

Jacob Morgan 00:00

First 45 minutes talking about stuff and last 15 minutes or so will really be focused on action items. So what what can people actually be doing? And I'll do a longer intro later for now introduce us Rick Hansen, psychologist, senior fellow at UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center. And New York Times best selling author of six books, including your recent one making great relationships and read the seven, seven books. Oh, this is gonna be seven. I think on your website. It still says six.

00:28

That's because it doesn't yet but it should. Right now. Yeah, this book is making good relationships. Number seven. So if you're going to include it, it would be yes. Yeah,

Jacob Morgan 00:39

I forgot. That's coming out in January, right? Yeah. January 17. Yeah. Cool. All right. Anything else? We're going to jump right in?

00:46

No, I'm ready to like, Fireball, baby. Let's do a cool.

Jacob Morgan 00:51

Hey, everyone. Welcome to another episode of leading the future of work. My guest today, Rick Hansen. He's a psychologist, senior fellow at UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center. And New York Times best selling author of seven books, including his most recent one, just about to come out, called making great relationships, simple practices for solving complex building connection and fostering love coming out January 2023. Rick, thank you for joining me,

01:20

Jacob. I'm glad to be here. This is exciting. I'm glad about it.

Jacob Morgan 01:24

Yeah, I have so many questions for you. So I mentioned before we hit record that I was working on a new book on leadership and vulnerability, which is going to come out towards the end of next year. So I thought that could be an interesting place for us to start is around vulnerability. And maybe just really, broadly speaking, what are your general thoughts on vulnerability, and how that plays into creating relationships? Is that important? Is that something that you've been seeing and writing about and researching?

01:55

If we think about vulnerability, as being exposed to harm, there doesn't mean we're yet harmed, it just means there's a potential for harm, we've kind of opened the gates, we've lowered our guard, we're exposed. There's certain situations in life and in business where you should not be vulnerable. You should not expose yourself to what would be an example of those, by the way, shields up Scotty, for example, situation where someone is just kind of, you can just tell they're a colleague, or a boss, or a competitor, who's looking for any chink in your armor, to make you look bad, tear you down, and you just realize, okay, or you're in a formal setting where it's just not appropriate to spill your guts on the

table. And to go into a level of self disclosure and your personal history that just isn't appropriate and, you know, doesn't make you look good. There's a place for being guarded for being careful. I think what's my Angelou line, you know, when people show you who they are the first time believe them. So you start to realize, no, I'm just not going to expose certain things to to you, let's say. So, with that caveat, then whether it's in formal settings of business, or in more personal relationships, when we expose ourselves to harm, we also expose ourselves to lots and lots of help, lots of benefit. And we send a signal to other people, that they can step out of the fight. You know, they can lower their guard a little bit. And maybe we can do this together. So my invitation, partly my vulnerability is an invitation to you to become one step more vulnerable yourself. And then we kind of mutually take steps that match each other. In, you know, our growing openness and accessibility. That's one second, I think it's important to distinguish between external and internal vulnerability. So I'm a longtime psychotherapist, and longtime business person. You know, I have a background in corporate consulting, and also I've owned and managed small businesses, or I'm unemployed because I'm test runs my own business for

Jacob Morgan 04:21

so we're in the same boat.

04:22

Okay, okay, good. Anyway, we can be externally somewhat guarded, careful, let's say, while being internally open, to all of who we are, right that in there, to all the ways we feel including ways we feel that might feel might be soft, or sad, or young or unfulfilled yearnings of the heart, we can be vulnerable to ourselves, which is full of value. Wow. It's one of the most powerful factors of positive mental health and is one of the most powerful factors of negative mental health when it's not present lacking that internal.

Jacob Morgan 05:07

So how does that how does that work? I mean, the external piece I think a lot of people are familiar with, because it's based on an action, like what you say or what you do. The internal vulnerability, though, you're not talking about it with anybody, it's just kind of like your internal voice and your internal dialogue.

05:23

Okay, so first part, I also realized that external vulnerability, even in business settings, includes, I'm willing to be affected by you. And that's especially important if you come into it as I do. So tall white dude, tall, white old dude. To relate with people who are don't, who are not advantaged like I am, in various ways to be genuine, genuinely, sincerely open to being affected by them to letting their story land to letting their experience land. I mean, that's a very fundamental kind of vulnerability. It's an openness to others. Okay. Internal vulnerability, self awareness. And a key to that is certainly body awareness. When people say, like I did, I was numb from the neck down when I entered adulthood, because of my unhappy but not traumatic, but still unhappy childhood. So waking down, not just waking up, is really useful, getting in touch with your body, with people who say, I don't know what I feel. Alright, just start with sensations. Are you What's are you aware of the sensations of breathing? You know, as the air flows in and flows out, your chest rises and falls? That's a really fast way into greater

self awareness, including of your underlying gut feelings, your emotions. So that's a thing and another is just being able to tolerate can you tolerate distress? can you tolerate discomfort? Can you stand your feelings, and then you can grow and how to tolerate I mean, I could name three or four things that make you more internally resilient, we focus a lot on external resilience, and about being internally resilient to the stuff going

Jacob Morgan 07:04

up. Yeah, I think that's also very important. And there have been a few times where I went to go see a therapist, to try to understand some of these themes. And as I mentioned, I'm working on a book on vulnerability. So I'm trying to learn as much of this as I can. And I remember a therapist had me do some exercises to try to understand and talk about feelings. And she said, Okay, three times a day, and want you to just stop and do a check in with yourself and write down how you're feeling. And so I did this for a little while, and then we got together again, and she said, Okay, read me some of your check ins. And I noticed that all the check ins that I would read back to her where I'm feeling good, I'm feeling stressed, I'm okay. You know, and they were all these kind of general terms. And she said to me, she's like, where are the feelings here? Where are the emotions, those aren't good is not an emotion, good is not a feeling. Stress can be something that you use for anything. And she said, You know, one of the things that you struggle with is you have a hard time trying to identify and talk about emotions and feelings. And she gave me a link to I think it was Gloria Wilcox, the feelings wheel. And it looks at that feelings will and I'm like, Oh my God, there's so many feelings that you can use to talk about. And they're not foreign words, but you just don't use them. And so I looked at that. And then I started doing check ins after that. And I started saying things like, I feel proud, I feel accomplished, I feel disappointed, I feel let down. And I became more comfortable. recognizing those feelings. Part of me wonders if inside of organizations, we really struggle and even just thinner generalized to struggle, identifying feelings and talking about them. Do you find that that's the case for a lot of people?

08:45

I think it is and to generalize, especially for a lot of men. Yeah. Yeah. And so just like you said, you know, I was just looking up the definition of KPI, earlier today and key performance indicator. And just like in business, you want to get granular feedback. You know, internally, emotions are a profoundly useful, evolved for survival purposes, including in relationships with others in our hunter gatherer bands that provide highly granular feedback. So being able to differentiate among them. You really important, what's the difference between feeling uneasy, nervous, worried, fearful, phobic, panicky, or terrorized? There's differences what's the difference between feeling exasperated annoyed miffed? Yeah. irritated, mad, angry, enraged, furious, right? These are these are useful distinctions and being able to name them to yourself, also helps you identify them more granularly and others, which is really useful, whether it's your four year old, or your 64 year old boss, who is acting like a four year old, I don't know, the you know, this really helpful differentiation, granularity clarity, distinctions are really useful. This is not an academic exercise.

Jacob Morgan 10:24

Why is this? Why is this important in a business setting? I feel like a lot of people might be thinking, Well, yeah, I get it. It's great for my spouse, my significant other, my parents, my friends, why do I need

to know or care about this stuff inside of an organization? When it comes to feelings, emotions, vulnerability? What does that matter?

10:47

Yeah, emotions are I mean, emotion, the root of it is motion. And it has the same route as motivation. So whether we're tracking the state of mind, you know, not just at the purely cognitive, analytical, Spock like level, right? We're not a bunch of termites bumping into each other, we're passionate monkeys, we're giant monkeys who are very vulnerable to being vulnerable, where it's very easy to make us feel afraid, or angry. And taking that into account, with our colleagues, with our bosses, with the people who report to us and with our peers, and with our, our customers of various kinds, you know, what are they feeling? Very straightforward. So it's extremely useful to track, you know, where they irritated with you. For example, let's say something happens. And you have this, you see this look crossing over your, your supervisors, your bosses, your managers face, what's going on there? Were they did they feel disrespected by you? Were they just puzzled? Were they thinking about their kids struggle at school? And just has nothing to do with you? Is it that they are just feeling kind of like, let down yet again, by you? What's going on? I mean, it's detail. Details are informative. Wouldn't you want to know, you go to a doctor, and you're just not feeling good? You don't want the doctor to say, oh, yeah, you're just not feeling good. We've, you know, we've we had this generic treatment for not feeling good. You'd be like, Wait, what is it? Is it my pancreas is my you know, testosterone levels are dropping as I age. What's the deal here? You'd want to know the specificity?

Jacob Morgan 12:38

You'd be the context, that seems like matters quite a bit. And I know there's a theory in psychology, I think it's fundamental attribution error. And I think you talked about in your book as well, right? It's this idea that when something isn't going well, and I think the analogy a lot of psychologists use is, if you're sitting in a restaurant, or this is at least the story I heard, if you're sitting in a restaurant and your your waiter comes over, and they accidentally spill the soup on you, they're having a bad day, they're short, they're snappy, and you leave the restaurant and you immediately think, man, that person was such an insert expletive here, right? Bleep Bleep Bleep, you go crazy. But you don't think in terms of, well, maybe that person's having a bad day, maybe their spouse just left them, maybe their family member just passed away. And so we're, I guess the theory is, we oftentimes attribute how people act to their behavior, their personality, who they are as a person, instead of the situation. And more often than not, it's usually the situation and not who they are as a person.

13:42

Yeah. You know, one of the that's really great, you great summary of that. Exactly. Right, you know, if I have a summary version of it, that I heard, just to kind of riff with you here is that when good things happen to us, we tend to think that global qualities in us are the source when bad things happen to us, we tend to think of it as bad fortune, just bad luck. when good things happen to other people, we tend to think of it as their good luck. And when bad things happen to them, we tend to think of it as their fault. So that's different. That's another way of summarizing it. Yeah. One thing about it, too, and I want to ask you, Jacob, like, in a way, in this podcast, you're listening for a living? Yes. And I too, as a therapist, you know, listened for a living, what has helped what helps people learn to listen, in a sense

because when you listen, you do start to recognize granularity or details in the state of being of other people. What helps us actually just slow down and receive including in the fast paced business world?

Jacob Morgan 14:56

What helps us slow down and receive

14:57

Yeah, and listen? Yeah,

Jacob Morgan 15:02

That's a good question. I feel like that's such a hard thing to do now, because we're so distracted that we have technology everywhere. We're not patient. And so as far as what helps us slow down? Oh, man, that's a good question. I mean, I know for me, what has been helpful is I started doing 10 minute meditations. I started doing daily gratitudes that night, my wife and I, each night, before we go to bed, we talked about how was your day? How are you feeling? And that's kind of how we end our night. So I think being a little bit more reflective, and taking time and space to talk about ourselves and how we're feeling and how we're doing has been very, very helpful, especially during tough situations, you know, it's kind of like, take a step back, let's reflect, let's talk about it instead of just go go go. So it's kind of like hitting pause, at certain times during the day. That to me personally has just been very helpful.

16:01

That's great. Yeah. For me, there's a kind of almost humility in it, and healthy sense that basically says, I don't know everything. I I'm, I'm interested in being influenced by you or affected by you. You know, what, what do you know that? I don't know, for example, that's one part. Another is, I don't know I, I, I'm bored by myself. I know my personality. I know what I think about stuff. I don't know what you think about stuff. So to be interested, and I think one thing that has, for me really been important, is to get good. And to get better at helping yourself be interested in things and sustaining interest.

Jacob Morgan 16:53

How do you make that shift? Is there a way to conquer that fundamental attribution error error? Like how do we move away from assuming that it's a person's character flaw or personality to think about the situation? Is it as simple as just as asking like, hey, maybe something's going on? Because I feel like we're very quick to jump here this year that? How do you stop that?

17:21

Yeah, well, understanding it just like you explained to people is really helpful. I think a second is to appreciate that other people are like you. They're complicated. messes. They, they do have an inner committee and inner village, you know, an inner zoo that's pulling them in different directions. So just like you, they're pulled in different directions, by multiple motives, and often do this stuff on impulse alone or out of emotional reactivity. And, and a lot of it just like you so much of what we each do, other people or bit players in our personal drama, they kind of move through our life, we're not immensely reacting to them, we're lot reacting to the last interaction we had or that argument with our wife going out the door, or partner. So I think that's, that's really helpful. And then last, you know, I think just leading with respect, it's not just the absence of bias or the absence of presumptions about other

people. It's presuming good intention, or looking for the good intention underneath at all. And, and, you know, I think of some old fashioned words patients respect really are useful, including in an increasingly multicultural business environment and world is to just patients slow slowed down. You know, You okay, man, you got to wait 40 seconds for the light to change. Can you just freakin chill, you know? Or, oh, wow, maybe I can't you know, I'm getting no, I'm getting only one bar micelle I gotta wait 15 minutes till we get out of this kind of shadow area here. Wow. 15 minutes take a long used to take people to send a letter to someone who is out of the world. Yeah. Respect.

Jacob Morgan 19:23

And my parents used to live apart for several years. My mom was in Australia, which is where I was born. And my dad was in LA. We're in California pursuing the American dream because I have immigrant parents. They came from Russia. And late, late 70s, early 80s. So there was a period where they spent years not seeing each other and they would send letters to each other back back and forth. You know, it takes who knows how long for that letter to get there. Today, you just Skype message somebody? It's yeah, right.

19:52

That's right. That's right. Exactly.

Jacob Morgan 19:55

So I'm also really curious you know, there's a lot of talk about stress, anxiety. The well being mental health lately? Where does stress and anxiety actually come from? And what happens in the body is? Does it create a certain chemical? Is it different for everybody as far as what causes stress and anxiety because we, we talk about it a lot. But I'm wondering how many people actually know what, what's going on with you when you feel stressed or anxious or what what triggers it? What's going on physically with you.

20:31

So this is a big topic, and I'm gonna really try to sound bite it. And I'm really inviting you, Jacob to segment me, cut me off, cuz you could push play here. And I could give a very condensed, useful, practical 10 minute talk, that would just probably drive you and half your listeners crazy. So I plan to do that. The short version is. So we're big animals. And like other animals, we deal with changing conditions, and we have needs, right? So life is changing, waves keep coming. We have to respond to them. There are stressors, there are challenges. But that does not inherently mean that we must feel stressed. So that's like Big Idea number one. Okay. And we'll be coming back to it. And so the key question is what helps us in a dynamic 1012 or more hour a day business environment, juggling family, dealing with other people, what helps us deal with challenges without getting stressed by them. So here's the key point, the essential ingredient of stress is negative emotion. Now, many people are dealing with challenges with enthusiasm, got, oh, I go rock climbing less than I used to. But there I am in a very hazardous environment. Safety's challenged, there's a little bit of pressure around the edges. But I'm still having a tremendous time. I haven't the time, my life, because there are factors that helped me deal with that challenge without getting stressed about it. Think about people who love the startup world, in business in a way that would freak out a lot of other people who look for that stability of a paycheck, but the, you know, the lack of a safety net. And you know, the high stakes is a thrill. For a lot

of people, they're, they're having a great time, think of a surgeon, dealing with life and death decisions that have to be made extremely quickly. You know that on a scale of less than a millimeter of a of their blade, they're not stressed by it. So it's negative emotion. So managing negative emotion. And helping yourself deal with challenges without negative emotion is, is the key, it's the heart of the matter. It's the heart of the matter. Now, managing negative emotion does not mean suppressing it, because it bubbles back up again. Yeah, you know, the brain is, is not like a flush toilet, it's more like a septic tank. You know it when we push down stays there. And eventually it stinks and comes back up. So, you know, it's important to keep, I could name 10 things, maybe I'll name one. But there are things we can do, to face challenges with less negative emotion about them. Like for example, reminding yourself that you're capable of meeting the challenge, when that's factually true. reminding yourself that you're okay in the present and giving yourself the feeling of reassurance. That's really helpful. Connecting with other people in challenging environments, is really useful for reducing negative emotion and promoting positive emotions. Replacing negative emotions with positive emotions, you know, a yes. Maybe there's been a frustration and also not denying the frustration. You can be grateful for five other things. Right? Yeah. Your boss has criticized you. It's a drag. It's a maybe it's unfair. And your wife loves you, your partner loves you. You're you have friends, you're part of a softball team. You're gonna go get a beer later and watch sports. It's okay. You know, it's really important, really important. So, tech, you want a little biology?

Jacob Morgan 24:37

Ya know, I'm really interested in like, actually what's going on in the brain or the body? Yeah.

24:44

So big idea. Number one, you can have challenges without getting stressed. You can have stressors without getting stressed. Big Idea number two, the key is emotion. You know, getting all activated with negativity. motion, that stress, getting all activated with positive emotion. That's enthusiasm. Yeah, that's peak performance. Okay. Third big idea. The amygdala hijack. In other words, basically, as information flows into us about the world, including some, let's say, a comment from your boss or an email from an irate customer.

Jacob Morgan 25:24

We've all been in those situations.

25:27

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Or your partner calls you, you know, in the way you're about to walk in the front door, and they said, you remember, did you get this and that and you're like, Oh, crud, I forgot. They're gonna hate me again. So and here I am back in my childhood when my parents lambasting me because I dropped the ball yet again. Something. Yeah. Okay. So when that information comes in, it goes through two pathways in your brain. One pathway goes right to the subcortical regions that emerged around 200 million years ago, their ancient from the early mammals, including the amygdala, to we have to have which in the brain, which is like a little alarm bell, it's constantly tracking what's happening, what's happening, what's happening. And it especially is designed to react to negatives. Okay, so negative feedback, obstruction to getting your goals fulfilled, issues with other people. And then the amygdala, bam, sends a signal really quickly, that then goes down to two paths. One path

goes into the hormonal system, to the hypothalamus, and then the pituitary glands. And now, two seconds later, you're feeling adrenaline and cortisol. And the other path, the other signal from the amygdala goes into the nervous system, typically with what's called the sympathetic nervous system, which then makes your heart beat faster, your pupils dilate, to take in more information, fight or flight. Okay. All that happens incredibly quickly. Meanwhile, there's a slow or information highway that goes to more modern evolved prefrontal cortical regions behind the forehead, that are the seat of executive judgment, conceptualizing long term planning, and regulating your emotions. Alright, the problem is the amygdala gets a little head start a second or two head start. And it starts it initiates the stress response quickly. And also it it biases, how the prefrontal cortex is going to now interpret events. So that's a lot of the physiology of it. And the takeaway from that is kind of twofold. In the moment, slow yourself down, slow your roll, so that your prefrontal cortex can catch up. Classic advice from your I don't know if your grandmother gave me this advice or something about character turn, sweetie, before you say anything. You know, I have a friend who uses the acronym Wait, w ay ay ay T. Wait, why am I talking? I really with my wife and my family, I try to remind myself, Rick, slow it down. Pause and pause. So that's that's one huge takeaway.

Jacob Morgan 28:24

How long have a positive we talking here, by the way? So let's say for example, three seconds. Okay. So if I'm, let's say, I'm in a stressful situation, I'm in a meeting, my boss comes to me, Jacob, you know, you didn't do this, blah, blah, blah, you know, kind of going off on me. You just kind of take a couple seconds, and then wait to kind of formulate a response before you just jumping in if you not kind of Yeah, back and forth.

28:46

Often is it sort of like, I've just a couple seconds, really, we'll get we'll help you. Now, if you by yourself five seconds, or 10 seconds, 10 seconds is a long time in a meeting between something happening, and you're responding, that has all kinds of benefits for one. It helps other people slow down. I mean, I deal with a longtime couples counselor too, and so much of what goes wrong in couples conflicts, but you could see it also in a work setting is that it's rat tat tat, tat tat tat. Yeah, no, they just go off on each other. It's nuclear reaction. And any one of the two slows it down. That's good for both of you. Also, when you slow it down, you're both able to buy yourself, you know, half a breath, so that you can start to think clearly. What should I do? What are my real priorities here? I want it I'm willing to lose a battle to win the war. You know, is this really the time at the end of the day? Or is this really the time just before we go get some food because we're all starving after this long meeting we've been in to really get into it, you know, and also So you can calm your body, one of the fastest way to calm your body is exhale. A lot of times when we're uptight and tense, we hold our breath. And technically, when we inhale, the heart rate speeds up, and the sympathetic branch of the nervous system, that's what it's called, gets gets engaged. And that's the branch that's energizing, but also moves into fighting and fleeing. The parasympathetic branch is involved with exhaling, during which time your heart rate is slowing, and your body is calming. So if you deliberately, just make yourself exhale slowly, once or twice, no one can even no need to notice it, no one needs to notice it. It's kind of secret, you know, that's really useful. And then I'll tell you another quick hack on your brain really fast, is to really try to remember someone who cares about you, or the feeling of being with your dog, your partner, you know, your grandmother, when you were a kid, your buddies you do something with, as soon as we

bring in the felt sense of being with others who care about us, that's a primal signal. Think about Stone Age tribes, incredibly important to feel like you were part of the group, they had your back, they were gonna come and get you. You were you were part of the team. Because exile was a death sentence back in the Stone Age, no one could survive on their own. You need it to be part of the band. So just bringing to mind what's it feel like? Or who do you love? Who do you care about? Either way, you know, there's that sense of heartfelt relatedness. Really, you know, studies show really effectively lowers emotional reactivity.

Jacob Morgan 31:50

It's interesting. And I like that you bring up the point that you're not, it's not about removing or suppressing negative emotion, it's understanding how to deal with it when it comes up. And it seems like the best thing that you can do is to slow down is to do some of the things whether it's thinking about spending time with your dog, or gratitudes, kind of just changing your perspective and mindset a little bit in those types of situations.

32:14

Yeah, technically, the amygdala, the alarm bell, has receptors for oxytocin, oxytocin, neuro chemical, women have more oxytocin than the men do. But men have oxytocin as well. And certainly in the brain, those receptors are inhibitory. What it means is that as you experience positive relationship, that increases oxytocin activity in your brain, which calms down the alarm bell, it inhibits the amygdala, interesting. All right. See, that's one of multiple little mechanisms, whereby this works.

Jacob Morgan 32:51

It's fascinating. So, so many things that you talk about in the book. And I know, we're always we're already like halfway through our interview. So I'm gonna pick a couple that that I thought were particularly interesting. One of them was around this idea of scripts, schemas and stereotypes, I think you talked about rewriting the script in in one different part of the book. And we have a lot of scripts and stereotypes and schemas for things. And I guess the way that I understand it is a schema is your blueprint for a situation, a stereotype is your or not your heuristic, your shortcut of what to do in a situation? stereotype is your shortcut for a person. And a script, I guess is how you feel you need to actually play out, or how you actually need to behave? What's the danger with these? Because it seems like sometimes they serve us well. So knowing how to act in a certain environment, knowing what you can say or not say, but it seems like sometimes these things can also be detrimental. So can you share? What are these things a bad idea? And what do you do?

34:05

Great. So they're basically all models, models of the world, including models of yourself and models of how you interact with the world and, and in the brain. And you can see this in evolutionary history as well. There's a tension between being on the one hand, fast, but rigid, a lizard a fly, they're very quick, but they're rigid. While on the other hand, being flexible, but slow. And so there's a balance there. It's efficient to have these models of yourself and other people so that you don't have to keep figuring it out. For a new every single time. Think about all the things we do while driving we have all these automatic sub routines, changing lanes, letting someone go ahead, not letting somebody cut you off, you know moving into a lane when You have to, you know, we know how to do these things. So we don't have to

reinvent them every time, there's a place for that, but we can become trapped by them. So one of the first things I want to underline here is, it's a little bit like what I said earlier about interest, or respect, this is more like a personal quality, that is worth paying attention to and cultivating, which is the sense of your own autonomy. That you are your own master, you are the captain of your own ship, you are the author of your own screenplay. And we tend to think about autonomy and in the business world externally directed, like, Oh, I'm not gonna let them push me around. All right, but what about all the forces inside your own mind that have been pushing you around since you were 10 years old, and are still doing the same stuff today. So it's the puppet masters inside your head. So I think there's a place for people to have a kind of attitude of, you know, wait a second here, I don't want to be controlled by those old scripts, those old assumptions. And I want to be a learner. I want to be someone who grows and learns. And rather than someone who's just sort of stuck in the past, I find that really helpful, I find it also really helpful to realize that other people are often trying to cast you into their movie, you know, they've got a script, and they want you to play that role. And, for example, they relate by quarreling, they connect by bickering, and you just, they're always looking to bicker, they want to argue about something. And because that's how they connect, maybe that's why they learn to in their culture, maybe in their family, and maybe you just don't want to do that it's tiring, it's frustrating and never goes anywhere. It is emotionally unpleasant. So you start thinking, I'm going to step out of that script, or you have a teenager, you know, keeps trying to suck you into a certain script, as a parent, you know that you're the evil dad or mom or something. And you just keep trying to find a way to get out of that script. So I, it's really useful to think about even a typical argument, like my wife and I, we've been married for two years. Wow, we still we still we go for we drive. So I usually am the driver. She's, she has poor depth perception. She also doesn't have a lot of background and driving. I grew up in LA, I've driven a million miles on heavy traffic. And I'm called, she's more anxious by temperament. So still, she's constantly telling me how to drive. Slow down, did you see this? Watch out for that. And I'm like, Honey, I got it. Plus, you know, it's kind of annoying. And a lot of what we do is try to stay out of a familiar script like that, you know, and one takeaway, honestly, for me, is to realize first, that even though other people are trying to suck me into a certain role, in my own mind, that can be free. Maybe externally, I need to kind of put up with it, I need to, you know, get along to go along to get along, at least in that situation. But deep down inside, I don't have to buy into it. That's useful. Another is to just disrupt the script. Okay, that's

Jacob Morgan 38:25

what I was gonna ask you, because I feel like a lot of people fall into a script at work. As far as the role that they play on a team. Oh, that's, that's Jacob, he's always late, or he never has the good ideas, or that's Bob, the manager or, you know, Lisa, the executive, she's like a robot shit. And we get these kind of like, we create characters and stories and attributes. And I don't know, sometimes it seems like we create things that aren't there, or we feel like we get into this pattern, and we get stuck with it. So how do you break that, especially if it's for you, and you are in somebody else's movie, and you don't want to be like, you get a reputation of I don't have the good ideas. I'm not the fun person, the cool colleague who wants to go out and party I'm, you know, how do you get out of that stuff?

39:14

It's great. Well, a to thine own self be true. I mean, that's obviously where we have to start. We got to, you know, like, who are you? What kind of a person are you? Like, I'm now the CEO of a nonprofit

that's growing quite rapidly to be something big and it first I'm not used to the nonprofit world, because I was a sole proprietor and small business owner forever. And I'm used to feeling like the knife set my neck and I got to perform every day and people got to produce tangible results every day, nonprofit world so much just feels different from that culturally, you know, and so, now, so I'm with people who come out of that world you know, I'm not going to not be who I am. And also we have a limited number. We're like a startup nonprofit, we have limited funding to get going. And we need to put points on the board. Right, we need to accomplish tangible things. So you got to be true to yourself. While also I think it's helpful to be really open to understanding what's it like for others to be with you. And to be that person who's willing to stretch and grow and be on the learning team, right? The most important, I saw guy, I worked with a woman a million years ago, and her she was in a marriage with a real hard charging type, a venture capital biz kind of guy. And he had on, you know, the license plate or the bumper, rather of his million dollar range rover, you know, he who dies with the most toys wins. And I thought, Wow, this, I don't know. And yeah, they got a divorce soon after. But, you know, I think the person who learns the most wins, yeah, the person who grows the most the person who heals the most, who awakens, the most wins, and to have to be motivated to be on that learning team. So I think that part second, if I could say one more thing to

41:20

is to kind of shake it up. You know, for me, there's there's no replacement for action. And if there's correction to put in, that's not going to be in authentic, but as in your range. What's that correction? And to actually say, you know, like, let's say, You're someone use yourself as examples that he delivered, made up, right, but totally made up. But let's say you're someone who's routinely late. Well, don't be routinely late, blow their mind. Maybe you're someone who tends to be sort of the person in the room who's always looking for the reason why not, he always kind of comes from doubt, or skepticism, maybe deliberately wait for others to express doubts and skepticism and identified problems, and be the person who leads with what you value or appreciate or what you think is good about another person's output, or their ideas, you know, shake up your script. And often these little changes can produce really pretty sweeping results

Jacob Morgan 42:38

like that. So the last 15 minutes or so I want to focus on some specific action items that I think would be really relevant to a lot of people starting off with how to fight fair at work. And I suppose it's also how to fight fair in general. So for example, I know that one of the one of the tough things that a lot of people always try to figure out is when there's some sort of a conflict, whether it's at home or inside the organization, how do you focus on the issue and not on the person? Right? And so sometimes, I think, inside of organizations, and again, inside of our lives as well, I don't think there's anything wrong, necessarily, will you tell me what we arguing or fighting or like getting things out, as long as you can talk about it in the right way, and you fight fair, but if one person is talking about the issue, and how to resolve it, and you're talking about the person and why they're bad, that's not fair. And sometimes that happens, and it creates all that conflict and tension. So for, especially in the workplace setting, do you have any tips or recommendations on how to fight fair or argue fair or talk about ideas in a fair way?

43:47

Definitely. Well, first off, it's really helpful to look at any kind of bias you have, especially if you're someone who has been advantaged by your society one way or another. So right off the top, are you? Are you making sure you're being fair? Or is there some kind of bias here? Maybe the bias that I've seen in the workplace is interesting. You have sort of the, I don't know what to call them, you have the people who are sort of like analytic head types, let's say even though and, you know, neurologically, this is not valid, but anyway, they're kinda like Spock, you know, they're analytic. They're careful. They serve their cerebral, they make their argument in a kind of dispassionate way. Then you have heart types, who are about process and an emotional response to situations and, and, you know, kind of at that level, really routinely, the head types are prejudiced against the heart types and vice versa. And so just ask yourself, are you really being fair here, or are you being biased in some way? So check, check that second. Let's assume you're being In fair, I'm going to a what's our objective and be the we frame. The common good frame, like, that's more impersonal. In other words, classic argument between, you know, sales and production, sales and manufacturing, let's say, or it's classic tension, say, what's good for the company? What's good for our team as a whole. So for example, if you have an issue with a boss, who is really poor at acknowledgement, you know, you might frame things in terms of it, you know, a lot of research has shown, one of the best ways to get higher performance out of a team is by genuinely acknowledging and praising and appreciating, you know, what is validly a contribution. That framing is not critical, it's not personal. It's positively oriented. It's focused on the future. So these are two other elements positive, focused on the future, rather than a criticism about the past positive focused on the future. operationalized. It's concrete and specific. And it's in a wireframe. It's about the greater good. Just that is huge. Yeah, and I think on the other side of it, there's a place for naming what's in the room.

Jacob Morgan 46:34

Just to name it, as they say,

46:37

yeah. And to if you are someone who you kind of like will, like our daughter, I won't name her company. But she was in one of these. razzmatazz, cheerleading, Boo yah, meetings with the CEO about diversity. And you know, that, you know, wanting to be a workplace culture that's inviting to everybody. And she is in a corporation, and she's kind of a middle manager there, and the CEO of mail, just open it up to everybody and our daughter, you know, she was, you know, she wasn't desperate to keep the job. So she was willing to speak truth to power, as we say, and she basically just said, Well, with this commitment to equality, I mean, just factually, right now, of the 20 people in senior management in this company at the, you know, C suite level, or the top tier level 17 Are men. And, you know, through three are people of color, two of whom are from India. You know, how does that connect with your statement about our company? And what aspirations might you have about it, and you could have heard a pin drop, and, you know, it never changed anything, but she's on record, people are in record, and he got said, you know, and so something that, you know, sometimes we can, we can, there are neither, we can err on either side, we can come in hot guns blazing. Or we can just shove it down and water it down and muzzle ourselves till we're ready to explode. Yeah. And I think both of them are things to avoid, you know, pitfalls on either side.

Jacob Morgan 48:22

Another action that I thought was important, and it's something that I can relate to in my personal life is using a softer tone. Yeah, oftentimes, when my wife and I get in an argument about whatever, she'll frequently say, I don't even care what you said. It's how you said it, and how what you said made me feel it's your tone. Yeah. And I feel like especially inside of organizations, as well, leaders and just employees in general, sometimes we forget that it's not always what you say, it's how you say it, and you get caught up in the heat of the moment. And especially leaders, they don't understand how powerful their tone is. I mean, the words are powerful, too. But oftentimes, there's a lot of subtext in the tone. Yeah. What advice do you have for leaders out there as far as tone because at the same time, you can't always talk like you're talking to a little baby, and you got to get your point across? And you can't be like, Oh, I'm sorry, did they hurt your feelings? You know, it's like, Shut up work. How do you balance the like, the tone with at the same time, being a leader and making sure that your message gets across and that things get done?

49:33

What a great question. I think it's helpful to get feedback from other people about what leaks out of you that you may not be aware of. And I've gotten good feedback from my wife from colleagues, because I think of myself as a very mellow therapists kind of guy, who was a scared, shy, insecure kid, very young going through school. And the truth is, though, You know, a certain amount of exasperation, or eye rolls or, you know, can slip out, partly because I'm used to doing things quickly and effectively. You know, I never ever, ever want to get anything less than a day, you know, I'm that annoying kid and even as an adult, and so you gotta be really careful about it. So feedback to become more aware of things. Second, neutral tone is often negative, and meaningless. Yeah, purely neutral tone often lands negatively. That's why, I mean, honestly, if you're in a team, and you're just count, you're just killing yourself to push the ball over the finish line, and you're working really hard. You're sweating bullets, and you're, you're, you're, you produce a result. And basically, what you get is something like, got it? Got it. Report received. No, mess, that's neutral. It's not critical. But it's deflating, right, disheartening and demotivating. And after a while, you just sort of like, especially these days, with a, you know, pretty fully employed workforce, especially more knowledge industry types. People walk, you know, a lot of research shows that people care more about camaraderie and credit, you know, credit in a good sense than they do about paycheck, they'll, they want to be paid at a certain level. But what they really care about, given the basics of, you know, appropriate paycheck is to feel like they're part of a group and they're appreciated. They're respected or valued. They want to feel valued. Yeah. And tone can be really valuing. It's amazing how easy it is to convey value to other people, not in a manipulative or flattering or salesy con artists way, just how rare I mean, I'm just stunned, actually, about how stingy people are about words of praise, genuine praise, or appreciation, or just facts, fact based acknowledgement, like, this is excellent. This is an excellent piece of work. Thank you, Jacob.

Jacob Morgan 52:13

It's interesting, because I think that's also a sign of vulnerability. So I've been interviewing a lot of CEOs. And I find that some of them struggle, even receiving praise, because they view that as a sign of vulnerability, like genuinely, you know, somebody giving you a compliment, you could say, oh, gee, thanks. Appreciate that. But it's a sign of vulnerability to say, Oh, wow, thank you, that really meant a lot to me, I appreciate that. And I think same thing with recognition, too, like, it's very easy to just say, Yeah, good job. But it's, it's a sign of vulnerability to say, Hey, I just want you to let you know, I really

appreciate the work that you did, and, you know, really means a lot to me a year opening yourselves up, opening yourself up in both those situations. And I think a lot of leaders really struggle with that, because it's still kind of like, vulnerability in times of praise, but it's still vulnerability. And I don't know, I feels like a lot of people are just not comfortable with it.

53:04

I think that's true. And so what an opportunity. Yeah. You know, to just think about how we feel. If we say something, and you're with someone who basically pauses for that long, three seconds, and really receives it, and you could have a feeling like they they let you land. In their own mind. They let you land like, got it? Yeah. You know, we feel really good. Yeah. And also, how does it feel when we when we're with someone who goes, you know, you something you sad or did was really excellent. Really, you know, was excellent, objectively Excellent. And also even at a human level? I value it. You know, I'm glad you're doing that. In a way that feels real. Yeah, beyond trite phrases, Formula phrases, but something real, you know, we, it's amazing what to feel valued. You know, I've seen so many situations where it's kind of funny, and for me, it's about it's about fighting fair, in a way and naming what's true. I've been in many situations where the facts were really on the ground, that you know, I just delivered an excellent piece of work. And nobody said a word. That's totally weird. It's weird. And we're in so many situations where people are just killing themselves or really working hard, or doing their very best, and nobody's saying a frequent word.

Jacob Morgan 54:51

It's funny because it's also so easy to just say good job. I appreciate you. It's literally like three to five words that can make or shape somebody's day or week or career.

55:00

Yeah, and a minute and you say it.

Jacob Morgan 55:03

Yeah, you know, in an authentic way, I think is the important part. Last question for you before we wrap up, and I think this is an important one, and it is around this idea of taking the higher road. And, of course, very applicable in our personal lives, as are all the themes that we've been talking about. But I think also applicable inside of an organization too, because it's very easy to get defensive to take things personally. I remember seeing Did you ever watch that show? Boardwalk Empire?

55:32

I never have actually,

Jacob Morgan 55:34

there's a there's a very good, I guess, yeah, yeah, there's a great scene in the show, where Bobby Kennedy Ali's character, and I don't remember exactly what happened. You know, he's a mobster. And somebody's trying to do something, you know, they say something to him, or they're trying to, like, cut them off. And they say, you know, don't take it personally. And he looks at them with this like, a mobster glands and says, What do you mean, don't take it personally, I'm a person RNA. And then I think he ends up killing the person who gave them that comment? Oh, yeah. So it's interesting there, I

like to taking the higher road, I think can also get you very far inside of an organization, whether you have a peer, they got promoted over you. And taking the higher road and just saying congratulations, instead of like, dammit, that should have been me. Whether it's, you know, a boss, who's really like coming after you, and sometimes taking the higher road. Can you talk about the importance of that? And how do you know when to do it? And to not just roll over, right? Because there's a difference between taking the higher road and just letting yourself get bullied?

56:41

I boy, so much there. I have a first I use unilateral virtue. Yeah. In other words, whatever they do, you operate by your code. And your code may include not letting yourself be pushed around in various ways, or, or having a limit to how long you'll go without getting appropriate acknowledgement for something, you know. But meanwhile, you have your own code. So I find it actually helpful for people to write it out. Do's and Don'ts. How do you want to be, you know, how do you want to be? One little thing I would do sometimes I'd imagine in a tricky situation, that there was a video camera in the upper corner of the rumor, you know, recording everything, and that it would be played at my kid's wedding or my funeral? How do you want it or for the Board of Psychology? How do you want it? How do you want to look? Right? And so just be really clear, what is your higher road? What is your your code, your path is helpful? Like, you know, for example, different traditions, including secular ones have sort of good Maxim's you know, in early Buddhism, the notion of wise speech or right speech, has these six attributes five required one desirable, but optional, you know, speeches wise, that is, well intended, actually benevolent, timely, true, and expressed without harshness, that goes to tone, and ideally wanted. But not necessarily, if, if, you know, you got the chips are gonna fall wherever they do. So little admonitions, like that are really helpful. Another is to just keep asking yourself, what's really important to you. And I think sometimes we can get very preoccupied with external feedback, and events, and people were in the language of psychology, we become what's called Object referenced, including other people, we become overly oriented around them, and we lose touch with, hey, on any given day, all I can do is make my offering. On any given day, all I can do is cultivate the best qualities of myself as the point of origin. For what flows out with me. All I can do on any given day, is to raise my own game, and to operate with my head high. And, you know, know that at the end of the day, when I'm sitting in bed with my wife, talking about my day, I will then be glad about what I have done today. Right to be then your more personal reference, you're more self referenced rather than other reference. I think that's really helpful. And the last thing is just to be really clear. You know, there's rough justice. It's really imperfect, unfortunately. But there's rough justice over the long haul. That jerks and con artists and dare I use the technical term assholes. You know, not always but very often over time you get revealed And the person who was decent, self respecting, respecting of others didn't get knocked left or right by the craziness around them is kinda kept focusing on the results kept doing their job. You know? That person starts standing out over time.

Jacob Morgan 1:00:22

Yeah. Sometimes we even call that karma.

1:00:26

Yeah, that's right. I love it. call it that. And it's like,

Jacob Morgan 1:00:30

yes, yes. Well, Rick, have a couple minutes over our scheduled time a fascinating conversation. Where can people go to learn more about you? Grab your book, check out your site, anything you want to mention for people to check out?

1:00:45

Oh, thank you best. It's just my website, Rick Hansen. dotnet. chock full of very, very practical, almost all of them free resources for people of different kinds, ranging from Little One minute meditations you can do to, you know, little, kind of like checklists or handouts, or brief videos, we'll talk. So scientific papers if you're interested in those things. So just go to Rick Hansen, s o n.net. Rick hansen.net are good. Just google me.

Jacob Morgan 1:01:16

Great. Well, Rick, again, thank you so much for taking time out of your day. I really appreciate it.

1:01:22

Thank you, Jacob. And I want to tell you true. You're good at this. Thank you.

Jacob Morgan 1:01:27

Thank you very much. That is a perfect way to wrap up. And thanks, everyone, for tuning in. I'll see all of you next week. All right, push stop recording.