

Speaker 1: [00:02](#) [inaudible]

Speaker 2: [00:03](#) one of the big things to realize from you, how did she do is depressed by telling them their life is amazing. You're not fixing the problem, you're making it worse. What they want is for you to sit back and just listen.

Speaker 1: [00:19](#) [inaudible]

Speaker 2: [00:20](#) hey guys, welcome to the front row dads podcast. I'm your host John Roman. Joining me today is my new friend Jason Reed. He's an entrepreneur, husband, father, founder of choose life.org and the man behind the upcoming documentary called tell my story, a father's journey to change the trajectory of teen suicide after the death of his 14 year old son. This story today is a tragic one and this conversation is a critical one. In fact, the conversation that we are having today is going to be able to change the conversations that parents can have with their kids all over the world and it will save lives. I'm so grateful that Jason was able to spend time with us, that he was willing to share the story and also what he's been learning along the way as he is a committed man ending teen suicide into giving the strategies and the best resources available so that what happened to his son, Ryan doesn't happen to anybody else.

Speaker 2: [01:21](#) Guys, there's no other way for me to set up this episode. This is a very different tone than perhaps some of our normal shows. And again, I want to honor Jason and his family and I want to thank him for sharing this story. And please, after you listened to this episode today, please share this with other people because what Jason is telling us today in the story and the ideas that can prevent other suicides, it's so very important. So please pass along this episode. And also if you would please take a moment to send along your thoughts or hold Jason and his family in your prayers as they suffered a great loss with their son Ryan. And I just want all of us to honor Jason for spending time with us today. And also honor his son's life. Thanks guys for listening.

Speaker 1: [02:14](#) [inaudible]

Speaker 2: [02:15](#) hi Jason. Welcome the front row dads man. Really looking forward to this chat. Thanks for being here Jason. I guess we owe it to Jim Scheels for our connection, right. His name comes up a lot in my world because he was actually at our first ever dad's retreat and he spoke about the family board meeting and since that day, if there were five things that were the most valuable that anybody's ever discussed or taught in our dad's

group, the family board meetings been in the top five. He's been a wonderful teacher to many of us. And I know he leads by example in so many ways. How did you guys get to know each other? So we met through um, gosh, YPO Buddy through CEO coaching. Yeah. And uh, just there's so many

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now the world's an interesting place. I just kind of pull on the strings and fall where those strings go on these days and I get introduced to a whole bunch of interesting people that way. Yeah, that's cool man. Well, I know Jim takes his intros seriously. So the minute he says, Hey, you've got to meet so and so, I'm always a yes. Oh, is it? Yes. Jason, let's talk a little bit about why we wanted to have this conversation for front row dads today. When I watched your Ted talk, the title is the most important conversation we'll ever have. Let's get right into it. What is that title all about? And really what is your mission today? Why are we chatting? Well, on March 12th, 2018 my son turned 14 on March 21st you took his life no matter. Okay, how many times I say that it doesn't get easier.

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So, so once that happened, no, I didn't see any of that color. I didn't know Ryan was depressed. I had no idea. I didn't know what the signs were. Well, I look back now, I can see there were signs and said, no, I didn't know they were there. I have four kids. There's 22 Ashton's 20 Kyle, 18 in January. Ryan was the youngest and I just thought he was another grumpy teenager and three others. I thought grumpier but the reality was there was something deeper with Ryan that he was hiding and he was severely depressed. I didn't know him until after he died. And we read his letters, but he went out of his way to keep it from us. But there were signs like, he was in this room a lot. He was on youtube a lot. He was just by himself a lot.

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I thought he was on playing video games with his friends. I thought, well, here I am a 52 year old guy and that's just how they do it. These days are on call of duty and they're all talking to each other and they're fine. They don't do on site as much as I used to, but the reality is no, he was severely depressed. I didn't know. So after that happened, I, I felt like I needed to understand why it happened, how it happened and I needed to not let his death be in vain. Right. Do what I could too, try and help others. So when I was going through the drawers was, um, his chest of drawers was room. Um, couple of weeks after I found a sticky note, I'd still put the, the top left hand drawer and there was two sticky notes. One had, here's my username and passwords and the other said, tell my story. So that's what I'm doing. Uh, I founded that she was left out of work, which repositioned the old antiabortion website. You're welcome.

Speaker 3: [05:52](#) I didn't realize that's what it was when I bought it. Um, but anyways, so I just thought I had to, I had to do something for parents to help understand does differently than I did. Yeah. So we're doing a documentary film called tell my story. We're in the middle of filming right now. Uh, we're actually in the editing phase. We started back in March, so we've, we've, we're probably 95% done with that film. It's going to be a rough cut in August in the out film festivals and by January and we'll have it playing in March. And that film is really all about my journey of understanding what's, what's happened here, how did we get here? How did we get to this point where teen suicide is up 70% since 2003 words, the number two killer, half a million kids a year attempt suicide and 5,000 die. How did we get here? Like it's such a different world from when I grew up. Yeah. That movie is all about trying to help parents understand that this is a different world. That makes sense.

Speaker 2: [06:57](#) Yeah. Well, and I'm glad we're talking about this and uh, my heartbreaks for you, Jason and your family. When you are telling the story, I immediately go back in my own life and start thinking about my thoughts as a young man, my suicidal thoughts that I had as a young man. I remember, you know, being in class in high school and drawing a picture of a person blowing his brains out, right. And I drew this very vivid picture and my teacher had seen it and then she had called in my parents and called in a counselor and we all had to meet in the principal's office. And interestingly, I don't know how serious I was about it, but I know I was thinking about it and I was actually at that point in my life I was a little conflicted because on one hand I didn't want people to know.

Speaker 2: [07:49](#) And on another hand I wanted everybody to know, right? I didn't want anybody know I was having these thoughts and I didn't want help. And on the other hand I was kind of crying for help and I was reaching out a little bit. That's my personal experience of it. And then even as an adult though, I've had thoughts that have entered my mind about taking my own life as an adult when it got really painful or really difficult. So I'm so glad we're talking about this because I've wrestled with how to deal with it in my own life. And I, I have younger boys now. My son just turned 10 and my youngest is four. But I've really interested in this conversation not only for what is ahead for me when I know my boys might face these thoughts and feelings and also for other guys in our group that do have kids that they could intervene right now or that they could see the signs or have the conversations that will help them. So Jason, what is the ultimate mission of choose life specifically? What do you hope the organization does? What do you hope the film does?

Very specifically for anybody who watches or gets involved or wants to engage in the dialogue?

Speaker 3: [08:54](#) So the mission of choose life.org is to end teen suicide by the year 2030 and I know that sounds like that's a really crazy how you're not going to, they'll do that, Jay, who can do that, but no, I'm not. I'm a business guy. I'm an entrepreneur. I'm a CEO, I'm a CEO coach. And I look at things in terms of beehag and if you take a look at Jim Collins and his beat and concept, the Beehag, it's your steadily goal. 10 years out that people don't think you can achieve and then you work back or just figure out how the heck you're going to do it. In fact, Jim just sent me a nice voice memo yesterday because I reached out to his team about this and you said very nice things about what we're trying to accomplish here, which is very kind of him, but I understand that maybe an impossible goal.

Speaker 3: [09:38](#) But the reality is everybody has been out there trying to raise awareness about teen suicide for the last 10 15 years and it's gotten worse every single year. So raising awareness is not working. In fact, when you talk to parents, they hey, and anybody aware of teen suicide? I talk all the time about this topic and everybody is where they don't know what to do about it. So my journey has been to try and figure out what do we do about it? And I'll tell you some, I've figured out, I haven't got all the answers, but I figured a lot of what we can do it and where the problems really are. And I'm happy to share with you what I've learned. Yeah. My natural questions are, yeah. What? Cause I'm putting myself into the mindset of somebody who this can help right now. So what are the signs and what are the strategies?

Speaker 3: [10:25](#) Yeah, I'd love to hear your thoughts and the signs of the signs. You, you probably are, you've got a kid who's now suddenly spending more time by themselves. Their grades are slipping. They seem like they don't care about stuff as much as they used to. They're not as happy as they used to be. They're just not there. You can see it in, when you start paying attention, you can actually see. Yeah. And not every kid who is alone in their room or a little sad is thinking about suicide. But a lot of kids do. Think of it same way as you. You thought about it when you were a kid. Yeah. It crosses your mind. And just because someone's thinking about it doesn't mean they're going to do it. Right. But the challenge is that we have to have these open conversations with our kids that we don't have right there.

Speaker 3: [11:15](#) Right. So when you see your child and you're saying, okay, they don't seem right. Here's what I've learned from talking to a

bunch of kids because for telling my story, we've interviewed a whole bunch of kids and parents, kids that have attempted parents that went through this with their kids, and that's part of this whole journey is trying to feel what's going through your heads. And when you talk to these kids, you say, well, what do you wish your parents did differently? What do you think? If I could say like you, you were on the edge and you attempted, what do you wish your parents did? Yeah, and they all say the same thing. They wish their parents pushed harder. Right? So when you call it your chin, you say, so are you, are you okay? What's going on? Yeah, fine. That's the typical answer for a teenager.

- Speaker 3: [12:02](#) Yeah, I'm fine. I'm fine. Fine, I'm fine. The kids are saying, I say I'm fine, but I'm not fine. Right, right. So they want their parents to push a little harder. Now here's what they don't want. They don't want to be fixed. I'm starting with a dad who was a buddy. I hadn't talked to him since Ryan passed. He called me miss his kids. He was having some challenges with the son and he's telling me how he was dealing with it. Same way as I would have dealt with it, right? If he's like, yeah. So, um, he told me he wasn't feeling good. He told me life kind of sucked. And I, and I told him, how could your life suck? You got a brand new car, you got a girlfriend, you have to live your life is amazing. And the first thing I said to him is that you gotta understand something. Their lives are amazing. Ryan's life was amazing. Like Ryan grew up in a place that most kids would've died. Deliberate. We'd love to live in a house with everything you ever wanted. Wonderful family, all this stuff in Roger Ryan's eyes. His world was horrible. Yeah.
- Speaker 3: [13:12](#) Through Ryan's eyes, his rules for pain. Yeah. To anybody else. Ryan's looked like this person. And so the, one of the big things to realize from you have a kid who is depressed. You're not going to by telling them their life is amazing. You're not fixing the problem, you're making it worse. What they want is for you to sit back and just listen to them. Let them talk, don't try to fix them.
- Speaker 2: [13:42](#) Well that's a great advice. You know, this idea of listening and w I really feel it, Jason, when you talk about your kids want you to push a little harder. I've learned that even in my marriage that when I say that I'm like, how are you? My wife's like fine. And I'm like, I know it's not fine. And I go, baby, come here and I give her a hug and she's like, I don't want to hug. And I realized that in that moment, if I hold her and I say, I'm not going to let you go, I want you to know I'm here, I need you to know I'm here. And then all of a sudden I get this big, deep breath of the

release. And I recognize that sometimes we feel conflicted in the advice we get. Like no means no, I need space.

Speaker 2: [14:17](#) Somebody needs time and you're like, I just got to give them time. It's going to back off, right? Like we get advice to back off. You're pushing too hard. But then there's other times when you know somebody says I'm fine, but they're really not. And you stick with them and you hug them and you hold them and you stay present with them. And it's exactly what they needed. They're like, I need you to know me well enough to know I'm not fine. I need you to push harder and hold tight or whatever it is. So I completely understand what it means to like push a little harder and stay there with somebody in their time. I also understand how that could be conflicting for people not knowing which to do.

Speaker 3: [14:49](#) And that's when, you know, parents just, well, how do I, well, the kid says I'm fine. What do I do? Well, what you said is a great example. Another thing is just trying to find the place where they'll talk to you, right? You, you know your kids. So if you tried to go into their room and have a conversation with them, they're probably not going to do it. But so when do they have it? If you take him for a walk, is that when they talk to you, do they talk to you when they're in the car? Going back to work at the school? Like where is that time that you know, your kid passionately opens up and talks to them. Everybody knows their kid and everybody's different. Right? Another great example that someone gave me is a young lady who accepted, said when I got, after I attempted to put me in the hospital, they created something called my happiness plan.

Speaker 3: [15:28](#) I'm like, what? What's that whole thing? She's like, I used to write down the five or six things that make me happy in life and put it on my wall so that when I have a bad moment, I go look at that stuff and it's like play my Ukulele. That makes me happy to go outside with my dog. That makes me happy. Go see a movie with my mother that makes you happy. And she's like, now when I feel depressed cause I still do, it doesn't go away. I looked at that and I can try those things. Someone who attempt suicide, Ryan had it planned out. He knew what he was doing, but it still took that boy, I'm going to go do it right now. Yeah. But if he can change his mindset just a little bit, maybe becomes happier, maybe gets pushed off another day.

Speaker 3: [16:08](#) Yeah. So creating that happiness plan. So if you want to wait to talk to your kids, sit down with them, say, look it. What makes you happy? Let's make a list. But what makes you happy? When I make a list of what makes me happy and they stumble around

that list on what makes them happy, there's a conversation. Has to be, yeah, like where I screwed up and there's lots of places I screwed up. I didn't show Ryan, for example, my vulnerable side. I, I show up as a guy that gets everything done that nothing, no problems. Too Big. I'm a black belt. I'm an iron man. I build companies, I coach CEOs. I mean, I failed 13 companies on top of the five I own that are successful. And I don't think my kids ever knew I failed at anything. I've almost went bankrupt two or three times and my kids would never know it. Wow. I've never shared it. My wife, I'm not even sure that was right cause I kept everything to myself. Right. And hammered through my problems. So by doing that, how did Ryan show up? Right. He saw, he saw me as guy who's always happy, always gets the stuff down, never cries the rules. Great. So I'll worry about it. So he showed up as that kid and kept all his secrets to himself.

Speaker 3: [17:30](#)

So I did this when I was up speaking at an EO group about a month ago. I had a bunch of parents and a bunch of kids and late in the audience, I said, all right kids, I want to keep your eyes wide open. Parents close your eyes. I want you to think back to what was like to be, well, 1314 years of let's pretend now you're, you're, you're that kid. I want you to think of the happy stuff that'll being 12 1314 I want you to think about were you bullied? If you were bullying Patreon, if you ever felt like you didn't like your body or you didn't feel like you fit in, put up your hands so you go through this list of questions. I basic questions about what was like growing up within three or four questions. Every hand in the audience was up and the kids are just wide eyed.

Speaker 3: [18:13](#)

Look at what right, right. And then I sell to parents put down or you open your eyes. Parents will drown. They're not surprised. Look yet. That's pretty much it. I said, all right then your hands. I said, parents put up your hands if you ever shared those feelings with your kids, not once they will handle it. Wow. Because we don't, we're afraid of, we tell our chins the truth that life is tough and was tough for us too. That somehow we're not being the right parent. Right, right. Because we need to show them that we get through stuff no matter what, when, what they really need to know is that, yeah, from time to time we questioned ourselves.

Speaker 2: [18:56](#)

Yeah. From time to time we're not sure what to do. Yeah, it's normal. So let's talk about that for a minute. This idea of being vulnerable, being open, talking with our kids about these thoughts, these feelings, these experiences, these whatever we want to call them, these failures, these opportunities for growth. One question, I know it comes up a lot in our

community, Jason, is when do we talk about it with our kids? Like at what age or stage should we talk about it? Is there a time when they're too young to bring this concept of suicide to the table or to talk about our own feelings of suicide or others? And I could stop right there, but let me give you just a little more flavor for the why I'm asking the question. So recently, and this is months ago, tiger, his climbing coach, a young man in his twenties who is like, this is rock climbing, his climbing coach, he committed suicide.

Speaker 2: [19:52](#)

And so he was the coach of all these young kids. And the question came up in the community of what do we say about this? Because one concern is that if you talk about it, especially with somebody that was once a hero who then committed suicide, does that give permission to other people to then commit suicide? Kids go, I never thought about that. But yeah, if Peter who I love did it, then you know, maybe I could do it right. Cause if that was his way out, maybe I could have a way out that way as well. There was a concern with that. And then there's also the concern of wolf. We don't talk about it and then it's a big secret. Then they probably hear about it some way or another. And if we're not the ones talking about it, somebody else is talking to them. So we need to talk about it. Thoughts about that concept and what age is appropriate.

Speaker 3: [20:43](#)

So I'm going to start by saying I don't have a degree in, I'm not a psychiatrist. I'm doctor, which I lost his kid. Yeah. I have spent the last 15 months, we'll be in the space researching it, talking to experts. I have forums of opinions that a lot of experts tell me are dead on. And the first thing is one of the like very important things. This whole idea that if you talk about suicide with your kids, you're going to create some side is not accurate. Okay? What I mean by that is that you're not going to put the idea suicide. A new kid's mind, sorry, it's already there. If it's there, it's there. So here's where, if you go on my website, it's [inaudible] dot org we've got a five stage plan on how we believe we can end teen suicide. And one of them is the challenge of schools.

Speaker 3: [21:41](#)

And this is going to get to your issue with with tigers coach. And I'm so sorry that happened. Schools react in some cases very poorly. There's a suicide, a school, they don't know what to do. They don't know what to say. So they do nothing. Right? And they sweep it under the rug because they're afraid of what they call a suicide contagion. Where there's this group of suicides because there was a suicide, and by the way, that's real. It does happen, but it happens for the opposite reasons. They think it happens. It doesn't happen to because someone sees it as

permission. It happens because I've got that. I'm a depressed kid with a thought in my mind about suicide. There's a suicide. Now it's clear. Now it's even more of the forefront of my mind and no one's talking to me about it. Right, right.

Speaker 3: [22:34](#) So I have nowhere to go, no one to talk to because this kid I knew or was that my school killed themselves from now, no one's talking about it, but now it's real. It just happened. Yep. The way to prevent suicide is to actually do the opposite of what people want to do. You have to talk about, yeah, you have to talk about suicide. If you're afraid that your child or your friend is depressed, you need to look him in the eye and say, look at it. Have you ever thought about hurting yourself? Have you thought about suicide? And it may very well, and by the way, that your thing is, they will answer yes if they have in a lot of cases. Yeah. And the next thing is that you know, it does happen. You thought about it, right. But the next step is do you have a plan?

Speaker 3: [23:18](#) Do you know what you're going to do? You just basically thought about suicide. Doesn't mean they're going to do it if they've a plan. Yes, I plan on doing it this way. That's when you have to get them to a hospital right away. But you have to open the conversation because they're afraid to talk about it. And when they tell you they've, maybe they found this like it's not, he can't freak out and go, oh my gosh, the world's falling man. I gotta get you to the hospital. You gotta you kind of just start, let them talk, let them talk. Don't chase them. Yes, maybe they need to get to a therapist. But the thing that people miss is that it's okay, not a therapist or a pill that's necessarily going to stop someone from killing themselves. What stops someone? It is then having someone to call at two o'clock in the morning.

Speaker 3: [24:09](#) Did they feel comfortable with that? They know is going to love them. Mm. And accept them for who they are and not judge. Cool. Yeah. Boy, that's big. That's a big dodgy. That's, Oh, and that's what, as parents say, when people say, how do we stop suicide? We have to parent better and differently than we have been. Yeah. Right. We're not connected as a society like we used to be. Like when I think about I, I'm 51 52 next month or something like that. Anyway, I come home and there's three or four channels on TV. I watched Gilligan's island. There's nothing more to watch. You end up fighting with your brother and sister and so your mom keeps you out of the house. You go play with your friends and you come back and then you're hanging out the dinner table and Saturday, Saturday, and Sundays maybe playing board games, but you wrote, you're connected as a family.

- Speaker 3: [25:02](#) Right. Because there was no phone, there wasn't a computer. You talked to people, your parents talk to you because they didn't have any else to do. Now we come home, parents are on the phone, kids are on the phone, kids are in the room, kids are on youtube, parents are watching something else planned, some stupid jewel game. Or where the hell are Catholic play on their phone, not paying attention to their kids and their kids are hurting and they don't know it. Yeah. So the way to reverse this whole idea of teen suicide is to have better connections and better community where we actually know what's going out of their kids. And we have open conversations about, you know, everything from Instagram to snapchat. Colin Kartchner, if you look up call incarcerator with a che and his Ted talk is an amazing Ted talk about why you should get rid of should cell phones.
- Speaker 3: [25:57](#) And it's specifically Instagram and snapchat because it does so much damage to a child in terms of feeling. And I mean look at, are we going to do that? No, we're probably not going to do that. Right? But here's what we're also not doing. We're not having the right conversation with their kids about, yes, you watched your friends on Instagram look like their lives are perfect, their lives aren't perfect. Let me tell you how it really works. We're not having those conversations. Partially because we think we feel inadequate watching our friends on snapchat, Instagram, everyone, everybody else's life is awesome. Yeah. Like I guarantee you follow me on Facebook. We're friends on Facebook by the way. It looks amazing. It's not a reason.
- Speaker 3: [26:40](#) Yeah. Right. Yeah. I just go travel the world. Have Fun outside. Yeah. But deep down, that's not what my lecture lead is. That's just how it shows up on Facebook. Right. But kids don't recognize that because I mean, we could spend hours talking about the dopamine effect and, and kids' brains out. They're not wired yet. They're not developed and how, how much damage we're doing by allowing them on on the instrument. But I can say that the big challenge, big, one of the big mistakes I made, John as a dad, well, I look back on it and there, there were a lot of them, right? Is, I gave this to my 12 year old son, right? I said like, I would never say that. I would never say, Hey Ryan, we live in an hour and a half from sandwich from the San Diego, Mexico board. Why don't you get down to Tijuana tonight?
- Speaker 3: [27:27](#) I'll drop you off. You spend the night in tea, a water Saturday night, you're, you're 13 come on dash crossed the border of six in the morning and tell me what you saw. I would never do that and nor would any parent out there, but what I did to just say, Hey, Hey Ryan, you're 12 the Internet is on your phone. You can

go anywhere in the world that you want to go see anything you want, all the deepest, darkest, worst things in the planet. All here have fun. I'll never even check to see which you'll look at because you're a good kid. You got good grades, you never do anything wrong. And I've got no reason to. So Ryan took this phone, not as computer where I opened up the door in his office or his room in this computers that I can see. It was on his computer.

Speaker 3: [28:15](#) He took his phone where I couldn't see it. Any research how to kill themselves. Wow. Jason, you, you mentioned earlier on in the conversation that there was a story to be told and I think you found it on a note. You mentioned. Tell my story. Yeah. What is it about the story that you can tell us? What do you think? He wanted us to know what part of that story? Right, so thought a lot of them, what that meant was we were going to do this, started this movie and I was talking to the, my partner's at the studio and there's like, oh, what's Ryan's story? I'm like, Ryan just turned 14 he didn't have much of the story. Right, right. There's no movie to be done on Ryan, but the story is, in my mind, it's not his story. It's everybody's story. It's about how a child, it'd be seemingly just fine, but deep down they're wrestling with things that we just don't know.

Speaker 3: [29:20](#) Yeah, and I didn't. That story is how all of our kids are feeling pressure like we never felt before. Yeah. Right. Because they've grown up in a world of Instagram, of snapchat, of access to everything in the world, which I didn't have. Like I was born in 1967 there were a bunch of wars that happened when I was a kid. I didn't even pay attention to even know existed. There are a whole bunch of times that the world was on the break. Yeah. I have no idea about because I was outside playing. I have like I was riding a bike. Right. These kids grew up in a world, but all that is in their face. Well they have the added pressure of being a kid, having all their friends see lives are better because they see him on Instagram everyday have all the world pressures they see everyday was around their phones.

Speaker 3: [30:10](#) I mean, it's just pressure, pressure, pressure on these guys, and by the way, not all of them are going to react poorly, but if they are a little unstable, if they're just a little emotionally not completely developed yet, they can go south and they can get anxious and they can do what Ryan did. Yeah. Which is why we need to have better communication and more communication with our kids. It's so important now than it ever was. Yeah. I mean, how do you stop teen suicide? It starts with the parents. It starts with how the relationship we have with our kids, the understanding of where kids are you can talk to, and it talks

about our kids being comfortable going, hey, it's okay to be sad. It's not okay to be sad all the time. Yeah. If you're sad all the time, there's probably a problem.

Speaker 3: [30:54](#) If you're thinking about suicide, it's not normal. It's normal. Maybe it crosses your mind, like what would that be like? Somebody would probably process people's minds almost everybody's mind, but to continually think about it like, wow, this is an option. No, that means there's something not right. There's something medically not right and we need to help get you right. Maybe you need medication. I'm not advocating for meditation but you need it. You need to go for a hike, get some fresh air or just reset your head. Yeah, but it's not normal and you shouldn't feel bad about or scared to tell people that you have. You should go, wow, I'm having these thoughts and I don't want to have these thoughts. What do I do though?

Speaker 3: [31:37](#) He guys want to take a second to tell you about our front row dads retreat. If you would value connecting with a brotherhood of likeminded and lighthearted guys who want to deepen their sense of purpose and meaning as fathers and within their families and to talk about and share the best practices and the strategies for ultimate family success, then this event might be for you. If you add value being around high performing guys without the big egos, guys that believe in being family, men with businesses and not businessmen with families, you might enjoy our front row dads retreat twice a year. We're getting together in person, small groups, cool locations, guest experts, and so much more for these events. We've now done this multiple times. It has sold out every single time and if you're excited about it, make sure to check it out@frontrowdads.com where you can apply for the next retreat now. Hi, one of the things you might be wondering is, does leaving my family make me a better dad or husband? The answer is for many of you, I know you travel a bunch, you do other things and the idea for this one is you have to retreat to advance. You have to take a step back

Speaker 2: [32:40](#) to gain that perspective so that we can go back and crush it within our families. This is the same concept that works in business where you take a moment, you think, you plan, you strategize, you work on your family so that you can be better in your family. If that all sounds good, check it out. Front row dads.com. You know, as you share all this Jason, um, and thanks for being so open and real and raw with us. I've realized as I talked with you, that that's the only way that you know how to be, which is good. I appreciate that a lot. You know, this idea of listening is so powerful. In fact, I was telling you that I just got

back from a couples retreat with about 12 other couples and we had counselors and I was part of the retreat. They talked a lot about listening was a big part of it, right?

Speaker 2: [33:23](#) And listening to our partners, really listening to our partners, like not listening to respond, but listening to understand. And then I couldn't help but think back to a time years ago, right when the Columbine shootings had happened and Marilyn Manson of all people was being interviewed by David Letterman. And I'll never forget this. David Letterman had said, if you could talk to those kids, what would you have said? And Marilyn Manson's response, I thought was so on point. He said, that's the problem. Everybody thinks it's what they're going to tell the kids. But he goes, instead of talking at them, I would've listened to them. I would want to ask questions and listened and I see that. I think that's what's missing is this opportunity to really talk and listen and ask questions and dig and I remember hearing that his answer, I remember thinking, yeah, that's it. And a lot of the solutions in life, you're a CEO of a big company.

Speaker 2: [34:22](#) You know I had a buddy who's a went into multibillion dollar company and I asked him, I said, what's your strategy as the CEO? He said, I'm going to first listen, so I'm not going to go in and start laying down the law. I'm going to go in and listen. I'm going to hear what people are saying. I want to get plugged into the community and I think about my marriage. It's the same thing when I think about my kids, it's the same thing. When I think about my biggest wounds as a kid, it's likely when I felt like my mom and dad weren't listening, right? Or even when they would listen supposedly. Listen, I, I have a great mom and dad, so let me not throw them under the bus completely, but they're human and they failed many times also. But I remember this one time my mom was listening and she said, how do you feel about that?

Speaker 2: [35:05](#) And I would start telling her how I would feel and she would start shaking her head, no. Did she go, no, you got it all wrong. We're not trying to do. And I was like, dude, you're not even doing it. Like you're supposed to listen. Not like, as I'm talking, shaking your head no. Like my feelings are wrong. No, you're wrong. You shouldn't feel depressed. You have all these things. You have this beautiful home, you have these friends, you're a star athlete, you're a whatever. Like parents can do that. They start listening to their kids and they start shaking their head no. Like, no, you're wrong. You should feel grateful. You shouldn't feel like, and then all of a sudden, right? Is that true? Like

- Speaker 3: [35:37](#) we make them wrong for feeling sad. Well, but here's the thing that
- Speaker 3: [35:41](#) we don't like. It's hard for me to understand, right? Because I've never really been truly depressed. But Ryan, if Ryan and I wouldn't, I imagine it this way, it's a sunny day and Ryan are looking in the sun blue guys, couple of clouds, a whole bunch of just, just a sunny, beautiful day. Ryan will see that day as cloudy and dreary. So you don't see when you're truly depressed, when you're truly have challenges, you don't see the sunny days as cloudy and dreary and you can, you can tell me if I'm depressed, you can say, look at their son and I will not see it. Correct. Correct. I will not see it. So when you're trying to fix me and tell me why my life is great, I don't see my life being great and you're not going to convince me of my life was great. Correct, correct.
- Speaker 3: [36:30](#) Yeah, exactly. And that's the problem. Like you look, I remember people asking you, how can Ryan have done that? He had a perfect life. Yeah, but not to Ryan. Yeah, exactly. Ryan was in pain. Ryan's only way out was to kill himself. And of course in your mind, if a parent out there is listening to this right now and is saying, I might have concerns about my child, and I know you've talked about this a little bit, I just want to reiterate some of what you've already said. If a parent is out there and they're like, I've concerns, what do they do? They have a child that's depressed that can't see the sun, right? That may be seemingly to the parent. Things are going pretty well. They might just be know, hey, just being a teenager. But now that after this conversation, they're like, I need to get a little more involved.
- Speaker 3: [37:18](#) Let's just imagine that part of the conversation is go talk, open up the dialogue and listen. What are the questions? Cause I can imagine, I'm trying to imagine Jason, where people are going to get stumped here and they go, I'm going to sit down and go, is everything cool? And then the parent's going to ask a couple of questions and be like, I'm out of questions. They're not talking to me. They're stonewalling me. Yeah, everything's fine. What do you do? So Mark Goulston, who's a psychiatrist, who's in our movie and a good buddy of mine, we're working on a book together. He has what he calls the seven words. If you looked at Mark Goulston, the seven words, do you spell his last name? G. H. O. U. L. S. T. O. N. Wilson. Got it. Mark. We'll say this. Seven words. Sit down. Say Your, you're my kid. I sit down. Say I'm going to give you seven words.

- Speaker 3: [38:05](#) I just want you to tell me if you've ever felt any of these seven words in the last couple of weeks. Hmm. Anger, embarrassment, frustration, sadness, happiness. You can pick the seven words, right? But right there. Okay. Have you ever felt any seven words? It's like, is it yes or no question. And by the way, everyone has felt that way in the last couple of weeks. Yeah. It felt kind of like that. Okay. Well, which one? Sadness. Tell me about where did you feel sadness. It allows a reset of the conversation instead of saying, are you okay? How do you feel? You're fine. Yeah, I'm fine. Have you ever felt this way? In the last couple of weeks. Tell me, tell me why you felt that way and just let them talk. By the way, Mark is one of those experts. He had some like 200 cases of some of the worst examples of people who tried to kill themselves multiple times.
- Speaker 3: [39:06](#) And in his career he lost zero. Hmm. Because of his empathetic way of listening to people. Okay. And that's what it really comes down to. If you want to stop some, if you want to protect your kids, you have to become a deep empathetic listener. Yeah. And just let them talk. Yeah. Try to feel the way they feel. It's okay to feel the way they feel. They just want to talk about, they just want to share how they feel and you've got to ask them, have you thought about hurting yourself? And if you have, I need to know. You can't see a straight in to say the word. You can't be afraid to say, have you thought about some stuff? Right, right. I didn't say it. I should in your research here, and I know you said you're not the expert, you're talking to experts in your looking for info here.
- Speaker 3: [40:00](#) Have you found that, is there an age when this becomes like on the chart of, hey you, let's look at the last thousand suicides that have occurred. Is there an age when it is becoming far more likely that somebody will follow through on those feelings and their plan? Is it 10 11 13 15 like do we know that info? So you asked earlier what is just you're talking, I don't think I answered the question. It's younger and younger, right? I don't have the exact stats, but go on Google and you'll find 12 year olds who have killed themselves when I was growing the level when you were growing up. It's happening now because of this. Yeah. Crusher and all the things that they're, their minds are not ready to take on the world. Yeah, exactly. They've done the world. Yeah. Right. Then once we got to Dalton enough to take on all the pressures of the world, but we've said, here are all the pressures of the world.
- Speaker 3: [41:04](#) So you have to treat them more as adults and less as kids and the fact that they're seeing the adult world. Right. I was kept in a little bubble. I didn't see all the atrocities of the wars that took

place where I grew up, which I can't remember what the hell they were. Right. Yeah. Right. I was kept in a cute little bubble. These kids aren't in a cute little bubble, so if you want to treat them like they're 12 years of age because you think they're 12 and they don't know anything, they know a hell of a lot more than you think they know. Yeah.

Speaker 2: [41:33](#) If it's on, if they have a phone, if they have ashes, the Internet, they know everything.

Speaker 2: [41:37](#) Yeah. So if you don't think they do, they do. And then some not all aren't going to deal with them that world in the right way. Yeah. I mean we talked about this on previous dad goes where you're talking about like exposure to the world. So my son's eight at the time and some kid in his class has an older brother with an iPad. Right. And his older brother exposes him to porn. So this kid comes to school and says, guys, guess what I found out about right and teaches all the other eight year old kids in one 30 minute session in the afternoon, what he saw online go, here's your assignment, everybody go home, get your parents iPads and search these keywords. And literally at eight years old, right, they're going home with assignments, trying to come back and report what they had seen. And you know, we find out very, very quickly and we all get together as parents and talk about how to address this.

Speaker 2: [42:35](#) But you think about how easy, like I remember probably being 10 or 11 and stumbling upon a playboy magazine in the woods right behind my house one time and being like, what's that right? That was my first exposure. Not nearly as traumatic, right? Or I don't know what word I want to use to describe it, but you know, a different experience stumbling upon a playboy magazine where you see a spot, a couple of boobs versus googling porn and seeing what shows up but gets a massively different experience. Absolutely. And I understand people always kind of try to bring this back to, oh my gosh, porn, why don't you Google how to kill yourself. Yeah. Right. Because that's really more of an issue. Yup. Kinsey were searching porn or not necessarily the same kids are going to kill themselves. Maybe they are the kids who are searching how to kill yourself. Well, how to kill myself or how to commit suicide. That's a lot more serious than the can searching porn. Yeah, 100% yeah, for sure. I agree with you 1000000% on that. My thought on that is, yeah, you're talking about the phone being the window to the world and my first thought about that was how easily accessible this is for my eight year old and it speaks to all the different things that they're being exposed to and have access to right

away. So I must say important, right? And good for an eight year old.

Speaker 2: [44:04](#) I'm saying there's even scarier things when you give them access to the Internet. That's right. Yeah. I mean, look at that. I just, my mission, just to make sure parents realize that the world we grew up in, there's not the same world or kitchen. Yeah. And some can handle it just fine, but the stats show that a lot can't. Yeah. And if you want to stop or protect your child from dying a suicide, it's not somebody else's responsibility to do it. It's yours. Yeah. No, your kid. Talk to your kid. Have the open conversations. Don't be afraid to have the tough conversations. Have them because I didn't. Yeah. Well Jason, I'm, you know, it breaks my heart for your loss and for your family and my heart goes out to you, man. And I just want to thank you so much for stepping up and for sharing the story, being interested in finding a solution here.

Speaker 2: [44:55](#) Being committed to finding a solution here is probably a better way of saying it. Choose life.org is the website. Choose life.org I hope everybody goes and checks it out. I hope everybody can walk away from this interview as I have with better tools and resources to handle this. My big takeaway today is to talk and to listen and to be engaged in this process and to be more aware and by being aware, I can perhaps alternate outcome, which I'm very grateful for Jason. So I think I would not be exaggerating to say that this is a lifesaving conversation that we've had today and I'm very, very grateful for that. I know many other men out there listening are going to be grateful for this conversation if they want to go further. Choose life.org is the one step correct? Yeah, I mean it's a good starting point.

Speaker 2: [45:43](#) I've got a Ted talk on, they're going to throw out of union talk. The movie comes out spring and you can do your own research. Mark Goulston, Colin Karsner with a k, all great resources, all great things. The good thing is that more and more people are talking about this. Yeah. It's coming bigger and bigger and bigger topic and it needs to be, yeah. Not just to our kids, although that's what I'm focusing on of ourselves or veterans of suicide is at an all time high in every sector. Yeah. And it used to change and it changes because as a community we come together and care more individually and we connect more based a face in person holding hands, giving people hugs in less time on Facebook. Yeah. Jason, my last question to you and then we can wrap up here. As your family is suffered a great loss and this tragedy obviously has given now birth to choose life, which is a going to save many lives in the years ahead. I know you'll fulfill your mission of ending teen suicide. I think I

look into your eyes man, and I see a very committed man, was very resourceful. He's on a mission and that inspires me. My question, if I bring it back to the practical at home, Jason Reed, what's changed at home for you in the way that you engage with your kids now going forward? How are you different dad? What is your practical application of all this look like now? Well, I like to think I'm close.

- Speaker 2: [47:20](#) Not that daddy was thought he wasn't. I think I'm a little, I'm a lot more vulnerable with them. They see me cry a lot more. They all work with me in some monks. Cassie, another
- Speaker 3: [47:30](#) my, my oldest works at one of my companies. My daughters is up all our social media for choose life.org bye. 17 year olds working on their projects with me. So I feel like I have more conversations with them being from closer and we spend time together. But yeah, I'm still nervous. Yeah.
- Speaker 2: [47:48](#) Jason, thanks for being real man. As I said before, this is a heavy conversation but when we need to have, and I feel it was really honoring to Ryan to all those that struggle and I think you also gave us some real actionable ideas that things we can do and I appreciate it man. I'm very much, if there's anything we can do as a front row dads, brotherhood, we're happy to help support you on this mission. But thanks for making time for us today man. Really appreciate this.
- Speaker 3: [48:15](#) I'll just add one more thing. If you don't mind John's, you're listening to this and you feel that if you've thought about yourself and you're thinking about it now and you thought it, showing yourself just to understand that that's not the way it's supposed to be and please take the time to talk to somebody. That's not the way your life still stand. You may feel like it happens. Really not that you need to talk to somebody. I know that people do care for you.
- Speaker 2: [48:43](#) Thanks Jason. Great message to end on. Really appreciate it my friend. I hope to uh, continue this dialogue in the future
- Speaker 3: [48:49](#) extra.
- Speaker 2: [48:52](#) Hey guys, if you haven't already done so, go right now to front row dads.com/facebook and join the conversation that's happening right now on line. We designed this group for guys who are entrepreneurial in their thinking that are high performing guys with low egos. We're looking for the dads that believe in teaching their kids how to think, solve problems and

be real leaders. We're looking for guys who believe in being family, men with businesses, not businessmen with families. We're looking for the fathers who have great knowledge, but also believe that they have so much more to learn. And we're looking for men who want to add value by sharing their wisdom and those that are willing to ask the questions that we all need and want answers to. That's [front row dads.com/facebook](https://frontrowdads.com/facebook) or simply go to Facebook, type in front row dads and you'll get to our group and what we put in there, links to all the podcasts and videos and other resources that you can't get access to anywhere else except for in this group. We want to give you the best ideas to help you with your marriage, balancing work and family life communication strategies with your spouse and also your children, travel ideas and even suggestions on the latest gear that would save you time and help you be more effective. We've got updates on upcoming events and so much more. Go right now to [front row dads.com/facebook](https://frontrowdads.com/facebook) and join the conversation. I look forward to connecting with you there. Okay.