

- Speaker 1: [00:00](#) Forgiveness is a great gift to give to somebody else, but it's actually probably the greatest gift you can give to yourself because the person who's carrying it every single day as you, and the one thing we don't want to do is because we're so goddamn fucking stubborn, is we don't want to forgive people who have purchased. And all we're doing is by not doing that, we're carrying that pain every day and I believe we're translating that and transferring that energy into our children, into the dynamic with our family.
- Speaker 2: [00:23](#) All right, gentlemen, welcome to the front row dads podcast. I'm your host, John Vroman. This is the show for family men with businesses, not businessmen with families. My guest today is Philip McKernan, who I first heard speak at a mastermind talk event and it was from that date. I thought, I really need to get to know this guy. Uh, which I would imagine was the case for a lot of people in that room because I've continued to see his name show up on many stages and in in many areas of life that keeps coming back to, Hey, pay attention to what Phillip is saying, including his most recent work with one last talk, something that really hits home for me as the founder of a charity called front row foundation, which 14 years ago we started with a couple of friends sitting around the kitchen table asking how to make a difference.
- Speaker 2: [01:08](#) And since then, uh, we have been working on putting people in the front row of their favorite event, uh, who are experiencing a life threatening illness to create this incredible moment and oftentimes in fact, 50% of our recipients, that is their last day off out. So I was particularly interested in Phillip's work and then when I found out he was a dad, I was immediately drawn in, been married for about 15 years, has to great kids. And something interesting about Phillip, if none of that catches your attention, that that is interesting, which I think all of that is interesting. Chased and nearly killed by a bull elephant, Philip. Is that right? That's true. All right man. Maybe we'll get there and maybe we won't, but uh, welcome to the show, man. I'm so glad to have you.
- Speaker 1: [01:51](#) Yeah, likewise. I've heard a lot about your work and again, as I said before we came on air, I really respect what you're doing in the world. It's, it's really, really needed. So thank you.
- Speaker 2: [01:59](#) Wow, that's awesome. I want to get right into your book because this is something that, uh, I know you're extremely passionate about this topic. It's making a huge difference in the world. I want to know specifically though, and feel free to add context where is needed here about what the book is, but I

think one last talk does a really good job in the title of, of, of giving you a lot of it away, but I want to know what about, yeah, book [inaudible] impacted your family directly in writing that, right? How has it changed you as a father and as a husband? Let's start there.

Speaker 1: [02:34](#) Well, it required me to do my own one last talk, which was hard and brought me back to my past meant some of my struggles as a kid, which then my kids got to experience stop by conversation. It also invited my wife to share her one last talk and a you it brought up something that was very old for her. She was, she was raped. So she came up publicly and shared that, um, in the last couple of years. Um, one of the things was also interesting is that her extended family didn't receive that very well. They've told her she should never spoken about it, that she should hidden that story, um, that they were afraid that our daughter Maggie would hear about that. And you know, at some point in our future, and my wife's response to that as she wants, uh, our daughter to know about that in time.

Speaker 1: [03:14](#) So it's had a massive effect in our, in our family. I've never actually thought about that question quite frankly, but it's hard to really, it's, I think what it's done is it hasn't forced conversations. It's created an environment where we can have conversations about perhaps we wouldn't have addressed historically. And also our kids go to one last talk and some of the talks to the nature of the invitation and the challenging nature of one last talk is they've heard some fairly deep vulnerable, dramatic stories. Do you want to call them that? And yet, I don't apologize for one second. By allowing or bringing our kids to that environment, it's opened our kids' hearts and their minds to stuff that I certainly wasn't exposed to as a child.

Speaker 2: [03:50](#) How have they responded to that? And what type of conversations have been sparked by, you know, uh, their experiences of witnessing these messages?

Speaker 1: [03:58](#) Well, I'll give you one example and again, I'm a little bit raw today. As I said, you know, coming on air because we have a family member who's passing away and I just had a conversation with my kids. So unlikely to get pretty emotional at any point, which I'm happy to do ordinarily. But I think today is a little bit more more amplified. Uh, I'll give you a live example where we had a one last talk event in Boulder and I put a man on stage who had committed murder and he basically had certainly stretched even my own as much as I like to think I've worked a lot of myself, I think I have a ton of work still to do my own judgements and so on. And he certainly stretched a lot

of those, those boundaries from eight. Uh, he shared his talk, he didn't want to try to justify his behavior, but he simply give, it gave us context about his life and how he got lost along the way and ended up taking somebody else's life.

Speaker 1: [04:42](#) But the shame in which this man held himself there that did the tremendous overwhelming guilt and the undeserving nature of his life and his existence was evidenced through his, just his whole demeanor. And I think one last talk allowed him to let go of a lot of that is going is going on to write a book about his life. But my then nine year old, maybe even ACE, he was just gone. Nine. Hmm. I didn't prompt him. I didn't know Jim. I didn't tell him. I didn't send him when this man Quan walked off the stage and he came up to me, my nine year old walked past may walk straight up to him and said, I loved your talk. And hugged him. Wow. [inaudible] start crying. And it was just, and that was um, like it was, wasn't like rehearsed or anything. I didn't know. I didn't even ask him to, you know, talk to Quan. And I think it is allowed him to see the world in a more complete way to see our fundamental flaws to begin to experiment with empathy and compassion at a much younger age than perhaps some kids are exposed to.

Speaker 2: [05:37](#) You work with a lot of men who I think are very accomplished and women too. But I was specifically thinking about the majority of our audience, although to my surprise, we have quite a few female listeners to the show. All right. But how has, how do you feel or how do you think that the men that you work with, the very successful, uh, that you coach with and consult with? To what degree does privilege raising their kids? Like what you just said was what I took away from it. What I heard was this idea of perspective, right? Uh, learning about the world that's maybe not so, uh, perfectly aligned. We spent a lot of time ask ourselves, how do I line up the dominoes for my kids so that this works? Um,

Speaker 1: [06:23](#) does that mean, yeah, no, 100%. I mean, to me it's about enlightenment. Nothing entitlements and it's, and I think one of the greatest fears for a lot of men in business, they're worried about this over just creating this, this sense of, of overwhelming entitlement. Even though they've worked very hard to create what they create. Do they starve? Their children have that? Do they give it to their children or did they try to hold it back? And it's a constant battle for a lot of them. I all I can tell you is what we've done and we are fundamentally flawed. Human beings are fundamentally flawed parents and my greatest parenting advice as obnoxious John as this sounds, and please just give me a second to wrap it up. As a matter what you do in this world,

you're going to F your kids up. What I mean by that is it doesn't mean you give up on them.

Speaker 1: [07:00](#) Would you let go of the perfectionism you let go of trying to, you know, stop repeating history and making sure that you never repeat history cause neither is authentic. It's about can you land in the middle and say, okay, what is my truth? What is the path that I need to create? The greatest thing that we have done as we brought our kids to an orphanage in Peru and we ended up building an orphanage and we call it an entrepreneurial orphanage because it's self-sustainable and we created a bakery and it's all, you know, looks after itself and bringing the kids down to that environment. Just, and it might sound like a very simple story, but I'll never forget the first day we're there. There's a young kid called Jericho, he's gotten, he's got not one word of English other than I think hello. And our son Charlie hasn't got one word of Spanish and Charlie, he got knocked over by one of our clients was a given grow trip retreat if you like.

Speaker 1: [07:46](#) And um, you get the deck pretty hard. And he was crying and I went down and I was holding him and the next minute we're only there like four hours or so. Um, the next minute I could feel, this person I told was my wife and it was Jericho and come over and he had his arm around shorty and I stood up and Charlie was age at the time. I said, Charlie, your buddies here. And Charlie looked up, tears rolling down his face and turned away from me and lent into this young kid, Jericho had just mashed this young little orphan from Peru. And I walked away. And of course I'm a mess. I started crying. It was one of the most beautiful moments I'd ever seen in my life. And I feel that dash

Speaker 1: [08:19](#) that probably is one of the most extraordinary things ever done with our kids. And the conversations that come out of that, we're staggering. We do this exercise called the five happiest days, which by the way, highly recommend for any of your clients because your kid's five happiest days. What was change depending on who they are. And you ask them what their happiest days are and it'll tell you a lot about who they are. And then you ask them why. And when we did this exercise months later, Charney says, that was one of the happiest days of my life. And I said, why? And he goes, I always remembered that [inaudible] Jericho and kicking a soccer ball. I mean nature and Bryce, he tried, he couldn't understand one word he was saying and, and knew what he was talking about and he goes, it didn't matter dad. I felt closer to him. He didn't use those terms but he talked about it. So to me, providing an opportunity for kids but

not Sydney gold. Oh look what they have local. You know what you no, they don't have, we do have this lecturing, forceful controlling teaching, which doesn't work. I believe it's just providing the environment and allow it to be what it needs to be and allow your kids to see your vulnerability in those environments because that inspires them to ask questions that they didn't even know how to ask in advance.

Speaker 2: [09:28](#) I think a lot of guys want to take their kids on trips like you just described. How did that come together? I, I'd imagine, cause I'm asking myself the question, I'm thinking, Oh, when am I going to do a trip? Where am I going to do a trip? We need a trip like that, Philip, you know? And how did that come to be for you and how did you decide that that's where to go and that your kids were at the right age? Take us back a little bit into why did you do that and how did you pull it off?

Speaker 1: [09:52](#) So I was living in Ireland. I wasn't very happy. I was building a business. Um, I told myself that everything was going great. A lot of data points to prove that. And what I was doing was doing, what a lot of entrepreneurs do and a lot of entrepreneurial mans do, is they stay busy. And the tell themselves a great story. You're there caveats that'll use a part of that was I was saying, when I build this business to a point X, then I will have, be able to go and do Y. I didn't know what, why was not, not my why, even though that was the, the kind of the source of it all. And eventually I went to Sri Lanka. Uh, it was one year after the tsunami. We didn't, we just said that's our best way of giving back to a community that had been devastated.

Speaker 1: [10:31](#) Long story short is a wonderful little nuanced story around us. We ended up in an orphanage. We were on prepared, so we didn't buy gifts and we didn't have an opportunity to get cash. I wish them to gift us. And of course that's the point where we do these give and grow retreats. We basically, we basically asked people not to bring money, not to bring gifts, that the gift we're giving is the gift of time, of connection to these orphans who desperately need to be connected and held and, and, and just holding space for them. And that was probably one of the greatest days and capitalist from my life because when we come back off that John, we did the five happiest days. Ironically, that was our second happiest day, each, myself, my wife. But we did this years later and my wife says, I didn't know that was one of your happiest days.

Speaker 1: [11:13](#) And I said, well, neither did I because we never talked about it. And then we said, okay, how do we do? The whole idea is how

do you create more of those days? It's not the wedding day, it's what it represents. And we basically from that created a one offer trace, which ends up being multiple retreats. And then we did a documentary on the back of those and then I'd always been drawn to Peru. And then I was down in Peru doing a given grow retrace and I heard about this orphanage. We went to visit it and it was in a shitty part of this dump of an area they had no outdoor play, a place to hang out and then combine that with this horrific story. I heard about these, this, these kids been locked into an illegal mining campus, sex slaves. And it was one of those stories.

Speaker 1: [11:54](#) And as much as I'd love this, this is kind of, I'm ashamed of this. I wanted to pretend I didn't hear the story. I wants to put my hands in my ears and pretend I didn't hear it because once you hear something you can't unhear it. And I had to do something. So we ended up building an orphanage. We took these kids out of this dump of a city. We took these girls, we housed them all in this amazing place with streams, rivers, mountains, and it's just beautiful. And I say we, I don't mean just myself, my wife, our community got behind it and we raised some money. And so that's how it happened. It was kind of accidental on purpose if you like.

Speaker 2: [12:25](#) Wow. And are you doing these trips still?

Speaker 1: [12:28](#) Well, funny enough, we haven't done one for about three years. And you won't believe this. And this is, so yesterday was my birthday and I don't really talk about birthdays a lot. Don't really celebrate birthdays. And we went to a little restaurant. Well thank you. So we went to this at a restaurant called Browsery 10 10 and on brows at the restaurant there was paper so you can draw. And my kids said, dad, when are we going back to Peru? And I said, Charlie, I don't know. And I said, you know what? I think we need to go back. And he said, well, are we going to do the retreat? We did the last said no. I said he's what's, what's emerging? He didn't say what's emerging. He says, what are you thinking and what's emerging for me and for my wife is we want to do a, because we've had kids with their dads and one kid with his mom and we want to do a parent child experience and we want to go to this orphanage. We want to go to a special needs orphanage and we want to do one of those trips. And we literally had my phone here at showed you. We literally outlined the, the the week long experience yesterday. We don't know when we're going to pull the trigger on it yesterday in the restaurant.

Speaker 2: [13:25](#) Oh man.

- Speaker 1: [13:25](#) So maybe the end of probably the end of next year.
- Speaker 2: [13:28](#) Well and it's possible somebody might see this video clip somewhere. But for those of you who can't see this right now though, I also want to acknowledge Philip, the energy that just shifted in youth, the smile that you have and how different that is, um, at, and just, I just wanted to bring that to light because I think that that is indicative of how that experience has changed you and already looking forward and being hopeful
- Speaker 1: [13:52](#) for, for what's to come. Can I share a story about that very quickly and I'll tell you, this is why. So we did a one last talk and I think this is such a huge key for all parents, myself included. Mmm. Particularly for fathers actually with respect to your, to your female listeners is we did a one last talk a number of years ago, this 15 year old young man called Matthew. He'll, he'll stay in my life imprinted into my life forever. And I never asked this question, but I just looked at him and I said, what's your number one takeaway today? Matthew said, it's great to know that adults have problems too. And I think that I certainly fall into this trap, that thinking that the problems that I have, the cashflow problems, that the business problems, the mortgage problems, that whatever problems I have in my life are so much more significant than my, what my children are suffering and, and is one of the most catastrophic mistakes.
- Speaker 1: [14:39](#) Cause when we don't honor the problems our kids have, which are huge to them, we're basically saying directly or indirectly every single day you're, you're not that important. You're not that, you're not enough. So long story short, and his dad came to this [inaudible], this trip and Peru, fast forward the whole thing and I pulled him aside before we went back into the classroom at the end and I said, Matthew has said, if you ever want to speak about anything, you can talk to me. I've, I've, I have permission from your father. He'll be so happy and he's comfortable. You chatting to me or you can share something in the group. And he says, I'm ready to share something in the group. And we'd go back into this room and I'll never forget it. We're sitting around a circle and a few people you probably know were in the room, um, Denmark, Tyler was there enough, you know Dan and sure. Beautiful. Yeah. If you shoot beautiful human beings. And I said, Matthew, would you like to share anything? He said, yeah, I just, I want to know why. No matter what I do, it's never enough and why I constantly think I'm a piece of shit. And I looked across and his father
- Speaker 1: [15:35](#) just devastated like, Oh Lord, but

Speaker 2: [15:40](#) [inaudible]

Speaker 1: [15:40](#) [inaudible] would, it made sense to him. And then

Speaker 1: [15:43](#) by him sharing that, like I looked around, I was a complete mess job. I couldn't like hold my shit together and I'm, I'm meant to be the retreat leader. Everyone was crying. Everyone in the room, every single human being in that room was crying. And then we were able to sit down with them and help them through this and work through it and give them some feedback and what we witnessed in him. And he walked away and he says, I'll never forget that date that the rest of my life. And I'm not saying himself and his father are perfect now, but they saw each other in a completely different light away from the busyness, the business that his father owns and the distractions and his other siblings. And it was just magical. So that that kind of drives a lot of, a lot of the thought process about going back.

Speaker 2: [16:23](#) You do incredible work with people. That requires a tremendous amount of listening. I, I would, I'm projecting, I'm not quoting you right, but at least from my perspective, you really need to be a student. You really need to be listening. You need to be asking questions, and you also need to have, develop your own thoughts so that when you know that you've thought about things, I mean, I know that even in your bio it talks about the philosophy that you have towards life, you know, um, what I'm curious about is how have you learned over time? What are, you know, to cultivate those breakthrough moments betweenD w within people. And maybe it's within the dad, maybe it's within the data and the child, but that you, you know, you're creating a space, you're, you're designing a container that's allowing these things to occur. So if I'm trying to bring this to the living room, to the gym, to the car of the listeners, I'm asking myself, what can we learn from your incredible work in the world, Philip, about how you've listened, how you've led, how you facilitated, how you design, um, [inaudible]. And a lot of that I know is coming, you know, it could be work that you've created in your professional space and then brought home. It could also be work that, you know, you've, you've found to be working in your personal life that maybe is even influenced your business. But what are those tactics, the techniques or the skills that allow for these moments to occur?

Speaker 1: [17:49](#) Right? And again, it's not about being pedantic and splitting hairs or even correcting, it's just more presenting this idea that it's, it's not even listening. It's hearing. So there's a lot of people that are listening in the world, but are we truly hearing and

hearing to me is this sense that goes beyond just the listening to the words. It's about suspending your own interests. It's about trusting that that person has the answer. It's about letting go of the need to provide an answer for them and depriving of them [inaudible] them of this opportunity of getting to their own individual truth and their own answer. And it's about going beyond the words and it's about trying to feel what the person is saying. And my wife has always said, she said, you are, I don't care what anyone else says. She says, your greatest gift is your ability to listen.

Speaker 1: [18:34](#)

And I never really took it on. And I'm working with a group of leaders at the moment and they're fascinated by that, this idea of, of hearing and we're working on that and it's about creating a sacred space. But the one thing I know, and I've always known this intellectually, John, but I never allowed it to drop to a deep intuitive place. And that is when someone comes to my work, they truly do have the answer whether they like it or not. And a lot of them don't like the idea because they're gone. Don't you fucking tell me I don't. I have the answer. I've spent three years trying to chase my passion, three years trying to work on my relationship with my kid. Don't you tell me the reason I'm here is because I want the answer when you're in the wrong room, if you want the answer from me cause you know on good, but I'm not that good.

Speaker 1: [19:10](#)

And [inaudible] suspending and your ego desperately wants to have the answer to wrap it in a bow to say something philosophical. The lands opens people up. And on the odd occasion, I might say something that lands 90% of the time, I don't even remember what I say because I do believe, uh, not very religious, but I'm very spiritual. I do believe I'm nothing more than a vessel, nothing more than a vessel. Like I really believe, and I lose this sometimes my ego takes over and says, no, no, no, you're the fucking man. McKernan you are the shit you got you. You have no idea how good you are. And then I bring myself back to this place and go, you know, I'm a curtain. You're just a guy who's deeply insecure. And the one thing I want to say is I do not want to give the impression because I do what I do, that I have the perfect household.

Speaker 1: [19:52](#)

I said something on a podcast recently, first time I've ever said it publicly, and I was ashamed to say it, but it's absolutely true. And by saying it allowed me to address it even better is I often have more patience with my clients that I do with my own children. So people sometimes go, Oh my God, you must be the most extraordinary father in the world because of the work you do. The work I do almost in some way, shape or form, has an

Achilles heel to it because I live, I, I do believe to my best awareness and other people can judge this. I live what I preach. And I think most people who know me would say that absolutely true. They don't like what I live. I don't like who I am that's different. But they say no, the guy on the stage and the guy on behind the stage is exactly the same person. But it is a struggle when you're giving so much of yourself to the world to come home and to have that capacity and empathy and compassion when you come home as well. And that is a real balance. And I, and I worry about that and I'm frightened by that and excited by that all at the same time.

Speaker 2: [20:50](#)

Whoa. Well, you know, I, when you said that I thought to myself, Oh, I can completely relate to that completely. And it hit me one day in particular when I was ordering a coffee and I was, and I had just left a fight with my wife and I and I, I immediately was super nice to this person at behind the counter and ordering a coffee. And I'm like, why am I so nice to this person? And so means my wife in this exact day, you know, this moment of time in the universe, you know, why is that? Boy. I really appreciate that, Phillip. Thank you. How do you deal with [inaudible]? Well, I don't know what the word is to use, right? But the areas where you want to improve as a father, where you feel you might be falling short, where you are. If I get, don't worry they're failing or learning, but when you are not hitting the Mark, how do you bounce back from that? How do you get past beating yourself up or right. How do you recover from those moments?

Speaker 1: [21:48](#)

Well, number one is, is there's a lot of people unfortunately in the coaching space that don't continue to work on themselves externally in terms of seeking guidance from other people. So I do that every single year. I'll go and do some police one type of immersive retreat or something, whether I get a lot from it or just reminded I'm on the right path or just blows me open and goes, Holy shit McKernan you're not as, not as great as you thought you were. So I do that. So I do that externally. I think my wife keeps me accountable, but I think, you know, the one thing that I've become pretty decent dash is that when I fall short is to be able to have that conversation with my kids without loading all my emotional baggage on them and understanding where the trigger points come from. But the thing you touched on there is without beating yourself up, that's the single biggest thing that I've had to work on in my life.

Speaker 1: [22:30](#)

Because most entrepreneurial men, particularly that I work with, simply don't like who they are. And they think workaholism is the problem. There are workaholics because

they're trying to escape something else in their lives. They're, they're trying to escape themselves or trying to stay busy so you don't have to face themselves in the mirror or whatever. Um, one of the biggest challenges I've had is this, is this, this idea of just [inaudible] really just disliking myself and I have a degree of disdain for the person that I was, the things that I've done, the person I never became, and that has come in. And I feel that the more I chip away at that [inaudible], it'll never go away. And the idea that you think you can get rid of us [inaudible] is the illusion. That's where you come from. You're, you're, you've gone from awareness to complacency. And the more I chip away in that, the more compassion shows up for South and other people, the more capacity, the more I can say, I don't know more, the more I can look at my kids and just say, guys, I'm just flawed. I've got a wrong, I apologize. So the speed in which I apologize, I'm not just intellectually, but really deeply allows me to escape the berating, kind of like judgment that I have towards myself. So that's probably something that I do pretty well.

Speaker 2: [23:38](#) All right. I'm going to look for a little personal coaching here, Philip. So, uh, I'm gonna, I'm going to give you something that hit me this morning. I was meeting with my band. So in, in front row dads, we have groups of men, about four people, we call them a band. So it plays, play on words for both band of brothers and literally like rock band. Everybody brings something new to the table and create something better as a collective whole. So I'm with Mike, my band mates and we're having a conversation and it leads me to realizing that I, I want to apologize to tiger, my 10 year old and I don't want to apologize for something that was done today or yesterday. I want to apologize for how I've been as a dad many years over the 10 years of his life. And interestingly for you and I both, I think people have come to me and said, yeah, you must be the [inaudible] best in the world, right?

Speaker 2: [24:31](#) You know, with all your experience. And because they usually see the version of me that's like on stage giving a keynote. And so I've been really embarrassed by a lot of my decisions and behaviors and being on the road so much and losing my cool with my kids. I'm curious as to how you might help me come up to the conclusion of what should that apology look like? Cause I have beliefs around what an apology is, but what would your framework, how might you approach that? What in your world would be the framework for a good apology?

Speaker 1: [25:01](#) Okay. So number one is I don't have a standard framework and I know you're not looking for that necessarily because of the

framework. And I appreciate the question and I'm not trying to, you know, escape it, but just bear with me. I have, I would have probably four more questions than any type of framework around sir [inaudible] what we do, these emotional solutions, um, we're often bringing kind of an intellectual solution to what is an emotional problems through the word someone says, Oh, writing the letter of apology and, and burn it or write it, read it to him and then burn it and, and then suddenly you go, you have, you know, it's out there. It's done. And it's nothing more than an intellectual exercise, which I know you're not looking for a place to throw that out there to me is, let's just say you and I were having a call and we're talking about this.

Speaker 1: [25:41](#)

I'd ask you to explain it to me, to bring me back to some of those moments. The decision making that led to you getting on a plane and going and doing a keynote rather than rolling in the grass of your kids. The practicality of that, the guilt that you were facing, where did that come from? What were you trying to achieve in those moments? What were you running from? What were you trying to, was it your ego? What was it like to really dissect what you were going through? I would forget about your son for the moment with respect. It's ironic. Your son is 10 my son is 10 Charlie's 10 years old and I would forget about your songs. I don't think this is about your son right now. I think it's, it can be about him. I would go back and ultimately my, my destination is not, when do you need to apologize to yourself or when do you need to begin to really forgive yourself for those things?

Speaker 1: [26:22](#)

And most people, when I, when I present that they go, Oh no, no, I forgive myself. No, I did an exercise three years ago. I went to therapy six times and whatever, and I'm not trying to diminish therapy or those exercises, but when you think it's gone, Oh no, I've dealt with dash. That's when you're, you're lost. So to me it's about starting closer to home. What is the guilt that you hold? What is the shame you hold? How do we reduced, diminish a little bit of that. Let go of even more of that and then live with the rest. That's the key. How do I live with my choices? Because these, these books that are written like get rid of fear, get rid of guilt. Kittle shame. It's bullshit. It's absolute bullshit. You can address and diminish and loosen some of its grip on you, but you've got to learn to live with those chunks that are alive.

Speaker 1: [27:05](#)

So it's about self forgiveness. It's about processing some of that. And then you know, here's my [inaudible] I, she was going to say 99% of the time, that's not true. 100% of the time when you deal with that, and then I say, okay John, you want to go back to

your son? No, no, I'm good. I know exactly what I need to say to my son. I know exactly when I need to say to him and I know exactly how to say it to him. And it comes from [inaudible]. It comes from such deep part of you that is beyond any thought process on the on, on, on the surface. That's how I deal with it because, and again, not trying to be a smart ass, but a lot of people are asking and and, and this is not your question, but a lot of people are asking for like bandaids and I'm patching stuff. I don't want to patch shit up. I had a couples retreat we did in the mountains last week and a couple said, how do you have conversations without one or other person getting defensive? Like I'm not going to ask that question. They go, excuse me. I said I refuse to answer that question.

Speaker 1: [28:02](#)

All right guys, I want to take just a quick second to talk about something really important now and know you're listening to the show because you want to level up your game at home, but if you want to take the next step within front row dads, I want you to do something today which is text the words front row dads to three one four, six, six, five one seven, six, seven three separate words. Front row dads, it's not case sensitive. I want to send you a few things right away. First I want to send you a recording from a masterclass that I recorded with my good friend and author of the miracle morning. Howe L rod is a father of two amazing human beings and we recorded a show called the five habits of a front row. Dad, I want to send that to you because I think it is well worth listening to.

Speaker 1: [28:39](#)

Second, I want to give you 45 minutes of a mind blowing conversation that I had with a woman named Kim and NAMI and the show is titled have better sex, hugely popular. This will rock your world and likely your spouses as well. But I want you to have access to this information. Number three, I want to give you access to 1300 other front row dads inside of our Facebook group where you can ask any question, share any win and give any resource that you think could be valuable to the community. And lastly, I want to include you in one email I send out each week. It's short, it's to the point and I pull from my life experiences along with the insights for more than 135 members of our brotherhood. I want to give you the best of the best in each email, so all you have to do is just text the words front row dads to (314) 665-1767 and we will get you started today. I want to know why you get defensive. Let's go right to the court. What's the trigger points? What is it triggering? What is it bringing up from the past Dean with that, I mean can see that across the table from each other and that comes up again. You would be able to navigate into a beautiful place of compassion. I'm not about helping you control conversations. I want to get

to the why. I want to get to the cause, so hopefully that answers. It gives you something. I'm not sure John.

Speaker 2: [29:56](#) Great man. I, I started to tear up and I was like, I thought to myself, nobody's made me tear up on my own show. Thank you for that.

Speaker 1: [30:05](#) Well, thanks for allowing me the privilege of [inaudible] sharing what I, what I need to share because I, I admire you more today or now because you were, you would even allow yourself to get to there being a leader, running your own show. Most people would never allow themselves to go there. So just, that's awesome.

Speaker 2: [30:21](#) Oh, thanks man. Appreciate it. Speaking of great leaders, who do you, who do you witness? Who are you connected to that is an amazing father and husband and family man. When I say that, who comes to mind and why? Like what do you see in the world that's good

Speaker 1: [30:40](#) right out there? Who's doing well? I see, I see little bits here and there and I see a lot of people trying to be something they're not. I see a lot of [inaudible]. I'll give you an example and maybe this is avoiding the question, I don't know. But a number of years ago, a guy called Derek Coburn as CC copied me or tagged me, I should say on Facebook on father's day, and he said the most amazing fathers I know in the world, and my name was in the on the list of maybe there's 10 fathers, 20 fathers, I can't remember [inaudible] when I, when I witnessed it and the tag came up and that little red button and I opened it up and people are commenting and I just, my ego kicked in and say, God, wow, God, you McKernan you've arrived, you know, this moment of, you know, appreciation for one of my peers, seeing me as an amazing father.

Speaker 1: [31:26](#) And then I had the wisdom, I believe to stop and say, what do I feel like I'm an amazing father? Because it doesn't matter if someone says you're not overweight, if you feel ugly or feel overweight within yourself. That's the only view that matters in the world. And the answer that question was, no, I did not feel like a great father at that time. And nor do I feel like a great father now. I feel like a better father right now. So this is not designed to diminish any of my friends and some of the great fathers and people that are father in great ways, I feel does a number of people out there who do pieces of it well. But most of those people also do large pieces of it incorrectly or ways that those doesn't serve themselves or their family. And I feel that when we let our kids down, we're letting our kids down.

But we're letting yourself down twice as much. And I'm too many of us are putting our kids first and we're not living the lives we need to. So therefore be an inspiration to our kids as opposed to the other way around. So not many people actually, John, I'm not trying to avoid the question, but not many people I and, and it doesn't mean I don't know. Well, beautiful people and great fathers, but not many people.

Speaker 2: [32:30](#)

Mm.

Speaker 1: [32:30](#)

In fact, I, I look less to the world for inspiration and I look a little closer to home because I feel that when, when I look at and go, they're amazing father. I don't, that's not true because I haven't lived with them. I don't actually know. Yeah, and I think that's one of the problems in the world is we're looking to other people as opposed to searching within ourselves.

Speaker 2: [32:50](#)

When you think about your 2020 like looking into the year ahead,

Speaker 1: [32:55](#)

what's,

Speaker 2: [32:55](#)

what's your lead domino when it comes to your family? What's one area that you want to give more attention to? To grow,

Speaker 1: [33:03](#)

to serve

Speaker 2: [33:04](#)

[inaudible] team at home?

Speaker 1: [33:05](#)

I want to truly put my family ahead of my work for the first time maybe ever [inaudible]. I mean I, I'm very committed to the, the clients that I serve. In many cases I'm more committed to them than they are on themselves to themselves or their own families. What I want to put my family first, and I mean really put them first, like make real decisions that they come first and I've already started to do that. That's something that's come up over the last, say six months in my life that despite the story I was telling myself and the, and the justification my clients have had the driver's seat and the front row and, and that's, that's not cool anymore. And I also want to get back to putting myself, not first. I think we need to come up with better language around either first are are, are selfish, but I want to start nurturing myself again because the better I do that, the more available I am for everybody else around me. I want to give myself permission to do the work I want to do in this earth, to speak the truth, that I'm afraid to speak still and to take the space and the time that I need to nurture myself so I can be

better for my family. Um, and there are the two things that come to mind.

Speaker 2: [34:09](#) What would be an example of putting your family first? How would that show up on your calendar?

Speaker 1: [34:13](#) Well, for example, we do a lot of these, you know, trips or retreats and we tie my family in. So we've taken the kids out of traditional schooling for the moment. It may work, it may not work, who knows, but we're bringing the family in the trip. So when we're looking at like trips away, they typically tend to be around the work that I do, which basically means that I'm emotionally invested into that experience unless available for my family, number one. Number two is then we've looked at social trips with other families, so just on a very basic level. Number one is actually taking time, you know, a week or two away. That's nothing to do with business that I'm not on my phone. My phone is completely left, literally left behind. The second thing is that I want to start taking every Friday afternoons off to spend with my children and because we do this thing called life class and the E stands for entrepreneurship.

Speaker 1: [34:59](#) So I've been basically going to entrepreneurial businesses, bringing my kids there so they can sit down with the founder and ask them questions. The whole idea being that if I can expose the kids to 10 businesses in a year, that at the end of that year, even though a lot of people would say, Oh, wait for 15 I disagree with, I constantly underestimate my kids' capacity for deep, vulnerable conversations and experiences in life that I think they're too young for. And, uh, this entrepreneurial piece is turned out to be fascinating. So they get to sit in front of a builder and say, so what do you like about it? What do you not like about it? If you could turn back the clock, these, there are questions not mine. And hopefully, whether they become or not is not the point that they get equipped with all these different businesses and ideas that they can make better decisions for themselves in the future. So I've actually penciled in every Friday afternoon for the entire 2020 is just another thing I've done as well.

Speaker 2: [35:52](#) Yeah, that's great man. Well, I really relate to this idea of, uh, of not really putting your family first because one of the reasons we started front row dads a couple of years ago was, I used to say that family was most important, but it just came to the realization that that wasn't true. And it was partially because I remember being at a party and I tell this story a lot on air. And so anybody's listening to the show, they know this story, but it was, somebody asked me what I do and I started to answer

what I did professionally. I was like, why is that that in any, almost any circumstance when somebody says, what do you do that, that my initial reaction is what I do professionally. So I cut myself off in the middle of that introduction and said, I'm a father and I'm a husband and when I'm not doing that, I do a couple other things.

Speaker 2: [36:33](#) And they said that's the coolest restaurants I've ever gotten. And I said it, I wish that was true because I said that cause I want that to be true, but my calendar would not reflect that. So I tell everybody who's listening to the show in case you happen to be listening for the first time out there. Like I didn't start front row dads because I was crushing it and want to tell everybody what to do. I started it because I felt like I was getting crushed and wanted answers. So I wanted to learn with and from amazing people and kind of bond together, if you will. [inaudible], you know, figure some of this out and through people's experiences, both positive and not so positive, I've been, you know, uh, experiencing my own, uh, enlightenments with blind spots, you know, and I didn't even know that was possible.

Speaker 2: [37:12](#) I didn't know you could look at family that way. I didn't know you could have that belief and have that work, but it's now I have a lot more possibilities because I've been witnessed to these incredible, uh, conversations. So yeah, I, uh, I really appreciate all that, Philip, we just go big picture. I'm going to zoom out for a second and say, you know, we've talked about a lot of things here in this conversation and we've, we've traveled down the path and I told you, I said, I'm going to kind of start off, I know where I want to go to begin, but I'm going to just follow it a little bit and I'm really glad I did because there's so much wisdom. I believe that's been shared in this incredible thoughts and maybe perhaps my favorite so far is that the listening versus hearing, right. I think that's incredible. And uh, and this will come as no shock to you, but that why are apology must begin with forgiveness of ourselves. That to me is, I needed to hear that today. So thank you. Is there anything that you were thinking or feeling throughout this conversation that when I took it in a different direction we want to go back to, is there anything that you want to say? Any topic

Speaker 1: [38:14](#) at all? You know, there is something that's just popped up and thank you for that invitation. There's a little anecdotal story and I believe it's a true story I heard recently, and I'll just paraphrase it, that the son who goes to the hospital to say goodbye, you know, his father's dying and he's sitting in the waiting room and the doctor comes out and says it's time. And he says, Oh, he's

dying. And he said, no, no, he's, he's got another three or four days to go. He said, it's time for the, and the son goes, what conversation? And the doctor says, the conversation you probably should have had 20 years ago, there are a lot of people that I work with that are working tirelessly to improve their relationship with her, their children, to be a better father, to be a better mother. One of the things I see with a lot of women but also fathers is they feel that there are 50, 50 or 50% entrepreneur and a 50% father.

Speaker 1: [38:58](#)

In other words, they don't feel they're doing anything perfectly and perfectly. And that desire for perfection part of the problem because it doesn't exist. Um, the bigger picture is that so often, and I can literally say five phone calls I've had in the last week with people who really want to be a better father, our mother, but yet they have dysfunctionality or lack of closure within their own parents that they're angry with their parents. One parent is a strange one parent as passed away. They're still harboring a lot of anger. And when I start to navigate that conversation with them, they go, what's the point of this? No, my dad's out of my life. I don't want to speak to him again. Or my mother was a pain in the ass, or she was mean to me or whatever. Or we have a decent relationship. And when I find it, and I can't show you the data, I can't show you this in a spreadsheet, John.

Speaker 1: [39:45](#)

Well, what I can tell you for certain is that when we go into that part of our lives, the part that perhaps we don't want to address, and we start to navigate that and we start to forgive, which is a big jump for a lot of people because forgiveness is a great gift to give to somebody else. But it's actually probably the greatest gift you can give to yourself because the person who's carrying it every single day as you, and the one thing we don't want to do is because we're so goddamn fucking stubborn as we don't want to forgive people who have hurt us and all we're doing is by not doing that, we're carrying that pain every day. And I believe we're translating that and transferring that energy into our children, into the dynamic with our family. And a lot of people who go nowhere, like keeping my grandparents, my kids' grandparents in their lives because I don't want to deprive them of that.

Speaker 1: [40:27](#)

No, I hate my dad. And they're dishonoring themselves because they think they're helping their children. And yet their children, when they see their dad hang out with their dad, with their grandpa or their grandmother, they see this dysfunctional disdain, which is very slight pass the sugar, go get it yourself or whatever. So I find that when I help people heal, they're past wounds. It actually just transfers automatically into their

fatherhood and their Parenthood. And yet many of us don't see the value in going back into our past. We want to focus on the present and we want to focus on the future. And I think that is a catastrophic mistake. I think it is a huge blind spot. And then what people say is when I'm really open and I go, no, you're not reopen at all. You're open. You're the most open, closed person.

Speaker 1: [41:16](#) I know. In other words, if I can show you on a spreadsheet how this is going to affect you as a mum, you will do the work. And they go, fuck you. Just nail me. I can't tell you. Well, I can tell you this is, if you don't have closure in the past, it's very hard to get clear on the future. So I know, hopefully, hopefully that makes sense. But it just came to me as you invited me to speak, share something. I've seen it come up more and more and more as the past actually holds all the answers in my opinion to the future.

Speaker 2: [41:42](#) And would you recommend to the men out there listening that is, what is the way to do that? Is it the right coach, the counselor, the therapist? How do they get there if they go, okay, I agree Phillip, I got to go do that. What's my next step?

Speaker 1: [41:56](#) Yeah, I mean I think this is where, you know, take this with a grain of salt, cause I think of, you know, connected here, but I do believe we need external counsel. I think we need somebody who's going to call us on that. And to me, I don't get caught up. You know, some people come to me, some people go to a therapist, some people go to a counselor. And then what's also telling us to go, I went with therapist, but I didn't like them. I said, well what was wrong with the, well they didn't wear socks. And I'm thinking, Jesus, you obviously were going in looking for a reason for this, not to work. Any therapists corpse sitting in front of you, you know? Yeah, I know this sounds obnoxious and setting facilitate their eyes open. Just anybody is better than nobody. Just begin the conversation, commit to a therapist, commit to accounts that or get a coach, find somebody that can navigate that personal piece because once you lean into it today, it feels different tomorrow and it feels different next week and it put a lot of people just avoid it.

Speaker 2: [42:48](#) Yeah. We had a Tucker max on recently and he was talking about his experience with therapy and the different forms of therapy that he's actually been into. He brought up plant medicines and I don't know if that's something that you talk about openly or have an opinion on or is that something that you're, are you thumbs up, thumbs down, kind of in the middle on

- Speaker 1: [43:06](#) I'm, I'm, I'm sideways and I'll tell you why I'm sideways. I've actually in took, I have permission to share this. I didn't know if Tucker was on your show. I actually work with Tucker and so Tucker has come to me because Tucker has gone on on this might sound very judgemental, but nothing I wouldn't say to his face talk has gone on a bit of a plant medicine rampage. In other words, he's gone all in, two feet all in and I kind of, you know, sat back and watched this happen and I think he went very, very deep into it and has come back out the other side and what he has a great intellectual understanding of a lot of his own traumas and his own stories and everything else. I think one of the, one of the areas, and he gave me permission to talk about this anytime is one of the challenges he has is it is going from an intellectual awareness and understanding into an emotional space.
- Speaker 1: [43:48](#) And I, I spoke to a gentleman called Don Ingle this morning. We had, we had coffee and you know Dan is, Dan said to me, he said a lot of people are becoming very reliant on plant medicine as a way to access their emotions. And unless you're under the influence of plant medicine eight hours a day, what's happening is people can't access that emotional allow people beyond that field. A lot of us are very, a lot of us have, I've been hurt. Everybody's been hurt. Every body in this world is a victim. And what I use that word very intentionally, even though a lot of us have just stained for that victim is somebody who's been hurt or had something done to them by another that didn't serve them. So we're all victims. It's how we deal with that determines who we are. But a lot of us protect our hearts.
- Speaker 1: [44:26](#) We put these little emotional walls and we don't open up. And plant medicine can allow you to bypass that protective mechanism and connect DP emotional. But unless you want to be on plant medicine eight hours a day with all your loved ones, do you need to learn to be able to open your heart without plant medicine and maybe use plant medicine as a vehicle or as a tool to access parts of ourselves that are unavailable to our conscious mind. So I think it's great in certain situations, right? I feel that a lot of people are becoming very reliant on us and it is no surprise it is not lost on me this cliché or this foreign idea of that or take a pill, you know this hang, you know, take a pill or a magic bullet and yet here we have a pill that a lot of people think is the answer. It is not the answer. It is simply a tool. And I'm really scared that a lot of people are not doing the real processing an integration work after taking plant medicine. So they have 40 years in this world. They take plant medicine, various different types of plant medicine over six months and 40 years of pain, trauma, joy, uncertainty. He's unleashed into the

world. And to me, unless you're really cautious with that and you're getting really good support and you're able to navigate that, it can be dangerous.

Speaker 2: [45:38](#)

Well, I'm so glad I asked the question then because I do think this is a topic that's come up a lot. I do think that what you just offered is a solid perspective that would be very valuable for people to consider. I appreciate that a lot and it's also a Testament when you say all that about having support and having people to help you integrate. It's one of the reasons why this year when we introduced this ban concept into our community, it's been, for me personally, the biggest game changer. The retreats have always been awesome. The calls that we do are great. I love the podcast all that's wonderful, but having this ongoing regular conversation with these four men, Dave in many ways had been my coaches and my therapist in my, they've noticed they've helped me to integrate things on a regular. I do think that regular conversation with the right person, you know, or a person like you said that you trust that you can have a good dialogue with is so important. Cause I've heard people talk about, and this is actually what can I look back on the theme of what's happened on this show. It's like isolation, whether it's been said directly or indirectly for a lot of entrepreneurial men because that's who our market, yeah. We typically attract as high-performing entrepreneur guy. Isolation is a really big issue.

Speaker 1: [46:50](#)

Yeah. I mean that's most of my clients, high-performing entrepreneurs, I'm working with that relationship to self relationship to others and and that connection to the work they do. And that's another area that a lot of entrepreneurs just bypass is a lot of entrepreneurs and this is not designed as a judgment. A lot of entrepreneurs do work that doesn't light them up

Speaker 1: [47:08](#)

and then they wonder why they're, they struggle connecting at home. I feel that if you look at those three, you know, work self and others are the three kind of prongs that I focus on as as legs in the stool and you take one away, it's unstable. But when we're, when we're doing something that doesn't make us happy, whether we like it or not, we look to the other parts of our lives to kind of almost fill in that gap, that emotional gap and sometimes, sorry, all the time, those people can't fill that gap. To that extent because they're not, that's not their job. Your wife is not here to make you happy, nor is your husband here to make you happy. No. Are your kids going to make you happy again? Sometimes they're gonna drive you insane and

sometimes you know, a lot of men struggle connecting with their kids.

Speaker 1: [47:46](#) What they do is they say they work hard for their family in fact, or they're just hiding from their family. They're afraid to connect with the family because they don't know how to, and a lot of men I work with don't feel deserving of connection with their family. So what they do is they hide back into their work and I have no problem with somebody being a workaholic, dedicating the next 20 years of their life to doing something they don't want to do is they can make a fortune to give to their family so their kids never have to work again. Let me just ask you, have you asked your kids, is that okay? Have you told him this is what you're going to do? Because I've yet to meet a parent who says, I wished my parents worked harder. Maybe smart, but never harder. [inaudible]

Speaker 1: [48:21](#) what your kids need is they need their father. They don't need another million dollars in the bank. They don't need another 500,000 in the bank. They don't need a Ferrari. They don't need a mini. They don't need that. They desperately need their dad. Here's something else, John. I know I'm jumping around, but I've worked with a lot of men. No, I worked with one man who said I'm struck. I love my kids so much and as soon as I, I leave, I miss them. I want to get home. I'm getting cranky and I asked him a fucking bizarre question and it just came out in the moment and I said, did you ever choose to have children? He goes, what are you talking about? Yes. I chose to make love to my, and I told him that the mechanics. Did you ever consciously sit down as a man, as a human, and choose to bring children's this world, or did you like many other people get swept along by the traditional trajectory of society you had going out with somebody getting engaged?

Speaker 1: [49:09](#) I'm not throwing his wife under the bus and say she manipulate and that's not what I'm talking about, and it goes, I've never stopped to consider out to choose to have children. I said, well, why don't you bathe on that? Why don't you marinate on that invitation on that question, and you texted me personally when you do, and I'm at four months later, I got a text of the blows as I'm sitting here in a park with tears rolling down my face and today for the first time ever I choose to have children and his children were like, I think seven and four and two or something. I can't remember. He never stopped. That doesn't make his life perfect. No, he still gets cranky, but this time different, is it a different energy? It doesn't last as long and it comes from a different intentional place within him. He'd never chosen to have children ever. And then he's wondering why he's struggling

to connect and he's becoming obsessive obsessive in his business. Cause that's the area he has control and in his mind that's the area he gets recognition and that's the area he can derive value from. So that's why he doesn't spend as much time at home. And yet the story you've been telling himself was, I'm doing this for my kids, which is horseshit.

Speaker 2: [50:12](#) Wow Phil, that is big man choosing your kids. It takes me right back to a moment when I was talking with Hal Elrod about an article he read about choosing your wife, like how did you really choose her and that concept, boy, that's a great one for us to wrap up on today. I think that's, that'll give our listeners really something to think about as if all the rest of is has it. That is a great one. Phillip. Thank you so much man. I truly for this conversation, I mean it from the bottom of my heart, man. I've been looking forward to this for a long time and I got tremendous value here. I know that our listeners did as well. So thanks for doing the hard work, man. Thanks for being courageous so that you can explore a lot of this in your life and then bring it to this call. That means a lot to me. Thank you.

Speaker 1: [51:01](#) You're very welcome. And thanks for having me

Speaker 2: [51:03](#) Phillip real quick because I know some guys are going to be emailing me going, tell me how I connect with Philip cause uh, are you for hire man? Like can people do coaching with you? Just give a little, little something.

Speaker 1: [51:16](#) Yeah, my, my, my, my sweet spot is, is uh, intimate retreats for whether it's um, you know, working with families, whether it's working with husband wise, personally, bringing people away in these intimate retreats to Arland, to, to Guatemala, to the U S to Canada. And then one last, Oh, it's Philip mckernan.com is where people can find out. I do take on the odd one on one coaching client, but it really depends on the fish and then a one last talk.com as the is the book and the movement we've created around the world.

Speaker 2: [51:43](#) Yeah, that's awesome. And guys, if you've been listening to the show for a while, you know that I like to do this. So I'm going to say the same thing I typically do in this situation, which is a as my thank you to fill up for making time for the show and thank you to all you guys out there for listening. If you go share a couple thoughts about what you loved about this episode, what value you took away, leave that as a review somewhere that I can then screenshot that, share that with Philip. My thank you to you sharing that with the world and sharing that with Philip would be to buy you a copy of Phillip's book and send it to you.

So for the first five people in the U S that want to take action on that, I will send you a copy of Phillip's book, uh, as, as a thank you to both Phillip NTU for, for supporting the show.

Speaker 1: [52:24](#)

I appreciate that.

Speaker 2: [52:25](#)

Thanks again for being here man.

Speaker 1: [52:26](#)

You're welcome. Take care.

Speaker 3: [52:30](#)

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 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 and join the conversation. I'll look forward to connecting with you there. [inaudible].