

Jeff Perera (00:02):

Gentlemen, welcome to the Front Row Dads podcast While it's common to hear men say family first, most guys are working long hours and finding it really difficult to juggle all the priorities on this show. You're going to hear unscripted conversations with guys who are as committed to winning at home as they are to winning at work each week, we're going to share a new conversation, digging into the strengths and the struggles of guys, just like you and me to help us level up our dad game, strengthen our marriage, succeed in business and stay healthy along the way. If you're new to the show, I'm John Broman, married to the free spirit known as Tatyana, father of two boys tiger and ocean and living in Austin, Texas. Let's get right into our next conversation.

Jeff Perera (00:48):

All right, Jeff. Perrera let's do this man. I'm glad you're on front row. Dad's brother. Where are you today? I'm here in Toronto, Canada, children born and raised in Canada. Born and raised. Yeah, absolutely. My family's from, but they moved here over 50 years ago and here we are in Toronto. Do you ever go back to Sri Lanka? No, I was there when I was four years old. I've always wanted to go back someday. I'm going to, I'm going to do that. I'm going to make that happen when we're able to fly again. Yeah. Oh, you just, you just sent me into a, uh, into a dream state of being able to leave my house and go somewhere else. Hey man, I'm excited about our conversation today because I wanted to talk about some of the things I know you're passionate about and I want to just get right into it.

Jeff Perera (01:36):

What is, what is the ladder of manhood? I've heard you talk about this. I want to just get right into it. What is the ladder of manhood? You know, I think that all right, DIA's of being a man look different around the world, but there's a lot that we have in common. You know, whether you're in the us or Canada or any other country around the world. And I think that it starts from a certain age and, you know, we drop our stuff, toys, and we, uh, we're taught that you have to be a man means to have all the answers that you need to be the solution, not the problem and that you don't need to ask for help that you've got this and anything less than that is soft or weak. So right away, we're creating this unattainable idea of being a guy and you spend the rest of your life trying to chase it.

Jeff Perera (02:27):

You know, all of us around like as men, we're trying to chase these ideas of power and status and how that's most important. And we're trying to almost climb over each other, get on top of this ladder. And I think that where you are on the ladder depends on who you are as a person. And it's not about who has it better as a worst for at different stages on that ladder. And we're all trying to get to this top three impossible to get to. And so the idea of manhood today to demonstrate, you know, who you are, show, improve, where you are, it's what you can demonstrate, what you own or what you look at this six pack, look at how tough I am, look how much money, all these different things that we have to kind of, it's a literal measurement of our man.

Jeff Perera (03:22):

For me, it's the measure of being a man is more of a, how we serve and how we give and how we live. You know, so this idea of manhood for me, it's climbing our way to the top and we treat women and girls as like the rungs on that ladder. You know, we treat people that way, where their people are either tools or their instruments or the obstacles you're either in my way or someone that I can use to get towards the top of being a man, ultimately breaks us down. This idea of strength. You know, strength is

more than just being tougher than somebody else or being emotionless. You know, I think that as men, we are a wealth of emotion and it's about being able to express that with each other. And that's not weakness. That's, that's real strength, a quick version of what the letter means to me is pursuits to getting to the top.

Jeff Perera ([04:23](#)):

But what I like about this conversation, Jeff, is I like being able to define things in our lives. I'm in this state right now, or this is a real interesting topic for me on, in many areas, which is just, how do I define that? How do you define fatherhood? How do you define manhood? How do you define your marriage? How do you define success? Like really getting crystal clear, at least in the moment, knowing that your clarity will shift as your life evolves, that your definitions will likely change too. Some of them may stay the same, but for me, if my past is any indication, what futures shit's gonna change, you know, like it's going to, I'm going to evolve and where I am right now, thinking about what it means to be a man for me right now and where, what my boys, 10 year old son tiger, and five-year-old son ocean is what does it mean to be a man as it relates to my influence in their lives.

Jeff Perera ([05:14](#)):

Right? Because what's interesting is I hear some of the things you say and I'm like, yeah, I agree. I don't think I want to teach my boys to step on other people or client over other, like, even the visual of that is like, yeah, that's not going to work. Right. That's not going to work. I also don't want them to feel bad about having power. I don't want them to feel bad about the craving of power in some way, like, you know, to feel like a powerful person, to feel like a superhero or feel like your strong, literally strong, or to be embarrassed. If you had a six pack, you know, abs or a nice car or whatever it might be, I'm really I'm playing with. Where is that place of embracing their masculinity, embracing this strength and this desire to want to like have a battle to fight.

Jeff Perera ([06:04](#)):

Like what's the nature of a boy that wants to pick up a gun and be in a battle out, back in our backyard of good guys and bad guys, you know? And then where do I not want them to grow up to be violent people, you know, unnecessarily violent, but yet still capable if somebody ever attacked them, that they could protect themselves. How do you see the balance of those things from the parts about being a man that really anybody could embrace or empower? Everybody likes to feel powerful. I don't think that's reserved for masculinity. Right? What you're saying is so true, man. I think that, you know, and I will say this, I think that people like myself, I would describe myself as antiviolence. However, that doesn't mean that I'm against men being assertive. It doesn't mean that when I say idea of strengths, that I'm saying that physical strength isn't important or value the way I would describe it as kind of like, if you're in the football or up here in 10, we play hockey and basketball as well in baseball, whatever field soccer, whatever you're into, right?

Jeff Perera ([07:11](#)):

Let's say football. So that on the field, you need to be assertive. You can't be on the field and be like, okay, well, you know, I wanna, I kinda wanna hope that no, you've gotta be focused. You've gotta have a mindset. You gotta search yourself. So there is an aggression that you use on the field, right? But that doesn't mean that once the play is called or the game is over that you keep in that mindset of aggression, like on the drive home, or when you're talking with your friends or any kind of problem in your life, the way he describe it as like, it's like a toolbox that we all get as human beings and emotional

toolbox, how we handle problems in our life. Right? So it's like, you know, for your kids, you're helping them equip that toolbox. So as a parent or a role model or a father figure, you're helping them get the tools.

Jeff Perera ([08:04](#)):

The problem is that for some of the young men in our lives and men in our world, the only tool they have in the toolbox is a hammer, right? So sometimes you need to use a screwdriver. Sometimes you need to use the file and you know, all the different tools, different things. So not just break things down, but to build things up, to measure things. So you're helping them have a whole full range of emotional tools. But if the only tool you have in the toolbox is a hammer. So that means the aggression, anger. That's the only way you handle problems in life is that that's the one problem, anger. Isn't a bad thing. Anger is, anger is beautiful. We need channels, right? It's like any kind of emotion. If you're sad about something that helps you realize there's something I need to work on.

Jeff Perera ([08:53](#)):

If you're happy about something, you can't stay happy all the time. It's not like, like, if you want to be happy 24 hours a day, you're going to be miserable. Cause there's no such thing, right? It's like, how do I balance all that? So for me, anger is like channel anger in a healthy way. You channel assertiveness in a healthy way. And we can like debate terms like I'm using the word assertive. I'm not saying that aggressive is a bad word or that power is a bad word. But if I define myself solely by the power I have, that becomes a problem, right? Because it's like in every situation in my life, it's not just physical strength or we're going to be able to handle it. It's also being able to kind of exhale and think about it or to take, take a deep breath, to talk about things, to be able to connect it's that kind of hold their full idea of who you are, is what we want to achieve.

Jeff Perera ([09:48](#)):

As guys, for me, it's so powerful to have a male role model in your life. Like you are with your kids where you can be able to say, Hey, look, there's times where you need to be this way. And this times that you'd be that way, you know? Yeah. Yeah. I think what I hear and what I agree with is, is the, you should have a lot of tools in your life to be able to use in different circumstances and different ways you can misuse or abuse a tool that was made for something and completely do a lot of harm with that tool. You know, if you're not informed, if you don't have a good model, a good example, right. Then I think that you can use all these things in a negative way. You can quickly go from a positive level of assertion and strong leadership of like, God, that guy can make a decision.

Jeff Perera ([10:41](#)):

That's exciting to be around somebody who could just make a decision and go, and then if you make a mistake, like I made a mistake and move on versus, you know, somebody that's that bulldozes or is truly like, it doesn't give a shit about anybody else's opinions. And you know, there's very different energies there, uh, which I think are worth exploring. Yeah, really quickly. Like you can call, you heard about it on Facebook, they have this slogan on their walls, their headquarters, it was move fast, break things. Yeah. But I think that know there is this, this kind of romance that we have with, you know, seizing the day. And like you said, like bulldozing through things. But I think that we also need to be able to acknowledge where we make mistakes and kind of go, you know what, there's a different tack that we can use.

Jeff Perera ([11:29](#)):

Sometimes I have to always be crushing everything in our way. You want to crush it when you're taking on a task, taking on a goal, you know, but it doesn't mean that it has to be like, my victory doesn't mean that I have to decimate my opponent. You know what I'm saying? Do you believe in masculine and feminine energy, do you believe that men naturally in their, their true essence of what it means to be a man has masculine energy and that from birth, I mean literally watch little boys and little girls that aren't being told anything specifically and like, by their very nature, do you subscribe to the fact that they behave differently in generality? Not that every girl is pure feminine energy, right? They could potentially have more masculine energy naturally, but that if you put a thousand boys together and a thousand girls together, that generally, if you were looking for a pattern or a consistent element of behavior without a lot of outside influence, do you think that chemical, all makeup that makes the difference very different biological?

Jeff Perera ([12:39](#)):

And I'm speaking in general terms here, of course makes them different in their nature. I mean, let's see there's the ongoing conversation, right? I think if you raise kids on an Island and there are no, no access to tech talk and like Facebook or whatever it is, and like, how will they end up? I think that, you know, I'm not going to sit here and say that as a definitive answer for every person. I think every person's individually unique. I think that there are things that make me realize that, yes, there's something inherent about young boys where there's a physicality, there's a need to kind of get up and run around. And they, you see young girls that are that way too, right? The young girls who are inquisitive, take something apart and would work on it. You know? And they're young boys who also want to like dig in the garden and play with dirt and plant a thing and grow it.

Jeff Perera ([13:30](#)):

You know? So there is this, I think that there are elements about who we are as people that we discover over time. You know, I think the child is when we put limits on it, you know what I'm saying? So it's like, it's like, there are boys who they need to kind of run around and let it out, get that energy out of them. There's some boys that are very quiet and they can just sit there, do their thing. And that's cool. What I'm saying for me, it's that we need to give everyone permission to be who they are. Like, it's cool to be who you are, feel the way you feel. If that's not who you are. That's okay. You know, but it's also dangerous where we prescribed that. That's who, you know, boys a hundred percent. Yeah. You can't, you can't look for patterns.

Jeff Perera ([14:19](#)):

I believe that you can look for patterns. I think that if you said, look, you put a thousand people and you said, you know, just on average, if you surveyed them all, you know, you could say 80% out, like whatever, like you can look for a pattern. The problem is when you are, where sometimes you're not that way you don't fit into that mold and people make you feel like you're wrong because you're not doing these things or behaving this way or that this is the way you're supposed to be at tenure. This is the problem I have with some of the educational system, like the educational system that basically says we're going to reward a particular type of child, our schools, right? The school system can be set up to say, look, if you're the type of kid that loves to sit down and memorize stuff and repeat it back, we're going to tell you you're in a, like, you are in a, you are a shining star.

Jeff Perera ([15:12](#)):

Thank you for listening. Thank you for getting in line, right? Thank you for taking orders. Thanks for sitting down and shutting up and behaving. And in my mind, you're stellar, you know, you're a stellar human. And if you're not that way, if you have a lot of energy and your body wants to move and you're not built for that naturally boy or girl doesn't matter. Right. But if you're not built for that and they're basically like, no, you're a D you have a lot of work to do on yourself. You're broken. You're not like the rest of us. That to me, that's what I hear you saying, which is the challenge, those limitations, because we forget to treat people as they are as individuals. I do think labels help or definitions. Here's what I like more, I like it as a definition, because I think that we've, we've done a good job of using our words to clarify what we mean by something.

Jeff Perera ([16:03](#)):

So like, as a family, man, I want my kids to understand the value of contribution. Right. But, but I would need to define that cause they go, well, what's contribution. And I'd say, well, let me try to label it or define it or use words to articulate something that's really difficult. Excuse me to articulate, but I'm going to try my best, but I will be constrained by the way of the words, because I can only put them together in so many different formats. And I, maybe I'm not a, a verbal poet, you know, and maybe that's not my superpower, but I'll try. I love what you said. There really resonates for me. I think that, I think that we're at this really critical point as a society, as a global society, we're starting to really have more honest conversations about things. I think we're so fixated on being right, that we got to remember.

Jeff Perera ([16:53](#)):

It's about, for me, like, so for example, I do a lot of public speaking and I can have the energy of being like, well, I'm the expert, whatever, whatever. And I walk into a room and I have that energy about me. And every time we were in front of an audience, every audience is different. So you gotta know how to read the room. It's like, you read a person, you meet a person, you know who you are, you have a confidence and you believe in who you are and what you're about on a personal level, professional level, absolutely. A hundred percent. But you also gotta read the room, right? So say when I'm in front of an individual, how do I connect with them? If I'm in front of a room right away. So for me at uncle to an audience and be like, I have the energy, there's a part of me.

Jeff Perera ([17:40](#)):

It's like, I want to go in there. I'm good at what I do. There's a confidence. I'm ready to go out there and have a good, good talk at the same time. And energy is a humility. It's like, how do I connect with them? I'm not here to beat you over the head. I'm not here to lecture you. I'm here to talk with you. So I think you use the word I love and it's contributing. So if I walked into the room and my energy is I have to control the room. I need to have everyone like attention. I need to win them over. I need to knock them dead. But if my energy is, how can I contribute here? How can I leave them with something that makes them think, how can they be in front of the room to realize this is what they want to talk about? Like, I look at my audience and I go, okay, this is what they want to hear. Or this is where they're at. Like I got to meet you halfway. Right? So I think that when you have that energy in life, how can I contribute? It's not about the lynching controls, not about giving up control. It's about saying, how can I flow with what's going on?

Jeff Perera ([18:47](#)):

What I've come here to do. You know, but it's not about my ego. It's not about all those things, but I can still assert myself in a way where we get things done, but I'm doing it in a way where I'm bringing you along with me over the head with something, I want to work with you on this, you know, and inspire you, encourage you to come along with me on a journey. Whether it's this conversation as a friend in a work situation, what have you, you know? Yeah. You know, I think what's good is that when we give people the chance to explore who they are for themselves, versus us telling them who they need to be, right. It's not what you're getting at. It's like, rather than, than us saying, you need to be this to be enough, you need to be this to be a man.

Jeff Perera ([19:33](#)):

Or you need to be this to be a woman. It's like, I think what's great. Is inviting somebody into the conversation to say no, test that like, just that like, are you, you know, I remember I grew up as a Tony Robbins fan, right? Like I remember going to his events and having him transform my life. Then your ways, right. That other people hadn't never done. One time. He said, are you a murderer? He would look to the audience. You know, thousands of people, do you ever hear him do this? No. No. Are you a murderer? Are you guys murderers? Like ask yourself, like, are you a murderer? And everybody's like, no, no. And he goes, well, you know, ask yourself, like, if somebody broke into your house and it was your life or their life, like if they were literally, they were beating somebody you loved.

Jeff Perera ([20:13](#)):

And the only thing you could do to stop them was to take them out. Would you do it to save somebody that you loved? If that was your choice that you were faced with in that moment. And most people in the audience were like, yeah, I would. I would then yeah. Then you have it in you it's there. You could tap into it. If you want to, it's not your daily identity, but to explore what is within you that you could potentially use at any moment. Or like, we want to get our kids to not be stubborn. Right? Yeah. Quit being so stubborn. But at the same time, where does being stubborn help you in your life? Right? Or like I mentioned earlier that we, sometimes I see parents like pride themselves on the kids that either listen or they're so well, like we even praise other parents.

Jeff Perera ([21:01](#)):

Oh, your kids are so well behaved like good for you, right? On some level like, Hey, you trained your kids to sit there and shut up and not speak up. Not be a nuisance, not be a bother, not share their voice. Like we have to be careful sometimes when we tell people how they need to be versus inviting into the dialogue, who are you truly deep down inside? What makes you come alive? What are your God given gifts? How do you want to show up to the world? Right? So there's a TEDx talk by professor here in Canada. And it's called why you will fail to have a successful career, a talks about a relationship between a parent of the child. And the parent will say things. The kids like do your best work, hard strive for your goal. Be the thing you want to be.

Jeff Perera ([21:50](#)):

But there's a part of the kid and that's not always the case books. Some of the kids, the energy towards the parents will be. Yeah, but you didn't do that. You know, you didn't chase the thing you want to be. So sometimes it's more about what we do than what you say, right? Like you model what you want your child strive for in their own life, by you doing your thing. You know, there, there are lessons that the kid will take from you like this moment today. But there are life lessons that 10 years from now, like you don't even see it, but you're slowly giving them something that 10 years they'll step back and look at it

and go, wow. You know, or they'll realize like, like my dad, I want to do what he did. I want to do my thing, which is different from him.

Jeff Perera ([22:39](#)):

But I want to apply myself the way he applied himself. You know? So one of the lines I use is to be the lesson and action. It's about modeling. Not necessarily do it like me. They can even be learned from, you know, here's where I'd made a mistake and I want you to learn from this. And I think that we learn more from that kind of humility, vulnerability being able to say, Hey, you know what, here's where I messed up. Here's where I learned from like, that's the real lessons in life. You know? Like I think that a lot of us are really trying to hold on to this all or nothing. Like I have it all figured out or I want to listen to someone who has it all figured out. And the truth is that anyone that tells you, they have life mastered, like it's, we're all on a journey.

Jeff Perera ([23:28](#)):

And I think you'd take, like, for example, with me, take what you like, take what you don't like from what I'm saying, you know, I encourage that. Right? It's like, I don't think of myself as an expert. I don't think there are teachers. I think there's only students. I think Mike's is the classroom. Life is the teacher. It's like, you know, you remember when you were in school and it was always a kid that took the best notes in class. Like they would have like the best notes and use different, different markers and like do illustrations and shit. And people want to borrow their notes. Right? Because they have the best notes. And I think the difference between us as people is some of us take really good notes and some of us share those notes. And you're one of those people. It's like, you're sharing your notes.

Jeff Perera ([24:09](#)):

Here's what I've learned about being a father, but being a man and passing it on to you. And when you get some of those notes, you take what you like, you take what you don't like. But I think that the lesson there is how he takes notes to look at you. And it's not even that what you're saying. It's like, it's the way you're observing life, the way you've learned life lessons. So I can take that process and apply it to my own life. You know? And so the learning is like at different levels, like you were saying, like some, some kids are visual learners, some kids, like you said, the quiet, I need to sit with it in the corner and I can read it. Some kids it's a whole different energy. Right? But it's like, like you, I'm different. I'm different lights. So I have my own way. You have your own way. We all have our process. And that's cool. You know? So I think that's what we need to do more of is kind of encourage each other as long as we're all going in a progressive, positive direction, not a destructive hurtful direction. How can we grow as people, you know, and nurture that growth.

Speaker 2 ([25:19](#)):

What's up guys. I want to take a quick break to talk to you about our private mastermind that we call the brotherhood. Now we created this unique community for a very specific type of man. And you may just have found your tribe if you believe in the power of relationships. And perhaps you're always trying to out-give everyone around you, you crave ideas that make you effective and efficient in all areas of life. You resonate with the idea of being a family man with a business, not a businessman with a family, by joining our brotherhood, you'll have access to weekly interactive training calls get to join as many or as few as you like. Our guys commit to one of these each month, optional, small groups designed to create meaningful connections and higher accountability, a private resource library accessible to only our members. And we have challenges throughout the year to help you push your limits.

Speaker 2 ([26:00](#)):

And we even involve your family in a few of them, the brotherhood is where I'm connecting every day. I'm asking questions when I need help and giving support wherever I can. Our brotherhood was created for men with wisdom, but also those who are wise enough to know there's more to learn. And the guys who value investing time to work on their families so they can make the best of their time when they are with their families. Now, of course, you're a badass. You can do a lot on your own. You likely have for many years, and yeah, you probably don't need front row dads to have a great family and to love on your kids and have a great relationship. But one thing I know for certain is that men for years have done better in tribes versus trying to brave the world on their own. Here's what one of our members has to say about the brotherhood,

Jeff Perera ([26:39](#)):

The message of what you're doing. And putting out there resonated with me at such a high level. I knew I had to be a part of it. And because I didn't know that this existed, I didn't know that front row dads was there and that community existed in that way. I mean, family men with businesses, not business men with families that changed everything. That one line shifted my entire thought on what you about what this community is about, what this brotherhood is about and what this group is about. And I would say, if you are a dad or an entrepreneur or a father or a husband, and that resonates with you, this is a great community to be a part of because it's unlike anything else that I've seen.

Speaker 2 ([27:16](#)):

If we want our kids to have great relationships and learn from others, we should lead the way and model the behavior we want to pass along. I look guys, the time is now to pour into your family. I read an article by Tim Urban that put everything into perspective for me, but how important it is for me to get parenting. Right, right now he wrote that 93% of all the time he'd ever spent with his mom and dad happened before he was 18 years old. And it's crazy to think that I've got only eight more years before my oldest son is an adult. I feel confident saying that, no matter how old your kids are, the time to go all in on your family is right now. We have members with newborns and we've got guys with kids that are grown adults members with only one child and guys with 10 people with blended families and everything in between by joining our brotherhood and choosing to invest one to two hours each month, we can help you make the most of your time that you do have with your kids. So no matter how great you are, a fatherhood marriage, juggling your work and your personal life calendar, we can help you be better. If you're ready to take the next step, go to front row, dads.com and click join the brotherhood today.

Jeff Perera ([28:21](#)):

Jeff, you've got a picture of Bob Marley behind you. Is that yours or somebody else's in your office? I see Bob. I see Nirvana. Yeah, there might be a tee shirt on the wall. I can't quite make out what that is, but I've got all kinds of, it's like my home office, I've got a bunch of hip pop rock. The music plays a big role in your life. Huh? Huge role in my life. You mentioned Kurt Cobain was influence for me because he was someone that was like, you know, he embraced whatever you want to call it. You want to call it masculine and feminine energy. He came up during a time where rock music was like either Michael Jackson or it was like hair metal bands and nothing against those, those ads. But he wants to just do his thing. And growing up, he was a punk kid beat up by the jobs at school. She was like, you know, I want to do my sound. And here's what I want to sound like. You know? And he eventually, he became the artist that those kids, I used to beat them up in school and now coming to his concert and they're in the

front row, they're meshing and mushing and, and that needs to fuck with him because he used the thing, like, you know, like my thing is about, it's not saying you can't do your music. Totally.

Jeff Perera ([29:55](#)):

It's. I want to be able to perform the way I do. I want, I think this music has values. He had his own kind of musical heroes and he knows them all the time. And he had his own sound and the band had their sound. And I think the lesson for me was that he said, it's okay to be different. You know, it's okay to do your thing. I think they became, they kind of became a parody because a lot of, you know, this whole thing about the grunge movement and everyone wanting to sound like them, that was the point. But I think his thing was like, Hey man, it's cool to sound the way you do, perhaps to be a polished musician, not everything has to be like a pop song. Everything's cool. It's whatever you want to do.

Speaker 2 ([30:39](#)):

People's pain becoming their purpose in life. I can't help, but just have this visual or this imagination that at some point in your life, like what you're telling me has to do somehow with your life, right? Like where did you feel? Unaccepted? Where did you feel that you were different? And that was not okay. Like where did obviously this recognition

Jeff Perera ([30:58](#)):

To be a truth for you

Speaker 2 ([31:00](#)):

Stemmed from somewhere in your life. And I'm just curious as to like, what is that, why is this also important? Where did this play a role early on?

Jeff Perera ([31:09](#)):

Well, I'll tell you like, you know, so growing up, I grew up in a home of domestic violence. So my father was physically violent towards my mum. So two things happened for me. Like I, I was tuned into the reality of women and girls and I, I kind of was able to have like a deeper sense of growing up my female classmates, like what they were going through. But I was also tuned into what's going on with men, because for me, the puzzle was why was my dad the way he was, you know? And I grew up in a priority neighborhood, a poor neighborhood in Toronto, there was violence, you know, people from different, different parts of the world coming here. So different, poor socioeconomic class, you know? And so I had examples of guys, like I grew up with guys who are from Jamaica, who are from Latin America, who are from Italy, from Africa, all around the world.

Jeff Perera ([32:04](#)):

But we hadn't calmed is that we're struggling as young guys trying to figure shit out, you know? And a lot of us didn't have fathers or fathers that were physically present or if they weren't physically present. Right. You know, and the ones that were in our lives, they weren't really emotionally present. You know? And so I remember I had this moment where, you know, for me growing up, I realized that the guys in my life, like if I was one on one, hanging out with one of my guy friends we could talk about, and then that early age, and I'm still formulating these thoughts. Like I can look back on it as an adult, but back then, like we used to watch strawberry cabbage patch kids, but we would never talk about that in front of all the guy, we talk about transformers, but one on one, we could talk about it.

Jeff Perera ([32:49](#)):

And I always thought that was so weird. It's like, why are we like this? I think things are a bit different now for boys. You know, like there's a little bit more permission to kind of be who you are, that kind of thing. But my point is like, I realized that that kind of STEM from we were all performing for each other and trying to prove to each other that we're tough or strong, you know? And again like that wrong kind of strong, you know what I'm talking about. So it's like, it's for me, I realized that being a man is a good thing. Cause growing up and seeing my father the way he was an early age, I had this moment where I was sitting in the car with him. Right. So I'm like five years old, six years old, I'm in the back seat, my mom's in the shotgun seat or front seat.

Jeff Perera ([33:36](#)):

My father's outside. He's arguing with this drunk guy we're in the parking lot of a mall or something like that. Right. And the guy's yelling at my dad and my dad gets into the car and slammed the door and the guy's outside Bay, the window tell him to get out here and fight. And my father has his hand on the steering wheel and he's shaking. And I remember seeing him at home in a rage. Right. But he wasn't shaking because he was angry. He was shaking because he was afraid. And I realized that, I realized here's this guy who had hold my dad is this Godzilla. When he gets mad, like I could feel his anger and the other room, you know? But here, when he's dealing with someone, who's like a peer versus like my mom he's afraid. So I realized that my dad was broken at an early age, whatever that meant in my head.

Jeff Perera ([34:27](#)):

You know? So growing up, it went from me being like, Oh, I don't, I don't like this about us as guys. I don't like this about Ben. So it was allergic to guys who are violent, who are acting violent because I can sense that kind of like, you know, when you're at school and the fight starts, everyone runs to the fight to check it out. I wasn't that kid and growing up, I could sense when regular was happening. Cause you have that sixth sense about you when you grew up around violence. But I started to change my attitude towards, I love being a man and I love the men in my life, you know? And I had to learn that through my teens and into my adulthood. I had to embrace that. What I was, what I saw as what I thought was being a man.

Jeff Perera ([35:11](#)):

That's not all though the whole entirety of what a man is, you know? And you need to have that realization. And it's a slow journey, a slow process to get there. I went to a place now where I can have deep friendships with men that I care about. And I love being a man that I love. I love things about being in band, you know, but growing up, I was rejecting a rebellion against those things because I thought that's what a man was. But those are those harmful, violent things. That's not, that's not being a man. That's, that's a man. Who's out of control a man who's in trauma, a man who's hurt, but that's not to say that I'm better than any other, other men.

Jeff Perera ([35:58](#)):

I'm just at a place where I'm trying to do well and be well and trying to heal. And that's okay. You know, like it's okay to be at different stages in your journey. Voice is a, we'll make fun of each other for trying to get help or trying to get better. You know? Cause it's kinda like when you see someone doing better, you try to bring them down. But it's like, no, it's like, not like you, I'm struggling in different ways. We can both get better. We can both feel and talk about this stuff. And it's what I started talking about things going on for me as a guy, other guys were able to open up and talk about their shit too, you

know? And I think that you find that again and again, as you get older and your twenties and thirties and on and on as a parent, I'm sure you can relate when you open up and talk about, you know, I don't always have the answers.

Jeff Perera ([36:55](#)):

I haven't always had a good relationship with my kid or we've had stressful moments that a parent can kind of drop the shoulders. Yes. I've had some struggles around this or that, you know, the struggles might be different, but what we have in common is that we can talk about it together. Yeah. Yeah. That's great, man. I feel like I know you a lot better knowing that like I feel like that was, that's a piece of the puzzle for me that really helps put in context why you're doing the work, you're doing the level of violence that you are exposed to, you know, things that you said, like being surrounded by emotionless men, you know? Yeah. And if that's your only model, then I could see really, really wanting to take a stand for those types of things. Like what is true manhood? Like what is it, what does it mean to be a man?

Jeff Perera ([37:47](#)):

It can't be that that's not good. That's not good. That's not a good lesson in action. That's not, what's going to help kids to thrive. I mean, you can certainly yell louder and physically threaten people and get them into gear. But that's a very shortsighted approach to nurturing a human spirit and, and showing them the way I think this is really interesting, man. You know what? This conversation has me thinking about Jeff. And I think this is what you're attempting to create. A dialogue around is, is, is really what is, you know, in some ways it's like, what is, what is strength? What is manhood? What is, what is an appropriate action? What are all the characteristics that an individual needs to embody to be whole and complete? How can we lift each other up versus condemning somebody or putting somebody down or making them wrong? Because they might be in a healing state or something to that effect where you don't have to be, you don't have to have all the answers you can show up with great humility.

Speaker 2 ([38:48](#)):

That's what I want is my boys to know all these different parts of them that make them human, the full human experience. My goal would be that they know they have all these things that exist within them. They are sensitive. They are compassionate, they are empathetic. They are loving. They're also fierce. They're also

Jeff Perera ([39:06](#)):

A force, you know, that, uh, that can be used for good or bad. You're powerful. Your words, like you said, you, in some ways it's like, let the lesson be the action. And in the other ways, you've talked about how our words are sometimes more powerful than the

Speaker 2 ([39:20](#)):

Shouldn't themselves, right? Like our words, like,

Jeff Perera ([39:23](#)):

But the point is that we create

Speaker 2 ([39:26](#)):

This world that we live in by the choices we make, by the way

Jeff Perera (39:29):

Words, we, we choose to say by the actions that we choose to take, we're creating and shaping a world. And for anybody that's, that's these young, impressionable eyes and this young impressionable heart, if they're watching you, if they're soaking it in

Speaker 2 (39:44):

Phrase that we've shared a lot in the brotherhood recently, thanks to my friend, Rochelle Clark, it's like values are caught. They're not taught you tell somebody all day long do they do, but it's like values

Jeff Perera (39:54):

A cop, man, they're catching you doing this. So let your kids catch you in the act

Speaker 2 (40:00):

Of, you know, winning and doing all the things that are great.

Jeff Perera (40:02):

So let them catch a failing and then show them how you bounce back. Yeah, absolutely. I always, I say that to men, like worry less about the impression that you have on others and focus on the impact to leave with others. So what I mean by that is like, you know, you have young men, especially today. Like I need to look like a million bucks. We need to look like I have it together. Like I look a certain way, but it's, it's the way I leave people feeling about themselves and about the world. Like I can, I can scare you into, like you said, let's like, get your shit together. Right. That's kind of like high school football coach, like yell and scream, get your shit together. The impression is, Oh, I gotta do the thing because I'm going to get my ass. But if I can impact someone to inspire them, to like assert themselves and to be their best, not just on the court or on the field, but off the court and off the field, like I leave that person with a life lesson again, using the high school football coach analogy.

Jeff Perera (41:07):

It's like a life lesson they can take throughout their whole life. Like once they can't play anymore because they got a bum me or whatever, you know, it's like apply that to other aspects of their life. For me, I talk about the letter of manhood. The quickest way up the ladder is violence. Like you walk into a room with a weapon, you get everyone's attention and you get a false sense of respect. Like if you're holding up a store or something and that's an extreme, but as men, we can aspire to have that kind of respect and impact in our own way, the impact where we get people's respect, where we can get things done, where people, we impact people. We resonate with people, but in a way that isn't about destroying everyone and breaking things down, breaking people down, like my rise and have to come at your expense.

Jeff Perera (41:57):

You know what I mean? Like we're taught that it's survival of the fittest for one person. I don't believe in that. I think we can lift each other up, like in different ways. So if you're in, like, you know, everybody's watching the Jordan last dance documentary right now. Yes, of course only one team can win the championship. But think about how many people, not just in basketball have been inspired by the bulls,

Chicago and Jordan or whoever your favorite athlete is, right? Like, yeah, don't get me wrong. I know this. If the bulls beat your team that year, your dreams are crushed. And I know that's a personal, that's a loss. I get that. Right. But the point is that at the end of the day, you see someone who excelled in a moment and you think I want to apply myself like that person did you know that's to me, that's the impact.

Jeff Perera ([42:50](#)):

Do you think Jordan was the type of man that you respect that you think is a great model for perhaps other people to consider? Not that everybody needs to be like Jordan, but is he the lesson in action that you talk about? Like how's his level of certainty and assertiveness because certainly some of his teammates like watch they're right there. Like he's an asshole, you know, whatever. He's really tough. We were afraid of him. And then you have people saying like, yeah, but that was what we needed. Like pushed us that. So it's interesting, man. That's a really fascinating case study of somebody who's like really assertive and a strong leader and sometimes overbearing. And sometimes like somebody has a healthy is a healthy fear of another person. Like it's like, we're just talking about earlier before a man. It's like, whether it's you or me or Michael Jordan or whoever.

Jeff Perera ([43:50](#)):

I think you look at anybody as a model and you say, here's what I liked. Here's what I think. If you were to talk to Jordan privately, but at some point in his life, there are things you would have done differently. Now you can argue, you can't have regrets, man. You're not Michael Jordan. And I think that's a large conversation, right? Like if he didn't do it the way he did it, what would have changed? Like if he was a little bit more empathetic, a little bit more light on his teammates, it sounded like he was a good teammate. It sounded like he was a good teammate. He also pushed people and rubbed people the wrong way or yes, to the point where people are like, I don't like you, like, I don't like you on a personal level professional level. I think you're an asshole, whatever it is.

Jeff Perera ([44:39](#)):

So there's things that I think I would not necessarily in agreement with. But at the same time, I think that applying yourself, that kind of like focus in Toronto. We had a pitcher here in baseball, Roy holiday, you also pitch for the Philadelphia Phillies. And he passed away a couple of years ago in a flying. And he had this line, he said always do more than you have to. And he was notoriously known for someone who was the first one to work out. He was the last one to leave pitch. And then after the game, talk to the press, soaking wet. Cause he had just did a workout after his performance. He was constantly trying to elevate himself. Now he can look back at his life and go, that cost me because my back is all messed up. Now as, as a retired athlete, go look at him and I can go, well, here's my leg.

Jeff Perera ([45:35](#)):

It's that drive? It's that dedication. But not to the point where it drives you into the ground, you know? Cause he, unfortunately he had, you know, the stories are still coming up, but it sounded like when he had to retire, she was one of those assets that didn't know what to do with himself. And he was a loving father, but also had an addiction to two. I think it was, I can't remember it was painkillers, but it affected his life. Like the next step, the next chapter of his life, you know, like how do I now just be a regular guy, retired, you know, not even 40 and I'm a father and I can, I can enjoy that. I can enjoy being a husband, but now my purpose has shifted. So Jordan is a guy who's driven to check people's ass, right? Like

there's this article I read way back to the day where when LeBron, James was coming up, I think it was for specialist rated.

Jeff Perera ([46:27](#)):

The report is sitting with Jordan, right? And the game is on and Jordan's on his Blackberry and George not watching the game. My friend is emailing somebody. But as the game is playing, Jordan calls out plays like on what he would do to defend LeBron. And the report is watching them and it's like, he's not even watching what's happening. He's so dialed in right. That he knows instinctively by the call of the, of the play by play. He knows what's happening. And what plays about to happen when you're at that level, because there's only one Michael Jordan is lane one, you know, whoever your favorite athlete is. Right. They're dialed in on a level that only a few people can understand. Right. So for me, it's like, I want to dial in, in my life on those levels too. Like how can I be dialed in as a partner, as a father, as a friend in extreme, extreme ways.

Jeff Perera ([47:27](#)):

Right? But in a way where as present as Jordan was, I can be that president of my own life, you know? But yeah, every hero has, I think it's just all in life, just like how we pick and choose what we like. And we're learning from people and take what we take Jeff to wrap us up here, man, who you think about a man who is truly, and just going back to your Brazier, being the lesson inaction, if you think of somebody that does that at a world class level, in your opinion. And I realize highly subjective here. Right? But what is that really quick? I would say Adam, yo, the Beastie boys was a huge influence for me going back to music. Hey Adam, yo MCA rest in peace. He passed away. Years ago, he came up as a musician. You know, the Beastie boys were kind of like, they were trying to make fun of frat boy culture and they became the pollster trials for frat boy culture.

Jeff Perera ([48:28](#)):

But then he turned it around. That is funny. I've never heard anything like that. Yeah. But at the same time it was like, he also was able to still party and have a good time, but also be about something. So you found a way to champion causes and issues, whether it was like, you know, what's happening around the world or here in North America, to me, he was someone who I watched him grow up and he was a lesson to me of how you can kind of step up and be authentic to, you know, what, here's, what I've learned. Like a journalist challenge. He passed away. And the other two remaining members that there's a documentary alive documentary that came out recently. And Adam, you know, Adam was saying how he did interview. Those were reported. I was really pushing hard. It was being like, you know, you guys are all now like advocates for women and things like this.

Jeff Perera ([49:23](#)):

But back in the day, you, you were like a bunch of jerks, like hurt you a hypocrite. And so Adam said, I'd rather be a hypocrite. There'd be someone who never changed. You know? So I think it's like that humility where you still get shit done, but you're able to kind of go, you know what I've learned from this? Like that to me is what being a man is all about. You know? So yeah. The Beastie boys really so trio they're influences in my life for sure. That's cool, man. I didn't know we were going to go down this musical direction, but that's fun, man. That sounds like something we could, we could talk a lot more about Jeff. Thanks for spending some time with us today, brother. I really appreciate it. This has been a fun conversation and thanks for doing the deep dive here and figuring out, taking on some of these

challenging subjects and being able to voice your opinion at the same time, hold space for humility and change.

Jeff Perera ([50:14](#)):

I think that, uh, your quote there as you wrapped it up is perfect because I feel the same way. In fact, in our brotherhood, in our private mastermind community for dads, we add five pillars of front row dads and we just evolved. We changed one of them. We added a sixth one, and I just said to the guys, I just recorded this video and posted it in the group. I'm like, you know, this is a conversation that is evolving over time. We are evolving as a brotherhood. We're changing our rules. We're constantly asking like, where are we now? And what serves the brotherhood today? And also I took guys off Facebook for a while and into this private community. And I was like, this is the direction we're going in. And like I was all about it. Then all of a sudden I came back and I'm like, all right, we're going back to Facebook for a little bit.

Jeff Perera ([50:59](#)):

And I just, you know, I try to practice this. Hey, I'm confident. I'm going to tell you exactly what I think today. And I want to reserve the right to change my mind tomorrow because I'm going to have new information tomorrow. I'm going to be a different guy tomorrow. I'm going to have read something or learn something or experienced something. It's probably going to change the way I feel. But the way to know that I'm still, I've still got a heartbeat is I'll probably be changing my mind. That's real strength. That's real strength, real growth. Absolutely. Thanks for the work that you do. Absolutely appreciate being with you, man. Thanks Jeff. All right, man. Well, let's uh, let's see where this friendship takes us down the road and all my bestie, Amanda and we're working guys go connect. If they wanted to find out more about Jeff Brera, uh, you can go to higher learning, higherlearning.com or just look me up on any social media. It's Jeff, J E F F E R E R a. Thank you so much, man. I appreciate it. All right, so next time take care.

Speaker 2 ([51:54](#)):

Hey guys, thanks for listening to the show. And if you enjoyed this one, consider what other dad out there would enjoy it also in pass this episode along and guys make sure you're subscribed to the podcast so that you get notified whenever release the latest episodes. And if you could, would you leave us a quick review if you haven't already done so, and if you have thanks because not only do I read every one, but tons of other people are reading them too. In the more of those reviews we have and the better they are, the more chance we have to get other guys to say yes to checking this out and we can help them in their journey to fatherhood and having a great marriage and just kicking ass family life. And also before we go, would you like to get a short, weekly email with a timely insight?

Speaker 2 ([52:29](#)):

And every Thursday I send out this super short three minute read with a personal photo from my own experiences as I try to go all in on family life. So if you want to get some recent relevant and real stories of my failures and the few of my wins, then text front row dads to (314) 665-1767, and you'll get our weekly insights, email blast, and the list guys, if you're still looking at whether or not you should join the brotherhood, then, uh, I want to leave you with a few comments from guys who are part of our tribe. And here's what they have to say about why they join, what value they're getting out of our brotherhood. So if you're ready to say yes, just go to front road, ads.com and click join the brotherhood.

Jeff Perera ([53:09](#)):

I'm super grateful. I was just at an event that I wore my front row dad's hat. I can't tell you how many people asked me, like, what's that all about? And it's just so easy for me to talk about it because it's had such a big impact on me, but the group that I've been looking for for a long time and I love what you're all about. And I'm really grateful that you've

Speaker 3 ([53:26](#)):

Created that group. I think there's this whole other level that is there. That's like Epic that you can reach. If you're listening to this, you already care about your family and your kids and your wife and me growing. So I just challenge everyone. That's hearing this to take it to the next level, whether that's joining this group or some other group, but just take it to the next level to take your family to the next level.