

Jon Vroman ([00:02](#)):

Gentlemen come to the Front Row Dad 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, 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.

Jon Vroman ([00:42](#)):

Guys, make my guests, John Eldredge, most known for his book, wild at heart. I'm a fan and, and largely thanks to the 82 people that told me I had to read the book. So shout out to all of those men. Um, my friend, Ryan Mickler, who just had a conversation with John and, um, has been talking about his work for years. So John is a healer amongst men, and I, I really get that. I feel like there's, after I read the book, there was a lot of healing in my heart. And also I know there's been healing as a result. So John I'm pumped that you're here. I'm excited for this conversation and I want to share a win with you to, to get things rolling right now. So this morning I had in my schedule podcast prep, which would have just meant, Hey, take a couple more, you know, glances at your videos and, you know, read over your bio a couple.

Jon Vroman ([01:35](#)):

That's usually what that means, right? To prepare for my guest. And as I was looking at my calendar, and then I heard my son and the next next room over, I thought, you know what? The best prep I could have this morning for this podcast would be, is to take my son on an adventure. And I said, that's how I'm going to prepare for this podcast. So, dude, I went out front because of you. I went out front, I posted this picture on my social media this morning. He and I jumped on our bikes and we rode and here's the game we played. You're going to love this judge. I said, every traffic light or stop sign or crosswalk that we come up to about 20 or 30 feet before that crosswalk, I want you to just start saying left right or straight slowly. And whenever you pass this, you know, get to the stop sign, whatever word you're on is the direction we're going to go.

Jon Vroman ([02:23](#)):

We're going to go on an adventure. But the whole thing was filtered on. We're going to take an adventure. We don't know where we're going. We're just going to see what, what awaits us ahead. And we ended up on these trails where there was mud and we got mud. It was muddy. It was fun. And on the way back, tiger said to me, he said, he said, this was a great morning. He said, this was a great morning. He goes, I woke up, I read. And then we went for this bike ride and it just had this sense of, you know, this sense of confidence, this sense of connection to nature. The sense of I'm an 11 year old boy, who's ready to take on the, and that is the type of influence. And I also feel that there was a moment when we were on our bikes and I said to tiger, I go, isn't this so much better than like sitting in, at getting into a fight with somebody in our house. Like we're just two dudes out on the trail, on our bikes. Like this is so good for the soul. And there was healing happening in that moment with our relationship, there was healing happening in his heart. And that is largely due to the influence of you in our lives. John. And I want to share that with you as a Testament to your work, as that is the introduction I wanted

to give you today, not the standard. I'm going to read your bio, but like that's the impact you're having on the Romans.

John Eldredge ([03:44](#)):

That's beautiful. I mean, we could just wrap the show up. We just,

Jon Vroman ([03:49](#)):

We're not mad because we have a lot to talk about. You have a lot to talk about. Thank you, man. And on that note, let's celebrate one of your adventures, man. What have you done in the last six to 12 months? What adventures have you taken that have really healed or lit up your heart in unique ways?

John Eldredge ([04:07](#)):

Yeah, so my, my rescue during the pandemic last year was to build up a fly fishing raft and a NRS Otter, one 30 with the fishing frame and the rowing seat. And guy stands in the front guy in the back. And then a couple of weeks ago, two pals of mine. We went out to the green river in Utah and floated for a couple days and fish and camp. And it was so life giving. It was so good. We didn't crush it on the fish, but it wasn't about that. It was like a couple of pals on a river all day long. Just drinking that in and yeah, it was really good. Do you

Jon Vroman ([04:52](#)):

Find, just talk about cadence? Um, I think rhythm is a word that would resonate with you, right? As these rhythms. What rhythm do you need when it comes to outdoor adventure connection with your family or other men? How often, and for how long

John Eldredge ([05:08](#)):

You got to divide it up into the daily because it's, there's gotta be a daily. You know, I, I have to at least take a walk outside and I'll do this in the middle of the day at work and it cracks my staff up. I'll just get up and walk out of the building. And I do laps

Speaker 4 ([05:23](#)):

Around the building cause I need

John Eldredge ([05:25](#)):

To get out of technology in zoom and meetings and all that stuff get off emails. So I walk her, I mean, daily there's the daily and it could be five minutes, 30 minutes. Right. And then there's the weekly, which is the hike, the bike ride something weekly, but then like the bigger adventure stuff. Yeah. That's a couple times a year trying to fit that in, you know, there's a fishing trip, there's a bow hunting trip. You know, there's something probably quarterly. If I really am honest about, kind of think about every three months, I find myself really needing restoration. And even if it's, even if it's just a day, it doesn't need to be in a big overnight thing. But yeah, those rhythms, rhythms of beauty, rhythms of a soul's pace are really, really big for me.

Jon Vroman ([06:19](#)):

Yeah. Do you plan them always in advance where you're like, Hey, I'm, I'm planning three, six months out or is it, do you kind of wait until your, your heart is saying now is the time you got to go? Right.

John Eldredge ([06:32](#)):

I plan a couple of 'em, you know, cause like in the bow hunting season, you got to put in for your tags and stuff like that, but I'm embarrassed to say mostly it's when my soul is screaming at me. Like I've run too hard, too fast. And, and I just realize I am not well. And then I'm like, okay, okay. I got up, whoa, like quick rearrange the schedule, cancel a few things, you know, go get on the river. I

Jon Vroman ([07:00](#)):

Think it's fascinating how fast you can get recentered. Like we just, as a group, as a community, we just finished a two day or 60 hour really to be specific water only fast. So no food, no coffee, no anything just water with like trace minerals in it. And we did it for 60 hours and we had probably 42 men, I think, you know, to participate in this. And I said to my wife and said, I'm amazed at just how 60 hours, how much can be reset in your life, how much momentum can be created, how much, you know, self-confidence can be generated in that time, how much your body can shift, how much your community can connect. Like there were 42 men who all got connected. There was, uh, I don't know collectively how much weight was lost and that's not really the goal, but it's kind of a nice benefit when at the end of 60 hours, like I can see my abs, you know, that's, that's a nice little benefit, but I just feel lighter. I, you know, everything just feels better. I had my best night's sleep that I've had in quite a long time, but that's just in 60 hours of doing something intentional, communal right. That's, health-related, that's good for your body that gives, and that, to me, the reason we do these fasts are healing. Like I genuinely believe like that is healing to every part of our bodies. Do you do any type of fasting as part of your tools?

John Eldredge ([08:23](#)):

And really, I usually do like vegetable juice fast though. I mean, I kind of tend it to the juice side, not just the pure water thing and had a lot of stomach problems over the years and stuff. So that's partly why too much this way too much to Kayla in my youth, cut it tore up. My are kindred souls, but let me no resets. Okay. So right before the pandemic, we released an app. Now we're not an app company. We don't, we don't do that kind of thing, but I was just really, really moved release this app called the one minute pause one minute, one minute. And then on the app, there's a three minute version and a five minute, a 10 minute, but you can start with the one. And then the pandemic hit and just crushed, you know, everybody. And we have 185,000 downloads on this app and people are writing in telling us just pausing in my day and we kind of reg it. You can set your time twice a day. It's free guys, but you were talking about, it's amazing how a reset, how quickly you can reset you, like literally just in learning to pause and then kind of what to do with the pause, detachment, letting things go, that sort of thing. It's been really fun to see that the number of folks who are like this is my life saver. Now this is my, this is my go-to. Do you think,

Jon Vroman ([09:50](#)):

You know, matters of the heart, which is really at the core here, right? That's what we, that's the thing, right? It's matters of the heart. My sense is that when I look back over the last 10 years of my life, the decade or two, you could say that the world has gotten so good at listening in some ways to each other. And here's what I mean by that. Not real listening, but, but being distracted by each other, this social media, just knowing in any given moment, you could wake up and for the first time, right? And in modern day, you could know what's happening in the lives of 300 people around you in an instant, within, within minutes of scrolling a feed, you could get a read. We're getting really good at knowing what everybody else is thinking and feeling. And we're very interested in being like in the know, the fear of missing out is very real.

Jon Vroman ([10:37](#)):

Like, oh, did you see that video going by? It was like, all right, must be so out of the loop. Right? Whatever it might be. And I've noticed that the things that have really stood out to me are now the principles that bring me back to understanding what am I saying internally? What do I think, what do I care about? What is my inner guidance system saying? And that I need more training with that. The better the world gets at telling me what they think. Right? And so books like a centralism by Greg McKeown was really powerful book. Like the one thing that just right by Jay Papasan and Gary Keller that gets you focused and honed in on something books that bring you into or anything that brings you. Like you just said to a one minute pause, all of a sudden people, if they just cut out all the noise, they are like, oh, I have something.

Jon Vroman ([11:28](#)):

I have this internal wisdom. I have this universal, right. Or depending on your beliefs, this God from within, or this connection to a spirit, right? That's a, that's a guidance system. That's there that we just drown out with all the noises around us. Right. So when it comes to matters of the heart, how much is being in community and seeing from other people's perspectives, counseling, mentorship, et cetera, modeling of others, and how much of it is just taking a walk into nature by yourself, where have you found that balance to be? Or how can a man look at that? You know, the benefits of both and the balance of both.

John Eldredge ([12:10](#)):

There's so many ways to come at that. Let's think of it as three stages, there's detox, there's healing. And then there's, wholeheartedness right. And we're all on that journey. And at different times in our week, and at different times in our lives, we need a little bit more of one than the other, like the 20 minute walk in the woods that actually Lowe, lowers your cortisol levels. Guys is your detox. Like I just, I'm fried at the end of my day. I'm fried at the end of my week. I need detox, but that's not the same thing as the restoration of your soul. And that requires a little bit more, I think, community, I think, um, sharing your story, sharing where you're at getting some loving counsel, just someone listening in kindness to your story is healing. Just that, that alone. And then we're in this journey towards wholeheartedness and we've got to, we've just got to admit, we are in love with distraction.

John Eldredge ([13:15](#)):

Like it, it's not, it's not just addictive the whole, you know, scrolling thing and click and all that. And you know, the dopamine hits and stuff like we love distraction because we don't have to deal with our inner world. And if I, if I can just stay distracted in really cool stuff. And I'm I'm to date on the BBC's newsfeed and yada yada, you know, but it's a false sense of settled ness. It's a false sense of being in tune because you're out of tune with your own self. And so we just got to kind of confess this, like, we actually love distraction because it keeps us from facing some of the more difficult things inside. Yeah.

Jon Vroman ([13:58](#)):

I learned that mostly this last year. I feel like I've been learning that for a couple decades, but this last year, John, my, my core community here in Austin really got into the Enneagram, which has kind of cycled in and out of our communities for decades. But, uh, really got into it as a core group. And I realized as a seven that I create distractions and adventures and all these things many times to not feel my feelings. Right. So I'll go, I'll go, I'll go run a marathon or train for a marathon or do whatever I'm going to do with the skies of I'm going to better my life. But really I'm also running away from just sitting

and feeling the pain, the trauma, the discomfort, whatever it is I want to avoid in my life. I'm, I'm running towards a goal and secretly running away from something I want to face.

John Eldredge ([14:52](#)):

Right, right. And it gives us, it gives us a sense of accomplishment, but it's not the same thing as, as wholeheartedness, it's not the same thing as internal restoration. And most guys, if I could just give you like a couple of categories, we're chasing love and validation belovedness and validations the coordinates of a boy with his dad. W what's your tiger is my 11 year old. Yeah, my dad. That was my nickname tiger. Yeah. So what tiger got this morning was love and validation. Yeah. It was, it was your delight. I want to be with you. Like that message is just golden. I want to be with you. That's belovedness but then it's also, you can do this pal, like you've got what it takes. There was tons of validation in it and you can handle the mud. You can handle the craziness of this adventure in.

John Eldredge ([15:44](#)):

Then he came back with a sense of love and validation. Yeah. And if we're not aware again, internally aware of where we are chasing love and validation, it's going to start ruling. It starts driving the bus. And so the marathon, the promotion, you know what, like, we're not aware of what's compelling us. Right. And then it sort of takes over because it gives you a set. You know, there's still a whole pornography thing. It's about love and validation. It's really not about sex. Um, if we're not aware, tuned in, dialed in to what our heart is seeking, then we get caught up in stuff that burns us out. When

Jon Vroman ([16:29](#)):

Did you realize in your life that you had what it takes?

John Eldredge ([16:33](#)):

So everybody's got a story and it's really important to know a man. You, you have to know his story. So I, I grew up in an alcoholic home and my dad really blew the family up. He was a good guy. We love to fish together, but then he just got taken out and it was a number of career setbacks and, and a pretty tough marriage. To be honest, he married a very difficult woman. He just started drinking and it took him out to sea. And, but my rescue was my grandfather. My grandfather was a cattle rancher in Eastern Oregon. And I would get sent to his ranch every summer because I was a really wild kid and they didn't know what to do with me. So they would just send me, but it was a rescue because I was beloved to him. Like he loved me. And then all kinds of validation, like he would put me on a tractor and say, Hey, go, go like plow that field. And I've never driven a tractor.

John Eldredge ([17:27](#)):

He would, he was, he was really smart. He knew what he was doing. He would stay saddle that horse. We're going to go ride and I'd be terrified. But the validation that came through it, you have, you have what it takes. I got some of that, but it really wasn't until my adult years, the anger, the drivenness, the fear waking up to fear in the night that I realized, whoa, I, I have some unresolved things inside. And I actually went and saw a counselor. It was life-changing for me. It was absolutely life. And, and that began the journey really in my thirties of kind of getting straightened out on, where am I chasing love and validation? Where does that come from?

Jon Vroman ([18:16](#)):

What did that counselor help you with?

John Eldredge ([18:18](#)):

Well, first the father wound, right? Because the little boy first looks to dad for that. Now, you know, then there's grandpa and there's teachers and coaches and mom plays a huge role, but the boy looks to dad for love and validation. And so you have to start with, how did that go? What was your dad's message to you? Where are you beloved in? The problem was because he checked out through his alcoholism. I didn't have an answer. I don't know that I have what it takes. So I became very driven to prove that I was a 4.0 student. I was over the top achiever, but, but it wasn't coming out of a place of subtleness. It wasn't from an internal strength. It was a desperation to prove that I had what it takes and a fear, a fear of exposure that one day, the whole world is going to discover that I don't, that I'm faking it.

John Eldredge ([19:15](#)):

Right. And so that's where the counselor went. He went, he went straight after that stuff and it's actually a beautiful story. We ended up becoming very good friends and we wrote my first book. I wrote with him, uh, together and we fished and backpacked, and I kind of broke all the professional protocols because we ended up becoming very close pal. When did you fall in love with writing? Yeah, another fun part of the story. So I didn't know that it was a gift and we were at the same guy, Brent for sitting at a coffee shop one morning. And we had been giving some lectures to men on, you know, kind of the journey of the heart, the importance of the heart, that kind of thing. And he said, I really, I really think we got to write a book and I, at the time I'm in grad school and have a full-time job and I have three young sons and I looked there and God, there's no, like, there's no way I can't do that. And I, I, and it was time to go. So I got up, he stayed at the table, I got up left. I got out to my truck and God literally said to me, that was a really bad decision.

Speaker 4 ([20:21](#)):

And that's all he said,

John Eldredge ([20:24](#)):

That was a really bad decision. I'm like, what? So I walked back into the coffee shop and I said, okay, I'm in, we wrote together a book called sacred romance. And I discovered that I love it. I love writing and I'm good at it. And it just, I mean, it just took off from there, but that wasn't, I was 35. You know,

Jon Vroman ([20:47](#)):

How many hours a day do you right now? Or is it daily?

John Eldredge ([20:50](#)):

Yeah, I, I don't, I don't do that. And partly it's because I've put in the 10,000 hours, like, it comes very easily to me. And it's that kind of gifted thing of when it's time to write, I write, but I don't, I don't do, I hate to say this because I don't want to give bad counsel to guys. You know, my son writes daily, I have three sons. They're their adult sons. Now they're in their young thirties. They're all writers, which is really fun. They do the discipline thing. Like he writes daily, even just get, get in front of the desk. I just don't do that. I, um, but I don't shoot my bow daily. I don't ride my bike daily. Like, I, I kind of fail at some of those when you're

Jon Vroman ([21:38](#)):

Like me where it's like, people are like, what's your routine? And I'm like, I love to do the thing every day that I didn't do yesterday. That's the thing I love to do. What's your habit. And I'm like, my habit is variety. Right. Very difficult to do the same thing every day.

John Eldredge ([21:54](#)):

Yeah. For me. Yeah. Yeah. I have some things. I have some rhythms, like the pause, things like that, like nature, beauty, you know, I have some dailies that I just need for the sake of my soul. I mean, you know, one of my new dailies is spike, spike ball,

Speaker 4 ([22:10](#)):

Right? Yeah. That's cool. I see that all

Jon Vroman ([22:13](#)):

The time down here in Austin

John Eldredge ([22:14](#)):

That has saved me during the

Jon Vroman ([22:20](#)):

John is somebody who would have given me a hundred yeses this morning as to what sport you've picked up. I would never in a million years. I love it. That's awesome. That's cool. Who introduced you to that? Nice sense. Yeah.

John Eldredge ([22:32](#)):

Yeah. And there's a group of guys, so we've got an organization called wild at heart. And one of my sons works there, but like when you're in the middle of zoom and you're in the middle of the email and stuff, somebody will just come by and go timeout, spike ball. And we'll go out in the parking lot. And it's the rec, it's the rescue. It's like, I get out of the technology, you know, blahs own. And, and we have a ball though. That's awesome, man. Do you ever play volleyball? No, I've never, never played.

Jon Vroman ([22:59](#)):

I got into volleyball a couple of years ago here in Austin. And that's been for me, the thing I know that some of the guys who come play regularly, like I look forward to this all week and it's just fun. We joke around, you know, it gets competitive, but not that competitive. Like it's more fun than anything else. Put your feet in the sand, get into the sun, breathe fresh air, just break the pattern.

John Eldredge ([23:21](#)):

It's really good. Yeah.

Jon Vroman ([23:22](#)):

That's cool. So you're you love writing, you wrote this book with this, uh, this guy, because you got a strong message to do. So. What was the impetus for wild at heart? When, when did that come to life? What stage were you in? How did you get that message?

John Eldredge ([23:38](#)):

Brent was my counselor, but then he became my supervisor when I became a therapist. And that's how we wrote romance together. And we were doing a lot of work with men. And so we held our first men's weekend in 1997. And Brent was killed in a climbing accident that weekends. And so it was devastating. And my publisher called me about six months later and said, Hey, look, sacred romance is doing really well. And you're a really good writer and we know you've lost your pal, but we'd really encourage you to write again, which would you write again? So I started, I wrote a book called journey of desire, talking about the power of desire in our lives and what happens when we abandoned desire and then came well that hard. And it's a funny story because I said, Hey, I got this book from man. I've been doing a lot of work with men. A lot of lectures for men, guys are really responding to it. And they said, nah, books for men don't sell well, we're like 5 million copies later. And so real wild at heart. And that took off and it really created a runway for us to do all the work we've done around the world, the conferences and stuff that we do for men.

Jon Vroman ([24:56](#)):

Hey guys, quick break here to talk about a new program that we launched a few months ago, and it's having a huge impact. It's called this summit series and here's how it works. Every 60 days, we take a breather from the business and focus on improving life at home. So over 12 months, we take guys through the complete fatherhood journey, covering all six pillars, all of the bases to make sure that you're making progress in the areas of life that matter most now, we've all seen. And we've likely been this guy at times, a hard charging business dude who spends the majority of their hours focused on growing the business while investing in the family. It takes a back seat, you know, and I've heard the phrase, I've said the phrase, Hey, I just got to get through the busy season. Well, for most of the busy season never ends.

Jon Vroman ([25:34](#)):

And we just are one of those guys who gets to the end of their life saying, I wish I would've spent more time with my family. So to ensure that that does not happen to you or anyone in our community, we created a program to keep us all on track. It's a space to get focused on how to take our families to the next level. So here's a few reasons why the impact has been so profound of this summit series. Number one, it's a giant pattern interrupt. While many of us have been very intentional about creating habits and routines and rituals that help us to thrive. They can also hurt us if we don't have moments where we break away, take a day and see things from a different angle. You know, we all know the difference of like a five, 10 or 15 minute meeting at work where we might've been able to address one thing.

Jon Vroman ([26:16](#)):

It's very topical and where we can step away offsite one day planning session where big moves are made. And that's what this is for our families. We also know that, you know, it's not always about new ideas. It's about true ideas. So while we're all interested in novelty, we have to be careful of that. And we have to remember that we want the principles also that have been tested over decades and centuries. And you know, that work for not just one family, but many families. So our summits are a mix of new and true ideas that serve men. We also believe in blind spots. You know, it's one thing to go out and listen to a podcast like, Hey, you're listening to one now, or to listen to an audio book or sit and read a book, but that's one directional. You just start getting the content plugged into your head and you're able to contemplate it.

Jon Vroman ([27:00](#)):

And it does serve a purpose, but there's a totally different level of learning. When you're in conversation with somebody who's hearing what you're saying, challenging your thoughts, getting vulnerable with you, reflecting back, giving you specific targeted ideas. And so within our brotherhood, that is what makes this summit series very different than any other type of learning that most men are getting exposed to. And lastly, one of the big reasons that guys benefit from the summit series is you're watching how other people design and facilitate conversations. So you're getting the benefit of learning from Steve Burchard, our designer and facilitator. He's one of the top facilitators in the world. And you can bring these same principles on how to host an online gathering like this, to lead your business and other groups that you care about your church groups, your family, uh, and whatever it might be.

Jon Vroman ([27:47](#)):

Men's groups that you're a part of in other industries. So learning to lead in this way, guys, constantly walk away and say, not only did I walk away with amazing content, but I got great ideas of how I could run my meetings, which is fantastic. So if you want the best for your family, then you should have the best training. And we're the first company to address this topic specifically for high performing entrepreneurial businessmen. So rather than me talking about it anymore, here's what one of our attendees has to say about the summit series. I just wanted to share some gratitude. This event was really one of the reasons I wanted to jump in to make connections. And there wasn't a single person that I interacted with who was not just on such a high level. Everyone was committed to being here, to being a part of this process, learning and growing and support each other. So I'm super grateful to everyone that I interacted with and to be a part of the brotherhood. So I'm looking forward to just taking everything to the next level with you guys. So thank you, you guys to register for the next summit event or become a summit series member, which I recommend within the brotherhood go to front road, ads.com and click join the brotherhood today.

Jon Vroman ([28:55](#)):

Let's talk about what was core in wild at heart, because after what two decades now, it got, there's a new expanded edition. And as I heard you and Ryan talking about, um, that, uh, there were some core elements that for sure are timeless, but there's also some modern day issues that you wanted to bring to light, right? Maybe update some of the language. Talk to us about what was at the core that you're like. This can never leave that 10%, the top 10%. And what were the, what's the top 10% of the new information that you just knew you had to get in there?

John Eldredge ([29:31](#)):

The core is you have a heart, it's a masculine heart. It's uniquely masculine and you need a battle to fight. You need an adventure to live and you need a woman to love. And like, just talking about those things, battle, adventure, love the power of beauty that's core that never goes away. And that's, you can, you cannot make a best-selling movie for men without those three ingredients. Like you just can't they video games like you just, you could go look this up, guys, like, look at your favorite movies. He's got a battle, he's got an adventure and there's love and beauty in there. And then the new, the newer stuff has to do with the hostility towards gender, in how we're not looking for a fight here. We're looking for healing. We want to see people get wholehearted. And so trying to offer some direction in that, like how do you navigate the current climate screen time?

John Eldredge ([30:34](#)):

And, and all of that's taken out. I brought this before the iPhone, right. And I wrote in 2001, iPhone comes out in 2007 and, and that's changed everybody's life. Like it's insane. I started my work career. There was an email. It guys can't even imagine that now, but we lived the whole different pace of life because it just simply wasn't possible. There's too much that's possible now. So how do you regulate that? How do you live with healthy rhythm, but particularly parenting? I think the core things in there on raising boys, because they're facing such a different world than we all faced when we grew up and the screen time and the sexual stuff and all that. Like, how do you, how do you raise healthy sons in an environment like this? That's kind of the top 10% of the new stuff.

Jon Vroman ([31:22](#)):

Do you think it's healthy for a boy to listen or read your book? The new book? Yeah,

John Eldredge ([31:29](#)):

Probably adolescents probably around 13, 14, 15, and a lot of dads will do it with their sons. And just talk through some of the issues. I talk about a lot of films in the book. So like use the films, like watch, you know, you watch Braveheart together, you watch legend of bagger, Vance, and how he lost his heart and got it back. You w you know, you watch the films and talk about it. It's so cool with your sons. It really opens up good dialogue. And then the clears, the cool thing is that in their movie go to their favorite movies, go to their video games and you'll see it. It's, this is inescapable. It's all ages all through time, all around the world, these core things of the warrior heart, the need for adventure, loving a woman like this is just core stuff.

Jon Vroman ([32:17](#)):

Yeah. John, you know what? I was, one of the things I was really excited to talk about today is this, um, I'll, I'll call it a battle to honor the term, right. That we just said, it's like, there's a battle in my mind over the word battle. And I'm sure that I'm not the first one to bring this conversation to you. So apologies if this is like, you know, beat the ground and you talking about this for the last 20 years, but I have yet to come to a clear belief around peacefulness and battling. And, you know, I'll give you a couple of examples, cause I really want to, I want to hear what you have to say, but I wanna make sure that I give the right context for this question of what I'm asking. So I want to give a little backstory to why I'm asking this question.

Jon Vroman ([33:04](#)):

So I grew up with, uh, a father who was a Navy captain, right? So interestingly like in our military and fighting for our freedom, but also a very peaceful man, you know, a man who, when I was beating crabs with a stick down by the river, because I thought it was fun, you know, grounded me because we don't kill animals without a purpose. Right? Like we eat meat and we fish. But even my dad, I remember having a, a challenge with like fishing, just to fish, sport, fishing, like hooking a fish, just for fun, happy to hook a fish, to feed my family a little bit more difficult of a time, hooking a fish, just because it it's fun to do that. And I remember all through my childhood and even into my adulthood, wrestling, battling, whatever word with the difference of where is this warrior inside me that I want to nurture, that I know is primal.

Jon Vroman ([34:02](#)):

I know that has a hunter in him, right? That has, you know, if you look at history, you've likely had to defend your family. There needs to be a part of you that is able to defend and hunt and provide in

whatever way that you want. And things often feel like a battle and battles can be fun. You can have a Nerf gun battle and it can be fun. And I also, where I, where I step over that line is where the, where if you take on the identity too much of the warrior, then the answer is always, well, we're going to go to war with that. Oh, you, you don't wear a mask. Uh, I wear a mask, uh, we're going to go to war. You're a vaccine. I'm an anti-vaxxer, we're going to go to war. Like everything is like, it's time to fight.

Jon Vroman ([34:44](#)):

And I go, I don't know that that's always the answer, right? Like it's time to, I believe in standing up for your rights. But I also really appreciate people that have made progress peacefully. You know, a Gandhi as an example of that peaceful protest and what that can do when you, when you rally people in their hearts to take a stand for what they want, modeling more of what you want, then the confrontational, which gets a lot of attention online. Like, all you have to do is start a podcast and be like, that guy. And it. Like, if you just really want to Raul people up, you can, you can get people on your team very quickly. Yep. Through that fighter mentality. So I don't want to say it too much of the context to just give you a chance to respond, but I know you know where I'm going with this now, but that's what I genuinely wrestle.

Jon Vroman ([35:35](#)):

Cause people come to me about front row dads and say, it's not edgy enough. Right? Like you gotta, it's gotta be more masculine. It's gotta be more like dad's fight, you know, or something like that. I'm like, Hey man, I want competent men who could defend their family. No problem with all of our men being jujitsu experts or hunters or whatever. But I also appreciate the philosophy of front row dads getting close to people, places, thoughts, and things that make you come alive, lifting others up. Like there's a, there's a softness and a hardness I both want to have as part of my life. So talk to us about that. There's a lot for that. We'll see. Let's see. At the end of the show, John 20 minutes, it's all yours. Take it away.

John Eldredge ([36:17](#)):

No, it's beautiful. It's a beautiful question. And it's sort of, it's a really important one. So let me just start throwing some thoughts out, right? The ancient Hebrew proverb that greater is he who masters himself than he, who takes a city. Okay. So the warrior is strength that is under control. The warrior is also strength on behalf of others. And that, that really defines things super quick. Like yeah, you want to fight. You want to make a big deal of this, that, or the other thing, why who's this for, is this about you? Or is this about others? Just about everything you want in this life requires some kind of fight. Like you want to finish high school. You want to finish college. You want to go to grad school. Holy cow, that takes a lot of fight in you to press through hard things, right?

John Eldredge ([37:16](#)):

You, you, you want to love, well, that takes a lot of courage. You know, when you walk in the door and your wife is and she says, we need to talk at that point. Most guys check out internally. They just go dive, dive, dive. And they're, they're gone. Like they may stay in the room, but it takes courage to love. It takes courage to be a parent. It takes courage to pursue your dreams. Courage is essential to masculinity. It's absolutely essential. And courage expresses itself in a ton of ways. You don't need to be a hunter. You don't need to work on motorcycles. You don't need to race motorcycles like to be a real man. No, but you do have to be aware of courage in your life and where your battles are and to, you know, wisdom is to know how to pick your battles.

John Eldredge ([38:08](#)):

Well, right. So right now we live in an incendiary culture. It's incendiary like everything's molecule, everything is volatile. And in part it has to do with the sociology and the politics of our day. But part of it actually has to do with the pandemic. We've all just been through global trauma and everybody has like a low grade PTSD from it. And one of the things you do is you get. And so like greater is he who masters himself? Like, why am I fried right now? Why do I want to fire this email back? I want to just roast this person. Why do I want to get online and just cook this person? Like, why is that in the service of love? Is that in the service of love? So like nine 11 twin towers are on fire. They're a small group of men, firefighters who ran up the stairs while everybody else was running down. Okay. That takes a lot of warrior to do that. But it was in the service of others. It was in the service of love. Does that help?

Jon Vroman ([39:15](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. It's great. You know, sometimes when you're in the middle of a show, John, you're in the middle of an interview and you're like, this one's going to live on for a long time. I have the sense about this conversation of how important this is for me. And I'm imagining many others. So no, that was, that took, uh, and you know that you're also a skilled communicator. John, when it took longer for me to set up the question than it did for you to answer it, see, that's why you're my mentor, John. Well,

John Eldredge ([39:44](#)):

And the thing is though, we could unpack that for a long time, right? W cause there, there is. Uh, so our prisons are not filled with young women. Okay? They're not, they're filled with young men and almost to a man. They are fatherless young men. So young men create the number of violent crime in the majority of violent crimes in the world, you know, domestic violence in the world, terrorism in the world. So yes, like there's an issue here of how do we shape aggression in men into healthy ways. And, and a lot of the world has come to the conclusion when we just take it away. Right? We just don't want men to like aggression is wrong. I go, whoa, whoa, whoa, hang on. Like your house is on fire. You want some aggression. Like you, you need to be like, get people out of that building.

John Eldredge ([40:33](#)):

You need to grab a garden hose and do what you can. You, you know, like, yeah man, there's a, there's a lot. You're in a, you're in a board meeting and somebody is about to tank the company with a really unethical decision. That's going to take some serious aggression and courage to stand up and go. I think this is a really bad idea. Can I tell you why? Like that's unethical? So we don't want to take aggression away. We want to harness it for the good of the community. And that's what, that's what initiation rituals all through the centuries did for boys, except for our century. Our era is, is, is you don't take the warrior away. You teach the warrior, you are in the service of the community.

Jon Vroman ([41:19](#)):

We just had an event last week, 45 men, three days, deep dive, you know, uh, conscious conversations, open, vulnerable, a lot of learning, a lot of sharing of resources. And it was a, it was epic. One of the ideas I took away, John was I took away this idea. We had a conversation at lunch about rites of passage and one of our guys Ned brought an idea to the table. He said, I think it was a friend of his who had wrote a book about this. It might've even been called way makers. I'm not confident on that, but on his son's 12th birthday, he lined up 12 mentors to have a lunch with him. Take that in any way that you want 12 days with 12 mentors, right? But this idea of lining them up. This was the beginning of a great conversation of all the different ways that you could look at a Rite of passage. I remember I had a

conversation with John Tyson about this, about his program called primal path and what he did for his son. For those who don't know, John, he leads a big church in New York. So for you, what's your take on rites of passage? What have you seen develop over the years? What are some ideas in that category? Something that men might be able to take and apply to their sons?

John Eldredge ([42:36](#)):

Yeah. So remember guys, the coordinates are love and validation, love and validation. So it's always gotta be in the context of love and bestowing validation, but let's clarify a difference real quick between there are moments of demarcation, you know, a 12th birthday, a 13th birthday, a graduation from high school at joining the military, uh, you know, their wedding dates. There are moments of demarcation that are very, very significant. And I think we seize those as dads. Like what are going to, what are the, what are the words you're going to say to your son privately the day of his wedding? Like it makes all the difference in the world. What's the gift you're going to bestow on him the day of his wedding. So there's these beautiful, sacred moments. But the problem is, is that the sacred moments are only moments. What, what, we also need our journeys of initiation.

John Eldredge ([43:34](#)):

So like the, in the native American world, that was the vision quest and the, and the young warrior went on a series of challenges of different types. Some of them were emotional challenges. Some of them were physical, right? Some of them were spiritual, but they were all building towards a resiliency in the boy. And so I would just look at there's process and then there's moments of celebration and demarcation. And you need both, as you think about, you know, what does it look like to initiate my son or other young men that are in my world, nephews, younger brothers, you know, the opportunities you have seize the moments, uh, or those sacred moments to speak into their life. But then they also need a process. And what you did this morning is part of the process of initiation. Get on your bike. This is unpredictable.

John Eldredge ([44:30](#)):

We're just going to go with the wild goose here and we're going to face challenges and you can handle it, right? Yeah. We could go so long on this, but, but to add one more quick thing, it's not just always success. And the challenges that doesn't teach a good lesson, if he had crashed his bike in the mud and gotten hurt, w what most men lack is a father or someone there to interpret failure. Because when you have someone that helps you interpret failure, you build resiliency. If you don't, then you, you start feeling like you don't have what it takes.

Jon Vroman ([45:05](#)):

Wow. Taking a note here, John, never. I pause in the podcast, man, that's me writing notes down. I hope that you are too. And that's so great. John, I'm conscious of the clock. I'm feeling both a lot of gratitude right now for this conversation. And also a deep sadness that I know that it will come to an end in a few moments, but, uh, what's a question that men could or should be asking themselves more often to perhaps connect with their heart where the heart of their families.

John Eldredge ([45:41](#)):

Well, oh gosh. Again, so many things. Desire is the language of the heart. You want to pay attention to your heart. You pay attention to desire. What are your deep desires? And they change. And they morph and they, and they mature over time. But where is desire in your life? Whereas desire. And I just mean,

man, I want a cheeseburger, but like the deeper stuff. I hate my job. Whoa, pay attention to that. You know, I, uh, I really wish I was closer to a few guys in my life. Wow. Pay attention to that. Like desire is crucial, but I would also want to ask a couple other questions. One would be, what am I running from? What am I running from? Um, because that's the warrior and, and he's not in the fight. What am I running from? Is it talking to my 16 year old daughter? What am I running from? And then the really, really deep thing is what is my spirituality like where you are, you are a whole person, body, soul, and spirit. You got to take care of your body. You gotta take care of your soul. What about your, what about your spiritual life? Like where the big questions, you know, where are the big questions? And are you, are you wrestling with them or are you running from them? So I would want to ask myself those kinds of things.

Jon Vroman ([47:00](#)):

Wow. John, thank you so much for being on the show today. I really appreciate this opportunity to connect. Uh, I do hope that we have another opportunity in the future to, you know, for a conversation number two, but this is a dealer conversation. Number one, this has been a great start, man. So thank you. I realize how valuable time is to you and to your family. And so to share a little bit with us, it says a lot. So thank you. Uh, really honor that guys. Um, you gotta get the book if you haven't, if you got a book gift one, you know, as to honor John and his path here, uh, and the work he's put into this, but the new expanded edition of wild at heart is out there. Go find it, pick it up. We'll link to it@thereintheshownotesatfrontroads.com. And as I have done in the past, uh, as my thanks to John for being here and to all of you for listening, if you, uh, if you dig this episode, which if you didn't, I strongly encourage you to listen to it again.

John Eldredge ([48:03](#)):

Great to talk to you today, John, thanks for this. Take

Jon Vroman ([48:06](#)):

It this one more stab at this, but man, uh, so write a review for the front road, add podcast screenshot. It mentioned John, and then send it to me and I will buy you a copy of wild at heart and send it to your home or send it to anybody that you want. I will send it as a gift. I will buy as many copies of wild at heart. As you all want, just read a review on the show, screenshot it, email it to info [inaudible] dot com and I will buy a copy of the book for you or somebody you love John. Is there anything else that you wanted to say? Is there anything that just wasn't said today that you'd like to take a couple minutes to share with the men and it's okay if there's not, if we're complete,

John Eldredge ([48:48](#)):

What I want to say is you're a beautiful man and I'm really proud of you.

Jon Vroman ([48:55](#)):

And thank you, John. I'll take that. I'll receive that and I will appreciate those words today. I'll let them feel my soul. Please do. Thank you, my friend. All right, John. Well, uh, Hey, until our next, uh, and until our next conversation, man, I wish you all the best with your family, um, and continued time in nature and doing the things that you love the most and you know, your words will continue to impact the Romans. I'm I'm sure that next time we take a bike ride. We'll uh, we'll, we'll say some words of gratitude for you.

John Eldredge ([49:24](#)):

Great to talk to you today, John, thanks for this

Jon Vroman ([49:29](#)):

Gentlemen. Thanks for listening to the show today. Two actions to take from here. First implement one thing that you learned from the interview and number two, share this episode with somebody who values being a family man with a business. If you're enjoying the front road ed podcast, the biggest things we ever get are honest reviews. Say thank you for your feedback in advance. We read all of them. If you want to learn more about the brotherhood, which is our private community of 200 men from six different countries, visit front road outs.com for more info. If you're wondering what the hell the brotherhood is all about, I'll leave you with some real feedback from guys who are active members and why they are part of our crew. Thanks again for listening to the show and I'll catch you on the next episode.

Speaker 5 ([50:06](#)):

You have this passion for wanting to find a way to make you a better parents and a better husband, just better in general. And so you develop this community of like-minded men that, that aspire to be better and aspire to put family first and business second. And so to me, there's no greater place. I'd rather be, you know, people ask me all the time, like if I could only pick one group mastermind organization, whatever to be part of besides my own, it's always yours and that's it. And by the way, part of it has to do with you and the leader you are and the way that you treat people and how you show up and the level of preparation that you have and the quality and amount of value that you offer. And then part of it's in the community that's been assembled and these unbelievable like-minded men that show up willing and ready to serve and to give and to share.

Speaker 5 ([51:02](#)):

And so to me, there's no better place that I can be spending my time. I look at two different things that we can be doing with our time. One of them is growing relationships and starting first with the most important relationships and the other one is growing our financial acumen and our wealth to be able to do the things that we want to do and have impact and be able to spend time with the people that we value most by buying that time back. So to me, what you do and what I do is a great marriage of what I think is most important. And I would also throw in there that health is, you know, the other component of that. And I feel like the community that you built that each of us had built is also centered around that because you talk about being a great husband, parent, that's going to come from taking care of yourself and making sure that you have the energy to be able to serve.

Speaker 5 ([51:52](#)):

And I do the same thing on a wealth standpoint, because wealth to me is not just about money. It's actually about having the time and the space to have your personal health. I would take having great health over no money any day of the week, rather than the inverse of that, having a lot of money, but no house. So to me, those are like the three most important components. And to me, we're always merging those three in the things that we each do. And so I think that's why there's a lot of crossover of, you know, members. That's why, what you do resonate so much with me. What I do resonate so much with you. I joined as a lifetime member for that small little window where you offered it. I'm like I'm in. Cause I know if I'm going to commit my time anywhere. This is it because it makes me a better man. It makes me a better husband makes me a better father. It encourages me to really step up my peer group

with other like-minded men so that I can be on mission on point with other people that will hold me accountable at the highest level.

Speaker 5 ([52:51](#)):

John and I met a year and a half ago with the launch of my first book. And as we were going through the interview, I began to ask him questions about the brotherhood. And it resonated within me that a community community of like-minded light hearted men that wanted to win as he was just saying at business and in life. And I'd reverse that I want to win as a dad. And then I'd also love to be successful in business. Cause I feel like if I, if I look at the dad right chairs, what I did in business, that's my legacy. That's what was beyond me, sort of tribe up with a bunch of going in the same direction with the pillars that are in place and the, the way that not only are you encouraged compelled, you're chided you're know, laughed with, but you get to pace yourself, but you can get around abandoned dudes that you can trust, you can share with, you can grow with.

Speaker 5 ([53:41](#)):

And just recently completed a time with these guys and get as fast at the start of the new year. Every day, I would tune in to the little app where we were sharing comments, and I was so impressed how you could see guys that were further down the road and things like this guys that were just starting and the comradery they encouragement. So for myself, this was a total fit and I would encourage any dude. That's looking for a place where you can feel connected with abandoned guys, wanting to go the same direction for our dads for you.

Speaker 6 ([54:15](#)):

[inaudible].