



Committing to the journey of trauma healing

Guest: Dr Pedram Shojai

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[00:00:10] Alex Howard

Welcome everyone to this interview where I'm super excited to be talking with Pedram Shojai. Firstly, Pedram, welcome and thank you so much for joining me.

Pedram Shojai

Good to be here.

Alex Howard

Just to give people a little bit of Pedram's background. Pedram Shojai is a former Taoist monk who is an accomplished physician of Chinese medicine and green activist and has lectured on wellness around the world. His no nonsense approach teaches esoteric concepts to Western readers in an easy to understand way.

He's the author of several books, including *The Urban Monk*, *The Art of Stopping Time*, *Focused*, *Exhausted* and *Trauma*. And producer of multiple films and series including *Vitality*, *Origins*, *Prosperity*, *Interconnected*, *Trauma*, *Gateway*, and *Conscious Parenting*. He's also the co-founder of whole.tv, a first of its kind, health and wellness streaming service with live and original content.

Pedram, as I was researching for this interview, I found a quote of yours on the website for your series on trauma that I thought really encapsulated some of the essence of what's so important. You said, "Hurt people can heal a lot of other hurt people – but they have to heal themselves first. That's the promise. There's hope for all of us." Many of us that have been impacted by trauma, we recognize the gifts and the potential we might have to help others, but we have to start with ourselves, don't we?

Pedram Shojai

Yeah. It's the crux of it and that's the hardest part in it. The tendency, the nature of how our human brains work, just psycho-emotionally is we tend to avert pain. And the aversion of pain has led to multi billion dollar industries around all of the anesthetics, whether they be Netflix, whether they be Vicodin, whether they be other types of drugs. There are many paths to self medication that help us avert the pain, but the pain doesn't go away, does it?

[00:02:24]

So we can just bring down the volume, we can keep working at chipping away at how terrible we feel by enhancing our mood in different ways, but the root of the problem is still there. And so that's really the challenge of trauma, it's what got me very interested in it.

We would deal with patients over the years in our clinics, and certain people just didn't get better. And when we started to dig, a lot of it had to do with underlying trauma. You start to dig and say, I got it. There is this operating system, the psycho-emotional pain encapsulated in memories in time that is lodged inside of your bioelectric field, is lodged inside the fat cells of your body or wherever the hell this thing gets stored, and the amygdala can't let it go. You can't feel safe, you can't relax and therefore you can't heal. And/or there is a subtle script that spins off of that, that allows you to self sabotage and undo the last 6 weeks of progress we had by going on some bender.

And so it became very interesting, clinically, for myself as a clinician. And then as we started getting into all the media and things that I do, man, it was just a recurring thing. And it's kind of like the elephant in the room. No one wants to talk about it. No one really wants to acknowledge it. And when it stays under the carpet, it rears its ugly head at the least convenient time.

Alex Howard

You mentioned the way that we try to self medicate that pain. And often we see that pain as the problem. The pain is something to get rid of. But ultimately, really, that pain is a message. It's a calling from something inside of us that's saying, I need attention.

Pedram Shojai

Yeah. There's a practice I did back in probably early 90s, called Symbol Linking Theory, Symbol Linking Therapy, which was finding the energy around whatever that trauma was, finding the feeling, scanning the body around it. Wherever it was in your body, whether it's lodged in your shoulder, or your tummy, in the back of your head, and just leaning into that and then feeling into that, breathing into that and allowing the energy to express itself. Instead of just moving away every time from the pain. Just breathing into it and allowing yourself to acknowledge its existence.

It's almost like a balloon that starts to get deflated. It starts to take all the charge away from it. And the aversion of something means I'm moving away from something. So let's just say the something, and I'm not going to use this in a qualitative measure, but just for language purposes, let's just say the event, someone bullied you, someone abused. You will associate a negative charge to that. And so every time you feel that, it doesn't feel good. So then you move to a positive charge and you constantly try to move away and move to the opposite polarity of that pain.

Well, I've got a negative charge and a positive charge, I now have a dynamo and I've created an energy field around this thing. And the more I advert that pain, the more anti energy, more opposite energy I put into that, until I've created an energetic life form, if you will, that feels like it has a life of its own. And so getting in and deflating that balloon, getting in and dissipating the energy field you've created around the aversion to this thing is the solution. Everything that we've been trained by, 'give the kids sugar cereal, take a pill if you're ill', the medical model that we come from has developed around prioritizing a quick fix and circumventing that. And here we are, decades later, with all the same problems. It doesn't work that way. It just doesn't work that way. You've got to get in and heal it.

[00:06:41] Alex Howard

And of course, as you touched on a little bit earlier, that I'd like to open up a little bit more, trauma impacts the body in so many different ways. You talked about the impacts on the amygdala, for example, say a bit more about that impact, but also some of the other bodily systems that get impacted and shaped by unprocessed trauma.

Pedram Shojai

If you don't feel safe there's a binary switch that's pretty simple, we can start with that. Just sympathetic versus parasympathetic nervous system. And the sympathetic nervous system is very, very efficient at getting us out of trouble. Run from the lion, attack the enemy, all kinds of things. At this point you've probably heard this before. And then the opposite being the parasympathetic, which is rest and digest.

Really, if you think about it metaphorically, you're sending all your troops to the front line and mobilizing your industries to fight a battle versus coming home, bringing the boys home kind of thing and then having money for school books and roads. And it's hard to thrive domestically when you're at war all the time. But in the metaphor that carries into the nervous system, if you're constantly going to sympathetic, you're constantly pulling blood from the part of your brain that's responsible for higher moral reasoning, negation of impulses, just all of the things that separate us from the monkeys. That part of the brain gets shut down and the blood goes to the big muscles in the legs and says, get the hell out of here. This is a crisis.

Now, look, that works when you need it to work. But the death by 1000 cuts lifestyles that we live in right now, forget about your bills, forget about traffic, forget about all that, and then you have underlying trauma, which is a simmering cauldron underneath all of it that can get set off by, God knows how many triggers. It's very easy to always get shifted into that sympathetic dominance. It's very easy to keep flipping the switch that way. And what happens is, look, we're creatures of habit. You water a plant, it grows. So if you keep firing neurons along a particular pathway, then you start to build tendencies along being just kind of a hair trigger type of person.

Now, people, and I think this is where I think the discourse around meditation gets very trite. It's like, oh, well, you just meditate, boom, parasympathetic. It's like putting a tomato seed in the ground and getting mad that you don't have tomatoes and looking at it 3 days later, 5 days later and still being pissed off that there's no tomatoes and not even having dug it down deep enough, not watered it, not created the soil and the substrate so that 90 days later you're enjoying tomatoes. And that's the same thing with meditation. People go, 'well, I tried to meditate when I was in a panic attack. It didn't work'. That's not what it's designed for. That's what Quaaludes are for.

We have this instant gratification model that meditation has become subjected to because we insist on fitting it into our insane paradigm instead of changing our paradigm. Meditation is about watering those fields every single day so that your fuse gets longer and you have the resilience to stay in rest and digest even when bullets are flying. Or go there and come back but because you've built out a nice ecosystem of well watered fields so that parasympathetic is where you live.

Now, that doesn't happen overnight. It doesn't happen with a stupid app on your phone, and it doesn't happen by listening to a podcast. It happens by meditating. It happens by doing the practice on a daily basis.

[00:10:36] Alex Howard

Just to be clear, if I download the app, that's not enough. I actually have to do something.

Pedram Shojai

Well, that's it. And that's where the marketers get you. It's like, 'oh, don't worry. Just buy this product'. And then the dirty secret behind all of it is they're going to forget all about it and they're going to buy our next product and they're going to buy our next product but no one slows down to actually do the work.

And to me, that's not a popular message. I'm not a guy trying to sell painkillers or sugar cereal here. The people that have come across my universe, whether it's priest, monk, world or doctor world or any of it, the people that have understood that the nexus of control is here, and this is where the work has to start and this is where the work has to happen every day, they're the ones that get better. And the ones that are looking for the next doctor, the next guru, the next pill, the next app, or the next set of goggles or whatever the hell they invent next, to fix all their problems and circumvent the healing process are still searching, aren't they?

Alex Howard

When you think about it, of course, it's not quite as simple as two categories. If we were to categorize two groups of people, those that don't do the work, that get perhaps deduced by the next quick fix or do the work for a week because they're in crisis, and then as soon as they feel a little bit better they stop following through. And in that group of people who do the work and they're consistent in doing the work, what's the difference? What are the strategies that you deploy to try and move more of the people from group one into group two?

Pedram Shojai

Yeah, that's a good question. It's a difficult question to answer because it's really the problem humanity is trying to solve around the trillion dollar healthcare industry that sucks and all of it. We have become quick fix/addicted to... It's like, hey, if we run out of money, we print more. We don't balance the budget, we don't fix the economy, we pretend, we create more, and you just keep making the bubble bigger because that's the overarching ecosystem we live in. And if you take the macrocosm down to the microcosm, it's the same thing. It's like, 'man, I just gotta get through today'. 'I've got to get through Q2'. 'We've got my daughter's wedding'. There's always something that is an instant thing that we've got to solve around instead of our life. We don't work on our life. We work on the dopaminergic issues around our next set of problems.

So that said, another metaphor, you can tell I'm a metaphor guy because that's what monks do, if you think about the difference between hunters and farmers. If I'm a hunter, I see a deer, I chase it down, I get it. We eat for a day or two, a week or two. Maybe I get a whale and we will eat a month. We run out, and then we've gotta get out there and hunt again. Whereas if I take the time to till my fields, if I take the time to water and create the soil and harvest the seeds and put them back in the ground, eventually I've got to get out there and check on my crops. The crops are yielding on a daily or quarterly seasonal basis, in a way where we're all eating. And we're not running around hunting the next fresh kill.

[00:13:59]

And I think that can cross over into some of these practices as well. I live off of interest, but I was a monk for years, and I sat on my ass and meditated for a long time. Great. What have you done today? I've been up since 5:15 this morning doing my Qigong, doing my meditation, and feeding the piggy bank. Why? Because I don't want to go tap into the principal after I've gotten out of the interest and now I'm sitting here with a lower yield because I'm living off of my savings. I want to continually add to that piggy bank, continually till that soil so that I continue to feel better. I don't know what tomorrow brings. My kid goes to school, they come home with some boogers, we all get sick. I mean, it's a reality.

So I have to prepare for the eventuality that life will continually bring crisis challenges, germs, bugs, elections or whatever. And I need to have an operating system that's built around lengthening my fuse instead of putting my finger in the next hole that's leaking. And that right there, that proactive operating system versus reactive operating system is really a big challenge. There's very few people that move to proactive because they're living in reactive, but you've got to start there.

And so what is reactive? Okay. 'I have trauma'. 'I have social anxiety'. 'I have angst'. So let's start dealing with those things to bring down your pain, Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Let's address the problem that you're having. And in doing so, let's make you feel better. Now, you have, let's say, 10 bars that feel better, let's invest 3 of them into a future forward lifestyle modification that allows you to continue to feel better. I don't want to go from migraine to hangover to Advil to hangover. You know what I mean? It's like the cycle of just self abuse. We stay in it because we're so used to pain and self medicating and our operating system hasn't changed.

So I've done this crap for a long time. I've written so many books. I've yelled until I'm blue in the face. My humble opinion, the problem with the industry is again, people are constantly being told what they want to hear because that's what they'll pay for. So it's like a market driven, self fulfilling prophecy to continue to give people what they want instead of what they need, because no one wants to hear what they need. They just want a quick fix to what they want.

And until people understand that the marketers and the self help personal development guys and just everyone out there is trying to sell them something and that something might not necessarily be in their best interest, until you understand that you're still stuck in the attention economy in this cyclone that keeps your eyeballs, your dollars and your hopes and aspirations stuck in an eddy of material consumption instead of resolution and evolution.

And you've got to blow up the death star, man. There's just no other way about it. You've got to change the game, because if you keep playing in the same game, you're going to get the same results.

Alex Howard

There's something about a radical honesty, somehow, in what I'm hearing you say. I think that sometimes we use copywriters to help write web copy and emails, and generally my feedback is I tell them to tone it down. I'm like it's too sensationalist. We're promising too much. If we want to have a dialogue based upon truth, we have to communicate in a way that's based upon truth.

And somehow I think when it comes to our relationship with ourselves, really what you're saying is we have to tell the truth to ourselves. And the truth might not always be comfortable. And it may not always be convenient.

[00:18:07] Pedram Shojai

No, it's not. And the truth might include having had sexual abuse when you were 6. The truth might be you started doing this crazy behavior when your parents got divorced. The truth isn't necessarily cotton candy, but the truth will set you free.

So all of the experts that you're talking to in this conference are offering areas of resolution to help someone turn around and actually heal. So the Taoist tradition I come from talks about this concept of retroflection, turning the light of awareness around to observe oneself.

So if I'm experiencing pain my natural Western gut reaction reflexes, 'let's go throw football', 'let's get a mimosa'. Avert, avert, avert. And at that moment it's just like, okay, hold on a second. I'm feeling an extreme amount of discomfort around this person. They remind me of my dad who used to yell at me. Stop, acknowledge now. Okay, I don't feel comfortable sitting with this pain without the tools. Great. Obviously. So now let's give you tools to now sit with that pain and heal it. Let's give you behavioral therapy. Let's give you tapping.

See, there's a myriad of ways to then get in and be like, okay, I'm experiencing discomfort, let me learn from this and let me grow through this, versus run for the hills. And run for the hills often looks like acceptable social behavior because it's like, let's go to the pub. There's a lot of ways to run for the hills and look like you're just being a normal citizen. But you know what you're doing.

Alex Howard

You talked a little bit earlier, Pedram, about the importance of that feeling of safety. And often part of what we've lost is that place of safety. What in your experience are some of the things that most help us recreate that place? Is meditation one of them? Certainly my experience has been, and I very much appreciate what you said about it not being a quick fix, and the time to learn to meditate is not when you're in a massive crisis or panic attacks, but there's something about meditation that I think is a pathway to safety. But say a bit about that and what else you notice really supports people finding that place.

Pedram Shojai

Yeah, it's big because there's a lot of ways to, depending on where you came from obviously, need safety. Good boundaries I think are a big part of understanding safety and understanding to say, 'hey, listen, bug, you're getting too close. I don't like that. I don't want that conversation happening here'. And so boundaries and just being honest about communicating boundaries. I think a lot of people need that. And I think a lot of people feel unsafe because their boundaries have already been compromised over years of neglect, abuse, bad habits, all of it.

And so how do you do that? Again, I think one of the major missing ingredients in that, is what you're alluding to, is consciousness. And if consciousness leaves the room you are subjected to unconscious, subconscious behaviors that tend to be broke and tend to come from an orientation that is reactive and based on past trauma and all these types of things. So you've got to be in the room to make the conscious decision.

And that's where, again, meditation is, again it sits in a central, pivotal role in bringing you back into awareness, activating your ability to become aware of what's happening in your body and eventually getting you to come from your prefrontal cortex, which is the part of your brain, which is again, negation of impulses, 'oh, yes. I'm going to pick up that cigarette'. Monkey no, don't pick up that

cigarette. Or 'I'm going to run off and sleep with this person'. No, that's a habit that you are trying to get out of.

[00:22:18]

In the moment the monkey mind, coming from the amygdala, coming from past experience and emotional momentum tied with behavior will get you to just run down the same road. The part of the brain that stops, that is the part of the brain you need to feed. And the part of you that becomes conscious that sits there and says, 'oh, I actually have a choice here. I can make a decision here'. And the more you get yourself back in that driver's seat, the more likely you are to catch yourself in one of those moments. And again, monkey no. Don't. Don't. Let's go to the salad bar instead of the burger joint. Let's go to the gym instead of the bar. Let's go for a walk instead of screening right now, just take a minute. There's always a better decision on the other side of the moment.

But we're all guilty of it. I've had plenty of bad moments in my life, and I was a monk, it's just the human thing. It's just where we come from. It's just how we react. So I think meditation is absolutely essential. Again, I'm not selling meditation like, 'just go do it'. 'Just Google meditation'. It's not the pill I'm espousing. It's not the pill I'm pushing on people. I can tell you that any sort of mind body work that holds muster, now there's all these research projects happening and all this stuff, is you'll start to see a modulation of NF-kB pathways. You will start to see inflammatory cascades come down, you will start to see the digestive track and leaky gut start to get better. There's a direct correlation between stress in our nervous system and vagus nerve activation, innervation that then lights up the bad bacteria that have dysbiotic downstream effects that lead to leaky gut, but also lead to the propagation of bacteria that will give you Alzheimer's, that will give you heart disease.

I mean, there's a lot of research. It's funny. I've kind of come full circle. I did the monk thing, then I went to the physician thing, and then I realized that the crux of all of it was I could throw all the right supplements, drugs, peptides, I can throw the kitchen sink at you but if you're going through a divorce or if you've got some underlying trauma and you've got all sorts of psycho-emotional stress and duress, nothing I do is going to be effective.

And so the elephant in the room is the crap no one wants to talk about. So let's talk about it. And so it's like it's come full circle back to say, hey, who are you? What do you want? What's keeping you from your fullest expression? What's haunting you? Let's shake out those skeletons. Let's heal you from the inside out, and then you're going to choose the better food because you don't want to freaking kill yourself. You're going to choose the better choices because the self sabotage is going to become apparent. And you're just going to stop doing that stuff.

But to me it's become a central pivot of all health care is we're emotionally wounded, we're spiritually wounded and yet we're like, 'oh, I should take vitamin D'. Why? Who cares? If I'm in this psycho-emotional angst and I just don't know if I want to live and I have a hard time getting through my morning, let alone my day or my week, I don't care about your stupid diet. I have a central operating system issue that needs to be healed that's a much deeper wound than the 8lbs I've been saying I wanna lose.

Alex Howard

Obviously, meditation is a key piece of the jigsaw. Do you find that meditation alone is enough? Or do you find that often people need to bring in other tools and strategies, particularly with those very repetitive, addictive patterns that have got a lot of momentum within them?

[00:26:27] Pedram Shojai

I think meditation is like a central glue ingredient, but I would never, ever say that meditation is all. You've got to watch what you eat, you've got to fix your sleep, you've got to move your body. Life has a lot of different components, and there are multifactorial, multi vector approaches to healing any given human. And for me, it's like, okay, well, what's the problem here? You sit at a desk all day, get your ass up, walk around. Are you making bad food choices? What do we have to deal with?

And to me meditation is the part of the equation that allows you to come from a place of consciousness and a place of better decisions so that you can then activate those decisions into all the downstream lifestyle areas that all need to be healed. My problem is you come into my clinic, I've got my white coat on, I'm like, 'okay, I found the problem. Here's your blood work here's all the crap. Here's what we need to do to get it better'. And you don't have the operating system to do it because you're not conscious. You're not in your head. The trauma pulls you out. Memories take you back. And so you don't do all the lifestyle stuff.

And so for me, you go through the lens of meditation to bring consciousness into the equation, and then all of these things are capable of getting activated. And then you start to see the results. Going the other way around I did that for years. I was like, okay, I did the monk stuff. That's cool. I'm going to keep that in the closet. I'm going to do the doctor's stuff. And I realized that the doctor stuff without the monk stuff is really a lot less effective.

Alex Howard

Sometimes people's reason for not committing and not following through on their healing path is that they just fundamentally lack a self discipline they need to cultivate. And other times that resistance is those protective patterns that are coming in. And it's almost like those defenses get in the way.

And other times, I think what happens is that people have tried a number of things that haven't worked so they're now not daring to get hopeful, they're not daring to try something for the fear of being disappointed again. And I'm wondering how you see working through these different resistances and is it just trying to get enough willpower or what helps get through those?

Pedram Shojai

Yeah. It's a great question. And I think people talk about habit stacking and trying to figure out how to do these micro habits to build back up, because if you've proven to yourself that you fail and you fail consistently, then why try anything because you're a failure.

And I think that there's a key missing ingredient in the willpower conversation. Willpower is very Western. It's like, let's run with a sword and conquer the world. I think the problem with willpower is it is decoupled from the other active ingredient that needs to constantly be there.

So we talk about intention a lot. Intention, intention. Look, you save up your energy and you have a bunch of intentions and come January 5 you've blown your lot and you're back to your old habits and where'd your intention go? I think intention without attention is really an imbalanced formula.

So think about it. You have the power and the drive and the volume and the energy of intention, but you lose focus. And so it's like a garden hose that's just like blah out of a bucket of water and you're out of water. Whereas if you were to direct it with drip lines to five key important plants that you want

to water, and then you don't let that water go anywhere other than the places that you focused it, you're going to have a yield in that garden, aren't you?

[00:30:24]

And the problem again with attention is that it's a scarce resource. Facebook wants your attention to sell to advertisers, Google, Toyota, name a brand, everyone is buying for your attention. And they're better at it than you are. And that's the battle we're fighting. They have teams of neuroscientists knowing that you're predictably going to move your attention to this with a blue light and a popping sound or whatever the heck it is.

And so how do you fight that is you take it back. Your attention gets retroverted back into your own brain, your own consciousness, your own body and your own life's priorities. And the more you learn to grab your attention and corral it back, the more you have it as a superpower or a resource to then focus it on saying, 'dude, you said you're going to get to 20 pull ups. What is it going to take?'. 'Dude, you said you're going to get to your sales goal. What's it going to take?'. Instead of getting up the next day and being like, oh, Becky wants to go to lunch. You're like, 'Yo, I said I'm going to the gym'. And keeping your attention coupled with your intention allows these things to manifest.

It's actually from the Taoist perspective, the heart energy and the kidney energy, the fire and the water together they make steam. That's the magical ingredient really to manifesting anything is having the attention focused enough to drive the intention. And so the energetic, to get metaphysical about this, the Shen or the attention/spirit is housed in the heart and the gateway is the eyes. And it will couple with the jing or the willpower that's housed in the kidneys, is the water element. And when you fuse those together, you focus your energy on something, if you focus your mind on something long enough, the energy will continue to flow to it. And when the energy flows to something long enough, in 3D reality it starts to assemble a material reality around it. You want to manifest something, keep your focus on it, keep your energy on it and keep putting energy into it, and you will see it manifest.

Now you go to the monkey swinging from vine to vine, which is the brain of most people. Most of us are so defocused we can't even manifest a flipping breakfast let alone the life of our dreams. And so to me attention has become really the scarce resource and the battleground of consciousness. And the entire economy is mobilized to pull the attention away from your life into their dreams and aspirations. Which is usually just quarterly earnings or some political agenda, but everyone's buying for your attention to pull away from your life and your life garden into theirs. So what's it going to be?

Alex Howard

And of course that comes back to why the meditation piece is so important because part of what we're doing in meditation is training our attention.

Pedram Shojai

You want to stand a flipping chance, you better be able to maintain your focus long enough on something other than a TV commercial. And again, I'm sorry, folks, that just takes practice. Like, that's not something that... People are like, 'oh, I tried to fly a helicopter, it didn't work'. It takes thousands of hours, man. You want to be a helicopter pilot, it takes a little bit of work.

Now this isn't... Like helicopter pilots, to me is an elective. Having control over your own mind and manifesting the life that you choose versus the one that you're told to pick, that to me is life and

death. That's the matrix crap right there. So what's it going to be? You want to be a mental slave stumbling around in a world that makes no sense, trying to buy Toyotas or purses to feel good about yourself? Or do you want to live life fully? There's a blue pill and a red pill. What's it going to be?

[00:34:36] Alex Howard

What's your recommended starting point? You're talking to someone at a dinner party or working with someone in clinic, and they've got to this piece and they understand, they recognize that they need to start. Where do they start in terms of resources and practical strategies?

Pedram Shojai

I mean, listen, honestly, what I'll tell someone at a dinner party is, okay, here we go, four-count breathing. Basic Buddhist stuff. None of this new age woo. This has been around for 5000 years. It's worked for hundreds of millions of people. Breathe into your lower belly for the count of four. Hold your breath for the count of two. Breathe out for the count of four. Hold your breath for the count two. So four in. Hold two. Four out. Hold two. Rinse and repeat.

And not if but when you find that your mind has wandered, simply recognize that that's what the mind does and just go back. Set a 10 minute timer and just do that every day, 10 minutes. And don't stop until you've hit 100 days in a row without fail. And if you miss day 12, start over. Teach yourself to feed yourself first. Teach yourself that you're going to assemble your entire day around this dedicated act of self love that brings you back to awareness and consciousness. And then, yes, go heal your trauma, go fix your company, go deal with your kids. But if you can't build a habit around self love, you can listen to all the podcasts, conferences, watch all my movies, you're still not going to get better. You've still got to do something, man. Start there.

Alex Howard

The interesting thing with that practice as well is even if the practice is crap and it does nothing, the very act of committing to something for 100 days, you've progressed. The very act of showing up to yourself has been an act of self love.

Pedram Shojai

Yes. And that dedicated act of self love is a vote in the right direction. And if you keep doing that for 100 days you're starting to build a habit that then you could stack on and say, 'okay, you know what, I did that. It took me four tries, but I flipping did it. What else can I do?'. Add some pushups, go for a walk, whatever it is, start to assemble the skeleton of dedicated acts of self love into your schedule and then build your life around.

And it's not selfish. I think a lot of people feel, especially people who grew up Christian they're like, oh, give, give, give. There's no give dude. Feed yourself then feed the world. Taking 10 minutes to meditate isn't selfish. The most important thing you could do for the world is bring peace home before praying for world peace. Peace starts here and builds habits around things that will move the needle for people who have been distracted their whole lives.

If you're in your 40s or 50s or above listening to this, you've got bad habits, you have toxic means, you have a lot of things working in the opposite direction. Rome wasn't built in a day, and you're not going to be some enlightened superhuman, despite all the promises and the hyperbole out there,

overnight. So just start breathing and taking care of yourself for 10 minutes a day. Do it for 100 days. Put that feather in your cap and then move forward.

[00:38:06]

I feel like we're at the point now with humanity, and the crisis of consciousness that I think we're experiencing, where we just have to go back to the fundamentals, press reset. Now, people are like, 'oh, 100 days, that's so long! It's like, you know what? Last I checked, 100 days from now, you're going to be 100 days older either way. So what's it going to be? And people think it's such a long time, that's the part that they're missing is it takes 100 days for a tomato seed to become a tomato plant yielding tomatoes. That's how nature works. That's where we come from.

And so I think again, when you start questioning the duration and the commitment levels and all that, just understand that that's coming from the advertiser driven, consumer reactive circuitry that has been programmed into you since Saturday morning cartoons. I didn't build the death star. I'm just a guy showing it to you.

Alex Howard

For people that want to find out more about you and your work, what's the best way to do that? What's some of what they can find?

Pedram Shojai

Yeah. So theurbanmonk.com. Lots of resources where I can hang my shingle on all that.

And then our streaming platform called whole.tv. Lots of 10-part series on trauma and they've got just a ton of resources that are available to people.

When I left my healthcare job it was because I realized we were losing the propaganda war to the chip companies, the drug companies, all the junk food and agribusiness and all of it. And I realized that the messaging had to go upstream, and we had to teach people how to avoid getting sick. So here we are.

Alex Howard

Awesome Pedram. Thank you so much. I really appreciate your time, your passion in this interview. I think it's a great call to arms and call to action. So thank you so much.

Pedram Shojai

Cheers. Thank you for doing this.