



Conscious Life presents

Mastering the Fundamentals of Trauma Healing

Guest: Dr Pedram Shojai

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[00:00:09] Alex Howard

Welcome everyone, to this interview where I'm super excited to be talking with my good friend Dr Pedram Shojai. And we're talking about some of the fundamentals of showing up to yourself on your trauma healing journey. How do we get good, consistent daily practices in place? How do we get the right boundaries in place? How do we stay doing the work when it gets tricky? And how do we build the support and community around us that's really going to help us last doing the work we need to do?

To give you a little bit of Pedram's background, Dr Pedram Shojai is a man with many titles. He is the founder of theurbanmonk.com, co-founder of Whole TV, the New York Times best-selling author of *The Urban Monk*, *Rise and Shine*, *The Art of Stopping Time* and of *Inner Alchemy*. He is the producer and director of the movies *Vitality of Origins* and also the series *Prosperity*. He's also produced several documentary series like *Interconnected*, *Gateway to Health* and *The Exhausted Series*.

In his spare time, he is a Taoist Abbot, a doctor of Oriental medicine, a Kung Fu world traveler, a fierce global green warrior, an avid backpacker, a devout alchemist and a Qigong master, and an old school Jedi biohacker working to preserve our natural world and wake us up to our full potential. So firstly, Pedram, welcome and thank you for joining me again.

Dr Pedram Shojai

Always great to be here. Thanks for doing this.

Alex Howard

So why don't we start with trauma and our capacity to heal? I think sometimes, in a way, part of the narrative shift around trauma has been from I don't have trauma to I do have trauma. And because I do have trauma, that means I always have trauma. In a way, the reclaiming is positive, but the identity can sometimes become a trap. And I'm interested in your thoughts in terms of can we really heal that trauma? Or to use a phrase I've heard you use before, does that scar tissue always remain in a way? Does it always have to define us?

[00:02:40] Dr Pedram Shojai

Yeah, that's a big one. I think it's an important one and I think it's where this conversation has evolved. 20 years ago, no one was even talking about trauma. Now everyone has it and everyone identifies with it. And to me, that's a Buddhist trap. In the mind science that we're starting to double back on, you know, the ancient stuff always existed, and now the, you know, the evidence based stuff is catching up with it. One of the central themes of the work, if you will, is asking a really important question. And it's a simple question, which is, who am I?

And the question behind that question should be who just asked that question? And who's witnessing who asking these questions? Right? And so the deeper inquiry really gets into this reductionist process. Who we think we are is usually a conglomeration. It's like a Brazilian shantytown of defense mechanisms that we just kind of keep throwing up to feel safe. And as we get into this work around trauma, we rightfully find the stuff, right, and say, okay, whoa, this is serious, I got to deal with this. This is a big undertaking.

And at some point along the journey the parasite becomes the host and we identify as a traumatized person. And that right there I think does have some very serious deleterious effects and will stop the healing if we're not careful. This is just another phase. If I had a kale salad for lunch yesterday, yes, that became a part of me, but I have more meals coming. I can identify with this one part of my deal here.

So yeah, I think this is a really important part of the exploration and piecing this together, I think, is going to require taking it apart. And that's not what we do. We add, we build. This is capitalism and so reductionism is a different operating system that I think would be an important conversation around this.

Alex Howard

Yeah, it's interesting, isn't it? Because in a way there's sort of two extremes. There's the extreme of I have trauma, therefore I'm always going to have trauma and it's always going to be this way. And then, as you just pointed out, there can be another extreme which is I want the quickest, fastest solution to kind of to biohack my way out of this and then just move on with my life. And my observation in my own personal experience and also working with folks therapeutically is that normally the truth is less glamorous on both sides. There's a requirement to showing up and doing the work but if we do the work, hopefully the work works and things can change.

Dr Pedram Shojai

Yeah. And to your point, there's the quaalude side of the equation where people are trying to find quick replacements to quaaludes and feel good pills and they're tapping and doing all the stuff to make the pain go away so the show can go on. Then there's the people who pull over and the show is over because they're going to stay in bed for the next six years. And somewhere in the middle is people who are healing and moving and needing to go to work and needing to be a dad and functioning in society, keeping it together, which is hard, in and of itself as you're going through all this work.

Having a storefront, if you will, that allows you to operate as you and pay your bills and brush your teeth while still doing the meaningful work which often feels like you're dying. There's a lot of

heavy emotion, there's a lot of emotional avoidance that comes with this stuff, as you know better than any, right, this isn't easy work but the harder work is hanging onto it and looking away.

[00:07:06] Alex Howard

And as you just pointed to, sometimes we're doing really good work, and we're showing up to it, and we're being consistent, and we're getting the feedback, and we're adapting as we need to and sometimes it feels like nothing's changing, right? And I think that's sometimes the hard places to keep going like it's the same thing if we map it over to functional medicine, that someone could be doing, like, a detox protocol, for example, and it's doing exactly what it needs to do, but someone feels crap and feels like their life's now worse than it was before they started this damn thing.

So I'm interested in how we navigate through those places. And I think sometimes we don't know if we're on the right path or not until we keep moving forwards. And the points we most instinctively want to give up are actually the places where we're on the edge of the breakthrough. So that navigating of that territory. I'm really curious what you've observed that can be helpful there.

Dr Pedram Shojai

Yeah. The caveat, obviously, is different strokes for different folks. We're all kind of built differently. We're wired differently. The floor of this is let's just talk about the neuroanatomy, right? You have the amygdala, which has all your fears and the heightened emotions that tie to the hippocampus with the memories. So you have this associative memory of something that reminds you of the trauma that you had, and it brings you into this limbic loop, and suddenly you're in this place, right? Anyone who's had trauma knows exactly what I'm talking about.

And it becomes a very difficult place to rationalize your way out. It becomes a very difficult place to feel your way out. I'm sure you have plenty of trauma informed therapists talking about this in your ecosystem here is, okay, what do you do? In those, there's therapeutic modalities, people have different ways of addressing this, but that's the juicy stuff. That's the work. And look, I'm a martial artist, and every day is a good day on the mat because I'm bettering myself.

And some days I'm getting punched in the face, and some days I'm feeling as strong as can be, but I still show up on the mat to do the work, and the work gives me the lessons. The lessons aren't about how to beat people up better so much as they are about gnosis. Folding your awareness back in to understand yourself, to improve yourself. So the translation of Kung Fu is, well, there's two translations, one is work hard, the other is eat bitter. Neither of which sound delicious, right?

And that's not how our culture is wired. And so the people that are afraid of working hard and eat bitter are tapping and taking pills and doing only the palliative stuff, right? And then there's the people who work hard, eat bitter and fall into that pit. And that scar tissue, I think that scar tissue doesn't go away. This is my personal opinion. I don't think that scar tissue goes away. I think the scar tissue helps define us and helps propel us into the what are you going to do about it now phase of your trauma recovery.

Okay. This happened. I mean, short of taking some new chip from Elon Musk and wiping out all your memories, how convenient would that be? The memories are there. You could block them. You've already been doing that. If you've had trauma, you've already been trying to hide all this crap. How's that worked out for you? And so getting rid of the actual memory I don't think is the way.

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I'm not saying it's not possible because tomorrow they're going to invent something to zap the memory right out of your head. But I don't think that's the therapeutic path. I think changing your emotional relationship with the memory, I think changing the story that you have now been able to rewrite on top of the memory from your adult self that can now bring safety to the scene and allow for you to see it objectively and learn and grow from it.

I mean, look, something that's horrible will remain horrible. You're not going to turn some atrocity in Darfur into a day at Disneyland. But you can repattern and you can shift the associated memories with the emotions that then propel you into the work you're going to do, the people you're going to help. And some of the best case studies in this space are people who had horrible, horrible trauma that healed from it in a way where then that became their benevolent mission to help others out of that.

And that gave them meaning. It gave them energy, it made them real, and it drove them into a life's purpose or plan. And Lord knows if that was given to us before we got here, but it put them on a mission to be of really valuable service to other people on planet Earth. So I think those people metabolize scar tissue for benevolence, but they don't ever run out of it. Right? That memory, I don't think, goes away.

Alex Howard

Yeah. I was thinking, as you were talking, that part of this is showing up to ourselves and doing that consistent healing work. One of the things that I think also gets in the way of that is one's sense of their own self worth, like they're actually worthy of and worth committing to and spending that real time on themselves. And so part of the challenge here is that when one of the things we learned from childhood trauma was, I don't matter, I'm not important, I'm not worthy, I'm not deserving.

And then the very thing that we need to do as part of our healing is to show up to ourself in a way that maybe no one showed up to us in the past. I think that can be another tricky one, and that can show up in people struggling to commit or follow through, getting excited about the new program and they're not really staying with the work. Sort of interested in your thoughts on that.

Dr Pedram Shojai

Yeah, I think this actually folds back into something very simple that I've been teaching people around time management for decades. Patients would come into my clinic and tell me that one of their major priorities is health or family. I'd say, give me your phone. And I'd look at their calendar with them and be like, I see zero appointments here as dates with your wife or time with your children. As a matter of fact, all I see is your work encroaching on all these places where you say you have value attributed and associated. Where is it on your calendar?

How many heartbeats this week did you allocate towards your fitness or your family? Because if it's not there, it's not going to happen. And so I think a lot of this trauma work, a lot of our personal development work, also gets swept under the same rug. You're like, oh yeah, I'm dealing with my trauma. Um, when? In traffic? Like in the moments between phone calls? If you don't build space

for it so that your body knows that there's a receptacle in time for you to be able to park in there and process those emotions and digest...

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It's like don't go swimming after you eat a meal. You got to digest that meal. And so if we don't leave time to do the work in our week and hold the calls, hold the enemy at the gates and just say, look, daddy needs some personal time right now. Please go play with your toys. I need 30 minutes uninterrupted. Lock the door and cry. Lock the door and journal. Whatever it is. If it doesn't show up, you're not going to show up to do it.

And then you see what we see. You see the guy saying the really snarky remark at the water cooler that, you know, Betty didn't deserve to hear. And you see the people having road rage and so it comes out, but it's going to come out at inopportune times because you didn't give it its rightful place for the healing. You didn't honor it with time on your calendar.

Alex Howard

And then we start that process and we kind of recognize that's what needs to happen and we get that time on the calendar and then we run into the next issue, which you just spoke a little bit here as well, which is a boundary issue, right? Which is that it's like to be able to say yes to ourselves, we have to say no to other people. We have to put those boundaries in place.

And even if we recognize that we're deserving of that, we've still got to restructure our life in such a way that we carve that time. So what do you find helps people to do that? It's like the kids don't respect the boundary or the mother or the sibling is always in crisis and drama, and partly because they've probably got the same traumas we've got. But yeah, how do we make that commitment to ourselves and then hold it in place?

Dr Pedram Shojai

The metaphor I use for this is called the life garden. You got room for maybe five plants, your family, your career, your health, and all these things, and all of these things that you say are important to you need water, right? And water is time, energy, and money. We trade those three for each other all the time. And so if you're not going to get real with yourself and understand that you have to commit time, energy, money at some level to the thing that you now know you need to do, to me, you haven't committed, right?

You haven't actually committed to doing the healing work. It's like saying, I'm going to buy this house, but I don't have the down payment. We're not getting the house. You have to put up in order to move into the next level. And, yeah, it's very easy when you're surrounded by people who have bad boundaries to play along. It's very easy if your five best friends are overweight to be overweight. It's very easy to drink alcohol if your social circle drinks alcohol.

And so I think boundary management, the establishment of healthy boundaries is something that is on the rise in terms of our awareness. And I think we live in a culture that has just been atrocious with those things, and because everyone's doing it, we don't realize that it's not necessarily go, mom doesn't have any boundaries. I'm just going to go interrupt her now. Mom's in the room crying and hiding from you because mom needed a moment.

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And so to me, look, it's a very strong word, it's a very easy word, but it's also one of the most difficult words. It's a two letter word. It's no. And we don't use it enough. And talking about the neurophysiology of the amygdala and the hippocampus and the part of the brain that would be like, hey, stop that, it's your prefrontal cortex. And the part of your brain that's responsible for higher moral reasoning, executive function, and negation of impulses isn't working well enough to stop you, say, in a panic attack.

But this is where I think meditation and spirituality and a lot of these areas of pursuit have been taught incorrectly in the West. I'm never going to try to teach someone to meditate off a panic attack. Too late. Call the fire department. I'm going to teach you fire prevention. I'm teaching fuse lengthening exercises so that the next time it's not as harsh or the next time it doesn't even happen.

And so I tell people, well, you have to strengthen the agencies that you have to be able to negate those impulses so you don't make the bad decisions, so you do hold the boundaries and all that. To me, it's a prefrontal cortex function, is boundaries. So then you say, well, how do I get better at boundaries? This is where I think some of the conversation breaks down. It's like, well, okay, practice boundaries. I did. It didn't work. It's like, how do I get better at flying a helicopter? You train. How do you get better at pull ups? You have to do pull ups.

And so for me, this is where meditation and mindfulness practice becomes not an option. Not the kind that says, oh, I'm going to change my name to Starlight or I'm going to wear patchouli and all the identity crap that goes along with saying, I'm a meditator now. Just sit down and meditate. Because what it does, and we have plenty of studies that demonstrate less than six weeks, you will see increased density of the neurons in your prefrontal cortex.

You are training pull ups and getting better at pull ups in the part of the brain that then stops those emotional cascades from catching fire, that stops you from saying yes to the bar when you're supposed to say yes to the gym and stops you when the kid says, hey, will you help me with this project? I'm saying wait. I'm so sorry. Daddy needs 27 more minutes. Please don't interrupt. I'm doing my work in my room, right? And so there's a part of the brain that does that. And so for me, I think we have to kind of jump over the oh, I need better boundaries conversation and strengthen the part of the brain that builds for better boundaries.

Alex Howard

It's really interesting what you're saying, because in a way, the practices that are most likely to create change, goes back to what we were saying a little bit earlier, are often not the things we most feel like doing in that moment. And it's that classic thing that the couple goes to couples therapy because they're both having affairs and the whole relationship is falling apart. The couples therapist is like, could you have come a few years ago before there was so much pain and so much suffering that was created here?

And I think what I also observe in people is that when things get really bad, they show up, they commit, they do the work. Things get less painful, they stop doing the commitment. Then things get bad again, and they show up. And it's like there's this sort of cycling back and forth between committing and not committing. But I think what you're saying is really important that if we really want to get lasting change, we can't just do the work when we either feel in crisis or when we feel

like doing the work. So back to your martial arts example. We've got to train regardless of whether it feels easy or comfortable in that moment.

[00:23:05] Dr Pedram Shojai

Yeah, and it's not supposed to feel easy or comfortable. That's why we call it Kung Fu. The hard work makes you better tomorrow. And that's the point, is I'm investing in a better future. I'm investing in greater resilience. I'm investing in a better version of me. And right now, my fingernails have dirt under them because I'm out there toiling the soil, right? And that's part of where I think we have lost the script.

But you mentioned something. I don't want to drop it. Real quick. And I just did an interview with somebody, and they said something that was, I think, really applicable here, where pain will move you forward. So, hey, I'm about to get a divorce. The kids are going to suffer. We got to go to therapy. Hey, I can't even function at work. I think this trauma is finally catching up to me. Let's go talk to a guy. You get a little better, you forget to go. You get a little better, your schedule fills up, and the second half of that is when the pain is gone, then where is the motivator, right? Until the pain comes back.

And that, to me, is not just in psychology, it's everything that's wrong with the Western medical model is you get up to no symptoms, and then you go home, and you come back to the doctor when it breaks again, instead of looking to the other half of that field, which is vitality and abundance and doing really well. And so vision in this person's assessment is what pulls forward. So I think, yes, the great motivator is pain sucks. I move away from pain, and the pills didn't work, the tapping didn't work. Okay, Doc, what do I have to do?

And then as that starts to get better, people start to fall off, and the trauma never really gets healed, or there's still work to be done, but there's not enough pain until the pain threshold goes back up. And so I really think that this concept of having a vision of what's your highest expression? What's your best self? Who am I in all this? And who do I think I am? And let me let go of all of that to really explore who I truly am. And in doing so, let me open myself up to the great mystery of life and pull myself forward into, I don't know, how about bliss instead of not pain?

How about fulfillment instead of not pain? And I think that half of the equation deserves a lot more attention as well, because the entire industry is stacked behind, let me help you with your pain. And then they fall off, right? They don't come to their appointments, and then they'll come back, but they're not coming back healed. They're coming back rewounded.

Alex Howard

Yeah. I really like what you say about having a vision for why we're doing the work, right? Because also part of what happens when we've got a history of trauma and we're going through trauma is we get focused on trying to get out of pain, but also we lose that sense of potential of what life can become. It's like people rarely come into your office or my office and say, I've got this vision for my life. Can you help me get there? And yet it's that what's really going to keep us going, particularly on the days that we feel like not doing the work.

[00:26:42] Dr Pedram Shojai

Yeah. And there's things, I mean, there's biological anchors that I think are there. There are days where I might be going through something tough and I get up knowing that I have these two children that rely on me. So we do have these kinds of time bombs in the future that we plant with children and pets and loved ones that kind of drag us on. And that vision is enough for some.

I do this for my family. I love these people. And some people don't have that, or some people don't have enough emotional charge for that to even make it work. And to your point, then, there's really nothing, other than the aversion of pain, there's nothing motivating forward. And the old Maslow's hierarchy of needs is, look, when you're on the bottom just fighting to make rent and stay alive and the bullets are flying, it's all you're worrying about.

But as you start to come up in the pyramid towards your enlightenment, as you individuate and you start to become more introspective and you start to illuminate, then the questions become different, the narrative changes. But if you don't change the narrative and you're still in this fight or flight, mud wrestling for survival, stream of consciousness, when you come out of that, it doesn't feel normal. Your identity hasn't shifted with it because you still identify with the person who is down lower on the pyramid. And so you revert backwards.

It's like a thermostat. You fall back into you lose your money, you start a fight, you do all the things to go back to that place where the drama feels normal. This is you. And that right there, I think that thermometer setting, unless changed, has people pretty much stuck churning the same wheels. I call it tequila and advil.

Alex Howard

And you mentioned this earlier, and you just touched on it again as well, it also somewhat comes down to who we spend time with. Like, who are the people that are around us? And again, often one of the impacts of trauma is that our trauma is with other people from acts or the absence of other people. And so it's like we learn, we sort of normalize to being in relationships that can be toxic and lack the support that we need.

And so it's almost like, as you spoke to, the people we're around are almost holding us in where we are because that's how they can be in relationship with us. And so part of this work is getting free from that. But then that's another absence, right? And so how important is it and how do we find pathways towards human contact that's actually supporting the transformation?

Dr Pedram Shojai

It's a tough one because you hear all the time in the literature about social connection and you need it to be happy. And you're like I'm going to call Jack because that's my high school buddy, and Jack drinks too much beer but Jack's a good guy, and Jack comes with wheelbarrows full of toxic memes and misrepresentations about how the world works. But he's the devil you know. And we don't want to be lonely. We don't want to fall into this place where, you know, alienating our old friends.

And so I'm always a look forward type of person. You don't have to get rid of Jack. Just bring in more people that serve you and then water the plants that continue to serve you. You don't need to cut everyone out, be all alone, and then go figure out who the hell you're going to hang out with.

Start to associate with folks that are doing the right stuff. And I would say this to patients all the time, you keep telling me you want to be fit and you don't like the gym. How about rock climbing?

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Look at this. REI has a rock climbing weekend for beginners. You need friends and you need rock climbing. Let's go. And then they say, hey, I met a person. They're really nice. I met my wife, right? There's all sorts of interesting new connectivity that comes when you take that first step and walk out the door towards a positive new behavior because then you're going to meet like minded people that are also making those better choices for themselves.

Alex Howard

Interesting. It strikes me that so often we get normalized to ourselves, our lives, the world around us, and we think about doing that new thing, and in our mind it's like, that's totally what I should do. But then our sort of somatic response is one of fear. It's like, oh, that's unfamiliar. They might not like me. I might not like them. I might not be good at it. And so a lot of the decisions that I think we make in life and therefore a lot of the decisions we make on the healing journey are decisions of keeping things feeling familiar.

It's almost like we conflate feeling safe with things being the same, and yet we want things to change, but therefore it must somehow be unsafe. And so I'm interested in what helps people break through those moments when they can feel that fear response, but the thing they want is on the other side of it. Like, what helps?

Dr Pedram Shojai

It's a tough one. It's a tough one. And sometimes the answer is get a buddy and enlist together, right? It's a thing. I mean, I had this when we moved out to Park City. I've been a downhill skier my whole life. And then you move up to these mountain towns and the real men, they go backcountry and do the all terrain stuff and then suddenly I'm like, well that sounds dangerous. That sounds hectic.

And so then I had to go do avalanche training and learn all this life survival stuff so that you don't die back there and made great friends, got some great skills, opened up my parameters and was like, wow, I wish I would have done this 10, 15 years ago. Now I drag my wife because I don't have that problem, right? I like new, but a lot of people do. And I could tell you that the times in my life where I forget this are the times of my life where you can see the cobwebs forming in front of my eyes and it is, look, you should always have a right relationship with death.

This is kind of like Carlos Castaneda Yaqui wisdom. Death is always stalking over your left shoulder. And so are we talking about something that just kind of scares you or is this a life threatening emergency? And I think what happens is the walls cave in and our fear bucket, our stress bucket, just gets so small that the little, stupid he said, she saids, impact us in ways that are really meaningful to our nervous system because our world has collapsed. And so to those people I'm like, all right, we're going rock climbing, you're going to learn how to hang glide. Let's go figure out how to ride a dirt bike.

And then you're scared for your freaking life. And then you go back to the office and you're like, what was all the fuss about? Like, why was I so stressed about this trite crap? And the times in my

life where I start to kind of settle into, like when the Hobbits left the Hobbit village and went off on an adventure, the rest of the Hobbits are like, whoa, why? Right? But they went and found themselves and they became heroes.

[00:35:19]

So for me, every few months if I'm starting to feel like the little things are bothering me, I go enlist myself in some new heroic journey to remind myself that, look, we could all die next week, right? There's always death. So why are you living in fear and not truly living? And that to me I think has been very therapeutic for myself and patients, obviously.

Alex Howard

Yeah, it's funny, I was just thinking of my eldest daughter, who's twelve now, really likes doing high ropes courses and I don't particularly have a fear of heights, but it's also not my most favorite thing to do. And I've given her a lot of talks over the years about sort of fear or encourage and the importance of doing things you're afraid of. And a few years ago we were on this high ropes course, like super high up, and then the next challenge is you basically have to jump off and then sort of swing into this cargo net. And it was like I could feel a lot of fear coming up in my body.

And I was like, in this moment, every conversation I've ever had with her about fear is about to become redundant if I don't demonstrate the thing that I've been talking about. And so it's like my love for her in that moment trumps my request to feel comfortable. So it's like I throw myself off and do this thing, which I probably wouldn't have done otherwise. And I remember for sort of weeks afterwards having this visceral memory of that feeling of leaping into fear and it being okay.

And it's like, I think sometimes there's no amount of telling people and talking about it until we, like you just described, go and give ourselves experiences that really change that relationship.

Dr Pedram Shojai

Yeah. And I think there's degrees of safety with that. Look, you can go sign up for the Navy and be in active combat in a year or two and have real bullets flying at you. Some people need that degree. I had friends in high school that felt the most alive popping wheelies at 100 miles an hour on the freeway, right? And I'm not necessarily recommending that as a longevity practice. There is that dopamine thing that makes people pretty insane when it comes to feeling alive.

And then there's a balance for someone who's so stuck in the cave of trauma. You're just shell shocked, sucking your thumb in a corner, and that person needs to come out to see some daylight. That person needs to go on a hike and get a vista and reprogram their brain. And look, there's plenty of interesting, fascinating research coming out on just broad vistas and the ability to have your eyes look out and not be so myopic. I think a lot of, especially with the kids and the ADD and the ADHD, we're starting to see vision declining way faster than is genetically possible.

And it's all because of the devices and us kind of focusing in. And I mean, right now I'm sitting in front of a two dimensional screen and the floor is flat. There's no contours to the Earth around me. And so the brain is kind of falling out of 3D. We're losing our ability to have bihemispheric crossover consciousness. And so getting out, looking at big views isn't just pretty, it opens your brain and your consciousness and allows for you to have whole brain thinking. When the neurons start firing again, you start feeling better again, right? So all of these things compound.

[00:39:07] Alex Howard

So someone that's watching this, where do they start? Someone comes out of this interview feeling kind of a sense of motivation, sense of possibility, recognizing that they have more capacity to influence change than they realize. What would be the first couple of things that you might recommend that they do?

Dr Pedram Shojai

Honestly, depending on where you live, I'd say book, every single day, ideally in the morning, a 15 minute walk that you take. And the only thing you have to do on that walk is leave your phone, like, in your pocket, but don't look at it, is take note of your environment, not just the stuff around you close, but the things far. Start looking broad on the vista and find one thing that you hadn't seen before that's beautiful and just acknowledge it's beauty. Every day.

It's a single, simple, dedicated act of self love that's pulling you out of the cave and getting your feet moving. In my experience, once you get your feet moving, momentum has a way of gaining. And it's these little small rituals, this habit stacking of these dedicated acts of self love that become the massive snowballs that then transform your life. But I'll never say, oh, do 100 burpees a day, that's your answer. Just take a walk, right? Just take a walk.

Alex Howard

Yeah. Beautiful. Pedram, for people that want to find out more about you and your work, where's the best place to go and what is some of what they can find?

Dr Pedram Shojai

Yeah. Thank you. Theurbanmonk.com. I've been at this for a while now. I've written eight books and made several films and series, have a lot of personal development training that I've done helping people establish their life gardens and figure out where their priorities are and whether or not they're being honest with themselves in terms of what they're watering.

And I have a free seven day reboot, which is just very helpful as part of my give back to the world, is just help yourself. And then when people get moving, suddenly you see sparks of life. And so it's been a very fun journey for me, going from monastery to this and how to translate that in an attention economy that's trying to just sell quick fixes to people versus getting them to actually wake up. So it's always fun trying to help people help themselves.

Alex Howard

That's awesome. Pedram, thank you so much. I really appreciate you, and I appreciate your time.

Dr Pedram Shojai

Always a pleasure.