

SUBSCRIPTION ENTREPRENEUR



HOSTED BY ERIC TURNNESSEN, FOUNDER OF [membermouse™](#)

EP 147: How To Uncover Your Gifts & Find Your Purpose with Soma Miller

"We're all kind of born into this world with certain inherent gifts, some of which we may have access to when we're young and they get kind of conditioned out of us, some of which we may not really fully tap into until we mature into them and a lot of times the journey to our deepest gifts is it requires us to go into the parts of ourselves that we don't really want to go into. It's an uncomfortable journey."

INTRO:

You're listening to Soma Miller - my special guest on today's episode of The Subscription Entrepreneur Podcast.

Soma is a men's coach who works to build both online and in-person communities of powerful, inspired, and purpose-driven men. He provides his clients with 1-on-1 coaching and mentorship as well as an online monthly membership community.

In this episode, Soma and I have a deep conversation where we explore some fascinating topics like...

- How an easily overlooked part of yourself can keep you stuck in life
- Why meditation can help you see and overcome your obstacles and destructive patterns
- How to discover your innate gifts and life's purpose
- And much more...

It was a true pleasure to have Soma on the show and I hope you benefit from our conversation.

As always, I'm your host Eric Turnnessen and this is episode 147 of The Subscription Entrepreneur Podcast.

Eric: Welcome to the show Soma.

Soma: Thank you. It's good to be here.

Eric: Yeah. I mean, we've been kind of pinging each other a little bit back and forth on Instagram. And I've been seeing your posts and I really resonate with the things that you're doing. And this is where we are now. So, I'm happy to have the opportunity to speak with you.

Soma: Yeah, me too. It's always a shift, getting out of the small screen of Instagram to really seeing somebody active and live.

Eric: Yeah.

Soma: That feels way better to me.

Eric: The first thing I actually wanted to ask you about is your name. So, in the Vedic tradition, I'm familiar with what Soma means in certain circumstances, like nectar of the gods, lunar energy, cosmic plasma. Is this a name that you gave to yourself? And if so, how did that come about for you?

Soma: I'm glad you asked that question because not many people do. I was born with... My parents gave me the name Amos, which is actually Soma spelled backwards and around the age of 21, I just had this sort of intuitive hit to change my name. And I had never really considered it before, I actually even thought it was kind of weird people that took on these sometimes-spiritual names, and I had some judgment about it actually, it just felt right to me.

And the origin of the name Soma, for me actually just came about in kind of a funny way when I was a teenager, I discovered that I had this kind of hidden talent to say words backwards. So, I practiced that just for fun. It was something I did with my friends and family, I would practice telling people their names backwards. And so, yeah, at the age of 21, it just happened. And I was like, "Yeah."

And for me, it was really about claiming my own identity that was separate from who my parents thought I was. And that's been a big part of my path in a way, kind of forging my own way, and kind of going against the cultural grain of normality. It wasn't until later that I actually found out what the meaning of Soma was. And when I did it, it actually was very fitting according to what I was studying when I got into studying yoga and embodiment. Soma in Greek actually means the body and just the path of consciousness, it really fit beautifully.

Eric: Have you heard the story of St. Valmiki and how he got his name or how he became a saint?

Soma: No.

Eric: I'm not going to tell the whole thing but it's really interesting because he was basically Valmiki before he was this great saint. He was the author of the Ramayana and other Indian, really popular Indian scriptures at this time. He was a martyr and he would steal from people on the road. He came across some saints and he tried to steal from them. And they were basically like, "Does your family know what you're doing? Are they wanting to have a part of the karma that you're generating by doing this?" And he's like, "Yeah, of course." They're like, "Well, we're not going to go anywhere. We'll stay here. But go back and ask your family and see if they want a part of this karma."

And so, he went back and his wife's like, "No, I didn't have any idea you were killing people and stealing to support us. We don't want any part of that." So, he goes back to the saints. And he's

like, "What do I do about this?" And the saints are like, "Well, just say this mantra over and over again, and they gave him the mantra Mara. And Mara, is murder in Sanskrit. And so, he just said it over and over and over again, like so much so that an anthill got built around him. That's [foreign language 00:03:49] means anthill and that's why he has that name but when you're saying Mara, Mara, Mara, Mara, Mara, it also becomes Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama.

But Rama is the name of an incarnation of Vishnu. And that name was too pure to give to him as a murderer. So, they gave him Mara. But in giving him that name, it also turns into Rama. So, your story of saying the words backwards, made me think of that, because it's like, however you come to the mantra, it doesn't matter, it still works.

Soma: I love that story. And words are powerful, identities are powerful. And I think one thing I didn't mention, in sort of the origin of that, for me was the name Amos is it's a biblical name, actually. And I think it's a Hebrew Old Testament name. And Amos was a prophet of some sorts, but my understanding of the definition of that name was he who bears burdens, like the burden bear. And at that time in my life, that's how I felt, so that was part of the I'm going to shift this energy in my life by taking on this new identity and I'm really glad that I did.

Eric: When one goes to your website, theessentialman.net. The first thing you see, well, one of the first things you see is in big letters, the age of the lone wolf is over. Explain this to me. Why is this the headline for your website?

Soma: Yeah, for me, it's a big part of my purpose is really about creating community, and in particular with men. Many of us have grown up in a culture that has taught us to isolate ourselves when we're in pain, or we're going through struggles and challenges. It's this kind of a John Wayne type of masculinity that's going in alone. I'm going to tough it out and get through this. And there's a beauty in developing resilience and capacity to achieve great things. But it's my belief that we can achieve great things much faster and much easier in community when we're all sort of interdependently supporting each other with our unique gifts, that's really kind of part of the deeper mission behind the work that I do is to bring men together in these collectives so that we can enhance each other's gifts and learn how to work cooperatively to support all of us to thrive.

Eric: I resonate with that a lot. I think especially given the situation that we've all been thrust into where we're all forced to kind of retreat to our own caves. And at the same time, in the contrast to also build community at the same time, I find for myself that the things that this brings up is, when you're put in isolation, what ends up shining through that are the things that are bubbling to the surface that maybe haven't had the space to bubble to the surface, when you've been so active. I think that part of what's happening right now for people is that given all the space that magically has been created, these things that have been buried for who knows how long are coming to the surface. And people then have a choice of how they deal with that and look at it? Are they going to project it onto the situation that's going on externally and say, "Oh, I'm feeling these fears because of this thing outside of me?" Or are they going to look at it and say, "Oh, this is actually something within me? How interesting. Let me look at that."

Soma: Yeah, absolutely. What this whole pandemic has created is kind of a pressure cooker for our inner landscape in a way and things are popping out. And I would say that, I think it's true that if we are forced into any kind of conditions that are different than the environments that we're normally in that we often use to kind of distract ourselves from our inner worlds and then shits going to come up there.

But also, it's not just about being alone in your little bubble because sometimes you can still avoid aspects of yourself. Those of us that are actually forced into households, where we're spending a lot more time with the people that we might even love very deeply, are also seeing that pressurizing happening in our relationships right now. And that's another reason why I believe that relationships are a gift, not just in our intimate partnerships. But in a tribe, you can't really hide from yourself as easily is like if you're closely knit with people, shit just comes up, you can't really bullshit your way through the world anymore. You can't put on this facade.

And I think that's the beauty of being in these kinds of containers. And it's part of what I intentionally try to create in my men's work is, we want these things to come out because they're really blocking us from our real potential.

Eric: And we as individuals want these things to come out whether we know it or not. And I think one of the values of the tribe or the community is that you have created relationships in a container where you feel comfortable allowing whoever you are spontaneously in the moment to be expressed. At some point we were taught that, that's not okay. And then bad stuff happens when you disallow that.

Soma: Absolutely. Most of the bad things in our lives happen as a result of hiding parts of ourselves. So, I think one of the most healing things we can create is an environment where we can kind of expose, oftentimes the things that we're most ashamed of or that we want to hide, in an environment where people are going to be able to hold them with a kind of an unconditional acceptance, and love. That's incredibly healing. It has been for me.

Eric: When you're working in the groups, how do you introduce this practice of unconditional acceptance of the group, how the group can listen and respond to the person sharing.

Soma: I want to preface this with... This is an imperfect thing, because no matter how well you set up a group, we all have judgments of each other. And sometimes those judgments are based on our own projections of our own stuff, which most often they are on some level, right? That's one of the biggest obstacles to connection. Those judgments in themselves can be a gift, and there's processes I have around that. But in terms of just the unconditional acceptance, I mean part of it's a vetting process, sort of having men that maybe have developed themselves enough to be able to really... It's about kind of holding a space, it's like being able to hold a space of neutrality, not necessarily need to like love somebody immediately, but to be able to just be present with where somebody is.

And to me that's brought about by more embodiment, right? I do a lot of embodiment teaching because when we're breathing, and we're stealing our experience in our bodies, we're present. And we're more able to be with whatever comes up for somebody else. Does that make sense?

Eric: Yeah, of course. But I'd like to dive into this because I'm not sure that these concepts are maybe like experientially familiar to everybody. So, talking about presence, talking about embodiment. I mean, these are very powerful tools for not just working in a group of people. But when you see something, when you're exposed to anything in life, being able to be present with all the different reactions that happen. So, let's look into that. How can we develop a practice of presence and embodiment?

Soma: First off, it's kind of hard to talk about presence conceptually, but we can do our best to kind of point to it. And I would say there's different places where we can put our awareness. And most meditative practices, a really basic one is to practice putting our awareness on our breath, right? So, there's a certain presence with that. So, when the full capacity of your awareness is concentrated in a certain area, there's presence to that. And that could happen by putting your awareness fully on the person that you're with, right?

In that awareness, you're noticing things about them that are occurring in the moment, this is all in the moment, right? So, I just noticed that you took a sip of tea, your eyes kind of blinked for a moment. And so, I can track what's happening for you in the moment. And I can also track what's happening for me in my own embodied experience. And so, I might notice, like how my shoulders are a little tight right now, maybe I'm feeling a little nervous and my breath is kind of shallow. And even just bringing your awareness more tighter into focus, it can actually create an experience of opening or connection, especially in relationship. I don't know how well I'm explaining this.

Eric: No that's great. But what comes to mind is like, it's like the conundrum here is, and this is a common one, trying to talk about these kinds of things is like trying to tell somebody who's never tasted sugar, what sugar tastes like, which is impossible to do, you could write thousands of pages on it, and they'll still never get it. So, one thought that just occurred to me is why don't we just sit for a minute in silence. And if people are in a position, they can close their eyes. But I think having the experience of doing this and then talking about what we individually experience after this can help bring us to a deeper level of connection with what you're talking about. So, I'm just going to not say anything for like a minute and then we'll come back.

(meditation break)

Eric: Okay, so I think for me like when I do a practice of meditation I mean the first thing in deliberately being quiet is everything internal starts to brighten up kind of like when the sun goes down, the fireflies, you begin to see them or the stars come out, those things are there but... And I think one of the challenges I had early on with meditation is I felt that because those things were there, I was doing something wrong. Those thoughts would then move me to like move out of the meditation, be like, "These thoughts are there. I need to go do something,

this, this, this." But really the practice is just about sitting with whatever is and that's presence, right?

Soma: Yeah, it's sitting and in being a witness and I had a similar experience and I got the same pulse to kind of share a little bit of a different definition of it that relates to what you're saying is like when we're present, what's subtle comes more into focus, than the subtle things that are always occurring all the time. The sensations in our body. What I noticed immediately when we got quiet was there's actually this kind of hiss I don't know if it's from the microphone in the background or what, but I wasn't aware of that until we got still in quiet. I think that's true so much in life is that we spend so much time in our heads trying to figure things out or being busy that we miss so many subtle details of our experience. Which in my experience are really, in a way clues to unlock a lot of the things that we're struggling with in our lives.

Eric: Yeah, like for me when we got quiet within 10 seconds after I was like, "Okay, I need to keep count and make sure I know when we're supposed to stop this. But after that I heard the wind blowing outside. There's a calming aspect just to tuning into the wind and hearing that going, which the mind is so loud, the mechanization and the whirring of the motors of speaking, and thinking, these are great tools, and we need them, but they're so loud.

And if we just constantly have everything on then we don't allow ourselves to slow down and tune in to those quieter things that ultimately may address issues that we have, that we think we need to chase after and solve using the mind. Because if you're only just ever using the mind, you think the solutions are all external to you. And you're constantly chasing after things.

Soma: Yeah, absolutely. And sometimes the solutions are doing nothing. A lot of times as men, we want to fix things and figure things out and get to the bottom of things. And a lot of times, whatever we think our issues are, they tend to just kind of unwind on their own. If we can just be in presence and stillness and quiet. My teacher talks about masculine bliss being kind of more whenever we can just tap into that deep, quiet and stillness, like nothingness basically. I had a moment of that sitting there with you. I was like, "Fuck the podcast." Feels good.

Eric: Yeah, exactly. Let's just keep going this. Yeah, interestingly enough though, speaking of groups and community, meditation practices are a lot more powerful when you do it in groups. I mean, it kind of may seem counterintuitive, but if you're doing the practice with somebody, even for us, we're doing this... We're not physically embodied, but we can still feel each other's presence through the digital mechanisms that we're communicating through.

Soma: Absolutely. And I think this touches a little bit on a little more esoteric stuff when you get into feeling each other's presence, which I'm totally okay with. Some of your listeners might be like, "What does that mean?" I can't totally geek out on the science of it. But my understanding is we have mirror neurons that are happening, whatever exactly that means, but like certain synapses are firing in our brain when other people are embodying something in themselves. I talk a lot about the nervous system, and it's my belief that our nervous systems

are so hypersensitive to our environments and those environments include like, the body language of other people, the depth of somebody else's breath.

Which these are very subtle things. I really think that even if we're not aware of the subtle things or conscious of them, our bodies are actually feeling them whether we know it or not. And so, you can actually walk into a room. And you could come from a place of being like kind of up in your head and frantic and scattered. And you're going to have an effect on the people in your environment coming from that place. Even if you don't say a word. People will turn the other way. They'll try to protect themselves physically, they won't feel safe with you.

But you could walk into a room breathing deeply, feeling your feet being grounded, and showing up with this real presence where you're connected to the environment, and it will actually have a nervous system effect on the people around you helping them to relax, to feel safer, to trust you more, to be more open.

Eric: Now have you heard of the Dr. Emoto water studies?

Soma: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Eric: That's a perfect example. I mean, basically this Japanese scientist was taking pictures of water crystals, subjecting the water to different types of stimuli, whether gross, like playing music or more subtle, like having an intention about it. And in either case, whether they were playing music or saying something to this water or having intention, which is a lot more subtle, the water crystals would respond to positive things like love and acceptance. And in terms of organizing themselves in beautiful geometry, and the crystals that were subjected to hate and heavy metal or other disruptive things would become all gnarly and crystal and then that's an interesting study in itself. But then when you reflect that we're mostly water, it ties into what you're saying how sensitive we can be, whether we're aware of it or not.

Soma: Absolutely, and that we're transmitting into our environments, just by our way of being and maybe it's a vibration I mean, I don't see any reason why the physics of it wouldn't exist. We have all these vibrational cell phone signals coming at us invisibly all the time. I'm not sure if that's like exactly how it works, but I tend to think things move in vibration. Nikola Tesla was one of the great inventors of our time that never really got acknowledged for many of the things that he brought into the world but I had a quote of his a while back where it's like if you want to understand life, think in terms of vibration and frequency.

Sound is vibration that moves through our physical bodies. So, it's these subtle things. What I found is the more that I've slowed down and done meditative and yoga practices, the more I become conscious of the subtle and then I can work with those subtle things to shift my life on a gross level.

Eric: Let's kind of come back up to the surface a little bit on the more burst level. So, some of our listeners may be familiar with men's work through the work of Robert Bly, David Deida,

Robert Moore, Douglas Gillette. But for those who aren't, can you give our listeners an introduction of Men's Work and why you think it's so important?

Soma: Yeah, Men's Work is not a new thing by any means. Most traditional cultures had rites of passages that would help to transition young boys into adulthood and coming to understand the traditions, the spiritual mythology of their cultures, and they would in a way through many of these cultures be in that initiation process come imbued with a sense of purpose, a sense of it's not just about me, I'm here to serve something larger than me. And that's a huge part of what initiation is about that's been absent from most modern culture.

There's not really a lot of true initiations that happen anymore. There's some fragments of initiation that I've carried through different traditions, like fraternities and gangs but most of them are kind of unhealthy, toxic ways of helping a man evolve into a mature place. I think one of the fundamental mindset shifts that needs to happen to shift from kind of boy psychology to man psychology is this kind of recognition that it's not just about me, my life's really in service of something larger than me. And until we can really tap into that as men it's process, we can often realize that and then fall back into this self-identified ego perspective, just trying to get our selfish needs met.

We see that reflected in the world right now, in politics and big business, they're just extracting whatever they can from the earth so they can get ahead right now, so that they can win the election, whatever kind of manipulative tactics they need to do to ensure that they get to be the one that survives. So, just going back to what it means for modern men. A lot of these rites of passages have been adapted to our modern life in a way and that's something I try to do in my work is to help men tap into a purpose that's larger than them and get a sense of what it's like to kind of be relationally oriented in how they show up in the world.

I really believe that men can't really do this kind of work on their own completely. I think that because these cultural traditions that are probably still living in our DNA somewhere, they were done communally. They were done tribally. And it's really important that we have this kind of sphere of influence in our lives so that we can unlock certain aspects of who we are, that we wouldn't really be able to tap into on our own. And one of the incredible gifts of Men's Work is having a container where we talked a little bit about the community aspect of it. One thing that's powerful about it is being able to get really honest feedback and reflection from other men that you wouldn't typically get in our standard kind of shallow, nice guy culture right now.

And we need that, we need deep honesty, we need an environment where we're going to be challenged to confront the parts of ourselves that we're afraid to confront on our own. A lot of us kind of live in the bubble of our fear and our limited realities. And until we step into a type of experience that's going to help to kind of sharpen us in that way, we're probably just going to stay stuck in old behaviors and patterns.

Eric: It really has to be a conscious choice at these times to light the rocket and escape the gravity because the gravity of the current culture is that it puts a priority on certain masculine

traits going for the things that you want thinking for yourself, lack of emotional involvement in whatever form and we are given role models in media and other things and put success on a pedestal and the people who are successful are basically behaving in these ways that are very egotistical. So, there's a strong magnetic pole, unless you resist it, you just naturally are going to go along in that direction.

It kind of makes me think of the samurai, and different martial arts where you'd grow up and you would be in community with these people, you'd go to a place and you would study, and you would practice, you'd fight each other because you were honing a skill. The thing is, in our world today, we're not fighting physically. But there is a lot of emotional junk going around all this passive aggressiveness, and people aren't doing it consciously, necessarily. So, the battle is more on the subtle levels at this point, it's not on the physical.

And I think from my perspective, going into Men's Work and starting to become open and communicate feelings, it's kind of like sparring, you're practicing, bringing these things to a level of awareness, dealing with maybe somebody telling you that hurts your ego, like they may tell you something that you're really attached to the certain aspect of you and somebody honestly tells you, "Hey, actually man, that's not cool when you do that." And then it's up to you internally, you're going to have a reaction to that. And are you going to go with protecting your ego or are you going to choose to take a path that maintains openness within that community.

Soma: Absolutely. And I like the connection to the samurai tradition, which I don't know a lot about. But it is kind of like a dojo that we step into, to almost slay our ego. Life is a battlefield. And one of the archetypes that's strong for a lot of men is the warrior archetype, which in a healthy way, is the energy of being able to set boundaries to go after what we want to be focused, to be directed to be sharp and clear. And we've definitely seen probably examples of that archetype coming from the shadow aspect where it's just, "I'm just going to take what I want and plow through everything that stands in my way of it." And that's kind of the shadow of the warrior, but the healthy part of the warrior is having those capacities to create those things, but it's for the sake of the greater good.

It's not just for me. Being in a group of men, we can help to draw that out, to sharpen that so that it becomes a strong force. I think a lot of modern men actually are very out of touch with that part of them, the part of them that could kill the part of them because we've... In the last 40, 50 years, we've been told that, that's bad. And so, many modern men have turned that off completely. The absence of that kind of fierce killer aspect of us, actually weakens us in a way. So, there's a way to turn that on, but also have our heart present. And this is something that not only serves our purpose, but also can really serve our intimate relationships. There's a healthy kind of fire to it that gives... If you're with a woman as feminine being, they can create a sense of safety for a woman, like, "This man is here to protect me," that's the real primal sense of connection in that way.

Eric: I notice in me when you were talking about like the killer... I mean, there was a reaction within me when you were doing that, that was surprising, because I was like, "Wait, I have a

killer instinct." I've never thought about it. But it's never had to be tested. There's no things that come up naturally in my environment for my entire life, where I've had to be put in a situation like that.

Soma: And hopefully, we don't have to. I mean, who knows, I think this current pandemic thing, it's testing that part of us and it doesn't necessarily mean we need to go out and shoot our zombie neighbors or anything, but it might mean that we need to hold that energetic of. I've got you through the people in our lives that we care about. I'm not going to let anybody hurt you, I would die for you. And that's a very nurturing kind of thing.

Eric: Where's the balance between... So, say that you have an intense emotional situation, where's the balance between centering and acting rightly and repression?

Soma: So, I think as men, we are biologically wired a little bit more for a capacity to kind of compartmentalize emotions. And I don't know if it's completely a byproduct of men being told not to cry, whatever. I think it does come from being warriors. Needing to kill for generations or needing to do the hard work. And I think there are moments when we need to step in and kind of get over our stuff because we're all human. We all have emotional reactions to things.

We all get our feelings hurt in different ways. There's a time sometimes to set that aside. And if our life is kind of dedicated to something larger than ourselves, that can be one somewhat healthy way to do that, because it's not so much repression. It's not like, "I can't feel this right now I'm going to tighten up." There's an experience of myself, that is so large, that I can handle this and this and this and have this thing happening simultaneously, it's not going to get suppressed as much.

And with that being said, it is important for us men to have spaces where we can unpack some of the stuff that does get suppressed because I think a lot of us have a habit of doing that in an unhealthy way. And we need safe spaces where we can express our grief or our rage or our sadness, where it's not going to be judged and unfortunately, as much as a lot of women say they want more vulnerability from men and for them to express their feelings more, even if they say that a lot of women are also conditioned to not really be able to handle the full expression of that it could kind of blow out their sensitive nervous system.

So, it's really valuable to have a space where men can go to just go full out and know that it's not going to rupture anything. It's not going to throw anybody else off. Just like you said earlier, when you get together with a group of men, and you meditate you go deeper. And you also when you get together with a group of men that are present, it creates an environment of deep safety that's kind of amplified so it makes it a little bit easier to go into some of these dark places that are uncomfortable and scary and kind of let go a little bit.

Eric: Because I mean, we've been talking about, we've been bringing up words like killing and fighting and things like this, and these things have happened. These things are part of our ancestry. But the thing is, I think it's an important distinction to make that the actions that we

take on the surface are dictated by and dependent on our current environment, the things that more subtly move us to take action, I think are timeless. So, if you're put in a situation, you will have a certain internal sensory experience that will drive you to take a certain action based on certain decisions.

So, in this day and age, you don't have to kill a lot. There may be the sensations and the instincts that come up and things that raise those same things for you. But the action is not to kill, the action maybe to do something different. It's a more modern society. And I think this part is important too, because there's a lot of people doing violent things, not killing necessarily, but saying hurtful things to people, making general statements about groups of people, if they're angry.

There's this disconnect, they're driven to some level of instability within themselves because of some emotion that's rising. They don't connect with it. And therefore, what they're doing is reacting. Anything that's reactionary is wrong, because you don't have control over your own full being at that point.

Soma: And most things that we're reacting to are, they tend to not even be based, if you really drill down and are honest about it, most of the reactivity has nothing to do with the thing that we're actually reacting to. It has more to do with our own personal history, something that we're not okay within ourselves or the world as a result of that. And so, all of that charge of the past is built into the reaction, all this sort of unprocessed, unresolved stuff from the past. That's what comes out in a moment. And that's fucking intense, that comes off as feeling very violent.

Eric: And fearful.

Soma: Very fearful.

Eric: And that's what's happening right now, people are having all different kinds of reactions to the world situation?

Soma: Yeah, they feel insecure. And now more than ever, as men we can tap into these kind of latent capacities, to be grounded, to be a rock, to be present, to be able to hold a container or a space for like all the reactivity that's happening in the world. And it's only from that place of stillness and presence that we can actually be decent leaders, otherwise, we're just responding to our own pain, our own reactivity.

Eric: Or feeding the fire basically.

Soma: Yeah. I wanted to just touch on the idea of, coming back to this topic of warrior because I think it's relevant right now, and I just want to make sure it's understood. It's like not advocating that we need to go out and start killing people, but there's kind of energetics within that archetype of a warrior that are valuable in our lives. For some of us, if we feel kind of weak and defeated at times, if we can open up and activate the part of us that's a warrior, we're

going to tap into energy and direction and conviction and moving towards something. And these things are... The idea of archetypes is that the things have existed in the collective consciousness for so long that they're really available to all of us to tap into it any time.

Eric: And I think the thing about archetypes is that they're a lot deeper than the surface. So, like when people think about warrior, probably the first things that come to mind are images of actions that who they think a warrior takes, but that's not what a warrior is. I mean, two things come to mind. One is the most powerful stance in kung fu is the open stance that basically like you're standing full... You're basically inviting an attack, and it's the most powerful because you're holding such a powerful presence and have such a confidence about your own ability to protect yourself that you invite it. You don't go after it, you don't initiate. But there's that, that brings to mind and the second one is about frogs.

This is from BBC Earth. I remember this. But basically, when frogs in the jungle are mating, a particular type of frog, I don't know if it's about all frogs. But this particular one, the alpha male basically sits on the highest branch and croaks, and the females go towards the alpha male. And now the quote unquote lesser males who aren't as in the frog world, displaying as much of the attractive qualities as the alpha male will try and ambush the female on her way to the alpha male, because that's the way that they're going to further their line is by an ambush.

So, in this scenario, the warrior guy basically just says, "Hey, here I am, this is what I'm about. Whatever comes, comes." And then the people who are fearful and they're worried that they're not going to attract something are the ones taking action, the ones attacking, the ones being more violent in their behavior.

Soma: I totally agree that there's other warrior traditions like Carlos Castaneda talks about it in his books, which is like a shamanic tradition. And then there's Chögyam Trungpa who's a Buddhist teacher, who's just a tantric teacher. And both of those are considered warrior traditions and it's not outward active warrior, it's really the closer that we can get to facing our own death, internally, being okay with everything, the collapse of the whole world, if you can relax into that. That's a very powerful place to come from.

It goes beyond needing to control and manipulate situations to have outcomes. It's saying like, I trust life, I'm so connected to God or the divine or the universe that I'm able to just relax into my life and trust whatever comes I can handle it.

Eric: Something you specialize in is helping men get unstuck or moving forward in their life and I'd like to dive into this a little bit because I think our listeners will get a lot of value out of your perspective here. And I think it ties into what you were just saying. I mean, yeah, if you were going to relax into these things, relaxation is really about letting go. So, what are the things that we're coming to where we just can't let go of them and why?

Soma: That's a good question. I think part of being stuck has something to do with being attached to a certain identity of who we think we are. That identity is... There's tons of like

verifiable evidence that we can prove to say, "Oh, yeah, I'm this guy. I got all this history proving that I do these things and that means that's who I am." A lot of times these identities hold us back from tapping into a new potential because we're attached to that identity. Like even if we don't like it, even if we're unhappy with it. There's a part of us maybe it's unconscious that is kind of comfortable there. I like my story. I like saying, "I can't make enough money or my wife doesn't understand me." Whatever the story is, some people get stuck in that's who I am and that's reality.

And, again like I talked about earlier, a lot of that's based on our childhood experiences, like our formative years, kind of create the lens in which we view reality through. And until we get somebody to kind of shatter that lens or clean it off, then it's going to be really hard to see anything differently.

Eric: How might somebody begin to identify the recurring patterns that keep them from moving forward?

Soma: I think one of the most valuable tools that I really believe in is meditation. And why it's a powerful foundational practice is meditation over time creates a larger gap between stimulus and reaction. Just like we were talking about earlier, that reactivity. So, the more we practice, the more we can tap into the capacity to just witness the experiences and phenomena of life without reacting to it immediately, the more self-awareness we can have, we can sort of... Like I said, you start to notice the subtle things more. And you can start to see those patterns happening in your relationships with work.

Oftentimes, there's a connection between how we show up in our relationships, how we show up at our business, how we show up in our work. There's a saying in the coaching world of how you do one thing, it's how you do everything. You can look at how you do the dishes, how you have sex, how you drive your car, there's probably some underlying patterns that are consistent throughout. It's really just about choosing to consider it, letting the ego aside momentarily enough to say, "All right, there's something to look at here." And I'm just going to start observing my life, being honest.

Eric: That distance that it provides is powerful because it begins to plant a seed of doubt that you are actually who you think you are. Because I think until you start getting a practice of experiencing, "I had that thought. And I didn't immediately act on that thought." Because I think a standard way of living is we just feel like our thoughts happen, and that's us. And then we immediately take action, but there actually if you do meditate, it distances that gap. And you start to see, the thought happens. And then there's a discernment aspect that comes in. Is it for me to do anything about that? Should I take action on that thought?

Soma: Yeah. And I think it also develops, part of that sort of witness consciousness is the capacity to be more neutral in how we respond to things and to be able to hold paradox too I think that's a part of maturity that a lot of us can tap into, especially in these kind of polarized times. Everybody wants to be right. When we approach life from like a meditative mind, it's not

about rights and wrongs so much anymore. It's about really choosing moment by moment what is most aligned with the deepest truths that we can access in that time.

Eric: One of the things you also help men to do is to discover their true gifts by looking into the shadow and uncovering their quote unquote gold. For people who maybe aren't familiar with the language of shadow psychology. What does this mean exactly?

Soma: The goal is really it equates to our innate gifts. And it's my opinion that we're all kind of born into this world with certain inherent gifts, some of which we may have access to when we're young and they get kind of conditioned out of us, some of which we may not really fully tap into until we mature into them and a lot of times the journey to our deepest gifts and I also consider that in aspects of our purpose, the expression of those gifts is it requires us to go into the parts of ourselves that we don't really want to go into. It's an uncomfortable journey. And there's sort of... It's hard to... This is another one of those things that's hard to fully articulate, because it's a very experiential journey.

But there's a relationship between our gifts and our wounds that we won't really know until we do the work to feel our unfelt pain or reclaim those sort of abandoned parts of ourselves that we at a young age decided were not acceptable. And those gifts really have so much to do with bringing those parts of us back online and being integrated with them. And that's how we become more whole and from our wholeness that's how we can be the clearest expression of who we are in the world. And it's a place of not holding who we are back.

Eric: How would somebody recognize if this is the type of work they're ready for, and does resistance to it actually indicate that they're not?

Soma: I would say, men typically come to work with me when they're... They see a place in their life, maybe like hitting a wall or an obstacle or just noticing, starting to have some awareness of these reoccurring patterns that are happening maybe after several failed relationships, it's often the pain, again, that will lead a man to like want to look inside and explore, what's going on here. And I think speaking to the resistance piece, resistance is often pointing us towards something, some of these things that we may not want to look at.

So, if you're experiencing resistance, that's a normal part of the journey. And it's usually a clue that there's some work to be done. Something that you might need to face. And so, I think it's a really ripe opportune time. And, of course, you need to have some kind of opening, you need to be willing to trust other people, to be supported, to be vulnerable and open up parts of yourself that you might have hidden your entire life. That's often where the resistance will come up. But in my work, I do as good of a job as I can to create a safe space where all parts of a man are welcome. Give me your deepest, darkest, dirtiest secrets, and I'm here for you.

Eric: So, in this time, specifically where a lot of us are at home, in our environments, maybe with the family or loved ones or partners, more than we are typically what are some ways that we can practice developing an openness in these environments.

Soma: Yeah, that's a good question. And I've been challenged by this one personally lately, I would say, first thing that comes to mind, especially if we're sharing space with other people or if you have a family or something is practicing, curiosity is a genuinely open place to come from. So, it's like learning how to relate to people without assumptions is a great way to show up in any kind of relationship. I think some of the self-awareness practices that we spoke of earlier are really crucial, right now, in order to learn how to like self regulate and to handle our own potential panic and anxiety that might be coming up.

I know for a lot of men, when money or business feels like a threat that's a big threat on our ego because men have a need to want to provide and when that's being taken away, potentially, that can freak us the fuck out. But it's chasing it just those frogs trying to chase down their mate is not always the most effective way to create abundance or opportunity in our lives. I think one of the best things we can do sometimes as men is to sit back and be still and reflect. It's not always about frenetic action. There's a lot of people that want to equate masculinity with doing all the time, but a lot of healthy masculine practice it's just about being.

Eric: And accepting what comes and developing a trust that maybe there's something beyond us. We may not understand it right now, but maybe there's something beyond that knows how and what we need more. And if we're constantly chasing then we are basically putting up a hand to that and not even allowing it in saying, "You don't know what... You took this away from me. I needed that."

Soma: Yeah, I agree. I think one thing I've also been trying to practice lately that I would encourage and this is similar to that it's being a yes to whatever is, being yes to whatever is happening. Whatever comes at us in our relationships, whatever's happening in the world, can you be a yes. And when we're a yes to something, we're more able to see opportunity in it. What's the gift in this?

Eric: And being a yes also is being a yes to if there's fear there, it can all be happening at the same time, like you were saying earlier about holding the paradox, fully accepting of this situation. I have fear but that doesn't mean that, that fear means I need to get into action and have that drive me somewhere. And practicing with that you may actually deepen your understanding of what fear actually is, because the word that we use for it, it's just the tip of the iceberg.

Soma: Yeah, it's usually pointing somewhere in that way of being a yes or being curious helps to open whatever our emotional experiences or deeper access to what's actually going on.

Eric: So, basically, practice, look at the waveform of this podcast. In the middle there's going to be like a silent period for like one minute. Just go there and replay that for 60 minutes every day. There you go.

Soma: Yeah. And it does help. I've at times really used structures like that to support my own practice. And then there's all kinds of stuff available online, I'm actually going to be releasing some kind of guided breath and meditation practice. It's helpful to have something to go to, to not only give us accountability to do the thing that might not be easy, but just to guide us into these deeper places that we're unfamiliar with.

Eric: So, as we wrap things up today, can you tell our listeners where they can learn more about you?

Soma: Yeah, my website is theessentialman.net. And you can also find me on Instagram, I'm pretty active on there more than other platforms. And my Instagram handle is @the.essential.man. And that also connects to my Facebook business page. But it's pretty much the same stuff there. I have a free Facebook group for men that are interested in dipping their toe in the water a little bit and getting curious about this, you can find that and that's connected to my Facebook business page, which is the essential man,

Eric: Thank you so much for joining today and having this conversation. It's been great.

Soma: Yeah, I've really enjoyed connecting with you Eric and exploring all these amazing, fascinating topics.

OUTRO:

Thank you so much for listening to this entire episode of The Subscription Entrepreneur Podcast. I sincerely hope you enjoyed this episode and benefitted from my conversation with Soma.

I'd also like to extend my gratitude to Soma for coming on the show and sharing from his knowledge and experience.

To get links to all the resources we mentioned in this episode, head on over to SubscriptionEntrepreneur.com/147. There you'll also find the show notes and a downloadable transcript of our conversation.

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