

# *Fear Me Out Podcast*

## Episode 18

Hosted by Clinical Psychologist - Dana P. Saperstein PhD.

*Guest Speaker*

Matt Lowe - Conscious Introspection

**Kim Fauskee** 00:00

It's not our disabilities, it's our abilities that count. On this episode we welcome into the podcast studio Matt Lowe, who refers to his physical impairment as a blessing and not a curse. Please join us for an insightful hour, where Matt discusses how his life was altered at age 16. And how his heightened senses and intuition put him on a course to become an agent of change, and an advocate for social and community restoration. We hope you enjoy the episode

**Dr. Dana** 00:36

there are two basic motivating forces fear and love when we're afraid we pull back from life. When we're in love, we open up to all that life has to offer with passion, excitement, and acceptance.

**Fear Me Out** 00:55

Humming coming to you from our studio in Santa Barbara, California. This is the fear me out podcast. We're not your typical Self Help Program. Our show takes a deep dive into those psychological issues that affect us on a daily basis. We hope to shift your perspective and have you experiencing emotions differently. Now here are your hosts Kim Fauskee. And Dr. Dana Saperstein.

**Kim Fauskee** 01:17

So Matt, welcome to the fear me out podcast studio.

**Matt Lowe** 01:20

Thank you. Thank you.

**Kim Fauskee** 01:22

Can you tell us a little bit who Matt Lowe is?

**Matt Lowe** 01:25

Who Matt Lowe is? Oh,

**Kim Fauskee** 01:27

no, it's a loaded question to start with.

**Matt Lowe 01:30**

To start off with it's all a two minute version, 10 minute version and 20 minute version.

**Kim Fauskee 01:37**

We have an hour,

**Matt Lowe 01:38**

We have an hour. All right. Well, Matt originally got defined by having to get through something he didn't quite understand. So Matt holds questions in deep and intentional ways. So that is who Matt is in one sentence. Beyond that. Matt was a lost and lonely, misunderstood child. Matt is also somebody who sees the depth of life that brings out others' beliefs and change because he's seen a lot of hard things in life already at a young age. And I've had some experiences, I've seen some things and so and I see the depth of humanity. So I think that it gives you a little bit of taste to go from there. So I think as who Matt is, though, Matt is somebody that thrives on truth, and aliveness and joy that loves bringing people together and love seeing healing take place. So

**Dr. Dana 02:39**

how old are you, man?

**Matt Lowe 02:40**

32? Yeah,

**Kim Fauskee 02:42**

I was gonna say he's pretty. He's pretty young to figure all that. Yeah.

**Dr. Dana 02:45**

That's why I asked because he looks quite young. Yeah,

**Matt Lowe 02:48**

yeah. All a lot of this came honestly to fruition. But combination will be a better word. In 2015 2016, I started writing a book, and I was processing my sister's rehabilitation or just life after brain cancer. So she had brain cancer when she was six, and I was seven. So I started writing a book about it when I was 23. I finished it when I was 25. So I started connecting all these thoughts and found a way that I've moved through it, and I found a theme to my life. And it really helped me find a kind of redemptive path for what I had gone through in a sense of suffering. You know, Viktor Frankl calls it the redemptive path of suffering. So a redemptive perspective on suffering. And, you know, we believe in second chances, and we believe that there's something beyond ourselves. And so I really found that before I even had the words to explain it. So and then I decided, like, well, I need to put words to this. And so I started writing a book. It's not out yet, unfortunately. But yeah, it'll all be great. It'll be out in its time.

**Kim Fauskee 03:58**

Oh, great. Novels take a lot of time. Right, right. Something important, I think the listeners need to know early on is that you're visually impaired. Yeah.

**Matt Lowe** 04:08

Yeah. So my sister went through her brain cancer when she was six, and I was seven. And then 10 years later, I was diagnosed with the disease that my vision would slowly start to decrease over a six month period of time, and then it would stabilize. And it's been stable for 16 years now. And there's something also spiritual about watching my sister go through what she went through, seeing the strength, the joy, the love, the pureness, the innocence, that she was able to get through what she got through, which gave me the strength to get through what I got through.

**Kim Fauskee** 04:42

So So how old were you when you were diagnosed with

**Matt Lowe** 04:45

I was 16. And it's it's rare disease. So it's not something that people think about? Oh, yeah, I know what that is. But it's Leber's hereditary optic neuropathy. It's rare and so

**Kim Fauskee** 04:55

when you were diagnosed with that, do you remember what your first thought was?

**Matt Lowe** 05:02

it's genetic, it runs in my family, my aunt, my two cousins have it. My great grandma had it. It skipped my mom's get my grandma, my sister had already gone through what she'd gone through. So I kind of knew the runaround in the hospital world. And so when I went to the optometrist to like, check out and get glasses kind of thing. And they didn't have an answer. They're like, Oh, we don't see anything wrong. I knew it was like, damn, like it. Like you just you just know, you know? And

**Kim Fauskee** 05:34

did you know growing up, though, that your relatives had this, and it was a possibility that

**Matt Lowe** 05:38

you know, not for me, I'm the first male in my family to have it. So the gene is passed down through the female gene. And then it can be passed down through the male. So I'm the first male in my family to have

**Dr. Dana** 05:49

it. So and how much impairment to suffer from? Yeah,

**Matt Lowe** 05:52

it's a I have about 10% left. So some of my peripheral that pretty much yeah, about 90% gone. So. And

**Kim Fauskee** 06:01

I did it, did it go quickly,

**Matt Lowe** 06:05

six months, so decreased February, to about July, August. And in that time period, I tried out for team USA. So it's kind of my claim to fame. I grew up playing hockey. So that year, that summer, before that, we had just won nationals. And I got an invite to try out for team USA that May and I tried out for team USA legally blind.

**Kim Fauskee 06:26**

Wow. So I was going to ask you that was leading into the next question. It was how did it change your life as, especially as a teenager

**Matt Lowe 06:40**

hockey was my life. So I often say my dreams were canceled, my plans were halted. And I had to find myself over again. So you lose, you lose your you'd lose a sense of self, you don't know who you are. And a lot of my friends left me emotionally and physically. And so I was alone. My family kind of had to care for my sister and just kind of didn't know how to process it either. So I had to find a new path, you know, step into a new way and just take one step at a time. There's, I didn't grow up in the church, but I came to college, I got connected in Christianity. And there was a passage I kind of I really connected with, and it says walk by faith, not by sight. And so you know, each step is a step of faith. So if you don't see where you're going, and so when you the faith walk, you know, it's not really by faith as people like oh, you know, you just step out you don't know what's happening but know when you're not when you when you're not walking by sight, you walk by feel you walk by hearing, he walked by your intuition, you walk by all these other things that you've learned to trust. It's not just faith is like you don't know, you know, it's not seeing, seeing is believing, you know, no, that's not true. You have belief that you just can't explain and that faith taps into that.

**Kim Fauskee 08:11**

Were you a religious person or a religious family before this,

**Matt Lowe 08:15**

if you consider the spirit of somebody getting going through brain cancer, religious than Yes, but No, I didn't grow up to an organized, organized religion, just my sister spirit, she had a major stroke during the, during the surgery to remove the cancer, and she hit the restart button on her life at age six. And a lot of residual issues afterwards, because of the stroke. Human precice she had a pituitary gland seek it out, no, no hormones, just the whole nine yards kind of thing. And so she had a lot of residual issues. And so a lot of strength, a lot of things just continued to happen. And so I saw a lot of the turmoil of that and but she to this day just lives with so much joy and so much love. And just kind of very much like that childlike spirit that, you know, we all kind of like just that, where that phrase comes from, you know, and so it's just, it's so beautiful. And so,

**Dr. Dana 09:11**

so she's okay now.

**Matt Lowe 09:13**

Okay, meaning that she lives with a whole bunch of joy and love. And she's 31 going on. Eight years old still. Yeah. Oh, yeah. She has a lot of impairment. Yeah, so I mean, serious in the way of, I guess in

the way of seeing disability as something that is bad, but serious in the way that it like it seriously. kept her with that sense of joy captured with that sense of love like that is serious that that is the seriousness that we need to attach to our lives. It's not something that I've come to see, not as something bad, but something that is beautiful.

**Kim Fauskee** 09:52

Yeah, if you want to stop my evolution there. Yeah, I would have been okay with that.

**Matt Lowe** 09:56

Exactly. Exactly.

**Kim Fauskee** 09:59

Man, were you in angry that this happened to you?

**Matt Lowe** 10:06

I'm told my personality type if you just like prick underneath my skin, there's a lot of anger. I don't show a lot of anger on the surface I learned to like, maybe control it subsided. Yeah, because, ya know, I was there wasn't much way to express it. Hockey was my expression, I was angry at what happened to my sister and the way people treated her. I saw that and hockey was my purpose. Hockey was my thing that I was able to put the strength that my sister, that inspiration that my sister gave me, I was able to put that into Hakeem, like, this is my purpose. I'm gonna go do this for her in a sense. And so that was kind of my journey. That was my story. And then when I lost that, I lost who I was. So there was a lot of anger around that like, and not not in a sense of like, why God There was never like, even to this day, I've never done that even after I've come to Christianity and gone through my own vision loss process. And I've never attributed any harm or any like, Mal bitterness or anger towards God. So

**Kim Fauskee** 11:07

then how about your parents being supportive, not supportive, not knowing how to handle the situation, I obviously they had their hands full with your sister as well. Yeah,

**Matt Lowe** 11:18

you know, supportive in the ways that humans are able to be supportive and deal with their own stuff and get through it in a way that is just one day at a time. That's when the issues and the complexity of my brain cancer and the stroke after and the residual issues that came after my sister surgery, you just you just didn't know what each day was coming. And so it could be seizures, it could be hormone imbalances, it could be pancreatitis, it could be muscle issues, it could be slowly, like things starting to shut down because of scoliosis, it could be vision. So just the range of things, you just don't know what is coming, you have to be ready for it. So the you kind of just take each day as it comes. And that's something that's a skill in its own right, because a lot of people like to play and a lot of people like to just have some order in their life and I became comfortable in chaos and actually chaos I've come to find, in my studies that chaos is beautiful chaos is the natural order of the universe. And once I heard that, that was very freeing and liberating for me. Because like, oh, that's I didn't have to resent any more that my childhood or to the things that happened to me and like, Oh, those things happen. And

those are beautiful. So we don't have the sense of order and control to this world is not the natural way. So

**Dr. Dana** 12:45

So do you feel like you have come to peace with the way the world is for you?

**Matt Lowe** 12:53

Peace is a continual thing for me pieces in an absolute like I've arrived to peace is something that I'm continuing to walk in. And so yes, I'm on the peace journey. I'm on the grief journey, I'm on the acceptance journey. And I'm, I'm at a place of enough resolve that I've that of acceptance that I can continue to accept the things that come to me each day, knowing that each day I wake up and I have to learn something new and confront a new a new impairment, that my vision loss, like each day, there's something new that I have to learn, or that have to come up against, you know, whether it's navigating a new website that is not accessible, or a new street crossing, or something's in the way in my apartment complex, you know, so just like there's something new and each day is an adventure. So have I come to peace and a sense of like Life is an adventure. Absolutely. So

**Dr. Dana** 13:48

because oftentimes when something happens, like what happened to a person becomes quite bitter. Yeah, I've seen it and feels very much victimized and have a really hard time getting past those feelings. And so life is not an adventure, necessarily. It's quite difficult and survival. Yeah, it's demoralizing and a lot of ways. Doesn't sound like that's what happened to you.

**Matt Lowe** 14:18

i To be honest, and say that I think we are not really getting over victim mentality. I think there's tools that can help us cope with it and let it come like it comes and goes, you know, and so what are the tools that we have? I recognize it, but I also I and so I know how to spot it, but I it would be like oh no I defeated victimized or the victim mentality. Like I kind of like have to check somebody if they say that they have, because I think that's part of being human is like well, you know, having the humility to think about our downsides or what we cannot do. So I think that's, I think that's just a part of being I mean, until You can get to the position of power where you just kind of are dominating things all the time. And that that's a whole nother conversation now. So, yeah.

**Dr. Dana** 15:07

So it seems as though you've chosen a path of helping others. So are you comfortable talking a bit about how that evolved?

**Matt Lowe** 15:17

Absolutely, absolutely. Okay, that gets a little more into my story. So going back to the original question, like I said, the 20 minute version, the 10 minute version of the two minute version, we got through the two minute version. And the 10 minute version takes us into my path. So vision loss hockey, my pathway kind of had changed. I was going to go move away to go away to school, I decided to stay home to community college, because I wasn't ready to give up hockey, and found that the path of being a high school history teacher was my next step. That was, that was kind of the thing that all

right, I guess I'll do this. And so I started to pursue that and went away to school, went, went away to university, and got connected with something called Black Studies. And I ended up majoring in Black Studies in my undergrad, as well as history. And in this process of history and Black Studies, I came to address the historical injustices of things that kind of have happened in this world, particularly around slavery. My history thesis was what do historical institutions like Brown University or Harvard do? What do they do when they have a deep connection with the historical legacy of slavery? What is I really like, what is this restorative? Like? What is the process of justice knowing? And I feel like I'm asking these huge questions and creating this whole field of study as a naive undergrad, and not knowing that there's hundreds and 1000s of years of this field of restorative justice already before me. And so I dive into this world of restorative justice and restorative justice is a field that is often contrary to the way our I'll just say, our western world works of the way of punishment, instead of how much time for the crime or how much time for the, for the action, it asked, what is the healing for the harm that was done. And that's kind of the basic premises of it. And it seeks healing in a communal or in a not a victim and offender sense. But a person harmed the person that did did the harm. And the community, it sees it in a dynamic sense, instead of a dual sense, okay. And so to me, that's where I really, really rooted myself in my healing, started connecting my healing journey to the world's healing journey, and really kind of start to understand myself in this change that I was meant to work to go on, because I grew up playing hockey. And my sister, the hospital that she was in, was in, she was in West Oakland, and I was in East Oakland. And a lot of those are very, like under the resource exploited kind of low income, low wealth areas. And just a lot of people have been left out to dry and not feel like they're cared about and so that I had a lot of questions from my childhood inside of me that a lot of people couldn't answer. And so when it really connected a deep place of purpose of why I was in those spaces, when I went, went away to college and started having these questions answered. And I started connecting my healing to the world's great healing.

**Dr. Dana** 18:18

Okay. And so where did that path lead you from there?

**Matt Lowe** 18:22

Restorative justice and, and grief and a deeper purpose of like, okay, hockey isn't my only purpose, that there's this other path that has connected these dots have connected me to this particular place. And then the restorative justice field, I started, I had restored a car with my dad, even after vision loss, I built a whole car in 1970, Barracuda and I had just come back from South Africa, because I felt like that was a journey I needed to go on. There's just something about it, that attracted me there. And it's something beautiful happened when I was there, I started to experience this restorative spirit as I would call it, in person, just embedded in the culture there when I was there, and then I came back, and I was sitting behind my car at a car show. And I'm like, Oh, my, the theme of my life is restoration. And so it's restoration of myself, restoration of my vision, restoration of the community, restoration of justice, restoration of this world restoration. And it's just it's healing presence, being a presence of repair. And that has led me to being an advocate of reparations and bringing out reparations in our community, for the historical and justices So, but also just not just reparations, not just race, around issues of race, but bringing that reparative model and bringing it into the ways in which we build community. There's there's something unnatural I mentioned earlier: the order of the world is chaos. And there's something natural in the ways that we repair. The things that maybe have been gripped too tight or things that had



been broken. And in trying to be controlled or dominated, so when things don't get allowed to be experienced or expressed in their natural way, they get confined and when things are confined, they break because they're pushed beyond their bounds of their natural abilities. So

**Dr. Dana** 20:31

tell me how your intuition relates to all of the stuff that you're doing? Because it sounds very much intertwined.

**Matt Lowe** 20:39

Absolutely. It's intuition, I think, that comes from experience. I mean, there's, there's something still, you could have intuition, even without having an experience. But knowing the, in holding the tensions of, of disagreement and strife and pain and harm and discomfort early on, I became very familiar with him. And I didn't really connect with my intuition much as a kid, I actually probably ran from it more than anything else. But when I was able to start to name it, as I got older, I started to find the power in my intuition, I started to feel things like, Oh, I understand empathy, I understand compassion, I understand how I can put myself in this person's shoes, I understand how this has guided me to this place, how this dot connects with this dot, I really kind of see our lives as one of those children's kind of coloring book where you connect one to two and two to three, and it starts to the more dots you connect, it paints a picture. And that's kind of really how I see our lives. Or at least for me, I've started to see that and like, Oh, if we just have that perspective, we can start to connect those dots and see where things are going. And I think, for me, it's the path of repair that really in restoration, that really connect all those dots for me.

**Dr. Dana** 22:00

You know, one of the main tenets that Kim and I adhere to is the notion that your intuition is, I guess for lack of a better way of putting it, God's voice inside of you. It's how the divine communicates with us. It's our, our source of knowledge and understanding that we look at as being sacred. I'm wondering if that description feels familiar to you.

**Matt Lowe** 22:28

It does it in soul language, or in poetry. There's something that happens when our intuition or something strikes or intuition. And what it does is it pulls us you know, people in the poetry world, they say, pulled me into it, or it just pulls on my heartstrings. You know, people say that language. And I think what we're saying, you know, intuition, some people will slow down the world, the word a little bit and say it into it, what are you? What are you doing, you're into it, you're, you're pushing into it. And what is also happening is a relationship, it's pulling you into it. And that's something that the soul does, this is soul work, and it's a process of, we have to also let go, but then we also have to hold openly. So it's a tough tension to hold. We have to often let the soul untether itself from the confines in which he was taught to build the world upon. And that can be really hard for us to do, because it takes a lot of deconstructing a lot of like, oh, man, that's not the way that happened. Or it takes a lot of humility to say like, well, I screwed up there and to take responsibility or like, oh, this didn't go the way that I wanted it to. But it is what it is. And like, this is an adventure and I can make it better. And here's some tools. Here's some ways of healing. Here's how you can engage your healing in the world's great healing. Make something better out of it.



**Kim Fauskee 23:57**

Man, do you remember which one of your senses was more enhanced when you started losing your sight?

**Matt Lowe 24:05**

I've always said, The blessing of memory is something that I can. I'm just grateful for it every day. i My dad has horrible memories. My mom has a beautiful, wonderful memory. And if I didn't have that I don't I don't know, if I would even think there's something beyond memory that guides my other senses, whether it's a smell or a sound, but like, oh, I smelled that somewhere where have I smelled it? And so like that memory that recall that that sound of like it allows me to associate something instead of like, if I hear a sound, it doesn't allow my body to go to its fight or flight state, but it's like, oh, okay, I know where I am now. So it allows the association to come about instead of like, if I had a really bad memory, it would go to like what does that you know, and so kind of go into the fight or flight mode and try to figure out Got everything. Whereas my memory has really allowed me to hold the association of all the things around me. And kind of a beautiful, kind of puzzle sense. So I often say like, yeah, my hearing, like, I'm talking with you here, but I'm hearing the plane flying overhead or the child outside or the truck driving away, or the chair squeaking, but like, and a lot of people, they hear those, but they don't engage with those. And so I'm hearing those I'm like, Okay, I'm making sense of the word world, with my ears and my senses and things like that, it's not that I hear better, but I'm more aware of the things I take them in. And so I can have, hear three different people talking in a room if there's a group, and pick up on each of those conversations. And so, oftentimes, I remind people that we use our eyes to hear, meaning that when we're looking at something, our bodies actually focus on that, and our ears actually direct towards that thing, whatever that thing may be, to figure out what it is. And when I can't see those things in front of me. I'm aware of all of the 360 things around me. So that's a memory, though, is is really the ability to recall, I think, is one of the greatest gifts,

**Kim Fauskee 26:15**

you had some pretty complex understandings and an early age. Did you have help getting there?

**Matt Lowe 26:22**

No, I I went through a self, I guess you'd call it actualization or self transformation, kind of in my early 20s, where I kind of went from an indwelling person to more of an extrovert more of an outgoing more of maybe you can say an empowered person. I don't want to say like that, just because I was an introvert, I was not empowered, but I was very indwelling. And so a lot of people would probably call me shy or timid, looked like I was processing a lot, which I was I understand but there was something that as as a child, I did. Like I said earlier, I felt misunderstood, because of that shyness, that timidness that look on my face, like I was processing or not here. It wasn't that I wasn't here, it was that I was understanding something that other people weren't, and I didn't feel like I had the safety to express it, or the even the space to express so you're an empath. That's what I would call it now. Yeah, I don't think people gave me the language or the ability to have that at the time when I was younger.

**Dr. Dana 27:36**

Yeah, have you come to accept that as part of your identity?

**Matt Lowe 27:40**

Oh, absolutely. And I find it beautiful. And I celebrate it. And the thing is a lot of us are at an impasse. It's, it can be hard, because we feel so deeply and how do we not let the feelings kind of overtake us and, or to give too much to somebody else. And so we have to learn to have boundaries with our own empathy. And a lot of people feel guilty for having boundaries with empathy because it's like, oh, the world needs this world needs this. But we know we only have so much. I often say to remind people, we're often taught the hat, the glass half full perspective. But I often like to teach people the glass full perspective because if your cup is not overflowing then you don't have anything to give the cup half full is not not what you need to be living at. You need to be living with your cup full and overflowing. And so yeah, that's really where I like to come from. I need to pay attention to that for myself. So that way, my empathy can continue to pour out

**Kim Fauskee 28:35**

being an empath. I consider it a blessing and a curse. Yeah, in that way, and I totally get it being completely misunderstood, especially by your parents and being called different and, and not knowing what the word or what I'm feeling is and and I was telling Dana, in previous episodes was a book written by Elaine Aaron called the highly sensitive person. Yeah. Yeah, exactly. So it was the first book I ever read. Like, I think she wrote about this. Yep.

**Matt Lowe 29:03**

Right. resonate with that.

**Dr. Dana 29:06**

So I'm curious, though, you talk about wanting your cup to feel full in order for you to video to care for others at your best. I hope I'm saying that correctly. So how do you fill your cup? Fill my cup? What do you fill it with?

**Matt Lowe 29:23**

Well, I'm a big supporter of Victor Frankel's work. I don't think it's the end all be all for things, but he has four different he calls it a you need to have the wheel of meaning, meaning that there's a wheel that has different spokes to it. So we need to make sure those spokes are all in line for the wheel to continue to roll. And so we need to know who we are. We need to have a project or service, the ability to give back, we need to have a plan. And then we need to have a team around us. And so those are the ways in which we have the team that has deep quality, important relationships. And so what is my product of service? Do I know who I am? What is my plan of action, my moving on that action, and then the team around me. So those are the things that really kind of keep me full. And then, you know, there's hobbies and things, I still really enjoy cars built. Like I said earlier, I built a custom car, I enjoy deep sea fishing, just go out fishing, and I feel like I come back and have the world all figured out. So that's, uh, I enjoy lifting weights, something happens to my body, lifting weights at the gym is just like therapy to me. So just a very body centered person. And so I just really enjoy that experience and just kind of the athlete is still in me wanting to push myself. So in learning how to treat my body better these days, though, and not treated as harshly as athletes do. Because I'm not going to be a professional athlete. I've come to terms with that.

**Dr. Dana** 30:43

Yeah, what about on a spiritual level? How do you fill your cup in that aspect of your life

**Matt Lowe** 30:51

I've had to see that spirit has always been with me. And so spirit is it or even spiritual practices, you don't need to go to a building with four walls to be spiritual. And I often say now that I knew God before I knew God. And so the places in which we connect with beauty is my spiritual practice. Oftentimes, I can look like a poet like poetry, it's a very it's a, it's not really a practice for me, it'd be too bold of me to call it a practice. But it's something I pay deep attention to. I really love the genre of hip hop for that reason, that is just poetry, as you know, as well as folk folk music and blues and things like that. I think a lot of the pop kind of maybe has gotten away from that tradition of poetry and music. But I really enjoy that. And I think just the aspect of community change, or what I call collective grief, I think is also my spiritual work. It's it's, it's the process of putting myself into the liminal space, the in between space, and to be able to hold that tension and to find the beauty in the midst of that chaos. Because that's, that takes me back to my upbringing to my childhood to that place of like, where I first came into contact with, you can call it God, you can call it spirit, you can call it brain cancer, you can call it vision loss, whatever, wherever I met God in those times that, that that natural order, the world of like chaos and beauty can be held in the same space. And to me, that's where the spiritual work is. And that can come in conversations with somebody but really kind of helping folks push through that discomfort, that chaos feeling and finding a sense of beauty and where they're at and knowing that they have a deeper meaning and purpose to where they are.

**Dr. Dana** 32:44

And how do you do that with people? Could you give us an example of how that might happen between you and someone that finds their way into your professional life? Ah,

**Matt Lowe** 32:56

there's not a prescription. I mean, Viktor Frankl, like I said, is one that really influences me also, Elisabeth Kubler Ross has grief processes, which is anger, denial, bargaining, sadness and acceptance. And then David Kessler has come up and said that there's a six phase of meaning. And those aren't a linear process. I don't hold that in like the dying kind of way, but in the sense of like a, this is the way we process life. But more to the sense of that, I know that our purpose as humans is being met, when we are pushing into the collective collective wholeness, and oftentimes that comes from a path of deep purpose of pushing towards liberation with one another because there's things that hold us back, whether it's systemic, or personal things that hold us back from being fully live humans. So stepping into those areas, making sure this person feels heard, making sure the person feels supported, making sure the person that has a path where they can pursue, pursue their plan, making sure the person has a team around them, making sure that they have a project that makes them feel like they have deep purpose and in helping them discover who they are. I think a lot of our world doesn't value promoting who we are, or discovering who we are to go into those deep and uncomfortable areas. And so that self examination is really important. And you know, I did a lot of that growing up. I may not have called it that but I had a lot of opportunities to do that and a lot of things to

reflect on. So it's it's a where I can start to call my wounds my friends and start to rub, rub my scars and see them as companions on the journey.

**Kim Fauskee 34:47**

I want to circle back to something that you said earlier. When you began losing your sight, you talked about how friends left your side at that point. How are you treated differently As a sight impaired person,

**Matt Lowe 35:03**

well, that kind of gets to the intuition part a little bit, it's kind of what I was maybe kind of discovering that a bit more in that. There's a hip hop artist and he's visually impaired himself. His name was Brother Ali. And he says, I'm blind in the eyes, but I feel with my heart. And I didn't know these words, but when I met them, they resonated very deeply to me. And in this high school experience, I didn't have to see people to know who they were and know their actions. And, you know, so I'm not caught. The first impression for me is not what somebody's wearing, or the look on their face. And so I sense something beneath that I can hear who somebody is and the sound of their voice, how they care, how they're carrying themselves in their voice, what their body posture kind of maybe looks like, and what I can make out from it, I can tell that somebody holds themselves and the way they speak, the voice says so much without saying thing much. And so in those days, I started to kind of understand who people were. But I also started to kind of protect myself a bit more. And also had to take responsibility for myself in that I maybe didn't know how to communicate what I was going through, and I had to be okay with that. And I had to not feel guilty for not being able to explain my experience, and that it's okay for people, or the people didn't have to get me, that wasn't something that others had the responsibility for. So in letting them go, like, I'm not, I'm not mad at any of those people anymore. Like, I'm not like, there's no no bitterness there. And by letting them go, I'd let myself go. And so they say forgiveness is the entrance to the two way street and reconciliation is the two way street. So forgiveness sets me free. It doesn't set them free.

**Kim Fauskee 37:09**

I probably already know the answer to this question.

**Matt Lowe 37:12**

Go ahead. Ask it. Anyway. Yeah, yeah, go ahead. Put it on a platter for me.

**Kim Fauskee 37:16**

Do you see this as a disability? I'm sorry, I'm sorry. Not a disability. Do you see it as a disability? Or a gift?

**Matt Lowe 37:23**

See, what is a disability?

**Kim Fauskee 37:24**

Your your sight impairment?

**Matt Lowe 37:27**

Oh, no, it's beautiful. My so much pride in my disability, my disability is beautiful. Totally resonates with my brother, Ali, who says I'm blind in the eyes. But I see with my heart that that is a gift that is I believe the world I have so much that the world needs. And that it's frustrating for me to see the world discount and shut other people out, because we're not seen as a gift, we're not seen as human, we're seen as not not as valuable. were seen as unimportant and unworthy, because maybe we can produce or work or get along in the same ways that the dominant ways of the world get along. So it's, it's really, I often say this in a way. And this is something that gets to the grief work. Also, this world isn't made for somebody like me. And there's a sense that calls me into a place of imagining and making a world that is for somebody like me, but then there's also a sense of grief of like, well, okay, I have to accept what this world is. And I often call it a grief process, just the acceptance process. The fifth phase is just acceptance, you know, but it's not like it's not linear, but And so yeah, I'm here making the world and finding other people that are doing similar things.

**Kim Fauskee 38:52**

I don't want to call you community activists, but the community Restore is I think what Yeah, appropriately called yourself early on. And I don't think we've talked about this yet. But are you still working within the community and doing that restorative type work and active in that? And can you talk a little bit about that? Yeah,

**Matt Lowe 39:12**

so one of the things I'm most recent, I was in Washington DC on let's see, December was December, beginning December, whenever that was, times have been flying in 2022, as we all know, but there's a part of something called the Poor People's Campaign, which is before Martin Luther King, was killed in 68 and 1967. He started something called the Poor People's Campaign, trying to unite the poor and low wealth people in the United States and beyond. And, you know, it kind of ended after he was assassinated. And then, in 2017, Reverend William Barber and Reverend liscio, Harris, started and took up the mantle of the poor people's campaign where Martin Luther King left off and so I have a myself in some other co leaders have started a chapter here in the central coast. And we were invited to Washington DC to participate in standing for the 100 and 40 million low wealth and poor folks in the United States to say, hey, we need better resources, better support for our communities, but also bringing about reparations in our local area. I'm still a part of many churches here. And so there's a long history of racial injustice within the church and foundations in which the church has not addressed. And so I really support and promote gather, organizing churches together to participate in something called a repentance ceremony. Essentially, coming to term ceremony with the harm that has been done. So I tried to get them to write a commitment letter to the harm that they recognize what their commitment is to moving forward and then coming to public accountability as a public ceremony. So the public knows and so

**Kim Fauskee 41:00**

when you're talking about organized religion and churches,

**Matt Lowe 41:03**

yeah, churches, yeah, no historical Christian Christian churches. Yeah. And so we all have a role in that, you know, there's a lot of institutions that have a huge role in that, that are still prominent in today's world. And so,

**Kim Fauskee 41:17**

and not to turn this into a political discussion, but how is that being received, I'm, I'm interested, oh,

**Matt Lowe 41:23**

it's very hard. I, I believe my grief, and my restoration work is really kind of the path to lead me into that. And also just being a white male, like, and I'm perceived as able bodied. And so I can get around, okay, even though I have 90% vision loss. And so I had a guide dog for a while. So that was kind of how my people saw him and kind of made the association, but he passed away a couple of years ago. And I use a cane kind of sparingly. Now, I'm pretty familiar with my ways around town, but when I travel, I use my cane. And so yeah, I'm perceived as able bodied, I'm perceived as white and perceived as male, perceived, as you know, in these Christian spaces, you know, so it's very like, for any other person that precedes me, I'm, you know, abiding in the ways of power. And so how do I enter into those ways and acknowledge, recognize and name and then be a healing presence for not only the harms that were done previously, because I'm not responsible for those, but to be healing presence moving forward, and the whole debt space. So it is very hard, but I'm not going at it. And it's not in a shame sense of like, you've done this. But it's more like this, this passion and love to it. Yeah, this has happened, what is your response to it? Because the historical part is that maybe I'm talking to a denomination or just to just say, any nonprofit that has a historic historical tie. And they may not personally be a part of it, but they have a choice, because their forebears before them, didn't do anything. So are they going to be the person that takes the initiation and says, you know, that, hey, I'm gonna take atonement for this and told me maybe, to religious of a word, I'm take responsibility for this, and say something and be like, Okay, we're no longer going to stand for what has been done in the past. And this is our action moving forward. And then having a ceremony where the public hears them. I think one of the biggest things is a lot of people do it in their silos. And they say, like, Oh, we're doing this, and they don't have any communal engagement, no communal responsibility. And so there's a lot of things like that, that there is people saying they're doing the work, but nobody knows that they're doing the work. And we're just so disengaged in our communities. And so how do we be a more whole community? It's all about being whole. So yeah, that's the restorative process. What is the big restorative question is what is going to lead to the greatest amount of wholeness? And so that is kind of my driving question for life.

**Kim Fauskee 44:03**

So if you have the perfect outcome, that your changemaker MATT Yeah, right. Yep. So can you can evoke this change? Yeah. What's, what's the perfect outcome?

**Matt Lowe 44:14**

Oh, you're ready for this?

**Kim Fauskee 44:15**

Yes. Because I can, I can see it in you. I knew you had this. Oh, yeah.

**Matt Lowe** 44:20

I'm wrestling with this question right now. And I'm challenging myself, because the actions I'm taking now are not getting me to the goal that I want to be and I don't see it getting me to the goal I want to be so I know, there's changes that I need to make, and to confront within myself and do the next harder thing to get to where I want to go. And that harder place that I want to go is much further down the road. But when I'm 60 I want to be a part of international reparations with Haiti, because there's very historical, very wrongdoings with Haiti as a nation. And I believe that when Haiti is liberated, then the world will be on it. Straight Path. And with that said international reparations with Haiti is already saying that there will be national reparations in the United States. And we'll have a path and a plan for that as well, too. And I want to be a part of both of those. So that's reparative. Spirit, the restorative spirit and me coming out. And so believing in the path of repair of, of grief, and understanding that we have to address power, we have to have a different conversation of power, because the only conversation of power that we have right now is power over is abuse of power. You know, we often talk about that, like, Oh, they're just abusing power, but we don't talk about power under, or power in, or power with. And so I think there's something about my disability that has taught me about each of those in their own unique way. And something that has taught me in my community work that has also taught me about each of those in their own unique way. And something that I really promote with folks is, we need to learn a process of returning to the people returning to community. So I think that if I were to write a subtitle to my life, it would be returning to the people.

**Dr. Dana** 46:10

incredibly remarkable young man.

**Kim Fauskee** 46:12

I can't believe he's 32. I'm thinking to myself,

**Dr. Dana** 46:16

when I was 32 years old, barely finishing school, all I wanted to do was go surfing.

**Kim Fauskee** 46:24

I was thinking if I had three lives, I don't think I could accomplish what he's had in 32 years of

**Dr. Dana** 46:29

life, you are an incredibly inspirational person, and very remarkable in your, in your passion.

**Matt Lowe** 46:35

Yeah, thank you, I hope that my life starts to work, speak for me, instead of my passion speaking for me, you know, I want to be somebody that is seen as a person of action and not just a person of words and hopes and dreams.

**Dr. Dana** 46:48

Well, I met you before, but you've come across very, very clearly. And with lots of energy and, and passion, and in a lovely way.



**Matt Lowe** 46:57

Thank you. Thank you. Yeah, it's a second a lot to get there.

**Dr. Dana** 47:01

It's, as it does,

**Matt Lowe** 47:05

that I often tell my clients and the people I work with that the five to nine work is harder than the nine to five work. So you know, we come home and that work is not and whether you have kids or not. I mean, that adds a whole nother complexity to it. But that five to nine work is harder than the nine to five work. So and, you know, I, I often say that, because I was confronted, I was just saying this to a friend recently because I was confronted with death in an early age, not myself, but like with my sister seeing her on life support and all those different different things. I, I don't wish this upon anybody, but because I, I've seen that experience, I've had that experience. I'm actually grateful for it now. And I actually wish it upon somebody, only for the sense that it has shown me that sense and purpose to live with that love and joy that I now have, and I've seen for my sister, because I've come close to death. I've seen death. And I think it does something to us. And we don't have to see death to have that perspective. To get to that place to value love and joy the most or to value, communal wholeness to the value of repair and healing. It's just did it for me. And so I don't wish it upon somebody in the sense of like, you know, go do this, because that's the only path but I wish it upon people because it is what has brought me to the place where I've seen life in a beautiful way. So I often tell people I see, but I see differently.

**Kim Fauskee** 48:36

Have you ever reflected, if you had lost your sight? Where would you be now? Who would you be now? Yeah. Would you be somebody? Would you think you'd be somebody different? Yeah. You probably still be playing more hockey, right? Yeah.

**Matt Lowe** 48:53

Hockey, bro. And I'd probably maybe be drinking a lot, maybe just be kind of going out to the clubs every once in a while. I'd like to think maybe I'd found somebody that I loved and in a deeper sense of purpose, because I feel like looking back on me there was still that in me. So I'd like to think that that drive would have come alive at some point within me. But I think there was still a sense of what I mentioned earlier, the victim mentality that was I didn't have any language, to be able to defeat the victim mentality, to be able to name it, move past it, to hold it and be like, Oh, to know who I truly am. The victim mentality is just a lie. It's a narrative that, you know, tries to tell us who we're not, instead of us believing who we are. And so I think I still to this day, I'm very persuaded and pushed by people. And so I recognize that and that's where I like, Oh, am I the victim mentality coming up? But I have the tools for it now. And so I see back then. I mean, If it wouldn't have and so I'm like saying like, that's why I'm like, I would not change life for anything I, I would not change my blindness, I would not change. Brain cancer, I would not change a lot of the things that have happened to me. Because I love who I am, I find my my blindness beautiful. I wish other people would find it just as beautiful to not discount my disability. And, yeah, to celebrate it, you know, and to say, hey, come teach me. You know, I, I love when people do that, like, that's why I kind of why I'm a coach, you know, as are like, why I kind of go and speak because I love teaching. I love the energy of being up there. But most of all, I just like, Oh, I

am somebody that has something to offer the world. And so I believe that I wish other people would come and see that though.

**Kim Fauskee** 50:47

You just gave me a perfect segue into a concept that Dana and I are beginning to promote now and will be on future podcasts. It's the differentiation between self help and self culture or so cultivation. Right? Because the self help movement and and talking in generalities here, can can lead into a toxic life. Yep. Right? We're self cultivation, really is the development of one's mind or capabilities through one effort. And so we're trying to get people to shift their mindset from self help to this self culture movement. And it seems like in this last 50 plus minutes that we've been talking, is that whether you knew it or not, you've been more of a self-cultured person, than a self help person that you're not attaching yourself to the external, or that you have to be somebody else. Right?

**Matt Lowe** 51:51

Absolutely. And I would even maybe take that one step further and say that I'm being communally cultivated now, and the sense of my sense of self has been defined by the way that I relate with community now and who I am in the sense of community, not being that, like, my community finds me or that like I am the five people that I spend the most time with, or that like, if this person does something to me than I am that, but in the sense of who I am, is deeply related to how I engage the broader community. And so and that cultivates then something within me, and so, yeah, but I'm deeply aligned with that, that self help kind of self cultivation aspect, because, you know, self as much good as the self help world has been, it's still rooted in a system of individualism, and it just puts us you know, we kind of it's kind of cliché but makes us navel gazer Zeno just like, it's all about the self and like, and there's people talk down about it, but you know, I have to celebrate it, because it got me to a place where I am, you know, I can't, there's so many things of, you know, a lot of people like to talk about the harms of, of, you know, dominant Christianity in this world, but like, I have to appreciate it because it got me to where I am. And so just because, you know, we see all the harms of it, there's, there's still good in it. And yeah, so we appreciate the self help, but we say like, Nope, there's more, we need to be people that continue to encourage people to go deeper, that go from the self help, to the self cultivation, and then to the community cultivation, and then to the social cultivation, and into the world of cultivation. Because this is a world that's ready for us. And we got to be people that continue to go deeper into that. So we

**Kim Fauskee** 53:41

Again, Dana and I talked a lot about that. We talked about the fear of self examination, you talked about self examination, or self actualization, right? And it's such an important piece and you know, you probably no people I know, Dana deals in this in a daily basis. Where you don't want the mirror turned on yourself all the time. Right, but scary. That is the only way right to really figure out who you are. And what you want out of life. Don't you? Don't you feel that's the case. I mean, we see people that think they're evolved but they've pulled off layers of skin right? And they need to go deeper and deeper and deeper. Because it's an ongoing process. It just doesn't it just doesn't stop with oh, I peeled that one piece of skin off. I know myself now. I'm good.

**Matt Lowe** 54:34

Yeah. And oftentimes, when people peel the skin off, they have a means to an end for it. And to be honest, like we all do, but most of the time people have peel that layer of skin off because they're trying to perform for somebody or something because it's going to get them to the next level in life instead of for them to become more in love with himself or to find a beautiful find beauty in the situation. So if we're going and doing something for that because Some guru says to do something, it's not going to it's going to leave us empty in the end, beauty will never forsake us. And so the efforts that we continue to pour out or that somebody says to do this, or you know, it's going to end up leaving us empty, and I think we need to talk about in our, whether it's psychology, or mental health or self help, or whatever that world is, that there's a social aspect to that psychology, there's a political aspect to that psychology, it's that way of thinking, if you will, you know, and so that, that way of thinking whether that person has been taught to shed this layer of skin for this particular purpose is motivated by political social motivation. And so, and the question that I have to that is what is going to lead to the most amount of healing? And so analyzing why that layer is being shed? Or what the motivation is behind that? Is it going to lead to the wholeness of the community, to the greatest amount of healing possible? Is it going to lead to us being together in a deeper way? If they're not, then we may need to shift it a little bit. You know, I often say that the self help world needs to do the world, or the work that the activists need to do. And the activists need to do the work that the self help world needs that has offered, I look at

**Kim Fauskee 56:33**

it, like it's the narrative, it's the narrative that we're being told, and it's the narrative we're telling ourselves. Right. And, you know, going back to what you were talking about, you know, with Dr. King, and so on, and so forth. And that's what I appreciated about Dr. King was, he knew the narrative, right? He got the narrative right. And I think this has been the problem. And again, not trying to make this a political debate here. But getting, we've lost, we've lost that narrative, right? If you want change, you got to change the narrative. Yeah,

**Matt Lowe 57:06**

it's not just personal transcendence, which, you know, King did, but it's also a social transformation. So the brilliance about King is he did both at the same time, he talked about personal transcendence. And he talks social transformation. And oftentimes, the, you know, again, about the self help world is it's only personal transcendence and not social transformation. Exactly. So we need to, we need to, we need to walk and chew gum at the same time, you all, you know, so and, you know, I started to do that, because that, again, goes back to that spiritual practice of being in the liminal space. Am I wrong? Is there another way to do this? You know, all those are holding the questions of life, you know, and, you know, I don't. I often say I don't have issues with politics, I have issues with people being political, because political is the Latin root of the word just means the way we are commonly arranged. And so that's that, that I don't really have an issue with, it's when people are being political so it means that they have a hidden intention to maintain power. And it's usually power over because people don't want to maintain power under you know, they want to get up and over somebody. So. And that's what we need to have a conversation about.

**Kim Fauskee 58:15**

So I teed you up at the beginning of the conversation with who's Matt. And so I'm going to end the conversation with how do you want the world to see Matt?

**Matt Lowe 58:29**

How the world wants See, Matt? Honestly, I don't think about that question too much. I? Because I think that question can be kind of consuming. Because it's about me, it's about how I want, like what I want. It's more how, what do I want my steps behind me to show? You know, Rabbi, Abraham Jacob Heschel?

**Kim Fauskee 59:03**

Okay, well, we'll call it your legacy that yes,

**Matt Lowe 59:07**

that's good. I was gonna get to that I was gonna come back around to that. The legacy Abraham, Jacob, Jacob Heschel said that I pray with my feet, you know, so my intention is my faith walk, because the ability to push through fear is what I think people will see. But what I want them to see underneath that is that there's this driving force that just once. Not even a sense of togetherness, because that makes it sound a little fluffy, but that doing hard things as possible. And it's possible because we believe that there's a better world possible like that. It inspires people to imagine what a world more whole and more healed and more repaired and more restored looks like. And so if at the end of My life, I want to see that like, Ah, he walked his walk of being a person of repair. And so that's, that's what I want my legacy to be like, when I think of a partner that I have like I want it to be centered around restoration. If I think of people entering my home, I want them to come and feel restored. And I think of my work in the community. I want people to think like oh, restoration, when I think of relationships, friendships restoration, when I think of the cars they build, I want to think of restoration. And when I think of the church, I want to think of restoration. When I think of governing bodies and politics in restoration, you know, what's restored, not in the sense that we need to get back to an old way, but restoration being the sense of what is the greatest amount of healing to happen. So and with that we have to the part of transformation is one that has to deal with the hard questions of power, and we have to talk about power. It's going to be essential question and question front for us to move forward.

**Kim Fauskee 1:01:01**

Well, Matt, you're a very inspirational young man. We appreciate you being here. And thank you. Thanks for sharing your message and who you are with the rest of the world today.

**Dr. Dana 1:01:12**

Changemaker man,

**Matt Lowe 1:01:13**

change maker man in the house. Yeah, I look forward to I have a podcast coming out soon to you. I did a little rebound. I had one for a while. And I hope to have both of you there as well too, because I think the work you're doing here is great.

**Kim Fauskee 1:01:24**

Great. Thanks, man. Appreciate you being here.

**Fear Me Out** 1:01:27

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