

S01 - E32 - Rooted & Unwavering - Oct 27 - Hylke Faber & Rick Gage

Presenter 00:08

Welcome to rooted and unwavering a podcast and radio show which features leaders from all walks of life in conversations about courageous connectedness. How do we stay connected to our best selves, especially when we are challenged? What becomes possible when we truly stay committed to our own and others brightness? Also, when we don't feel it, join hosts Philco, Faber, transformational coach, facilitator, and award winning author of taming your crocodiles and his guests as they explore leadership greatness in today's episode of rooted and unwavering.

Hylke Faber 00:48

Well, welcome to rooted and unwavering broadcasting live from Phoenix and also from Washington State. And we are here to connect more deeply to our innate potential. This is our 32nd episode. And I'm your host, Helga Farber, and I'm here today with my friend and colleague, Rick gates. Rick, how are you today? I'm good. I'm excited to be here with you. Excellent. Well, I'm very happy that you're here. And if you're listening, I know you're in for a treat. I always love spending time with with Rick, and looking forward to to learning with you today. And before we learn a bit more about Rick, I always want to say a little bit more about this podcast, rooted in wavering. So rather than wavering is a series of stories, basically, where we want to learn from leaders from all walks of life about what is it like to be connected to your true self? And what happens when we get disconnected? And how do we make this journey from being disconnected to being connected again, sometimes it can feel like a very long charity. And in these conversations, we learn tools, find inspiration, and draw insights about how do I do this? What first of all, what is it like to come and approach leadership and life from a place that's truly me? And how do I find my way back to that, as a leader and as a human being. So today, we're going to talk with Rick gates and Rick Gage. Besides an amazing coach and facilitator and leader is an amazing human being, I'll start off with that, when I think of Rick, I think of somebody with an a heart that's as big as the universe and then bigger. He always greets me and the people that we are with, with this deep sense of care, and acceptance, and quiet. And also fun and joy, which I really enjoy and the sense of humor. Some of the things to know about Rick, he is the grandfather of six. And who knows, maybe counting I may be off here with with one I don't know, we'll ask him in a second. His passion is about unleashing human potential. He has been in that passion from very early on in life, where he became fascinated by the impact people can have on people around them, he became already student leader in school and lead in formally any book about servant leadership was a very important influence about for recomend and his life. He's worked in some of the great companies of our time over the last 40 years. Companies that have deep roots in Japan, Germany, India, France, and United States. And he has a deep appreciation through all that work about the powerful role culture plays, both within organizations and in a society that surrounds an organization. Rick's pass is, well,



very interesting to me. He's climbed the corporate ladder. And then at some point, he came to a point where he says it all shifted for me and an extended sabbatical really shifted, what he perceived as important and what he wants to do and what he wants to be. And from that time, he's been moving deeper and deeper into alignment, and finding alignment between his work and who he authentically is. I love this sentence that he shared with me. His father taught him early on that big privilege comes responsibility. He's worked to amplify voices of people that are not so much heard like women. For his whole life, he just loves people. And that comes through in all of his work. He works with a human workplace and Growth Leaders Network, to grow leaders build stronger teams and transform workplace cultures. And he also does many other things to help people connect more deeply to what's true for him, you can find him leading a meditation class, having a one on one conversation with somebody and many other things that he will tell us about. So I'm very grateful today that Rick, you're here with us today. And I'm going to start us off with this question that we always start this podcast list with, which is, tell us more about what have you learned about connectedness in your life.

Rick Gage 05:53

Thank you, thank you, okay, it's such a privilege to be with you and fun to be and a little unnerving to be in the hot seat of the guest chair, I'm often in the control room or with you in kind of conversation about the great conversations that we've heard from guests. And so it's, it feels a little different to be to be the guest and fun and, and a little, there's a little bit of nervousness in it, which is kind of feeling good. Yeah. So when I think about connectedness, and I think back to sort of my roots, it's interesting, because I think in my early life, I was unusually connected to my higher self, and unusually disconnected from my human self. And that was a function of I was deeply imprinted on my dad, who was the was a pastor in college community for most of my growing up years. So very visible in a community where everybody knew each other. So everybody knew me, without me knowing them. And I had this kind of a longing for anonymity, I would love to have been invisible. But I never felt invisible. I felt like I was always kind of on stage and people were watching my behavior. And, and how I was there was a recording I heard of myself at at age three, which was quite unnerving. I've lost the last that I would love to listen to it again. But I remember when I listened to it, somewhere in my 30s, probably was quite unnerving to hear it because the voice of the three year old was not the voice of a three year old, that was the voice of a three year old trying to be an adult. It was actually a game my dad and I were playing where I was playing a missionary. And I was teaching the gospel. And so it was, you know, I was using sentences that no three, three year old because I had learned them and memorize them. And so I, I felt this deep responsibility to first do no harm, to be the model, that that, that I should be, and that there were some really dire consequences if I didn't do that, that undermine my father's ministry that it might, you know, create catastrophic consequences for people. So it was a really deep imperative, ie this clear channel of Not, not Rick, so that a higher self could flow through me. Ah, and in one way that was useful. And another way it was completely counterproductive, I think, I think it helped me mitigate harm that I might have done otherwise, I think, but it also you know, made me not a full person which, you know, showed up in my dating life I was the I was the guy that was nice guy that that that women would say, Well, I want somebody like that and I'd be like that but then they wouldn't be that interested in me which I can now understand looking back because there was kind of there wasn't



a me there to push against. There was a willingness to be whatever, whatever they needed me to be this deep connection of something beyond myself that was bigger than my, my limited human self, but I can't remember consciously choosing it's better if I don't know what I want. Because then I won't be disappointed or I won't be distracted by it.

Hylke Faber 09:31

So a real denial of your a break or break and a an openness to something higher, which led to some kind of sounds like imbalance early on.

Rick Gage 09:45

No question. Yeah, it was was a distorted self and it was a distortion that I carried through with me through a lot of my life. Fast forward a little bit i i can remember walking hand in hand with my wife and her eventually getting to the point of frustration of I can't hold hands with you when we're walking in public. Why is that? Because you speed up and slow down all the time to accommodate everyone else on the sidewalk. And I never thought of it. But of course, yes, I do that it was my job, as it was, as I drove in traffic, to make sure that the way I drove never caused anyone else to have to change their direction, or speed or anything else I was to somehow navigate life in a way that disrupted no one. It was this massive overhead that I that I carried on it was just exhausting. Yes, yes. And an A genuine in some way not authentic. Right. So I was, was, it was my intention. And it came from a good place in some way. But it was not whole. And I can remember sitting in a with a marriage counselor with my with my then wife. And, and realizing that this whole code I had built up in me of how I should behave, just totally dominated my life. And there was this image, really vivid image of if I take that code out of like, if I grab a hold of that plant inside of me, and I pull it out of my body, my body is empty, what is left? Who am I without my code? Without my code? Well, I get up in the morning, I can see that I need to give up this code, I can see that it makes no sense for me to not be me. But if I do that, who am I? And Will anything happen? Well, I will I will I show up? Well, I what will drive me because this code and showing up in the way that I thought I should show up in the world was what had had driven me. And oddly enough, it really shifted me to being externally external validation oriented. I needed to achieve everything I needed president of anything I could be president of as I came through, through school, I needed to be the youngest ever to achieve each level in my work. And, you know, I was able to do that for a while and, and then I wasn't the youngest that was doing things anymore. Because it's funny how that happens. In a leadership issue, too, you know, the same people want to push against a leader and have some sense of who's there and I was behaving, you know, impeccably immaculately appropriately. There wasn't a me there. Push against. And so it was this, this imitation of perfection thing that I was doing, which was in some ways really helpful. I mean, I was the guy, they wanted to chair the meeting, when it was going to get really emotional and intense, because I would stay calm, because I wasn't there. yet offend me, I'm not here. I'm just here being what I think I should be. And that sometimes it was productive. And sometimes it really helped propel my career forward. I think it helped me and in sales, and in consulting roles, I could be really present to my clients. I wasn't distracted by my own stuff. But it also was, was a limitation. So it was a really interesting piece, that that brought me up actually to that sabbatical. When things shifted,



Hylke Faber 13:25

so I'm very struck by this, I, I was scared to take out all that code, because I don't know what I'm going to be when I take that out. And I'm also struck by how clever that was, of young Rick, to survive in that system, because that's what we all do, right? We are in a system and we take on some kind of strategy, whatever strategy that is, to make the best out of that situation. And the one you chose was to be the immaculate, super human, almost like a transcendent human that wasn't human, or at least some image of what that might be. And I love you the idea of your walk in the street and adjusting for everyone. And like, where's Rick, where is Rick? Right, where's Rick? So you now talk about this with a bit of perspective and distance at least that's what I hear. You provide some observation perspective on so how have you worked with that or how are you working with that?

Rick Gage 14:44

Well, let me maybe first talk a little bit about a little bit go a little deeper into the code and how I operated with it in the in the before it shifted. Yeah. So that like one of the one of the really powerful images for me was King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, write that code, right that we're all equals here. I dismiss my privilege, you know, whenever I can. But of course, I can't really dismiss my privilege, I still get it. You know, people always listen to me in meetings, in ways they don't listen to other people. And so I was in No, I wasn't fully aware of my privilege in much of my, much of my early life. But this, this code was really central and driving, and driving me and then this combination of this code and the need for external validation, really had me in my, the first part of my career, just wanting to progress in the organization and the sort of corporate environment where you can get a promotion, and you can get more responsibility, and you can, you know, all those things becomes just, that's my playground, that's what that's where I that's what I'm driven, to move through and, and, you know, provided lots of rewards and incentives, and, and, and a great opportunity to do that stuff until it didn't work anymore, and work anymore. When I was really, really clear. I didn't want my manager's job. I was a vice president at Siemens, and I absolutely did not want to be a senior vice president. I did not want to move into that. What looked to me like an incredibly political internally focused, no client interaction, I don't want that job. And if I don't want that job, then what's driving you? What am I what am I here for? What am I doing? And at the same time, I was reaching a point where my my marriage was hitting hitting an inflection point, and it was becoming clear that the girls had had grown and we're, we're off to college and our marriage, which was in many ways, not a marriage, at that point, no longer served I, I had sleep apnea, I was not sleeping. Well, at night that I was sleep deprived, essentially, all the time, I would struggle to stay awake driving this 10 miles from my home to office, I could fall asleep driving in those, you know, those 10 minutes, I was that sleep deprived? I had suicidal thoughts. Not surprisingly, with that sort of cocktail of challenging mental experience. And the universe opened up the opportunity for sabbatical, which then created a space in which I could explore that shift of what could be different? And how could How could I function differently in the world. And that was that was really, that was really powerful to open up to something new.

Hylke Faber 18:03



Thank you for sharing that. I'm just, I just want to pause for a second and, and feel into with you, and what that was like, where it sounds like you're coming to the end, you're coming to the end of a program and of end of a road. And often that's accompanied with a lot of intensity. Where things are just not working anymore. And you worked so hard to I'm presuming to climb up that corporate ladder and to basically find the last Rick in that. And then realizing, no, that's not it. I'm not there. That's not me. I don't want to become a senior vice president. This is not me. And then having that happen at work and in your personal life all at the same time. I can imagine that you had suicidal thoughts. That's it. That's very understandable.

Rick Gage 19:08

It was a it was really in a strange way. It was quite upside down. I had some therapy at one point where some really clear images of myself came forward. And it was it was quite strange. That was a I had the sense of little Ricky, Ricky was who I was when I was young, locked in a closet. And I first sort of understood that as my childhood locked away that I hadn't let myself be a child and that I lost my childhood and, and some of that and, and over time, I came to see it differently that that was actually my adult that had locked itself in a closet and left my child running my life. So I was in many ways this child driven by by child motive issues the need for external validation. But with this distortion of, of I shouldn't I shouldn't have needs or wants. So I'm a child trying to deny that I have needs or wants but of course I do. And so I I am in some ways manipulative that I that I get those but of course, I have to be manipulative and very prescribed ways so that I don't violate my code. It's quite a tortured is quite a tortured existence. And not surprising that I was really weary and, and kind of desperate for relief at that point.

Hylke Faber 20:36

I can imagine. Yeah, relief of any kind. And then then the sabbatical, King. So tell us about what was that process you went through in in the sabbatical? Because I can imagine many of us, maybe each of us that's listening to you, having experiences that are in some way similar, right, where we are coming to a realization of how I've been pursuing this, but is that really that important? Maybe not, that may not have been as intense as what you're describing? It seems to me that many of us are going through this kind of crucible at some point. So tell us about your your sabbatical.

Rick Gage 21:21

So the sabbatical opened up and then, like many sabbaticals do I think I didn't even know it was a sabbatical initially. I was moving from one job to another job, there was a pause in the second job, but we'd already started replacing me in the first job. The manager for the next job said, Have you got something you always wanted to do for a couple months? Why don't you go do that? And then come back and, and, and take the new job. And immediately I had this sense of, you know, I've always wanted to take a break. And I was in this point of kind of feeling some desperation about needing a break. So I said, Well, yeah, I would love to take a sabbatical for a couple months. And I was fortunate enough to Okay, well, we can, we'll fund you to do that. So I had this sort of silly idea that I was going to take one month to figure out how I wanted to live differently. And then I would take another month to



figure out how I wanted to work differently. And I was going to do a little project that I was going to do in these very clear timeframes. And I probably wasn't two weeks into that. And I realized it wasn't two different questions. It was the same question. And I wasn't going to answer it in a couple of weeks or a couple of months, it was going to be a question I was wrestling with the rest of my life. But what opened up for me, in the spaciousness of not having a sort of driven agenda and moving away from this code was this space where I got up every morning and I followed what looked interesting. And and I felt guided or, or, or I stumbled onto a series of things that just opened up by thinking in really profound ways from Eckhart Tolle is the power of now. Byron, Katie's the inquiry and just one thing after another that as I look back, I would say in the sequence was just, that's, that's genius that if I had this, after this, it would have not made sense. It came in the order it needed to come. It was just a natural thing of going to my computer, going to going to a meeting going to a reaching out to a friend and getting this next thing that I was to lean into and, and learn about and grow into. And there really came this shift of letting life teach me and opening to what what news, what does the universe want me to know? Now, what's, what's mine to do now. And that sort of different frame of this sort of internal driven need for external validation to this, something outside me is conspiring for my good. I came over time to think of it as the universe conspiring for my good and I don't know how the universe worked. I don't know if that's true. But I like my life thinking that. And so I'm going to continue to operate that way. And you know, maybe I get to find out at the end of my life, whether that's true or not, but it doesn't really matter, because it makes my life better. If I stay in that place of curiosity of what's going to come up today, what's the opportunity for me to learn? How can I grow from this? What might there be here? For me? That opened up a lot for me.

Hylke Faber 24:49

Powerful question like What is what is opening up for me today? Like what am I curious about today? What's the universe teaching me today? And I'm curious about how you discovered that question. Because I'm imagining Rick going to work. And now being on this external validation, seeking train, and then suddenly being at home. So how did you find the wherewithal to become even curious about what you wanted to do?

Rick Gage 25:27

You think there's a kind of, of a breaking down of the of the identity that's not working. It kind of it kind of has to fall apart, to make space for something new. So I think I, the the, I did pull up the plant out of out of me and recognize that I needed to be different. I somewhere in there, I also found a CPAP machine and started sleeping differently. And that was a big help and made a big difference. Not being sleep deprived. It's a pretty big, a pretty big foundation. So that helped. And then I think just faced with the Okay, I got this time, what am I going to do with it, I need to do something with it, I can tell that it's precious, I don't know that I'm going to have a lot of it. Let me try to do something with this time, that that pushed me or pulled me to, to, to open to what might be there that that I could tag into that would, that I could tap into that would would would help move me forward?

Hylke Faber 26:36



I'm very struck by this sense of this identity falling apart. And that somehow, because that seems like, well, I don't want that to happen. And yet it happens. So the validation seeking Ricky, identity was falling apart. And in that somehow a space was created for you to discover something else about yourself.

Rick Gage 27:12

It's like it has to stop working. So it had stopped working in my professional life. And it stopped working in my personal life, feel that my marriage was, was falling apart? You know, it was not working in my physical life. I was not well, no, it's not working on any level. And that kind of forces itself, sometimes we have to sort of hit those bases where, where we're forced to acknowledge this just doesn't work. I can't keep going this way.

Hylke Faber 27:44

This just doesn't work. Just doesn't work. So then you were in that you were in that. And then sabbatical is over?

Rick Gage 27:57

Well, sabbatical first extends and extends and extends, which is another way of saying unemployment. So it became that the new job was going to take longer. And the path forward was to take a layoff which which gave me a few more months of compensation. That happened to be right at the time in 2008 when the economy took a dip and so then there wasn't a job to come back to for a while and so there was some unemployment fortunately, there was some some buffer and so it wasn't enormous hardship, but it was there was worry and concern. There were you know, family things that happened passing of My in law, my mother in law and some other things that that you know, consumed part of the time for me in that sabbatical, which created different learning opportunities and different growth opportunities. Really interesting process with with my, with my ex wife, where we went through a couple years of as we pulled things apart and became less enmeshed. Oh, I like you better now that we're not as enmeshed all but we don't really want to be together. And so we spent a couple years uncoupling in a healthy way. really grateful for how we uncoupled we, we together just two weekends ago took care of our granddaughters for a weekend together and it was lovely, she's a good friend, and we're able to, to be together and really enjoy each other. But it was like the uncoupling uncoupling process. And then, while I had thought I needed to do something different from work, it really became clear that it was more about doing work differently than doing different work. And so I ended up back in in in roles that were not wildly dissimilar to the jobs I'd had before. But I had no drive to climb the corporate ladder. I didn't need my boss's job. I was content to have whatever job it was and I was given good opportunities. A good responsibility to, to work with teams and, and, and it was quite freeing to be in a space of, I don't need to play the corporate game. And so

Hylke Faber 30:12

so I am very struck by that sort of being in the corporations. While not playing the, I have to get up the letter game. So we're going to explore that a bit more after we take a short break. We have been talking



with Rick ah, from human workplace and growth Leaders Network and an amazing friend that we've been talking about what happens when we allow things to fall apart and find a curiosity about what's truly important to us, and have the courage to actually stay with that because Rick, you didn't talk about that. But that's what I'm getting from this conversation a lot. But you had the courage to stay in that messy place. And let the discovery unfold itself and not run back to the place that you knew so well. So thank you for for sharing this, you're you're listening through it and wavering, we're gonna take a short break.

Presenter 31:12

You are listening to rooted and unwavering presented by growth Leaders Network, the leadership team and culture development company. If you would like to learn more about working on connectedness for yourself, your team or organization, please contact growth leaders network on LinkedIn. And now back to the show.

Hylke Faber 31:37

So you're listening to root and wavering, we're talking with Rick gates. And the question that is really on my mind is this. And I hear this often from coaching clients, where we start to undo some of the attachment to what we thought was important, like validation, or even like huge financial rewards or job security until the grave or whatever it might have been. Right. And, and often the question comes in that keeps people from wanting to even consider that as well. But then I have no motivation anymore. So this sabbatical happened quite a few years ago, you talked about 2008, or around that time. So that's, we're not 2023. That's good. 15 years later. So I know you as a very energetic, energetic, energizing, person, and engaged person. So where do you find the energy? Where do you find the energy come from? to still lead in corporations?

Rick Gage 32:50

It's the it's a shift from the push of driven to the pole of discovery. It's, I It's such a joy to move through life, to discover what's there for me today. And it's, it's just this amazing adventure. Even when it's hard, it's an amazing adventure. In everything there is learning and growth. And there is such joy and growth for me. I think another thing that that that drives me, is that that for me, and this is something in my wiring for me. The future, I imagine is as real as the present is for me. So as I'm, as I'm in something, envisioning what it could be and what it could become. It's like It's like it's right there. It's real it is. And so it's easy to be called forward by those visions of what could be one of the learnings has been to hold them lightly, because often I'm called forward toward this thing. And it turns out, it isn't actually that thing that I'm going toward, I'm going to this thing over here. But I couldn't see that thing over there. Because this thing was in my way until I went toward that and now I can see the thing that I'm really going to so I have these passions for what I'm moving toward. And at the same time guys, that may not actually be where I'm going but it is the call for my path that is the call for my steps today. It's the call for what I'm for what I'm working on now.

Hylke Faber 34:47



Is this the future and the present. Being the same for you this is fascinating. Before we go there more I want to explore more this whole show If from being driven to being deeply curious about what I might learn today, so can you give us an example of how that works in your life? Or maybe an experience that may be on the surface of it? For many of us maybe like, why don't have that experience? But somehow, that curiosity helped you to find the energy to, to even find some maybe joy in it? Yeah.

Rick Gage 35:41

Well, let's maybe let's maybe dive a bit into one of the challenging parts of the last several years of my life has been the passing of my wife about 14 months ago. We met in 2011, so not long after sabbatical. And we had a coffee date that lasted three and a half hours, by the end of which I was convinced this is my person. And I said that to her, and thankfully, it didn't freak her out. And she hung in there with me. And we were inseparable, then for for the 11 years, almost 12 years, until she passed. We had about two years of a cancer journey together before she passed, in which, you know, the message was essentially we can offer palliative, but not curative treatment, and her prognosis was for six months. And she stretched it out to two years. But that journey, in particular, one of the hardest things about that journey was living in the not knowing about the future, holding open the possibility of healing, while preparing and being accepting that it might not go that direction, was very hard to hold both futures. I just want to hold one future, we want to be attached to one future. We don't like holding on to uncertainty I'd rather choose and a future I don't want, then be uncertain about what future is coming. So I can I would have been easier to accept that she was going to pass then to hold open village that she might live. But in that journey of of living in that it was hard in many ways, but it was also so rich and powerful. Because, of course, life is always uncertain. And it's not. And so it was a living in the deep reality that life is uncertain. So it was living somehow closer to what's real. And in that closer to what's real, is life more vibrant. I think that's become a really compelling thing for me, as I know that in in being real. Being willing to accept the experience that's at hand is the the the energy, the power, the the growth, the juice. And it's been a guiding force in how I've grieved, how I grieve with anticipatory grief during those two years, and how I've grieved since then surpassing you know, it's all here comes a wave of grief. I don't want to resist it, I want to feel it. Not fun to feel it. When it passes. And as it passes, I'm reminded of the deep love that we had, on the other side of the wave of grief, which as it lifts me creates this moment of Will I ever recover from it? Will I ever escape it? Will I get lost in it forever? Oh, no, it sets me back down. Like the waves that the beach used to do when I was a child and sets me back down and okay, I'm going to be alright. And on the other side is Oh, I loved her. I was so blessed to have her in my life. So grateful for the time we had. And so that willingness to accept the stuff that life brings us to feel is so powerful and really practical workshop leading a group of leaders who are thinking about culture change, and I made a mistake in how we were conducting the workshop and my worship partner stepped in and said, No, no, not what Rick said. When you do this next. And she was right, of course, and I immediately had this sense of oh, I look the fool in for One of my clients and, you know, she may think bad of me and, and all this stuff, and then almost immediately, like, Oh, this is an opportunity to model what it's like to be real. So when they came back from their little exercise, I said, Well, let me share what was going on in my mind a minute ago, as we had, and I felt embarrassed, I felt this, I felt that this is what happened for me. This is what I can learn from that. This



is what modeling looks like. This is this is the kind of thing that we do that helps people understand what's possible for them, when they see us go through it and us be willing to feel it, and ask be willing to, to, to lean into it. So there's such power in this being present to what's real. And it's, it's amazing how much of our energy, we by default spent avoiding feeling what's when we think that feeling is going to be uncomfortable. I don't want to feel that uncomfortable feeling. So I'm going to deny that that's there, I'm going to my mind makes up all kinds of ways to avoid avoid those feelings, when in reality, if I'll just go feel it. It'll be helpful. We were joking about this before, before the session started day one of Rebecca's constant questions, which is both powerful and annoying, is what is this giving you the opportunity to feel? And that is such a great way to go through life, just to be in the What is this experience giving you the opportunity to feel right? I mean, that of course is then and what can you learn from this? And how can you grow?

Hylke Faber 41:38

Yeah. It's, it's such a far cry from the way you started. What does this give you an opportunity to feel to from? Well, who should I be, I should be this competent workshop leader that has it all together at all times, and make no makes no mistakes. is, you know, I'm never flustered. And yeah, and what you're talking about is my sense is not getting lost in the feelings. I don't think that's and then Rebecca de for those who are listening is, as Rick's was, Rick's wife passed very recently. It's, it thinks he's pointing to something else. That she didn't say what this is give you an opportunity to get lost in right to give. She says, what, what does it give you an opportunity to feel? Now, how does that work in leadership? Because I can imagine this sick at the skeptic thinking like, Yeah, that's great, but we've got things to do. And purpose to fulfill. So how do we make progress towards that while practicing being real with our feelings?

Rick Gage 43:08

Well, it helps us make progress towards those things. But I guess the maybe an important part of it is that it's, it's to feel those things while watching myself feel those things. Which, which means that I'm not identified with the feeling, right, I'm having the feeling of grief, I'm having the feeling of anger, I'm having the feeling of sadness, or, or embarrassment, or whatever it might be. And I'm watching myself have that have that feeling. So it doesn't have power over me in the same way, it's a thing that I'm experiencing, but I'm watching myself experience it. And I think that's what helps leaders, I can feel what I'm feeling, then I can ask, what is that feeling telling me? Because very often that feeling is our body wisdom, or, or intuition, wisdom or some other wisdom that is relevant to the decisions that we're making, I'm feeling angry about this, there's probably some boundary that I'm feeling is being crossed. Now that might be an ego boundary, that I is my own defensiveness that I should pay attention to. But But ignoring that's not gonna be helpful, because I'm going to think my way into a defense. Without understanding that it's really a defense. It's not actually what we need to think about. I'm just defending my, I don't want to look bad here. So I'm going to defend this argument. So I don't look bad, but that doesn't make it the right decision. If I can set it aside say I'm feeling defensive. Now what will be the right decision? You know, it frees us to to make better decisions because we're not distracted by the thoughts that present our feelings that present themselves as non feeling thoughts. And I can tap into



the wisdom that may be there in what I'm feeling. Oh, this just feels unsettling. This doesn't feel right. Why does this feel right? I don't know right now, but maybe let me pause and think about what it is that I, that this feeling might be trying to tell me? Maybe there's some better perspective that being shared in that. So I think leaders being aware of their feelings is actually vital to unlocking leadership potential.

Hylke Faber 45:16

Yes, yes, yes. I like how you're making this juxtaposition of on the one hand, being able to observe your feelings and make a distinction and saying, there's on the one hand, there is the feelings that are probably something about my ego doing something. So I'm going to work on processing that cleaning that up whatever I need to do. So it doesn't translate into ego driven action. Defensiveness, which has nothing to do what we're actually here to do. This is every then it becomes about me, and I don't want to do that. At the same time, I hear you say is don't throw the baby out with the bathwater, and, and allow for the body and intuitive wisdom of the feeling to be there at the same time. That's a lot of work that feelings give us to do. So how do you keep yourself motivated? Like, do you ever feel like no, I don't want to feel this feeling right now. Thank you so much, I'm going to ignore it and skate right by it.

Rick Gage 46:43

I feel numb sometimes. That's that that's actually a fairly natural part of the grieving process, though there are there days when it's like, Well, I'm just not going to do much today. I sometimes call them puddle days, you know, I feel like a puddle. So there, yes, there are times when I want to feel not motivated, principally in the grief processing, I don't think outside of the grief process, and I've had a lot of that experience. There's just so much rich, interesting stuff happening in life, that it's that it's quite compelling when I'm not somehow processing the woundedness, of, of grieving, or I think is a piece of what people experience in, in processing trauma. Not you know, it's not not a lot, that happens also in trauma, in a certain way of a spouse passing his trauma. So, you know, it is a bit of that. I don't think too often. Well, I definitely have, I definitely have time. So I, I would like not to process my feelings in front of other people. Most of the time, it'd be nice to not do that. I prefer doing it, you know, on my own, I've, most of the time my grief comes up. When I'm alone, it sometimes comes up with other people. What comes now quickly as the thought process around grief, certainly, but even around anger and some other things is, this is probably an opportunity for me to process out loud a little bit. And model for the people that I'm with what that process looks like. Because I think people don't have a lot of experience with this, we spent so much time and energy trying to avoid emotions, that were that we haven't learned how to deal with them. relationship, and it's really powerful to just deal with them in relationship. Yeah, you know, we can just say, Oh, I'm feeling this thing. And when I can say it out loud, it, you know, kind of defines it in a certain way it you know, and mine that I'm feeling that may cause you to feel something and then you get to name what you're feeling and, and but then it becomes a genuine real exchange. Yes. And we actually have the conversation which otherwise we avoided, but we still need to have. And there is a there's an efficiency and a speed and an ease. That that I've come to know in that process that's just really powerful. When you can have the whole conversation, even if it's uncomfortable, you can do in a half hour what otherwise you might have spent weeks you know,



stumbling through with with you know emails and various things that didn't really say the whole thing. That didn't that didn't get at the heart of the matter.

Hylke Faber 49:36

Mm hmm. and efficiency of getting to the heart of the matter by being real about what's here, including our feelings. And I was struck by your words that the fangs, the feelings and I interpreted that as that has the feelings lose their control. all over us. Right so that they're not as scary. Because I think the scariest feelings, at least from my perspective are the feelings that I feel control me. And when I pass that bridge with no, actually no, you're not controlling me, I am going to take a look at you, then this huge monster of whatever it might be of feelings, starts to become a person, something that I can work with, that's liberating

Rick Gage 50:40

becomes a part of me that I want to pay attention to that I'm willing to listen to that I'm that I'm willing to hear. When I it's a dis identifying when I when I no longer identify as that feeling. Often we say I'm angry, what we really are feeling is I am anger. And, and what I like to frame in the way I the way I talk about it, and more importantly, in the way that I experience it is I'm experiencing anger. Part of me is angry. Right? What's that part of me? Saying? Do I recognize that part of me? Is that a part of me that that I already know? Well, now that's the that's the angry part of me that, that that shows up when I'm triggered in this way when when I'm activated in this way.

Hylke Faber 51:34

I love that I also find that for the conversation partner, because we've had some conversations you and I were that perspective, that feelings are things that we experienced, but they're not us, still creates an open channel for communication. So it's not, I'm angry, and I'm scared. And now those two, like they can really have a conversation as opposed to here some anger here some fear, let's take a look at those together creates a very different interaction.

Rick Gage 52:09

Well, and it's I'm experiencing anger. And that's mine to deal with. This is a really powerful thing that that was really incredibly potent in my relationship with with Rebecca, we both understood that when I'm feeling something when I'm triggered, it is always, always always about me. I'm telling myself a story that it's you. But it's always always always mean, there is something for me to work on in this, I don't need you to be different I need maybe there's something I want to ask you to be different. Maybe there's a boundary I want to set. But that's totally separate from this feeling that I'm having this feeling that I'm having, that I am activated by your action is this stuff I'm carrying with me, it's not the thing that just happened. It is my history of all the things that have happened to me, which are I'm remembering and are bringing into this situation. So what I'm having this emotion, it's mine to go work on. And so what that perspective makes it so much easier to have a conversation. I can remember the first time in which the thing that was triggering Rebecca was something I hadn't even done. I hadn't done it. It wasn't true. But it was triggering her. And a part of you will say no, no, I didn't do it. Don't blame me,



you know all those things. But it was like none of this is giving her the opportunity to work on something. Why would I cry for the opportunity to work on it? She doesn't ever need to know whether or not I actually did that. She just needs to process this this is her opportunity to process it and she did and I don't remember whether I eventually told her not but it was really freeing to even be in the space of I don't need to tell you that I didn't do it. I can give you the space to feel what you're feeling and process what you need to process and that's in itself useful. And doesn't I don't need to be blameless oh, I need to blameless that's mine to work on that's my stuff. It's not something I need to bring to this conversation.

Hylke Faber 54:23

Little Ricky would love to have been blameless his whole life I'm sure about that. But what does this give you an opportunity to to feel which then became also was this this give you an opportunity to work on is the way that I'm seeing you hold that. Very powerful. Amazingly, we're getting towards the final few minutes of our conversation, Rick is as always seems to happen with us. Still tell us a little bit about what you would like a person to take away from this conversation and especially a person that may feel in this moment. Slightly are a lot disconnected from themselves? What would you like to say to them?

Rick Gage 55:14

Well, I think if I were, if I were sitting across from someone feeling that, what I would want to say is, Oh, you're so worth loving I probably say something like, let me love you until you can love you

Hylke Faber 55:39

That's beautiful.

Rick Gage 55:40

It's such an interesting thing. The, the philosophy taught in the religious community that I grew up in, was made self love a bad thing. You know, it was, it was it was sinful, it was the source of evil it was, you know, it was not how things were supposed to be. It's a big, big shift in my life to know that's actually the heart of everything good to, to love ourselves in really appreciate the miracle that we are the magnificence that we are the just to understand and appreciate the arc of our life in which we have overcome and grown and learned and, you know, sometimes willingly and sometimes against our will. You know, it's not always an achievement that we can take credit for, but it is it is always a progress that life sort of inexorably takes us through. I spent a year holding question some years ago, and I love this holding questions for an extended period of time. And it was a simple question is what if I can't screw it up? What if I can't fail at life? What if I can't mess it up? What if the actual structure of life is that it will inexorably move me forward somehow? What if the result of life is that I'm going to learn whether I like it or not? And if I was willing to accept that, what would that free me to be and do? And I found it incredibly freeing to say, Oh, I don't have to try to rigidly make sure I don't screw it up. I can't screw it up. I'm gonna I'm gonna progress. I'm gonna somehow grow. Okay, how do I want to grow today? without the fear of failure without the need to defend against screwing it up? Possible? How



could I? How can I lean into and grow from whatever is in front of me right now? What find to do in this moment? That's one of my most powerful questions. What's mine to do in this moment?

Hylke Faber 58:14

So much what's mine to do in this moment? What if I can't screw it up? What if I can't screw it up? What this is give me an opportunity to feel. Yeah. And what's what's what's here to learn from me today? What's her to learn from me today? Very powerful questions that you are sharing with us today. Rick. What's mine to do today? What's What's this give me an opportunity to to feel? And what's what's there to grow? What how am I growing here? How am I growing through this very liberating beautiful orientations for Life and Leadership. Rick, it's been an absolute delight to be with you. Thank you so much for sharing yourself and your insights so openly. If you want to listen more and learn more about Rick, you can connect with him on LinkedIn. I'm sure if he's willing to talk with your connect with you if you're interested in that. We have been at coming to the end of this episode of router and waving we'll be talking to Rick Gage, who's a leader in human workplace and also with growth Leaders Network. He is an astounding human being who sits with questions for extended periods of time and look what happens all the joy and discoveries that come from that. What if we couldn't screw it up? Next week we'll be back with Ruth and we overing with Yvonne Higgins leads who was a Boeing leader and is now a poet amongst other things, and we'll learn some more about what is it like to live an authentic life. And to follow that inner voice. You've been listening to root and unwavering, and we look forward to seeing you next time. This is where we help leaders connect more deeply to their innate potential. I'm your host local farmer. See you next time.

Presenter 1:00:44

Thank you for joining us in today's episode of rooted and unwavering leadership conversations about courageous connectedness presented by the leadership development company, growth Leaders Network. To learn more, subscribe to this podcast, connect with growth Leaders Network and Hilco Faber on LinkedIn or read Hilgers award winning book taming your crocodiles. Now take a moment and appreciate something that is great about you. Celebrate the gift that you are and enjoy connecting more deeply to your best self today. See you next time on rooted and unwavering

