

S01 - E20 - Rooted & Unwavering - May 5 - Hylke Faber & Rick Gage

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Presenter 00:04

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 rightness 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 00:43

Welcome to root and unwavering broadcasting live from Business Radio X Phoenix, Arizona, where we help leaders connect more deeply to their innate potential. This is the 20th episode of Rodan wavering, I'm your host, Dr. Farber, and I'm here today with my colleague, Rick gates. How are you today, Rick?

Rick Gage 01:06

Good, excited to be here with you today.

Hylke Faber 01:09

Me too. Me too. So in this episode, we're going to review the previous six episodes of Route unwavering, and a bit of a context about that this whole series is intended to help us connect more deeply to what's true about us. And I find it so helpful myself to listen to stories from others to nudge me back and saying, oh, yeah, this is what's true about you. This is actually what you are, and all this other stuff that you saw about yourself may not be it, and then how can you lead and live from that place? So we had six wonderful human beings and leaders in the studio over the last few months. Augustine Munch, who was the president of Behringer in Ohio, and also a coach, the President being on home in Central America. We had Karen a wiki, the leader of Business Radio X, and also trauma coach, we had your Rena and Elena in IAM, and from from Ukraine, speaking about their experience, what it was like to be there when the war started. And learning from that, we talked to Bert founder hook who was the president of the tremors Institute in the Netherlands. And we talked to other people, whilst we talked to Rick, Valerie, Valerie BMO, from the Gates Foundation. She is the deputy director in emergency relief, and, and gore have been the guard from cocreation partners, who helped each of us, each of us help them to provide a bigger view. I think those were the six people that we talked to other seven people who talked to me is anybody. Yes, yes. Yes. So there you go. So that's what we're going to be looking at. And, and so, as Rick and I have been looking at these conversations, and as we've been thinking



about connectedness in general, we found there's sort of three principles that come back over and over when you think about what is it like to be truly connected? What is it like to be truly connected to ourselves and each other? And these three principles are three little words that I can weave with a lifetime, I'm sure and find more out about myself and others, which is truth, love and service? Truth? What's really true about this, is this thought true. What is true about me what is true about you, do I need all this? What is what is true about me? Love? Well, how do I extend what I am to others? How can I be empathetic? How do I connect to from a deeper place to myself and others? And how do I lead from that place, and then it's not just staying in this little bubble. It's also putting this to work. Just like a tree provides shade. A flower provides beauty and for pollen for insects. There's an element of service in us that brings us alive. So these are three orienting principles that we'll be practicing. So we would like to share this with you today a bit more. And I invite you as you listen, to think more about what does it like for you to be more connected to yourself and to others, and what happens when you disconnect? So So having said all of that, Rick, can you share a bit more about what were some of your insights as you were listening to those seven wonderful leaders?

Rick Gage 04:56

I'd actually love to start with an experience that just happened as we Just before the show started, we did a pause and, and I sort of check in, as we often do, and in the pause, and then the silence, we took for a couple of minutes, I felt myself suddenly feeling kind of a weight of responsibility, I have so much respect that each of the people were kind of coming through my mind just as long as you talk through it, feel good, they were, they were coming through my mind, and I was feeling this sort of weight of responsibility, I have so much respect for each of these people and, and what they shared. And it was so profound, and it's like, oh, I just want to make sure I do justice to this. And, and I could feel myself kind of moving into that space of oh, I've got to do a good job here. And then almost immediately, I felt I felt kind of I felt them all surrounding me and begin to go and laugh at me, you know, and say no, actually, that's not the point at all, you know, open and just just to have fun with it and, and be playful with it. And that's a part of why they were such inspiring people was they all dealt with challenging things. And they shared openly authentically about their experience. Oh, we forgot James. Christian said, also who it's such profound ways in which they navigated challenging experiences in their lives. And it was really was inspiring to go back and review and spend time on them. And lovely to think about it in the context of those principles. When thinking about truth, I just could go through each one of them, each one of them had insights into how they focused on their truth. Each one of them had some focus on how they opened their heart and how they embraced what was possible and connected with others. And, and each of them has significant service in the world that was just really fun to apply that, that perspective across to all of them and to kind of feel them pulling at me as I was getting myself a little bit wound up in a knot just before we started this.

Hylke Faber 07:00

Yeah, and this wound up in naiveness. Now, I recognize that and I'm sure everyone listening has this experience of like, oh, you know, I have to do this thing, I have to have this meeting, I am going to give this feedback, I have this conflict, I have to get this presentation, I have to write this email, and there's



like sense of almost a preordained. naiveness not nervous, like now I have to be stressed out. And that that's where the first principal comes in. Is that true? Is that true? And who would you be without that thought? And what I find is, I just took a walk before this podcast. And you know, I wasn't my email before this podcast. And I was thinking, No, I have to do this and this and that. And then I looked at the blossoms of the trees in my neighborhood here in Arizona. I was like, Ah, how much many more days? Are you going to be run around and not notice the blossoms? Are you going to wait for the perfect moment, or Beck's and perfect vacation or whatever it is? Or are you going to allow yourself to be here and, and experienced this incredible beauty that you're in every moment. And that's part of being more connected to appreciate what is here to let it in and not let the ego mind delude us into all the problems we have to fix now and that we have to be so stressed out about it. You know, we all know about the reptilian brain that has repertoire, basically stress, stress, stress, stress, stress, stress. And because it's such a such a well and widely accepted distraction in our current state of evolution, we kind of all add each other on to this. And we associate leadership with that. And I love listening to you there RegTech their sense of, oh, maybe that's not leadership. Maybe that's like an adolescent kind of leadership, maybe there's a more mature level of leadership, which is much more being present and being able to be here. And let things be what they are open to what what is here, these are all words, and each of us have to has to do their own work to, I think, connect with that. I want to start our review in detail of what we heard with the person that I forgot. In James, if you're listening, I'm so sorry that I did that. I was guided by my intuition. And somehow I didn't mention you. And now I feel like I want to start with you. Because what you shared James was so incredibly profound that I get goosebumps just thinking about it. James Christensen is the CEO of Gateway bank in Mesa. It's one of the most thriving institutions in community banking in today's world, that means even more. And James just in his, in this podcast, the first time I met him was just before the podcast shared about his suicidal ideation. And I don't know how many people have that. But that's like an extreme form of stress, you could say, where the world becomes very, very small. So I want to read to you a little bit of what he said, and also what we can learn from being in that state. And you know, like, little stress is maybe like a an early state into that. But when we unsuited suicidal ideations, like saying, No, there's nothing to live for. James said, I found suicide to be a welcome. Exit, I was grateful that I had that exit. And there's nothing wrong with that. It's just saying that, wow, I, there's nothing else I could see. And so what James was saying was this. Well, it was a Sunday morning. And that's when I kind of hit rock bottom. And I had figured out how to end it, what I was going to do, right, before I was going to leave the house. My wife walked in. And I was thinking, I was sitting in the closet. And my wife came in. And I was sitting there. And I looked at her and I just completely broke down. And my wife's first thought was, oh, did I cheat on her? And I said, No, it's not like that. I was going through a lot of emotions, I felt shame. And I knew then what I was getting ready to do and just seeing her, I broke down. And I literally fell to the floor in the closet, and I couldn't stop sobbing. And she's like, tell me what is going on? And I did. And then she's like, you know, we'll figure this out. And they did. So when I listen to that story, right? That's may seem for some of us very far fetched. And for some of us, it makes you may be at our experience, I know that my mind takes me into this very dark places. And when I look at James story here, like being in the closet, literally ready to end his life walking out the house. There was something that happened with him when he saw his wife, and I associate that with greater truth. Like something in him opens like, Ah, okay, and



he broke down. And that, to me, is a very profound experience, that the sense of breaking down, like there's something in us we've been holding on so tightly, sometimes it's a belief or whatever it is. And then something lets go and a greater wisdom comes in. And it sometimes involves sobbing, crying, or maybe it's like, almost a sense of relief. So that struck me as I listened to, to James, and I'm very grateful that he shared that. And he shared that openly. And then these days, he, he still has moments that are difficult, but he's able to, like he said, like, take the take the balcony perspective. And he listens to hip hop boots, music on meditates being being being very intentional about this. So Rick, as you're listening to that story, what strikes you?

Rick Gage 14:04

Well, there's several things that strike me, I can remember a period of my life when, when I wasn't sure I wanted to live. And I didn't get quite to the point of having a specific plan and, and a timing. But I was frequently in that desperation of I see no way forward through this to take care of the people I love and care about other than die and leave them with an inheritance because I'm not helping them being here. And that was a very scary time. And it wasn't as dramatic as what James talked about the sort of falling to the floor. But that really was the experience ended up being an unplanned break from work and sabbatical in which I really just kind of opened up and said, alright, this isn't working. What what do I want instead? And over the period of a couple of months Having the time and the spaciousness to be able to find some new purpose and some new sense of, of what I wanted to do and, and deal with some health things in my life that were that were impacted me I wasn't sleeping well and that the cumulative effect of not sleeping well was impacting my psyche and I was in depression and I needed medication to help me through that at that point in time. So there is a kind of broken open effect that was one of the books by Elizabeth lesser that I read in that time, broken open. And there is something really profound about that experience. There's a breaking point, you know, the Brock bottom, the many ways people talk about it, where we find that sort of truth we find that bedrock we find okay, what is it that really is most important, and from there, then we can rise from there, then something becomes possible. So it is a kind of coming to a truth. And I remember James also talking about how then going forward and the experience of coping with, with his situation, the strangers that loved him, and how he could take in their love and let it begin to help him begin to love himself more. And I thought that was a really profound and opening way. So there is a kind of a, a finding our footing in the truth, and an opening to, to the love that shows up when we do that. For me that love showed up in the form of people it showed up in the form of I just felt like I felt totally guided that I masterfully you know, each book I found built on the last one and helps me move through a journey that opened me up and helped me see a path forward and led me to a sense of purpose and service that that has sustained me for the last 20 years.

Hylke Faber 17:00

I love that sense of broken open, is being broken open. Like we can't break ourselves open. And yet there's a choice in it as well. So when I think of the parallels between your story and James's story and then Augusto story it's remarkable like a gusto. very accomplished now CEO of a region of Behringer Ingelheim, has been in this company for 25 plus years, I believe, and 23 years. And he describes his



experience of going to Germany headquarters and having to do some kind of presentation to the board or whatever it is, and him having something close to a heart attack. And then the doctors diagnosing and doing all this and, and then he said that they didn't find anything. Besides there was an area that was irritated that at all, everything to do with stress. And his doctor asked him, so do you have any particular kind of stress that's ongoing for you? And he looked at it, it's like, yeah. And he realized he was very overcome by the fear of not being enough, and being abandoned and being rejected. And that was keeping him like in this crunch in this like, small bubble. And interestingly, he then later on shared in the podcast that he now has this mantra that he reminds himself by off by having this bracelet on his on his wrist, which reminds him to be humble, and reminds him to not fall into the trap of his ego is ego being just the idea we have of ourselves that we have to defend at all costs, like I have to please the board or I have to be this performer. Like you said before this podcast, I have to do justice to all these people, you know, or me like I have to get through all these emails and be a successful entrepreneur and all this stuff that I have to do otherwise are something like, look at the blossoms, right? Look at the bracelet, look at your wife and then then stuff starts to open up. I sometimes find that getting a hug gets me out of that or eating some good food. It's like it's like an other census part of the census gets activated. What Augustus mantra was, is is that I self ego is smaller than it or it is bigger than me. Right? But the true me is bigger than it right? I am smaller than it but the true me is big Get on it, whatever the challenge is. And he made this very concrete. And he said, you know, our mind thinks it's like me against the world. But then when I start to see that I'm part of a community, of a country of the world of the universe, and I just start seeing this big piece, this whole of history talked about how being no harm has been around for many decades. And one person is not going to make or break the difference. Of course, there's some extreme examples where it is not the case. But you can see that your sense of like, the sense of wholeness, so this sense of surrendering to something bigger, and of course, the surrendering happens from the place of clenching. Like, I'm Clint, and clenched, so now I need to surrender. And that's one part of what I learned from, from from Augusto. So Barrett, Rick had something similar to say about that, maybe you can see, I live it about what your your thinking was, when you heard Barrett speaking about how he was serving more broadly. Through, like, through his life, starting from, like, me, too, it's not about me, or whatever struck you from that conversation?

Rick Gage 21:27

Well, what the part that struck me from that was slightly different, great, but I think it connects. It was the letting go of anyone needing to be wrong or right. Um, that opened things. And it was that that creating a deeper ability to see the truth of the situation to see himself to see others more clearly. And, and that opening a space to the finding common purpose theme, which I found so powerful, and what he shared. And that actually triggered for me a memory of there was a teacher I had in high school, who used to talk about finding friends as finding common purpose. Well, they met and they found common purpose. And what he meant by that was they meant and became they met and became friends. And that idea of friendship of that connectedness being formed by finding common purpose, I thought was, was powerful, it sounds like that's slightly different than what you were remembering. So maybe share a little bit what you were, what you're remembering from what he was sharing that that connected to there.



Hylke Faber 22:43

And I love that you and I are practicing connected this right now because I realized that I had an idea of what it should be which is disconnect me from you. And part of being connected real realize is that we each have different perspectives on truth. So your perspective on what you saw was something and then I had something else. So when bared, somewhat similar part of connected leadership, the way he talked about it was that two things one, that in his life, he said, there's kind of this natural evolution, like we start off thinking, it's all about me, I have to be successful. Like it's it's like a small bubble. And then it became it's somebody said, my guitar to his fiancée at the time, my guitar is more important than you. He changed his perspective on that at some point. And then it's your family. And then it's your team and, and are in whatever sequence that is for you. And then and then at some point isn't about mighty, but now he's like, the head of trim boss, which is the National Institute for well being. And in the Netherlands. Now he's thinking about how can I make a space art contribute to a space where everybody's well being is, is served. And what I thought was very powerful in that conversation with him was he talked about what in my mind are to arch rivals, hospitals, or health care providers, and insurance companies. And don't get me started on those things. Like from my own personal perspective, what what he said about that was very interesting. He said, You know, I've been both as CEO of both parts, like I've been a CEO of a healthcare provider and an insurance company. And I know what both parties cared about. They do care about providing sustainable care and the longevity of their organizations when it comes down to it. When I get out of the rat race of I have to be maximizing profit and all this stuff, that in the end, everybody agrees doesn't mean Matter. And he said, when you create a safe space, where people are able to come down from their high horse positions, and start to sink more deeply into what they truly care about, then you have dialogue, and you come up with solutions together. So that to me is practicing truth together, and also extending love and respect to each other. So it's another element of connectedness and also embodying service, asking ourselves, what are we really here to do? Like, what is it that we're really here to

Rick Gage 25:40

look at when you're talking about broken open, what what came up for me was the experience of Atlanta and Marina and in Ukraine, and that was so beautiful, that you had the conversation with them right around the anniversary of the invasion. And they were, they were sharing their, their, you know, vivid real experience of that whole process, each of them from a slightly different perspective, but that sort of life crisis opens and clarifies and makes it really easy to see what's most important. And so many things that we that we clench about, fall away, sort of struck with that image of of James falling to the floor and, and how that the threads its way through several of these conversations, there's a kind of everything falls to the floor, in the face of an invasion in the face of everything being threatened. Where there's a coming to this is what's really important now, what do I do, and kind of finding our courage in that in that moment, both the feeling immobilized and then moving from and mobilized into, okay, but now I need to take action, I need to do something I need to move forward from this and, and having that sort of clarification. And an orientation made solid and, and clear and vivid for them. We just really



compelling to hear their story and and how that impacted them. Would love to hear your your perceptions as you think back on that conversation with them.

Hylke Faber 27:25

You had this sense of stepping into what is needed now. And they were both very honest. Like when the full scale invasion started. Their reactions were so much similar, like, ah, like, Oh, no. And each person had a different response. And what was so beautiful about them is that they both deeply respected the other. So Elena Sergey via left Ukraine, a couple of weeks before the full scale invasion started, she had an intuition. And she followed it. And she felt that this is what she had to do. So she left and she chose to be of service to herself and to her country and family from that place, right? Your Rena state. And she describes her process of having COVID at the time already and feeling immobilized. And then after a while getting very clear about what is needed. Now what is needed now what how do I serve from this place, and she said, I am not the person that's gonna go to the front. That's not me. But my gift is communication and PR, and that's how I'm putting myself to service. So each of those two people having a very different response to simply something similar, both living truth and both respecting each other. And to me, that was actually quite healing, to hear that, that those kinds of different actions can coexist and deeply respect each other. And there's a harmony between that, as opposed to some kind of recipe of when war happens. Here were some looks like this. And if you're not doing that, you're a failure. And neither of them was like, then following that recipe was much more openness in that that happened. And that that, to me, is also living truth.

Rick Gage 29:29

of it. Maybe it's finding what's mine to do. What's my do now?

Hylke Faber 29:35

Yes, yeah. Yeah. And, and we can translate that into meetings, right? We may have a read a book about what is it like to be a good team member, and then we see a team member, always speaking up or having the really profound insights or driving the agenda or whatever, or listening very deeply. And we think, Oh, I have to be and I have to follow recipe. As if was to know I'm need to find my own place in this. And that, to me is part of the invitation that we have as human beings and as leaders to really listen deeply, as you said beautifully, Rick to let the clutter, like, calm down. And, and then we can connect more deeply to what's true. While this conversation is going fast, we're already at the half hour point. So we're going to take a break in a moment, after the break, we're going to explore more deeply, also what we can learn from some of the others from the conversations we've had. I'm thinking, for example, about Karen, and a wiki talking so powerfully about what it's like to work with emotions, because this, this breaking open this allowing ourselves to lead from truth is, it can be very intense work, you know, our emotional systems can produce all kinds of things, and how can we be with that with courage? And with a lot of presence? And how can we learn from that. So let's explore that more. After the break. We'll be you've been listening to root and unwavering where we've been your Rick and I, Rick gates and I have been talking about reviewing the last six podcasts, see you after the break.



Presenter 31:26

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 31:52

Welcome back to root and wavering, we've been talking about the last six podcasts and what we can learn from it. And one of the themes that struck me is just let it be broken open. And when I think about all the information, we're getting six podcasts is a lot of information, I'm thinking about all the information we get every day, the mind wants to understand it all, which creates more separation. And from the heart, we can just be in it and not be in a rush to understand it all covered at all. But we just like you said Rick earlier, you take what's ours to do. So there's three people that we haven't talked about yet graph.

Rick Gage 32:50

Karen, Valerie,

Hylke Faber 32:52

and Valerie, and let's explore those three conversations. When you think about those three, what stands out for you, Rick?

Rick Gage 33:06

Well, something that each of them brought that I thought was so helpful, and Garf talked about it quite a bit was the ability to see themselves to watch themselves in the process. But but each of them, you know, showed it Karen showed it in observing the way she was going through something and the way she was talking about it with others. And even talking with us about it in the in the course of the podcast. Valerie talked about her beautiful work with, with people in crisis situations and, and observing the way they're, they're functioning and then observing also how a lot of the experience was for her and how much he was taking away from it. So I think each of these three and actually all of the all of the folks and I think part of the reason it feels like it's so much okay, because I just went through and counted in is actually seven podcasts. It's, it's, it's such a rich tapestry, that that all of these folks brought in. In fact, this is a kind of out of left field. But one of the things that came up for me as I was thinking about this this morning is My sister is a quilter. And she's been making a quilt out of some fabric that was made from photos taken by an astronaut, who lived quite a while on the space station, the International Space Station, beautiful images of what the Earth looks like, from space. And it's such a powerful sense of perspective, that when you pull back, you see something that you couldn't see when you were when you were so close and write in it. So I think a part of this sort of falling down breaking open is that we also pull back from it and can see it more broadly and and see what's there and what we can learn from it and what we can take forward.



Hylke Faber 35:07

Taking a step back I'm struck with how revolutionary that is. No, because the, from what most of us, I believe, at least me is more familiar with is the staying in it, not taking a step back, you know, being so in it, that we forget. And you could say, this disconnecting is just forgetfulness. It's forgetfulness of what we are. And when we reconnect with that, there's such beauty that opens up and it's an endless journey. And I love the tapestry from space. It reminds me that even also, the things we say are all little grains of sand, you know, little spots in, in in the hall. And that's also what Gore have talked about, like he, I had a very, very profound and provocative statement is that if you're exhausted, it means that you're disconnected from the infinite self that you are. And I don't think he meant physically tired. I think he meant at least higher how I heard it, emotionally drained, like burnt out. And I can relate to that. Because there's, there's a lovely thing about really engaging in the task. It's really wonderful. It's very, very fulfilling. And then there is this getting lost in that, and forgetting the bigger part and becoming so identified with the task that the well being leaves, and I really got that from, from what Gore have said, like, oh, you know, to see yourself and see what's see that we're all parts of this infinite consciousness, and that we're all egos giving manifestations to that he talked about his life story as being unhappily successful before he discovered his work. And then working in South Africa, in Johannesburg, I think it was in the McKinsey office. And then there's some lady that came in called Geeta Balan, who thought was crazy at the beginning. And then he did some meditation. And then he had this Kundalini lifeforce experience, and then he's decided to dedicate his life to that, and now coaches people all around the world. I see that very much connected to the sense of the truth of being broken open. And it's like, Ah, now I'm connected to something much deeper. And I think that's part of our role as a leader to allow, allow ourselves to break open to that bigger energy and to inspire others to do this, do this, we call this, I think, in the management literature, psychological safety, where people are able to share freely what what is going on. So what struck you from the case of conversation with Karen brick?

Rick Gage 38:25

You know, I think what struck me from the conversation with Karen was Karen. You know, it's it's, it's a how she is in the world, and the sort of willingness to be open, and authentic, and present. That that really struck me that it is it was, it was inspiring to me. It's like, oh, I want to be more like that. I felt I felt very called forward by her and just the way that she was sharing and how she was showing up about for you.

Hylke Faber 39:04

Yes, and I liked the articulation she had, because he challenged me at some point because I said to her, you know, when you're stressed, you're kind of getting very lost in yourself. And she said, No, no, no, no, actually, when you get stressed and triggered, you leave yourself. And the job is to come back to yourself. And I loved how she was talking about this, like we all have these experiences, we're going to getting stressed, triggered or whatever, and getting very much in it. And in CSV, Karen talked very vulnerably vulnerably about a breakup that she just had gone through where she thought he was going to marry this person. After not having dated for a long time after a very traumatic divorce. And she's like Nah, never again and she starts dating. As you met Steve meets this person, they are together, and



after a couple of months, they think she thinks it's going to result Often to lifelong partnership marriage, and then there suddenly is a break. And see described their own process with so much vulnerability, what I was struck by is what you're saying, Rick is she took a step back, you know, didn't get lost in all the kerfuffle of the emotions and expectations and but she took a step back and see, let the Insight happen. Until let it clear. And she was willing to do to stay in her body and Caesars she was willing to stay with the emotions, and really look at them without getting lost in them, which I thought was another beautiful thing about what she thought about that emotions are not garbage. But they have some information, you know, and see, sees it think she shared something about that, when she let go of the expectation of what would happen, there was this love towards this other person that's still here. And now they're really good friends, you know, so to allowing things to be what they are, and not getting in the way of that. And she does that with her clients or in our trauma guiding practice. She mentioned an example of a board member calling her in the morning in tears. And she said, you know, what I did was, I just was with her. And to me that was very profound, that simple, like the simply being with that bring attention, that allows for the light that comes in, to come in and the insight to emerge. So that's again, that practice of truth and love and service all at the same time.

Rick Gage 42:03

It connects to what you were talking about a moment ago, for me he'll go of being there's a certain energy and joy in the task, and then we get caught up in it. And I found myself thinking as you were saying that it isn't that we're caught up in the task. We're caught up in the story about ourselves in the task is actually being in the task. It's like the being with it's the sitting with, here I am here's the task and I'm sitting with it. What does it teaching me? What am I get to learn from it? What are the emotions that are coming out for me? What's What's the calling forward in me? What's it making me uncomfortable about? That's all the sort of sitting with the I'm not looking the way I want to look, I'm not accomplishing the way I should accomplish. All that kind of stuff, is the story about it that we get so quickly tied into that we stopped being with it, that we stopped sitting with it. And I think just sitting with life. You've heard me use this many times, my sweetheart who passed away last summer, I constantly had the question, what is this giving you the opportunity to feel? And I love that question. I hate that question. But it is so helpful and so profound. Many, many times that's the sitting with experience. What is this giving me the opportunity to feel? What's What's this calling forwarded me? How can I be helpful to this person? What am I feeling as I'm sitting with them? What am I experiencing as I'm, as I'm here watching this? And if we let maybe focus for a minute on Valerie, I think Valerie did such a beautiful job that she described how she's in these really interesting situations where people are in crisis, they don't have food, and they're passing out food. And she talked about how a woman brought back some rice that that had been given to her because I don't need this much. And why should I have more when somebody else doesn't have what they need? That there's a there's a goodness and a and an openness in people, when they're at their core when they're in that space of sitting with. And there's something about sitting with whether it's in war, or it's in famine, or it's in crisis, there's we're sort of forced to sit with. Here we are all of us in the presence of this thing that's challenging us together. We have experienced this in some ways that the beginning of COVID There was a sense of oh, we're all going through something together. It's a part of what I think opened us to thinking about



connectedness, as a topic was the sort of shared experience we were all having in a disconnected way. That there's a there's a there's an opportunity and all of that to sit with and be with and see things as they are even more clearly than we than we normally would as we're running our ego processes of how do I look and what should I do and how do I have happened? What what I think I should be control and have happened here. Yeah,

Hylke Faber 45:03

yeah. That I'm just struck by how unloving the mind can be. You know, but when it's not in truth, because then it the first point port of unLove is this totally not love ourselves and to beat ourselves up for not being in the situation, and not having the task done or whatever it might be. I'm struck by Valerie's witnessing, and the strength of her witnessing she's, she's worked in emergency response for probably decades, in some way, and now works, has been working with the Gates Foundation for a long time. And I remembered his one phrase where she said, You know, it's, it all comes down to this, whether I sit with Bill Gates, or I sit with a person, in a hit area, like a person that doesn't have anything to eat, it's all the same, we just want to be loved. We just want to be loved and feel that we belong. And, and connect to this kind of sense. And that seems so almost wrong to say like, Why what is a person that doesn't have anything to eat, and Bill Gates have in common, it seems like sort of, like almost like a spiritual bypass, to even talk about it that way. And, and yet, she said it that way, because she lived this everyday. And I thought that was that really made me think, and, and made the truth of that even come more to life, when she shared the story about this woman who had this discover that received rice, and some rice. And then this woman who didn't have much herself turned around and shared the rice with others. And then when she was asked, Why do you do this? He said, Well, how can I eat when the people around me are hungry? And this sense of like, I, this is what I have to do. And the sense of goodness in people in each of us. So yeah, I was I was very struck by by that. And that, for me, take takes out this monstrous ego part that I have, which is that I have to be the hero and the solution, the rescuer and have to solve it all. But I saw what I felt in her was, even in the midst of that, there was a sense of joy in observing and being of service, and maybe the heartbreak of never being able to solve it all. Which I think is the heartbreak we all have as humans in some way. But being able to be with, to be with to be with that. And then there's something else that opens up that as always, which does not fit in all the images we have or what would happen.

Rick Gage 48:11

I'm struck as we're talking through this, it's always interesting how the themes emerge. So play with this broken open theme that we've been been talking a little bit about the broken part of it, the James is falling to the floor, the falling away of the illusion of the things that aren't true, the landing on the truth, the sort of realities of war, that that sort of broken part of it, then the landing in this state of openness, the being with the holding less tightly. And the kind of paradox that this state of broken open, which you know, as soon as I say that I think of it as somebody that has been weakened by the experience someone who isn't strong that they're the broken open we should be careful with them now because they're not as strong. Actually that broken open is strength that's the place for which I can do what's most important that's the place for which I can be and bring the best of me and I think there's an



element of this that's that's that threads across all of these guests too. It's it's a where I find myself so that that open isn't empty. That open is full of me and not in an ego way but in you know in the service way in the I'm full of what I'm here to be in the world. I'm here to bring the the Ric flavor of openness to the world and I spent a lot of my life trying to have my flavor of openness not have any personality to be somehow If you do not have any of that, because that would be that would be offensive or that would be Ego. And I eventually learned and in some in some really helpful experiences, that what I need to do is let it be the Ric flavor of open, let it be my version, that's what I'm here to bring is my version of openness, my willingness to sit with and be and that that is I am that in the world as I live in to that purpose, then I can, can bring what I'm here to bring that that's that's when I am powerful in the important ways in the more mature ways that love that sort of arc that we talked about, of how as I get farther in life, I get more clear about what that's like. And it's not the adolescent version, which needs to be in front that needs to be loud. It can be the quiet version that just needs this is this is what's mine to do this. This is what's mine to bring in that open. Living who I meant to be way.

Hylke Faber 51:03

Yes. I'm getting very quiet as I'm listening to you, Rick. And it strikes me as there's not a arrival point like a connected leader is no it's we are on this journey is of course, an overuse metaphor, of greater and greater and greater openness, greater and greater openness, where the journey of discovering more and more is the reward itself. And what I love about this is that, that's also has is very redemptive to think about that way, right? Because we have so often thought in a world and in organizations business to say that's right, and that's wrong. Often, when we work with organizations, we talk about it in terms of from to, from old way of being, which offers a little bit more contracted fear, maybe it's like fixed thinking, I have to do this by myself, blaming others, you don't have to be the hero, whatever it's on that on that column, I have to be prescriptive, to be much more adaptive being inspirational to working together having a growth mindset, whatever, right. And the ego mind makes from bad, and to good. And connectedness means that we are honoring each part of the journey, I there's a, there's, there's part of that you can't walk before you crawl. And so part of us having to be up front, if that's our experience, in the adolescent states of our maturing of our consciousness, we learn something about ourselves, there's something to learn about power and agency and, and our personality and all these things, you know, and I can think about that for myself. Like, I still have some adolescence energy in me. And no part of me is very curious about the world and, and joyful, and at the same time, a little pushy. And now I get to work with that. And you know, one part is to say, oh, it's all garbage. So this, you know, Zen be in the Zen this is like pops and not really sad but pop zen like be in the space of being so good. But there's also this just like taking a walk, ah, that's beautiful. There's value in that others value that doesn't have to all add up perfectly. So when I think about these, these conversations, we've had each person shared authentically about how they're connecting more deeply to themselves. And universally what was across them as they didn't make themselves wrong for that experience. And I think if that's something that I can take away and that we can take away from these conversations, to honor our own experience and even if we get lost it get lost and have that experience. Right dancing, okay. Now, how do I allow myself to evolve to the next level of being more deeply connected to what is



true what is loving to what's being of service? And this this being with that question can be propeller to propel us forward without having to get to a landing place.

Rick Gage 54:55

That really resonates for me it's a returning again and again, to openness, and even not making bad the times when I'm away. I'm forgetting I grew up talked about fears love forgetting itself. Yes, I forget myself, I forget the openness. I forget what helps me in that state. And the very process of forgetting opens for me some things about which I can be curious that will help me be more open, stay open longer than next time. So each journey away is a value because it strengthens the journey back to returning again and again to openness. Yeah.

Hylke Faber 55:40

I'm thinking of, of, of a guest. That's not on not been on yet. But he told me before. So we may talk about in this podcast, like I always look every year it's like, what am I going to fail at this year? And in so how can I grow from that, and that does require intentionality. At least from what the way I hold it. I think life has this way of teaching us even if we're not willing. But if we are willing, the experience is a lot more enjoyable, I find. So what we're just going to look at,

Rick Gage 56:32

when I can remember that open feels better than I become less resistant to returning to open. But it's easy to forget that. But more and more now I hold on to and I don't lose track of the fact Oh, I'm not open now open this better. Let's think about open again.

Hylke Faber 56:55

So as we're getting to the close of this conversation, Rick, what is it that you would like love to share as a closing thought?

Rick Gage 57:08

I love being inspired by people. That's the reason I've enjoyed the podcast so much. The guests have just really offered such beautiful insights into their own journey and the power of their stories is really compelling and opening for me. And I'll return to the little experience I had just before we started and it becomes a dance of my my thinking mind wants to be like them to be worthy to all those things. And really all that falls away. What's mine to do is to be the best version of me I can be today. And that's really what they were doing as each of them did what I find so admirable, in what they were doing.

Hylke Faber 58:03

Thank you, Rick. That's beautiful. For me, it would be to allow to enjoy the hike in humanity, and really enjoy it to say, Okay, what am I seeing now? What can I learn from this? How can I serve from this. So it's been wonderful to be with you today. Again, Rick, and for all of us to be together in this space. If you've been listening, I hope you've heard something that made you feel maybe a little taller on the inside, with it more broken open. In a week, on May 12, we'll be speaking with Renee Smith, who is the



CEO and founder of a human workplace where the organization is actively working on having less fear and more love in the workplace. And we'll be exploring that and looking forward to that conversation. If you're interested in more of these kinds of topics and conversations, please subscribe to this podcast who then wavering on Spotify, Apple and other places you can find us on LinkedIn growth leaders network on LinkedIn, you can connect with Rick and I on LinkedIn as well and with other colleagues. And for now, I'd say have a beautiful rest of your day and enjoy this hiking into being more and more broken open into what's true. See you next time.

Presenter 59:44

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