

S01 - E22 - Rooted & Unwavering - Hylke Faber & Robert Washington

Presenter 00:00

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 greatness 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 00:36

Welcome to root and wavering broadcasting live from Phoenix Business Radio x in Arizona, where we help leaders connect more deeply to their innate potential. I'm your host, Hilda Farber, and I'm here today with Robert Washington, a sales leader in Microsoft, also a US Navy Seal, father of six martial artist, and award winning speaker, author, inventor and many other things I'll talk to you about in a second. Robert, how are you today? This morning?

Robert Washington 01:08

I'm pretty good. Thank you so much. Okay.

Hylke Faber 01:10

Excellent. Very good. I'm glad that you're here. Before we're going to talk more about you, Robert and about hearing your story about connectedness I want to, as we always do start this episode. With a brief reminder, you could say a recentering of why we're talking about Ruth and unwavering. So the intention of this series is that each of us gets more and more connected to what's true about ourselves. So we can get rooted in that. We all have all these forces that pull at us all the time, you know, things happen that we like we don't like if we have thoughts and feelings, how in those moments of challenge, do we come back to what is true what we can rest in our values, our intrinsic being. And that's what these conversations are about. And my personal experience is that I learned a lot more from stories and from concepts. So I'm so grateful to have guests like Robert Washington in the studio with us today. This is our 22nd episode. And Robert comes to us today from the state of Washington. He is, as I said, a father of six a sales leader, devoted husband. And his experience, which he will talk to you about in a moment is quite varied. He grew up in one of the most dangerous cities in America. And despite that always embraced a growth mindset and maintained an optimistic outlook on life. He has been distinguished and gotten awards as a motivational speaker. He draws on his own life experiences to do that he has a lot of sales acumen. And he has earned recognition as one of the top sales executives at Microsoft, he, as I said, as an author, inventor and entrepreneur, consistently challenging



the status quo. And he also served as a US Navy veteran during the hiring times off September 11. After his military service, he went on to work his competitive spirit and determination as a professional mixed martial artist. And he has also developed a framework called Goro. That's something that we can also explore more about that's about how to basically work with a growth mindset. The little sentence that I read about Robert that stays with me probably will always stay with me Is he is he is very clear about not being a victim to the past, but be a victor of the present and an architect of the future. Robert Washington, very happy that you're here today with us at rooted in unwavering. So tell us a little bit more about your experience, learning about connectedness in your own life.

Robert Washington 04:07

Yes, yes. Thank you so much. Thank you for the angel and thank you for allowing me to be here today. And you know, I love kind of what you're the whole framework of this conversation around connectedness. And you know, I've learned throughout my years love face and new opportunities to grow that know when I think about connectedness I think about this. Everything starts and stops with relationships. And when I listen ships, not only relationship with other people, but relationships with ourselves. The more I understand myself, the more I'm able to connect with others around me. So my whole philosophy around the kind of the growth mindset and what I'm trying to do in life and how I'm trying to inspire and impact other people's lives. It's I want to help people build a better relation is what it sells, which is going to help you build better connectedness and relationship with others around. And like that's the true value, you know, in this world we live in we live in today. So that's kind of where I kind of fit in from, from a connectedness perspective, and also how that ties into relationships. Awesome.

Hylke Faber 05:25

Thank you for sharing that, Robert. So, I'd like to start with the beginning. So little Robert, once upon a time, there was little, tell us a bit more work. Where were you born? What was it like back then? And through that experience? What have you been learning about connecting to yourself? Because you talked about getting to know yourself is really important. I'm sure you got to know yourself in that time in very specific ways.

Robert Washington 05:53

Yeah, definitely. That was so I mean, you hit on someone. So I was born and raised in poverty in one of the most dangerous cities in America. I had some very, very unfortunate circumstances as a child, but but a lot of those circumstances, kind of going back to what you said, I'd never looked at my life. From a victim perspective, I always thought I was a victim, I always felt that I was a special child. And that helped me kind of overcome some of my traumatic experiences. So, you know, as far back as a child, you know, I've always looked at life, everything is an opportunity. Because when you don't have nothing, you have nothing to hold you back. Right. So growing up with zero, there was nothing to hold me back. So I always kind of leveraged my creative mind, look at, you know, instead of looking at obstacles, looking at opportunities in life, but also, you know, because I grew up in such a, you know, impoverished kind of environment, one of the things that really kind of helped me build that kind of



relationship or connect this type of mindset is just being a codependent growing up. So growing up, because, you know, I was a young man, and at an early age, I was forced to do things that, you know, a lot of young kids didn't have to do, you know, I was taking care of my parents, I was taking care of my younger brother, even my older sister, like I was the man of the house and a young age. So because I was a codependent, it kind of forced me to put others in front of me, right, and which is a good thing. But it also can be a bad thing. But I've learned a lot, I've learned to leverage that kind of codependency the kind of mindset, self before, I mean, service before itself, mindset to really be a value to others. So my whole life because of some of the things that I do. And some of the experiences I'm doing as a child is all about, know, how do I add value to other slides, right? And if I take that mindset into everything I do, then it's not about it's about you. It's about how can I add value to what you're doing? And when you do that, you track ego from the situation. And I'm able to build relationships with others, because it's not about me, it's about you.

Hylke Faber 08:21

Beautiful, thank you for that. I'm very curious, Robert, how that started. Because you talked about being and growing up with zero. So imagining what zero looks like maybe you can talk about that for a second. And then where do you get the wherewithal to make that choice? To not be a victim of that circumstance, but actually find a way through that, and find the resilience that I see and hear in your words? What, what happened?

Robert Washington 08:58

Yeah, you know, so, for me, I think there was a couple of positive influences in my life that really helped me kind of, not not be, I guess, attached to my surroundings, right. I think one of the biggest challenges some people faces, they are their environment, or they are their past, or they are a reflection of their parents. I've always detached myself from my environment. And so for example, even when I was poor, I never had a poor mindset, right? I've always looked at, you know, here's an opportunity for me to, you know, do something for my family or help my mom out or maybe go fishing. This is the opportunity for me to give back to others around me. So I never I never really looked at life as a as a as a way of me being a victim. I've always looked at it as a way for me leveraging these small moments to really prove my value to the world. So for example, like to get into the details, like, every morning when I was young, but boy, we used to have to wake up in the morning, how to fish for my food, while other kids were out, you know, hanging out, and, you know, going to school getting ready, my daily tasks was to wake up and fish for food for my family. So I wake up before school, we live in New Orleans, Louisiana, I would walk across the street, climb over the levee, take my fishing ride, and my poll and go out there and fish. But even the reverse the goal we wanted for a second, we didn't even have worms to go out and fish. So nice. Before that, I will place these bricks in the yard. And then I wake up the next morning at 6am, lift the bricks back up. And that will be one of those books, I will take those worms you go fish for my meals. And so when you think about that goes back to what you're saying, like I had nothing, but I was able to, from nothing, go and you know, extract warmth from the ground and go route substance to my family. So when a lot of people look at life and say, Well, I don't have this, I don't have that, like for me nothing for it's an opportunity to go and be creative and find something from nothing, right. So I think



that's kind of like the framework that I've built when I want to talk about having nothing and being able to create something from nothing. Because as much as we think we don't have nothing, there's a lot of things around us that can help us achieve and reach our goals, if we're present, and if we're paying attention to everything around us. And so from a young boy, because I had nothing, I had to pay attention to everything, because everything was something that can get me further on my mind and my

Hylke Faber 11:56

beautiful, beautiful eye, I hear and that also part of the wisdom of being very detached. Like you said, in the very beginning, something that I want to highlight is I am not my surroundings. I'm not my parents, I'm not my past, I'm not what I have, I am here. And from that place of presence, I interact with the world differently. And what you're talking about, what I'm hearing you talk about is say that I can see it with fresh eyes. And then I know to put a stone out in the evening, so I have warmth in the morning. And then I know that I can go fishing in the morning and get fish. Now this sounds to some listeners. Very courageous. To me it does. And for some it might also be like, Well, where did the guy get the faith to do it? Because even going fishing is an act of faith because you're not, you don't know whether you're gonna get fish. So how did that work with a little boy going out fishing in the morning? Did you get fish every day? And how did that work out?

Robert Washington 13:12

I mean, for me, it was more and like going back to what I'm saying always looked at it as it's not about me. Because I grew up in that codependent mindset, I that service to others before itself, I've always put others in front of me that helped me kind of wake up in the morning, because if it was just about me, then I probably wouldn't have been able to do it. But I knew that I had people that was leaning on me that was relying on me to extract these words from the ground and go fish for these foods. So when other people quit, I kept going. Because the faith was driven from everybody around me, I had a lot of people looking at looking that was leaning on me at a young age. So I had a lot of pressure on me and I had to perform and, you know, some, some broke during those type of moments. But again, I've always looked at those types of moments as Everest and showed the world that I am a special person. And I do want to make an impact. So even as far as a young boy, I have built this mindset to put others in front of me, which has helped me you know, when times get tough. Think about the consequences and the impacts of the decision I made and how it's going to impact not only myself but all those people. And that's why I just never give up. Today, everything I do. I just never quit because it's bigger than me.

Hylke Faber 14:45

I never quit because it is bigger than me. I love them. I never quit because it's bigger than me and that propels me forward. I also resonated with you saying when I'm off in service, it loosens my ego attachment, I realized that I am much bigger than this thinking that I have about little self. So today, Robert, you're not going out fishing in the morning, or maybe you are to get food. You do other things. So tell us about your life today. And how you apply those principles that you're speaking about, of connecting to your true self. Yeah, day to day. Tell us about that.



Robert Washington 15:30

So I do go on fishing, but a different type of fish. And this type of fish that I go out and fish for is this actually food, food for thought my thought food for us. So I have a very, very talented, high bachelor habitual routine every single day. So in the morning, I made sure that I, I pray and meditate, but I take care of myself. So my first actions before I pick up a phone or anything, is I center myself in the morning through prayer through meditation, drinking a glass of water, and just being connected to the environment around me. And from there, I go out, and I work out. And while working out, I'm always listening to something, or podcast or read an audio book that's going to help me grow closer to the relationships I'm looking to build. And typically, so what I like to do is I break my life down to these four core pillars, itself. faith, family, and focus. So every single day, I'm working to grow closer to those four pillars, self being myself, I believe the biggest relationship that I can have is relationship myself, because when I have a relationship with myself, I can understand others better. When I have a relationship with myself, I don't give myself slack. If I'm messing up, I'm really myself. I don't make excuses. I don't make complaints. I don't become a victim of my own thoughts, right. And, and the next pillar is fake. So I'm always growing and trying to build a relationship closer to my faith, my spiritual beliefs, you know, the things that I believe in, right? So every day, I added to that book it also, and the family piece, I'm always trying to ingest information that's going to help me become a better person for the people behind me, right? Because that's really what matters and the focus being on a job and my giving back. So every single day, and taking in information that's going to help me grow closer to these things. And when you think about a growth strategy for my life, that's my growth strategy. Every day, I'm filling my buckets. And I truly believe that everything's matters. And that's why I pay attention to everything, I can't be too focused on work, and giveaways give up on my family and vice versa, right have to be centered and balanced across the spectrum of these four core pillars. And everyday I'm working to fill those buckets individually. So a lot of my habits and rituals that I develop is all around how am I growing closer to these four pillars in my life? That's a growth strategy and how mixture I'm filling these four buckets. And I'm not just focused on one bucket and leaving other bucket. unfilled.

Hylke Faber 18:23

Beautiful. So self faith, family and focus. So you have six kids, Robert, right. Yeah. And and so tell me about how does it work to balance that because I also speak with people that have as much on their plate as you are even less that may think, well, it's too much for me, it overwhelms me it this is I don't have this one thing becomes everything. And the other ones just have to take a break until the next decade when the kids are older. Tell us about how you are able to do this. And really tell us about like what how does that work on a day to day like asking you and how does this work?

Robert Washington 19:10

Yeah, so you know a lot of my my mindset philosophy is not saying what you said, saying there's too much I just don't believe I can ever say those type of words and it goes back to my whole philosophy towards commitment. So I'm always telling myself the once you make it make a commitment to stay committed to your commitments, so it's a triple C I call it triple C but what I really trying to say is we make a commitment systems they committed to those communities. So when times get stuck,



remember, you have to stay committed to those committed not just committed commitment, but you have to stay committed to those commitments. So I never tell myself that I don't have enough time. I never tell myself that it's to worry worse rested. I never tell myself that. You know I'm stressed out or anything Unlike that, I believe when I started telling myself that, I will start to create that like victim mindset, and I start operating that way. So for example, just recently, I took on I took on a task, my wife asked me, my wife volunteered me voluntold me to be a flag football coach for my kids, two teams. And I said, right away, I can do this, right. And so while a lot of the other parents and things that I was working with was like, Man, this is too tight, and I'm not able to do it. My thing was like, Okay, how can I rearrange my set my, my, my schedule, and make this more of a family visit? So instead of me saying, Hey, I can't do this, I got six kids. I looked at it this way. How can I do this for six years. So this is how I shifted my mindset. I brought my three oldest boys out to happen, volunteer help coach, and my two oldest boys, my two youngest boys was actually on the football team. So it became a family event. So now, every week when we're going out Wednesday, and Thursday, my boys have given back to the team, my wife is out there, my six month, your older daughter's out there, and we're having a family connected event. Because that small shift in mindset of okay, this is not too much. Let's make it a day out in the park for the family now. So little things like that, when you start to shift your mindset, you start to see possibilities that you probably didn't see, right?

Hylke Faber 21:37

Yes, yes, yes, I can see the little boy going fishing and putting the stone out and getting the worms again, that's very different skill right now. That's very beautiful. That's very beautiful. So then, tell us how that translates into work. You work as a sales leader in Microsoft. So how does this structure the strategies work of connectedness? In work for you?

Robert Washington 22:02

Yeah, yeah, you know, I like to say this, also, you know, every, every successful internal, external customer engagement starts and ends with you, right. And so what that means is you on the value proposition, you know, you're leading the sale, you're leading the first customer engagement leads in the first internal partner engagement, so but you are the value proposition that you bring into the, to the table, right. So I, when I do that, I want to bring the most authentic, the most real, the most loving, the most caring version of myself and each engagement. So in order to do that, I have to going back to what you said, I have to pull back and I have to detach myself from the past that can be holding me back. But also I have to detach myself from the future. In that space, when I create that space, that's the present moment. So where as others lead in, and they're so focused on his outcome and trying to, to achieve, I just want to end it, I want to understand the person that's in front of me, right? Because that's really what's matters, when I sought to understand this person, and what they're trying to achieve, or their challenges are more about them. Giving makes me help me build a better relationship with that person. But in order to do that, you have to pull yourself back to what from what you were trying to achieve, and just be there and be present. And I think that takes a lot of work, a lot of skill, a lot of habitual practice. But when I leave these conversations on, leave me, I leave with who I am as a person, my value proposition, my life and my purpose, because at the end of the day, that's my



competitive differentiated from everybody else in the market. Because when I'm connected to you, as a person, you have to understand, I become an extension of your team. So that what that means is Roberts wound to Roberts aligned to your mission, and he's willing to knock down barriers, to make sure that we as a team hit our goals together. But that's really, it's not about me, again, it's about how can I add value to what you're doing? How can I want to your niche. So there's that mindset shift. You know, that shift in your mindset of life, you know, it's about the other person can greatly I feel helped you build better than others.

Hylke Faber 24:32

Very clear. It's not about me, and I've heard you say it is now in very different manifestations in this conversation like it's, it's not about me, I'm going to go fishing for my family. It's not about me. There's a way for me to be of service to you and be part of your team. And it's not about love. My mind is made up right now. It's about being in this present moment. Tell us little bit more about how you practice being in the present moment, because I hear you being very intentionally conscious of that. And I'd love to hear Robert, both about your victories. And about your failures in this and what you've learned from that.

Robert Washington 25:19

Yeah, I'll start off with my failures, because he alludes back to how do I get to the point. And so, you know, I wasn't always this person, right. Because of my past, I was, I've learned from a young age to be a provider, for my family, just to be a provider. And so because I've seen all the men around me just kind of provide and protect, I didn't know there was other aspects of being a father, right, because I didn't see it. And so for a long time, it was about work, we're, and a lot of that came from me, from what I seen, but also society's expectations of failure that was projected on Wednesday. And that stuff consumed me. And you know, for a long time, and I felt like I needed to over work over prove myself to the world. Because of this, because the world looked down on. And so to say that, you know, as a professional athlete, I've had to I ran into some huge obstacles early on in my career later in my career, because of this. So for example, I'm sure one of these failures to say, that really opened me up. So far back, I think this was 2016. One of my last fights as a professional mixed martial artist, I overtraining myself, almost to death. And the reason I did that is because I was an underdog going into their fight. And so I wanted to prove it to the world and everybody that was around me that I was better. So I put more emphasis in our trade. And I remember one day I was at 12 o'clock at night, I walked into the house, my wife was like, What are you doing, Robert, I say, I'm going back out and train. I got to train these people are doubting you have to prove them wrong. So think about that. My whole energy, my whole drive was to prove others wrong. So it pushed me to a point that I was overworking myself over training. And then I remember another day, I came to the house and my wife looked at me, she said, Robert, you're here. But you're not present. And like, What do you mean, I'm going out and doing all this stuff and helping out? She said, Robert, you're here, but you're not emotionally present. And that really struck me like just hit a chord and you're like, what does she mean, once you say that? So as much as I was here, I was never emotionally present. And I was always thinking about the next thing, I gotta meet this girl. I gotta do that. And so when I went into this fight, I'm almost like I said, long story



short, I almost over train myself to death. And, and acuity said, shut down. I was going into cardiac arrest. And I had an awakening at that moment in the hospital. I was, I mean, what am I doing? Why am I pushing so hard? Like, what's in the past, has pushed me to push. So what am I trying to prove to the world what really matters. And for that moment, that kind of pushed me into my public speaking because I shared my moment with the world and how that impacted me. And it pushed me to public speaking. And different areas of my life that was just given to me by that sport was just a platform sport, they helped me get to my real goal, which is helping other people overcome these challenges that I've been able to overcome. And look, the biggest thing I say, when I say this, like the biggest curse I can ever have, I take all this knowledge to graver like, that, that'd be the biggest disservice I've ever done. So a part of me is just like giving this back to the world. So though that moment actually put me in a position to I needed to shape change. So some of the things that I do on a daily basis to stay more present is to always challenge my thoughts, right? Because if I don't control my thoughts, I know my thoughts will control my actions. So I'm always having a conversation with my thoughts. And so When thoughts come into my mind, I'm always asking myself, is it true that this thought benefited me? But more importantly, Where's this coming from? Because a lot of times are negative or dysfunctional thoughts could be coming from a place of dysfunction. So creating space between you and your thoughts and understanding your natural thoughts to me is something Did I constantly do on a daily basis? And that's growth, right? That this growth every single day, there's not be one day where I feel like I got it, because life's gonna snap me again. Right? So I'm constantly constantly challenging myself every single day, you know, and I'm my biggest critic, sometimes.

Hylke Faber 30:19

I really resonate with that. We're going to take a break in a moment, we've been talking to Robert Washington, one of the core teachings that I've been receiving from speaking with you today is to be totally disciplined, very disciplined about not believing my thoughts as they come up, but actually being clear and asking myself those three questions. Is this true? Is this helpful? And where does this come from? After the break, we'll explore this more and also, we're gonna explore more with him. But Robert, about what was it like those moments before the cardiac arrest? And what was that awakening insight like for him and what he learned from that. So I will be back after the 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

Welcome back to router unwaivering. We're here with Robert Washington, currently a leader in sales for Microsoft, also a professional martial art arts artist, and also a father of six and devoted husband and a public speaker and many other things that I'm sure you haven't told us about yet. Let's go back to this moment off cardiac arrest or almost cardiac arrest. I want to hear more about this. You asked this



question. Where did this thought come from? This third question. So where did this thinking come from? For from your perspective? Or did you discover Robert in that moment and says you were in the hospital that led you to overwork? So yeah, yes.

Robert Washington 32:28

No, that's that's a great question, I think, for me is. At that moment, when I was in hospital, one of the things that I was, I was just kind of self reflecting on my whole life, everything just was, I was just everything was steel, but nothing else mattered. But that moment that was in front of me. And so that provoked me to go dig a little bit deep, and really go and attack those questions that I've kind of wandered away from, or I've just given them given any tension in the past. So the first question I asked myself in that moment, in a hospital bed when a doctor came back in and she said, Robert, your heart is twice the size of a normal heart. You were going into cardiac arrest, it's like, most people would have probably getting freaking out of like, okay, I'm about to die. I was like, Okay, I wanted to know how to get here. That was my first question I had to myself. And so that's, that's where, you know, I feel like prior to that, if I had known myself a little bit better, I would have known that, you know, I wasn't my past. And I wouldn't been pushed to over achieve these goals, because of my past, or things that has been projected on me, from my environment around me. So because I was able to dig into that question at that moment. At that moment, I was able to understand that everything that I was doing was because of past failures. Everything that I was doing was because of past family failures or past societal expectations. And I was, I wasn't being the true authentic version of myself. I was, I was doing what I expected society expected me to do. Right. So it pulled me away from my authentic version of myself. And so that's where I was challenged. I was challenging my own thoughts at that moment, and really awakened me to dig a little bit deeper to get a better understanding of who Robert Hughes and I went on this journey for, you know, from 2016 to now, and I feel like I have a better understanding of who I am. Because of that moment.

Hylke Faber 34:49

Yes, yes. Yes, this. So digging a little deeper is what you said or what I heard, and being able to face your thoughts and also be Very clear. It's like, oh, this thinking is not me. Like this thinking belongs to beliefs I had about my family's failings, or this thinking belongs to beliefs I had about the society's expectations of me. But these are my thoughts about that, that have nothing to do with me. Yes. So when you become free from those thoughts, what do you discover about yourself? Then? Who is Robert without those thoughts?

Robert Washington 35:38

Yeah, no, no, good question. So, you know, for a long time, I felt that I needed to prove myself to the world, right? Because of those thoughts. And I wouldn't show up the authentic version. I'm funny, uncared. I'm a character, I love people. And I always belong time because of these five steps projected on me that I needed to prove to people that I was a good person. And now, I mean, just to simplify your question, I just, I just have to be a good person, I just have to show up every day to be a good brain. Because I feel like if you look, you're trying to do something, then you're not being authentic. If you just



be and just do, they just show up you. So anything, you see the posts on acorns, Facebook or on LinkedIn, that's why I am inside and outside the word, you get one version of Robert, and you get you see what you get. Like, there's no this Rob, Rob is rod and I care about people. So why do I have to try to be somebody different. If I'm a good person, I really, really care about people. And that's like my value proposition. As a leader. I feel like my competitive differentiator is I care. A lot of people talk about it. But I actually live it every single day, like I truly care. And people know, like, if you call Rob, he's gonna pick up the phone. That's the value that I bring to the table. And my wife knows that too. Because I care about people. So by detaching myself from all this stuff, I mean, to be the best version of myself, I'm able to have this, this conversation and just be authentic and show my vulnerabilities with the world. Because I know that my goal really is can be strength to other people. And I'm not just living in my own thoughts. And I can share that to help other people grow and overcome their challenges.

Hylke Faber 37:47

Yes, yes. I'm so struck Robert, by your commitment. Like, if I think about you and your story, and what you've been telling us, now, you've been sharing, and also what I sense from you is, is your commitment, your deep commitment to what you have committed to and I love that you made that distinction, not only commitment, but also being committed to your commitment. What do you want to say to somebody who was not unwavering in their commitment, but currently finds themselves in a situation where they may waver? Because we all have these thoughts? We all have these thoughts. We're human, right? Where we feel weakness. And what what do you want to say to them? And what do you say to yourself?

Robert Washington 38:36

Yeah, yeah. So like, if anyone is in a situation where you will you feel, you know, where you're kind of unwavering in your thoughts, like you saying, it's like, the first thing that I like to do to myself is I'm always lifting myself up. Sometimes you have to go back and look at, you know, your own patterns of success, what have you done, because a lot of times, we're our own biggest critic. So a lot of that stuff is like, let's pull ourselves out of that victim mindset. Let's get to a mindset where we're more open to be optimistic. So anytime you're in one of those ruts or just further down, we think about, like, who you are, and how powerful you are to work. And then some of the things I do when I'm in that situation is I go and give back to others. So whenever I'm down or not feeling good, or I'm out or I'm just like, hey, I want to I want to I want to be just a little bit more optimistic. I'll go and give back to other dudes that fulfills mine. And you opened me up to the to how many more in the open mindset to be able to explore the world? Because, you know, I always like to say this other quote, I'll say also, you can't have an open conversation with a closed mind. Right? So First thing we have to do is we have to open our minds to receive the information, there see the energy that's around us, but it helped us grow and expand. So that's really one of the things I do to try to pull myself out of those small, little breaths, and there just to make sure that I'm constantly on pace of hitting not only my goals, but helping others around the 30 goals.

Hylke Faber 40:26



So in the rut, you get yourself out of it. And I like it, you call it little rats. Which do we also suggest that you have the sense of the bigger perspective that we're part of that you're saying, Okay, how do I open myself to the bigger picture here. And one way to do that for you is service that helps you being a being there all the time. And I can only imagine you live with six kids and all the things you're doing that you're pulled into that, whether you like it or not all the time. And you seem to be enjoying that, which is wonderful to hear. I want to go back to your decision of becoming a professional, mixed martial artist. Tell us about how that happened. And how that relates to your journey into more and more connectedness.

Robert Washington 41:21

Yeah, yeah. So it's so crazy how that situation happened to become a much more solid. And a lot of my mixed martial arts background kind of went back to me going falling the path to mixed martial arts went back to me trying to prove something to the world. I just felt like I was one of those kids, I was bullied. I was always undervalue under look. And I've always felt like I wanted to prove something to work. So part of my journey in life was to prove something to the world. And I felt like I can do that through mixed martial arts. So I joined which more shorts, honestly, I think with the wrong intention, but it worked out because that was my path. And that's the only thing I knew at that moment. So it's not, I don't have any regrets with it, I was just trying to find that path. So that journey to let you watch or watch was, I was in the military, I was stationed overseas, and I was in Guam at the time. And at the time, I just wanted to, I wanted to be something bigger than just a military, you know, never, I wanted to prove to myself that physically I can, I can, I can do something, I can win something. So that was kind of mixed martial arts to me, and do mixed martial arts, I felt I started to build the confidence I needed to be successful in life. And so I would get these small little wins over and over. And I was like, wow, I am a value to the world. I am okay, I am good. I'm a good person, I can compete at the highest level. And things that I've sold these little wins would help me kind of build my confidence up. And so that's when I kind of fell in love with the whole sport. And then I started to look at mixed martial arts in a different view, almost to say, it was wasn't almost mixed martial arts that one period of my life became about life, it became about this is more how to react, to thing how to not to react to everything in life. So one of the most beautiful things I learned from the arts is emotional control, right? And so do mixed martial arts. I've learned to not react to everything that's done that, for example, if then you Hilke yoga was like sitting right next to each other, and I swung on you, and we start two feet away, you're probably swinging back. But if we were standing 20 feet away, and I swear to God, you probably wouldn't. And and the reason because it's because of that space. And so it makes more shorts, and you think about the fine aspects and makes more shorts. Everything's about timing and spacing and discipline. So because my opponent swings on me, I can't swing back every time my opponent swings on me, because they're not controlled by my opponents action to think about life. If anything life throws at you, you're swinging everything that you control about everything that been on the ledge. So let's more so it's kind of taught me how to be centered, how to be balanced, how to be steel, and how not to react to everything, the string that.

Hylke Faber 44:45



I love that. That's time and space. And what was the third thing you said? Time and space anyway, there was something about that. I love the metaphor of being when you're hitting at me from 20 feet away, and I have that perspective, then I can sense the space. And what I'm sensing you do is in interactions with others. When things happening, you stay centered in the space, so you choose whether you respond or not. And that's a way of practicing being detached. And that's one of the lessons you learned from the martial arts. It's what I'm hearing from you. So, today, as you're sitting in your chair, today, in in on May 26 2023, what do you sense you're being called into? Because my sense of you is Robert, that given your commitment, and being committed to your commitment, you've grown so much in your life. So what is called for now you think in your life in terms of your next area of growth? Where do you want to be going into?

Robert Washington 45:59

Yeah, so I think it goes back to my first saying, kind of going, there's really no there's really no outcome outside of grocer myself, my faith, my family, and my focus. And I say that, because for me, that, to me, is success, that that that to me, embodies a almost a 360 view of success. And so my calling is those three things. And if those three things, whatever aligns, I mean, those four things, whatever aligns to those four buckets, and then I kind of just follow the path. So like, I make a lot of decisions more efficiently and effectively, because I checked those four boxes throughout my decisions. So if it's not going to help me, build a better version of myself, go customer fi, my family on a focus that I just, I just turned it down. But if you've launched buckets, then I know, okay, that's the next step I need to take. So I think the path as I continue to grow and walk, the path will unfold itself, because there's no such outcomes, the only outcome that I'm looking to achieve is to be a better version of myself every single day. And look, that's a journey. And that can take, I'm never going to master it. But I continue to kind of continue to grow as an individual, because I don't I don't hit a goal and say, Okay, what's next, this journey just continues to go, continuously go.

Hylke Faber 47:47

Always grow into a better version of myself, and continuing to grow in those four buckets of self, faith, family, and focus, I really want to reflect on that bit more with you, and also with the listeners, thinking about, know what each of our buckets might be. I love the clarity of that. And also the strength that I feel and the resolve that I feel from you. I'm committed to self. I'm committed to faith. I'm committed to family. And I'm committed to focus. So tell us about maybe an experience you've had maybe recently where you had to make a choice where it was very obvious to you that not not fitting, not doing it? How can you tell us about that, and how that works for you in practice?

Robert Washington 48:45

Yeah, so I get a lot of, I get a lot of phases thrown at me. So these are minor, be aligned, maybe they're more focused on generating just income and not impact. So, you know, there's so many things as strong that me or us on a daily basis that can distract us from our goals. Like, I look at it this way. If I have a strategy, and I'm moving towards my strategy, like I'm this big shift, right? And my strategy, my, my, my strategy that hit this goal, and two years, right, if I'm this huge, big ship, and I got a two year



journey to hit this goal, and every time there's a distraction, this big ship has to turn around and go the other way, or go left or right. I'm never gonna hit that goal. So it's, like, kind of going back to you said, How do you like manage the distractions is thrown at us every single day, right? Yeah, and I hate to say this, but go goes back to that. So, like, I get opportunities all the time to do things that's not aligned to who I am. And it's easy for me to make a decision, because my decision is not based on monetary gain is not based on titles or recognitions, is not based on fame, it's based on those four core priorities of mine. So anytime I'm asked to do something, and it's not ethical, it's not who I am as a person is not, why not? It's easy to say no. And it goes back to what I said late and also, because I understand that every decision that I made, the consequences, and the impact of those decisions is going to affect everything around. So like, we're not, we're not, I'm all for something that seems like it's, it might stretch me away from my faith, my family and my focus, I just say no, and forge, for example, I, before I took the job here at Microsoft, I was offered another role that was halfway across the country, in an area that I knew my family wouldn't be happy, it was easy for me to say no to that decision, because I knew the cost of living was extremely high. My wife wouldn't like to error, you know. But the pain in that job was extremely high also, so, but there wasn't, there wasn't a lot of churches that I like to attend in that area, there was a lot of opportunities for me to grow as an individual, and a lot of communities that had diverse and inclusive people. Still, a lot of people would have took the job just from the monitor game. But I looked at it from a 360 view, and said, Okay, how does this align to who I'm trying to be? How does this apply to me grew up closer on my feet? How does it align in the building a better relationship with my family? And how does it lie to me giving back to the world and focusing on the things that really mattered to me, and it did. So that was an easy decision, even though the monetary gain for that job would have been really nice. But it was, it was really easy for me just to say no, and walk away. And I use this framework, and all my high level decision making processes, like it's easy to like, make a decision now because I have a universal framework where I can just check the boxes. Okay, how does it does it? Check? It has to check out four boxes? If it doesn't, I just can't do it, right? Because then, like I said, that strategy, that a goal, I'm taking this get shipping, I'm taking in another direction, right? And I never want to hit that goal. And I want to hit which is to be, you know, hopefully one day, master those four pillars, which I'm probably never going to do, right.

Hylke Faber 53:02

Gorgeous, gorgeous, gorgeous. So you're making this decisions. And it sounds to me almost with ease. The way you're like saying it's like, well, this is not fitting. This is not fitting and interesting to hear you say not money, not fame, two very strong distractions in our current society. So tell us, maybe as we're getting towards the end of our conversation already, which surprises me because I'm still in the middle of it for my feeling. Is that was a bit about what is that? Like, when you make these decisions? In your in this focus? What does that feel like? side of you? What does that like?

Robert Washington 53:51

Oh, that's a that's a deep question is a great question is a deep question. I think. I think because I made the decision. And I checked those boxes. I never have any regret every decisions is the right decision, even if I check those boxes, because I know, I'm going to make the right decision. Right? If it checks



those boxes, Dennis to right, since so I feel good when I make those decisions. No, sometimes we make decisions and we will regret our decisions right away, as because we might not have done the due diligence to make that decision or to make those good decisions. When I make these decisions, because I've checked the boxes. I know that if there's any thoughts that came up, those are self inflicted thoughts that I can get away. Those are just thoughts that don't really have any meaning because the decisions already grounded on those four years. And so it's easy for me to embrace that decision and continue that commitment towards those decisions. And I never give up on my decisions. I Never give a woman scissors because if it's grounded in those four pillars, that means it was the right decision. Now it's I have to I'm the person that has to make it, you know, right, you know, from from a, you know, actual tactical execution perspective, from a high level, there was a right decision. And that's one of the obstacles, ie the path. But just feeling good about your decision is going to help you embrace those decisions, and really drive momentum to execute on those decisions, when you might have little doubt in your mind.

Hylke Faber 55:34

Thank you, Robert. Thank you, Robert. As we're getting towards the final minutes here of our conversation, I am taking away from this conversation so much. One of them is this deep commitment to commitment. Also the unwavering focus on what are our true priorities, and really inviting us to reflect on what are your true priorities that are guiding you? And what are Suda priorities that actually have nothing to do with you? The conversation about being very disciplined about our thinking, and asking ourselves as three very powerful questions. Is this true? Is this of service? And where is this coming from? And then last, but not least, this whole sense of when I feel in a rut, think service, that is a sure way to defeat the ego, entrapment? Robert, what is it that you want to say, by way of closing our conversation?

Robert Washington 56:41

Yeah, you know, I think, I think goes back to the whole kind of grounding and reflection, just this conversation today. No, no, I always like to say, it's not about you kind of mindset. You know, think about everything we do, right? And how we can impact others around us and constantly, kind of shift your mindset from a i into like, it's about the team was about the people I'm trying to support. But also, I challenge everyone to create a growth strategy for your own personal life, like what's your four kills, right? Because look, growth is constant. If you're not going to the things you want to grow towards, are you going towards because you're growing, you might be going towards habits that does not benefit you. So I challenge everyone to create a growth strategy that we have strategies for our business, we have strategies for our side gets, why should we Why don't we have a growth strategy for life? Right. And through that growth strategy, I challenge everyone also to focus on relationships, you know, again, like going back to what I say everything starts, it ends with relationships, but the first relationship, I think it's a relationship with ourselves. So I mean, in closing, that is that's kind of my challenge to the world. Now, that's it. Thank you.

Hylke Faber 58:14



Thank you, Robert. Well, I deeply appreciate being with you today. And so grateful for the example that you set by the way you are and what you've been sharing with us. Today. You can listen more to this podcast on Spotify and Apple, you can find his day, you can also find Robert Washington, on LinkedIn and other places, and also booked him for a speaking engagement. If you'd like to do that. We're very grateful that you've been listening to Rudan wavering. Again, you can subscribe to this podcast on Spotify and Apple and other places. And also, you can find us on LinkedIn on there under my name, I will be again with together in route and unwavering in two weeks with Adam freed who is a managing partner of DSV ventures. He speaks 11 languages is on his third career has two amazing kids one hilarious doc and is the best husband ever. And he says life is good even in crazy times. So we'll hear from him building more on the wisdom we heard today from Robert, that will be June 9. That's it for today. Thank you again, Robert for being with us and sharing the wisdom so eloquently and powerfully. I hope that if you listen to you find some helpful nuggets today that maybe connect you more deeply to your core priorities. You'd be listening to root and wavering, where we help leaders connect more deeply to their innate potential. I'm your host Ahsoka fiber. See you next time.

Presenter 59:51

Thank you for joining us in today's episode of rooted and unwavering leadership conversations about courageous connectedness presented Find 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 help us 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

