How to Repair Any Relationship In Four Steps Transcript

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Podcast Intro and Guest Introduction

Fear and bribes are the worst parenting techniques. Fear is, if you don't do that, I'm going to hit you or hurt you or take this thing away. Bribes are, I'll give you the iPad or social media or I'll give you sugar or anything dopaminergic.

That's low-hanging fruit that parents use all the time who are We're really overwhelmed and under-resourced and welcome to the TBD Fit Podcast on Dr. Talks.

I'm your host, Daniel Keeley, and I will be guiding you through this wellness journey in terms of optimizing health and longevity, where we unpack the science, the dos, the don'ts, and everything in between.

Come join us. Look forward to seeing you inside. Welcome to the TBD fit podcast where again, our mission is to optimize health performance on longevity.

We are privileged today with our guest, Jason Gaddis, who is a health coach for entrepreneurs, CEOs and founders. He's a bestselling author. podcast or speaker, coach, CEO, and relationship expert, which is why I'm super excited to get him on today.

He has over 100,000 people that have benefited from his online programs. He's trained hundreds of coaches worldwide and presented in various relationship coaching sectors.

For the model that he has created, he has a podcast with over 8 million downloads. His best book, well, his book won best leadership and business book on Amazon in 2021. He's been featured on Wall Street Journal on the bestseller list.

He's also built and run a seven figure company since 2018. Beyond his professional work, he's been married to his amazing wife since 2007, I believe. And you guys have two beautiful kids together where you reside in Boulder, Colorado.

So Jason, a warm welcome. Thank you so much for joining me today. Yeah. Thanks for having me. So let's start with just getting to know a little bit more about your story.

I know that was kind of a big intro, which speaks to the level of work you've been able to do, achieve and intervene in helping many lives, similar to kind of what we do, but more in the lens of relationships.

Jason Gaddis' Personal Turning Point

But just tell me kind of what was the catalyst? How did you get into this? Pain really. I was a sensitive boy really growing up, but I had a really athletic driven entrepreneurial father who kind of kicked my ass metaphorically to be like all the other guys.

So my sensitivity went underground and I just tried to fit in and I played sports. you know, push the limits. And I was kind of a jerk relationally. And I drank a lot and used a lot of drugs and enough failed relationships at age 29 got me on the kind of my face on the mat, so to speak.

And I was like, okay, maybe I'm the problem. I was always blaming everyone else and I figured, okay, I'm the one common denominator here in all these relationship failures.

So if that's true, I'm going to, I can do something about that. It's in my control and I'm going to get to work. And so I did and went to grad school eventually to become a psychotherapist, met my wife there, eventually got married,

started a school because I got tired of complaining.

There was no class on relationships. So I started the relationship school. And here I am, you know, just trying to help humanity get better at connection, better, just want a relational world, you know.

So I definitely want to dive into the relationship school, but you mentioned pain, which is usually a driver for change. And I know that the upside is you seem to have uncovered your blind spots maybe relatively early, but I'm curious because I'm always in kind of pursuit of authenticity, let's say.

Uh, but in some degree, when we are looking or seeking external love, whether, you know, Lack of love from a parent or from a relative or friend, spouse, etc.

We almost lose our sense of authenticity because it's externalized. Was that attributable to some of your pain and then how you've been able to change that language and dynamic?

Yeah. Yeah, that's really true. Um, yeah, like most kids want to fit in. And so you, but you kind of have to betray yourself to belong in a social group and even in your own family sometimes.

Uh, and then people don't even notice it becomes the skin they wear the rest of their life and they're miserable. Well, it's because they're not being authentic.

They're not being themselves or being who they think other people want them to be. And between trying to please my dad and trying to live by his values and caught between being myself and what even that meant, I didn't really know, but there was a gap, huge gap, right?

And there was a lot of pain in that gap. And then personal work helped me close the gap and be more real, be more myself. Makes sense. Was your mom present?

Did you have a good relationship with your mom? My mom was great. My mom and dad on all accounts were really great parents other than they, it was like an emotional kind of relational desert or very compromised in our home.

Misattunements all the time and hurts and you know, they kind of parented me based on who they wanted me to be versus parenting me based on who I was.

And so that just caused a lot of disconnection eventually and pain in our family. I see that often enough where the, let's say lack of success that a parent didn't achieve or their trauma, if you will, is passed on to their kids.

Authenticity, Emotions, and Vulnerability

And it's like, we push our kids to become a person that we never were. But we don't realize sometimes the harm that we're doing as parents. And again, it goes back to our blind spot.

What were maybe some of your big blind spots apart from that, maybe growing up or in terms of your relationship or parenting? Yeah, you mean as an adult parent when I became a parent?

One of the big ones I think was just that my marriage and my parenting helped me with was getting better at being with emotions. Because I grew up in a family where it's like we don't be with emotions, we shut them down.

And so I entered adult relationships very compromised there. And my wife began to help me kind of get my shit together around, you know, validating her feelings and learning how to feel my own.

I went to a lot of therapy and learned how to feel my feelings and learn how to name them, articulate them. And then, you know, I became a therapist initially and then eventually a coach.

And you got it. If you're going to be any good, you have to learn how to be with other people's pain and emotional

life. And if you can't be with your own, you will unconsciously block them from theirs because they just won't feel like they trust you.

So that was a big, you know, my daughter in particular, she was my second child and her sensitivity really pushed me to the limits around like what I thought I could handle, you know, getting super triggered by her and then learning how to be with that, you know, and just breathing through it and being able to hold her in the midst of my own just tremendous activation.

was like a workshop, you know, for years. And I got better and better at that. And I'm still, you know, I'm still a work in progress, but I'm way better than I was.

What were some, because I'm certain and we'll dive into the relationship school for sure, but if you can maybe provide any guidance in terms of strategies or tactics, because it's almost sounds like the essence of being vulnerable in terms of acknowledging your emotion, being open about your emotion, being able to accept your emotions.

and then allowing that to transition and helping others. What are some things that if I wanted to be more accepting or vulnerable of my emotions, how would you kind of guide me through that process?

What are some techniques I could use? Well, first I have to enroll you in the value of even doing that, right? Because some people, particularly men, have been so socially conditioned that feelings are bad and wrong.

They're really problematic and they don't kind of get that actually being vulnerable and honest with what you're feeling inside and being able to name that stuff can be really beneficial as a parent and as a partner.

So I'd have to enroll people first, right? And then it's kind of like a mindfulness practice of being aware of what you're feeling in your body and just kind of like a basic meditation.

Instead of focusing on your breath, you're focusing on sensations in your body and then being able to report those out. And I like to do it, I like to teach people when they're activated because, you know, when you're doing great, you're not feeling sad or angry or But when you're triggered by somebody, that's the perfect time to just stop and breathe and close your eyes or just look down and try to really tune into why is this so activating for me?

What is going on in my body and what is this called? uncomfortable, okay, I'm afraid maybe, I'm hurt, I'm feeling scared, I'm feeling pissed off. Anything in that direction, right, is we can begin to flex those muscles.

And then the next step is, of course, to look someone you care about in the eye and tell them what's happening with you because that's even more vulnerable is to do it in the context of a relationship.

I think it's super difficult in some senses like to, um, let's say with my spouse, as an example, there's something that creeps up. I'm uncomfortable.

And then now I'm having to pause. Take an understanding of why am I reactionary and then express to her that this is making me feel comfortable because she's doing X.

How do I say that without passing blame? Like I always equate it to instead of pointing the finger, how can I better point the thumb, look internally as to what's happening with me?

But if there is something that she's doing in terms of parenting or in terms of how she's approaching a situation of her intonation. How do I reflect that without passing guilt till then it starts a war?

Yeah. Yeah. I like the pointing thumb thing. That's great. It's sort of you two have to have a framework that you both agree on is okay. Like it's okay to say, and this is the sentence stem I would use is when you, when you blank and we talk about behavior or action or inaction, I feel blank, right?

And so that basic sentence stem, we should both agree in our marriage that that's okay to say that. Because a lot of people don't agree and they just start communicating and then it starts to escalate and turn into blame and defend loop and now we're kind of lost.

But if we both agree like, hey, it's okay to say, yeah, when you raise your voice, I feel scared, for example. The other partner then has to learn how to receive what you just shared.

Sounds like you feel scared because I raised my voice. Did I get that right? Yes. You got it. Okay. It makes sense. And that's the validation part. I start, I, as a listener, I validate your feelings.

It makes sense that you feel scared because I, and then I own, I did raise my voice. And then the other person just, their nervous system just completely lets down because you're taking responsibility for your behavior and you're validating their feelings.

And just those two moves alone move mountains. So pause, acknowledge, validate. So I try to ignorate that, but then what if the pushback remains is, so yelling, let's look at yelling, I guess, because that's a perfect example, because I have two non-negotiables.

One is with nutrition, given what my life is, my career, and then second is yelling. I don't tolerate yelling. And I understand kinds of danger, perhaps it's essential, but apart from that, I think We live very reactionary lives.

I was fortunately taught as a young kid, life is 10% action, 90% reaction. And we control that effectively, right? So we're living these constant reactionary lives.

And I think Derek Silver put it best, it's like the first reaction is not interesting, not even the second.

Repairing Conflict in Relationships

It's usually the third and fourth, which you elegantly said is when you pause, you're able to kind of experience and identify those feelings with certain adjectives.

So if she's now yelling and then says, yes, okay, I acknowledge, I validate, but I'm doing this because you're doing this, right? It becomes again, this finger pointing.

How do we… Yeah, so like you be your wife for a minute and I'll role model how to respond. So what might she say back to me? So she'll say like, why are you always putting this here?

Yeah. Well, hang on, honey. Remember we agreed to, and we have to have an agreement. We agreed to no yelling. And then yelling is a tricky one because it's subjective.

How you experience yelling and how she experienced yelling is, it might be just that you raised your voice slightly and to her it's yelling or vice versa.

So that's a tricky one, but we can, like the couple needs to orient around each person's sensitivities. Like, Hey, can we both have my back around how sensitive I am about voice intonation?

That would be really cool. Can you try to have my back there and know that if you hit a certain decibel over here, I get blown out. And then I can't be responsive or sensitive to you.

And so can we, what are we going to do about this, right? The couple has to navigate this together outside of a conflict, right? They're doing this, you know, they're brainstorming in a huddle kind of thing.

But in that moment, I want to comment on the yelling, hey, we agreed. Can we just take a breath here? I really want to hear what you have to say, honey.

It sounds like you have a concern about where I left something or the cleanliness of the house, or did I get that right? And I would just reflect back like, okay, I'm trying to look for what are you upset about?

What is it that I did that you're so pissed about? And ideally, she'll be able to tell me what I did. And then I want to say, yep, I did that or a version of that, right?

And it makes sense that that's activating to you. Like you have a thing with tone of voice, she has a thing with like where you put stuff or whatever, right?

We have to navigate that together though. how much of it to going back to the trauma component and healing ourselves first, how much of that is still unresolved or driving that?

I mean, I know difficult to answer directly, but I see this. Say, let's say another example is a perhaps one that you may get all the time. If a spouse or partner has cheated in the past and maybe Um, they work through that marriage has improved.

Um, but it's still brought up. Yeah. There's been forgiveness. The couple has worked through that because I see that in practice too. Uh, how to me there, if that's still brought up, then is it, is that person, has they really forgive them or is it kind of like forgive, but you haven't forgot and there's still deep wounds that has broken the nation or the trust.

Well, there's layers here, right? Betrayal is a big one and the human nervous system doesn't just get over betrayal based on some skillful words, right?

It's sometimes a many year. many month process that's very like, you know, you're done with the repair process of a betrayal like that when the nervous system feels safe again and can trust and open and relax.

And you might cognitively have forgiven or think it's all done because you did all the things you went to therapy and you did all the things, but the nervous system is still kind of hijacked.

That's that, that just says you're not done. And affairs, cheating, et cetera, leave really long lasting scars. I mean, it just so impacts trust. And then let's say it was from a previous marriage or your childhood.

There was a betrayal in your childhood. It sometimes will tap into that older unresolved trauma like you were pointing out. And then it's again layered where, okay, now I have this thing between you and me, but I've also got this thing that's now activated between me and my mom or me and whatever happened to me 20 years ago.

That's what's so brilliant about the body. It just doesn't forget. And we, if we really want to work through this, again, we want to take the team approach and work through it together and like do whatever we can to heal, you know?

And then there's always, as you know, strengthening opportunities here if we choose to really co-heal together and navigate this and just stay in the fire and, um, and not get impatient and be like, Oh, we already talked about this and eye rolling and like, why are you over this?

Like that's not going to go anywhere. Right. We've got to be really humble to the nervous system and how it operates and just bow down to like, okay, there's a, there's a process here and we're going to take our time and get through this.

Cause I care about you. Yeah. I always say, uh, every day that we can only heal the speed of our nervous system. Uh, and so if that's impacted, obviously there's, there's work that needs to be done.

I think you said that so beautifully there. If there's still a reaction, then there isn't a full transformation. In terms of trust and trying to repair that trust, what exercises, if you will, or trust-building activities do you suggest that one can do within not only couples but let's say siblings or friends?

Or business partners or whatever. Yeah. Yeah. Well, again, very first step is always do two people want to repair this and are they fully committed to repairing it?

Because sometimes a person's like, well, you did this to me and now I'm one foot in, one foot out, and I'm not sure. And then that's just, sorry, that's not going to net the same result.

It's like a person being half committed to their health, right? It's just like, are you going to get anywhere with that? So full commitment, both people.

And then it's like, it's really the repair process that I teach that I wrote a whole book on is quite straightforward. It's hard to do when you're activated, but it's really the four things.

And I mentioned three of them a minute ago. It's we want to reflect back always like the other person's reality, even if we disagree with it. So we're going to reflect that.

So you saw it like this. I did this thing. Did I get that right? Yes. Then we validate the feeling. You feel betrayed. And then we say, that makes sense.

Your feelings make sense because I did betray you. You know, I did the thing. I cheated on you or I hurt you or whatever. And then the last one is the hardest for me personally, and I see it being really hard for most people is empathy.

Consistent, just relentless empathy. And empathy to me means not only am I putting myself in their shoes of, God, that must have been so crushing for them, but I want to empathize with how scared they are and what they go through on a day-to-day basis and how they have now, their brain literally in a fair, like for example, really shatters the brain and the memory of the person and they have to rebuild it in their brain.

And it's not easy to do. So empathy is like, I care about you, showing care and consistently and demonstrating I'm interested in you, setting my own impatience aside, my own needs even sometimes to just fucking be there.

And so to review, right? Reflect back, validate, own, empathize. And no matter the scale of the injury, if you do those four things really well and you're both doing them, really well, I think you can get through just about anything.

What if we're doing all four things, say someone is working through that and the other individual has an expectation of what that outcome perhaps maybe should look like or what things should be like for the other individual?

Right. Perhaps again, maybe there is some unresolved trauma. I can go back to that or for sure maybe agnostic of that trauma. They have a certain expectation of how someone should show up or how someone should act.

Can one now dissolve that expectation? Because let's say if the individual doesn't see maybe ideal eye, it's like agree to disagree, or maybe that's a fallacy.

I don't know. We can unpack that. They're not willing to adopt that level of expectation or outcome. They don't see that that's how things should be. In terms of, let's take parenting as an example, right?

Yeah. Moms are often, I hear this within our clinic, so moms often are very helicopter. Dads are very much kind of stand behind the curtain. And sometimes mom will say, you know, Well, I just wish my husband would be more X.

He would be more active or engaging, whatever I am doing. It's kind of this self-centered viewpoint of how reality should unfold. How do you navigate that dynamic?

Well, it depends on where the husband, if we take the parenting example, where the husband's at in his development. So an immature, underdeveloped man will get defensive and reactive with that kind of feedback.

Trust, Betrayal, and Healing

A mature, developing man who's on the path will really try to understand what the… Wait, hold on, honey. So you're wanting me to do it like this? or that.

So instead of defensiveness, he brings curiosity and interest and actually gives a shit about her feelings and her experience. And he's open to feedback.

Of course, why would I be a co-parent that's not open to feedback? That sucks, right? So, and ideally, she's the same way. She's open to feedback. She's receptive.

She's curious and interested in how he would like it done. And that tension of hands-off and hands-on is classic, you know, co-parenting dynamic that actually has that diversity of approach, has tons of strengths to it if we allow it to be there.

But if the hands-on person thinks the hands-off person needs to be more hands-on or the hands-on person, hands-off person thinks the hands-on person needs to be more hands-off, Like so many partners get into you need to change and do it like me and do life like I do it and parent like I parent and that's just not going to go anywhere.

The other person is going to feel judged and criticized and going to shut down. And then there are two parents like on their separate islands doing it their way out of kind of resentment and don't tell your mom I'm doing this and don't tell your dad and And then disagree to disagree is definitely like a losing game.

I don't recommend that as a bar by any means. So again, we're a team. How do we want to raise our kids? I see you're bringing amazing strengths. I see I'm bringing amazing strengths.

We both have weaknesses. Let's talk about those and let's do this in a way that is really generative and good for our family. And let's learn how to be a team, even when I'm having a hard time with the way you do it.

I want to learn to see the value of that rather than ask you to change. Yeah, so I think that kind of direction is better. And it seems like it just starts with, again, those four principles, but also healthy communication.

So the openness to have that uncomfortable conversation and understanding that we can focus on strengths. We are a team. We want a beneficial outcome.

Let's figure out how we can do it together. That's right. Yeah. If you and I go into business together and I'm now your business partner and I just sat on my ass and folded my arms and was not open to feedback, how's that business going to go?

It's not going to go anywhere. you're going to resent the shit out of me and we're eventually going to have a falling out. So we need to choose our teammate wisely and choose people that are, you know, receptive, curious, open, interested, want to become a good teammate.

And a lot of people, of course, don't choose that and then it turns hard. What are some key components or let's say maybe if we can identify certain words around what makes a healthy partnership in terms of business or in terms of any dynamic, father to son, spouse to husband.

What are some key kind of ingredients, maybe non-negotiable ingredients for you to make it successful? Yeah, a lot to say here, but I'll keep it short.

There's four needs you could call them that are biopsychosocial needs that Dr. Dan Siegel introduced me to that I've adapted a little bit. And it's we want to have the other person feel in their perception, not in ours, in their perception, four things, safe, seen, soothed, and supported.

And then I add challenged because it's good to challenge the people we love. They're all four assets, super easy to remember, safe, seen, soothed, supported.

Why would I be in a marriage or a business partnership where I don't feel emotionally safe to express my emotions, where I don't feel seen and gotten for unknown, for the real me inside?

Soothe just means we repair every single conflict that comes up and we know how to do that. And supported means like, yeah, I feel like my partner, business partner, actual partner, parent, if I'm a child, has my back.

And these go both directions in adult eye level relationships. Parent-child, the parent does this for the child, the child does not do this for the parent because the child's a child.

It's not a child's job to try to meet the needs of the parent. It's only the parent's job for 18 years plus to meet the needs of the child, period. And so they're unidirectional, parent to child, bidirectional, adult to adult.

Are we imposing then if we're asking the child to meet the needs of the parent? Yeah, we're imposing, we're creating a tremendous amount of little t-trauma that is going to fuck them up for a long time when we ask little kids to take care of big people.

It's just completely inappropriate. So I guess maybe in terms of, let's say, discipline, right? Maybe not in terms of like trying to take care of such, but chores as an example.

Yeah. Or just chores, let's say, around education. Like you got to do your homework, things like that. In terms of discipline, is that still an imposition?

No, I mean, parents get to choose whatever discipline, but I mean, in 16 years, I've not once have I disciplined my kids. because we value the connection.

Connection before correction is we have a relationship where I, you feel safe, seen, soothed, supported by me as a child. And so when I tell you to do chores, mow the lawn or pick up after yourself or clean your room or whatever, and you throw a fit, I know I have the skills to validate your feelings, hear you out.

You get to express yourself and our family like totally cool. And the lawnmower's in the garage. You can do it right now or you can do it in an hour. It's up to you.

You know, this is how we roll here. I'm training you child to be ready for adulthood. And that's my job to get you ready to become like a functioning citizen of this world, not a person who's going to sit on their ass and blame other people and doesn't pull their weight on teams.

And, you know, that's like an awesome human to be around.

Parenting, Discipline, and Rewards

So the parent's job is to like sculpt that kid into that while also honoring who the child is, not, you know, turning them into a robot or something. How much danger are we doing for our kids if we're constantly leading with the carrot or maybe not?

And I see kind of a little bit older than my kids. The younger generation I feel are often entitled and it's almost reluctant anything now without a specific level of compensation and like little work to high reward.

Kind of that same generation about working hard, but regardless is, um, I saw this kind of the other day. So if we're providing this reward paradigm of like, Oh, you, you need to do this.

You need to sit still. I'll give you kind of this for doing it. How dangerous is that? Or how are we setting our children up for the future generation for failure when we're.

instilling kind of this, that reward dynamic. Yeah. Yeah. I mean, I'm just going to be honest. It's a terrible approach. Fear and bribes are the worst parenting techniques.

Fear is, if you don't do that, I'm going to hit you or hurt you or take this thing away. Bribes are, I'll give you the iPad or social media, or I'll give you sugar or anything dopaminergic.

Like that's low-hanging fruit that parents use all the time who are who are really overwhelmed and under-resourced. And look, I make a distinction here between privileged parents and under-privileged parents.

Under-privileged parents, a single mom parenting three people. It's like, I'm not going to criticize that behavior. But privileged parents who have resources, it's like, come on, you got to get more creative than bribes and fear.

And it's okay to have rewards occasionally, for sure. Like mow the lawn, you get 20 bucks or whatever. But cleaning room and doing dishes, I need to give you something.

It's like, no, there's just basic expectations in this family of you pulling the weight. And the older you get, the more freedom you get, but the more responsibility you get.

And we're gonna, cause that's life. Again, we're training, this is in a larger context of we're training kids to be prepared to be a functioning member of society.

And out in the world, you don't, there's not a carrot for everything you do. Like you said, that's, and that just breeds entitlement. I'm not, I'm going to sit here until someone gives me some dopamine and then I'll do it.

It's like, uh, you know, parents have to see right through that. And when we talk about it, it's like, duh. But unfortunately, many privileged parents still do it.

Say a kid is having, because they didn't get something or they're upset about something and now a parent is trying to calm that child down. I know you mentioned dopamine.

How toxic is it to provide a device, computer, tablet, phone, et cetera, at a young age or I don't know, maybe at any age, certainly anything under 18, how toxic does that become to either kind of quiet down a kid or provide the child who's seeking for that dopamine hit when you're on a plane or something or when parents are out to eat and they just want, okay, here you go, kids.

So that the parents can enjoy and the kids are now kind of just glued to that contraption. Yeah, again, I have strong opinions here. So the risk of offending people, I think it's not cool.

I think it sets up so many problems on so many levels. And first of all, I'm with Jonathan Haidt's work around like no smartphones until 13 or 14, no social media until 16. I just think more and more families are adopting that because so many families get into big wars with their kids around the iPad or phones.

social media because kids are getting jacked up and the research is really clear, especially young girls, what social media in particular is doing to kids.

So I'm just a huge no. We did that pretty well, I think, in our family. Our kids, my son didn't get a phone until he got a pinwheel phone, which is just a text phone when he was 13. Didn't get social media until 16 with high, high restrictions.

But when parents do that, it's like handing a kid a pacifier. It's lazy parenting. It's like, I don't want to learn how to be with my kids' pain. I don't want to learn how to validate their feelings.

I don't want to learn anything. So here, here's the pacifier. You go over there and be quiet so I can enjoy my dinner. I can enjoy the plane. I'm not judged by all the other passengers with a crying kid that looks incompetent.

It's just like, be the incompetent parent that's like, yeah, my kid is screaming on the plane. That's me. And I'm not going to give them a fucking phone.

Nope. I'm going to just walk up and down the aisle and we're going to figure it out. And you guys are all going to judge me and that's okay. You know, parents are not resilient.

Parents are entitled. Like, handing kids phones is like medication, basically, because parents ineptitude and they don't want a deal. Let's take that one step further.

And so, because of this idea of restraint, right? If something is prohibited, it becomes taboo. We almost want it more. Yeah. Did you find that within your children?

Like if they had, you know, first the pin phone, then you had extreme restrictions when they're exposed to it. So I see this as an example, like in Europe, the drinking age is a lot lower and it's just endemic where you'll have a glass of wine growing up with your parents.

Let's say we're found in Italy. Here is when kids turn 21, you're ending up in the hospital because you're taking 21 shots. So when you restrict something, then someone is almost seeking that out even more.

Did you find that typical with your children or with other parents in general? Yeah, we didn't find that at all. And I think it has everything to do with the culture you build as a family.

And if the culture is what I call relational or it's connection centric, it's like we value the individual for who they are and we were like trying to get them and see them.

And that takes a high level of attunement and care and presence that a lot of parents are too overwhelmed to do. And so then if I'm kind of a one foot in, one foot out parent, of course, every parent loves their kids like, you know, so much.

But not every parent's willing to get on the ground and play with their kid. A lot of parents are staring at their phones themselves. Too busy when the kids are like, hey, can we go outside and play?

Parents are setting up like it's a like video games and phone is the way to connect with the world instead of no, go outside and play out in the street, like go figure it out.

You know, we've forgotten how to like allow our kids to play outside in nature or just in the street or yard. And I think there's a, again, creates big downstream problems that then set up, yeah, this thing of like, it's so forbidden.

I want it so bad. Why would you want something so bad? It's because you don't see value in the connection with your parents. You don't get nourished by that.

You think the nourishment is over on the phone because you're not getting nourished emotionally, psychologically, relationally, spiritually with your parents.

And that's again on the parents because they're not setting up that environment. I almost find the more privileged, the more disconnected, like the bigger wall we build and the impact of socialization becomes less, unfortunately.

Within our neighborhood, we see less kids outside as an example of modern technology, which does have some advantages. But needless to say, it's like we're becoming less connected, less mentally healthy, and unfortunately, just in general, more sick.

But going back to the relationship culture, I definitely want to unpack that because this is something that has been burning inside me for over a decade now.

And so I saw this early on in my practice here. And I thought maybe this was just a microcosm of culture and the marriage dynamic locally, but I would have estimated that nine out of every 10 couples that I worked with were unhappy in their marriage.

Yeah. Um, this is, was at a time, you know, when I was going to, uh, just starting that journey, you know, as a new married couple, you're super exciting.

Like what's going on here. And then years down the line, you see it now in your, in your circle of friends too. And I was like, okay, yeah, what we're doing.

backwards, right? This institution of marriage, this kind of epitome or zenith of success where you get a home and married and kids, kids are a blessing certainly, but regarding institution of marriage, like is everything that we're doing backwards, is it incongruent with our evolutionary biology?

And it started, I started asking those questions because why are nine out of 10 people unhappy? And so what I surmised at the time, You had those, those four principles and then you said the last one was challenge.

And what I found is that even in the course of my personal journey, uh, and often similar with others is you'll see one, one individual kind of stuck in, in how they were when they got married 10, 20, it's whatever years ago.

And then you have the individual who's, who's wanting constant growth. And it's almost like in the past begin to slowly diverge and then cracks into grow.

Um, I guess let's discuss your thoughts on kind of reflecting on, you know, marriage, the institution of marriage, how, cause I, when I heard you talk in some previous conversations, I know you'd have some deep strong beliefs as well.

Yeah, I mean, I think you're right though. I'm with you on this marriage as an institution is like, why do so many people buy into this with so much such a high failure rate, right?

Technology, Phones, and Family Culture

And evolutionarily, we were more like aloe parenting and parenting where with the group and very relational and kids, adults, a lot of adults being tuned into child, not just one adult or two.

I mean, it's just a bummer because we're now in our homes in these big boxes, apart from everyone else not sharing the load. And it's so much to parent children in a good way.

And it falls on often one of two people, if they're still married, it's still in a traditional setup. The woman is still tracking the kids way more than the man.

And the man is out quote providing or whatever. You know, that's, not a lot of people can do that well. And have their kids be awesome and just be loving the experience.

It becomes a struggle fest. And if, like you said, if one person's like, okay, I don't like how this is going. I want to work on this. And the other person's kind of a, you know, dead weight, so to speak, or just, they're just like not interested.

That creates its own problem. And then, you know, we drift and the years go by and then we wait till the kids are out of the house and then we get a divorce.

You know, this kind of move is really common, but my challenge to everybody in that scenario is, you know, have I tried everything to make this work? Have I studied relationships?

Have I picked up all the books, listened to the podcasts, self-reflected and looked in the mirror at my blind spots and blocks and the places where I'm actually not a great teammate?

And have I put effort into working on these areas? And to get a divorce after you've put a ton of effort into it, both of you, and it's still not working, that's a really different ending.

than people who haven't even tried. They haven't even gotten to the starting line to do the work. So I think a lot of people just aren't willing to do hard things.

You see that in your business all the time, right? I just couldn't agree more. Let's then, I guess, segue into what you're doing with the relationship school that you built and how you help individuals.

And you said it didn't exist, so you wanted to find something for yourself. Were you struggling with your marriage at the time? Is that kind of was a catalyst as well?

Or you just wanted to, you saw kind of similar, whatever it is, is failing. I think what the divorce rate here in the US is 50%, something like that. Yeah.

It just really calls into the question of what we're doing. And again, to me, it's just, when you said boxes, I say all the time, we go from one box to another box to another box, like from our home, from our offices, from the car in between.

And they're all just different sizes. I said all the time, I was like, I need to live in a circle where we're kind of tying a loop. And I see that often in European counterparts is everything is a community based.

If you look at the blue zones, people living along as community tribe is absolutely foundational. And that's the problem here is we're kind of these silos.

and we're trying to go about it on our own and we're only worse off because then we have no one to support us so I think the one component we said support as a key pillar it's lacking here but it's also endemic to our culture I think in many cultures overseas the nurse the word nursing home doesn't exist yeah a new concept but here it's it's unfortunately ubiquitous so How can we, like, what are some things that we can do to improve that?

Perhaps, I mean, that's what you're unpacking in your school, but that's what my curiosity was, like, how that comes full circle for you. Yeah, you're really right on there without observation.

There's a loneliness crisis of people feeling so alone and we're so connected on our devices, but we feel so alone and miserable. I think we're built for relationships, we're built to connect and to belong and to know how to do this, but we've forgotten.

how to do it. And so we get preoccupied, you know, I think the core problem of the human condition is disconnection and disconnection from self and disconnected from other people in a deep way.

Like we can all look, we can all act like we're connected, but that's very different than feeling and being connected, you know. And so, yeah, I mean, I started a school because I'm like, I want to give people this.

There's the skills you need to learn to have good relationships and they're learnable by pretty much anybody because we're not taught. We're just downloaded whatever we got by the big people in our family for 18 years.

And often it's inadequate. to be awesome in this area of our life. So we gotta learn, just build skills. But then there's this other bigger thing you're speaking to, which is how are we setting up our lives?

Are we setting up our lives in our homes and our communities in such a way that are relationship-centric, are really where we can ask for help and get it and feel like we belong, like really belong.

I'm just taking my crack at it and I want to live a long time with my wife and I know that having really good relationships is a part of longevity. My wife's been preaching that for a while now, that the better our relationships are and the deeper they are and the more authentic they are, the more fulfilling they are.

that's going to be a positive marker of our health, right? And it's going to reduce inflammation and we're going to like, just feel better, feel more alive and connected.

So, yeah. Monogamy. Yeah. Are we designed for monogamy? Cause I know, um, certainly in this social media era, I think that once upon a time, you know, people don't have access, you, you marry your spouse and you didn't have access to meeting someone new.

Um, or at least seeing someone with such, whether it's dating sites, things like that. Um, are, are, are we doing again, is that. endemic to our biology or?

Yeah. I mean, I wish my wife was here because she's like a complete nerd about the hunter gatherer societies and pre homo sapiens and just the evolutionary.

curve of how we are relationally.

Marriage, Loneliness, and Relationship Skills

And monogamy is a thing throughout history, but it's not the main thing. I like to see it as animal species. There's plenty of animal species that are monogamous and there's plenty that are not.

And so I wonder if we, some of us are monogamous more than others and some are just not, we're not built for it. And if we subordinate to that construct, we might run into a lot of problems because we're going against our nature.

But for other people, it's a good fit. Like for me, I'm pretty sure monogamy is a really good path for me. I really like the rigor of it, the spiritual path quality of it.

I like the, what it brings me in my life. I like the discipline. So it's making me a way better human. But I don't think it's for everybody. Help shed light on maybe some routine or rituals within your relationship that allows it to be successful.

Because you speak so fondly about kind of what you guys have been able to cultivate, which is admirable. What are some things that you guys do? Because I know what's crazy enough now is you've got to put sex on the calendar.

Yeah, right. I mean, it's just like dude. What are some like routines that partnerships should be kind of thinking about in order to optimize? Because I say this all the time, so let me preface just very, very briefly.

I look at our existence and especially as you continue to age, we often prioritize our career. It's an ambition that we want to fulfill our purpose. And so if I'm working, let's say just traditionally people working nine to five, and then after kids, you have activities.

Now you're picking up Johnny from soccer, you're dropping off Mallory at gymnastics. You get home, you're having dinner, then you're going to bed. How much time are you prioritizing your relationships?

To me, it's maybe an hour or two maximum if you're lucky often enough. And then we, why relationships are failing because we prioritize our career over our relationships.

Yeah. That's a direct correlation. So that's why then we have to plan a date that we have to plan dinners or intimacy. Is there other ways that we can be thinking about healthy relationships and constructing routines?

Yeah. Yeah. And that's a well set up there, how you just described the whole thing. I would add before I respond is, um, and if you add on to everything you just said that we have conflict that we can't figure out and we're not great, our communication starts to deteriorate and we go to our habits and we go to our corners of the house.

That is another factor that's going to make it hard to prioritize a relationship because we fight, we can't figure something out. We don't know how to get through hard things together.

We stopped having hard conversations years ago because they didn't go well. Right now you're dealing with a

couple that's just avoiding each other. So even harder to prioritize the relationship.

This is why you got to set it up super good from the start, you know, so you don't get in the weeds and then you're just climbing out of the quicksand and just how deep of a hole you get into.

Anyway, yeah, there's my wife and I, so we've been together 22 years, married 18 and We've gone through phases right of scheduled sex for example is one every Wednesday morning after the kids are dropped off at school We come back and you know, right and that worked for a little while until it didn't and so you have to be Adaptable into what's the new thing and it can't get like anything.

It can't get too rigid formulaic or automated or we start to check out or one of us at least is like not going to be satisfied. So then we have to change it up.

It's kind of like working out. You would never just do deadlifts your whole life. You would never just jog your whole life and expect to be quote healthy.

You got to have a diverse approach in my opinion. And so other things like date nights, weekly date nights, there's been phases where we nailed it for like a year.

And then other phases where we barely got to it once a quarter, depending on the age of the kids and the stress in our lives. So, you know, there's so many things.

A couple little things that have made the difference are every morning and every evening. So mornings, no matter what, no matter how disconnected we are, however big the fight was the day before, we hug.

Just a hug as a greeting that basically conveys care, even though I'm scared and threatened by you and pissed off at you, I'm still going to hug you and you're still going to hug me.

And we're going to take a breath together. Good morning. We're greeting each other. So that's one that has been probably one of the best things we've done for years.

And that's pretty much an every morning thing, four years. and then the evenings it's let's at least the very least turn and look at each other with the lights on in bed and put one hand on each other or that we're not feeling that just an acknowledgement of good night you know i hope you sleep well tonight and of course it can be any variation of that right it could be a hug it could be snuggling it could be skin time it could be a conversation whatever you great gratitudes whatever you do But those transition points of like waking up and going to bed, I think are really prime opportunities to say, just convey, I care about you, even though this is stressful or even though I'm upset.

So things like that, little things go a long way. Yeah. Connection. I think it's a simple hug, uh, floods the body with oxytocin, which is an element of, of euphoric naturally.

Right. So it's that to me was so elegant because it's so overlooked. And there was one thing, I think one of my mentors, um, that I follow, he said, anytime you're, you're angry or you guys are fighting, just go and hug the individual.

Because it's hard, like the brain, you cannot be simultaneously angry and happy. So that's absolutely brilliant. I want to be, I know, mindful of your time.

So a couple kind of last questions here. One of the individuals in my audience wanted to know what's your favorite relationship advice that you've ever received?

Hmm. It's probably the advice I now give, which is to prioritize getting good at repair. And repair just means cleaning up the mess in a good way that works for both of you, so you both feel good again.

And that means you got to listen, tell the other person Phil's understood. You got to do some things to make sure,

hey, we're okay. That was hard and we're okay now.

So prioritizing repair and most people don't, unfortunately don't know how to do that. And it's the hallmark sign of a secure relationship is the willingness and ability to do that.

If, say you're, you're the one really evaluating, able to kind of step back, evaluate, but somehow your partner is reluctant or not meeting somehow in the middle.

Is that when you have to call someone like you or some sort of a therapist to get involved? I guess the question is if someone's reluctant, like if the dinette is not maybe safe for them to do it at home, is that where then it has to escalate into a more kind of professional environment?

Yeah, yeah, probably.

Routines for Strong Partnerships

But I would start definitely try at home first and I would try with, let's have a conversation about the conversation, which is, hey, can we just talk about our relationship and where we're at?

Can we have a kind of a big picture meeting or a connection about that? And like being really honest, let's just, can we be full 10 transparency honest about how we're feeling here?

And then let's have a conversation about, do we want to do something about it? And then can we get clear on, do we want the same things? Do we want the same kind of relationship at this point?

So then we're zooming way out to talk about the relationship versus getting into the weeds of trying to figure something out when we're not even on the same page about the kind of relationship we want.

So I recommend that type of, and even if you go to couples coaching or therapy, you talk about that first because it's like, are we even doing this thing anymore?

Are we going to be a team here? And if so, we've got to do some things differently. I think the openness is critical because I've heard sometimes the individual responds that that's what friends are for.

They're reluctant to go pursue anything because they think everything's okay. The other partner is kind of screaming for help, but yet this individual just says, you know, I, I don't need to see a therapist.

That's what friends are for. Right. I don't recommend that. You want your partner to be the first person that hears about problems or the very second.

If you feel too scared, it's like they should be the second person to hear about the problems. This has been absolutely incredible. I hope that, um, our listeners are able to take away some actual items and, uh, otherwise, uh, tell me more, I guess, where they can find you or if you know, they're looking for professional advice, help, et cetera.

Um, how can they kind of get in touch with you or where do you suggest they start? Yeah, RelationshipSchool.com is a good general place to find me and courses and different things, our podcasts.

Or you can find me on Instagram at Jason Gaddis. That's Jason with a Y. That's where I found you in some of your just brilliant work and, and monologues have been transformation for me.

So when you said earlier, you know, I'm going to offend people. I think that's also necessary, right? Until sometimes it's just your, I think you feel you have very strong held beliefs, but to me, I resonate in regards and I appreciate kind of the tactics that you unpacked today in today's conversation.

Last question is if you had any superpower or you could have any superpower, what would it be? I mean, flying is always my favorite thing, but I would put an asterisk by it and say, I'd want my family to be also flying with me so we could go cool places together.

Again, connection. We're stronger as a tribe. Thank you for joining us today and sharing your wisdom on relationships and how that deeply influences our health and longevity, our partners.

are the choice at least for our partners are probably the most important decisions we make. I certainly see that in my life and within our patient population here and just in general.

And so what you're doing is incredible because I think you're really setting up people for success. It's essential, I think. And I guess I'm curious really quick, if you have just another 30 seconds, how did you decide on your partner?

Um, I mean, it's a long story. It was like a hell Mary. Um, I broke up with her twice and she left the door like barely cracked open for me is, and I got really clear that I, I didn't want to lose her.

Closing Advice and Farewell

Um, there's a longer story there, but, um, yeah, I, I wanted someone who was just a woman and who was growth oriented and she was that and more. We'll have to do round two then.

So you really underscored today that healing has to start from within. I definitely see that. So again, I certainly appreciate your time. Anything else you want to leave for our audience today?

No, man. Just thanks for being a stand for our health. Really appreciate it. I look forward to meeting in the flesh at some point in the future, if I can make it to Colorado, otherwise the doors always open here in Chicago, but this was certainly awesome.

Again, it's a pure privilege and I appreciate your time today and look forward to round two in the future. Thanks for listening, everybody. Thank you for tuning in to the TBD Fit Podcast on Dr.

Talks, where we unpack all things health and longevity. If you enjoy the show, like, review, and subscribe. This allows us to have a greater reach and help others on their health and wellness journey.