

THE UGLY TRUTH

*We
develop a passion
for Teaching!*



[Music] hello and welcome
back to dream girl I'm
Sheen your host and today
we're joined by a guest that
I've been trying to get on the
show for the past 3 years so
I'm
super excited to welcome Dr
Sela AFI who is a clinical
psychologist a mother of
four and also an entrepreneur
she runs the lighthouse
Arabia and she's also a mental
health Champion hello Sela
how
are you thank you Sheen
thank you for having me I'm
super excited for today so

how have you been end of
year what are
The Vibes it's been okay it's
it's intense right now it's um
lots and lots
of mixed feelings a lot of pain
a lot of sadness a lot of
gratitude a lot of love
so lots of heart opening
experiences and feelings yeah
I feel like 2024 has
been intense for everybody
but what advice do you have
for us in terms of
what is the best way to wrap
up the year in terms of you
know our mental health how
to compartmentalize and how

to
process everything that has
happened and be ready for
2025 well we're getting right
into
it I think it really depends on
what you are holding right
now I think the word
you used is a good one
compartmentalizing tie
trading don't try
to do everything all at once
this is a time when a lot of
people are around
family For Better or For
Worse it can bring up a lot of
different feelings you
can be quite triggered even

though you love them so much and so that requires a lot of energy and so what I would say is you can put things away and tend to other things that are in front of you right now so you can show up in your best way I would also say be very uh preemptive when it comes to grounding and also when you're done with whatever encounter you have whether it's with your family or friends or a loud party or a big Gathering I would say resource up before that so do some

grounding and centering
before that and then also do it
after that and and know that
you are
holding grief and if it
becomes too much give
yourself permission to put it
away
and and or talk to a
professional or or join a
support group where you
know
you're honoring it you're
showing up for it um but it is
not coming there in
front of you all the time we're
always holding it in our heart
and I think this is where what

a lot of people have been
struggling with right now that
there is so much pain inside
of me there is so much
sadness how do I show up for
the

joy and I think you must hold
both of these together you
must hold the joy and
the Gratitude alongside of the
grief which makes the grief
more bearable so

make sure that you make
space for all of these different
experiences and emotions that
show up during this time yeah
that

makes a lot of sense and

honestly I love your voice by
the way I just wanted to tell
you you have such a soothing
voice and when you're talking
about all of

these things I just get carried
away listening to you and I
need to remember I need to
ask

questions so s I'm going to
take you a few steps back
now so tell us what got you
onto this journey of you know
um

being becoming a
psychologist and everything
what what brought you here
you know it's actually a really

windy
road I am just genuinely a
very curious person and when
I first took a
psychology course which was
in my undergraduate program
at University of Michigan in
an arbor I hated it I hated
it I was like there's no way
I'm taking another psychology
course ever again and
when I was younger I wanted
to do what my father did I
wanted to go in an
international business it was
sexy I was
going to travel it was going to
be one of those jobs that I was

going to do so I was just sort
of geared into okay this
is a person I look up to and
this is what he does and you
know my Dean in
high school told me that you
could sell ice to an Eskimo
and I was like okay well
maybe I would be good in
sales or I
would be good in business um
and so then I but I didn't
pursue it in my under
graduate I just was
completely turned off by it
and I
pursued my degree in cultural
anthropology and

communication which was
journalism like a mass
communications with an
emphasis on journalism and I
didn't literally had no idea but
those

were the classes that were
interesting and so I declared
my major and that was that
and then I did my first job in
a

marketing firm and just as it
happens with me very
suddenly

one day the sky opened up
and the lightning bolt literally
felt like it hit me on the head
where I was like hold

on a minute am I going to be
doing this for the rest of my
life like that sounds like a
really long time to be doing
this

and what meaning will I get if
I am a marketer which is to
sell things to

people that they don't need
and that was what I was doing
and my definition of

marketing was quite narrow
at that time remember I'm just
20 something at the early 20s
so I said nope I'm not going
to do this anymore and I
walked out of there and I
walked into my boss's office

and I said I quit and he was
like what and you know he
was he was looking for
me to be this kind of rising
star within the company I said
nope I'm going to go be a
dentist cuz I like to make
people
smile I swear this is a true
story and so I joined in like a
pre- dental kind
of take the courses and the
chemistry and the organic
chemistry and I remember
sitting in that class and saying
there's no way I'm doing this
for like the next four years of
my life letters should

make words which make
sense to me rather than these
things that I was seeing so I
was like nope I'm not going to
do that

so I drop out of that program
and I really went to my older
sister and I said I don't know

what to do with my
life and she said what do you
love I said I love people I

love caring for
people I got nominated most
caring person in my high
school class Senior High
School class um I like I like
people I like stories which is
why I went into cultural

anthropology also like
reading about cultures reading
about people reading their
stories and she said okay well
why don't you be a
psychologist and I was like
hm that

sounds like a good idea it's
good that I have a very short-
term like memory when it
comes to like oh I hated
psychology

so I didn't do that but then I I
was like actually that's a good
idea and so I took my courses

I entered a master's
program then I went on to do
my doctorate and I've always

given myself
permission that if I get bored
and everyone knows it too by
the way everyone in my
family like holds on
wondering okay when is she
going to quit and go do
something else but if I get
bored I'll quit and I'll go do
something
else and so I never took my
path very seriously and now
I'm 20 years in yeah
and uh since the first ever
master's class that I took and I
still love it
I'm still studying so I am still
in you know I'm going to UC

Berkeley once a month I'm in
Switzerland three times a
year um so deep in studying
at this time but um when I
decide that I don't want
to do this anymore I'll
probably not but it hasn't
happened yet okay I love this
we have so much in
common because I also have
had the weirdest squiggly
career and this is the term that
they give us now by the way
oh

really yeah they call it the
squiggly career um because I
I actually have a PhD as well
in spinal research oh wow

yeah so I also started off as an
engineer then went to do a
PhD in spinal research then
went into becoming a
consultant and then left that
went into Tech startup and
then left that and now I teach
I'm a professor but I also do
the podcast wow so same
we've switched a lot and you
know one question I get all
the time and I would love for
you to
answer as well is I feel like
for us we are always
optimizing for happiness
right what makes us happy so
if something is not serving

that we have the courage in as
you said not taking it
too seriously and move on to
the next but a lot of people
don't feel that way and that's
why a lot of people are stuck
in jobs that they hate or
relationships that they hate or
a course that they hate so
what advice do you have on
how
to make that decision bravely
to Pivot I think a lot of people
are in situations
maybe because they don't
have another option also so I
think it is a privilege
it is a privilege to be able to

Pivot not everybody has that
they have kids to
feed or people to look after or
they have to pay the bills and
I would so I
see that as a privilege and I
think that if people are in a
position where maybe
they can't leave a relationship
because they're financially
dependent on the person I
would I would not I'm
not speaking to those people
I'm right in this answer uh I
think those people
have a different set of things
that they have to tend to and
they have a different reality to

the one that I had
I had very supportive and
very stressed out parents very
supportive and they
didn't understand me but they
were able to financially
support that
decision um I also am able-
bodied mhm I was able you
know physically I was able
to do what I wanted to do
mentally I was able to do
what I wanted to do so um I I
thank God for that privilege
having said that there are
some people who I think take
themselves too seriously and
say

well I've invested five years
into this and oh my gosh it's
going to take me
nine years to get another
degree or four years to get
another degree and I don't and
so I think if you look at at the
whole chunk of what is
needed for you to Pivot you're
never going to change but if
you just see that it's day by
day bit
by bit you you just have to
start and when you start the
whole universe will
conspire and support you in
that direction so for me I don't
know what

word you use I think you said
emotional or what did you
call it we we are too
emotional or we we look for
happiness

yeah optimiz for happiness I
don't know if I'm optimizing
for happiness I actually feel
like I don't have a choice
it really feels um like I'm
possessed in some way when
or completely disengaged
so I'm really um attuned to
my spirit and I have a very
loud spirit and I know
it sounds a bit esoteric but I
am a very spirited person
where the spirit is

louder than my mind and
when it says you're done like
you can try to convince
it you can try to manipulate it
it's just not going to engage
and it with it
withdraws all it withdraws all
approval and then I'll go into
a depression and
then it's like now go work
with this dep and so it's like I
can't move I have no other
choice but than to quit I have
no
other choice than to leave and
so for me me and my spirit
we have a very
complicated relationship

because it makes me crazy
sometimes um in the things it
asks me to do uh but
I've now realized that I submit
to the spirit and I don't argue
with it very
much when it says go I say
okay fine you'll find a way for
me to figure it
out and I have a lot of faith in
my spirit it'll find a way can
you tell me a little bit more
about the spirit is
that what we also call a gut
feeling I think so I it shows
up like a gut
feeling it may show up as
intuition you have a sense but

my sense is just very
big it's not just a gut feeling it
becomes like an overall head
to toe

feeling oh wow so it's a very
big like it takes full command
and um and it's

become bigger and bigger the
more I acknowledged its
presence because that I
I have a great ability to
recognize patterns and I
noticed what was happening
and every few years it caused
is chaos every few years it
challenges me to go go to the
next level or go learn
something new or go you

know try

something different so every
few years it makes me pivot
in a in a way where so

I I noticed that I have a
pattern also like four to five
years there's going to be some
some chaos that's going to
happen um but yeah I I do
think that if people start to
meditate and still

themselves and really connect
to that inner voice we all have

an inner guide a
diamond as um it has been
called a genius um as it has
been called we all

have like an inner genius an
inner guide I'm I just
commune with that inner
guide
quite a lot we do this life
together I like that I like that
and as you said
like if there's too much pull
and push that's when you're
not happy either so it's better
to just let them guide and
see what happens and I trust it
now sometimes I was like you
know but I trust that it's very
value centered it's
not going to make me go and
like you know abandon my
life and my kids and my

family and go it doesn't do
things like
this but it does say take this
course and it's like how am I
going to do that I have four
kids and my parents live
with me my in-laws live with
me like how am I going to
take this course how I how
am I going to do this once a
month I
have to fly to California what
am i h and it's just like just do
it and then I'll be like well I'll
think about it
and then I'll dream about it
and then I'll be thinking about
it and then I open a magazine

and it's there and then
I check my email and they've
sent me you know so all of a
sudden I'm like okay fine and
then you know I'm already
five

months in and I you don't
even and another four months
and I'll be done you know so
like it's sometimes we we we
make a bigger deal about
pursuing our goals day by day
it doesn't take that long yeah I
think if you set your mind
to something you can find a
way to do it or your heart or
your heart or your spirit the
spirit will handle it yeah

yeah know I love that but
now that you mentioned you
know how um of course you
have your work your career
you have a
family of four you have your
parents and your in-laws that
live with you plus you're
studying the the one question
I
have is I think a lot of young
professionals are also
struggling with
that balance of how do we
make everything how do we
kind of like show up for each
aspect of your life and what
advice do you have for them I

would say absolutely in
a in a obsessive way schedule
everything

and I know some people are
like well what about
spontaneity schedule it
schedule the spontaneity and
there are open gaps in
my schedule where I'm like
I'm not really sure what's
going to show up and I think
the more children you have or
the higher up you go when it
comes to responsibility in like
a company you need to leave
more white spaces cuz
crisis will show up and you
will be asked and then you

you'll be really pressured so
leave gaps in your schedule
where there's white spaces but
schedule everything if I have
to a call and I'm
in the back of a car I'm going
to you know make sure that
that's scheduled if I have to
wash my hair that's going to
be scheduled if I have to hang
out with my children that's
going to be scheduled if I'm
doing lunch with with my
family
that's going to be scheduled
like every move I make is
scheduled and you'd be
surprised how much time you

actually
have if you are intentional
with that time and there are
times where it's like the whole
day is without plan and I just
want to do whatever shows up
that day and usually that's
going to be on the weekend
and I try to be very protective
of that time and so if someone
says can you come do a
podcast on Sunday it's like no
that's really protected time so
what's going to show up for
my kids what's going to show
up for my husband family
that's Saturday and Sunday
but

the rest of the time um it's
pretty tightly scheduled and
and that allows me to
balance everything CU all
that I all that is important to
me is in that

schedule ask me what I'm
doing on January 25th I'll tell
you precisely what happen at
10:00 a.m. what's going
to happen that day and of
course I'm always fible and
oh we can't do it this
day we have to do it this day
okay um but when you have
everything else kind
of scheduled then it's easy to
be flexible on some

things having said that not
everything goes according to
schedule that's okay
make space for that flexibility
and then I would say um you
know manage the time
you spend on social media
that's a big like energy energy
drainer uh but not

Just Energy drainer it
consumes a lot of time be
very I'm on social media I
really appreciate social media
it has changed the world it
has changed opened our eyes
broken our hearts expanded
our
minds it has done that so I

really am quite grateful for
social media and we
have to use it in a way where
we are not neglecting our
priorities and for me
showing up in front of my
children my husband my
studying my reading those
things are really important to
me so once all of that is in I'm
going to have a little bit of
room where I engage with
social media but I do that also
very intentionally okay a lot
of things I
want to pull the threads here
but I guess the first thing I
want to ask though a lot of

times the conversation
we have around feminism or
the modern feminism um
understanding of it whether
we agree with it or not is that
do you think we're selling
women a lie when we tell
them they can have it all
or do you think it's very
manageable and is possible to
balance it all I mean you
clearly are but do you think it
comes
set a price well that's a tricky
question um
see I there's no clear answer
to that I think women

first need to figure out what
they want this is what I want
yes this is not what
my sister wants this this is not
what my elder sister wants
this is what I want
and it does come at a price
and you know it does extend
me beyond my daytoday like
I am there were times
there was no balance I had
zero social life at the you
know when I was starting
up the lighthouse and I was
new to this country and I had
three children under
four years old and I was a
single mother at that time and

so no there was no
balance in my life I was
obsessed with two things my
children and my work so
and and in there somewhere I
would find some time to sleep
you know so for me it
it did you know and
eventually that caught up with
me and I realized what
burnout means and I know
what being
completely exhausted means
and and I learned along the
way so I think the
most important thing is that
you have to figure out what
your all

is your all can be so different
and and when you say you
can have it all
what do you mean because if
you ask my friend or if you
ask my sister they have
it allh and that's their
definition of success so really
be very clear as to
what your definition is and
I'm I know that's evolved for
me and I know my energy as
I'm now approaching almost
50
years old like my energy is
different now and my
priorities are different now
I have elderly PL parents I

have children that need me a
lot more right now so I'm
pulling back on work I'm
still working I'm still learning
uh but I'm now more present
in this space so
it's constantly moving around
and saying what what do I
need to give my attention to
and how do I redefine that
and I
think that renegotiation
redefinition is really
important you cannot just say
well this is what I'm going to
do and then do that for the
next decade doesn't I mean it
didn't work for me that way

I'm constantly updating what that means what my all is changes yeah and yeah I think flexibility as you said is super key because we evolve as well as people right we we're constantly learning as earlier you were saying we're a different person than we were three years ago right so yes then our priorities change what we care about change so it's really important to keep evolving but now going back to what you said about social media I really liked uh the way you approach this topic of social

media and um I was reading
this
paper recently that said that
we will only find out the
actual impact of social media
in a few years we still
haven't reached like it hasn't
existed long enough for us to
know the long-term impact of
social media but even now so
for example I teach students
and I see how social media
has impacted impacted
them at that age early 20s
compared to what my early
20s was like you are
constantly bombarded with
everyone's

highlight reels of their life
right and you see the good
and the Great and the perfect
but you don't really see the
ugly and that leads to a lot of
you know the comparison
game sucks out the Joy
from everything and that's
also true for adulthood as well
so when you're a young
professional you start seeing
others

buying a car buying a house
and you don't know the rest of
their life but suddenly you
think you're running behind
based on that so how do you
see social media impacting

the mental health Arena
let's say especially for like
young people so my
kids didn't have social media
like my daughter just got it
and she probably doesn't
know what to do with it you
know

cuz she didn't have it in her
um her teenage years my son
has it only for
football but he's in a you
know in a boarding school
where he doesn't have access
to his phone till like 8:00 p.m.
and then he has to sleep at
9:30 so he doesn't have a lot
of time with it um but my

younger two children don't
have it and I feel quite
strongly about that I mean I
will I will send them to the
moon and I'm very okay with
that but I will not
let you get on social media
and this is how strongly I
literally had this conversation
with my son who was like oh
you you know you're easy um
I get what I want from you
and I said yeah I do say
yes a lot I I say yes to
anything really like they
wanted to go to my daughter
is
in California my other son is

in France like yes sure I'll say
it but I will not
let you get on social media
because I just know how that
warps your reality
and at that young age when
they don't have a fully
functioning frontal lobe um
they don't have their
executive functioning fully
formed yet they don't have
impulse control fully formed
yet
you give them this highly
addictive highly destabilizing
highly
consuming G app which
creates a a reality for them

which is not the reality in
which they will live
and that um can have a very
detrimental effects on a
young personality and a
young brain and and the
young personality which then
becomes
self-obsessed and becomes
well let me show you
everything there is to know
about me and
then becomes really um quite
consumed with will I get
liked will I get shared will
people follow me this this is
already a very uh fragile time
in a adolescent

in in in an in a child's life and
now you throw in the super
peer it's already
a time of peer pressure you
throw that into the mix and
when I say young I'm not
talking 13-year-old our
frontal lobe
doesn't fully formed and
personalities are still in shape
even till 23 24 right
so our identity formation task
is still very much on and in
our undergrad years
and when we enter the
workforce so it I I really think
um I don't need the

research I don't need the
research to tell you that this
ain't going to end well this is
going to go real bad guys I
don't need to I don't need the
research to convince me that
people are lonel
than they've ever been and
people don't have the social
skills to connect with each
other they get really and they
said
that you know even typical
children are showing atypical
kind of spectrum type of
social skills because they
don't know
how to m manage their

anxiety they don't know how
to have a difficult
conversation face to face they
don't know how to show up
and ask for what
they want because everything
has happened behind the
screen and a lot of that has
happened on social media so I
mean I there could be another
four hours and I could still be
talking about the effects but I
think um parents need to
do um some gatekeeping here
and I know a lot of parents
are like well everyone
has it well if that's the value
that you're going to raise your

children on everyone has it so
you should do it too
then they're going to grow up
and everyone has a Mercedes
and you should get one too
even though you can't afford
one so anchor yourself on the
values and
be don't be afraid to say no
it's a privilege it's not a right
it's a privilege to have social
media it's a
privilege to have a phone it's
not your god-given right um I
your I will your
rights are education and
having a roof over your head
I will give you these rights

but I don't have to give VI a phone or social media so um yeah really people need to take back their power and really have a very social media is not going anywhere and it's just going to get more and more intense we need to manage our relationship with it that's so interesting it's impressive that you've managed to get your kids off social media until you wanted them to get on because I think what a lot of young parents probably struggle with is but I don't know what they're doing when they're at school

they might be looking at
someone else's social Med
just like you did things when
you went to your friend
sleepover but they weren't
allowed in your house exact
and

as long as you create that
little bit of noise inside of
them that I'm doing
something wrong but if you
give them
permission then you've given
them permission yeah so am I
under any illusion that my
kids don't have access
to social media somewhere no
no I'm under No Illusion but

do they know
they're doing something
wrong when they do it yes
and so I need to create a little
bit of interference there mhm
and
for them to know that this is
not okay for them MH and
even when they grow older
they will know this is not
okay
for me because my
conditioning has been and
this is classical conditioning
by the way from Psych
Psychology 101 I have
conditioned that this is not
okay now I grew up in a

house where we had one TV
like many of us did and we
grew up
watching no TV I don't have
TV in my house I have one
TV and we watch Apple
TV but I don't have television
and I never did in the US I
never did during
my college Years we just
didn't grow up with TV so I
don't need TV yeah and I'd
much rather be sitting so it's
what did you grow up with
like I didn't grow up eating
um
eggplant so I can't eat
eggplant now it's what did

you get a flavor for in
your childhood that's the task
so I will not give you a flavor
for this and

eventually maybe one day
you will get on social media
and my daughter said what do
you think I need a handle
because

this is how we communicate
on the campus college
campus they don't say what's
your phone number they say
what's your

handle I was like oh okay so
they have handles and they
communicate on social
media so she started a social

media account she had two posts on there but this is how but she's not in the habit of it right now um and I think that that is my task as a mother I need to make sure you've got all the right habits so there's always something competing and I'm not going to give you full like free reign mhm yeah I like that because you don't miss what you've never had yeah so then as you said not having a TV

you're not going to miss having it so then it's easier to do but also touching on what

you said in terms of
validation

right when you were saying
they wanton the likes they
won the comments and then
they start putting out more
and more

just to go to see what other
people are getting likes on
and then you start everybody
start comparing and becoming
the same person and that's
also true as you grow up it
keeps happening and I keep
seeing it around me and I I
realized that as you said I
love that you said that that
we're really losing

the ability to make real
connections because now
there's so much oh but I
watched your story I know
what's
happening in your life I don't
really need to pick up the
phone and call you and say
how are you doing and I
actually
had a friend who I said oh I
haven't heard from you in a
long time and she said yeah
but I know what's happening
in
your life and I like but but we
have been connected and I
realize that now this is

building this false impression
that we know a lot of people
we have friends but loneliness
is there yeah but
how do you see do you see
this getting worse or do you
see us getting better at this
what do you think I think it
was
quite a few years ago where
the Surgeon General in the
US
called loneliness an epidemic
like every Surgeon General
chooses a project and
his was loneliness and yes I
do see it getting worse I do
see um I I see it right now

like where's our Humanity we
are losing our humanness so
we think of ourselves as
robots who don't need to sleep
we stay up till 2: 3 in the
morning we we don't

we eat things that are not real
and of the earth we don't feel
when we see
another person in pain we
yeah we operate like
machines and we
we have all of these
algorithms through which we
judge the world or we say
well you are worthy of my
feelings and you

are not and you are not good
vibes so I'm not going to you
know like these algorithms
we've created which are not
human this is not a human
thing when you are human
you will naturally connect

you

will naturally seek out people
you will naturally be
interested and curious

it is our natural state so when
we are not in that state then I
would wonder

what is going on and what
have you forgotten about
yourself gosh okay so
clearly when it comes to like

parenting it's a lot easier like
what you were saying you
know the way you raise your
kids we can protect them
from all of this from a young
age but what do we do about
people like me what he grown
up

how do we how do we then
Empower them it's the same
way we all have to parent our
ourselves we have this
absolutely consuming um
technology that is making us
forget who we are and
making us forget to look
around the room go walk
anywhere go to a bus station

or go to um
a taxi stand who looks at each
other go to a doctor's office
when was the last time you
like you know smiled or when
you were in the waiting room
no one looks at each other
anymore you know so
I think these are the things
you just have to set an
intention that I'm going to be
more human and that means
I'm
going to rest I'm going to go
out in sunlight I'm going to
eat I'm going to call my
people I'm going to have once
a

week if not more like dinners
with my people where we
leave the tech outside
which is what we do when we
have our lunches as a family
that there's a table a tech table
you have the jail for the F
that that goes there and then
we have a in the middle just
go check go check
make sure everybody's okay
and then we move to dessert
so like there is a moment
where everyone can get a fix
but
like you can go two three
hours without looking at your
phone um and I think that's

what you just have to make
an
intention and and say what is
important to me and how do I
want to live my life really
Define that and then make the
small moves for example
something is small as I told
myself I will not type while I
walk now I can do like 15
things at the same time I have
quite a great capacity to do
quite a lot but I will not type
and walk and if I am walking
through a mall let's
say I will pull over to the side
send the message and then I
will start walking again why

did I say that because
when I walk I want to look
around I want to look at who's
there and by the way I'm like
the only one looking up by
everyone else is looking
down you don't find that in
Europe so much by like when
I go to Switzerland like
everyone's
looking at each other and
they're like sitting in the park
and throwing frisbes and I'm
like why this is so amazing
like
this and so I do see that in
other parts of the world I
don't see that here in Dubai as

much and in certain parts of
the US I don't see it as much
but you don't need to be so
productive and that's not
really
productivity that's just
busyness like it's okay you
don't need to check your
phone right now and whoever
needs you they'll call you
if it's really urgent like this
kind of urgency culture is also
there like I get a message I
have to respond right away
if I don't I'll respond to you
when I'm done talking to
Shan and then I will
speak to you but right now

I'm fully here with you I want
to be here with you fully heart
to heart eye to eye ear to
ear we're here together and in
One Moment In One Moment
One hour we can
reach a great great depth that
most people wouldn't be able
to if they were distracted and
fragmented and that
connection is going to feed
me for the next week maybe
maybe
the next two weeks because
you've had those deep
connections so it doesn't
require you to be like that all
day long it requires a moment

where you say all right I got
two hours with my husband
or

I got one hour with my kid
cuz these kids are also quite
busy I got one hour with my
kid

I'm on and we're going to
connect um I'm a therapist I
see people once a week for
an hour 90 minutes and I
know the great you know
have gone to the greatest
depths of their psyche with
them I know the most about
them in the in in their whole
life from all the people that
they

know I know the most why
how one hour
it's because I'm there fully
present non-judgmental open
touched by by what they say
really
interested in what they say
that's how magic happens it
doesn't take a long
time so making that intention
is very important short
answer no you are absolutely
right and
you know you just brought
me back because um I went to
a standup comedy show in
Abu Dhabi and they looked
all of

our phones and the initial reaction when I found I was Panic being like Oh my God I won't see my phone for 2 hours what what if someone messages me what what if someone is calling me and I went with a friend of mine who is a very busy person and she panicked right she was like what if I get an email what am I going to do and I was like but it's Saturday night

like you should not be getting a work email but then when we sat down for that those two hours it was the

best time we've had in a very
long time it's so intentional
you are present for the show
you're enjoying it there's no
need to take pictures to show
people later that you were at
the show and it's just and
you're not checking the
notifications and I was like I
don't know I think this is the
first time ever ien phone right

you need to lock it up
yourself so now I do and
before going to sleep I leave
it in the living room yeah
airplane mode
it's there I'm like it's on

silence I don't hear it I'm in
my room I read and then I
sleep and I my quality of
sleep

has changed but yeah so that's
that's the thing the whole
connection thing you're so
you have to Define that and
it's focused all the energy is
you experiencing rather than
oh how should I

you know what will I write in
the comment let me record
this you're not fragmented
you're fully present there's
so many experiences I've had
where I was like oh man I
didn't even take a picture but

it was like but I remember
that
moment and so a lot of times
people what did you do last
week most people can't tell
me because they actually
don't
remember because they were
actually not fully present so
we think we're becoming we
have Dementia or we're
losing our
memory you're not losing
your memory honey you don't
have attention if if you don't
have attention it doesn't
transfer
over to long-term memory it

has to First be processed by
your short-term memory but
our phone has become our
short-term

memory so we are not
transferring we're not making
any memories you will
remember that comedy show
on a Saturday night for years
to come but you won't
remember what you did the
other Saturday night because
you were fragmented so it
really is about being like
listen

nothing's going to happen so
this is what I mean we we got
on to this ation by you have to

parent yourself yes you
have to lock up your phone
rather than having someone
lock it up for you you have to
say I'm putting it on airplane
mode everything else can
wait or I'll put it on ringer and
I'm going to let my kids know
that they can call me if they
need me but that parenting
has to happen and that
intention has to happen and I
like to use this phrase of
memorize the moment
memorize the moment like
imagine
that there's no other memory
that you can have you cannot

take a picture you
have to remember this
moment when you are 70
years old how would you
engage
you would engage with an
intensity because you've got
to remember the details of
this and then when you
remember that that's going to
be the memory you have not
the ones you have in your
phone and you know now
there's also
the other epidemic of people
also have TV on and they're
scrolling multiscreen
yeah it's everything they're

just overloading their senses
and I I saw recently that
Netflix you know the way
they are accepting pictures for
new movies to get on there is
it needs to be
a movie that can be a
background play so now
they're even taking that into
account it needs to be
something that people will
put on to play while they are
on their phone so it needs to
have
that effect so that just literally
is showing you how Society
is evolving in a way to allow
people to keep scrolling

well multiscreen use has been
shown to reduce the gray
matter in our brains so
Netflix doesn't care about
your brain and neither does
Instagram and neither does
Facebook and neither does
Twitter

they don't care about you they
don't care about your
relationships they don't care
about your love they don't
care

about your work they don't
care the only thing they care
about is will you get
addicted to our app and will
you stay on our app for as

long as possible it's
designed to keep you on they
call it engagement I call it
addiction and so
how do I get Sheen to become
addicted how do I make sure
that this thing is playing all
the time somewhere
in her psyche or on her screen
that's what they are designed
to do mhm and we
are falling right into it like the
PIP Piper with the little you
yeah yeah we're all in the
river yeah we're all in
the river and we've all and
and not no one's thinking hold
on a minute they don't have

my interest in mind no and
this is the stuff that I tell my
kids I don't have to control
my kids I really educate them
like listen I just know and
these are the books that I've
read and this is the research
that's coming out and these
are the documentaries we saw
together this is designed to
get you addicted and to make
sure that you are most
insecure and most obsessed
what are you going to do yeah

I mean

that's that's a very tough
question to not say okay I
don't want to do this but okay

so but that's that's the part
where
you know we use social
media for kind of like
entertainment or you know
comparison and we're just
there but you
also mentioned a lot of people
use their phone all the time
under the pretense of being
busy you know and that's one
thing

I see a lot of especially with
my friends who are at work
we can be having a really
deep serious conversation and
there's a ping of an email and
they just you see the anxiety

in their eyes as soon as that
work email comes through
and then they're gone you can
be talking to them but they're
not there they're just not there
anymore and I think that
again that brings us to the
hustle culture right so now
there's this whole thing of like
as you said it's busyness
rather than being productive
and a lot of we just I need to
be active I need to respond to
an email within 20 minutes
when it comes and otherwise
What will what will they
think how do you
how what advice do you have

for you know young
professionals who are
especially those that are now
starting to
experience you know the
professional world and we're
there trying to learn how to be
someone who is professional
and do the things that you
want to do well how do you
balance the fact that they have
access to you all the times
and especially in the buy you
get WhatsApp all the time
from work how do you create
those boundaries to protect
yourself it depends on if

you're like if you're getting I I
think it's important
to have conversations in your
work and in your personal life
about your WhatsApp
etiquette like I had to have a
conversation that this is going
to be like an email box this is
not a chat we're not chatting
here this is you've
now converted WhatsApp
into a quicker email response
and I'm okay with that so
there's like level one email
and then
there's like the basic email
right like so this is urgent
email and that's like all the

other emails and if we've used
like that just know that I will
get back to it within 24 hours

I think for young
people they really have to
learn how to communicate
and understand the
expectations no one's going to
really

expect you to respond at 8:00
p.m. on a Saturday night they
won't I don't think so you
think I think of course if
you're on a project and there's
a deadline I get it but no on
even even the employers are
starting to see that being on
leads to absenteeism

presenteeism and so we don't
want you to be on all the time
we actually want you to go
off so when you're on you're
actually on so I think
if you show that you bring
value on the
weekdays from 9 to 6 or
whatever it is that you're
working that okay I log off
at 700 p.m. and I don't check
my messages until 6:00 a.m.
the next day I
think if you tell them I've
actually never in all my years
that I've lived here and all the
years that I know of
working with Executives and

working with young
professionals as well as older
professionals I've never had
someone
where they were like no that's
not but if you say listen I
check my WhatsApp
from 6: to 6:00 a.m. to 7:00
p.m. that's it those are my
WhatsApp if you if it's
urgent call me I've never had
someone be like what are you
thinking that's so
unprofessional now there are
times where there's a you
know I've worked with
Consultants where it's like it's
cram

time we don't have the weekend off we are it's like we are on hands all hands-on deck for the whole weekend okay very different scenario but you don't live like that yeah so I would say get very clear about your expectations communicate your expectations with everyone that you engage with um and I would say add value when you are on make yourself so valuable that when that people are they understand why is it that you're not

checking your phone all the
time I am not checking my
phone all
the time but I'm not also just
sitting on Instagram right I'm
not checking my phone
because when you meet with
me you
know that I'm fully focused
fully engaged I'm going to
take notes I'm ready so they
oh that's who she is she's
really when she's in front of
someone she's really on so
create a reputation for
yourself that you're fully
engaged
full like very professional

you're not checking your
phone on message it you
know when you're in a
meeting and that's
what they will start to expect
for themselves as well that oh
if she's not responding then
she's probably with
someone right now instead of
being disruptive yeah so and I
think if it's
really an important thing then
get a separate phone and and
make sure that that person
those notifications are on I
tell everyone turn off your
notifications you're literally
like a pavlovian dog Ding and

you salivate like
it literally is like that it's
proper like you know like I
said classical conditioning
where something notifies
you and you pick it up why
I'll pick it up when
I want to pick it up not when
you tell me to pick it up so
you have to have a little bit of
like a
resistance you know and
Rebellion inside of you to be
able to
say I'm not you don't get to
tell me what to do I'm talking
about my technology you
don't get to tell me when

to answer I will tell you when
I'm going to answer oh and I
think that that was
that was an important turning
point in my engagement with
technology too that
was actually going to be my
next question to you because
you know how people say
that now um we experience
High cortisol levels just when
an email comes in and it's the
fact that you have
access to those emails right
and these emails have access
to you and as you said every
ding or something leads to
either anxiety for people who

are not they don't want to see
that or as you said people just
jump on it being like
Oh I want to reply this is it's
like the dopamin hit as well
it's just a lot of mixed signals
and this is something I
struggle with I hate seeing
unread notifications on my
phone so I need to like reply
just to get rid of it but
then how do we move
forward from that what would
so would you say for me for
example I should just switch
off the
notification sound so I don't
hear it yes that's how you

regulate it yeah and and turn
off your notific a on
WhatsApp
you know the double ticks so
they won't know when you've
read it you won't know when
they've read it you and I
remember
when I first did that it was a
very weird 10 days for me
cuz my phone was
dinging dinging and blinging
all the time right and it was it
was so
disorienting for me that there
was nothing so I would pick it
up and I would pick it up I
and then slowly it

quietened so it there is a
withdrawal period and there
isn't adjustment period
but turn off the notifications
100% turn off the
notifications if if you are at in
a

workplace just say I I will um
you know in my out of office
for example in my
email I check my email twice
a day or and you can even put
it in your set I check my
WhatsApp you know every
hour

and a half I will respond to
you in the Tim Le like you
can write stuff like that you

just draw the boundary and
people I've never had any one
be like what were you
thinking and I'm a
psychologist and I deal with a
lot of Crisis you know I know
if it's a crisis

call me yeah people will call
if it's urgent yeah yeah but I'm
not going to make everything
urgent this moment this life is
urgent my life is urgent my
my moment is urgent
this is my engagement with
this moment is most
important right now and when
I

go to WhatsApp I I can crank
out you know 50 messages
yeah in a very short
amount of time cuz Okay now
it's WhatsApp time okay back
to the meeting so I'll leave
gaps in the middle of my
meetings because it's a 10-
minute Gap where I will
check all my WhatsApp
respond to that and then for
another
three hours I will not respond
to it right so it's like that and
you can take
your power back okay 2025
here I come here go what
notifications off all of a

sudden everybody does not
like me because she is not
responding but it is too much
and I

always struggle with that I'm
like how do people not reply
immediately because I want
to become that so now I know
now

you know now I know I just
need to cut it it there's an
adjustment period but it will
be the best thing you
do for yourself okay okay I'm
excited but also my question
for you this is

personal curiosity as someone
who's a therapist where you

talk to a lot of people you
hear about the good the bad
the ugly how do you leave it
there and don't carry that
emotional strein with
you into your personal life
you know my mom didn't
want me to be a
psychologist um because she
thought it would deeply affect
me emotionally because I'm
like a really emotional
person um it does affect me
deeply and I don't think
there's a clear you know
boundary between what what
affects me and what doesn't
there are days where I've

worked with a client and
they've
shared something with me
that has deeply deeply deeply
affected me and I do carry
it with me I honor it and it's
you know and that was one of
those days at work and I'm
holding that and I'm honoring
that so when people say no no
no I leave that at work and I I
don't know how
people do that what affects
me at home I will bring it into
work what affects me at work
I will I'm a human and what I
do
is a very human thing I show

up with my heart at home and
I show up with my heart at
work and my heart holds a lot
and I show up with all of that
now over the years my
capacity has
increased and I can hold a lot
more than I did when I was
younger so everything
affects me that's my answer
everything affects
me but it doesn't weigh me
down okay most of the time
because I don't see the
human experience as
something that weighs me
down yeah even if you bring
me

the most traumatic or the
most you know painful
experience I just I just see
that as such an honor so I
don't see that as
heavy I just say okay we're
going to we're going to hold
this and we're going to you
know honor it and we're
going to
love it and we're going to heal
it and we're going to integrate
it that's how I experience I I
see what I do not as a
treatment I'm just doing life
with you and life can
sometimes be heavy and life
can sometimes not be that

heavy and life can sometimes
be really great and we're I'm
here for all of it
so yeah some days it's harder
than others and but it's a very
real thing I

I guess it's who I am I don't
it's not what I do it's who I am
and what I see

as my work I'm not a clinical
psychologist who got a you
know Sid or a doctorate I
don't it's it seems so it's
emotionless right yeah yeah
what I do is a very human
thing and yeah some days it
does weigh heavy on my
heart because that's just that

day that's beautiful
but it's it's very I I I love it
and I honor it and I I'm here
for it that's so
beautiful I love the way you
said that and I guess parting
message for everybody now
that we're starting 2025
what would you say oh the
healthiest practice for us to
implement to start
the year right and protect our
happiness our mental health
and everything I would
say have a reflective practice
some people do that with a
therapist so I do
therapy twice a week I I'm in

analysis actually um I engage
with my own
therapeutic process some
people do it through
journaling um but not
journaling this is
what happened in my day
really like this is what
affected me today I wonder
why that affected me this kind
of reflective engagement with
your inner life um that's how
you build a capacity
to hold bigger and bigger
feelings and I think as we
move into the future we're
going to need to hold bigger
and bigger

feelings and and we're going
to have to show up in bigger
and bigger ways as as
humans um so I would say
have a reflective practice if
that's one thing
that I would would say that
could change your life
because when you reflect then
you know
what your values are when
you know what your values
are then you know what your
boundaries are when you
know what your boundaries
are then you know how to
live
your life and then you're not

yanked here and there
because some new app came
or your boss said this or your
HR said

that then you know this is
what I'm going to do and this
is how I'm going to show up
and this is what matters to me
and you'll be able to articulate
it because you've reflected on
it so it gives you clarity
and it gives you conviction
well that was incredible
advice thank you so much
thank you Shane it was a
pleasure
talking to you I could speak
to you for hours there's so

much more we haven't
touched on but thank you so
much for being here thank
you thank you for
having me [Music]

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