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Jaime Masters: Welcome to Eventual Millionaire, I'm Jaime Masters. And today on the show, we have renounced author of over 40 books, and one of my favorite books on the planet, Gay Hendricks. His book, *The Big Leap*, is something I recommend to absolutely all of my clients. He's also written a myriad of others and is a mystery novelist too. Thank you so much for coming on the show today.

Gay Hendricks: It's my pleasure, Jaime. Great to talk with you.

Jaime Masters: This is so – so, what I want you to do is talk about *The Big Leap*, number one, just because I recommend it to absolutely everyone, and it's an honor to have you.

Gay Hendricks: Well, thank you, I really appreciate that. In fact, of all the books I've written, *The Big Leap* has a unique status in a way because it came out about 10 years ago, and the sales graph would go in the author's dream direction, just straight up. So, it sells more today than it did when it first came out, and so I really appreciate all of you for spreading the word.

Yes, *The Big Leap* is really about two things that I began to study in earnest about 30 or 35 years ago, and then gradually – I always say, when people ask me how long did it take to write *The Big Leap*, I say, "Well, it took me 30 years to think about it, and a year to write it." So, it was something I started thinking about. Basically, I noticed something in my own life that I started calling the upper-limit problem, that I would get to a certain level of feeling good, or a certain level of harmony with my then girlfriend, or a certain level of success in my work, and then something would happen that would kind of knock me back down to my previous level of being.

Like I would eat well for three days in a row, and then I'd go out and have an extra-large double pepperoni pizza. And then I'd go, "Ahh," for you couple of days. And so, I began to call this the upper-limit problem. And so, *The Big Leap* is really, first of all, how to recognize the upper-limit problem in yourself, and how to correct that so you can have, instead of an "eh, eh, eh, eh, eh, eh" approach to your growth and you prosperity that can go in a kind of easy breathing fashion.

And so, I'm happy to say that *The Big Leap*, the sales of it is actually mimicked that because most of my books, you know when a book comes out, especially if we were on Oprah with our book *Conscious Loving*, for example, the book went like, "Whoosh!"

you know? And then it would die back down, and then every time they would re-run that show, "Whoosh!" And so, there was something like this sort of thing. But I like the way *The Bid Leap* has gone out by word of mouth.

And so, the upper-limit problem. Number two, *The Big Leap* is about, what I now call the genius spiral, which is – I used to call it the zone of genius, but I quit using that term because it's kind of limiting. A zone is a place. And I began to use the idea of a spiral because a spiral really has no end point, you can keep riding up.

As a matter of fact, I got the image from – my wife and I had, when we got married, we had a private wedding up on the top of a mountain just for the two of us, and then we had a more public one down for friends and that kind of thing, but when we were on the mountaintop, we were saying our vows to each other, and this is almost 40 years ago now, Katie said, "Oh, look up." And I looked up, and there was this magnificent hawk circling around in a spiral above our heads. And as we said our vows to each other, suddenly we looked up again and there were two hawks.

And I didn't know it at the time, but hawks mate for life, unless something happens to them. And so, here with these two beautiful hawks circling around above us as we were doing our vows, and then when we finished, we looked up again, and they were way up in the sky, almost tiny little specks.

And so, this idea of a spiral, I think, took root in me, and I realize that in personal growth, you often, as you grow, it's like a spiral because you come back around a revisit themes that you visited earlier in an earlier stage of growth and enlightenment. But you have it in a whole different way now, and it may come again in a larger wave of the spiral.

And so, I like this idea of building our personal growth around a spiral, rather than a zone. So, anyway, the genius spiral is the second thing that I'm really excited about talking to people on, especially business owners because it's been my experience – I used to come to Austin, by the way, a lot to consult with Michael Dell, and the top team at Dell computer out in Round Rock.

So, I had a lot of experience with big business, but I've had a lot of experience, too, coaching young entrepreneurs that I work with, and one of this things that is incredibly important for all business people is to take a little time off from the practical side of business,

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and put – we recommend just starting with 10 minutes a day on the spiritual side of business. Because what happens is the more successful you get often times, the less time you spend in the depths of yourself saying, "What am I really doing here?"

And we work here, people will come sometime, a CEO at a company will come to be with us for two days or three days, and we work with that person all day long. There are no other people around. And in those intensives, what we often find is a person who has gotten to be incredibly successful, but has left a piece of himself or herself behind. And that piece is one that needs daily visiting.

When people come here, we often ask them to just start by just going in a room by themselves for 10 minutes and asking, "Hmm, what is my true genius?" Not even trying to come up with an answer, just focusing on the question. "Hmm, what is my true genius?" So, if you keep in mind those two things, the upper-limit problem, and the genius spiral, that's really the essence of what's in *The Big Leap* and the new sequel, which is, *The Joy of Genius*.

Jaime Masters: And this is what I absolutely adore because now everyone's talking about the neuroscience, and negative thoughts, and things that are the upper limit problem, but you came out with this 10 years ago, and have data over, and over, and over from tons of people that have gone through it. So, how did you, when you started doing that first book, how did you start testing the way that you counteract our upper-limit problem?

Gay Hendricks: Well, I first started doing it in personal well-being area. I began to first focus in because at the time I was overweight, and I'm now, I'm a little over 6 feet tall, and I weigh about 180, so I look athletic now, but in that days, I looked like an athlete with a spare tire around the middle, an unnecessary tire around my middle. And I was more of a pear-shaped intellectual body than I was an athletic body, than I was an athletic body.

Jaime Masters: Intellectual body, I like that.

Gay Hendricks: I spent a lot of time working on my library tan in those days. So, this goes back 30 to 35 years ago, and I had moved to California to work on my doctorate at Stanford, and I had opportunity for the first time to eat things like real fresh vegetables, I'd been living way up in New Hampshire where – I remember one day buying a cantaloupe for, at the time 35 years ago, \$2.50, which would be

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like \$25.00 now –

Jaime Masters: I'm from New Hampshire and Maine, so it's hilarious. Yes, I know exactly, it's weird up there.

Gay Hendricks: It's really weird in wintertime, so I always say, we used to get the vegetables that the rest of America didn't want.

Jaime Masters: Seriously. That's funny.

Gay Hendricks: But I moved to California, and suddenly, wow, there's all these fresh vegetables everywhere, and I started paying attention to my well-being, and like I said earlier, I would get three days or four days of really eating well and feeling good, and then I would sabotage myself. I would go out and just have to have an extra thick vanilla malt, or a triple thick burger from something or other, and then I would, kind of, groan in my body for a day or two.

And I started noticing also the same thing in my relationship with the woman I was with at the time. This was in my pre-Katie days. And so, it goes back, actually, more than 40 years now. And so, I began to notice that we would get along well for a few days, and then one of us would start an argument, and it didn't matter who it was, but something would happen that would interfere with the flow of intimacy. I think I see a head nod there; you may have noticed something like that. Anybody on planet earth who's had a relationship would pretty much have that experience.

So, I began to pay attention not to what we argued about, but when we argued. And I started realizing that we tended to argue on Friday, late afternoon Friday, and late afternoon on Sunday. And I figured out that, oh, here we've got the weekend coming up, we're not sure how we're going to be with each other, but we know how to argue. And so, we would kind of pick these fights with each other, and then the rest of the weekend, "Nah, nah, nah, nah, nah."

So, that was a key step because I began to think, okay, what the job is, is to extend the amount of time I'm feeling good, and to extend the amount of time I'm feeling that close connection. And so, I began to focus more on that than on the content of any issue. Because I realized it didn't really matter how I sabotaged my diet, I could do it by getting a cold and thinking, well, I better eat something that nourishes me, or I could do it by just – I remember losing my head one day walking past an ice cream store.

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I'd lost about 35 pounds, and I was feeling really good, and I passed this ice cream store, and I saw this family eating a banana split. I just had to have it. And next thing I was, "Mmmm –" It was the 20-minute-high of my life, but then half way down the block, "Clunk." And so, that's the upper-limit problem in action. And I ask people to pay attention to it in the simple things in life first, like connections with your beloveds, and how you feel in your body, and things like that.

Ultimately, though, everything in the upper-limit problem is a way we keep ourselves from experiencing our true genius, our true creativity. Because what happens is, if people can keep hitting their upper-limit, and struggling with that and sabotage, go high; go low, what happens is, that distracts everybody from asking yourself, what is my true genius, and how can I express it in the world in a way that makes the greatest contribution? To me, life is at its best when I'm doing what I love to do, and it also make the largest contribution. And so, that's really what we teach.

Jaime Masters: And I love this too. Especially in the guise of entrepreneurship. Because you've seen that meme online where it's like, "Entrepreneurship looks like this." And it's a graph that's like, up and down, and up and down, and up and down, right? And what you're saying is that when we hit those ups, and maybe not on a day to day basis because we're all gonna hit that, that we can even it out a little bit better.

So, when I think about this, everybody wants to live in their genius, but there are cashflow issues, and this issue, and that issues, so it makes it difficult to put into practice. What do you say to people that come to you, especially after reading your book and going, "You're a genius; I love this; I want to do more of this, but, but, but, but –" All the excuses in the world.

Gay Hendricks: Yes, well, when you were saying that, I had an image come to mind of a young man that I did some coaching with. He was in his early 30s, and he was full of good ideas, he needed a lot of focus, so we worked on focus, but what really did the trick, in fact, I wanna illustrate that with what not to do.

Jaime Masters: Okay.

Gay Hendricks: What not to do is, more and more of what already isn't working.

Jaime Masters: Darn it. You got me. No.

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Gay Hendricks: And the same thing with time. There's never enough time to do what you don't really want to do anyway. And so, if you understand that your time is your most precious commodity, where do I want to focus my time? And the young man that I was referring to, as we honed in on more, and more, and more of his genius, it also had to do with what he most loved to do, which was this act of personal transformation with people. A moment where a person's face lights up. And I must say, that to this day, is one of the most wonderful things in life is when I see somebody let go of an upper limit and, oh –I don't have to keep doing it that way. I see a new possibility. I could live on that, I think.

And yet, in life, life teaches us almost the opposite, to distract yourself, and not focus in on, what do you most love to do? When I first thought of that, as a matter of fact, I can remember where I was sitting, I was sitting in an apartment in Colorado Springs, I used to be a professor there at the university in the counseling psych department. But one time I was thinking about, what really is my life purpose? And I came up with this idea. What I love to do more than anything else is expand every day in my learning, expand in my ability to love, and my ability to experience abundance, and my ability to keep my creativity flowing. That to me is being wealthy.

And so, I made this vow, and I took on this idea that every day, I commit to expanding in love, creativity, and abundance, as I go about inspiring other people who are interested to do the same. Because to me, that contribution part of life is such a sacred thing, and very few people tell us that early in our life –

Jaime Masters: Right?

Gay Hendricks: How good contribution actually feels. And many of us are coming from a place of, well, gosh, I feel wounded down inside, and I need mine first. I was working with a person one time on the phone who called me, who was in a state of deep depression, and he was a client that I'd seen in another state, and he called me one night, he was feeling really depressed, and I talked to him, had him do a little bit of breathing, and everything, but nothing really broke through, and finally this idea came to me.

I said, "Before you came and talked to me on the phone, did you notice anything that caught your eye; anything that needed doing?" And he said, "Well, I have an elderly neighbor downstairs who it's hard for her to keep her front porch clean, and I noticed it had

gotten all cruddy with leaves and everything. And I said, "Okay, I'll stay on the phone, you run down and sweep it really quickly. Do a two-minute quick sweep out." So, I said it to him on the phone, he comes back, "Sigh." He was totally different. Maybe it was some of the exercise of doing it, but I think it was the deeper issue of, he got out of himself for a moment and offered something to the world.

I have a good friend **Uritca Risathy**, who founded the company, **Gya**, gya.com, which is a very great media company. Before that, he founded corporate express and did a lot of mergers and acquisitions, and I think he told me once he had done 200 or 300 different merger and acquisition things, so he knew a lot of entrepreneurs, and one time we were walking across the street, and I asked him, in Boulder Colorado where they are, and I asked him, "What's the funniest thing you've ever heard somebody say in all your years of coaching and coaching entrepreneurs and doing mergers and acquisitions?"

And he said, "I've heard it many, many times, but the funniest thing I ever hear is," He said, "I always make a point of people saying: why do you want to go in business for yourself? Or why did you want to go in business for yourself?" And he said the thing that makes his laugh when people say it is, "I wanted more time for myself."

Jaime Masters: Right? Everybody's laughing right now. They're like, darn it!

Gay Hendricks: And this young man I was talking about, the 32-year-old, I remember talking to him about that very subject, and just pressing him on that very issue. What do you really want to get out of this? And to let him know that it really needs to be something that you're willing to think about 24 hours a day. I've had some of my best business ideas – in fact, I would say one of my two biggest business ideas came from when I wasn't even thinking about it. I was meditating one morning when the idea popped in my mind.

My business partner in the movie side of my life, Stephen Simon, and I got to beat our brains against Hollywood after his movie, *What Dreams May Come*, came out, we formed a little business where we were going to produce more inspiring movies, and we kept beating our brains against the Hollywood production establishment because *What Dreams May Come* had lost money, and so it was, "We don't want any spiritual films around here, we want comic book movies. Come back with a spiritual comic book."

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That's what one executive told us.

Jaime Masters: Come back with a spiritual comic book, that's great.

Gay Hendricks: We should have too.

Jaime Masters: Yeah, right? That would have worked. Yeah.

Gay Hendricks: But suddenly, one morning in meditation, in the year of 2003, suddenly, this idea popped in my mind. Oh, let's hotwire around Hollywood. Let's go to the film festivals and find the inspiring movies that Hollywood won't touch, put them on DVDs – this was before streaming. Put them on DVD, and put them out to people around the world, and whoosh, we launched a business, and it was almost an overnight success. I think we were profitable in our third month, or something like that, and caught the attention of three Wall Street people who came here to find out what we were doing.

But that whole little thing came from this 10 second little poof at the end of meditation. Oh, why don't we do it that way? And some part of my mind had been thinking about that for a long time and suddenly produced the solution. In one of Einstein's notebooks, if I remember correctly, he talked about a physics problem that he thought about every day for 27 years. And that is some dedicated think time.

Jaime Masters: Wow. That's insane. I guess that's the question, then, for me. So, everybody that's listening feels like they don't have enough time, right? And of course, that's a construct, and you can go into that, but how do you actually do it? So, when you have a to-do list, how do you lean into your zone – I'm so used to saying zone of genius, your genius spiral? How do you lean into that more when you have so many obligations that you said yes to for so long?

Gay Hendricks: Well, it's a question of priorities; it's a question of commitment. And those are two words that – commitment, no change happens without heartfelt commitment. The thing that makes 12-step groups work is that person stands up there and says, "My name's John, and I'm an alcoholic, and here's my story." And so, it's claiming who you really are, and making that heartfelt commitment, whatever that heartfelt commitment is. If it's to growing a successful business, you know very few businesses are successful. I've had several other businesses that were not success

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- Jaime Masters: Oh, good. Thank you. You're perfect.
- Gay Hendricks: Yes, in fact, I've had a couple that had approximately the trajectory of the Titanic. They started with great fanfare and praise, and then kept hitting the iceberg. But I'm happy to say that what you should do in entrepreneuring is go more for your batting average. Babe Ruth didn't have a great batting average, but he hit a lot of home runs, so if you're going for homeruns, be prepare to strikeout a lot.
- Jaime Masters: Well, I guess that's my question then, too. When we have the heartfelt commitment, because you know what you're doing too, right? You have the heartfelt claiming who you are, you're in your genius as much as humanly possible, and you still fail, or potentially, I don't know if you were in your genius or not, but you still fail. How can we make sense of that?
- Gay Hendricks: Well, first of all, I think we need to just get a better image in our mind. I take along, in fact, sometimes when I speak to groups like Young Presidents and things like that, I often take along a kids Bobo the clown doll. It's an inflatable thing that if you hit it, it bops back up. And I say, "Okay, this is an entrepreneur, here." And because you're never going to get where you need to get to in a straightforward path. You get knocked down; you get back up. You get knocked down; you get back up. And so, I mean it happens around here all the time. Recently one of our key assistants quit, "Grrr –"
- Jaime Masters: Right?
- Gay Hendricks: It doesn't sound like a big deal.
- Jaime Masters: Huge.
- Gay Hendricks: But it's like having one of your tires quit.
- Jaime Masters: Yes.
- Gay Hendricks: And so, we're a lean organization around here. We only have half a dozen people and everyone one of them had a key function, so when one of them unplugs –so, things like that are gonna happen wherever you are in the process, and I think you have to construct that resilient part of yourself. That's why we recommend body kinds of things so much.
- I'll tell you, as the older I get, the more appreciative I get – like I
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spent an hour this morning at the gym, I do that three days a week, and I'm gonna play golf later, and my wife and I go for a lot of walks, and we have little electric e-bikes that we ride all over town with in the summer time, and you peddle them, and when the hill gets steep, it kicks in with electricity, so it's perfect for my iffy knees after 25 years of competitive squash playing, and about 35 years of gol – and skiing, and then golf, my knees are hanging together by a prayer.

But it's important, I think, to keep things in motion on a physical level, and a lot of entrepreneurs completely overlook that. They get busy on charts, and graphs, and forget the other stuff.

Jaime Masters: Well, and that's why your perspective is really helpful because when were in it, its harder to see, right? So, even if they feel like they've heartfelt claimed it, like a little while ago, and then the renege, and they're not doing the things that are really really important to get them in that genius where they do feel really really good, how do they whack themselves back into it? Do you know what I mean? I feel like we get in these ruts, and then we have to go, oh well, shoot, I'm in it again. The upper-limit problem again, and again, and again. It's over, and over, and over.

Gay Hendricks: Well, it is, in a way because of the spiral issue. Because you're going to touch on the same kinds of things the further you go up the spiral. Let me give you an example. Many, many years ago, when Katie and I had been together a few years, I think, so we're talking about somewhere in the mid-80s, 83, 84, somewhere in there. Before you were born, probably.

Jaime Masters: It was about when I was born, yeah.

Gay Hendricks: Yeah, back when you were born, young lady. There was a world back then.

Jaime Masters: Right.

Gay Hendricks: So, anyway, we'd been together a couple of years, and we lived in Colorado at the time, and her parents came to visit from California and were staying at our house, and we noticed they bickered constantly. And as we thought about it, every time we'd visited them in California, the same thing had happened, but since we were coming and going, we hadn't noticed it, but when they were in our house, we noticed it was pretty much a 24 hour a day ping pong match of bickering with each other.

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And so, after they left, Katie and I got down in a conversation and said, "You know, we do that more than we really need to ourselves. But look where we got this from." You know? Because I'd grown up in the same kind of family. And they were wonderful people, that was just the way they entertained themselves, I guess. and so, I said, "Let's put a stop to that. Let's create a relationship, if you are willing, where we eliminate criticism."

We thought about that, and we made a vow to each other to eliminate criticism from our relationship, and it literally took years because we'd get a couple of weeks in and then one of us would go, "Nah nah nah." You know? And we'd get a few more weeks in and, "Nah nah." And so, we would keep returning to that commitment. So, here's the point I'm making. Recommitment is just as important as the original commitment because of the Bobo doll problem. We're gonna get knocked down, and you gotta get back up and center yourself in your commitment, and go again. And that's not easy to do. I'm not saying it in any way is easy to do.

Because a few times, just personally speaking, you get depressed after something falls apart that you put your life into. In my book writing world, I've had the experience of putting my heart and soul into a certain book and then having it **[makes explosion sound]**. You know? And then you'll say, "Oh, let's never publish a book again on Memorial weekend." And you learn, and live, and all that. But it can be quite saddening when a prized project flames out like that. So, recommitment is incredibly important.

The punch line of the criticism story is that it took us a few years, maybe three to five years, I don't know, I don't remember now, but a long time to make good on that commitment. But once we did – I can tell you, for example, we've lived in this particular house, which is kind of like our dream house that we found in 2000, or so. So, we've been living here for almost 20 years, now, in this house, and no one has ever said a critical word to the other inside these four walls.

Jaime Masters: Wow.

Gay Hendricks: Yeah. And so, it's possible to make good on a big commitment wherever it is. And it may sound like a ridiculously impossible thing to create a relationship which has only positive energy to it, but it can be done. So, now that I know it can be done, anybody else could do it too because it's like the four-minute mile. Somebody can break it; everybody can break it. Not everybody,

but people started breaking it. And so, what we're all in life to do, I think, is to expand in abundance and creativity as we expand in our ability to thrive on more and more love and good positive energy in our life, and to the extent that we do that, life is wonderful.

Jaime Masters: You're such an inspiration. You and your wife, the fact that you can have done that is insane. Nobody – I don't think without you actually committing to that and saying that that I would have believed it would have ever been possible, just as a side note. And so, thank you, thank you, thank you.

I know we have to start wrapping up because you've got a date with golf coming up very very soon, but I'm gonna ask the last question, and I highly recommend for everybody that's listening right now, getting *The Big Leap*, and then Getting, *The Joy of Genius*. So, those two books, it's prescription for you, you have to read them, but besides buying those books, what is one action listeners can take to help move them forward to their goal of a million?

Gay Hendricks: Entertain a wonder question. It will take you 10 seconds, but it will change your life. What we call wonder questions are questions that you really would love to know the answer to, and you really don't know the answer to. And so, a wonder question that I'd like to leave you with is: hmm, how can I spend the majority of my time doing what I most love to do, while making my greatest contribution to others? Hmm, how can I spend the majority of my time doing that I most love to do, while also making my largest contribution to others? Hmm. And then see what happens out of that.

Jaime Masters: That has changed things for me, just from reading the book. I've read it three times already, for *The Big Leap*, just so you know. And it's a progress, not perfection thing for me, but I highly recommend for everybody – if your driving doesn't write it down, but write that question down, go back, rewind it, write that question down, meditate on it, thank you so much, Gay. You can find you at hendricks.com is one of the links, but I know you have quite a few. Where can we find more about you online?

Gay Hendricks: Well, we have our big relationship section of Facebook called, Hearts in Harmony, where you can see lots of videos of us, and learn about our relationship work. Well, hendricks.com will take you off into where we need to go to our non-profit foundation, or wherever you would like to learn about, there's all sorts of different

free sources for you one there.

Jaime Masters: I just appreciate you, and all of your work. I know we've never met before, but you have impacted my life. I so so appreciate you coming on the show today, thank you so much.

Gay Hendricks: Many blessings to you and all your subscribers, thanks.

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