
Jaime: Welcome to Eventual Millionaire. I am Jaime Masters. And today on the show we have Peter Montoya. I love his new business. It's called Thrive Union, which is really helping the epidemic of loneliness. I'm so excited to talk about that today, but he's also a 20 year veteran, sold a multimillion dollar business beforehand. Thank you so much for coming on the show today.

Peter: Jaime, I'm thrilled to be here.

Jaime: Okay, I love this. So, tell me a little more about Thrive Union. Because I went on there and now is the time that we really need to be talking about loneliness. We're all stuck in our houses, as of this recording. So, please tell me why you started that.

Peter: So, there is an epidemic level of loneliness and all of the diseases of despair are on the rise. That was pre-coronavirus and pre-lockdown. So, diseases of despair are anxiety, depression, suicide, violence, domestic abuse, addiction and deaths related to all of those, have been on the rise. And their core fundamental— What draws them all together is that of loneliness.

Peter: So, the average human being, what we need to maximize our feeling of well-being, of happiness and satisfaction, is we need about three to four hours a day of good quality empathetic socialization. Now it's a little bit subjective what qualifies as good quality empathetic time, but more or less, it's a time when you're getting real world contact preferably or face to face via video chat. You are empathizing, you're putting yourself in the shoes of somebody else, you're emoting. That's probably what that means.

So, we need three or four hours a day to feel really good about ourselves. We are only getting about 41 minutes a day of social contact and we're spending 11 hours a day on screens. Screens means TVs, tablets, computers and phones. So, we can see where our time is going and where it's not going and why we feel this way.

Jaime: This is so important, especially pre-corona this was so important, because it was on the rise anyway, but now it's like we're in a Petri dish or a magnifying glass and now the loneliness is just amplified. So, what are you telling people to do right now to try and up that?

Peter: Great question. So, with Thrive Union, which is normally a real world community and life's goal dedicated to human being, is we would have regular meetings. We do a meeting every single

Sunday, which is kind of like a connection/personal development event on Sundays, which is tons of fun. We have between 50 and 100 people there on Sundays. We would do movie nights, game nights, we would do a docs and discussion night; we would do supper clubs. We did all the kind of the normal things that help connect people. It was working really, really well, pre-coronavirus.

But now what we're doing is we're doing Thrive Sunday online and you can actually still— anyone can join that now by going to Meetup and searching for Thrive Union in Orange County and just joining our group. And we'll invite you to spend an hour on Sunday mornings. So, we're doing.

And then, we've also made a daily challenge to everybody. And the daily challenge is the following. Number one, meditate every single day for at least five minutes. We all have the time to do it, however, it's hard for a lot of us, especially those with ADHD to really stop for a couple minutes. But it's really good for us, for lowering our anxiety.

Number two, we're recommending daily exercise, even if it's just a 15 to 30 minute walk that counts as daily exercise. And number three, we're recommending some kind of a video chat with somebody else every single day. And that little three-part formula is doing really wonders to help people's emotional well-being in this time of year chronic disconnection.

Jaime: So, meditation, I meditate every single day and I harp on it here for everybody. But I know business owners are like, but I have ADD or I have — and it's hard for them to sit. So, what do you say for those five minutes, they just sit and clear — Can you give me some tips for them to just test that out?

Peter: Absolutely. So, first of all, one of the reasons that a lot of people, by the way, just in case you're watching the video and you see my lovely wife, my office mate over here, she has now joined us, that's my lovely wife, Amy.

So, yes, meditation is weird for some people and it's hard to get started. Let's acknowledge that right up front. But with practice, it gets better. A lot of people have a hard time with meditation because they go, my mind wanders. Everyone's mind wanders. It's completely and totally normal.

So, the whole idea with meditation is to give your frontal cortex

something simple to concentrate on, so the rest of your brain relaxes. It goes back that old recommendation of counting sheep, so you can go to sleep. It's the same idea. So, you can find a guided meditation, search on YouTube for five minute, guided meditation, and they have spiritual and non-spiritual versions of that. Find one that fits you or find an unguided one, and then you can concentrate on one of the following things.

Number one, you can concentrate on your breath and just pay attention to your breath going in and out. And when you lose focus on your breath, go back to your breath. Kind of the same way that you would guide a toddler who's walking on a path. If a toddler walked off the path, you would not shame, berate the toddler. You would just gently take their hand and bring them back onto the path. So, you can focus on your breath. You can focus on to the narration, through a guided meditation.

Or the third one is you can just pay attention to all the sensations. When I first started meditation, I thought that it had to be done in a quiet room and nothing could be farther from the truth. You could be in the middle of a construction site and meditate. All you're doing is paying attention to all of the stimulus, whether it be a thought, a sound, a breeze, a heat that's coming onto your face. And that's the third thing you can focus on.

And if ever you get distracted, you just go back to whatever, your breath, the narration or the stimulus.

Jaime: But it's the practice that matters more than anything. Not about how good you are at it. I think we're so mean to ourselves. Like I sucked at – Well, yeah, yeah, it's okay to suck. Just don't be mean to yourself about sucking.

Peter: Right. And it is called practice for a reason. It's not called perfect. It's called practice.

Jaime: Totally. I highly, highly recommend, please take action on this. People, I know we didn't ask the last question yet, but please, please, please, I beg of you, because I've been harping on this forever, but because we're in this Petri dish, it does feel like everything is heightened. So, if we don't have our awareness heightened about how crappy we are to ourselves or anxiety or mean, then it just amplifies and amplifies and amplifies. And that's where we're feeling–

I've been hearing ups and downs, like craziness. What have you been hearing from people about their emotions right now?

Peter: Yeah, so the disconnection is really bad for us. As I'd mentioned earlier, where we need three to four hours a day and most of us were getting 41 minutes pre-crisis. So, if you're living alone or only living with one other person, I cannot recommend enough the practice of video chatting with somebody else.

And number two, you're talking about being hard on ourselves. And let's dive a little bit deeper into that, because it's one of my favorite topics. And what you're kind of alluding to is the idea of shame. So, let's just say that you're at work and you make a mistake at work. Your boss calls you in, they tell you what you did, tell you what you did wrong, and they don't berate you, but they more or less say you messed up and here's what you got to do going forward.

You go back to your desk, pick up your phone, and you call your best friend and you say, you know what? I really messed up at work. This is what happened. And your best friend says to you the following, "You should be fired. I don't even know why you're working there in the first place. I can't believe they even would keep you. You are not worthy of being at that job. And seriously, you're just not even worth-while being employed anymore."

So, Jaime, if you called your best friend and they said that to you, what would your response be?

Jaime: I'd be like I don't like you anymore.

Peter: Right. Why would we talk to ourselves that way? Which is what many, many people do. And once you realize that you wouldn't allow somebody else to talk to yourself, why would you talk to yourself that way? Especially without a filter even stopping it from going into your subconscious. So, If you are ever shaming yourself in any way and find yourself in one of those shame spirals, you have got to stop it and stop it immediately. If you need any help, go onto YouTube. Look for Bob Newhart, Stop It. Just search Bob Newhart, Stop It. Watch that video, and it'll give you a really positive way of stopping that negative shame spiral. It actually is incredibly easy. Once you can get yourself doing it, you say, "Stop it," it becomes a great trigger to stop doing that awful habit.

Jaime: All right, we're going to link to that also. I totally have to look that up. I mean, I think that's the thing that meditation has helped me with. It's like putting a little bit of space between how mean I am to myself and critical, right? And after 10 years of doing it, I'm like, oh, way more self-aware. Whereas beforehand, I'd have to have my best friend slap me every time I would say something mean because it was so unconscious, I didn't even realize it.

Peter: Yeah, and there's a big distinction between shame and guilt. Guilt is feeling bad about something that we did, which is really positive. You know, I've made mistakes at work, I've said things that I've really regretted, I've done things I've really regretted, and ruminating over those enough to understand what you should do better and going, "Okay, I'm going to fix that." That is super healthy and super positive. But shaming yourself, as Brené Brown has proven over and over again in her test results, has no positive benefits. Zero. It makes you feel worse. It makes you perform worse. So, if you're doing any kind of beating yourself up right now, I'm giving you, I'm not asking you, I am telling you, stop it.

Jaime: That's one of the action items I told my client yesterday, stop beating yourself up and notice it, and then you have to report back to me next week. Because I mean, it's easier said than done of course, but even like you said, it's the practice of just getting better and better and better at it. So, when we look at being a hermit, because I was sort of an introverted hermit typically anyway, so 41 minutes in general before pre-corona. That's crazy. We must be getting like zero right now in the corona crisis. Right?

Peter: It kind of depends. It's a mixed bag. I actually am living now with seven people, which is my wife, my two kids, our best friend and her two daughters, And so, I'm actually getting more quality time with just a fewer number of people, and I can't tell you how much I love having all the people at my house. I really enjoy it. We have family meals, we're playing games; we go on walks. So, it's been wonderful for me and my emotional well-being, but there are other people who only have nobody else or mainly one other person and they're really struggling.

Jaime: See, okay, let's talk about this. My former husband who has stage four cancer right now, him and his girlfriend stayed with me for a good solid two weeks.

Peter: Oh, sorry.

Jaime: Yeah, it was magical, and I am bit introvert, extrovert. So, when we talk about having actual people in our space, I felt different when they were here versus when they're not this week, and the loneliness is cropping back up again. So, it's very interesting to me. When we're looking at, especially how I'm feeling with people versus not, I should be doing a lot of Zoom calls right now, shouldn't I? Or something to create that connection instead of sort of going inward. I thought now inward would be the time, but you say no. Okay, tell me more.

Peter: No, and there's lots of easy ways to those video chats. You've got Zoom, you've got Skype, you also got Facebook; you've got FaceTime on Apple. There's absolutely no excuse for not doing a face to face call. And what you get in a face to face call that you do not get just in a phone call is you get to see somebody else's face, and there's a specific kind of neuron in your brain which scientists think get lightened up, called a mirror neuron. They think that gets activated, which gives us a greater dose of oxytocin and adrenaline. So, it's really important that you're actually looking at somebody and paying attention. Seeing faces is very, very healthy for us.

Jaime: I didn't know that. Okay.

Peter: And going back to what you said about being, maybe you're an introvert and maybe you're an extrovert. There actually are a number of different surveys you can do online and you could be what's called an ambivert.

Jaime: Yes, that's what I call myself. Okay, good.

Peter: Ambivert, which is in the middle. And for the audience, an introvert is not somebody who necessarily is antisocial. That's not what an introvert is. An introvert is somebody who gets recharged by being alone and an extrovert is somebody who gets charged by being in a group of people. I put myself in that ambivert category and I really like people, I just like small groups of people so I can have real connections. I just don't do big parties and the kind of flitting around. That's just not my bag.

Jaime: I am right there with you. I guess so then how do we deal with whatever our current situation is, however many people are in with us, how do we deal with interacting with them, but also trying to

have time and space for ourselves, right? There's a lot of that too.

Peter: Yeah, and we do need to pay attention to our internal emotions on that stuff. I think listening to our feelings is even more important than listening to our thoughts, and our bodies and our minds will tell us when you're having different kinds of pain. We get too hot or too cold. We know that pain. We get too hungry, we know that kind of pain, but we also get lonely and that's kind of a pain. Maybe around people, we might go, "I need to go upstairs." Okay, well, that's what an indication from your body that you need some other different kind of stimulus right now, and just listen to those.

Jaime: See, I love that we're talking, I mean I love that you sold a multi-million dollar company, or a salesman, speaker and we're talking about feelings. I think we're changing as a society and actually paying more attention to how happy we are and not external circumstances that are trying to make us happy, and connection seems like one of those things that I adore but that people shove under the rug, because our phone technically gives us connection, right? But there's a huge difference between people to people connection and people to device connection, especially 11 hours. Tell me a little bit more about that and how we can stop our addiction to our phone.

Peter: Yeah, so I think technology is at its best when it's facilitating face to face real world connections, and it's at its worst when it keeps us from connecting to the person who's next to us. So, whenever I am around other people and I don't have, I'm not – my rule is wife and kids always get through. So, if my phone rings or the text comes through from my wife and kids, I always respond to that. Otherwise, my phone is out of sight and preferably out of mind when I am with people, unless I'm expecting somebody to come through. That's the discipline that I give myself to make sure I'm connecting with people.

I'm a business leader and being a leader is different than being a worker. When you are a worker in a business, you're mainly focused on what you do. Maybe you're a plumber and you think about pipes or you're an accountant and you think about preparing taxes, or maybe you're a clerk and you think about [inaudible] [00:14:40], and it's largely about improving what you're doing. But when you are a business leader, it's a being activity, which means it's personal. In order for you to get better at your job of leading a business, you have to improve who you are. It is intensely personal, and for me, I always thought I was a workaholic and I

worked 70 hours a week for the better part of 10 years and 50 hours a week for my other 20 years of my business career, and I thought that I wasn't an emotional being, I thought I was segmented. I had my work life and my personal life and I didn't see myself as an emotional being.

I burned through a marriage like that. I didn't spend nearly enough time with my kids. I was stressed out to the max. I never slept more than three or four hours at night. I mean, I paid a painful, painful price. My self-esteem and self-confidence, although in a business setting seemed high, was actually really low outside of that. So, that was one of the major epiphanies I've had in the last five years or so as I've really come back and started focusing on my relationships, and also my business is still flourishing. There is a balance for business owners available.

Jaime: Thank you for saying that. Not a lot of people talk about it. We talk about the bottom line and we talk about the numbers and we're supposed to be logical in business and blah, blah, blah. And I don't even think people are really sizing how they're careening towards a horrible wake up call. Right? Because as entrepreneurs, we are very good with pain. We are stubborn, we have all these things that prevent us from actually looking at how bad things actually are until we hit addiction or anxiety or suicidal. So, where do you think the wakeup call A, where you came from, but B, where everybody else is coming from for wake up calls right now?

Peter: Jeez. Sadly, for most human beings you're absolutely right. Can it— Being— So, I bootstrapped three companies, which means I started all three companies with absolutely no money or negative money and two of them burned down and one of them I had a great exit. As an entrepreneur with no money, you really have to be fairly single-mindedly focused. Which is both a strength and a weakness. So, unfortunately for most of us, it's not until we hit bottom that we finally get the wakeup call that many of us need. So, I do recommend and as you get more experience in business and a little more wisdom, you start paying more attention to what's going on around you and stop — So, you start not paying such high prices in your personal life and the relationships around you.

Jaime: See, that's one of the reasons why I interview millionaires because at the beginning I was like, okay, money is great, but life is a little bit more important. So, we're all about life first and then money here. But I want to make sure that people know that they can still

have money too. So, when you made this sort of shift, right, from being the guy that works 70 hours a week and only logical to actually paying attention to your feelings, how did the money flow? Did you start like taking more time for yourself and your bottom line went down or what?

Peter: Well, I think that I can't ignore the fact that I had a really great exit event in 2018 from all the work that I had put into it the previous 30 years. So, I had gotten amazing dividends from all the work that I put into and that just happened too late at a time where I was really feeling a lot more and realizing I didn't have the relationships that I wanted. On my second marriage with my beautiful wife behind me and I was around her parents, her parents are very successful, both personally and professionally. And they had a group of friends who they got together with nearly weekly for the last 35 years. And that's not happening in my generation. And I realized how badly I wanted that. And that was one of the things that drove me to start for ThriveUnion, So, I could have a group of friends that really transcends time and they're on that same journey with me through life.

Jaime: Yeah. And it's – I've got goosebumps. Now it's more fulfilling though too. I think we sort of sidestep fulfilling for that exit because everyone's like, "Wow, if I have the exit then I'll feel a bunch of better with the money."

Peter: Yeah.

Jaime: But what would you tell yourself in hindsight right now?

Peter: Oh yeah, the research is really, really clear in that we all know this. We say this, success doesn't equal happiness. We all say that but we gloss over it. But then the research bears it out and it turns out people who have more money are not happier than people who don't. So, once you have a basic standard of living, which means you have food security, housing security, transportation, a job, and your basic technology, more money absolutely positively does not make you happier.

So, if you want to be happier, some of the things to focus on, number one is relationships. The number one factor, if you want to live a longer, happier, healthier life with better brain function is not money, education, social status, business success, marriage. It is none of those things. The number one factor is quality of relationships, which could be with a spouse or a partner or could

be with just friends and family.

So, that's the number one factor if you want to live a longer, happier, healthier life. And if that is not your number one goal, I'm not sure what you're living for right now. It doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me. So, yeah, the financial success has absolutely no correlation to living a better life.

Jaime: I've so many questions. Okay. So, back in the day, probably 15 years or so ago, I remember writing the list of the five people I hang out with the most and it was all very surface level. And number one, I didn't really want to be where they were. They hated their jobs kind of stuff. But also number two, like I felt like we had no depth. And now after many evolutions of different friendships that have come through, the level of depth that I have with friendships is insane. That I never thought I'd be able to get before. And so, can you tell me about for you what that level of depth of relationship really matters?

Peter: Yeah, that's a really big deal. So, what you're talking about there is really, really important. And I recently read a study, I'm going to approximate these numbers and more or less, it takes between 40 and 50 hours to develop a casual friendship time together between 40 and 50 hours. A good friend takes someone around 100 hours and a great or best friend takes about 200 hours of time together. So, that's what we can see when we were kids in the neighborhood, going to school with people back and forth and doing sports, why it was a lot easier to develop high quality relationships. So, for us in middle age, which I'm not sure go from 30 to 60 or 70 years or something like that, it's so much harder because unless you're spending a lot of time at work with a coworker, it becomes much harder to have those quality relationships.

So, I have very intentionally in the last five years, constantly been adding people to my list and saying, "Okay, I'm going to build a friendship with this person," and intentionally spent more time with them via video chats, coffees, lunches, and dinners. Right now I'm doing a video call every single day and I was trying to do some kind of social activity every single day, pre-coronavirus. So, yes, it takes intention in middle age to actually do that. You can join— There's tons of business mastermind or networking groups you can do. You can just start at meeting neighbors and inviting them over for a drink or a coffee or dinner. But yes, you've got to get really intentional about it because it's critical to your health. If— Let me ask you this, here's the tradeoff. If you could live seven

more years and those seven more years were of high quality, which means you have friends, purpose and good brain activity, lack of sickness, would you spend an hour a day investing in social relationships? That's basically the question and if you do, that's probably the benefit for you.

Jaime: And the social— Really, that part is fun all right. I mean, usually deep connection is fun. One of the things that I really noticed quite a few years ago, which was very eye opening epiphany like for me, is that I never intentionally asked anybody to hang out. Like everybody asked me and I was like, "Oh, okay. Everybody wanted me to be their best friend." And I never actually made any effort like at all. And when I started making the effort and picking the people that I wanted to spend more time with, not just the ones that asked me, because there's very different levels of depth on what you can go, especially based on your personality types and if you want to hang out with them more.

I was like, "Sure, I'll hang out. Sure." I just kept saying yes to other people. And then, realizing the level of depth that I really, really was craving was something I had put zero time into. And so, having the actions to be able to do that, how do you start to cultivate that? Like if its 200 hours and you really want to have a subset of a couple of best friends, that's a lot of time and space-

Peter: It is.

Jaime: How do you start doing that?

Peter: Yeah. How do we shortcut that? There's just like anything else you decide. Most of us can commit to— A lot of people will say, "I'm going to train for an iron man. That's a 1000 hours or something like that." Or run a marathon and its 500 hours or whatever it is. So, it's just like anything else in life and it's just a little bit of time every single day. Just like anything else, any other discipline that matters, like going to the gym or reading or meditating. It's incredibly easy to do and it's incredibly easy not to do. So, you just got to pick your disciplines. I think the benefits are so incredibly clear and obvious that it's an easy trade off. Seven more years of high quality life for an hour, a day of social interaction. Sure. It's an easy transaction for me.

Jaime: I love this. Does it matter how many best friends you have versus like is there a level of this? Just as long as we have social interaction?

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- Peter: I haven't seen any research on that.
- Jaime: Okay, that's awesome. So, that means I can just have lots of date nights with five people –
- Peter: Absolutely.
- Jaime: – and then we all– Okay, I'm trying to time hack my way to yes.
- Peter: You certainly can.
- Jaime: But I really appreciate it because being alone is very different than feeling very lonely. And if you don't really have a support network, there's a very big distinction. Can you talk to that a little bit?
- Peter: Yes. So, loneliness obviously is a pain that we feel and if you're feeling that way, you need to go out and take care of it. What actually can happen over a period of time is you actually get so numb to the pain you're usually in a state of anxiety or depression, which means you can't feel the pain anymore. And being with people actually feels painful. This is bad. If you've actually gotten past feeling so lonely that you are now depressed and feel anxious being around people and there's nothing more I can tell you to do, then you absolutely have got to push through it. So, when you're with people, you're going to feel like you have social anxiety. You might feel, I don't like this person.
- What's kind of strange is that state of loneliness actually becomes kind of an immunity system against meeting more people because the more anxiety we feel, the more we're suspicious and paranoid about the intentions of other people, which is really, really bad. So, I'm telling you that is out there and what you've got to do is just kind of overcome it and push yourself through it through gradual and continuous socialization.
- Jaime: Wow. Okay. This is amazing. So, when we're looking at anxiety and depression, it's really interesting to see that entrepreneurs can continue to push forward in their business and ignore all that, you know what I mean? Ignore all that stuff like, we have to go through, we have to hustle anyway. We're in the culture of hustling and ignoring all of our feelings as much as humanly possible and just pushing through anyway. But how can we take the time to actually pay attention to, hey, I'm actually feeling anxiety. I know a lot of people, clients and friends of mine don't even call it anxiety
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because then that seems bad. We can't even call it depression because that seems bad too and there's so much stigma around all of this.

Peter: Yeah. Yeah, I wish I could tell you something more besides, beginning of this process, taking what I'm recommending and doing it, which is the meditating and the self-reflecting, and I'll give business owners one more reason why they should. Leadership begins and ends with people. So, if you want to grow your business faster, if you want to influence your team, your supplier networks; clients better, it begins and ends with your ability to be authentic and present and connect with people. So, if you need a financial motivator of why you're psychological, emotional and social health is important, this is the reason. If you're ever finding your inability to connect with employees and you're having to use more fear and financial motivations as a way of motivating people and it's always about paying them to do things and they don't do things because they actually like and respect you, that's the reason why you invest this kind of stuff.

So, when you sit before your employee or employees, or actually I don't like the word employees, your contributors, your team, and you want to motivate them better, being authentic and real will do that. So, the fastest way to increase your self-confidence, your self-esteem and your overall authenticity, once again is being really healthy from an emotional point of view.

Jaime: Go team. Thank you. Because we do need that, unfortunately. It's like okay let me slap you upside the head to let you know that this is really important. What do you think people should do to actually improve their EQ, cause we do— Everybody knows about IQ, but actually having their emotional intelligence get better, what did you do to do yours and what do you suggest to people as leaders?

Peter: So, what most people are petrified of is what they need the most and that is feedback. So, what I'm a big proponent of is humility. Humility is the recognition that you as a human being have no more value than any other human being on the planet. Now you may have more authority in your company and more responsibility, but you as a human being are no more valuable than anybody else. It's the ability to look at yourself objectively, both strengths and weaknesses and also it's the recognition that you are not perfect. Now, that's a very important realization. So, things that are perfect. Let's go ahead and list the things that are perfect. The Mona Lisa, Michelangelo's David, Beethoven's Fourth Symphony, those things

are perfect and perfect things need to be protected.

If it's not perfect, it needs to be changed. It needs to grow in some way. So, the only way for you to grow is to get feedback from your environment. And good leaders know how to look at facial expressions, body language, that's how attuned we get too when we're delivering a message and it's not resonating. But many business owners are not humble, they are so incredibly arrogant, which more or less means they are enabled to see the mistakes that they're making on a regular basis. That they have got to either hire a coach and or empower others to give them feedback. So, I'm a very expensive business coach, business strategist, and I get paid by companies to come and give their top executives feedback.

And the truth is, they don't need to pay me hundreds of dollars an hour if they just empowered somebody else in the organization to give them feedback. Feedback is nothing more than empowering somebody to whenever they might need to hear it, give them honest kind and helpful feedback. So, feedback needs to be honest. It can't be ruthless, you're not trying to hurt somebody. It needs to be helpful, which means when you tell them specifically what happened or what their experience was. So, when you came into the room and you kind of blustered and blew through everybody, here was our experience of that. And it needs to be kind, which means delivered in a way that's really— Delivered in a way which means that it's meant to improve somebody else.

And so, as a business owner, you need to empower a couple of your team members, a couple of your contributors to give you honest, kind and helpful feedback. And the truth is you don't need to hire expensive business coaches like me if you're going to get feedback from people around you. But that's really important. Feedback is the oxygen of growth.

Jaime: I absolutely adore that. Thank you for saying that also. And it's sometimes hard to see it when you're already in the bottle, you can't see the label kind of a thing, right? So, if you're already in it and you don't know that you're being arrogant or you don't know, what can you actually – what are some of the triggers that you notice that you're doing something wrong in regards to this?

Peter: So, first of all, to be a human being is to be delusional.

Jaime: I'm so glad you said that. That makes me feel so much better as a human.

Peter: So, we are constantly diluting ourselves as to how we are in the world. I've been delusional many times. I've put on weight and thought it was kind of strange that my pants didn't fit anymore. Why am I passing out fitting anymore? And I was just delusional about that I was gaining weight. I've been delusional about how my effect is, I thought something went really well, and I realized something went terribly. So, we're delusional. And so, you've got to first of all accept that you're delusional. And my goal as a leader is to correct my mistakes as close to the moment that it happens. That's my goal. So, that the mistake doesn't have reverberations, that's what I want to do in my business and in my relationships. I want to correct my mistakes as quickly as possible.

So, number one, I first of all started empowering people to give me feedback. It means that they should not have any fear of being fired or any kind of retribution when they give you honest, kind and helpful feedback. That's really important on the list. And you really got to start listening. And when somebody else gives you feedback that you do not like, do not reject it. Just sit there and breathe and see how can I grow with this, even if you disagree with it. The worst thing in the world you can do whenever you're getting feedback from your team is to argue with them, to punish them for giving you feedback. I've given people feedback before who asked for it and they more or less punished me by arguing, disagreeing, sighing, making it a miserable experience. You want to become really good at both giving and receiving feedback and feedback comes back from people saying, hey, I need to have a chat with you and talk with you about it. It also comes from verbal, I'm sorry, nonverbal physical cues as well, start becoming very, very attuned to that.

Jaime: Okay. So, a lot of us, reaction is just easier than actually contemplating and taking a step back in general, especially for your team members. So, I love that you said, "Well, I'm not going to fire you for giving me feedback," but where is the line when the argument or the – You keep trying to give somebody verbal feedback and help them out and then it's just not working. How do you deal with somebody that's like that?

Peter: It kind of depends on what your role is. So, as a business owner, we actually have, inside of our contributors handbook, so contributor's the word we use for our team members and it's the handbook, and in there is the feedback agreement, which I have developed and I now consult companies on. And in there, basically

talks about the rules of giving and receiving feedback. As a business leader, I more or less can give feedback to any one of my team members at any time. It is my right and probably my responsibility. Whenever I give feedback, 99.9% of the time it is done in private. It is done confidentially in a way that they are protected. Only 1 in 1,000 times would I do it in public. But that's a time when other people need to really see how bad and how negligent that activity was. It is incredibly, incredibly rare that I do that. So, it's always done in private.

When it is for my team members, my team members can also give me feedback anytime. I just ask they do it with me but in private, at a time of my choosing. So, they have to ask me when I want the feedback. But then I always listen to it and I never, ever, argue with it. I will listen to it, I will write notes. I will take it in. I reflect upon it and once you've got the feedback, it's up to you what parts you want to act upon, so it's completely and totally up to you.

Jaime: So, and if you don't agree and then they keep coming back and giving you feedback, I mean it's your choice to do whatever you want based on that, knowing what their feelings actually are.

Peter: Correct.

Jaime: Okay. So, as leaders, especially during the Corona craziness, that's what I'm calling it, the Corona craziness, their emotional turmoil inside is just, I've just been hearing so many different things. Up, up, really, really great one day, really, really not great other days, but they also really feel compelled or are told to, "Now is the time you have to step up, you have to be the leader you want to be." And it's like this conflict in their mind of going, Well, what's the "right" way to be able to do this. What advice do you have for leaders who are really dealing with this internal conflict?

Peter: Oh great. So, I watched again just last night, the Austin native Brené Brown special called, Call to Courage on Netflix. Have you seen it?

Jaime: Yes I have.

Peter: Oh, it's so good. It is so good. And I don't know why more people haven't watched it because it is so rich with good content. And what she basically says there in the middle of it is, is she had a group of Navy SEALs and she asked the Navy SEALs, is it possible to show courage without emotional risk? Is it possible to

show us courage without being vulnerable? Is it possible to show courage without, in some way, putting yourself at risk? And the answer was no. It's absolutely not possible. So, when we're trying to be courageous, AKA strong, it doesn't mean that you're not still vulnerable, that you're still not hurting and things are not really hard for you.

So, I gave you a little snippet of what was covered in that 1 hour and 10 minutes special on Netflix. And I recommend every single business, every single leader in America, go back and watch that because it's rich with really great takeaway content. You can be strong, in order to be strong, you still have to be vulnerable, which means you have to be courageous and willing to take risks that you may not have taken before. Being strong does not mean being stoic. It does not mean being self-righteous. It doesn't necessarily, being arrogant. Those three things have nothing to do with being strong. Those are actually all signs of weakness.

Jaime: Courage keeps coming up over and over. I'm actually reading a book called the Courage to Live Dangerously right now, and it does feel like we need to be a lot more courageous during that time. But where is the line of vulnerability? Because as a leader you don't want to be like, "shit's hitting the fan. Where do we go from here?" Because there seems to be a line of still being an authentic leader, but not sharing absolutely all the ups and downs that you're going through also, because sometimes when you're feeling despair, that's not the time to be talking to your team members right?

Peter: Yeah. My example for that was going through my divorce 10 years ago, and I had two young kids at the time, they were probably four and six at the time we were going through divorce, and divorces are really ups and downs. And we were going through – It was also in the middle of the Great Recession where it in 2008, 2009, and financially things were really scary. So, myself and my former wife, we were divorcing and we would talk about all the scary stuff of finances, but the message to my kids were, things were a little uncertain, but just so you know, you're going to be okay.

So, I always kind of had the private discussions with somebody who was my true teller, my confidant, to have those tough conversations where you're kind of full of despair. But whenever you're talking with your team, you try to be realistic somewhat to most of the facts, what the possibilities are, what the risks are, and also of your course of action, showing a reasonable level of

confidence depending on the action. But that's kind of what leadership is, which is part art; part science. It's kind of picking that right tone to show the objective reality of the situation with a reasonable amount of confidence going forward.

Jaime: Oh yeah. Riding, riding the waves of like, "okay where are we going now? We're over here." I really appreciate that analogy there too, because it is having the deep friendships where you can talk about the shit hitting the fan, so you can get it out. Especially because it's lonely being a leader, especially if you don't have anybody to talk to about it.

Peter: And internalizing all that.

Jaime: Yeah. So, tell me a little more about the difference between, your deep friendships and your business friendships that you can really go deep on that. Are they different? Are they the same? Tell me a little more about what you think.

Peter: Yeah, I've got really close relationships with all of my team members now. I'm lucky in a small business to have people, to have personal, like a family-like atmosphere. Frequently when you get into bigger organizations, 50, 100, 200, 300, you lose that family-like feel and it becomes what people call more corporate. And that's very, very typical. So, I'm lucky in that I still have a small environment and can stay largely personal, but even when I had bigger organizations, I always had an open door policy and allowed for anybody in the organization to come in and tell me what they saw in the organization or in me. And that was really important for continuing to build my authenticity as a leader.

Jaime: How personal is too personal though?

Peter: Okay, cool. Yeah, of course you're always drawing lines with that and making decisions what you do and do not share. And that, once again, takes decades of experience to figure out what's comfortable for you.

Jaime: Darn it. We all want quick fixes nowadays. Come on. Can't you just give us, yeah.

[Crosstalk]

Peter: Well, it's kind of funny as I've gotten older, I'm 51 years old and I say this not with any arrogance, but I recognize I've got a lot of

power. I'm probably at the top of our society as far as my social, economic power. So, I can be a lot more personal than somebody who is younger and coming up the chain because they are trying to garner respect. By my mere achievements, I've achieved so much, I can be a lot more personal, I have a lot less to risk.

Jaime: Okay. Tell me more. Why do you think that is?

Peter: Well, power. Let me ask you a question, Jamie – All right, here's the question. Do you want more power and why? Why or why not?

Jaime: I want to say no but only because I don't find power as the thing that will get me all the things that I want. Do you know what I mean? Okay, continue.

Peter: Fair enough, all right, so I'm going to change your mind. So, I love it when people tell me no. So, power is the ability to achieve intended results.

Jaime: Ooh, that's a good definition.

Peter: Power is the ability to achieve intended results. Most people have a negative association with power because they think of some fat cat CEO who's in a corner office manipulating other people to take something away from them to make themselves better in some regards. That's what most people think power is.

Jaime: So, it's like power versus force. Yeah, okay. Continue.

Peter: But power is just the ability to achieve intended results. So, no matter where you are in life, and you look at where you are versus what you want. You might say, I want a better living situation. I want a closer relationship with my partner or spouse. I want to have better relationship with my kids. I want to take a vacation where I can go for two weeks, a year on a cultural excursion and not have to worry about work. Those are all exercises in power. So, power, no matter where you are in life, you're trying to generate more power so you can have the results that you want.

I wouldn't say it's the only measure that we probably should be looking at. But I would say it's probably, in our capitalistic driven society, is probably one of the most important measures that we could probably have. Yeah. So, power is really important. So, I look at myself and I know that I have a ton of power and people can see that when, by my way I articulate myself, if they see my house, if they know that my business success is. So, I get a lot of

respect walking into a room. Somebody who is a lot younger and doesn't have all of that power is much more fragile. I mean I can't get fired. Somebody who's coming up, they might think if I share this personal information, people think less of me. I might not get an advancement. So, they have a lot more to risk. They'd be a lot more careful in disclosing their personal information.

There's still a lot that I don't disclose. I'm just saying I'm a lot less at risk because I can't be fired for example, because I have enough power that I have my own employment.

Jaime: Okay. So, I want to break this down too. So, are there levels, because it sounds like there is, there's levels of power? Then what's the opposite of power? Where's the skew going towards?

Peter: Well, sure. We call that in our society loosely the social economic ladder and more or less, when you think of the most powerful person in the world, you look at somebody who has the ability to stop and start wars, the ability to create millions or trillions of dollars in wealth. More or less the person who can deploy the most other people to do other things.

By argument, most people would say the President of the United States is probably the most powerful position in the world. But you could also make an argument that CEOs of a lot of the top corporations are probably sitting at the top of the power heap. Their ability to create and destroy wealth, deploy people and resources in different places around the world, basically by edict makes them incredibly— Them or her, him or her, incredibly powerful. And more or less when you look at somebody who lacks power, you're looking at people, and I've met them, they are struggling to get their next meal. They don't know where their next meal is coming from. They don't have housing. They don't have the ability to even change their life. Their life basically feels like they are a victim to the world around them. Those are the least powerful people in the world.

Jaime: So, before we were talking about happiness and wealth and that sort of thing. So, I was going to ask you back then, and now is a perfect time to ask, when we're going through charity or helping people, the more wealth you technically have, the more people technically that you can help. But it sounds like what you're saying is that power is actually more important than the wealth side, because you can still enact the same amount of change based on that?

Peter: And it's really hard. So, the old adage still works today. I'd rather teach a man to fish than give him a fish. However, empowering other people, getting people to actually develop their own power is really hard. It's really, really hard. I mean, I look at, I was raised in basically a white collar suburb in Southern California. My parents were both teachers.

They both had college degrees. 90% of my high school. Went to college. I was in boy Scouts, I was involved in church, I was involved in extracurricular activities. I more or less had 25 years of people pouring resources in me to develop me to such a place that I was able to exercise my own power. That is a ton of time, a ton of resources that were invested in somebody. So, one of my jobs now is in leadership development, that's one of the things that I do now. And that's more or less to get people to start, even first of all, getting on the playing field and going, okay, yeah, I want more power. And yeah, I want to be able to lead myself better. In getting somebody to that point of view, it takes a good hour of time. So, empowerment is basically self-leadership.

That's what empowerment is. And the definition of empowerment is the ability to live life by your own design. The ability to live life by your own design. And by my estimation, this is not scientific, 90% of the people on the planet are victim to their circumstance and maybe only 5% actually are living an empowered life. Another 4% or so are people who are striving to get to a place of empowerment. But yeah, what I've done over my lifetime is I've been a constant learner. I mean, what you want to do, if you want to grow your power, you should be reading books all the time. You should be listening to great podcasts like this. You should be attending one or two personal or professional development courses every single year like clockwork. You should get yourself a coach or a friend who gives you honest and regular feedback. These are all of the tools that we use to develop our personal power so we can achieve the results that we want.

Jaime: I could talk to you forever. Okay. I'm going to ask one more question before we have to start wrapping up in a minute. I'm fascinated by empowerment versus disempowerment. And what came up is, when you were at your height of **logicness** and unhappiness, did you feel powerful or disempowered?

Peter: I think I felt I was so unhappy. I think I felt disempowered. So, my satisfaction wasn't there. Even though I was in the throes of

actually making some fairly good progress by a business societal gauges. I was making good, I was a business owner. I had employed 50 people. I was making money. So, most people would think that I was fairly empowered, but I was so unhappy. I would say I was disempowered.

Jaime: So, I appreciate you saying that because I think there's these lines and ebbs and flows of where we are, where we're sitting as a human, but also what's going on around us. So, again, everybody would have thought you were powerful. And again, in so many ways you were, is what it sounds like? And you swung the pendulum pretty quickly, but the moments of feeling disempowered negate all of the power that you had created from before, or at least that's what it sounds like. Which is crazy.

Peter: Yeah, I think now that I have a much greater authenticity, self-confidence and self-esteem. I'm more powerful. The ability to achieve intended results. What I really want and what I'm exercising is my leadership power. So, leadership power is basically the ability to empower other people to achieve their results that they're doing. And so, that's where my focus is now.

Jaime: Well, then you can have your team members be empowered and then they can all go and be free and live happier lives because of it. And then, we're a better human species because of that. So, thank you for what you're doing.

Peter: That is modern leadership. That is modern leadership and that's what you're engaged in too. I mean, that's where I get off. I get really off when I'm seeing people transcend their lives, when they actually have a fundamental shift in seeing what they are and what their life can be. That's what gets me excited and gets me up every morning, creating new content.

Jaime: I got goosebumps twice during this episode. Okay. I know we have to start wrapping up because we're going quite long. What is one action out of everything that people could take this week to help them towards their goal of a million?

Peter: So, first of all, we covered this already, so I'm going to take this as a freebie. Enact the feedback agreement with as many people as you possibly can. I have an extended family and all of my family has permission to give me honest, kind, and helpful feedback at nearly anytime, especially my weird roommate, my wife behind me. She has permission to give me feedback, which is really, really

important. The second one is the concept of absolute responsibility, which we didn't talk about here. And absolute responsibility is a fundamental shift away from just normal responsibility. Responsibility is about blame and shame. What happened here and who do we blame for it? Absolute responsibility says we own the situation of our life independent of blame or shame.

And the reason that shift is so fundamental to living a life of empowerment is we cannot change what we do not own. So, if we think, Well, I am the way I am because I was taken advantage of, or I was abused, or I lacked education and it's somebody else's fault, as long as we have that we have an out we have an escape hatch so we don't fix it. And as soon as you say I am the way I am independent of who did what to me, the situation that I may not like right now is mine. We are then empowered to change it.

So, absolute responsibility is probably one of the most important mind shifts that any human being, and especially any business leader, takes. And the second benefit of that is as soon as you find absolute responsibility for owning the situations in your life, your anger level goes way down. You stop blaming anybody else, you stop getting frustrating on a regular basis. Because obviously in business something are going to go wrong, that's just all there is to it. But you're actually able to reduce the number of things that go on because you're owning the entire situation.

Jaime: I adore this. And it's funny, because we have a joke in my family where we're like, "I'm doing it to myself." It's like, "Yeah, I'm doing to myself again." Great.

Peter: Yes.

Jaime: And after over and over and over, hearing that, it's really, really annoying. But also extremely empowering, as you're going through.

Peter: I'm going to read to you the greatest thing ever.

Jaime: Okay.

Peter: Here it is. My wife is kind of laughing, because I just jumped into her space and stole this off of her wall.

Jaime: I noticed. Her face is so fun right now.

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- Peter: And I ripped the sign off behind her. So, I'm going to have to pay a price for this one.
- Jaime: She's going to give you feedback. Yeah, feedback. She's going to give you feedback.
- Peter: I'm going to get some feedback on this one, and I deserve it.
- Here it goes. I am where I am because I allowed it. Not only did I allow it, I am currently committed to it regardless if it served me Well, or not.
- Jaime: Drop the mic. We all need that up.
- Peter: See, it was worth ripping it out.
- Jaime: It was, totally.
- Peter: It was worth it, it's that good.
- Jaime: Tell her I really appreciate it. I don't know if that helps with the feedback. That was awesome. And knowing that and embodying that is a bit different than actually just seeing it on their wall. So, I appreciate the fact that, not only do you have it on your wall, but you embody it also. So, where can we find more about you and everything that you do, and ThriveUnion and all the amazing stuff?
- Peter: So, I've got two ventures. One is ThriveUnion. You can go to thriveunion.org and also our YouTube channel, which I highly recommend you go to. We have over 60 videos that help us understand what are called predictable models. These videos are only five minutes long. They're so informational and so fun. Go to YouTube/ThriveUnion, or search ThriveUnion on YouTube to find those videos.
- Second thing you can do. I'm also a leadership strategist, author and speaker. I do both consulting, training and speaking for organizations, whether it be businesses or nonprofits or schools. And you can find me at petermontoya.com.
- Jaime: And we will link to everything in the show notes, so everyone can just click a button, especially for the videos that you talked about earlier too. Thank you so much for coming on the show today. I really, really appreciate it.
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Peter: Oh, I absolutely adored it. You are a wonderful conversationalist. I had so much fun today. Thank you.

Jaime: Thank you. And say hi to your wife for me. Thank you. Take care. Bye.

Peter: **[Inaudible] [00:51:17].**

[End of Audio]

Duration: 52 minutes