
Jaime Masters: Welcome to Eventual Millionaire. I am Jaime Masters, and today on the show we have Ben Woodward. You can check him out at ben-woodward.com. He wrote a book called *The Empowerment Paradox*. He's also a personal and corporate transformation expert. Thank you so much for coming on the show today.

Ben Woodward: Thank you very much, Jaime, it's a pleasure to be with you.

Jaime Masters: I love the premise of the book, *The Empowerment Paradox*. I just started listening to it. I didn't have a chance to listen beforehand. And I see it in your background. Can you please tell me a little bit about what this empowerment paradox is?

Ben Woodward: Yes, it discusses the essential duality of joy and suffering in life, and also in business, by the way. The two coexist. We often, in our pursuit of getting an ideal outcome in our futures, often try to develop this vision of emotional homeostasis, where suffering or adversity doesn't exist, everything is in this beautiful equilibrium, and it's not a real existence.

So, it looks at, first of all, what is the role of adversity in life? What purpose does it play? And then critically, the second part of the book, are what vital virtues do we need to possess in order to confront it properly, respond to it well, and not just get through it when it's tough, when challenge comes our way, but actually have it as a catalyst that can transform us into the very best version of ourselves.

Jaime Masters: I love this because shining the light on it, really important, because no offense, online anything, internet marketing tells us, "No, you can only have joy and not have any suffering whatsoever." And then we're in business going, "I must be the weird one," right? And that's not the case at all, and let alone all the other suffering that comes throughout life, anyway.

And while we're told and we know this logically, that failure is what grows you, and there's no such thing as failure, everything is lessons, and we've got that. Except when you're in it, and you're in pain and you're suffering, it is a different story.

So, tell me a little bit about the suffering that you've personally been through because I read a lot of different stories in your book that you've been through. A lot of suffering. And again, not uncommon in any way, shape, or form now. So, share with us a little bit about your story.

Ben Woodward: Yes, so my story is interesting. I grew up, I was born in the UK, grew up in New Zealand. At the age of about 22, I decided to move back to the UK and catch up with family that I hadn't seen for a long time. The last time I'd seen my father, I was 14, so it had been a long period of time.

I went over there on a one-way ticket. Very impulsive decision. Full of enthusiasm, and you can anticipate, I'm sure, what it must be like for a 22-year-old who hasn't seen his dad since he was 14, that buildup of just raw emotion, of anticipation, of excitement, of all that stuff that's gonna come with it.

And about two weeks into arriving, moving in with them, I found out that he was an unconvicted sex offender. And what do I do with that?

And so, to cut a long story short, my decision was to do what is right, not what is easy. To confront it head on, to stand with his victims, not with my dad. And so that process meant that I had to facilitate his arrest. I saw him – I had to testify against him in court. I drove him there myself when it came time for him to be sentenced, and yes, he was in prison when I got married. He was still there when we had our first child. I think he was still there when we had our second. It was a difficult thing.

Now, the challenges, for me, I mean, those things kinda stretch on for years. It doesn't happen in a moment or in a few moments. Yes, that just drags on, drags on, drags on. And that required a lot of me and others, of course – I wasn't the only one involved in that process – to navigate through that successfully.

So, I learned a lot of how do you develop patience in a process when you're desperately wanting it to be over, when you don't have any patience, right? It's so easy for people to say, "Hang in there. This will pass." But what if you have no patience in that moment? What if you're saying – because amongst all of that, you've got this sense of identity that's still really being formed at the age of 22.

And so you've got all of these really complicated questions that are going through your own mind, when you're going, "I've got the same name as him." Yes? I look in the mirror and I see similarities, and how does that make me feel? How do I respond to that? And you've got all of these conflicting emotions.

So, that really helped me confront a lot of things that I wasn't expecting to confront and have to deal with, but what was interesting was project a few years into the future, I'm now a very young corporate executive, and we suddenly get hit with this major crisis. It's a billion-dollar – well, I say billion dollar. It was an \$8 billion company at the time, and I was responsible for a couple of their international markets.

And we had this major crisis take place, and what I found was all of the suffering, the adversity, the pain that I had to confront and deal with on moral grounds, when it wasn't easy to do way back then, suddenly informed, educated, and prepared me for these moments. And then, all of a sudden, when I'm having to make tough decisions and respond with strength, with integrity, with honesty, with transparency, and do what was right and not what was easy, I found that life had actually prepared me for that.

I was grateful for at least getting some benefit from that horrible ordeal I went through before. But it taught a really interesting lesson, that everything is wrapped up in life, isn't it? Business and everything. Our identity, our morals, our values, our ethics, our perspective, it all meshes together to make us something great or not. But we're the ones that decide.

Jaime Masters:

And there's freedom in that, and also – I mean, no pressure for everything that you've been through, right? I know they joke, like "Diamonds are made from pressure." And we're like, "Yes, except you didn't have to go through that." I mean, everybody goes through pieces of that, and that's why I think it's so important that we actually talk about it.

Because it's not just the same amount of feelings throughout the years, period, it's a lot of ebb and flow. And sometimes there is joy in that, and sometimes there is definitely not, and there's the depths of darkness. And how do you navigate that, especially knowing that you have a job to do, right? And stay clear and level-headed and try not to struggle in a flailing type way, I guess. Or maybe you don't. Tell me more.

Ben Woodward:

Well, yes, I mean, we've got to recognize that not all pain is bad, for a start. That's the starting point. And a friend of mine once said, he was the CEO of a big company, he said, "In business, we're always going into or coming out of a crisis." He said, "And if you're smiling, then I know what's around the corner for you." Right?

Because that's the nature of it. And I've found that to be true. And so the challenges, then, for business owners, for entrepreneurs, is how do I respond to the pain, when it's tough? Because like you said, there's so many places online that teach, "You can have it all, be it all, and it feels good, and you can have it now." And that's just a load of garbage, isn't it?

Jaime Masters: Yes.

Ben Woodward: It's not true. So, the reality is we need to be willing to pay a price. Excellence costs something, and it costs something of us. And so we've got to be willing to pay that price, and that price does require a degree of adversity, setbacks, unexpected learning curves, all that kind of stuff.

So, it is a painful journey, but it's a joyful, rewarding, abundant journey as well. So, we've got to balance – like I said, my book talks about the balance, the duality of joy and suffering, and I want to make sure we emphasize that here, is the journey to achievement and to excellence in business will have the adversity, but it's also a joyful ride as well. We've got to see the both.

So, a lot of that comes down to, then, if I do want to enjoy the journey and not just suffer, struggle through it and give up before my time, it comes down to how do I look at the tough stuff? How do I interpret it? Because what I've seen with a lot of the corporate executives that I've worked with and the entrepreneurs that I've worked with that are excellent, that are high achievers, they view adversity differently.

And so when they see it as having value – and I like that, there's a word that we use, appreciate. Do you appreciate something? That comes from the Latin word *appriata*. Sorry, let me say that again. *Appretiare*, which means to give value, right?

So, when we look at something, if we look at adversity and we can give value to it, then it starts to be something else. If it's just hurt, if it's just discomfort, then I don't value it and I don't respond to it well. But if I can see its purpose, or even if I can appreciate its value in the long term, then I will respond differently to it. I will be more patient, I will be able to get through something that's challenging.

So, the first step is we need to appreciate what the role of adversity is. If I'm going through a crisis, if I'm getting rejection from a key

client, if I've just lost an element of my business, if a pandemic has hit and all of a sudden things are changing, can I look at this through a different lens and appreciate that within this, there may be learning, education, opportunity, and a chance to become something different?

And that's a critical starting point, I think, is appreciating the function and purpose of adversity in the very first instance.

Jaime Masters: So much to unpack in regards to that. And what that brought up for me, and my listeners know this, that the kiddo's dad has stage four cancer, and he's had more joy in his life in finding out last year than he ever has before in his life, which is very counterintuitive. I just interviewed him not that long ago, and he was talking about how now joy matters more than anything, where in reality, he'd be like, "Oh, everything just hurts right at this moment," you would think, right?

So, the lens sort of start – and I'm not saying that there's not a bunch of really suffering, horrible moments also, but that lens is something that how do you change that? Because for me, watching him, I was like, oh, it just automatically shifted.

Whereas if it's a business thing, might not automatically shift, right? I'll be like, I have rose-colored glasses on occasionally, and I try, but it's not an automatic shift.

Ben Woodward: It's not. That's a great question. So, I was conducting a workshop in Birmingham in the UK a few years ago, and it was with a group of entrepreneurs, and we were talking about one of the – this very question, interestingly enough. And so we were talking about in order to really move forward, you gotta have that compelling why. That purpose behind it.

And of course, that boy with his father, he's certainly experiencing it right now. Changes his perspective.

So, I was asking the different entrepreneurs in the room, what's your real compelling reason for being in business right now? What gets you up in the morning?

And this one lady, I'm sure she was front row, very enthusiastic, throws her hand up and she shares. And she said she worked in a health and wellness little business, and she said, "I've just recently overcome a terminal illness." And she said, "And as a result, I just

have a new lease on life. I just see my health with such a different perspective, and I just want to go out there and make a difference with people. Help them understand the value of good health and give them a chance, and the tools and the resources to improve it.”

And her eyes were just sparkling. She was effervescent and full of energy, and it was just a very, very compelling story.

The lady behind her put her hand up, and she looked upset, right? And she goes, “I’ve got a concern with that.” I said, “Oh? Share away.” And she said, “Well, I’ve not had a terminal illness.” She said, “I’m not saying I want one, but I haven’t had that significant event that gives me those significant emotions.” She said, “I feel like a big tree with little roots.” Right?

Jaime Masters: That’s a great way to put it.

Ben Woodward: She said, “Sir, how do I move on from this?” And I thought, what a profound question.

So, I asked the rest of the group. I said, “How many people feel like her, like a big tree with little roots?” And about 80 percent of the room put their hand up. They had this great vision. I said, “Now, let’s look at the metaphor here.” I said, “Because the answer is in the metaphor that you’ve used.” I said, “So the top of the tree, metaphorically, is like your vision. What you want to achieve. But the roots are like your desires, right?”

And we can get a vision fairly quickly. You might catch a moment of inspiration because that can spark pretty fast, can’t it? But then to get the know-how, the strong desire, the character, the discipline, the resources, and all of the interconnected parts to turn that vision into reality takes time.

So, the top happens in a moment. The bottom takes time to develop, right? I said, “So, what we’ve got to work on it building the root system, and that takes time to grow, doesn’t it?”

So, the starting point – this kind of feeds into the virtues that I kind of go through in my book – the starting point is to discipline and to train our desires. Because what happens if I don’t desire the right things?

Jaime Masters: I’ve done that before.

Ben Woodward: Or what if I desire the right things, but not in the right amount? I want to be a success – and plenty of us have seen this – so many people that have desires to be successful, to be millionaires, to be successful in business, but they don't want it enough.

I was with my brother once. He had come over to the UK. We were visiting some friends. And he was regaling them with stories from New Zealand, he'd been over there for the last few years, and was obviously painting a wonderful picture.

And one of them said, "Ah, Simon, that sounds incredible. You know what? When I win the lottery, I'm gonna go to New Zealand, and I'm gonna visit that place. That sounds incredible."

And I looked around because I was like, "Is having a lark?" Right? When you win the lottery? What kind of strategy is that? But sometimes people will have this vision of what they want, but it's just a wish. How do you differentiate between wishful thinking and really deep, meaningful aspiration?

And that's where you've got to train your desires to match, and when we get the balance between the two, then I think it's almost said and done that success will follow.

Jaime Masters: Okay. Let's talk about that then, too. Especially because newer entrepreneurs that can build that vision very, very quickly, and then especially when somebody who's been in business for a long time can hear the stories of them, you're like, "Oh, wait till you get thrown on your butt for a lot of times over. Let's talk in a little bit." You know?

And again, super important wisdom that they have to go through, potentially, in order to do that. But knowing this stuff in advance and how important it is is huge. So, can you walk us through this part of how do we know what we have right now, and how much we need of it?

Ben Woodward: Well, the starting point for building our desires or training our desires is knowing, first of all, what it is we're really wanting to achieve and become. It's got to be founded on our governing values, I think. So, what, first off, are my governing values? Because we can't build our journey – you know, I liked what I read on your website the other day, just prior to jumping in on the call, that this is really about developing a business that you can fall in love with. It's not about getting rich. It can't be about that.

Jaime Masters: No. You'll be screwed.

Ben Woodward: If that's your goal, first of all, it's not enough to get you through all the tough stuff, anyway. And secondly, once you get it, you'll be wonderfully unfulfilled, right? Because life is not about that stuff.

So, you gotta start off with what are my governing values. When you build your foundation on your governing values, and build your vision out from there, what kind of impact and difference do I want to make in the world? From there, we start to find that we craft a journey that can have meaning and can be fulfilling. And so I think that's a critical step.

So, the starting point is to build that vision out, but then we've got to recognize that if there is a lack of motivation or if there is a lack of discipline around that desire to fulfill it, then I've got to reconnect more with that vision. I've got to believe it more. And the way to believe it more is to create small wins.

So, it really does come down to – it's like an inverse funnel. We start out with the governing values, and then you break it down to long-term goals, mid-term, short-term, daily tasks. And if you can have the daily activity, something in small steps along the way, that demonstrate that you're winning and that you're succeeding so that you can measure the right thing – you've got to put these KPIs in place, these key performance indicators, that will build into your belief system confidence that you're on the right track.

Jaime Masters: Yes, because we're entrepreneurs and we need to see progress, even if it's little progress. Otherwise we're like, "Never mind, I'm going down this rabbit hole and it's not working, and I'm expending energy." And again, the vision has to pull it long enough so that way you can get through those bumps that are sometimes not as fruitful as other times, for sure.

Ben Woodward: Yes. And so following on from that, then, is education, isn't it? So, you've got your desire. It's based on your governing values. You've drilled it down into activities that you can measure and respond to and evaluate. I think that's important, like I said. Because one of the biggest barriers I've seen in entrepreneurs, the biggest barrier to their success is often their belief in themselves.

Jaime Masters: Ouch, yes.

Ben Woodward: So, we've got to learn how to tackle that and build in mechanisms

that allow us to evaluate that, hey, I'm making progress. I am able to do this. I am succeeding. But we can't, again, just rely on what I call "hot bath motivation" for that. You know, where you just get – in a moment, you jump in the bath, you're hot, you jump out, and you cool down just as fast.

We can't have that kind of pep talk that buoys us up in the moment, but is full of just fluff and stuff I want to hear. The false hope that gets peddled to the hopeless, that makes them feel good in the moment, but in reality doesn't lead them anywhere productive.

So, we've got to take responsibility ourselves for our own education so that we can build that confidence in us, that I'm creating a plan and a path that will work. So, we've got to get educated, and that isn't necessarily just formal education. Wherever we are in our educational journey, we've got to make a commitment to level up. And if we can level up our education and our learning – and this kind of platform, I think, is fantastic for that kind of stuff because it gives voice to some of the typical pitfalls and the key lessons that people have learned that have gone before so that you can learn and you don't have to make the same mistakes.

Jaime Masters: Definitely.

Ben Woodward: So, education is a critical component to, again, strengthening our desire because that desire then is mixed, now, with confidence and optimism and belief. There's all those other things that start to mesh together to make it something robust versus just wishful thinking.

Jaime Masters: Totally. I joke a lot of the times that a lot of the strategy that I do with entrepreneurs is I just know what works from other companies, and telling them, "Of course you can do that." They're like, "I can?" My belief is their belief, once you sort of go down that path, and I think that's really interesting because they could've found it on their own but had zero belief, and probably not even achieved the same thing because they would've gone back and forth, or whatever those things are.

The plan totally doesn't always matter. Like, yes, that's gonna work, but there's probably five paths that would work similarly. But the belief behind it, that it's like, of course you can do that specific thing and achieve those things. There might be bumps, as

always. But it's huge because why start at all if we have no belief whatsoever? We won't make the commitment to the level that we need to when that happens.

Ben Woodward: Yes, and you've raised a critical point in the process, which is in many instances, we need an external party to help us in validating our strategy and giving the reassurance. Because when we don't believe in ourselves enough, again, I'm not saying at all, but if we don't have sufficient belief to take the necessary amount of steps forward, then where do we go?

We can have the right strategy, but if we're foundering, we need someone else that can come in from the outside and say, "I believe in you. I have confidence in you. You can do this. I've walked this path before. I've seen others take these steps. You're doing the right thing." And just kind of help to steady them a bit.

And that is profoundly important in the process. It helps us be accountable to our own decisions as well. When we say, "This is where I'm going," it's good to proclaim it and to be accountable to it, and to be accountable to someone that wants you to succeed.

Jaime Masters: Accountability is so easy, and yet so valuable for everybody. You know what I mean? Like no matter how high of a level you are, even just the small amount of accountability by going, "Did you do what you said you were gonna do?" Especially for ADD entrepreneurs that are most of us, right? "Oh, I totally forgot I said that a little while ago." And having that support is extremely valuable also.

Well, I have a quick question. I know you've got more to talk about, but when it comes to in the weeds, right, the daily tasks that you're talking about once we sort of have the pieces, the stress that we go through, though, right? So, if we start having belief and we start going down that path, on the upside, and then you're in it, and then the stress and the things sort of pop up that are innately patterns that we probably had in the past from childhood, or whatever it is, start to pop up.

And I feel like you're really good at that specific chunk, do you know what I mean? Tell me more about that piece, when we sort of get stuck in the weeds.

Ben Woodward: Yes, that's a great point because it comes to everyone. It's always more exciting with your head in the clouds, isn't it? The big vision

stuff for entrepreneurs is always more exciting, I think, because it's visionary, it's creative, it's artistic, it's inspiring. But then when you get right down to the grass roots and have to put the work in and make things happen, that's where you stub your toe. You find the obstacles, the barriers, and all that stuff that you didn't know existed that is in the way of your success.

And the way forward, I have found, if you're struggling with it, if the journey is taking longer – because that's one thing that I've found. I am wonderfully impatient.

Jaime Masters: Ditto.

Ben Woodward: And so it's really hard to work with urgency and be patient with the process, or have these great ideas but then realize that it takes so long to execute. And if you want to do it with excellence, you've got to do it the right way and allow the lure of the harvest to take its course.

And so the challenge is, in that process, is to break it down to moments. It's very easy to try to take everything in as a collective. My whole future of this situation. This crisis that I'm in the middle of right now, or I'm struggling with this particular aspect of my business that I don't understand properly, and I'm getting hit from issues that I didn't know existed. I'm out of my depth and I'm starting to drown, what do I do?

We've got to start by saying this is not my entire future. This is just right now. And critically, we've got to be brave enough, humble enough, to reach out for help and ask someone for support.

This is the critical thing. Again, there are so many misconceptions that are taught in the world right now that are infuriating, right? We've mentioned one already, of you can have it all right now, and what that looks like is total bliss. And we've already kind of discussed that.

But another one is what we were just discussing, that all of these problems can either go away quickly or you should be able to handle it all by yourself. That's a measure of your competence and your skill.

When I was in the corporate world, before I started running my own businesses, I valued the fact that, I took pride in the fact that I would always hire people smarter than me. And I'd look around

the boardroom with all the different people that I'd hired, and I'd go, "This is great. I'm not the smartest guy in the room. If I'm the smartest guy in the room and I'm in charge, something's wrong."

And as an entrepreneur, you shouldn't be the smartest person in your business, trying to do it all, because that doesn't work that way.

So, we've got to be humble enough and courageous enough, and the two coexist, to reach out and ask for help and say, "You look like you know what you're doing in this," or "You've got experience on this, can you please help me?" I think that's really important.

And I want to stress it because Gallup did an emotions survey. They do one every year, right? And their emotional survey for America reported in 2018, 55 percent of Americans felt stressed much of the day. Not part of the day; much of the day, which is frightening.

And they also noted that I think it was a quarter felt worried, and nearly a fifth felt angry, right? And scarily, those statistics on the emotional wellbeing of Americans were worse than the most pain-stricken country on the planet, which is the country of Chad, right? So, we're worse off than Chad, emotionally, and scarily, those statistics on how we're performing is worse than the year prior, which means emotionally we're getting worse.

But I think one of the reasons for that is these false messages that we're being told, that you can have it all, do it all, and be it all, and be an island, and that's not the case. It doesn't work that way in life, and it certainly doesn't work that way in business. If we want to succeed in business, we cannot do it alone, even if you are a one-man band, right? We still don't do it alone. We can still reach out for help.

And that help may come in all sorts of virtual or real terms. We can get great help online, from free podcasts or from free places where we can read books and what have you. We can get all the experts in the world on any subject that we want and get them into our mind and heart if we're willing to invest in our learning, like we talked about before. We can reach out for help, but we've got to be willing to ask for help, otherwise I think we struggle.

So, ask for help and take it a step at a time. It's okay to deal with

one problem at a time.

Jaime Masters: Well, so it's funny, I was laughing so much because a client that WhatsApp'd me right before this was sort of using it as a badge of honor, like, "I do everything myself." Like, she had a good team, not a great team, and then we ended up hiring a bunch of people, and she goes, "I feel guilty. I'm not working very much right now." It's like, we have one side of the coin or the other. We either have pain and stress because we don't have a good team, but now I feel guilty because I'm leading my good team, right?

And I'm not saying any of that's bad because that's sort of the process that a lot of people have to go through to be like, oh, actually, they like it when I'm not working. That was the point of the reason why they were hired to begin with, right?

Ben Woodward: Exactly.

Jaime Masters: But emotionally, we go crazy internally from all sorts of things. So, when you say ask for help, I know – one of my very first therapists when I was young was like, "You're Atlas, carrying everybody in your entire community on your back." I'm like, "Yes, that's great, right? That's what it's supposed to be." They were like, "Not even a little bit. You're gonna die soon." You know what I mean? "You've got too much pressure."

Ben Woodward: Doesn't that mean I'm awesome?

Jaime Masters: I know. I'm like, "I can handle everything. This is great." And again, I thought it was a wonderful thing until we realize how community-driven humans we are, and you can't do that. And so the pain is great.

So, give us tips, though, because I was actually just chatting with the previous interview right before. We had stopped recording and we were both joking about how we suck at asking for help because she asked me what I needed help with, and I'm like, "So, what I've learned is I can't ever respond to you in the moment. I have to go away, think about it, right? Away from the pressure of trying to go like, ah, I don't – because I don't like asking for help."

So, give me and everybody else more tips on how we can do that. I can hire people fine, I can delegate mostly okay as long as I'm paying them. But asking for help is a hard challenge, especially for a lot of entrepreneurs, including me.

Ben Woodward: Okay, so asking for help in what context? Help me understand the question here. Because we've got a number of different ways that we can reach out, haven't we? So, we've got, for example, if we've got employees, it's okay to reach out to them and ask them for your help.

Jaime Masters: I was gonna say, I'm good at that one. That's the only one that I'm like, I'm paying there, so therefore – but I mean, even I have an amazing network that I'm sure – I even have a hard time asking people in my Mastermind group, who I've known for 10 years, for small things. You know what I mean? That shouldn't really be that big of a deal, but I'm like, "Ooh, let me give you something back first."

My friend gave me these earrings, and I was like, "Oh, well, let me pay for dinner." She's like, "It was just a gift to be a gift." And I was like, oh yeah, okay. I'm supposed to receive that.

Ben Woodward: Yes, it's a wonderfully basic answer, in my opinion, and that's practice.

Jaime Masters: Darn it, I knew you were gonna say that.

Ben Woodward: I would say look for opportunities now to do it. If you are uncomfortable with it now, then set a goal now to ask someone in some way to do something for you. The neat thing is, if we get into this relationship journey with people, where we reciprocate – because service and help is reciprocal, isn't it? You just demonstrated that, didn't you? You just, "Thank you very much for these earrings. Now let me do something for you." Right?

So, we immediately want to give back, and so we can start by offering service to other people and say, "Hey, I just saw this person, I thought you might want to make a connection."

One way that I've been able to receive a lot of help is I actually share my network with people within my network and make connections together, and that just is always mutually beneficial. People come back and say, "Oh, I'm really grateful for that introduction. I just wanted to do this for you." And it can stimulate all sorts of conversations.

I'm not suggestion you do it with insincerity, but I think the most basic way to ask for help is to first identify your problem, to know what it is. Understand your own natural limitations with it.

Understand what you need as a positive, realistic outcome, and then if you know someone that has that skill set or resource or ability or some insight there, simply reach out and ask and say, “I’d like to pick your brains, please. I’d like your help.”

And it’s surprising how willing people are to share their knowledge, their insights, their expertise.

So, I would say have that clarity beforehand and then reach out and just ask, and make it a habit. Make it a habit.

Jaime Masters: Yes, I think it’s – oh, what was that?

Ben Woodward: I was just going to say it’s uncomfortable now because we don’t do it enough.

Jaime Masters: Yes, definitely.

Ben Woodward: The more we do it, the more comfortable it will become.

Jaime Masters: I’m learning that. I’m learning. It’s funny, when the interviews first started, everyone wanted to help me at the end of it, so I said yes to everybody. And then they each sent me in different directions, and I realized that wasn’t necessarily good, either. So, when you’re saying figure out your problem first and then line that up, I mean, that’s what’s hard, when people are like, “Oh, let me help you.” I’m like, I don’t know what you have to help me with, right?

And so what you’re saying is to take some more time and sit back, and that’s what I’m working on. But I don’t – as much as I like practicing some things, I am impatient in so many ways, as we talked about, that it’s like, okay, yeah, I’m working on it, and is it gonna take years?

Ben Woodward: Yes. Could I add to that as well?

Jaime Masters: Please.

Ben Woodward: When we’re asking for help, you want to go to the best sources, yes? So, if you’re evaluating, like we talked about, this is my problem, this is my vulnerability personally, where I’m inadequate and I lack, this is what I want as an outcome, and then you go to who do I know, right?

And within that list of who do I know, there will be people that I'm comfortable reaching out to, and there will be people that I'm uncomfortable reaching out to.

Jaime Masters: Exactly.

Ben Woodward: And what you've got to do is put that to one side in your exercise, before you pick up a phone or jump on your laptop, and say, "Of all the people that have this skill, who is the most qualified and capable person that will give me the best insights that I need?"

And you might go – I call it my chicken list. The people that I'm chicken, that I'm too afraid to go up and talk to. But who's on my chicken list that I'm too chicken to go and talk to? And go, okay, they're often the best people.

So, if we can just approach them and see what happens. Like I said, all they can say is no. But it's kind of rare that that happens.

Jaime Masters: It's a shortcut, also, like you're saying. Like, yes, I could ask so-and-so that has this much reach, or I could ask so-and-so that's a lot harder, but if they say yes, it can potentially be so much better or bigger or whatever it is.

And yes, it usually takes some chutzpah.

Ben Woodward: I have a great example with that. I was studying business models a number of years ago when I was president of a health and wellness company, and I saw these different companies that I was looking at that I really loved. I loved the way that they operated online and the way that they acquired customers, engaged them, retained them, and I thought, this is fantastic.

And then by chance, I discovered that they were all founded by the same person. I didn't realize at the time. I was like, I've just identified his – if I can identify all the things that they've got in common, I know his formula now for business, right? This is great.

And I thought, but I'd love to pick his brains, right? And just understand more.

And so I went onto LinkedIn and I reached out on LinkedIn and said, "My name is Ben, I'm the president of this company here, we're based in Irvine, California. I noticed that you're up in Santa Monica. I know we've never met, but I would love to buy you

lunch and pick your brains.” Right?

Jaime Masters: That worked?

Ben Woodward: “I loved your business model, I love the way you think. Can I buy you lunch and pick your brains? Worst thing that happens is you get a free lunch.”

And I thought, what’s he gonna do? I mean, this guy was a mega successful, mega successful guy. And within a week he came back and said, “Yes, sure, come on up.” And off I went, and we’ve stayed in touch ever since. In fact, he gave one of the blurbs on my book, which is fantastic. He’s just continued to stay involved and offer help, and every time I reach out, “Not a problem. Not a problem.” It blows my mind.

Jaime Masters: That’s amazing.

Ben Woodward: Just reach out and ask.

Jaime Masters: There’s still people that do that. That’s actually how I got one of the blurbs for my book from Seth Goden because I was like, “Oh, I’m gonna” – and then I hit the email and went, “Oh God,” you know? Like, okay, let’s run away. And not that – I was in sales for a long time. Not that “no’s” are that bad, but “no’s” from influencers and people you respect seem to hurt a little bit more than a random “no” that you’re cold calling and stuff like that.

And so that resiliency, do you feel like you’ve built up your resiliency to asking and getting a negative response?

Ben Woodward: Yes, it gets easier, but as a side note, I’ve got a ton of kids, right?

Jaime Masters: Oh, you have seven, yes.

Ben Woodward: My wife and I have got seven children. Yes. And so that means we watch all the Disney movies out there. So, to quote Mulan from last night, “Courage can’t exist without fear.” So, it’s really true.

Jaime Masters: It is true.

Ben Woodward: So, the reality is it does get easier, but if you still feel fear as well, that’s okay. We still act, and fear isn’t an indicator that I’m inadequate. It’s not an indicator that I’m weak. It’s not an indicator that I’m unqualified. It’s an indicator that you’re human. That’s all.

The key is to act anyway. Feel the fear and keep on acting. So, it will get better, but you know what? For some people, it might not. Just keep doing it because it's the right thing to do.

Jaime Masters: Your comfort zone grows, and I know that logically. And still, I mean, I think that's the funny thing, too, is especially during the pandemic, with business owners having this on top of this on top of this, right? Like, your capacity starts to go, "Oh, wait, I only have this much extra." Probably with your kids, you're like, I have one kid, I have two kids, my capacity just – there's only so much of you to go around.

And when you're in it, and I love this is how you talked about it in the book, the difference between distress and eustress because we sort of lump stress all together. So, now when we have these things stacked and stacked and stacked, it's not that we are going through every day stressed out, and that's all bad, and that's sort of how we've been – I know I have looked at it. We've looked at my dad and gone, he just is a stressed person. I don't want to be like that.

But there's definite benefits to some of that, so can you tell me a little bit more about the difference between those two?

Ben Woodward: Yes. So, eustress, the prefix "eu" means good. So, you've got good stress and you've got distress, which is the bad stress. The good stress is actually within our capacity to control, right? And it actually helps us to become more hyperaware. So, we experience this eustress when we're anticipating perhaps a new job that we're about to start, a new project that we're getting involved in. If I'm about to propose to my future wife, right? I'm gonna feel some eustress there.

But I'm not gonna feel distress, right? It's not gonna send me into a state of depression. If that's the case, I'm making the wrong choice. But you've got eustress, it is typically short-term, it will create hyperawareness, it will charge our bodies biologically in a way that is positive, that helps us to be more engaged, more proactive, and more positive.

And we can actually remain in a degree of calm with eustress compared to distress. Distress leads to anxiety. It can be short-term and very intense, or it can be protracted and very painful, and it can lead to depression and biological ills as well. It can lead to heart health problems, it can lead to all sorts of different problems.

So, there is a difference, and I do think that how we respond to stressful indicators can help us to separate the two out. Because sometimes we can take natural stressors that are positive and health, but if I'm not interpreting it correctly, then I can pull it into the distress pool and turn it into something else.

So, it's helpful just to, like I said before, if we can learn to separate out the things piled on top of us, one thing after another after another, rather than looking at it all as one lump sum and trying to swallow it all in a single bite, and then going, "That's just far too much," well, it's far too much for anyone.

So, if we can learn to just separate it out and say, I can focus in the moment. One thing is we keep changing time zones. We either live in the past, or we live in the future, and we rarely live in the present. So, the present is all we've got to work with. If we can just focus in the moment and say, "I can only deal with this problem right now." I can delegate out here, learn what you can delegate out, delegate out effectively if you can and deal with things one at a time, and just pace yourself through.

And if you are feeling stressed, you build in some healthcare mechanisms to take care of yourself. Because eustress does exist, but unfortunately, in business, in pandemics, in life, distress certainly exists as well.

So, if you are getting into a distress state, again, that's another time where it's important to ask for help. And that's actually one, interestingly, that I think many people find harder to do, especially guys. Unfortunately, men find it harder to talk about their feelings than women do.

Jaime Masters: Oh, yes. A lot of my conversations with my clients are about that specifically. Because I mean, you're told that it's weak to talk about the weakened type of emotions, and you don't want to sort of show that.

Ben Woodward: Yes. It's man up.

Jaime Masters: Yes.

Ben Woodward: You man up, yes? And so we've got all of these wrong [audio cuts out] [00:44:56] around [audio cuts out] as well, and one of those is you internalize it. You bundle up, you push it down, you don't talk about it because you're a bloke, if you're on that side of the

gender equation.

Jaime Masters: Or even if you're not. I shoved every feeling – I only work with men, I've always sort of been very masculine, and I used to go – this is what I used to say, back in the day. "I only have good feelings." That's what I used to say. "I don't have any negative feelings, I only have" – that only lasted so long, you know, until pain starts to come in.

And I'm hoping as a society in general, we are evolving, so you're teaching your seven kids and teaching my two, thank goodness I only have two, the importance of emotional intelligence and actually being vulnerable to create connection with other people so we don't feel like we have to shoulder responsibility alone, and how asking for help really should not be this big of a deal.

Like, none of this – I shouldn't say none of this, but a lot of this shouldn't be this big of a deal.

Ben Woodward: Yes, and I hope that we can have the courage to do that more because it's refreshing and encouraging. I talk about it a lot in my book, about kind of opening up and being willing, brave enough to be vulnerable and share your feelings and share where it is you're struggling with your mental health or your well-being so that you can get the strength and help from other sources that you need. Because that's an important part of the equation of leadership as well.

Jaime Masters: Yes. I know we only have so much time, but can we go into that for just a little bit? Because I also feel like the mental health issue or stigma, especially in entrepreneurship, is ridiculous, and we're supposed to hold it all in, and I know you've got a story around what that – I do too. Like, of knowing what people are going internally and struggling with, we have no idea because it's not as open, at all.

Ben Woodward: Yes. Well, it's interesting, so I've got a diagnosis with bipolar disorder, and I actually kept that wonderfully quiet for a long time because of the concern around stigma, right? And when my book launched, interestingly, I talked about it in the book, and I had people come out repeatedly now and say, "I knew that about you."

I'd always had a very public-facing position in my businesses, in my career, which had always been on the stage in front of big audiences. So, I had this expectation that I put on myself of what I

should look like and behave like, think like, feel like in order to exist. And the reality was, I had all these private struggles that I had to work through, which were actually sort of the main informants of all the lessons in my book.

And as much as I talk about the struggle with my dad and what we went through there, navigating that journey with my mental health was far more complicated than anything else. I have learned, first of all, that as I've spoken about it, people have only come back and said they have greater respect for what I'm doing, for what I've achieved, for what I've become, and knowing what I've gone through privately that they weren't aware of, [audio cuts out] [00:48:11] all the more, and I've had nothing but positive feedback.

At the same time, critical end, when I'm open about it, I recognize that there are so many more people that start to open up and say, "I actually struggle with this. I find this really hard. I might not have bipolar, but I really actually struggle in this area of my life." And the ability for me to reach out and help because the principles are often we're connected, yes, has been profound. And that, for me, gets to the very root issue of what my book was about.

And in the midst of all of the suffering which my disorder gave me, amidst all of that, I was able to look in, lean in, try to understand it, transformed for the better by it. And as a consequence, I have a platform where I can make a real difference in the world with the wisdom that I've gleaned from those experiences. Wisdom that I would not have had through any other mechanism.

So, how can I resent it? How can I bury it? I've got to say thank you for it. It's helped me and it's helping me to help others, and it's bringing added purpose to my life. So, it makes it good.

Jaime Masters:

The transformation expert that's been through a lot of transformation is kind of the whole point of all of it because we all want to transform also, and knowing somebody's giving us advice without know that they personally have been through so much, you know, we can connect with people that have problems, because everybody's got problems.

And I really appreciate your openness because I'm hoping this is just gonna be way more – I mean, not having a stigma, number one, but to help younger kids get diagnosis, and I know family

members of mine that still don't have diagnoses yet, you know?

So, trying to release that stigma so people can actually heal and have help and understand themselves better, right? It's hugely important, especially in these times.

Ben Woodward: And critically, again, coming back to this principle of self belief, do I have enough? I've got this vision of wanting to achieve great things in my life, but maybe I doubt myself a lot. I've got those little roots.

If we can take from this that if someone has come from an environment where he had to send his father to prison, that struggled with mental health diagnoses that have been wonderfully catastrophic sometimes, but has been able to go on and have a wonderful marriage and be married for 20 years, I've got seven kids, one on the way –

Jaime Masters: Another one on the way?

Ben Woodward: Another one on the way.

Jaime Masters: Oh my goodness.

Ben Woodward: And I've been able to achieve some great things in business, but most importantly, have an abundant, fulfilling, rewarding life. That's the great thing.

So, whatever you might be dealing with, it doesn't have to be bigger than your dreams. That's the great thing.

Jaime Masters: Drop the mic. Yes. Now I have to ask the last question, but that was beautiful. That was just a wonderful wrapup and tie-up for everything that we have. Because it is, it's the joy and the pieces of life living fully expressed that's gonna make our lives what we want it to be, and not just the money and not just the marriage on the outside and sort of the superficial stuff, and I just really appreciate that.

All right, I have to ask you the last question, and I know it's action oriented. So, what is one action listeners can take this week to help move them forward towards their goal of a million and a fulfilled life? So, we'll add that.

Ben Woodward: I would say to look at the thing that causes you the most pain right

now, and confront it in some small way today. Do something about it today. So, it might be what you just said before, picking up the phone and reaching out to someone and saying, “Can you help me out?” It might be reaching out to someone and saying, “I’m feeling overwhelmed, can you help me?” Or it might be something else. Whatever it might be, lean in, face the pain, act on it in some way today.

Jaime Masters: I love it. Thank you so much for coming on the show today. We’re gonna get your book because I highly recommend they pick it up, and where do you – do you do social online? Do you have social? Like tell us where we can find more.

Ben Woodward: Yes. So, you can find my book in all the usual places. Barnes & Noble, Amazon. Amazon’s the easiest place. Audible Books. It’s all the usual places for audio books as well, if you’re into listening. And you can find me on ben-woodward.com and all my social media handles are right there.

Jaime Masters: Perfect. Thank you so much for coming on the show today. I really appreciate it.

Ben Woodward: Thank you very much. Pleasure to be with you, Jaime.

Jaime Masters: You too.

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Duration: 53 minutes