
Jaime Masters: Welcome to Eventual Millionaire. I am Jaime Masters and today on the show we have Peter Kozody. You should check out his brand new book called Honest to Greatness. He's also an Inc. 5000 Serial Entrepreneur and a business coach. It looks beautiful. Thanks so much for coming on the show today.

Peter Kozody: It's my pleasure, Jaime.

Jaime Masters: So, Honesty, blah, blah, blah, is the best policy, right?

Peter Kozody: Mm-hmm.

Jaime Masters: That's what everybody says.

Peter Kozody: Yeah, insert BS here, yeah.

Jaime Masters: Exactly. Great. And I love the name of your title though way better than Honest is the best policy. There's nuances to this though. So, tell me a little bit about the premise of the book.

Peter Kozody: Yeah. Well, people got very excited when they figured out that I was writing and speaking about honesty because they're like, "Peter, wow, I'm so honest and I just tell it like it is all the time and I don't care what people think and all that." I'm like, "Well, that's cool, but that's not honest. You're probably just a jerk. You're probably just a bad person. That's not what honesty is." And that's where I think a lot of the confusion comes in is folks have come out and said like, "Well, how do you say this person's honest or that person's not honest or this and that?"

And I think the term we need to start right out of the gate, Jaime, is strategic, brutal, honesty. And all of those words are important – that it is strategic and brutal and also honest, at the end of the day. One of the CEOs in my book makes a good point. He says, "If you're flying in an airplane and the pilots come over the intercom and they say, 'Well, folks, we've never seen storm clouds like that before up ahead, so please fasten your seatbelts. Not quite sure if we're gonna be able to land this one, but we're gonna do our best.'" So, listen, is that honest? Yes, but it's not helpful, right?

So, what we have to do is redefine what honesty even means and I think it's easier as you can see how I started by defining what it doesn't mean. So, what I do in the book is I take it and I stratify it in three crucial layers. And, by the way, they're the same layers that all of the [audio cuts out] [00:01:51] organizations in the

book – from an 11-year-old Girl Scout that sold 30,000 boxes of Girl Scout cookies, up to Warren Buffet himself – use every day.

And those layers are – and we'll get into it more – but basically getting honest about the community at large, about the people around you, and then finally about yourself. What I found is those who align all three of those levels – both at the personal leadership level and at the organization level – actually create industry dominating profitability and results. And that's the most important thing.

Listen, I was very pleased that this premiered as No. 1 new release on Amazon for a couple categories. One of them was business ethics and, look, I think people should be ethical and nice and moral and all that happy horse crap, but that's not what this book is about. This book is about – in a brutally transparent society that we live in – what is the way to achieve results in your business and life? And I was more shocked than anyone, Jaime – I promise you – that honesty turned out to be the method to achieve it.

Jaime Masters: Everyone's like, "Wait, ROI and honesty? This sounds great." Because what we've been told – especially by skeezie used car salesmen that that is not really the way you're supposed to do it.

Peter Kozody: Yeah. We call it ROH, return on honesty.

Jaime Masters: Oh, I like that. And everybody listening is like, "All right, now I'm gonna pay attention because if I can get a return, this makes me way more interested than just being aligned and all that fun stuff."

Peter Kozody: Yeah, yeah.

Jaime Masters: Now, what is the difference between brutal honesty and being a jerk like you just said though?

Peter Kozody: Yeah. So, remember it's strategic, brutal, honesty. So, there is a point. I do a lot of business coaching helping entrepreneurs figure out what it even takes to build a seven figure business. It took me a lot longer than it should because I didn't know enough to ask for help, right? So, now I've helped literally hundreds of entrepreneurs figure this out and here's the deal. Ninety-nine percent of business problems are personal problems in disguise. That's brutal, right?

So, the question is how does one get so brutally honest with themselves mostly that they can understand that their sales

problem is really say a confidence problem or their leadership problem is really a personal communication style problem? You trace all these things from one place to another. It's amazing what you can learn about yourself as a leader and therefore how it directly impacts your organization. Now, the self part is probably evident to people though. "Yeah, no, I probably should be brutally honest with myself."

Of course, easier said than done and most people don't, right? Honesty is like self-awareness. It's that thing everybody insists they have it, everyone wants it, very few actually possess it, right? But there is a place for being brutally honest – both with and about the others around you. A lot of what I talk about in the book is understanding the distinction because sometimes we do need to be brutally honest with the people around us. "Hey, I don't want to hurt you, I don't want to offend you, however we need to have an honest discussion about what's going on here – about your behavior – about whatever, whatever."

Now a lot of what I talk about in the book is we can't always control others. Sometimes we need to be honest about them – about their thoughts or feelings, their hopes, dreams, desires, their limitations, their self-limiting beliefs, the size of their ego. That's a lot of being brutally honest too. And then what's interesting about that, Jaime, is it means we can only take one action – which is to reflect on what we're honestly seeing – and make changes about and in ourselves, right?

And all of that comes back to we can't see those opportunities, we can't change those opportunities, we can't even spot the opportunities. We can't do anything without honesty at the root and that's why I was so excited to write this particular book because it's such a – Everything builds on it. Nothing happens if you're just full of crap and lying to yourself and others.

Jaime Masters:

I'm so grateful for the leading edge that you're bringing this out to, right? Because back in the day, so you know when Four Agreements came out and it was like, "Be impeccable with your word." It's like, "Yes and how do we actually do that?" because we don't even realize the dissonance that we have internally a lot of times. So, tell me a little bit more about – especially at the beginning stages when everyone's raising their hand going, "No, no, I'm pretty good, self-aware. I totally get this" – how do we even notice what we're not doing "correctly"?

Peter Kozody:

Yeah. So, I'll give you a couple of frameworks, but one thing I will say is this is so hard to do alone. If this were possible to do within our own heads, A, the entire therapy business would not exist, right? B, you would magically become more self-aware as soon as you decided you were going to do it. We know those things aren't true. So, you all have to understand that you can't just – in a vacuum – decide, “I'm gonna get honest about my own crap.” It doesn't work that way.

That's why I run forums for entrepreneurs and we come together once a month and literally – with 100% confidentiality – the whole idea is, “Let's get really honest about the things that are going on in our business life, personal life, family life, the stuff we can't say out loud to those who love us, the stuff we can't say to our parents, to our kids, to our spouses, to our whatever because they're gonna say maybe it's time to get a real job.” Not helpful, right? So, that's why I've created those safe spaces so entrepreneurs can get that out because what happens after that is magical.

You get six, seven, eight, nine other people saying, “Holy crap, I went through that too and here's how I felt about it and here's what I did and here's what happened.” Very, very powerful because it's only through that sort of power of reflection – getting honest perspectives from other people – can we begin to change ourselves. At least that's the best method I've found. Now that said, I will give you one trick to immediately put yourself on the path to this, which is two questions that literally they have the opportunity to change your life if you can adopt them.

The first is, “Is that true?” and the second is, “How do I know?” You can imagine this applies whether you are watching a headline on the nightly news or reading your Great Aunt Millie's obnoxious Facebook post or even having a thought in your head. So often I work with entrepreneurs and I'm listening to them and they're saying like, “Yeah, no, I know I needed to go do this but – in order to do this – I have to do that thing and that thing and that thing.” I'm like, “Oh, that's really interesting. Is that true?” Who told you? How do you know?”

They're like, “Well, I don't know.” I was on a live stream the other day with a mentorship group and someone was talking about systems and processes and they were like, “How do I put systems and processes in my company?” I was like, “Well, what this sounds like is you read a book that say, “Oh, you need systems and processes” and now you're like, “Oh, I need systems and

processes.” And then they’re looking at me like, “So, what do I system and process?” I’m like, “Yeah, good question. How about let’s back the truck up and ask what’s the business foundation here?”

Are you clear on your customer and their pain point? Are you clear on the problem you’re solving, on the solution, on the profit model you’ve designed? On your own ability to see this business how it evolves over the next three to five years?” This particular person was a service provider, right? Think like a chiropractor. Well, to systemize being a chiropractor is very different than to systemize being an owner of a chiropractic HR software company. Do you know what I mean?

Jaime Masters: Yeah.

Peter Kozody: So often I have entrepreneurs who are like, “Yeah, I’m gonna build \$100 million company doing X, Y, and Z” and I’m like, “Do you think it’s a coincidence why there are – all the companies that look like the one you just told me about hit a ceiling at about five million? Do you think there’s something there?” There are certain companies from the get-go that entrepreneurs are just not honest with themselves about what it takes structurally in the beginning from the get-go to make these kinds of goals happen. And that’s where I do most of my work, Jaime, is like in the foundation of the business.

Jaime Masters: Okay. We can go so deep on this because I’m a business coach. I’ve been for 12, 13 years.

Peter Kozody: Awesome.

Jaime Masters: Exactly what you’re saying is true – so true and the fact that we use it as a shield, right?

Peter Kozody: Yeah.

Jaime Masters: So, not only are we not being vulnerable with people so we’re like, “No, we have everything. We’re fine. Everything’s great over here.” Internally, more mental health issues than ever before, right?

Peter Kozody: Mm-hmm.

Jaime Masters: And yet we’re going – and no offense to all those great internet marketers out there but they’re like – “Oh, you can have anything

you want. All you need to do is buy this thing and go here and –”
Yeah, right?

Peter Kozody: Yeah.

Jaime Masters: And like everything is incongruent and yet we’re like, “Wait, it must be us.” And what you’re telling us is that it is not. I mean it is us, but in a way that we can take responsibility for instead of abdicating and saying it’s outside of us, which is what a lot of entrepreneurs do, unfortunately.

Peter Kozody: Oh, gosh. It’s so good. I had two entrepreneurs on my live stream show. One is an incredible woman from Ghana – grew up in Africa – and she came on the show and my show is called Let’s Be Honest with Peter Kozody, right? So, I get these and people love it. They react to it. They’re like, “Oh, great, I get to spill out all my stuff” which is awesome and – by the way – I think that’s a lesson for all of us to invite others to be honest because sometimes just the invitation can allow someone to open up and there’s a lot of just power in human connection.

But anyway, she’s talking about, “Hey, you know everyone’s talking about Africa and how much charity we need for Africa and do you know what the problem is in Africa?” I was like, “No, honestly, I have no idea. I’m not an expert on this.” She was like, “Corruption.” She’s like, “None of you in the United States” – in her beautiful accent that I will not try to copy – “–none of you in the United States can give us enough money to solve the corruption problem. We have to solve it for ourselves.

This is we’re in African and we need to solve this for ourselves problem.” And everyone in Africa’s thinking, “Oh, we’re gonna put it on the rest of the world.” She’s like, “This is decimating. It’s horrible.” I mean I was fascinated because I’d never heard that perspective before in my life and the fact that she was on and sharing that, I was really blown away. But what a macrocosm of what you just said, Jaime, which is there’s so much opportunity. It’s almost like we’ve given ourselves too many opportunities now through social media and through people selling courses and this and that.

Now, it becomes the opportunities problem instead of our own inner growth, personal development, actually going out and seeking the assistance we need and not being afraid that when someone tells us that our idea is shitty that we take that and we

actually do something about it, right? God forbid that happened. So, all these do [audio cuts out] [00:11:51] to being honest, brutally honest with yourself.

Jaime Masters: What? We don't all get medals? That's not how this world works, right?

Peter Kozody: No. I grew up as a figure skater – like a very serious figure skater.

Jaime Masters: Really?

Peter Kozody: Yeah.

Jaime Masters: Wow, I love to figure skate.

Peter Kozody: So, this everyone get a medal thing, no. In my world, everyone fell on their ass thing. I was the everyone half the time, right? And getting on the podium actually meant something. So, for me, yeah, that whole idea – Gosh, I remember when I was – because I had skated since I was three – and when I got to middle school – I was like, “Wait. There are teams and you can go out on the field and you can pass a ball from one person to the other and make it their problem? This is fantastic. Where did I go wrong?”

Jaime Masters: Why did I pick a self-responsibility sport? What the hell?

Peter Kozody: What was wrong with me? But you know what? I say after you're out in front of 3,000 people in the middle of the ice all alone and you fall wearing tights, nothing is difficult after that. That is the pinnacle of hard, right?

Jaime Masters: I will bow to you. Yes, you can do hard things. I mean I think that's what's so interesting too. Even our core family values that I have up is self-responsibility – which my children don't like, don't get me wrong I'm not saying that they do – but to be able to look inward because whenever I work with millionaire business owners and not, it's really interesting because they each have their own flavor of issues, right?

And when you can start – especially as an outsider – I can look and be like, “Oh, you got this.” But internally – and I've known this for myself – it feels like you're reinventing the wheel each time and you get hooked in these patterns, right? Our programming that we've had for a really long time because that's sort of what we always do. We never ask for help. We never do this, right? So, it

feels super uncomfortable even if it's super small.

So, how do we get through that practice of having to do this often so that way, hopefully, it will be more automatic? Specifically asking for help like if you sucked at it, so do I or so did I and I'm working on it, right? So are half the entrepreneurs that are listening right now. Tell me how we can start moving forward to make it easier?

Peter Kozody:

I mean I'll tell you how I solved it, which is **[audio cuts out]** **[00:13:51]** who have known me. This is what's funny, right? I had to learn about honesty and vulnerability and transparency and all this crap. I was the guy who was most likely to continue being an A-hole in college. That would have been my superlative, right? And I had to learn the power of all this stuff.

And in my young 20s, I started my company in 2008 right out of college – great timing, Peter – immediately went tens of thousands of dollars into debt because I didn't know what I was doing, spent four years basically bouncing along the overdraft account until finally we figured out enough so that we could hook in and get to a million and multi-millions and Inc. 5000 list. But it took so much pain – years and millions of dollars wasted – when I could have just gone and spent 10 grand or 20 grand or, quite frankly Jaime, if I had spent 100 grand on a coach, it would have saved me more money and time, right?

This is what's crazy about people. But we have this magical coach called the internet now and we can just Google and see what Forbes columnist so and so said and they said “Systemize my business. So, now I know the answer and I'm gonna go do that.” And here's what I decided that helped me. I asked myself, “Who am I? What kind of entrepreneur am I? Am I the story that I look back on and say wow, I spent 10 years struggling.” This is after I had spent five years struggling.

And I was like, “No, that would be pretty embarrassing to have to tell people. Yeah, I'm the guy that was gonna figure it out on my own and that's why I wasted 10 years of my life.” I'm like, “Is that me? Is that who I want to be?” The answer was, “No, definitely not.” And that's when I started to make changes and one of the changes I made was just agreeing to talk to anyone. I was like, “I'll talk to anybody.” And you just don't know. I mean conversations that I've had have led me to millions of dollars, have led me to speaking gigs, literary agents and publishers.

Really, every great thing I have in my life has been a conversation that I had no idea where it was gonna go. “Oh, yeah, I know so and so VP of Marketing and a Fortune 500 company. Yeah, I’ll just – Oh, that’s your brother-in-law? Oh, okay. Well, that’s cool.” I didn’t know that ahead of time. And it cracks me up because I share my calendar freely. I’m not gonna talk to anyone, anyone because I don’t really – If there’s a situation where I get contacted by like, “Hi, I’m a 16-year-old in India and I want to –” It’s like not my target market, right?

But if you’re a reasonable person with a reasonable LinkedIn profile, I will talk to you and if you want to test that out, go to LinkedIn and ping me and tell me what you want to talk to me about. But my point is some folks I’ll make that offer to. I was on John Lee Dumas’ show – Entrepreneurs on Fire – and I gave them a page and I was like, “Hey, you can book a time with me.”

So, a lot of people did, but I was fascinated with the people who booked and then backed out for some reason or another or the ones that I had a conversation with that told me every reason why they needed help – they needed the kind of help I provide. “Okay, I’m gonna follow up with you.” And then they’d email me a week later and be like, “You know what? I feel like I have everything under control so I’m good.”

Jaime Masters: Yeah, right.

Peter Kozody: I’m just like –

Jaime Masters: Oh, oh, oh, oh, okay. Have fun with that, right?

Peter Kozody: Unbelievable, right? So, that’s showing you that there was something that came in – fear, uncertainty, pride, ego, whatever it was – and the point I want to make to everyone listening is think deeply when you are making decisions to have a conversation with someone, to take advantage of a free offer or whatever. I even like being sold to. I even will go on sales webinars and stuff just to listen and be like, “Oh, that stuff’s interesting. Oh, I’m learning from this” and people are so like, “No, I don’t do those” or “I don’t do this kind of thing.”

It’s like when you close doors like that, you must also be honest with yourself that you are missing opportunities. Period. Stop. That is the truth. So, it’s up to you to figure out what kind of person do

you want to be? Do you want to be an open person who is the one to have been lucky? This is how to create your own luck to find an opportunity, an insight, a connection, a relationship or referral, or not. Things are out there for you to take. I'll get off my soapbox.

Jaime Masters: So, I'm always on a soapbox so I appreciate you. Preach, please, because everybody actually needs to – not only hear it – but internalize that because it's very different to be like, “Yeah, he's right. He's so smart” right versus “Oh, no. I have to actually turn the mirror on myself? That's great.” Right?

Peter Kozody: Yeah.

Jaime Masters: So, where is that line or – if there is a line – where do you see it because new entrepreneurs especially – in my opinion – try to protect themselves, right? Because they don't want to be looked bad upon because they might not be able to make the sale, their company is trying to look bigger than it technically might need to be, right?

Peter Kozody: Yeah, been there.

Jaime Masters: So, there's these, “Who do I say what to because I can only be vulnerable to maybe a close, intimate, personal friend or mentor but everybody else I have to be like I got my stuff together so they don't think that I can't handle what they give me.” Right? Whether it be sales or relationships or whatever, we look vulnerable and crappy, typically. So, when it comes to that, is that accurate? Should they be doing that? Who should they be opening up to versus not so that they don't look bad?

Peter Kozody: Yeah. Wow, such a great question because every entrepreneur struggles with this and I certainly did. And here's what I've learned that I wouldn't have believed if someone told me this when I was like 24. I wouldn't have believed it, but the premise is this: if you are startup company and you have a solution that the market really, actually cares about, it is enough that you're solving a customer's problem to the type of client's that you probably want to work with anyway. Just think about what I said for a moment, right?

Because the clients that you have to pretend to be something else for eventually either the truth will come out and they'll be pissed off or it will grind you down so hard because there's some sort of values mismatch. You are the young upstart, you are the innovative one, you are the high touch customer service one. That's what we

can do when we're small and there are some client that will love that if you're just willing to [audio cuts out] [00:19:51] be honest about it. And I've played that both ways. Every time we start a new division, I actually use that as a selling tactic because this is 2020, right?

So, we had a couple manufacturing clients and they used to do millions of dollars at the trade shows. Trade shows died. So, they were like, "Okay, what do we do?" And we were like, "Well, trade shows are going virtual. We just go virtual." We set up funnels, we have opt-ins" and they were like, "We don't know if any of that's English. You go do that for us" and we were like, "Okay, fine." So, now we're building those and we went to market to other manufacturing firms. Now, manufacturing was a small piece of business. Now it's getting to be a much bigger one.

But when we went to market and said, "Hey, where's your virtual trade show booth? If you don't have it, let's talk." I'd get on conversations and people would say like, "Hey, do you have a manufacturing firm that specializes in Swiss screw machines?" I'd be like, "No. Nobody has that. First of all, stop. "By the way, a very dishonest practice wanting to copy your competitors or find a vendor that works with all your competitors. That's the stupidest thing I have ever heard in my entire life. Please stop doing it. It's dishonest and Warren Buffet agrees with me on that, by the way.

But aside from that, I would literally say to them, "No, I don't and that's a really good thing because if you want that, honestly, I don't know where you'd get it. But even if you did, think about this: we are specialists who have worked in 30 industries – even up to Fortune 500s and Warren Buffet himself. This is what our other manufacturing clients have asked us to do. What does that mean to you? By the way, you're on the phone with the owner. What that should signal to you is I'm personally working on this new initiative, that I am going to be personally guiding your project – the owner of an Inc. 5000 company."

"If that doesn't have value, you probably won't love working with us because I'm gonna be on your ass. I'm gonna be calling you and emailing you and making sure we have all your assets and making sure this works so I can go sell everyone else. Does that resonate with you?" And more often than not, they're like, "Actually, that's a great point. Let's get started." And sometimes not. They're like, "No, I need to find the person who's worked with 20 other Swiss screw –" Fine. But I don't want to work with them anyway.

Jaime Masters: Exactly.

Peter Kozody: **[Audio cuts out] [00:21:51].**

Jaime Masters: Well, when you can actually have the open policy – whether it be with clients or your own employees – it just seems easier.

Peter Kozody: It's so much easier.

Jaime Masters: Because then values are sort of automatic instead of you going, "Oh, wait. Why is this resistance even here? I don't know. Oh, it's because I should have told them way beforehand where I was at." Because when we don't – even when we don't even realize that we're doing it – sometimes we'll be like, "Oh, I did a sales call and I sold them, but I'm a little like mmm, that's weird." Right and we can't even put –

Peter Kozody: That happens all the time.

Jaime Masters: Yeah, we can't even put words to it. So, tell me a little bit more about how we can get a better skillset with even knowing where we're at with conversations like this?

Peter Kozody: Oh yeah. One of the best exercises I talk about in Part Three of my book is we all know core values for companies. That's all the rage and it's like, "Wait a second. We missed a step here, which is what are our core values as people?" And I have to credit Columbia Business. I decided after 30 and after building a million dollar company that I was stupid and I needed to go get an MBA. So, I did. I went back to Columbia, got an MBA, and I was right. Wow, how much did I not know about business, finance in general, that I should have. I mean it was shocking.

So, that was wonderful. And one of the first things we did in the first semester was a core values exercise not only understanding what our individual core values are, but what the hierarchy of those values is – what the order is. For instance, in my core values hierarchy – and I talk about this in the book – I actually have service above honesty surprisingly enough, which means that if I have the opportunity to serve someone else – to help them – and I have to lie to do it, I will make that trade whereas someone else may have the exact same values but flipped.

And so even though they have the same values, I'm gonna come

into conflict with them because they would never make that trade. You see? So, just going through the exercise and then being aware. And it's so funny, Jaime, after I did that I walked around thinking like and listening to Jaime talk and I'm like, "What are her core values?" trying to pick out things she's saying like, "Oh, it sounds like she's talking a lot about doing what you say and saying what you do. I bet integrity is a big word for her" whatever. And what's great about values is there's no right or wrong.

We were working with a Fortune 500 for the past year, energy sector, and one of their core values is speed. They are the slowest company I have ever worked with in my entire life, right? Everything takes forever. And you know what's silly is if they just said like, "Lethargy is our core value" or "Taking your time. That's our core value."

But what happened is they would repel the employees that want to move fast – that come into conflict with the core value – and they would attract all these people that are like, "Oh, thank goodness. I hate making decisions quickly. I love to read every single consumer report" and they'd literally built a culture of alignment and it would be so much more effective. So, it's not right or wrong and what sucks is you have all these companies and also people, leaders. – I use that term loosely – trying to pretend that their values are something that they're not. Values are not something you can just manufacture.

And Jaime, you put your finger on it where it's like, "Oh, I just sold that person." It's like, "Oh, why do I feel not excited about that or kind of icky about that?" Literally, I just talked to someone the other day who was in this same situation. They're like "It's a multi-million dollar piece of business and now I'm thinking about telling this person no. Why am I even having this crazy thought?" It is 99% of the time a core values issue.

Jaime Masters: See because we run by our – I'm so appreciative of you saying this because I preach. Again, because we are running our lives by them and if we do not know them – just like with our strengths – we're like, "Why does this feel great when I do this and time goes by like nothing? Oh, why do I do this just automatically and I can't help myself." Right?

Peter Kozody: Yup.

Jaime Masters: And so putting names to things is really important for yourself and

for your family, but also gosh, darn it, your employees. I said gosh, darn it and I don't think I've ever said that on my show. Gosh, darn it, your employees because when we put on our job description if you're doing any sort of posting it's like, "Put your core values because you will repel the people that suck, that don't have the same culture as you."

Peter Kozody: Totally.

Jaime Masters: "And you want that so bad because I mean you're gonna, no offense, have to fire them shortly after because of that." I actually added to my company values a while ago because I had hired somebody that I considered an Eeyore and I am a very positive person.

Peter Kozody: I love that.

Jaime Masters: And I was like, "How is positive living not even on my list? That's sort of kind of a thing for me" and I didn't even realize it until I had already hired someone and was like, "Oh, I don't even like getting on the phone with them" right?

Peter Kozody: Mm-hmm.

Jaime Masters: And I had to let them go. And so it's an evolutionary process. You don't necessarily have to have everything perfect as you go through –

Peter Kozody: Totally.

Jaime Masters: But how do you unwind what that is and evolve your values?

Peter Kozody: I mean listen, I had to start somewhere, right? So, doing that MBA really forced me to even think for the first time about that. Ironically, here I was having helped multiple organizations through a core values exercise and never thought to do it to myself, right? So, it's one of those –

Jaime Masters: Well, your book is about honesty and you just admitted that. Thank you, sir.

Peter Kozody: Oh, no. Trust me, I admit all kinds of things. It's actually kind of an interesting thing being an author about honesty because I just get to be honest, right? You know so much of this is awareness. So much of it is just having a lens of honesty and those two questions

I gave you earlier like, “Is that true?” and “How do I know?” Pausing to think and here’s why the forum program I told you about is powerful. Just giving yourself time in the month to reflect and say like, “What things bothered me this month?” and then asking, “Why did they bother me?” And just having the awareness and the presence to have those kinds of thoughts and then to look. I mean I love that you’re talking about core values. You literally looked that way.

Jaime Masters: I have them up. Yup, I have them –

Peter Kozody: Right?

Jaime Masters: Yeah.

Peter Kozody: So, I’m a big proponent of sticky notes. I tell my clients like, “Put sticky – Oh, that’s a bathroom sticky note. Put it on your –” People need to have things in front of them. If it’s not present, it’s not going to be important to you and I think that’s the missed opportunity and that’s why I think things like **[audio cuts out] [00:27:52]** so powerful, right? Because if you don’t get it out of your head and write it down, it just floats away or it bubbles beneath the surface and it wreaks havoc.

Jaime Masters: Just like with your goals or whatever. You’d have it somewhere in your folder randomly. I’m like, “No, no, no. I would like to be called out.” I’ve actually given my kids permission to call me out when I am not living by our family values, which is not fun, by the way.

Peter Kozody: Nice.

Jaime Masters: Just so everybody’s clear. It’s like –

Peter Kozody: No, but it’s a great leadership trait.

Jaime Masters: Right. And again, for any of your employees I hope that they call me out because I sometimes am not even self-aware, right?

Peter Kozody: Yeah, right.

Jaime Masters: To be even be able to do it just because of the patterns and the habits. How long – and I know you probably don’t have an answer to this but I want one so make something up, no –how long does some of this stuff take? I mean a lot of it’s neuro programming just

because we are so patterned in the ways that we do things or the hustle culture of entrepreneurs. It doesn't matter how you feel. Presence, I mean just keep doing what you got to do, right?

Peter Kozody: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jaime Masters: Versus what you're saying, which is kind of totally the opposite.

Peter Kozody: Well, first let's be honest, nothing matters except how you feel. We're at the top of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, right? Self-actualization.

Jaime Masters: Yup.

Peter Kozody: That's about feeling. You already have the food, the shelter. Then it's how do I gain success and fulfillment? And by the way, those things like success is just happiness. Fulfillment, they're all names of the same thing, which is a feeling. So, anyway, I think that's important. How long does it take? Well, I'll have two answers to that. The first is ask me when I'm on my deathbed. I'll let you know. But the second is I've found with certain things – once I was able to identify it and then took action steps to do it – faster than I thought.

For instance, I was convinced for most of my life that I had an abundance mindset. And it occurred to me through a thought that I was having – some habits that I have – like, “Maybe I don't? Maybe I have a scarcity mindset. And if I did, how would that show up?” And so I started watching for it. Now the fact that I'm even talking about abundance and scarcity mindsets like I'm telling you right now, Jaime, if people who knew me in my young 20s knew I was even talking about this it'd be like, “This guy's smoking the ganja. What happened to this person?” Brutal honesty happened.

But the point is, once I was asking myself like, “Do I have a scarcity mindset” or “What do people with scarcity mindsets do?” Well, they watch things like The Secret that no one wants to admit that they watched on Netflix even though it's one of the most watched things. They go to Spotify and they listen to abundance mindset things. I just did all of that. I was like, “Okay, well if I have it and I think I have some evidence that I do, I'm just gonna attack it as if I have it and then I'm gonna see what happens.”

And it took me about eight months to be able to identify every

single time I did something that like, “Oh, I need to finish this dinner even though I'm full like I'm never gonna have a dinner again.” Weird stuff, right – weird science – but nonetheless, things that are important. And yeah, it took about eight months and then I was able to identify those and start to actively avoid or change those behaviors which, I mean, anyone can take eight months to change a mindset. I mean it's not forever.

Jaime Masters: Thank you for actually giving us a timeline. Not that it's that gonna be for everybody, but it is really helpful to go, “Okay, now I have a set space and time” because otherwise working on yourself is a forever thing, right?

Peter Kozody: Yeah.

Jaime Masters: Until we die, especially for the people that really do appreciate growth as a human. I feel like that's one of the reasons why we're here. That being said, there unfortunately is no scientist that will help us individually, right? And so we –

Peter Kozody: Back to personal responsibility.

Jaime Masters: Darn it. Again. Every time.

Peter Kozody: Yup.

Jaime Masters: So, but to be able to have that, I have a personality trait where I am a researcher and I can't help it. So, I have books upon books upon books of me writing down things about myself and my thoughts just so I can understand myself.

Peter Kozody: Well, I have a great book for you if you're in the market.

Jaime Masters: Right? But it's also in the busy culture that we live in to be able to take the time to sit down at dinner and realize, “Oh, I'm finishing this right now because of this” and not thinking 20 steps ahead. How have you made that a priority in your life so that it only took eight months? Because I mean there's 100 things that we could be doing that with – which will be the rest of our lives – but how do you make it a priority so you actually are making a dent in it?

Peter Kozody: Oh, wow. I don't know that I can answer that, Jaime, because it didn't used to be. You know? That's a great question because it really is stumping me. I don't know what occurred in my head to make me realize, “Now is the time to work on that.” I don't know

that it can be forced, but I will say the inflection point of me traveling down the self-improvement road at all was because I got into a forum of other entrepreneurs.

Having that space and being forced to come and start to hear stories from others and start to share with others what was really going on, that kicked off the entire – the entire curve.

Jaime Masters: So, that was the catalyst.

Peter Kozody: Yeah.

Jaime Masters: Don't you feel like as a coach also though? I always joke because I call people out. I'm like, "You're doing it again." Right? Because they love me and I'm allowed to say that because normally you don't have a relationship – unless it's a marriage or whatever – and even in a marriage you can't really do that. I know. I was married for 11 years, right? You can't. There's nuances to everything, right?

Peter Kozody: Yeah.

Jaime Masters: And as a coach, you can call that out or a therapist or however that you have that radical honestly like you're talking about, but again the reason why I asked the question before is because it's great when you're on with your coach or if they're paying attention to things, but there's only so much time and space to be working on each chunk at a time.

So, while you're on with a coach or you're on with a therapist you're like, "Oh, I should totally do that" but then the integration of later, right? You've got that catalyst moment but then you go back to normal patterns and habits and stuff like that again. Are you very partitioned about that? Do you go one step at a time?

Peter Kozody: I am, yeah. I think about my life like Tetris. There are certain blocks that can only fit in certain places and, for instance, listening to a podcast [audio cuts out] [00:33:51] when I'm walking my dog, right? So, when I walk my dog, I listen to a podcast. There isn't a, "Oh, I don't feel like it today" or "Well, it's raining." It's like, "No, that's what I do." And that block fits into that slot and that's it. I'm very strict about those sorts of things. I've learned about myself that my brain's pretty useless after about 3:00 p.m. It switches into something called wine mode. I think that's the scientific term for it anyway.

But regardless, I just do really good work in the morning and – by the way – I don’t like early morning either. If I have to wake up before 8:00 a.m. I’m kind of pissy about it. So, I restructured my days and my life to take advantage of those things and I think it’s the folks who – again talk about self-limiting beliefs. “Well, but don’t successful entrepreneurs have to work 12 hours a day?” It’s like, “Nope, they don’t have to do any of that crap.” I know brilliant entrepreneurs – so much smarter than I – zero employees, three hours a day, multimillion dollar company. That’s like the Holy Grail, right?

I built a company of 30 people and – to your point – avoiding them and walking quickly to my office so I don’t have to talk to them. I was like, “What the hell’s going on here?” People have offices in multiple states and go like, “Isn’t this awesome?” No. It turns out that I like working from home. I like having these conversations. I don’t want to go out and see anybody. I don’t even want to put pants on. So, it was up to me then to recognize and then make those structural changes. Personal responsibility, no one’s gonna make them for us.

Sorry, just one last thing. Unfortunately, we all have these things piled on us like, “Successful entrepreneurs have to do X.” “Is that true? How do you know?” Stop that. Just stop.

Jaime Masters: It’s a collective sigh of relief and yet it’s easier said than done also because it’s –

Peter Kozody: Is that true?

Jaime Masters: I love you already. No. so, this is what most people’s perception would be is that it’s easier said than done.

Peter Kozody: I would agree.

Jaime Masters: Because A, we’ve never done it before or maybe we haven’t done it to the level that you’re asking for, which is out of the comfort zone and uncertain, which is also like, “Do I even have enough time, energy, capacity, whatever it is for that chunk?” and “Will it work?” Right? So, the questions that I was having as you were saying that, the perceptions of entrepreneurs based on what things that they think are correct like you’re saying “We have to have a business that has this many employees.” Well, “Do you like managing employees?” “No.”

Then why do it because then you build the thing and I've worked with so many people that have tons of money that are completely unhappy and the people that are listening right now that are finding inconsistency and incongruency in their business, please notice it and listen to what Peter is saying because otherwise you're building something that you don't want later and you're gonna burn it all down and then what is the point of your life?

Peter Kozody: Yup.

Jaime Masters: All right. I'll get off my soapbox now. But I just –

Peter Kozody: Yeah, well –

Jaime Masters: Yeah, go ahead.

Peter Kozody: People need to hear it and like I've said to you I think at least once if not twice, these messages would have fallen on deaf ears. I had to learn it the hard way. And I wish I knew – and I don't know, Jaime – I wish I knew what I could have said to myself that would have made me listen and I really don't know the answer to that question. I was turned off to it. If I would have heard a podcast like this and I would have thought, “Well, that's nice of them to say. They've built seven figure businesses.” Right?

Jaime Masters: You're telling us the – because this is what people are doing right now.

Peter Kozody: That's not true.

Jaime Masters: Exactly. It's not true.

Peter Kozody: It's not true and now I've known so many entrepreneurs who have seven figure businesses. Like you just said, do you work with people and they're unhappy, right? And listen does money buy happiness? I actually think it does if you use it the right way, you know? But there are all kinds of other questions around that. How did you make the money? What does your life look like? What does your lifestyle look like? What do your decisions look like? What do your core values look like?

Jaime Masters: One of the things that I find I'm honestly very, very stubborn – as are my daughter specifically, right – so I can see it in her and it's really fun to look at me and go, “Oh, you got that from me.”

Awesome.” Right? So, that is very humbling in itself. But when I work with a lot of entrepreneurs who are also very stubborn – which there are definite assets to being stubborn – and the not so great thing about it is that we can bang our head against the wall and be like, “Pain? What pain? Sure. We’re fine.” Right?

Peter Kozody: Yeah.

Jaime Masters: And so like you’re saying that moment of like, “Oh, crap. I can’t push through this anymore” sometimes comes with banging your head too many times against the wall or I feel like what you’re saying is honesty is one of the ways to get to that place where you can actually open and be vulnerable instead of shielding, right? Looking at it with a curiosity instead of looking at it as a like, “I am wrong because of this” is huge.

Peter Kozody: That’s the word. That’s exactly the word, curiosity.

Jaime Masters: How do we get people that are stubborn that are listening right now to become curious? I know we might not be able to, but what’s your guess?

Peter Kozody: Well, the question is what are you stubborn about? Listen. Nobody walks around thinking, “I am this way” or “I am stubborn and whatever and “Gosh, what a crappy way to be” and “Wow, I’m so wrong and the way everyone else behaves is right.” People take actions and have habits because they think it is the right thing to do because they think it helping them. So, the question is, “Is that true and how do you know?”

And I hope people who were listening to my story earlier about scarcity mindset like one of the best coaching questions is “If the opposite of whatever you’re thinking were true, how you could test that?” So, let’s say like, “I’m stubborn, but it helps me. But it is a pro, but it is a what?” Okay, well let’s pretend that stubbornness was actually the No. 1 thing that was hurting your life. If that were true, walk me through where that might be true. And no one I’ve ever asked a question like that has come up short.

They’ve been like, “Well, I suppose it would be this and this and this and probably that, but I know it’s not any of those things.” It’s like, “Well, there you go.” So, it’s one of those things where do you really know? And this is another thing. I have clients who are like, “Yeah, I’m really [audio cuts out] [00:39:52]. Is it that or it’s that?” I just sort of listen and nod and I love the silent treatment,

right? I just nod at them and go like, “Mm-hmm.” And they’ll keep talking, right?

And what happens is you get to see the wheel in their head. You get to do a full cycle with them and then they start to repeat and you’re like, “Okay, cool. Got it.” And to another person listening, it’s imminently clear what they’ve already decided. So, then I’ll just pause and say like, “So, do you really not know what you’re gonna do or do you know but you’re trying to justify it?” And usually, it’s the latter. So, stubbornness or any trait is one of those things like, “Do you really know that it’s a strength or are you just trying to justify it and what is that costing you?”

Jaime Masters: Yeah. The Byron Katie stuff with “Is that true and who would you be without that thought?” Whenever I’ve asked clients that, they’re like, “Huh?”

Peter Kozody: Yeah. What is it costing you is another one of my favorites.

Jaime Masters: Yeah, yeah.

Peter Kozody: What is it costing you?

Jaime Masters: Yeah because it’s easy not to look at it. It is our protective mechanism to not look at it on purpose and to not want to be called out on it, for sure, or to skirt around it. I am the best at skirting around. I’m too good at asking questions of other people that I can – you know? And that is not a good thing. My poor therapist and coaches hate me I’m sure because I’m squirrely and that’s because my ego is just trying to be so tight with what it wants and then it goes in a loop.

And that’s why I’m asking you so many questions about it because I can be in that space of knowing I want to be different and can feel the same gosh darn wheel turning and going, “Oh, I’m doing it again. I’m doing it again. Good times.” But I do think this is how we grow as humans in general. So, tell me –

Peter Kozody: Totally.

Jaime Masters: I know we have to wrap up in just a second because we’re going a little over, but I liked your quiz. So, tell me a little bit about the quiz. I’m apparently an honest challenger.

Peter Kozody: Okay, not bad.

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- Jaime Masters: Only a little. Not bad. It isn't good?
- Peter Kozody: No, no, it's good – the second highest.
- Jaime Masters: I was honest. I was honest. So, tell us a little bit about what the quiz is so everybody can go take it.
- Peter Kozody: Yeah. So, I designed it to get people into the content of like, "What does honesty even mean and how do I measure up?" And it's **[audio cuts out] [00:41:51]** parts. One is where do you get your information from? How do you form your world view? Are you only watching CNN or only watching Fox or only on Facebook? Are you making sure you go behind the headlines that are being screamed at you to figure out what does the data actually say? What are the political motives here? What is the other side of the story or other five sides of the story as we have in 2020?
- And so it's getting at sort of how do you form a big picture? Then it comes down to how honest are you with and about the others around you? Are you a talker or do you listen? Do you think about core values? Do you understand the core values of those around you? Do you openly share with others how you're thinking and feeling and encourage that feedback to come back to you – things of that nature?
- And then it deals with how honest are you with who you really are, what you really want, what you understand or not about what it's gonna take to get there? So, it's just a fun way for you to get you thinking about, "Where do I rank on these?" It's 21 questions. It tells you what profile you fit into. There are four profiles.
- Jaime Masters: Okay, what's the top one then because now I have a goal?
- Peter Kozody: It's honest innovator, yeah.
- Jaime Masters: Okay, okay. I'll work on it. I'll be close.
- Peter Kozody: Well, that's the thing. It's not a personality test. It's not set in stone. It's a snapshot of what your behaviors are right now and they are completely changeable and there's a whole workbook that comes along with this to help you and that's at HonesttoGreatness.com.
- Jaime Masters: I love this. Okay. I'm gonna ask my last question.
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Peter Kozody: Go for it.

Jaime Masters: So, what is one action listeners can take this week to help move them forward towards their goal of a million – besides buy the book?

Peter Kozody: Yeah. Honest to Greatness, on sale at Amazon. I think one thing I want everyone to do is go have a conversation with someone much smarter than you and don't go in with anything other than, "Hey, I just want to update you on where I am and share with you about the business and me and see what you think about progress" and what thoughts come to mind and what people come to mind and see if you can start to kick start any sort of feedback loop and networking leapfrog that could help you.

Because what I find, Jaime, which is sad – and I've found it in myself, trust me – is we entrepreneurs get a great idea like, "Oh, we're gonna go build that idea" and we sink a lot of time and money into it and then we go to market and there's nothing to validate it, right? And instead, we should be having a lot more conversations all the way along the road. And I think the No. 1 reason why people don't do that is because they don't want to hear that their idea is bad. Listen people, honesty, right? It all comes back to honesty.

Jaime Masters: Thank you so much for coming on the show today. Where can we get the quiz and find out more about you online?

Peter Kozody: Yup. So, nobody can pronounce my last name or spell it – Kozody – so head to HonesttoGreatness.com. That's Honest, T-O, Greatness.com. There you can find the free 21 question honesty quiz, which will tell you how honest you really are if you're brave enough to find out. It also gives you a free workbook and, of course, Honest to Greatness is on sale everywhere and all of my coaching programs are on that Honest to Greatness site, but only reach out. I'll have a conversation with anyone, but only reach out if you're serious and not stubborn like this one. No, I'm just kidding.

Jaime Masters: All my listeners, core values, dude, core values.

Peter Kozody: That's it.

Jaime Masters: Thank you so much for coming on the show today, Peter. I

appreciate it.

Peter Kozody: My pleasure. Thanks for being honest.

[End of Audio]

Duration: 45 minutes