





## **The Elder Council: Pathways of Wisdom**

To celebrate our 100th episode, this compilation distills the essence and spirit of the acclaimed "The Elder Council" podcast on YouTube. This collection of ten seminal conversations has been thoughtfully curated to guide you through a journey of self-discovery, enlightenment, and profound understanding, mirroring the show's dedication to sharing the invaluable insights and experiences of the elders with a modern audience.

"The Elder Council" stands as a beacon of wisdom, offering you a unique blend of personal narratives, philosophical discussions, and actionable advice on navigating the complexities of life. From exploring the depths of human potential to addressing the intricacies of family dynamics, each conversation serves as a stepping stone toward greater self-awareness, resilience, and connection.

This overview is more than just a collection of conversations; it is a carefully woven tapestry of life's lessons learned and shared by those who have walked the path before us. "The Elder Council: Pathways of Wisdom" embodies the show's spirit by providing a diverse range of perspectives on critical aspects of life, including personal growth, community building, and overcoming adversity. Each chapter includes a link to the original conversation on YouTube.

Your journey towards more profound understanding and connection starts here.

*Mark Sylvester and Duey Freeman, The Elder Council*

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## The Conversations

### **In The Beginning**

Welcome to a realm where the wisdom of those who have walked before us lights the way. This conversation sets the philosophical groundwork of our collective journey, emphasizing the importance of elder wisdom in today's world. [Watch](#)

### **Being an Elder**

Dive into the essence of elderhood, exploring the virtues and responsibilities of being an elder, such as mentorship, storytelling, and imparting knowledge to future generations. This conversation invites you to consider what it means to guide and inspire others. [Watch](#)

### **Human Potential**

Embark on a quest to discover the limitless possibilities within yourself. This inspiring call to action encourages you to realize your full potential and embrace growth, pushing beyond perceived limits. [Watch](#)

### **Building Relational Systems - Understanding Family Dynamics**

Navigate the intricate web of family relationships and dynamics, gaining insights into how these foundational systems influence our lives and how understanding them can lead to healthier, more fulfilling connections. [Watch](#)

### **The Choices We Make**

Consider the profound impact of your decisions and the paths they set you on. This conversation encourages mindfulness and intention at life's crossroads, recognizing your power to shape your destiny through your choices. [Watch](#)

### **Self-Awareness**

Explore the cornerstone of personal growth: understanding oneself. This conversation delves into the importance of self-awareness for navigating life's challenges and opportunities, urging a deep dive into self-discovery. [Watch](#)

### **The Planned and Unplanned Life**

Reflects on balancing making plans and embracing life's unpredictabilities. Offering wisdom on navigating uncertainty, this conversation highlights the beauty of life's certainties and uncertainties. [Watch](#)

### **Dealing with Sexual Abuse**

Address a profoundly challenging topic with compassion, providing support and guidance for healing. This conversation demonstrates courage in confronting complex subjects, focusing on empowerment and resilience. [Watch](#)

### **Integration of Knowledge**

Dive into a transformative exploration of how to turn knowledge into actionable, life-changing habits, uncovering the secret to embedding wisdom deep within your bones for lasting personal growth. [Watch](#)

### **Recognition and Community**

Celebrate the importance of belonging and the power of community support. Highlighting the human need for recognition and connection, this conversation underscores the podcast's belief in the strength of collective wisdom and shared experiences. [Watch](#)

## In The Beginning

### *"The Art of Connection: Building Trust and Influence"*

Welcome to a realm where the wisdom of those who have walked before us lights the way. This conversation sets the philosophical groundwork of our collective journey, emphasizing the importance of elder wisdom in today's world.



*The image evokes the themes of contact, power, and attachment within a serene landscape where the physical and spiritual boundaries blur, showcasing the interconnectedness of emotional and energetic connections against a backdrop of nature's tranquility.*

### Overview

The conversation features a compelling discussion between a therapist, Duey Freeman, and an entrepreneur, Mark Sylvester, exploring the concepts of contact, power, and attachment in human relationships. They delve into the nuanced understanding of how emotional, physical, spiritual, and energetic boundaries intersect and affect our connections with others. The conversation reveals insights into the nature of human interaction, emphasizing the importance of being open and receptive to giving and receiving influence within relationships. Their dialogue underscores the significance of trust, connection, and the dynamic interplay of influencing and being influenced, all within the context of maintaining authentic contact with others.

## Key Takeaways

**Contact as a Multifaceted Concept:** Contact is not merely physical but involves emotional, spiritual, and energetic dimensions that can intersect in various combinations, highlighting the complexity of human connections.

**Attachment Through Trust:** Building trust through consistent, predictable contact over time leads to deeper relationships. The process involves navigating challenges together, reinforcing the bond between individuals.

**Power in Relationships:** True power in relationships is defined by the capacity to influence and be influenced, a reciprocal process that fosters growth and understanding within the context of trust and contact.

## Action Steps

**Reflect on Your Interactions:** Take time to observe and reflect on how you interact with others across emotional, physical, spiritual, and energetic dimensions.

**Foster Trust Through Consistency:** Work on building trust in your relationships through consistent and meaningful interactions, paying attention to how these interactions contribute to a sense of connection.

**Embrace Reciprocal Influence:** Open yourself to both influencing others and being influenced. Recognize the value of this exchange in deepening relationships and fostering mutual growth.



## Being an Elder

### *Wisdom Without Age: Rethinking Leadership and Maturity*

Dive into the essence of elderhood, exploring the virtues and responsibilities of being an elder, such as mentorship, storytelling, and imparting knowledge to future generations. This conversation invites you to consider what it means to guide and inspire others.



*This image captures the essence of growth, wisdom, and the journey toward elderhood through a serene and mystical forest path.*

### Overview

The conversation delves into what it means to be an elder, challenging the conventional notion that age is the primary factor. Through personal anecdotes and reflections, the conversation highlights the essence of elderhood as rooted in experience, responsibility, and the wisdom to lead and guide others irrespective of chronological age. The discussion further explores the journey of personal growth, from embracing leadership at a young age to the continuous process of learning and adapting through various life stages. The narrative weaves through leadership themes, the significance of shared experiences, and the transformative journey towards becoming an adult and eventually an elder, emphasizing the importance of trust, integrity, and the courage to face the unknown.



## Key Takeaways

**Elderhood transcends age:** Elderhood is not strictly tied to one's age but is more deeply connected to the experiences, wisdom, and maturity one possesses. This conversation challenges the traditional view that elders are solely defined by their chronological age.

**Leadership and responsibility are key components:** From an early age, taking on leadership roles and responsibilities can shape one's journey toward becoming an elder. These experiences foster a sense of trust and the ability to make responsible choices, which are crucial traits of an elder.

**Personal growth is a continuous process:** The journey towards elderhood involves continuous personal growth, including becoming an adult and recognizing the complexities of life and relationships. This growth is marked by an understanding and acceptance of oneself and others, highlighting the importance of empathy and compassion.

## Action Steps

**Seek leadership opportunities:** Regardless of age, look for chances to lead and take responsibility. These experiences are valuable in developing the qualities associated with elderhood.

**Reflect on personal growth:** Engage in self-reflection to understand your journey towards adulthood and beyond. Consider what experiences have shaped you and how they contribute to your wisdom and maturity.

**Embrace lifelong learning:** Continue to learn and adapt, recognizing that becoming an elder is a lifelong process. Be open to new experiences and perspectives that challenge and enrich your understanding of yourself and the world.

## Human Potential

### *From Mass to Momentum: The Journey of Personal Growth*

Embark on a quest to discover the limitless possibilities within yourself. This inspiring call to action encourages you to realize your full potential and embrace growth, pushing beyond perceived limits.



*This image embodies the concepts of mass, velocity, and momentum within a serene landscape that encourages reflection on personal growth and the pursuit of potential. This visual representation inspires contemplation on the journey toward realizing one's full capabilities.*

### Overview

This insightful conversation revolves around human potential, utilizing the analogy of mass, velocity, and momentum to dissect the journey toward realizing one's full capabilities. The dialogue begins with an invitation to reflect on personal attributes (mass), skills and experiences (velocity), and the resultant direction and progression of one's life (momentum). The discussion delves into the importance of self-awareness and presence, contrasting the pursuit of potential as a future-oriented, judgment-laden endeavor with the tangible, immediate experience of momentum. Through anecdotes and philosophical

musings, the speakers explore how perception, action, and relational dynamics contribute to the understanding and achievement of one's potential.

## Key Takeaways

**The Importance of Self-Awareness:** Understanding one's mass (inherent traits) and velocity (skills and experiences) is crucial for generating momentum toward achieving one's potential. Self-reflection and feedback from others can provide valuable insights into one's innate capabilities and areas for growth.

**Action Overcomes Stagnation:** Movement, even without a clear direction, is emphasized as a vital step in overcoming the feeling of being stuck. This concept is metaphorically linked to horsemanship, where motion precedes precise direction, underscoring the importance of taking action to facilitate progress.

**Perception Influences Potential:** How individuals perceive their abilities and situations significantly impacts their potential. A realistic self-assessment, alongside understanding how others perceive you, can guide personal development and enhance momentum toward achieving goals.

## Action Steps

**Engage in Self-Reflection:** Take time to assess your mass (traits) and velocity (skills and experiences). Consider asking friends or colleagues for feedback to understand better how others perceive you.

**Take Action, Regardless of Certainty:** Embrace the concept of movement as a mechanism for progress. Engage in activities that challenge you, even if they seem unrelated to your ultimate goals, to prevent stagnation and foster growth.

**Develop a Personal Learning Plan:** Identify areas where you want to grow and set actionable steps towards acquiring or enhancing new skills. This plan should be flexible and adapt to your evolving understanding of your potential and goals.



# Building Relational Systems - Understanding Family Dynamics

## *Shaping Futures: The Impact of Parenting on Child Development*

Navigate the intricate web of family relationships and dynamics, gaining insights into how these foundational systems influence our lives and how understanding them can lead to healthier, more fulfilling connections.



*This scene reflects the nurturing bond and supportive atmosphere fundamental to family life, highlighting the importance of connection and shared learning experiences.*

## Overview

This conversation delves into the intricate layers of family dynamics, anchored in Duey and Mark's personal experiences and reflections. It begins with a heartfelt exploration of tenderness within familial relationships, particularly between siblings and partners, and how these early connections set the tone for future interactions and attitudes toward others. The conversation transitions into the complexities of fatherhood, examining the pivotal role of fathers in a child's development and the consequences of their presence or absence.

As the discussion unfolds, it touches upon the therapeutic aspects of addressing family dysfunction and the responsibility of parenting. The speakers share insights into their journeys of understanding and navigating the roles of a father, highlighting the challenges of breaking away from negative patterns inherited from their parents. The narrative then shifts to the broader societal and environmental factors that influence children's development, including the impact of polarized attitudes and the COVID-19 pandemic on shaping young minds.

Concluding on a note of optimism and actionable guidance, the conversation emphasizes the importance of conscious parenting. It advocates for acknowledging mistakes, the power of forgiveness, and the significance of building strong, loving relationships.

## Key Takeaways

**Early Childhood Experiences:** Parental behavior and early childhood experiences significantly impact an individual's sense of security, self-worth, and worldview.

**Parental Mistakes and Forgiveness:** It is essential to recognize and rectify parental mistakes, teach children about forgiveness and resilience, and separate personhood from behavior.

**Fostering Relationships and Connections:** There is a critical need for a conscious effort to nurture relationships and connections within the family and community as a means of healing and support, particularly in challenging times.

## Action Steps

**Reflect and Model Positive Behaviors:** Actively reflect on your behaviors and their impact on children. Make a conscious effort to model positive behaviors and attitudes to foster a healthy and supportive environment.

**Acknowledge Mistakes and Apologize:** When mistakes happen in parenting, acknowledge them and apologize to your children. Use these moments as opportunities to teach forgiveness and resilience, emphasizing the separation of personhood from behavior.

**Nurture Relationships:** Focus on fostering strong relationships and connections within your family and broader community. Recognize that relationships and connection are essential for healing and support, especially during challenging times like the COVID-19 pandemic.

## The Choices We Make

### *Legacy in Motion: The Impact of Our Journey*

Contemplate the profound impact of your decisions and the paths they set you on. This conversation encourages mindfulness and intention at life's crossroads, recognizing your power to shape your destiny through your choices.



*A serene landscape at twilight with a path leading through a forest towards a gathering around a fire. This visual metaphor symbolizes the warmth, community, and the continuation of stories and actions through generations.*

### Overview

The conversation delves into the profound concept of leaving tracks, a metaphor for the legacy and impact one has on others. It emphasizes the importance of self-awareness and being a role model for younger generations. It explores how personal actions and stories contribute to the memories and legacies that influence those around us, weaving through stories of resilience, mentorship, and the intentional creation of impactful memories.

Discussions highlight the power of storytelling in perpetuating one's legacy, with insights on overcoming struggles and focusing on growth and positive impacts. The narrative highlights how stories of personal experiences, challenges overcome, and lessons learned



can inspire and guide others, emphasizing the significance of sharing these stories to leave meaningful tracks.

The conversation concludes with actionable steps for listeners to reflect on their legacy, share their stories, and focus on personal growth and positivity. It encourages an introspective look at the tracks one leaves behind, advocating for a life lived with intention and focusing on leaving a positive mark on the world and the lives of others.

## Key Takeaways

**The Importance of Self-Awareness:** Recognizing our actions and stories' influence on others is crucial. The conversation highlights the need for self-awareness in understanding the 'tracks' we leave behind, shaping the memories and legacies that impact future generations.

**Legacy Through Stories:** Stories perpetuate one's legacy, illustrating how tales of struggles, resilience, and growth can inspire others. The conversation emphasizes storytelling as a powerful tool for leaving meaningful tracks.

**Growth Beyond Struggle:** The narrative underscores the importance of moving beyond victimhood to embrace growth and strength. It suggests focusing on post-traumatic growth and positive impacts rather than being defined by struggles.

## Action Steps

**Reflect on the Tracks You're Leaving:** Consider the legacy you wish to leave behind. Reflect on the impacts of your actions on those around you and the memories you're creating.

**Share Your Stories:** Actively share your experiences and lessons learned with others, especially younger people. Your stories can serve as guidance and inspiration for navigating life's challenges.

**Focus on Growth and Positivity:** Work on personal development and seek to impact the world positively. Embrace the lessons from your struggles and use them to foster strength and resilience in yourself and others.

## Self-Awareness

Explore the cornerstone of personal growth: understanding oneself. This conversation delves into the importance of self-awareness for navigating life's challenges and opportunities and urges a deep dive into self-discovery.



*A serene garden at dawn featuring a solitary figure sitting by a still pond, reflecting in the quiet of the morning. An ancient sundial spans the water, its shadow marking time, surrounded by vibrant flowers and lush foliage. The scene symbolizes the journey of self-awareness, the importance of time management, and personal growth, inviting contemplation and mindfulness.*

### Overview

This conversation dives into the intricate relationship between self-awareness, time management, and personal growth, challenging listeners to question their level of awareness. Through a candid conversation, the hosts explore the illusion of self-awareness and share personal anecdotes to highlight the common pitfalls in perceiving one's consciousness. The discussion expands into time management techniques, particularly "time hacking," which involves meticulous tracking of planned versus actual activities to enhance productivity and self-discipline.

The dialogue further explores personal and professional autonomy, introducing the concept of 'levels of freedom' as a framework for understanding and improving one's control over one's time and actions. Through engaging narratives, the conversation underscores the importance of setting realistic expectations and adopting a reflective approach to daily activities for continuous self-improvement.

## Key Takeaways

**True Self-Awareness is Crucial:** The conversation emphasizes that genuine self-awareness is elusive and essential, urging listeners to engage in deeper introspection to uncover their true selves. This involves recognizing one's biases, limitations, and strengths to foster personal growth and improvement.

**Reflective Time Management Enhances Productivity:** "Time hacking" is introduced as a method to bridge the gap between planned and actual activities. By reflecting on how one spends their time versus how they intend to, individuals can identify inefficiencies and adjust their habits for better time management and productivity.

**Levels of Freedom Determine Autonomy:** Understanding and navigating one's levels of freedom in personal and professional life is pivotal for enhancing autonomy and efficiency. The conversation discusses the importance of recognizing where one stands regarding freedom to take action and make decisions and how to progress toward higher levels of autonomy.

## Action Steps

**Engage in Regular Self-Assessment:** Allocate time each week to reflect on your actions, decisions, and outcomes. Use this opportunity to gauge your self-awareness and identify areas for improvement. Consider questions that challenge your usual thought patterns and behaviors.

**Implement Time Tracking:** Start tracking your planned versus actual time spent on various tasks throughout your day. Use tools or apps designed for time management to help with this process. Analyze the discrepancies between your planned and actual activities to identify where you can make adjustments for better efficiency.

**Evaluate Your Levels of Freedom:** Take a moment to assess your current level of freedom in both your personal and professional life. Identify your current level and formulate a plan to move towards greater autonomy. This may involve setting more explicit boundaries, improving time management skills, or taking on more responsibility in areas that align with your goals.



## The Planned and Unplanned Life

### *Rhythms of Resilience: Practices for a Purposeful Life*

Reflect on the balance between making plans and embracing life's unpredictabilities. Offering wisdom on navigating uncertainty, this conversation highlights the beauty of life's certainties and uncertainties. (Source: Ep 34)



*A serene landscape at dusk shows an individual under a tree using a digital tablet, symbolizing the fusion of technology and nature. The image visually embodies the conversation's theme of harmonizing life's planned and unplanned aspects by contrasting a manicured garden with a wild forest.*

### Overview

The conversation delves into the interplay between technology and personal growth, inspired by a mentorship story in the animation industry. It explores the balance between life's structured, planned aspects and spontaneous, unplanned moments, mainly through the lens of artificial intelligence in animation. This conversation raises questions about predestination, free will, and the role of habits, rituals, and practices in shaping our daily lives.

This conversation suggests that embracing life's uncertainties and challenges is essential for personal development. It urges listeners to reflect on their habits and the impact of these practices on their mental health and well-being.

The conversation advocates integrating intentional practices into daily life as a foundation for resilience and fulfillment. It highlights the continuous journey towards self-improvement, emphasizing the value of learning from life's unpredictability.

## Key Takeaways

**The Balance Between Structure and Spontaneity:** Life is a dance between the planned and the unplanned. Embracing both aspects allows for a richer, more fulfilling experience where technology and personal growth intersect surprisingly and meaningfully.

**The Significance of Rituals and Practices:** Daily routines have the potential to transcend mundane tasks, becoming rituals that imbue our lives with intentionality and presence. These practices are essential for mental health, well-being, and personal growth, highlighting mindfulness's importance in everyday activities.

**Learning from Life's Uncertainties:** Challenges and uncertainties are not obstacles but growth opportunities. Approaching life with a mindset that welcomes these experiences as lessons can transform our approach to personal development, making us more resilient and open to continuous learning and self-improvement.

## Action Steps

**Reflect and Reevaluate:** Take a moment to assess your daily routines. Identify which activities are mere habits and which are meaningful rituals that contribute to your personal growth. This reflection will help you understand the impact of your routines on your mental health and overall well-being.

**Introduce Intentionality:** Begin incorporating intentional practices into your daily life. Choose activities that foster presence and engagement, whether a morning routine setting the tone for your day, a mindfulness exercise, or a creative outlet. Make these practices a non-negotiable part of your day to enhance your sense of purpose and fulfillment.

**Embrace Challenges as Opportunities:** Adopt a mindset that views life's uncertainties and challenges as avenues for growth. Instead of shying away from difficulties, approach them with curiosity and an open mind. This perspective will make you more resilient and enrich your personal development journey with valuable lessons and insights.

## Dealing with Sexual Abuse

### *Stories That Heal: The Role of Narrative in Overcoming Abuse*

Address a profoundly challenging topic with compassion, providing support and guidance for healing. This conversation demonstrates courage in confronting complex subjects, focusing on empowerment and resilience. (Source: Ep 36)



*The image represents an individual on their journey of healing and overcoming trauma through the power of narrative and resilience.*

### Overview

Duey shares insights into the harrowing impact of intergenerational sexual abuse, detailing encounters with victims and the emotional toll on families. This dialogue reveals the complex layers of trauma that span generations, challenging both survivors and those aiding their recovery. The therapist emphasizes the critical need for mental health professionals to practice self-care, highlighting their personal and professional strains.

The conversation transitions to the therapeutic value of storytelling, presenting it as a powerful medium for healing. Through narrative, individuals find a voice for their pain and a path to understanding, fostering connection and resilience. This approach benefits not



only the clients but also the therapists, offering them a way to navigate the emotional challenges of their work.

The conversation concludes by underscoring the importance of addressing intergenerational trauma with empathy and resilience. It advocates for narrative therapy to facilitate healing and underscores the essential role of self-awareness and self-care in the helping professions. The discussion invites listeners to reflect on the profound effects of trauma and the transformative power of storytelling in the journey toward recovery.

## Key Takeaways

**The Pervasive Impact of Intergenerational Trauma:** The conversation highlights the deep and lasting effects of intergenerational sexual abuse, revealing how such trauma not only affects the immediate victims but also resonates through generations, impacting families at a profound level.

**The Importance of Self-Care for Therapists:** It underscores mental health professionals' need to engage in self-care and maintain their emotional well-being. This is crucial for them to continue providing effective support to their clients and manage the emotional toll that comes with handling cases of severe trauma.

**The Therapeutic Power of Storytelling:** The conversation explores how storytelling is a powerful therapeutic tool, offering both victims and therapists a way to navigate and make sense of their experiences. Through narrative, individuals can find healing, connection, and a means to transform their trauma into a narrative of resilience and recovery.

## Action Steps

**Seek Professional Support:** If you or someone you know is grappling with the effects of trauma or abuse, it's crucial to seek help from a mental health professional. Therapists can provide support and guidance to navigate the healing process effectively.

**Practice Self-Care:** Prioritizing self-care is essential for those in caregiving roles, such as therapists and support workers. Engaging in regular self-reflection, setting boundaries, and adopting healthy coping mechanisms can help them manage the emotional demands of their work.

**Explore Storytelling:** Whether you're a trauma victim, a therapist, or someone looking to understand and process personal experiences, consider exploring the power of storytelling. Writing, sharing, and listening to stories can be a potent way to heal, connect with others, and foster a deeper understanding of oneself and the recovery journey.

## Integration of Knowledge

### *Embodied Learning: Making Change Stick*

Examine societal shifts and their impact on our collective and individual sense of security. This conversation encourages dialogue on cultivating safety within ourselves and our communities in changing times. (Source: Ep 44)



*A serene setting with an open book on a wooden table amidst a lush forest backdrop symbolizes the journey of integrating knowledge into action. Potted plants at various stages of growth surround the book, representing the nurturing of ideas and personal development.*

### Overview

The conversation delves into the challenge of turning knowledge gained from books, workshops, and seminars into actionable change in one's life, emphasizing integration's importance in fostering fundamental transformation. The conversation explores how often people feel inspired by new information but struggle to make it impact their lives deeply. Proper integration requires more than just understanding; it requires embodying the lessons learned.

The discussion highlights the concept of somatic learning, or integrating knowledge into one's body, as a key to making lasting changes. It suggests that people need to mentally grasp new concepts and physically and emotionally connect with them to internalize and apply them in their lives. The speakers share personal anecdotes and strategies for achieving this deeper level of integration.

The conversation concludes with practical advice on nurturing the seeds of new ideas and ensuring they find fertile ground in one's life. It stresses the importance of consciously supporting the growth of new skills and perspectives through presence, reflection, and practice. The conversation underlines the significance of giving oneself credit for progress made, reinforcing the value of self-encouragement and recognition in the journey of personal development.

### Key Takeaways

**Embody to Transform:** True integration requires more than understanding; it involves embodying lessons through physical and emotional experiences.

**Nurture One, Grow Many:** Focusing on nurturing a single impactful idea can lead to significant personal growth and transformation.

**Celebrate Progress:** Acknowledging and celebrating one's advancements is crucial for reinforcing positive behaviors and encouraging continuous personal development.

### Action Steps

**Practice Mindfulness:** Engage in mindfulness to fully absorb new information, allowing it to resonate intensely, physically, and emotionally.

**Focus on One:** Identify a key takeaway from each learning experience and commit to nurturing and developing this idea into a tangible skill or change.

**Reflect and Acknowledge:** Regularly reflect on your progress and achievements, no matter how small, to reinforce positive changes and motivate continued growth.

## Recognition and Community

### *Fostering Belonging: Leadership and the Art of Recognition*

Celebrate the importance of belonging and the power of community support. Highlighting the human need for recognition and connection, this conversation underscores the podcast's belief in the strength of collective wisdom and shared experiences.



*A group of people in a serene landscape, engaging with each other in a circle, symbolizing connection and support. Gentle light illuminates their faces, highlighting recognition and belonging and creating an atmosphere of community, warmth, and inclusivity.*

### Overview

This conversation delves into the universal human desires for connection and recognition, highlighting the importance of feeling part of a community and being seen for one's unique contributions. It discusses the role of leadership in fostering community by creating spaces for connection and offering genuine recognition. It shares a personal story from an improv class to illustrate how acknowledging individuals can enhance their sense of belonging and self-worth.



The conversation explores the concept of community in various forms, from intimate relationships to broader social networks, emphasizing the importance of safety, shared experiences, and mutual support. It also touches on the idea of gamification to enhance engagement within communities, suggesting that well-structured activities can strengthen bonds and foster a sense of achievement and belonging.

## Key Takeaways

**Connection and Recognition Are Essential:** The conversation underscores the universal need for connection and recognition, emphasizing their significance in fostering a sense of belonging and community. These elements are vital for personal and group cohesion and influence overall well-being and productivity.

**The Role of Leadership in Community Building:** Effective leadership is pivotal in creating environments that nurture connection and recognition. Leaders have the unique opportunity to cultivate spaces where individuals feel valued and seen, enhancing engagement and loyalty.

**The Power of Acknowledgment:** Personal stories and examples within the conversation illustrate the profound impact that specific and thoughtful acknowledgment can have on individuals. Recognizing someone's contributions can light up their sense of belonging, significantly boosting their confidence and commitment to the community.

## Action Steps

**Practice Active Recognition:** Make it a habit to recognize and appreciate the efforts and contributions of others in your personal and professional circles. This can be as simple as a verbal acknowledgment, a thank you note, or public praise in a team setting.

**Foster Safe and Inclusive Environments:** Strive to create spaces—whether at work, in social settings, or online—where everyone feels safe to express themselves and contribute. This involves active listening, openness to diverse perspectives, and promoting mutual respect.

**Incorporate Gamification Principles for Engagement:** To increase participation and interest, consider applying gamification principles in community-building activities. This could involve setting clear goals, providing feedback, and celebrating achievements, which can make the community engagement process more rewarding and enjoyable.

# In Conclusion

## *What Has Your Journey Been Like?*

Through these conversations, you've embarked on a remarkable exploration, delving into the wisdom of elders, the essence of self-awareness, and the intricacies of human connection.

This is a journey through individual conversations and a transformative voyage within yourself.

Here are some reflections to guide your contemplation:

**Elder Wisdom:** How has the guidance of those who came before influenced your choices and perspectives? Are you embodying the virtues of mentorship and storytelling in your own life?

**Human Potential:** Have you unearthed hidden strengths and unlocked new possibilities within yourself? What inspires you to continue pushing beyond perceived limitations?

**Relationships:** Have you gained a deeper understanding of your family dynamics and their impact on your life? How are you fostering healthier and more fulfilling connections?

**Choices and Self-Awareness:** Do you approach life's crossroads with greater mindfulness and intention, recognizing your power to shape your destiny? How has self-awareness helped you navigate challenges and opportunities?

**The Unplanned Path:** Can you embrace uncertainty while appreciating the beauty of life's planned and unplanned moments? Are you finding resilience and growth amidst life's unexpected turns?

**Healing and Community:** Did exploring complex topics like sexual abuse empower you to find support and build resilience? Are you fostering a sense of belonging and sharing wisdom within your community?

Remember, this journey is not merely about absorbing information; it's about integrating it into your life. Take action! Share your wisdom, build meaningful connections, and continue to push the boundaries of your potential.

# Afterword

## The Essence of The Elder Council

Reflecting on our podcast journey together, reaching episode 100 is a remarkable milestone. This achievement speaks volumes about our resilience and self-discipline, as we consistently engage in meaningful conversations week after week. Our dialogues extend beyond mere exchanges; they are a testament to the shared depth of our experiences, creativity, and the hard work that has shaped our lives.

Our show is a testament to the power of shared experience and the belief that wisdom can alleviate the hardships of those who walk untrodden paths. It's about creating a legacy of learning, a compendium of life lessons that, when pieced together, form a guidebook for navigating life's complexities with grace and resilience.

At its core, The Elder Council is about connection—between two men with a wealth of life behind them and between all of us who seek to understand the vastness of the human experience. It reminds us that we are not so different, regardless of the era we were born into, our struggles, and the triumphs we celebrate. In every episode, we explore the contours of our experiences and open a window into the universal soul, inviting us all to peer in.

The podcast stands as a beacon of hope and understanding in a world often fragmented by the superficial divides of age and time. It champions the idea that once shared wisdom becomes a tool for growth, a means to sidestep the pitfalls of naivety, and a bridge to a life lived with purpose and insight.

As you turn the pages of this booklet, remember that the essence of The Elder Council is not captured solely in the words spoken in each episode but in the spaces between them—the laughter, the silence, the implicit understanding that, though life may take us on divergent paths, we are bound by the common thread of humanity.

In honoring this legacy, we recognize that the true gift of The Elder Council is not just what is said but what is heard, understood, and carried forward. It is a call to all of us to listen, reflect, and, most importantly, share the wisdom we gather along our journey.

May this collection inspire you to reach new altitudes of understanding and cherish the invaluable perspectives that only time and experience can bestow.

## **A Note from Duey**

It is a cold January afternoon in 2021, and I am nervous because I am meeting this man named Mark Sylvester for the first time online. Traver Boehm introduced us, saying we were kindred souls and needed to know each other. All I know is that Mark is a high-level business coach, an incredibly accomplished computer professional, and lives in Santa Barbara. As I nervously prepare for our Zoom call, I wonder what in god's name do we have in common. I live on the side of a mountain in Colorado, can barely find the power button on my computer, have never been to Santa Barbara, and would not know how to consult with a high-level business if my life depended on it. We get on the call, and within minutes, I am taken by Mark's kindness and authenticity. Our scheduled hour goes by in what seems like seconds. We both agree that we must have a second and third call. Mark then suggests we pick topics and record our calls to share with Man Uncivilized. I find this idea fascinating.

As subsequent calls unfold, we dive into many topics. With each call, I leave with a new perspective, a new door through which to view the world. I love that I get to talk with someone with a similar number of years living life, dealing with struggles, celebrating wins, and loving the time we have been alive and spent together. I cherish the level of trust, commitment, and, most importantly, our vastly different experiences and perspectives. Holding these with kindness is what has created our deep trust and love.

My greatest wish for those who listen is that you have the opportunity to learn from our experiences, mistakes, and different perspectives and that our sharing these may help make your lives just a little smoother.

## **A Note from Mark**

Reflecting on the past couple of years and 100 episodes of our show, I think about the more significant objectives we recognized early on during our conversations. We found ourselves talking about things men don't usually take time to discuss. Every Saturday morning, I'd look forward to a cup of tea and a chat with the man who has become my best friend. While we have wildly different backgrounds, we've uniquely encountered and solved most of life's challenges.

We saw an opportunity to share the lessons learned with a broader audience, and within a few short weeks, we started to share them with Traver and the men in The Nation.



When asked about the Elder Council, I explain that Duey and I live in a universe where time travel is standard. We use our time together to go back to our 25, 35, and 45-year-old selves to talk about what's important. We find it helpful to remind ourselves of those early years and share lessons you may have missed while living and surviving early adulthood. For instance, did anyone ever sit you down to talk about being a Dad, a Son, a Boss, a Co-Worker, a Citizen, or a Friend? How do we overcome the natural tendency of men to keep everything bottled up inside?

Thankfully, Duey has 80,000 hours of being a therapist and is gifted at getting people to talk to him, and I have not shut up since I was 12. The two of us together have turned into quite the pair. We're thrilled you have taken the time to listen in, and hopefully, we have at least pointed out some of the pitfalls.

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You can watch our entire back catalog of [The Elder Council on YouTube](#).