

- Announcer: Bulletproof Radio, a state of high performance.
- Dave: You're listening to Bulletproof Radio with Dave Asprey. Today's cool fact of the day is all about your body on kindness. It turns out that just witnessing acts of kindness produces oxytocin, which you might have heard as your love hormone. That aids in lowering blood pressure, improving heart health, and it increases self-esteem and optimism and even trust. Kindness also stimulates your body to make a built-in anti-depressant that we like to call serotonin, although serotonin does a lot more than being an anti-depressant. It's also pro-inflammatory if you have too much.
- Dave: Assuming you get the right amount from kindness, it's a feel good chemical that helps you with wound healing and calming down and being happy. People who actually practice kindness perpetually have 23% less of the stress hormone cortisol and they age more slowly than the average population. According to research from Emery University, when you're kind to another person, your brain's pleasure and reward centers light up as if you're the recipient of the good deed, not the giver. They call that the helper's high. One theory behind that is that it's caused by mirror neurons in the brain, which I think is the right theory.
- Dave: Now, one thing that I've learned in the course of Bulletproof is that if you want to be kind to another person consciously, it helps to have enough energy. That's one of the reasons that I make the products the way I do at Bulletproof. I feel like if you're fed the right stuff and not fed the wrong stuff, it's easier to be kind to other people. Today's guest has only three small words that back up what he does, and they are, "Go be kind."
- Dave: I'm talking about Leon Logothetis, who's a world-renowned motivational speaker, adventurer and philanthropist who is known everywhere as the kindness guy. He started out with his travel adventure and started a movement that's now made it into five books, multiple TV series, including Netflix and National Geographic, as well as a bunch of stuff on social media. The reason that I wanted to interview Leon was because of his recent post on Instagram. By the way, he's The Happiness Guy on Instagram. He wrote, "Happiness is the new rich. Inner peace is the new success. Health is the new wealth. Kindness is the new cool." Leon, welcome to the show.
- Leon: Thank you very much for having me.
- Dave: Alright. Kindness is such a mushy word. We all sort of know what kindness is when we see it, but it's relatively hard to define, sort of like the Supreme Court definitely of pornography. I can't define it, but I know what it is when I see it. How do you define kindness?
- Leon: A lot of people always come up to me and they say, "You're the kindness guy, you tell me what kindness means." They expect to have this epic answer that solves all world problems. The truth is that, for me, kindness is simply helping someone feel less alone. That's it.
- Dave: Wow. That's a great definition.

- Leon: Yeah. When you make someone feel like they matter, when you see someone, when you take someone's loneliness, depression, and transform it by simply being kind, that's quite a profound way to be.
- Dave: I was just reading an article on how to teach your kids to handle bullying. It occurs to me that a lot of the unkindness, or lack of kindness, that we see in adult discourse comes out as a result of people being mistreated as kids, oftentimes being bullied, and then they come up feeling, "I have to become a skeptic. I have to attack others. I have to defend myself, or I have to be at the front of the stoplight," or whatever the thing is. Sort of like there's this pattern that's repeated over and over. How do you tell people to approach making people kind in the next generation? Is there a recipe for just creating kindness from the start?
- Leon: One of the most powerful ways to, let's say, create kindness in a human being is to teach empathy. If I feel your pain, the chances are that I will not go out into my world and share pain with others and create pain because we all know what it feels like to be in pain. When I give speeches at schools, I get the kids to come up and I ask the question, "How does it feel when someone's mean to you?" Then they tell me. Then I get them to come up, "How does it feel when someone's kind to you?" Because we can really only experience our own experiences, so the use of empathy is a very profound tool to inspire people to treat others with dignity.
- Dave: Teaching empathy. Alright, you can teach that to kids, put yourself in the other person's shoes. How do you get an adult who's in a reactive place? They're either in the process of doing something that isn't kind, or about to do something that is unkind. Let's take the stereotypical example. They're in traffic and their middle finger is about to go up because someone cut them off or whatever. What's the intervention to allow people to choose kindness versus reactivity?
- Leon: Well, in the moment, when someone's about to pull their middle finger out, there may be no hope, so you can't help them in that moment because it's done. What you can do down the road is come from your heart. Instead of trying to fix them with your mind, or trying to speak to them on a mind level, you speak to them on a heart level. I used to have road rage.
- Dave: Me too.
- Leon: Believe it or not, The Kindness Guy used to have road rage. It's true. I've destroyed my career, but it's done. I remember once, many years ago, I got out of the car and this guy got out of the car, and I turned around and got back in my car because he was much bigger than me. I was in some way humiliated to never have road rage again. A wise man once said to me that people never remember what you say to them, but they always remember how you make them feel. The way to make someone kinder is to show them that kindness is a win-win, to show them the benefits of coming from a place of love and coming from a place of compassion and empathy.

- Leon: Sometimes people always tell me, they're like, "I can't be kind because it's weakness. If I'm kind, then they'll squash me." I tell them the story of Muhammad Ali. Muhammad Ali, not a perfect man, but no one is, is a man that came from his heart, is a man that came from a place of service, is a man that came from love. Then I say to them, "Would you mess with Muhammad Ali?" They're like, "No, of course not." The point is that you can be kind and you can be strong. Your kindness doesn't mean you can let people walk all over you. Absolutely not. There's a boundary in place. There's a, "It's not okay to treat me like that." Treat people with respect, but there's a boundary that you put up. "Do not mess with me, but I'm going to be kind."
- Dave: Kindness isn't weakness, but kindness can feel like weakness, especially in the face of someone who isn't being kind towards you. How do you break that cycle? Let's say you're at work and you got a coworker who's feeling critical and you're like, "Alright. I'm going to start talking about it behind their back, or I'm going to start becoming defensive or something." What's the process that you coach people to go through to just be kind?
- Leon: Many of us make commitments. One of the commitments is to our work. Another of the commitments is to our families. How many of us make a commitment of how we're going to show up in the world? That's the secret sauce, let's say. That's what I do every day. I'm not perfect by any stretch of the imagination, but I've made a commitment to show up with compassion and kindness as often as I possibly can. By doing that, through osmosis to a certain degree, I really don't spend that much time around people who are kind, who don't come from their hearts. It took time, and it doesn't always work, you never know what happens in life, but if you do that and you make a commitment, the greatest thing that one can do is have an intention.
- Leon: That intention of showing up with a kind soul, with a kind heart, with some compassion is something that will truly change lives. That's my trick. That's what I do. That's what I do as often as I possibly can. It's easy to do it if you win the lottery, right? It's easy to do it if everything's going well. The hard part is to do it when things are not going well, when someone upsets you on the road, when you want to get angry. If you make that commitment like you do with your family, like you do with your work, lives change, starting with your own.
- Dave: When's the last time that you did something that you would classify as unkind?
- Leon: Oh my god. Do you know what? I'm going to tell you. I can't believe I'm going to say this, but I am. Basically, over the weekend I was staying in a hotel and I put on Amazon Prime and I didn't know how to turn off Amazon Prime and put my code in. It was \$3 to rent a movie, and it just so happened that someone else's thing was on there. I was like, "You can't do this. You're The Kindness Guy. God is going to punish you if you do this." I was like, "Okay. I've got to figure out how not to do it," but in the end I couldn't, so I was like, "Oh my god." If you're listening, I think the person's name was Brooke, if you're listening, I'm really sorry. Please send me a check and I will pay you the \$3.
- Dave: You borrowed \$3 without permission from Brooke.

- Leon: I know. It's really bad. I feel ashamed, but it's true.
- Dave: I love it that you're so real. Well, I was going to say, "And what did you do to make it right," but it sounds like in this case, like, "Hey, I'll pay you back."
- Leon: Do you know what I could do? In fact, I'm going to is I'm going to call the hotel, tell them what room I was in and tell them to tell the guest that I will send them \$3.
- Dave: You could probably also buy someone else a \$3 item or buy two other people a \$3 item and do the pay it forward thing.
- Leon: I like it, but I feel bad. It's going to haunt me. Brooke's \$3 is going to haunt me forever.
- Dave: Alright. You just introduced the next topic, almost like we planned it that way, which we didn't. No one's perfect.
- Leon: No.
- Dave: If you commit to being this kind person and you say... In fact, this is a law from Game Changers, my last book. People don't find out who they are, they choose who they're going to be and then they make themselves that person, and kindness is one of the things that I aspire to. The problem is you made that \$3 choice. We've all made choices that in retrospect weren't the kindest or the best choice, and it's really easy to then say, "Geez, I failed." The voice in your head can get a little bit hostile about that sort of thing. How do you deal with the fact that you weren't as kind as you wanted to be? What's your inner dialogue and what do you do to let go of that?
- Leon: My inner dialogue is very simple. Sometimes it's external as well, specifically when I'm giving the speeches. No one's perfect. I'm not perfect. Gandhi wasn't perfect. Jesus wasn't perfect. You're not perfect. Your listeners are not perfect. We make mistakes. Sometimes they're \$3 mistakes, sometimes they're much worse than that. I tell people, "You make a commitment to get and stay on the kindness wagon." You keep on going. If you fall off the kindness wagon, it's okay.
- Leon: It doesn't mean you're a bad human being. It doesn't mean you can't be kind. It doesn't mean you're going to help. It just means that you're human and you fell off the wagon. Get back on it. That's what commitment is. That's what intention is. It doesn't mean that I make a commitment to be kind and all of a sudden I'm going to be like the Dalai Lama. You know what? The Dalai Lama is a human just like us and I'm sure he's been unkind in his life. It's a commitment thing. It's a commitment thing. You get back on the wagon and it's all okay. Don't worry, you made a mistake. It's good. No worries.
- Dave: Okay, so you just basically say, "No problem. I made a mistake." How much of a monk-like existence does it take to be kindness? I mean, you've traveled to a hundred countries. You've really gone out there and just put yourself out there as an example of this, but it seems like you can almost become an ascetic. If everyone listening to this

show right now said that, "I'm only going to be kind," you'd give away all your money. You'd start to go down a path. How do you know when too much kindness happens?

Leon: Well, remember my definition. My definition is kindness is simply helping someone feel less alone. If that's true, it's true for me, it could be not true for you, but it's true for me. If that's the case, then you don't need to be a monk to make someone feel less alone. You just need to be present for them. You just need to make them feel like they matter. You just need to show up. It doesn't mean you can't do silly things, like this weekend. I probably shouldn't share this, but I'm going to.

Leon: I decided to take, and always wanted to have a bath in glitter. Yeah? Yeah, so I did. Now, I don't know any monks that have had baths in glitter. Just being kind doesn't mean you have to give up everything. You can't be silly, you can't go on adventures, you can't have bad days. You can. It's all good. Have a bad day. It's all good. Except when you have a bad day, or a bad week, or a bad month, when you're on the floor and you feel down, that's okay. As the great man Winston Churchill once said, "Never, never, never give up." You're down, you're on the floor, it's okay. You've been mean, it's okay. Just when you're ready, stand up and keep on going.

Dave: Alright, so it's the continued practice of kindness, not the perfection of kindness that you're targeting.

Leon: Absolutely. It's the same thing with love, let's say. People think, and I used to be one of those people, that you fall in love and everything's going to work itself out. It's all going to work itself out. The truth is you have to commit to it. You have to commit to how you show up on a daily basis. The same thing with kindness. You have to commit to it. That's the way it is.

Dave: Okay. That makes a lot of sense. It's a practice much like meditation, but instead of saying, "I have a daily meditation practice," you're saying, "I have a daily kindness practice." You walk through life saying, "Alright, how do I help the people around me not feel alone?"

Leon: Yes. Sometimes people say to me, "Why are you so kind? Why did you decide to live your life like this?" The truth is, as a kid, I felt profoundly alone. I know what it feels like to feel like one doesn't matter. I know what it feels like to feel ostracized. I know. You're a human being, and your listeners are human beings, and they know too. The way to resolve that, in many instances, is to have someone be kind to you. When someone is kind to you, things get better, so you take that kindness and you throw it like it's confetti to others and it becomes a win-win. I win because I'm being kind to you and I'm feeling better. You win because my kindness makes you feel like you matter.

Dave: Yeah. That's a powerful equation there. I'm thinking of times when I've been able to do that, and it pays a dividend. I suspect everyone listening to the show right now can think of one person in their life who really was kind at a time they needed it and it'll stand out. "Oh, that person really made a difference." You realized you can be that person, but there's also, to the research at the beginning of the show and something that you've

said as well, being kind can be a little bit selfish because it actually feels good to be kind to another person. It pays dividends for you in terms of good hormones and all those things.

Leon: 100%. They say to me, "Mother Theresa, she was selfless." Maybe, but do you think that Mother Theresa didn't feel amazingly beautiful because of how she treated people? Of course she did. She got something out of it, and there's nothing wrong with that.

Dave: Did you just say Mother Theresa was selfish? I think you did.

Leon: In a roundabout way.

Dave: That's okay. She clearly had some ego in there. It's okay. Right?

Leon: Yeah. Yeah.

Dave: Okay.

Leon: Being kind makes you feel better, so why not do it? It's a win-win.

Dave: One of my favorite tricks for this, one of the places where I buy my organic grass-fed everything, if you spend more than a couple hundred bucks, they give you a receipt worth \$10 off your next purchase. The problem is I lose receipts. I don't keep a folder of receipts in my wallet. If I did, there's just a crust then that builds up at the bottom of my wallet and it's just not a good situation. I realized I could throw them all away three years from now when I finally look at them or I just go to the person behind me in line. I'm like, "Hey, here's \$10 off of your groceries right now." It's an act of kindness.

Dave: I could be selfish and keep the 10 bucks, but then I tell them, "Look, if you get one of these things sometime, will you do me a favor and give it to the person behind you in line and it's all good and everybody wins? If you never do it, it's okay also." The smile you get from doing that is worth at least 10 bucks, and not having to track some piece of paper that I'm going to lose anyway is also worth 10 bucks. To me, that's one of those things because I always feel happy when I leave shopping having done that. Otherwise, I don't. There aren't a lot of losers in that situation, unless I truly didn't have \$10. Even then, I think it would probably come back to me.

Leon: Yeah. Again, it goes back to the law, well, Leon's law of win-win when it comes to kindness. You win, I win, and why not do it?

Dave: Now, that easy to say because I have more than 10 bucks, but you traveling in your TV series, Amazing Adventures of a Nobody, you crossed America, the UK and Europe on \$5, 5 pounds, and 5 euros a day, depending whatever the right currency was. Alright, that might rely a lot on the kindness of others. Tell me about what that was like and how kindness played a role in that.

- Leon: As a kid, I was very shy. I couldn't connect with people at all. I grew up in an environment where, materially, I had everything, but emotionally I had nothing. On the journey, one of the first journeys I did, I walked across America. Well, hitchhiked across America from Time's Square to the Hollywood sign. I flipped it so that I would have no money, but I would have to rely on the hearts of other human beings. It made me realize in doing that that there was so much love out there.
- Leon: Yes, bad stuff happens. I get it. You watch the same news as I do, but more often than not, there is a heart-centeredness in humanity that is not... The magnifying glass is put on the negative instead of the positive. I just say, "Put the magnifying glass on the positive." Yeah, okay, bad things happen, but go out and connect with people in their hearts. That's what we are. We're communal creatures. We're a species that needs each other, yet we've reverted to going back behind high walls and connecting on the internet and connecting via social media, but we're not really connecting. That's the magic, when you connect with another human being. Someone once said to me that kindness is really just a portal to human connection, and that's the truth.
- Dave: Alright. Give me a specific example. Five bucks a day, you're traveling. You need to eat. How did this work? I'll admit, I haven't seen the series, so how did you do that?
- Leon: Basically, I would walk up to people and I would tell them what I was doing and I would ask them if they could help. Eight to nine times out of 10 they'd say no, which is fine. That doesn't mean they're mean, although some of them may have been. It just meant that they had stuff to do and whatever. You ultimately find that one human being who you connect with on a heart level and magic happens. Maybe they put you up for the night. Maybe they give you some food. Maybe they help you to get to the next city. It's really an experiment in connecting with humanity.
- Dave: So people would put you up in their houses. They'd feed you. You definitely benefited from that. What about the flip side? I mean, you're in LA and I certainly get asked a lot when I'm in LA, "Hey buddy, can you spare a dime?" Although now I think they're asking for Bitcoin. What do you do when someone asks you for money? Do you help?
- Leon: Well, in my journey, I cannot accept money.
- Dave: Okay.
- Leon: Okay? Can't accept money. That's one of the major rules. When people come up to me in the streets and they ask me for money, I have to make a decision. I have to use my intuition. Often, my intuition says, "Maybe this isn't the right time to give this person money. Maybe you offer them some food. Maybe you do give them some money. Maybe you walk past them and do nothing." That's happened many times. Truth be told, probably most of the time for me. You can't help everyone, but you feel that one connection, that one bond, that one moment, and you can help. Sometimes, you make a mistake. There've been people I've helped that it hasn't worked out, and that's okay. If they're going to take me to the cleaners, which is an English phrase for if they're going

to do something bad, that's on me. That's not on them. I let them into my life. It's on me.

Dave: Okay. Got it. The worst thing is you might give someone a buck and they might say no, but you're generally not going to get them a dollar. You're going to say, "Let me buy you a hamburger."

Leon: Generally, that's what I do.

Dave: Alright. Good deal. I totally understand and respect that. Now, here's a situation. I saw a homeless guy once and he's like, "Hey, man, I..." He had a sign that said, "I need some money for medicine." I looked at him and I said, "Why kind of medicine?" He looked me right in the eye and he said, "Beer." What would you do in that situation?

Leon: Depending on how I felt, if he was funny I may give it to him. Sometimes you can do things like test people. I don't know if you've ever, in LA it happens quite often, you have kids and adults. They're outside the grocery stores and they're saying that they're trying to sell chocolates and they're like, "Please help me. I want to sell these chocolates to buy jerseys for my school basketball team."

Leon: What I do to them is I say, "Okay, no worries. Here's my email address. You send me an email and I will buy jerseys for every single kid on the team in your school." They're like, "Okay, great. That's really wonderful." Not once has any ever emailed me, which says to me that they're not telling the truth because if you're really doing it to get jerseys for your school and a man has told you that he will give you the money to buy jerseys for every single person on your team, you're lying. It's done.

Dave: What do you do when you see girl scouts selling girl scout cookies?

Leon: Now I'm going to get hate mail from the girl scouts.

Dave: I'm having fun with this.

Leon: Yeah. Actually, sometimes I buy cookies off them because they're the girl scouts. They've clearly got something behind them. It's the girl scouts. The other guys, they're just clearly not telling the truth. You would imagine the girl scouts speak truth, but who knows?

Dave: I'm always torn because I don't eat the kind of processed, highly sugary garbage ingredients, no offense Girl Scouts, but your cookie quality has drifted down over the last 30 years. I just don't eat that kind of stuff. Also, I would feed it to my kids because it makes my kids go bonkers. I want to support a good cause. I want to support entrepreneurship. I've gone back and forth and said, "Alright, here's what I'm going to do." I say to the little girl, "What's your favorite flavor?" I guess the caramel or whatever. It's like, "Great. I'm going to buy a box of these for you, and you can eat them." Their mom always looks at me like, "You jerk," because these kids are going to be wired on cookies. Was that an act of kindness or was that not an act of kindness?

- Leon: It depends on your intention. If your intention was to drive the mom crazy, then it wasn't.
- Dave: No, no. That's not the intention. I just know it's a side effect, but my intention was to, "Hey, good job selling. You closed the deal. I don't eat those, but let me help." That truly is in my heart, but I also know that the mom's like, "Oh, come on. You're going to crank my kid up on sugar again." I don't know. Maybe the underlying question for you there, Leon, is some acts of kindness are not necessarily one-sided, or they're not only kindness. Sort of like a meal. You can have some stuff that's good for you in it, some stuff that's bad for you in it, and there's a balance of the two. Do you run through some sort of a calculus when you're saying, "Alright. I'm in my kindness VW, kindness to my VW Beetle. I'm driving from one continent to another," and just saying, "I'm going to do this thing," and it's kind for Party A, but it's maybe ignoring or not kind to Party B. Do you have a kindness equation that runs through your head?
- Leon: The equation that runs through my heart is does it feel right? Does it feel right? If it feels right, I will do it. Have I made mistakes? Yes, but more often than not, I follow my heart and the heart always wins. Except when it doesn't, but that's rarely.
- Dave: What fascinates me... By the way, I love that you're just going with the intuition the body tells you. In the world of neuroscience, where I spend some of my time at one of my companies, you can see the body knows what's right. The body knows stuff the mind doesn't know, and the mind oftentimes changes the signal that comes from the body. You're practicing this. In your last season, you drove from Alaska to Argentina in three and a half months in a 1971 bright yellow VW Beetle with no heat, and you just found good Samaritans and out of your own pocket said, "I'm going to give you an award for your kindness, just an unexpected thing."
- Dave: Tell me the way you decide what you're going to gift someone with. I mean, is it just like your heart's like, "Hey, I'm going to give this guy something that's really expensive"? There has to be some sort of cognitive loop that's in there. I want to know, number one, how do you decide what you're going to gift someone, and number two, what's the weirdest or most noteworthy thing you've gifted?
- Leon: The journeys work as follows. The first journey, I took a yellow vintage motorbike and I crossed the world, circumnavigated the world on kindness. I had no money, no food, no gas, no place to stay, nothing. All I had was relying on you. At the end of each episode, I meet someone who is in need and who's treated me with amazing kindness and I give them something back in a surprise way. How do I decide that? Well really, again, it goes back to the way I answered the last one. I decide it with my heart, but I also decide it with my mind.
- Leon: I think to myself, I ask them questions. Bear in mind, they have no idea why I'm probing. I ask them questions about what they need and stuff like that. For example, in season one I ended up on the streets of Pittsburgh, sleeping next to a homeless chap who had nothing except love. The next morning, I was able to put him up in an apartment and send him back to school because he always wanted to be a chef. Clearly, I had figured out that he wanted to be a chef and clearly he was homeless. My heart felt connected

to him, and I also knew or felt that he would take what I gave him and do something great with it. Sometimes it fails, but more often than not it doesn't. Really, to answer that question, it's a mind/heart thing. Do you know the author Joseph Campbell?

Dave: Of course. Yeah.

Leon: Okay, so Joseph Campbell, he was clearly a bit of a genius, but he had this famous quote which I'm going to completely butcher. He basically said, "To live a great life, you have to master both worlds." What he meant by that was you have to master your heart, then you have to master your mind. When you go back and forth between those two worlds, that is when you are truly living greatness.

Dave: That's a great source there to quote. I'm thinking back at the very beginning of Bulletproof, one of my either blog posts or social media posts. I talk about how there's a group of people who think they're meat robots, like they live only in the world of hard logic and skepticism and just only think. They're generally really unhappy people. Then you have this other side of people who live only in the heart. They're the yoga teacher who can't be on time for their own classes. The kind of person like, "I don't know. The universe will provide," and that if you're in either one of those extremes, you're probably not very effective as a human being, but somehow there's a way of walking that middle path. Certainly, Joseph Campbell explained that.

Dave: You're saying that you walk that same middle path. I'm kind of putting words in your mouth. When you're figuring out how you're going to help one of these people, you've got some of that yoga teacher mindset, or heart set in there, and you've also got some of the, "What's going to make a difference?" You're thinking your way through it. You're at a place in life where you've given away more than \$200,000 worth of stuff to people around the world in the show, so you can do that. I guess what you're saying is you walk that line the same way Joseph Campbell says?

Leon: Absolutely. To the best of my ability. Are there moments where my mind freaks out and there's nothing my heart can do? Yes, there are. Of course.

Dave: What's the biggest mistake you've made in the show or in these acts of kindness? Did you ever give something away and realized the next day, "Oh my god, this guy's a pimp or a drug dealer and completely had me," or has your intuition always been right?

Leon: Do you know what? It's never been wrong on that level. Has it been wrong in the sense where the person doesn't make the most of it? Yes. It has because you know I've had many opportunities in life, as I'm sure you have and some of your listeners have. There are people out there that don't have opportunities, so that was another thing I wanted to do. I wanted to give someone who has no opportunity an opportunity. Then once I give them that opportunity, it's up to them. There's nothing really else I can do. Yes, I can help them. I can mentor them. I can take their calls. I can text them, but if they don't want it, there's not much I can do, and that's okay.

Dave: Okay. That leads to another line of inquiry here that I wanted to get to. I've come across people who find something that works for them and it becomes a little bit of an obsession. One of the primary things, and this certainly happened to me back in the 90s with food where I'm like, "Oh my god. I finally lost 50 of my 100 pounds. I know the answer." You just feel like you have to tell everyone about it. While just a couple years ago someone said, "I want to be a nutrition activist. What's your advice?" My advice was shut up and eat, and let people ask you. Do you find people become kindness junkies where they just can't stop talking about, "Oh my god, you have to be the kind. I'm the kindness person. Kind, kind, kind, kind, kind." It sort of takes over their life. Is that a thing?

Leon: It is 100% a thing. I never wanted to preach. I never wanted to sit on a stage and tell you, "This is what you have to do. You have to be kind, or you have to do this, and if you don't do it, then you're screwed." Because if you do that, you become a fundamentalist. You may not be a fundamentalist in the narrow sense of the word, but you are a fundamentalist. You are a kindness fundamentalist. Some people don't want to hear what you have to say. That's the reality. Don't ram it down their throats. Don't, "Oh, I'm so kind," or, "Kindness will change the world." Okay, maybe it will. After you say kindness will change the world, say, "You know what? I stole \$3 from Brooke," because that's basically what I did. I stole \$3 from Brooke. Brooke, if you're listening to this, I'm so sorry. Just send me an email or a message. Just do something and I will just repay you in some way.

Dave: You realize 4,000 people named Brooke are going to hit you on The Kindness Guy on Instagram?

Leon: Oh, god. Yeah. It's a question of imperfection. No one's perfect.

Dave: Yeah.

Leon: I once said to someone, "You can be blinded by the light." There are kindness warriors out there that are fundamentalists, and I don't want to be told what to do by anyone, let alone a fundamentalist.

Dave: Well said. In fact, that's a meme worthy quote right there. By the way, that goes even if you're a Bulletproof Diet fan, that shut up and eat and let people ask you before you talk about it is probably a good move. You want to share the good stuff, but fundamentalism and perfection go together. If you're a fundamentalist, you know what happens too. There's a vegan, I don't know which one, who got caught eating fish. Oh my god, can you believe it? Fundamentalism sets you up for a fall from my perspective, and your vulnerability in saying, "I took three bucks from Brooke," I think is a great insulating factor where you're like, "Look, we're all on a path." Kudos for being real and avoiding guru-hood, which isn't necessarily the right thing to do.

Dave: I have a question for you, Leon. I remember, I've traveled the world not quite extensively as you, but quite a lot. In fact, when you had your first motorcycle trip in 2005, I think, right before that I was in Tibet where I discovered yak butter tea, at least

for me I discovered it, and that led to Bulletproof Coffee. I spent some time in Cambodia and I noticed in Cambodia that people were shockingly happy, and they had almost nothing. This is a country that's been just torn by war, and very recent war where I was expecting a bunch of PTSD trauma. There are people who were walking around singing and happier than I would've ever expected them to be, and happier than they would've been in the US. It actually shifted my perspective on a lot of things. I want to know, given that you study and you observe kindness around the world, are there some cultures that are inherently more kind than others?

Leon: The kindest cultures are the ones that foster community, whether or not that community is consciously fostered because community's good, or whether it's because war has happened or whatever, there's a sense of community. I remember I was in Bali. I was driving on my moped and I saw these people sitting in a circle. I was like, "What?" I stopped and I went back and I looked at them and I was like, "What are they doing?" What they were doing is they were talking. There was no phones. There was no television. They were simply connecting with each other. To me as a Westerner, I was like, "What?" All these places where you have this sense of community, I would definitely say they are happier, 100%. Doesn't mean they don't have problems. Of course not. Everyone has problems. But they were definitely more connected and they had a sense of community which we lack in so many different ways.

Dave: That's kind of an answer. Name a country.

Leon: Bhutan.

Dave: Bhutan? Okay, where the gross national happiness is part of their equation. Really, out of all the countries you've been to, Bhutan was the kindest country, not the happiest country, or was it both?

Leon: Do you know what? The people that I met, they came from their hearts. You know when you meet someone that lives from their heart and is love, you sense their heart. You sense their humanity. This was what Bhutan was for me.

Dave: Beautiful. I have yet to go to Bhutan, but I did in Nepal. I was there when the Red Cross had pulled out of a country because they were in the middle of a civil war and I was too stubborn to leave so I said, "I'll pretend that I'm Canadian," not knowing that I would end up living in Canada. I've been here for nine years now, so I'll be alright. Because I was one of the few tourists in the country at the time, just random people, shopkeepers, people who weren't looking for anything would invite me into their homes. "Hey, have some tea, have some chai. Let's talk." We talked about corruption. They said, "Our country is so corrupt. Your country is not so corrupt."

Dave: I'm like, "I think we have a good branding thing over you, but there's some pretty strong corruption where I live too, it's just that we're better at it." We had these really deep conversations, but it was that genuine connection there that I hadn't experienced in any other countries. They're a next-door neighbor of Bhutan, so there could be some local cultural thing.

- Leon: Yeah. I went to Nepal as well, which is a magical country. There's just so much, there's just so much kindness. There's sense of community. There's so much humanity just flowing in their veins. It's a beautiful, beautiful place. Again, bad things happen. I get it. Just the people, so welcoming, so humble, so kind.
- Dave: Alright. What's the least kind country.
- Leon: Oh, I hate this question because if I answer that question, I'm literally going to get hate mail. Please, I'm begging you. I'm already going to get hate mail from every single Brooke in the world, so please don't let me answer that question because I will get hate mail.
- Dave: Alright. I suppose asking you that question might not have been kind, but I sure want to know the answer because-
- Leon: I'll give you a clue.
- Dave: That wouldn't necessarily be a criticism, but then you're like, "What happened in that culture to create the environment? What was the core trauma or something?" Maybe if you don't name a country, but what are some characteristics of the history of a country or a society or a community that generate a less kind environment.
- Leon: Well, look. Suffering on some level, like in Eastern Europe, they suffered for many, many years. It takes them longer to open up. It takes them longer to be able to desire to be vulnerable because they lived under communism for a century, approximately a century. They're always mitigating circumstances.
- Dave: Basically, a society that's less trusting because of whatever.
- Leon: Exactly, exactly, exactly.
- Dave: Alright.
- Leon: That's what it is. Some of those people say to me, "Well, Leon, what is the thing that stops being kind?" The main thing, and I would say it's fear. It's fear. They don't want to be vulnerable. They've been squashed. They don't want to be hurt. They want to be careful. It's fear.
- Dave: It's interesting, though, because I look at groups of people who've been through substantial trauma and I'm always interested. How does a society become resilient? In Cambodia, for me it was one of those things like, "How is this possible?" I have a bunch of friends who are Jewish. Generally, as a people, Jews did not have a good 1900s, at least none of my friends would say that. Yet, I've been invited to a Shabbat at many people's houses. There's some level of tact and helpingness that absolutely survive what was really just horrible, horrible things that happened.

- Dave: I always ask myself, "How did that level of kindness and community, and no, not everyone's any one way," but generally, when really bad things happen and you have people who are average or above average in their level of kindness, which has been my experience, I'm always curious. How did that happen? Do you have any thoughts on not necessarily amongst the Jewish community just as an example, but just when people end up way kinder than you'd expect from bad things that happened to you, a whole country, a whole culture. What's the magic spark that makes that happen? Do you have a theory?
- Leon: Yeah. Clearly, what happened in the Holocaust is beyond my comprehension, yeah? I would go so far as saying that the level of pain that they went through, and that people go through sometimes pain is a catalyst to create lasting inner change. Sometimes pain is the magic source that makes you want to live a different way. I talk for myself here. That is that I wouldn't be sitting here talking to you today about kindness if I hadn't felt deeply, profoundly, chronically alone. If I didn't feel deep pain, my own version of pain, I wouldn't have been able to transform that into love.
- Leon: Also, because you have people who suffer pain and they become mean. Let's be clear. The flip side of the Holocaust is what the Nazis did to the Jews and others. I would say that in order to transform your pain into kindness, into love, you need a witness. You need one human being to witness your pain, one human being to feel your sadness, one human being to see you, to feel your aloneness, to feel your brokenness because if you have that one witness, you get to feel your own pain and that there's hope. That actually comes from a very famous psychologist called Alice Miller. She wrote many books. One of the books she wrote was *The Drama of the Gifted Child*.
- Dave: Yes. It's on my shelf.
- Leon: Yeah. It's a life changing book. If you're suffering pain and you have a witness, there is hope. If you're suffering pain and you have no witness, the hope diminishes tremendously.
- Dave: Having a witness is perhaps the key. You talk about fear. One of the things I did, and for me, a core fear was also a fear of being alone. I felt alone. I had a lot of bullying when I was young. Part of my hacking all the things, I identified that that was a problem for me. I was, "Alright. I'm going to go fast in a cave by myself for four days in the middle of the desert. I'll just deal with this fear of being hungry as a formerly obese person, and fear of being alone and just see if it kills me. It was sort of someone with fear of heights jumping off of a bungee jump or something, going parachuting just to... Exposure therapy, maybe."
- Dave: I went and I did it and I was pretty darn apprehensive. I think it really did make a big difference because I just realized that being alone wasn't as... It wasn't as scary as I thought it was because I had built up stories from feeling very alone as a child, so I had this strong emotion that wasn't actually based on reality because what it was it was kind of peaceful and I got to look at birds. It wasn't that bad, and I was kind of hungry. Having a witness is a very different path than just building that resilience. What's the difference between, "Look, toughen up a little bit, look at it from an adult perspective," versus

when you originally experienced whatever that thing was versus, "Alright, I'm truly suffering, have a witness." I think there's value in both, but what's your perspective on the difference?

Leon: Yeah. I mean, look. It's multifaceted. It's not just having a witness. If you're in pain and you have a witness and you don't do anything with what you've learned or what you've been shown, then nothing's going to happen. Again, it goes back to commitment. It goes back to intention. It goes back to a desire. You were overweight and you decided to commit to not being overweight. No one forced you to do that. That was an inner commitment. Yes, maybe people helped you. Maybe you had a witness that guided you, but you had to do it.

Leon: Clearly, I like Winston Churchill. He has another quote which I am always quoting. It says, "When you find yourself walking through hell, keep walking." That's another example. You were in the cave for four days. I've had moments where I was in the wilderness in Utah for four days with no food. After day one I was like, "What on earth are you doing? This is insane," but I put myself in that situation like you'd put yourself in the situation with the cave and there was no turning back. You were going to leave that cave until you had proved to yourself that there was another way to be, and that's what you did. Look now. Look where you are now because of that. That's the magnificent thing.

Dave: There's some amount of resilience training and exposure we can do, and there's also some amount of, "Actually, I'm really suffering here and having a witness." Certainly, I've had lots of people who were there for me when I needed it. Alright, so it's both. I have a couple more questions for you. One of them is give me some details on cellphone roulette.

Leon: Cellphone roulette. Okay, so I wrote a book. My latest book is called Go Be Kind. It's 28 and a half adventures guaranteed to make you happier. Basically, what it is, is people would come up to me and they'd be like, "I can't quit my job. I can't give random people life-changing gifts. I'm not going to be kind." I'm like, "Okay." What I did was I created this book which enabled you to go on the same kind of adventure that I went on without spending a single penny because it's not about getting a yellow motorbike. It's not about a yellow VW Beetle. It's about how you show up moment-to-moment. That's all.

Leon: The cellphone roulette is one of the adventures in the book. You take your phone out. You go down your contacts without knowing where you're going. Wherever it lands, wherever it lands, you call them or you text them and you say something that will make that person feel less alone. I did a little video doing that and I was like, "Oh my god. This is much easier when you write it than when you actually do it." I got this guy and I called him. I literally had no idea who he was because I have people in my phone, sometimes I don't know who they are. I called him and we did the cellphone roulette and I was kind to him and he remembered me and then I remembered him, and it was a beautiful thing. That's really what cellphone roulette is, one of the 28 and a half adventures in the book. It's really a journal.

Dave: Alright. That's a cool trick and it reminds me... Oh, geez. I'm going to blank on. I had another guest who talked about doing that. Once every couple weeks, he'd go through an pick someone he hadn't texted in a long time and send them a quick message and profound things happened as a result. Similar idea, but I think he was a little bit less random about it. I like your roulette-ing. That's cool. My final question has nothing to do, I don't think anyway, with kindness. We did mention at the beginning that kindness is associated with aging less quickly. I am actively working on living to at least 180. I think there's actually science that says this could happen. My question for you is how long do you want to live?

Leon: Wow. Well, you don't look 180, let me tell you that. Yeah, thank God.

Dave: Thank God.

Leon: Look, I've always wanted to have a moment when it's time to go to be like, "It's okay. It's done. You've done what you needed to do. It's okay. Whenever that may be, whenever that may be." Clearly, I'd like to live for as long as I can, but that's one of my goals, to be on that deathbed or to be in that place and be like, "You know what? It's okay."

Dave: Got it. You'd like to do what you came here to do before you go, if I'm paraphrasing right.

Leon: Yeah, basically.

Dave: Alright. What'd you come here to do?

Leon: Oh, man. Do you know what I realized I came here to do? This may sound a little silly, but maybe not. I came here to love. Not in a preachy way, not in an "I'm perfect" way because trust me, if I gave you the telephone numbers of all my ex-girlfriends, they'd tell you how imperfect I am, but I came here to love. Yeah, I make mistakes. I mess things up. Get it done clear. That's why I came here.

Dave: Beautiful answer. Leon, it's been a pleasure interviewing you on Bulletproof Radio. The easiest way to connect with you and find all of your good stuff, because you've got multiple TV series and books and all that stuff, it's Instagram @thekindnessguy, I have that right?

Leon: Yeah, @thekindnessguy on Instagram.

Dave: Alright. I'm going to make sure I'm following you right now. I'm pretty sure I am, but just in case, I'm actually going to Instagram on the air using my cellphone, all the bad stuff you're not supposed to do and I'm checking it. If you guys want to join me doing the same thing, I won't blame you, unless you're driving in which case you might get a ticket. The Kindness Guy. What do you know? I wasn't following you. That is just disturbing and wrong. I am now.

Leon: I wonder if Brooke is following me.

Dave: Your follower account's just going up and up with all of these people named Brooke. I don't know why. Alright, Leon. Thanks for your work. Thanks for being kind, and thanks for showing people how they can do it and making it a practice rather than a set of perfection. I think there's some profound wisdom in what you're doing and I appreciate it.

Leon: Thank you very much for having me on today.

Dave: If you enjoyed today's episode, you know what do to. Do something kind. In fact, you know an easy thing you can do that's really kind? If you have read or watched on of Leon's things, go to Amazon and leave a review. If you've read my books or you like this show, leave a review. Reviews are incredible acts of kindness for two different people. One is the creator, the person who wrote the book or did the show. The other one is for other people who might find the show. If you love the show and you say, "This is five stars, best ever." That's awesome. You're helping people find it. If you think it was a bad show, I guarantee you that the creator wants to know it was a bad show and you would want to help people steer clear, so you're helping tons of people when you do that. Leave reviews. Thank you.