

Under the Skin Podcast 4 18 2020

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SUMMARY

The conversation explores the complexities of parenting, emphasizing the need for self-awareness and healing from personal trauma to break generational cycles of dysfunction. The speaker reflects on their own experiences as a parent and the challenges of setting boundaries, highlighting the importance of recognizing the spiritual lessons children can teach us about control and authenticity.

- *Parenting serves as a portal for personal growth and healing past wounds.*
- *Many parents unconsciously perpetuate dysfunctional patterns from their own upbringing.*
- *The speaker shares their struggle with people-pleasing and boundary-setting, which affected their parenting.*
- *Each individual has a unique prototype of how they learned to receive love, influencing their parenting style.*
- *The importance of physical and emotional separation from family of origin to discover one's authentic self.*
- *Understanding the balance between form (material expectations) and formlessness (spiritual truths) is crucial in parenting.*
- *Children embody an independent spirit that challenges parental control, offering profound spiritual lessons.*
- *True parenting is about partnership and growth, rather than exerting control over children.*

I suppose like most parents to be honest my motivation in talking to you was twofold one because you are one of the foremost experts in parenting in the global conversation have a great social media following a very influential and that's good for us as a hyper you're good for us as a high profile yes but also as a pro as a parent like when I've spoken to like say Brene brown or Gabor maté a other medical professionals my

motivations are personal what the hell should we do with our children it's really hard you know because on one level we should all be spiritual wisdom truth seekers consciousness raisers of our own evolution before we become parents and yet it's through the parenting journey that were afforded the greatest portal to achieve that so it's really difficult if we are open to

understand that the parenting process is the portal to understanding your own past and healing your own wounds then you're going to really activate yourself in this journey but most people are not open to that they're not open to raising their own consciousness so then they quote-unquote use their children as pawns just like they were used and so continues the dysfunctional generational pattern over and over again this doesn't

mean that we don't screw our children out my kid is royally screwed up thanks to me but I am using this moment these challenging moments to really look in the mirror and if we could do that in all relationships but especially in this most intimate one then we have an opportunity to keep healing but but what's happening on the contrary is we keep having the children but we don't disrupt the patterns so then we just keep having

children to keep you know

enduring the suffering you know the buck has to stop somewhere and this doesn't mean we're perfect this doesn't mean the destination we have to arrive at but it does mean that we have to take this seriously and end the suffering somewhere it's thank you it's commonly understood that we find it hard to observe our own pathology particularly in real-time dr. can you give me an example half of

how you have perhaps in retrospect noticed how a part of your parenting has been as a result of your own trauma or need to evolve you know an example of where you've retrospectively gone wow I shouldn't have done that I wouldn't do that again that's how I would do that in future oh my goodness is everyday but a big theme that's personal to me which may resonate with your audience is that I grew up in India as this Indian woman

which is a prototype of someone who is the ultimate people pleaser and I learned to AB negate the self you know I learned to martyr myself and I thought that's what it meant to be a really kind and good person so this is my classic mold and then on top of that my temperament was of a very sympathetic sensitive person intuitive person so put that together and you have this bleeding empath so most of us suggested aggress

to just let other people know how they can deconstruct this for themselves we grew up in a inner childhood culture right enough in an ambience that gives you certain prototypes of how to get love and so mine was you get love this way you can love by being disobedient self-abnegation deprecating mess of a girl who doesn't know who she is but you suffer you suffer the self but you give to the other the other is glorified this was my prototype each one

of us has a prototype of how we were taught subconsciously to receive love to receive validation to receive worth and many of us moved to that very quickly very quickly so that's the fundamental prototype we are raised with but then in a who we are as humans now have had I been a rebellious kind of person I would have ended up with a different prototype you know I would have rebel that would have become an addict maybe because I

couldn't have molded to that pleaser right so I would have gone the other way so it depends on what our childhood ambience was plus who we are temperamentally and these two the nature-nurture is a very key factor in observing your patterns so uh so that was my pattern and I ended up with in many relationships where my boundaries were violated so for me as a parent the hardest thing that I had to really learn and I'm still terrible at it my daughter

caught on at the age of seven how terrible I was in creating boundaries and she would say oh I just need to ask mom ten times and the ten times she was going to say yes she doesn't alert it and that's what happens our children just learned how to play us in our wounds and the opportunity then is to see to look in the mirror so I began to see that I was unable to create boundaries not because of what my child

needed but she didn't need loose boundaries it's because I was so inherently afraid of being seen as the bad one

because I saw was attached to the image of this pleasing person so I had to really detach from that image right we're all married to an image and my image was this always say yes but I was ruining my daughter and I and I have ruined her in many ways God ruined her I have you know wounded her in many ways

confused her in many ways by this bleeding impact desire to please because what's with the bleeding empath is that we said yes yes yes for years and decades but man when we say no when we decided so no we just abandon everyone we just burned the house down you know so it's confusing for a child you know and I've had to see myself in the mirror and it was wretched at first to observe that in me that I was so wounded so

attached to my ego of wanting to be the pleaser that I couldn't serve my child in the way my child needed to so that's one prototype but there are other prototypes you know there's the negligent parent there's the over obsessed with control parent there's the power-tripping parent you know there's all different sorts of parents I was the police a parent who suffered in boundaries and then so we have to really deconstruct who we are based on our nature nurture syndrome and

and be brave enough to break the pattern you know so I had to learn to break the pattern and let go of this desire to be the Mahatma you know I still have it though yeah yeah I got a lot from that um when you talk about prototypes makes me wonder about archetypes and it makes me wonder about essence I wonder how your siblings evolved through your

childhood and if they have comparable challenges or distinct ones definitely you know especially in heavily traditional cultures like India where tradition is lauded but it's actually a great suffocate er of the essence in those cultures you know males and females have very defined gender roles so but a called man and woman how to be a man and how to be a woman so my brother I only have one sibling and he's male so he was prototypically archetypal

e raised to be a man in that culture and I'm sure suffered his own demons you know I remember my father would be so hard on him to succeed but never hard on me but I was told you know do you know how to cook you know how you're going to adjust in your in-laws house so I was given different messages he was given different messages I rebelled though eventually and did leave India because I knew I was suffocated in my essence and

I had to leave you know for him maybe he didn't leave because he wasn't suffering so much you know it's a it's it's advantageous to the male in those cultures you know but for a woman who had this also this other side to her that was rumbling of the Neetu cover her essence I then had to leave you have no choice at some point you have to leave to discover who you are so all of us are leaving in some way we're

always departing do we how far do we abandon our authenticity is the question you know how many years do we abandon it till we return home to it where did you go and what was there a pivotal moment that made you realize that you required a kind of severance from your family of origin in order to become yourself yeah I think the first thing and I see this in all my clients as well is a physical

separation you know we need to separate in form to discover who we are in the formless so I had to get the F out of India so I was clamoring to leave at the age of 12 I gotta get out I gotta get out I just knew physically they needed to be separation and it's really the process that I take my clients through - and they're very scared to physically separate but we have to go on a journey

so I left and came to America and went to California to San Francisco and then I immediately immediately within six months went on a Vipassana meditation retreat at the age of 21 and I fought began to discover my formulas authentic self so my process was immediate I left and then I left so I left in the form and I began departing in the formless as well from mainstream culture and then began a long journey of self-discovery

through meditation I mean really while I'm psychological in my foundation and more meditative and contemplative and that really freed me but it still took decades to ultimately be brave enough and bold enough to really be my authentic self it took years and years and years what challenges do you face with this well it's superficially at least conflicting set of ideals one around

formless one could say spirit spiritual ideals and these rather more material evidence-based procedural that come from medicine even in a more amorphous field like psychology or psychiatry this is still sort of formulated are there challenges and how do you mesh those two ideas together yeah so I always look at every single challenge through the form and the

formulas the both the lenses that I have so I understand form but I understand it through the lens of formlessness I never left formlessness leave me so for example right now we're in this virus pandemic right form it we're being attacked on the form level our physical is being compromised there is a you know we have to have social distancing all these form-based challenges but really on the formless level nothing has changed right on the formless level this

is the eternal impermanence of the transience of life like what's new on the formless level the universe is like what's new right nothing's new the mortal is going crazy because he's realizing she's realizing her mortality really on the on the formless level it's though it's the greatest desire of every Zen master right and now we're learning this like now so nothing has changed so on the formless level we are eternal so the perturbations on the form level I

understand and I have compassion for but with humor no and with a likeness of being so I help parents see that they're just caught up in the myopic moment and none of it really matters on the formless and I help them detach from the egoic expectations of how this moment should be and how that child should be because in the grand scheme of the universe this is the earth speck and I so I help parents to release their

control and the control is only coming out of scarcity because they think this moment is significant and it isn't you know so I named my daughter Maya which means illusion to remind me that if I think she's mine or this matters it's an illusion so - but but but understanding we have form-based limitations so I have compassion for that but we can navigate the form so much better and easier with play if we understand formlessness and

what's missing is that people typically struggle to understand the formless elements of life you know and we just get obsessed with the form the ego the density of this moment how many of the challenges that we face as parents and as people do you think could be ameliorated or at least improved by accessing what would once have been known as the sacred but is now difficult even to refer to and I know you use the

word formulas a hundred percent of human suffering is from the mental attachments to the form all our suffering is because we want things to match the form-based expectations what culture has told us is important you know you and I were talking pre-interview about how the education system has not wanted to miss a beat and has sent curriculum home with grading systems and I've been protesting

that saying you have to adapt now when we're truly in the formless level of Education can we not appreciate that for a moment right but people are so attached thinking that that is a prescription and we're seeing now more than ever there is no prescription life is always unexpected but we fossilize life because we want the illusion of certainty and grades and achievement and outcome and zip codes and and and the number of cars

in your driveway somehow make us feel like we are you know and we get an identity from this outside these outside accoutrements but you and I know how false that is how deluded that is what an illusion and then we suffer so when our job is taken away we suffer when our kid doesn't match the expectation we suffer but who creates the suffering we do because we've imposed an expectation we have this checklist in our pocket

check check check check check and now we see life doesn't work like that and if it did work like that how sad for you because you really thought life works like you know the good child I always talk about that good child at obedient child how sad for you if you only have good children you know because you really think that you're amazing and that you're doing something and you're not you know so I love the

coracoid bad kid because now the bad kid makes you turn on your head and shatter your illusions what do you think is the primary lesson that we're taught by by our children that we can't can't control when you encounter the strength of spirit that a child brings into your home and watching that evolve and develop and me speaking personally my sort of inability to control it but also a kind of my kind of or my older

daughter in particular because you know she's evolving more no no longer and to see like this strength this character this spirit this independence I mean that in a kind of a literal way like you said with you the naming of your daughter I quite early recognized there is something present this is not just sort of like a genetic past the parcel this is something has come from somewhere else yeah and it's such a fascinating juxtaposition of the my you know they

are in some ways ours because for many of us who have them biologically there they do share this DNA and they do share the physicality and the traits and the woman will say hell if she's mine or he's my he look at my body I'm wrecked because of this child so it's the juxtaposition of the my and the so not mine right so when you realize that that this child I thought was mine but damn it this indomitable

spirit that cannot be controlled and the all but the humility that comes with it is the lesson you know the ego non-ego the form formlessness the non-duality of that is the most brilliant spiritual lesson of all you know it's mine but not mine at all and what a brilliant lesson you know we cannot control I mean it's just absolutely a delusion to think that we could but most parenting paradigms the traditional ones

espouse control and I come along and people like me you know many I'm sure there many who say that it's an illusion and people don't like that you know parents resist me and walk out of rooms and get angry with me because they think that I'm espousing that they are not important you know parents have tied their importance their relevance to control instead of understanding this is a spiritual partnership and and you are the evolving one and they are the

teachers and you're not using power when you look at life like that you're gaining spiritual power because you're the tickler don't you want to be the ticker but they don't want to be the ticker because they're like I you're just fooling me you're actually taking my power and this is the sadness of the human psyche right we so want egoic dominance even with our children you know you