

## The Lost Art of Restoring Trust, Resolving Conflict, and Emotional Intelligence – Greg Stephens: Ep #547



Greg Stephens (00:00)

If you're avoiding conflict, you're avoiding breakthroughs. You don't get to have a breakthrough in life until there's conflict and that breakthrough is growth. Why would I want to engage with conflict in a relationship if I don't have the skills to do it? That's an ability issue. That's why I love the program so much. Once I deal with ability, motivation starts to come. So now that I have the skill sets, I see conflict, go,

I still don't like it, David. But then I get excited because I know what's on the other side of that. It's not just a better result. It's actually a stronger connection.

Dr. David Phelps (00:41)

Decades ago, I hustled to grow my dental practice and real estate empire. Society patted me on the back and every new deal and patient reinforced the success they said I had. Then, my daughter Jenna was diagnosed with leukemia.

nine years, several intense chemo treatments and years of epileptic seizures, my daughter was given one more miracle, a life-saving liver transplant. In that hospital, I realized I wasn't successful. I had money, I had real estate assets and a business, but the only thing that mattered was time with my daughter. In that hospital room, I decided to sell my business, leave active income and sustain my lifestyle with my real estate assets. Now, Jenna is healthy and all grown up and me, I am teaching others to do what I did. And I continue to

uncover the principles, strategies, and lessons we can apply in business and investing to create ultimate freedom for what matters most to each of us. Welcome to the Freedom Founders Podcast.

If you struggle with avoiding conflict, miscommunication or difficult relationships in business or life, this episode is going to challenge and inspire you. Today's guest is someone I've had the privilege of learning from directly. Greg Stevens is the founder of Alignment Resources, a firm dedicated to helping executives and business owners strengthen leadership, repair relationships and unlock long-term success through high impact communication and emotional intelligence. Greg has over 25 years of experience in coaching,

facilitation and corporate training. He's a certified instructor in crucial conversations, a former master trainer and author of the book, Build New Bridges, the art of restoring impossible relationships. In this episode, Greg shares the personal story behind his career shift from pharmaceutical sales to relationship transformation. Why most people avoid high stakes conversations and how that avoidance is costing them.

The real difference between completing a relationship and simply walking away. Why leadership begins with personal responsibility and the courage to be vulnerable. And how Greg is now training the next generation. College grads and early professionals and executive skills most don't learn until midlife. Please welcome Greg Stevens. Well, Greg, I have been looking forward to having you here on the podcast for some time. You and I have become relatively

recent connections and mentor and friendship relationship, which I have personally really enjoyed. You our best network and I think friendships and mentorship relationships come through other people and that's how we came together. And so I'm a big fan of expanding my network and people that are influential in my life and I see to be influential in other people's lives. You're one of those people and I want to have you on the podcast because I know your heart. I know enough about you to know what inspires you, but I want our audience to have a little bit of a chance to get to know

the Greg Stevens that I've gotten a chance to know. And so my first question is gonna be, Greg, you founded Alignment Resources with a focus on executive leadership and development, executive coaching. What inspires you to start this journey and how has your vision evolved over the time? 25 years of experience. Give me some backstory, if you would.

Greg Stephens (03:54)

Thanks, David, and thanks for having me on the show. It's a real honor to be here. And I feel the same way. feel like we've gotten very close since we met. And I heard about you beforehand from Dan Mormon. And Dan said some great things about you. And before I knew it, we were talking and invited you to come in. But I never thought I'd be doing what I'm doing today. It never occurred to me on my own since I was 17. Put myself through college at Baylor University in four years. And then got out, had a couple of jobs, and got the

coveted pharmaceutical rep job back in the 80s. It was a great run. had almost 13 years in selling pharmaceuticals, loved my job, but I outgrew it. And during the time I was working for Roche Laboratories, they would pay for me to take any type of classes. So I took traditional, non-traditional. I took psychology, sociology. I did human development, human behavior classes.

did a lot of work with landmark education and some mastery courses. So I just want to get better at dealing with human beings. And through that, I had some amazing breakthroughs in my life and began to see the world very differently. Hired a life coach, his name was John Catalina, and he was teaching a man-woman relationship course. And he'd done all the landmark work years before, loved his relationship course.

I hired him to be, I was going to look at an acting career because I felt like I wanted to do something different. I got an agent, had a couple of plays, live plays here in town. My acting coach said, Greg, you've just got to get out to LA. You're ready right now. And I loved it, but not for long after I started doing a couple of things. I told John, who was my life coach, I said, this just doesn't call to me the way I thought it would.

And he said, well, Greg, have you ever thought about doing what I do? Life coaching and training and development. That's the one career I'd never thought of. said, no, I've never even thought about it. goes, think about it. Let's talk about it next week. And so it just rubbed on me. And the next week I said, well, John, I'm interested. What do you think it would take? He goes, well, you need to do a couple of years of free coaching. He goes, if you're interested, I'll do a true apprenticeship with you. You can go online or something. This is way back in that.

like 98, 99. And I think ICF had just started, but he said, believe in doing a true apprenticeship. so I actually apprenticed with him. I coach people for free. I'd come and produce courses for him, get coaching from him, read everything you could, took classes, took any type of class I could think of on coaching. Then about two years after I started, I stepped out on my own, not knowing one person.

and got this great client. My first client was someone in the Cayman Islands. Just came out of nowhere and I was at that point and then I ended up leaving Roche, the company I was working with and pursued coaching full time. As I did that, I was teaching man-woman relationship courses and that's where my focus was. I think it was, yeah, it was 2001. There's a gentleman named Hayden Hayden. He was one of my landmark classes.

He said, I'm going to go to Dallas and check out this class called Pat the dialogue. You interested in going? said, sure. I want to take a class. This is about communication. And I went and could not believe how good it was. I couldn't wait to go out and try it. And so I started using it with my clients, using it in my life and everything started to change for me. And so I actually, at that time,

I talked to the authors, the book wasn't even out yet. It was called Crucial Conversations. They had the training years before they had the book. And I asked them, said, could I sell your program and train it? And they allowed me to come in as what they called an associate. And as I started doing that work, I saw my life just turning around. And I thought, you know what? I

want to be the type of leader that actually practices what they teach rather than just have a theory about it.

So I had this crazy idea. I made a list of all my incomplete relationships and I set out to complete them, to clean them up, whatever. So I went out, cleaned them up, completed them, moved on from those relationships. had a list of 36 people on my list. Took me two and a half years. And so as Crucial Conversations came out, I became a master trainer and I stayed with that organization still.

keeping my independence for years, but going all over the world coaching, training. I also had my own coaching business, but I did a lot of work with them. And then I wrote my book this last year. And then in January, when I released it, we decided to kind of go our separate ways, but I still support all of their training. As you know, I use it as a background on my coaching. I have people take the online version and then we come in and

actually train deeper into that work. And I found that people will typically come in and take a class for a day or two, it's a two day class, and they love it. They walk out best class they've ever had, but people don't know how to apply it. And so that's what I decided to do. I thought, you know, I want to spend time with executives, with people who have a larger reach. And I've been working with executives for years, but I just started really focusing on that.

And I found that most people think executives at that level have these skills, a lock on them. They don't, they're usually need the most help because they've advanced, but the people skills in this particular arena are much different and you have to deal with them very differently. You have to have a level of self-awareness that we're typically not used to. And so I take people in a six month, 20 week program.

to actually apply and people come in with a list of relationships they want to improve, clean up or complete. But we don't throw them in the deep end. We build them up first, teaching them how to break the conversation down, manage their emotions, what to look for. Most people will tell you to go have the conversation. I teach you how to do that. And it's a skillset. And if you don't have it, why would you ever be motivated to do it?

But what I find is when people have the skill, the motivation ends up following because they are like, why would I waste my time avoiding a conversation now where I can engage with it? And David, I haven't told you this. We've just decided that actually I taught leadership programs for years and we just decided, no, and I, we're going to reach out to seniors in college, people in their gap year or people early on in their career.

And we're going to focus as a gift from their parents to be able to put people through those programs and teach them at that age what executives are having trouble understanding and learning. We want to teach the next generation. Those will be our leaders in the future. And I've got a young guy in NOAA who's ready to go. I did the same thing with NOAA. He's my right hand. I've actually brought him in just like John brought me in and mentored me. I brought NOAA in.

and I'm mentoring him to take those things over. But my goal is to work with the executives and the younger generation to bring out that leadership we need so desperately in our world today.

Dr. David Phelps (11:43)

You remember the moment you were sitting in your office, patients lined up, calendar packed months ahead, the numbers looked fine, but something inside you whispered, is this really freedom? Now imagine walking into a room of people who've asked the same question and found a better answer as the conversation sparked something in you. They're not about grinding harder, they're about building smarter, replacing earned income with predictable cashflow, creating margin and options in your schedule for your family.

your purpose, your life. You hear real stories, not sales pitches. And for the first time, you see a clear path forward, not someday, now. This isn't theory, it's a blueprint. And it's built for people like you, high achievers who are done waiting for retirement to live free. The next Freedom Founders event is coming up this October. You see it's waiting, will you take it?

Learn more and register by scheduling a call at [freedomfounders.com slash discover](https://freedomfounders.com/discover). That's [freedomfounders.com slash discover](https://freedomfounders.com/discover).

Full disclosure, I am in a master class with Greg and Noah and it's been amazing. And what you said, going and taking a course, one day, a two day seminar, it can be very enlightening. It can be very motivating. You can go as a single person, you go as couples, whatever the focus is. And we've all done those and you feel good. You feel exhilarated. And then you go back home to regular work, life, relationships, and it falls apart because there's no support. You're a fan of coaching. are coach. You've been coached.

obviously in different aspects of your life. I think we have an appreciation. Everybody does to some extent of being coached, but we think that when we cross the line, we've graduated. Hey, we're done. You know, I reached the pinnacle. I'm good, right? To your point, you know, I don't care where you're on the spectrum of executive, wherever you climbed in your elevation as a leader, a business owner, whatever it may be, is that the skills that we need become more important as we elevate in time. And yet very few of us put much effort on them at all. And we wonder why.

We have turnover in our businesses. We wonder why our family, personal relationships get in all kinds of conflict. We wonder why there's so much divorce and breakups, you know, in business and family. And I've been both intrigued and appreciative of the work and your passion for, know, your passion just comes through. And I know your heart's in it. And I know you walk the talk. It sounds to me like you always had a curiosity, no doubt, about human behavior, relationship, psychology. You took those courses that were offered to you. What a smart move on your part.

And I'm guessing that as you were taking these courses, you were already good with people because you are just good with people kind of naturally. But you start taking these because you want to be better, right? You want to be better. Were there any parts of that early life, the

13 years with Roche that where you were doing well, obviously you were a great rep, you're learning more. Was there any parts of your professional personal life that you want to talk about that weren't so good? Because you talked about going back with 36 relationships you had to complete. Tell us about that.

Greg Stephens (14:46)

Yeah, well, when I was working with Roche, I was good at my job. I loved it. I had great friends I've worked with. I could work my territory in no time because I developed the relationships. the person you see today, I look back then, I was terrible at communicating when it became difficult. I could make small talk with anyone. I could even go to deep conversations. But when there was opposing opinions and

emotions were on the line. I tend to sugarcoat my message or avoid the conversation or try to make sure I kept the peace. Didn't know how to do what I do today. And when I learned that it changed everything. But I also found out during while I was working with Roche, I ended up going through divorce, a very difficult divorce. And I blamed my ex for almost everything in my life at that point. And when I took landmark education was the first time I got

started into the work I'm doing today. And Landmark has a thing called the forum and it's about putting your past in the past. I'll never forget sitting there realizing that in that moment, I never realized I was playing the victim around my relationship. I could get anyone involved, poor Greg, poor Greg. I got something out of that. But I want you to get, was stuck. I was miserable. And when I realized that I was a victim, it comes down to this, you know what?

I made the choice to marry that person. I live in Texas. It wasn't a shotgun wedding though. I made that choice. Perhaps I chose poorly for me. Perhaps I rushed in and I didn't look at things the way I should. Here's the thing. It didn't change the circumstances that day. Anything that happened. It changed my mindset. And when I changed my mindset,

I had the ability to do something I had never done before. And what I see today, many people are playing a victim role in their life. They're blaming an ex, they're blaming life, they're blaming something else. And I live by this mantra, everything in my life I create, promote or allow. I am responsible for my life and that's it. Not responsible for yours, David. But when I found when I deal with this,

You and me can have a whole different engagement because I'm finally being responsible for what I've been given rather than trying to manipulate others or do anything else. My yes can be yes, my no can be no. I can actually engage with people differently and create the things I want to create. That was the light bulb moment for me when I did Landmark and I did a lot of their leadership programs, stuck around their work for about five years and did almost every course they offered.

because I wanted to learn more. And that's when after that I got to the relationship course with John Catalina. And it was interesting, I got to share this. So I worked with John and I thought I had a lock on relationships. I understood man-woman, it was a passion for me. So that's what I started teaching. And then I met someone and got married. And in the middle of that, I

realized that I wasn't an expert on relationships. I made another mistake.

This wasn't the marriage. There's a lot of things that happened in that. And I was like, my gosh, I've done it again. And here I am getting divorced again. And I felt like a fraud because here I'm trying to talk about relationships, man, woman. can't even keep mine together. That's when I fell into the crucial conversations work. And I use that to actually have a divorce that worked for both of us.

I practiced my crucial conversations. One day I went into my wife and said, I know you want to be divorced and so do I. But I said, we're treating each other terribly and we were friends once. I said, I want to get that cleaned up and if we divorce, let's do it as friends. Let's change the whole dynamic. But if you're not willing to do that, we're stuck together because I'm not going to leave and take this baggage somewhere else.

And we sat down and we created a friendship again. We sat there and solved our problems. And here's what was really cool. A year after we were divorced, she was a flight attendant at this time living in Baltimore. She calls me up. I hadn't talked to her since we divorced. said, are you going to be in Austin on Tuesday? I said, yeah, why? She goes, well, it's my day off. I'm going to fly in and take you to lunch. So what's this about? She said, don't worry. It's nothing bad.

She takes me, I meet her at the place we're going to have lunch. said, I want you to know, thank you for how you dealt with our divorce. I was able to go forward. goes, I'm getting remarried. I talked to my fiance. We want you to come to the wedding. wow. And I went, wow, I can't see how this would ever happen. And I looked at her said, thank you for making the trip. Thank you for coming to thank for telling me.

This is your wedding. want you to go. I won't be there. You have my blessing. I wish you the best. And it means the world that you came to me today and talked about that. And that's what I talk about. Even my first marriage, it was so bad. It was interesting because I was like, I think I'm ready to see her now. It was years. I had so much, played a victim. And about two weeks to the day after I said that, I'm locked eye to eye with her in a store, hadn't seen her in eight years.

Before I thought I saw her like three times in that eight years, I had this visceral almost threw up each time because I was so, it was so harsh on me. In that moment when I saw her, I felt nothing but love and concern and I walked up to her I didn't know what I'd ever say. I gave her a hug. said, Hey, I am sorry if I ever did anything to hurt your spirit. Total responsibility. And I didn't, there was no blame. No, you did this to me. You did this.

It was all complete. And that's what I want people to experience because I understand when you lay all of that to the side, you get to deal with what's real. And it's interesting because my wife had divorced. She had actually worked with her ex-husband over the years. And when we got married, the first person to bring over a wedding gift to my wife and I were her ex-husband and his fiance.

So people say, that's weird. Well, I want you to think about what the alternative is. What would be the alternative to that? And I have a piece. I don't need to worry about those things. Emily's ex-husband is one of my really good friends now. And at one point they had no idea that could ever be possible. That's why my book, *Build New Bridges, The Art of Restoring Impossible Relationships*. That's why I wrote it.

I want people to be able to restore those relationships they want to restore, clean up the ones that need to be cleaned up and complete the ones they decide to say, I'm done. And completion doesn't mean you go somewhere. You might, might never see them again, but you might work next to them. that issue doesn't come up anymore for you. There's freedom there.

Dr. David Phelps (22:27)

If you're ready to break free from the conventional financial treadmill, the Path to Freedom newsletter is your roadmap.

Every quarter, you'll receive my free digital newsletter packed with powerful alternative investment strategies, timely economic insights, and uncommon wisdom to help you create more freedom, autonomy, and impact in your business and in life. As a subscriber, you'll also get weekly blog insights from decoding market shifts to building generational wealth to crafting a business that doesn't run you. It's not just information, it's insight that leads to action. Join a community of like-minded entrepreneurs

and practitioners who are choosing the road less traveled. Sign up today at [freedomfounders.com slash digitalnewsletter1](https://freedomfounders.com/digitalnewsletter1) and start your path to true freedom. That's [freedomfounders.com slash digitalnewsletter1](https://freedomfounders.com/digitalnewsletter1). If we don't complete relationships, we're carrying some baggage with us. It follows us everywhere, right? We distance ourselves from it. We divorced. We push that person away, but we're still going to harbor something that

doesn't free us up. Isn't that what you're essentially saying?

Greg Stephens (23:36)

Absolutely. When I did the first one that I did, it felt like 20 years was off my shoulders. It's interesting. Look at where your complaints are. Where you're complaining is an area you're tolerating. If you're tolerating that, you haven't let go of that emotion underneath. It's baggage. I can tell you, we're not designed to hold onto that. We're actually designed to let that go. We have the power to do that. But when we don't, we're hurting ourselves.

No one else is doing it to us. We've got this prison in our head and we're allowing that to control us rather than control what we're doing. Like my friend, Nnedio said, how you relate to the thing is the thing. It really is.

Dr. David Phelps (24:20)

we're gonna put the link to your book in the show notes because it's a terrific book. And for people who just are interested in getting a little more involved, you did a great job in the book.

It helps me follow along the deep work that we're doing in the course. And I would say that's obviously the next step for anybody who really wants to do this. You've got to do the work. I know that people who listening to this are thinking just as I would and have thought and probably still do to quite an extent, if I do this, if I quit playing the victim and I want to really be honest and complete relationships, that means I'm gonna have to be vulnerable.

And vulnerability, it can be for a man or woman, but I'm just gonna speak from my heart, Greg. Thinking about being vulnerable makes me feel like I'm gonna be weak. And if I'm weak, someone's gonna roll right over me and smash me to bits. And my initial reaction, which I'm sure you deal with with other people like me all the time is, I need to come on strong. Instead of being weak and vulnerable, I need to come on strong and pound and convince that person that I'm right. If I don't do that, I'm gonna take an advantage of.

Greg Stephens (25:16)

Well, you wanting to be right actually puts a wall up because I'm right, you're wrong. Who wants that? And you might be right, but there also may be two different ways to do things. As you think about that vulnerability, think Brene Brown in her book, she talks about it and she talks about speaking people in war. Anyone who has courage will tell you that's vulnerable.

It takes courage to do this. Now I can't teach you courage. I can give you skills. So when you do muster the courage, you know what to do. And that's what I found the line. get more confident as I do these conversations, but it does take a level of courage. But what I found is courage takes an open heart and there is still to this day, there are times all

Cause I'm real open in front of a crowd. I'll be in front of 2000 people talking about something and I'll go to bed and that night and I go, I can't believe I said that to that group. They think I'm weird that, but the next day, same group, I'll get three or four people. Thank you for your story. That was it spoke to me. find when you're vulnerable, you connect with human beings because that's what we're all hiding.

And when you have the courage to step into it, I'll be honest, I've found I've been rewarded for it rather than hurt by it. Typically when I want something from someone, that's when I get hurt and it's not getting what I want or whatever. But if I truly love that person, I truly have an open heart. I want them to do what's right for them. That's a vulnerable space to be, but it does connect you with human beings. And, ■

I would say grab Brene's Brown's book and read something about being vulnerable there. It's a really good book.

Dr. David Phelps (27:18)

The soft skills that we're talking about, I call them soft skills, high stakes communication, mentoring, emotional intelligence, active listening, which is something most of us don't do very well at all, having empathy, conflict resolution. I know I can speak as a former dentist, it's still within me, and you talked about it earlier, is a lot of us in that profession, and there's others as well, we don't like conflict. We've already talked about it earlier, we don't like conflict as a

general rule, and the stories.

I can tell myself I'm better today, but still always a project in action, of course. But the stories that often I hear through the people I have the privilege of working with, it could be the staff person, it could be the assistant, it could be the hygienist, it could be the associate dentist. They'll tell me or tell our group the situation came up and they just didn't want to deal with it, hoping it will just take care of itself and go away. And we've all done that. Talk a little bit about that conflict avoidance in my marriage. You know, I've been bad about that. It's just

I don't want to go there. I don't want to start something. Maybe if I just don't say anything. And then the resentment starts to build.

Greg Stephens (28:24)

Yeah. Thanks for asking that because I'll be honest with you, I was a conflict avoider as well, but I want your listeners to hear this. If you're avoiding conflict, you're avoiding breakthroughs. You don't get to have a breakthrough in life until there's conflict and that breakthrough is growth, but that's what's there for you. So if you can begin, why would I want to engage with conflict in a relationship if I don't have the skills to do it?

That's an ability issue. That's why I love the program so much. Once I deal with ability, motivation starts to come. So now that I have the skillsets, I see conflict. go, I still don't like it, David. But then I get excited because I know what's on the other side of that. It's not just a better result. It's actually a stronger connection. My stepson's getting married in September 13th. ■

He actually asked me to officiate the wedding. I was so honored. He said, I want to take you to dinner. So he and I went to dinner the other night. said, I was talking to my fiancée. He said, I'm doing what you told me. It's hard to talk about those little things. But he said, I find it if I don't, they fester. And I looked at him said, let me ask you every time you do that, each time you have that difficult conversation, how do you feel?

right afterwards. He said, I feel so much more connected. We actually get to a deeper level and I'm glad we did it. But up until that moment, I'm kicking and screaming inside. And it is, but that's why I tell people don't look at that. You're going to, we have the skills. You're to start to know to be your best. That's another thing, David. Many times we have an expectation about what it should look like.

When we go and have these, I found many times the result is better than I could have ever imagined. So we don't really know what's on the other side, but I find over and over it's actually better than what I imagined. And typically people say, I don't know how to do that again. It's a skillset. So if you have the vulnerability and know how to look at conflict. when I look at conflict now, I say,

Look at what it can look like at the end. Stop focusing on the negative. And here's the other thing. Let's say I have a problem on Friday and I want to put the conversation off until Monday. My whole weekend, I'm thinking about that. And at Monday, I still am going to have

that awkward 15 minutes, but I would rather trade that 15 minutes upfront.

rather than let it cost me on the back end because I understand emotional accounting. That's what it is. It's emotional accounting. I'm investing right here to get something on the back end. Otherwise it's going to cost me. And so I'd rather do an investment, freedom founders, that's what you're about, vesting your time, building wealth, doing that thing that's going to support you long-term.

I'm going to suggest the same thing in relationships. That's what we're doing. We're investing to have great relationships on the back end, but they don't come without lifting some weights. Everyone wants to have the lean body. No one wants to go to the gym.

Dr. David Phelps (32:00)

Obviously, we're going to put the link to alignment resources, the book, anything else we could do to encourage people to connect with the mission that you have, the podcast that you have. I was going to say, we know that that's there. What else?

Greg Stephens (32:12)

Yeah. Well, I would just like to hear what your firsthand experience is. mean, you said you liked it. Someone out there who's going, what's this all about? Because we do it in a group. Most people say, I don't want to do that in a group, but I can, I can move you more in six months with a group than I can two years one on one. So share with people your perspective. What's different than anything you've.

Dr. David Phelps (32:35)

Absolutely.

Greg Stephens (32:41)

You've seen it. That's everyone who's done masterminds and things that go, I've never seen anything like this. And that's how I created it. What's your experience with it?

Dr. David Phelps (32:51)

I say first and foremost, any group, whether it's a mastermind or in this case, a small cohort. So the difference is mastermind groups and networking groups or whatever they are, they're fine. They serve a purpose. But if you're wanting to really develop a specific skill set, a knowledge base in a certain area, then that's where a smaller cohort, so I'm calling what you do the masterclass, there's a maximum of eight or nine of us. So the intimacy is what's important. I'm not gonna share, I'd be willing to share anything close to what I'll share in this group, in a larger group. I'm just not.

I just don't feel comfortable. But in a small group, the safety which you create, the fact that you are very good about making sure that the people in a small core, a master class, were probably about the same level of maturity, or maybe I should say immaturity. The point is

when you invited me to come in just to test drive and say, David, I think you'd be a good fit, but we don't know. I don't know, you don't know. Come see, you let me come in to one call and it was that quick. And immediately I go, okay.

None of these people are dentists. None of these people do what I do. But that's the good part. They're all very high caliber, highly driven like I am, want to be game changers. And they are, and they are all, quote, successful by any societal standards or industry standards. And yet every one of us have the issues we're dealing with. And that's where the safety comes from. So when you can be in a small group with a great leader who is leading you to

gain some skill sets in areas that are difficult to do, difficult to acknowledge, but the outcomes and the benefits are massive. I get it. Everybody in this court gets it. And as you said, it's not a problem like we need to go make more money. We're not learning sales skills. We're learning how to have these crucial conversations that most of us, again, and in this group of high caliber people every week, it's like, we'll talk about a relationship that has been bad, is bad, going bad.

let's talk about it and we all have them. I mean, we can just make the long list, right? Like you did. And when you start seeing, hey, well, it's not just me. Oh, and by the way, when people do the work through your guidance, the breakthroughs that start to happen, even if one might be a little bit slow. I mean, everybody moves at a different pace, right? The group brings its own accountability. I don't want to you down. I don't want to the other people down. If I don't show up on a call and it's not like every week you get everything done. We understand that, but.

I want to be in the mix and I know that by investing my time and a relatively significant amount of capital, I want the results. I want the results and when you start to see the results other people are getting, which I wouldn't see if it was one-on-one. I mean, you can do great one-on-one work, I know you can, but when I'm doing it with other people, I get a perspective from them that I wouldn't see just working one-on-one with you. It would just only be my world and one of your mantras is you can't read the label from the inside the jar.

which I love that. You might want to explain that to people. anyway, you asked me the question about, you know, why is this different? That's my organic response to that question.

Greg Stephens (35:51)

One of the things I find is I think with the group, we can learn so much. I have a certain base of knowledge. I give that as a foundation, but the real learning is I believe from each other. I believe it's people coming and practicing. And like you said, we take people to certain level. If someone's at a level where they're trying to move up to the executive role, we put those people together. We put executives together.

and I've actually done teams of executives in the same organization, then I've done them like ours. We've got really random group and it doesn't matter what level of business you're in. You're talking about human issues. You're talking about the things we all struggle with and you feel like you've got high achievers. That's one thing people tell me all the time. I don't

want your problem people. I want those leaders that are already successful.

that actually want to improve themselves. They read books, they take classes, they're on the edge of things. And I want to upgrade their communication skills to a level they didn't even know existed. And I believe that we do that because it isn't just a communication class. It's a whole self-awareness, self-mastery, relationship class. It's all that rolled into one. And it does have a stamp of my personality and my

my passion in it, but I also, we take people that have that as well. You get to spend time with great people. I feel it when people have to miss because of something that's come up, they hate missing. mean, what, what kind of program, most people are I don't have to go today or something. And everyone's wanting to jump in. We have some people jumping on 6 AM because we do it central time for our group and we shift it with different groups. But

People just want to be there and if they can't, they feel bad, but they catch up.

Dr. David Phelps (37:53)

We can enjoy this conversation for hours, but we need to keep it within some context so people will stay with us. Yeah. And obviously there's ways they can connect. That's why I want people to do is to take some follow up. But if I was to ask you this question outside of getting your book and connecting with alignment resources, listen to the podcast. Those are those are things. outside of that, is there like one actionable step that you could give the audience, Greg, that they could take to improve their leadership and communication skills? If there's like one thing I know there's a

There's dozens and dozens, but is there one thing that people could do to maybe engender more awareness? I don't know. I'm just looking for something there that people could take away from this conversation we had today that would stick with them and go, ■ there is something there that I utilize.

Greg Stephens (38:38)

Yeah, I would say a couple of books, mine, Crucial Conversations. Also, there's a book, called The 15 Commitments of Conscious Leadership. When I read that, I was like, this covers everything I've been teaching for the last 20 years. I thought, I'm so happy they wrote it. I don't have to think about writing it now. Because part of me was like, I need to get something out. When I read it, I was like, ■ this is it. I say just be a constant learner.

because there's so much out there. Follow what your passion is. Get better. I tell people all the time, my program isn't just for anyone. It's those people who, if you think of a sports team, the people who take my program are the people who want to prepare to win a championship. And look at that. Try something new. That's the biggest thing. If you feel like you're stagnant, get out and do something different. Pick something up.

Find what motivates you. think if I say, this one thing, that's why there's so many great things out there. We live in the best time it is to be alive. I think we have so much at our fingertips.

We just, we feel like, we're entitled to it. Well, you're not, and you're not a finished product. If we can, if you can learn how to listen better, if you can listen to Ted talks, listen to books on tape. If you don't get podcasts that

feel your knowledge, not things that are going to be, there's a lot of mental junk out there. That's one of the reasons I try to put all the things I put out there because I believe that's my responsibility because I've got something to say rather than letting all the other things take our attention. Because there's a lot of stuff that could really rot our brain out there. a lot of us are on that road if you really look at it, well, I could

probably listen to a book rather than this crap. So that's what I would say. The one thing you can do is find what you're passionate about and go learn something.

Dr. David Phelps (40:43)

Constant curiosity and personal growth through learning is, I would say, that's what drives us. And you're right, if you're stagnant, there's no reason to stay stagnant. There's a world out there that's beckoning you to step into it, to take you in a new direction, to bring a new passion to the table if you've run out of passion with what you've been doing. There's no excuse for it.

Greg Stephens (41:06)

Well, I do have to say this, one of the best books, and some people read this just because Matthew McConaughey's Greenlights. I tell people, don't read it, listen to it. It has him narrating. It's like having Matthew McConaughey at your dinner table. But here's a person who actually talks about improving himself constantly. He tells it in a way about his life. It's enlightenment to me. I love the stories he tells you. Great storyteller.

If you don't know where to start, kick off with that and then see what interests you. So it doesn't have to be a something major deep. It could be something about someone's life. Another one is Michael Singer's The Surrender Experiment. Listen to that. It's Michael Singer talking about it. Or the book Awareness by Anthony DiMello. Listen to Anthony DiMello. He passed away in 1985, but they wrote the book after from his lectures. But if you listen to it on Audible,

It's actually the lectures and they're so insightful.

Dr. David Phelps (42:10)

Greg Stevens, it's such a pleasure. Thank you so much for being here today and we'll look forward to coming back and doing some more deep dives into these areas that I think are so crucial to our lives, our joy, our happiness. Thank you.

Greg Stephens (42:23)

Thank you

for the opportunity. Appreciate it. Thank you, audience.

Dr. David Phelps (42:29)

Vulnerability, oftentimes seen as showing weakness, that we're not strong, we're being open and showing that we don't have what it takes. I think that's incorrect. I think being vulnerable means that you are open to a deeper connection with somebody. In personal relationships and business relationships, I think they go hand in hand. As leaders, a lot of people look up to us and want to know that we are good leaders, that we have a good moral compass.

that we have a vision ahead, but it doesn't mean we're perfect. In fact, far from it. As good leaders, it's important for us to show our leads, our team, or even our spouse or family that sometimes we don't get it right. Sometimes we don't have all the answers. In fact, oftentimes we don't, but that doesn't mean we're weak. It really creates a deeper connection of trust and confidence in you, the person, as that leader. If we feign that we have it all right, that

Your pride is something that we will not revert to and allow us to look weak. Then in fact, we become poor leaders in that regard. I think for name Brown said it well. Says vulnerability is the birthplace of innovation, creativity and change. When used wisely vulnerability can be a superpower that deepens relationships, creates resilient teams and fosters meaningful lives. I think that's where it's at. It takes practice. It takes.

the willingness to open oneself up to potentially criticism. But in long run, I found that being vulnerable, being open, being authentic and transparent is really the way to stronger relationships and to moving yourself forward along with other people. It's the key. Another aspect of crucial conversations that Greg and I have discussed and discussed a little bit right here on this podcast is the fact that many of us, myself included, really don't like conflict.

I'd like everybody to be happy. I'd like everybody to show up and not have issues because dealing with people in all walks of life, we all have issues. Some people are more needy. Some people want to glean quick assistance or help or solve problems. And we tend to resist that because we sometimes walk into a maelstrom that we don't want to walk into. I get it. I've been there. What I found is when there are issues on the table, the sooner that I'm willing and able

to have that crucial conversation with that person, the sooner the issues is resolved one way or the other. Oftentimes, we fear that there's gonna be a relationship breakdown. Maybe there is, but on the other hand, if we don't open up the door and show our intent, and our intent should always be positive, our intent should always be, I want to see if we can make the situation better, the relationship better, the working environment better, whatever it is that's missing,

Start with your positive intent. Now it doesn't mean that the relationship has to go on indefinitely. Some relationships are not meant to go on indefinitely. Sometimes finding closure and doing that in an amicable way is more important than just trying to push something out that doesn't really fit. Freeing up someone's time and opportunity and freedom to go on to something else when the current situation is just not going to be resolvable is sometimes a conclusion to be made. But letting things go.

Not dealing with what's in front of us, I think, is one of the biggest mistakes we make. And learning how to do it in a non-conversational way is one of the best things I think we can do with our communication skills.

Hey, thanks for watching or listening. For those interested in learning how to create replacement income that allows you to step back or exit entirely from practice, then schedule a call with my team at [freedomfounders.com](https://freedomfounders.com) forward slash discover. That's [freedomfounders.com](https://freedomfounders.com) forward slash discover. We'll dig into your financial situation and let you know your best next steps. And as always, be sure to hit the subscribe or follow button.

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