

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:00:00 Today's episode of Hidden Forces is made possible by listeners like you. For more information about this week's episode, or for easy access to related programming, visit our website at [HiddenForces.io](http://HiddenForces.io) and subscribe to our free email list. If you're listening to the show on your Apple Podcast app, remember you can give us a review. Each review helps more people find the show and join our amazing community. With that, please enjoy this week's episode.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:00:32 Long ago, during the Second Millennium BC, before Agamemnon and his long-haired Achaeans would plunder the stronghold on the proud height of Troy, there ruled the king by the name of Minos. Child of Europa. Son of Zeus.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:00:51 His capital was the commercial center of the civilized world, a naval super power with ships that were said to have sailed through the gates of Hercules, navigating the open seas of the forbidden, unknown ocean waters of the Atlantic that formed the enormous river that encircled the earth.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:01:13 But Minos' kingship came at a cost. Long before his reign, while contending for the throne, he prayed to Poseidon to send out of the Mediterranean a bull as a sign of the gods' favor, vowing its immediate sacrifice as an offering to his uncle Poseidon, God of the Sea.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:01:35 Poseidon answered, the bull appeared, and Minos took his throne. But in a moment of weakness, he hesitated. Beholding the beautiful beast that the sea god had sent him, Minos refused to honor his pledge, believing that he could trick the god by offering him another bull to sacrifice while leaving the herald to breed in his own herd. Thus, converting a heavenly boon into his own, private benefit.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:02:06 But Poseidon was not fooled. In requital for the new king's apostasy, Minos' wife, Pasiphaë, was enchanted with a wild and unruly passion for the animal, and solicited the help of the skilled craftsman and engineer Daedalus, who would construct for her a wooden cow in which she would eagerly enter and mate with it.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:02:30 To her and Minos' horror, what emerged was a monster. Half-man, half-bull, the Minotaur was the manifestation of the call unanswered. Unable to rule the lands of his own psyche, Minos turned his attention outwards, commanding Daedalus to undo his horror by subduing it, building a labyrinth so elaborate and confusing that even Daedalus could barely hope to escape it.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:03:01 Years later, while writing out of a two-room apartment in New York's Greenwich Village, the great mythological scholar Joseph Campbell would write, "Often in actual life, and not infrequently in the myths and popular tales, we encounter the dull case of the call unanswered; for it is always possible to turn the ear to other interests. Refusal of the summons converts the adventure into its negative.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:03:32 Walled in boredom, hard work, or culture, the subject loses the power of significant affirmative action and becomes a victim to be saved. His flowering world becomes a wasteland of dry stones and his life feels meaningless, even though, like King Minos, he may, through titanic effort, succeed in building an empire of renown. Whatever house he builds, it will be a house of death: a labyrinth of cyclopean walls to hide from him his Minotaur. All he can do is create new problems for himself and await the gradual approach of his disintegration."

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:04:15 This week on Hidden Forces, Jerry Colonna, Life, Leadership, and Learning to Heed the Call Unanswered. Jerry Colonna, welcome to Hidden Forces.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:04:45 Thank you for having me. It's actually really fun to be here.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:04:48 Yeah. Well, we hung out for like half an hour.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:04:50 We did.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:04:50 We did, because you were early, and we're having some technical problems here, but-

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:04:55 And I was exhausted.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:04:57 You were exhausted. But it was good. It worked. You've done you said five interviews today, right?

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:05:00 Amen, brother.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:05:01 Wow. There's some ideal number to do before you get to the perfect recording. I think five is a little too many. I think maybe one or two is the good amount.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:05:11 Yeah. I think that would be right.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:05:12 You don't want to do more than two.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:05:13 That's right. But you know what? I'm-

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:05:14 Whoever was number three got real lucky.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:05:16 Right. I'm actually here for you. I'm good.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:05:18 I'm sure you are. I read your book, Jerry. As you know, I was speaking its praises earlier. It really is a great book.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:05:26 Thank you.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:05:27 It really-

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:05:28 And I really appreciate the careful finesse with which you undertook that. It means a lot to me.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:05:33 Yeah, I know. It was my pleasure. I had an uncharacteristically, work-wise, difficult couple of weeks. Normally, I never book more than one guest a week. I had booked one guest last week originally, weeks out, but then I got contacted by the Secretary of Defense, who wanted to come on the program. I had to find a way to accommodate that, so I doubled up last week. Then you were originally scheduled to come out a few weeks ago.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:05:58 That's right. That's right.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:05:58 We had to reschedule you. I had another guest this week.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:06:01 Got you.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:06:01 So I've done four episodes ... This is the third; I have another one tomorrow ... in eight days. When I had to read your book, when I sat down, I was like, "All right. I've got to get through this. I've got to make sure I do it," because, regardless, I have to read the book.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:06:13 When I started reading it, it sucked me in very quickly. It felt very much like the undertone, a current. I told you it reminded me ... It's not exactly, but it reminded me it's in the vein of Joseph Campbell. It's in the vein of the mystic sort of quality.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:06:28 Thank you. I mean that's a very, very high compliment.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:06:30 Does that resonate with you?

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:06:33 It makes me a little uncomfortable to think of me in that light. The part that makes me feel comfortable is, and I think I mentioned this a few times in the book, I stand upon the shoulders of giants. I am nothing without the people who have

taught me. While I never met Joseph Campbell, he taught me. If I can evoke the spirit and the feelings, then I may have done something good.

- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:07:02 Jerry, can you tell us, for our listeners, how did you come to this point where you are today sitting here in this interview chair talking about a book that you wrote? Given your background as an investor in the '90s, what was the path that got you here?
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:07:17 The path was windy, unexpected, pockmarked with, here's a reference in the book, asteroids. It probably begins with my actually walking away from the venture capital business and perhaps walking into the rest of my life, although not knowing that that's in fact what I was doing.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:07:36 You were a founder of Flatiron Partners with Fred Wilson ...
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:07:40 That's right.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:07:41 ... who now is Union Square Ventures.
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:07:43 That's right. We founded Flatiron in 1996 and shut the doors effectively ... I mean we had some follow on investment activity, but effectively shut the doors in 2001. It was a very brief period of time. I mean it felt monumental at the time, but it was a very brief period of time. But it set me on a particular path really for the rest of my life.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:08:09 What caused you to shut it down to make that decision? Because as I understand it, that came from you, right? Fred wanted to continue or maybe to start a new fund with you, but not for you guys to part ways.
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:08:19 Right. Well, the first step in the process was that by the time the fund was shutting down, we had one sole limited partner in what was at the time Chase Capital Partners and then became JP Morgan Partners, because JP Morgan and Chase merged. They were rethinking all of their investment strategy. We were faced with the choice of going out and raising a new fund with independent investors.
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:08:45 The challenge at the time was that I knew that I could not continue. I had to stop. I think that's what you're referring to when you say it was my decision. It didn't feel like a choice. I feel like it was one of those moments-
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:09:00 You hit the wall?

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:09:02 I had hit a wall. I had hit a wall emotionally and physically and existentially. I knew that I couldn't continue.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:09:10 What precipitated that?

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:09:13 I think that the clearest thing that was going on was that, starting in around 1999 into early 2000, I began entering a major period of depression. You often are cognizant of these things after the fact. You can see them more clearly after you've been in that path.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:09:32 That continued well into 2001, early 2001. By that point, it really felt like everything that we were doing was just hitting a wall. Everything was hitting a wall. But the external forces that were conspiring against us was nothing in comparison to the internal forces that were going on inside of me, which was a profound sense of change.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:09:59 In hindsight, I can see now clearly that I was entering a period of midlife transition. But because of a long friendship and relationship with depression going back to childhood, it felt particularly pronounced and challenging.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:10:16 By the middle of 2001, I wasn't sure what the next move was going to be. In fact, I made a move into JP Morgan. But by the early part of 2002, it was clear that that was not the right move for me either.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:10:30 It wasn't the first time that you had dealt with depression.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:10:33 Correct.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:10:33 You were in your, what, mid to late 30s at the time?

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:10:36 Yeah. I was 37 going into 38 years old.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:10:39 Which is a difficult time.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:10:40 Sure. I mean, again, in hindsight, I see now that that age period from, say, 35 to about 55 is one of profound adult transition. We kind of blithely refer to it as midlife crisis.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:10:57 Where you get a Ferrari, they get a new haircut, get girlfriend.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:11:00 Yeah. That language, it's unfortunate that we have that mythology, because it doesn't do justice to the amount of existential pain that's going on at that time.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:11:10 What is going on at that time, do you think, and what was going on for you?

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:11:14 Donald Justice has a wonderful poem called Men at 40. The first line of which is-

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:11:20 Men at 40?

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:11:21 Yeah, Men at 40. The first line of which is, "Men at 40 minute learn to close softly doors to rooms they will not be going back to." Yeah, see? How old are you? 35, 36?

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:11:34 I'm 37.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:11:35 There you go. Welcome to the middle of your life. You know those plans that you had for yourself at 10?

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:11:41 Yeah.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:11:42 That's a room you will not be going back to.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:11:44 I said yes, but I don't know what plans I probably had. I probably had the plans of becoming a fireman.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:11:50 Yeah, that's what I mean. That's it.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:11:53 No, no. I mean I'd laugh about that specific point, but I certainly-

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:11:58 But you stopped at that line.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:12:00 Well, the thing that ... You write about this in the book. You write many things in the book, but one of them had to do with what I think is a common feature, which is people that are successful or were ambitious and define themselves, whether it's on the corporate track or the entrepreneurial track, but where the tractor beam of their own ambition, what happens oftentimes is that we use the work and we use the external as a way to try and fill the hole, or try and make up for something that feels lacking, and we may be very good at it but we're not aware of it.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:12:39 I think one of the things that disrupts that illusion is success. When you attain a certain level of success, you realize that didn't solve the problem. It didn't go away. That hole is still there.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:12:54 I'm curious what you have to say about this, but it seems to me that this is oftentimes one reason why people who achieve some level of success in the moment of that acquisition can fall into depression, because that moment of success reveals the fact that they're still grappling with something deeper.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:13:14 Yeah. Well, I actually think you're touching upon two or three related and very, very important themes. The first is the pursuit of external sources of internal healing and using approbation, an external affirmation to try to create some sort of intrinsic internal healing. Our entire society is socialized to pursue that. Buy the right deodorant and then you'll feel good about yourself. The whole structure, the game is rigged in that way. This despite the fact that every wisdom tradition humans have invented have warned us against that.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:13:58 The second thing is that, and this speaks to high achievers and high-success people, those who achieve a lot of success, in my experience, without having a means for internal self-soothing and internal validation, start to question the validity of that external success. They doubt its depth. They doubt its ability to do anything. In fact, the more successful they become, the more strong the doubts are, to the point where it doesn't matter how much external success one has, the dopamine hits stop, and the pain rushes in.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:14:45 Now part of that, there's a third corollary to that, is that while the success is being achieved, there's a little voice in our head that says, "This is all bullshit. You have no idea what you're doing. You have fooled that teacher into getting an A." You have figured out the system all because we've externalized responsibility for our internal well-being. Then we wake up and we're "successful" by any external metric. But the voices in our head are louder and louder and louder.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:15:25 Does that moment oftentimes lead, for such people or people who are in this dynamic that we're describing, a sense of deep hopelessness, because you've done everything that you thought you were supposed to do in order to be happy and to fill that hole. Now you're there and it's still just as big?

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:15:45 Yeah. It's almost as if you were sitting in on a new coaching session. I can't tell you the number of clients who come in and say what you've said, in some form or another, "I played the game. I did everything I was supposed to do. I went to the right schools, I got the right grades. I did everything that I was told, implicitly or explicitly, that I should do. Why does it hurt? Still. What the fuck? What gives?"

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:16:18 Sometimes they'll get really bitter and they say, "The whole thing is a game," and, "It's not fair," and, "I don't believe it." Then what they'll do is they'll say that, "There's some sort of cabal of people who are keeping the real playbook from me."

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:16:34 In a quite literal sense, or-

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:16:36 Yeah. I mean they'll walk in and they'll say, "Where's the startup playbook?"

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:16:40 Wow. They must feel very angry to say that.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:16:42 "Nobody's told me how to be a CEO. Nobody told me how to be a leader. You must be keeping it from me."

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:16:48 Wow.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:16:49 But more often than not, they just tumble down a path of self-loathing.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:16:54 Now I have a very specific question there. Is that a distinction? That particular thing you just said about the playbook being kept from me, is that unique to non-entrepreneurial leaders, people that climbed the ladder to get to CEO in a Fortune 500 company?

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:17:11 No, I think it's not that it's unique to one group or another. It's more unique and more a reflection of people who, in their pursuit of external validation, check constantly to their right and to their left to see how they're doing in comparison to others. If you live your life in comparison to others and you watch them and you believe that they've got it all figured out, you become convinced that someone has kept something from you. Part of the root negative action is constantly comparing oneself to another.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:17:45 Oh my God.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:17:46 Right? As I like to say to clients, swim in your own lane. When you're in the pool swimming in a competition, it does not matter what the guy to the right of you or the gal to the left of you is doing.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:17:59 Can I ask you something about that? I'm very competitive, and I think there is a distinction to be made between healthy competition and the type of competition that I think we're describing here. Someone that's in my head right now is

Michael Jordan, when he gave his acceptance speech at the hall of fame and he talked about how competition drove him to be a great basketball player.

- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:18:19 When you're talking about comparing yourself to others, I think the danger is, in my experience, when the source of your fixation has to do your own sense of self-worth, when you're competing with other people and you're internalizing the value metrics of that.
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:18:34 Well, there's one step before it. It's when you are walking around with an inherent sense of self-worthlessness and you're using the pursuit of an achievement or a competition as a means to push away that demon.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:18:52 Yeah. If you're an actor and you're saying, "I'm a great actor. That's why I'm a great actor. I won the Academy Award. I'm a great actor," and you have to keep achieving more and more in order to keep the flood of pain out-
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:19:06 It keeps the demons away.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:19:06 Yeah, because you've attached your own self-esteem with external values.
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:19:12 William James said, and I'm going to paraphrase him, he said it's not failure that annihilates us, but it's when we attach ourselves a sense of self-worth and self-esteem to accomplishment of the goal and then fail to achieve it that we are annihilated.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:19:30 At least that offers the hope of change, the annihilation.
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:19:33 Well, I'll give you a shorthand way of understanding that. The notion of the personal best. Really great athletes who can hold on to a notion of personal best, that's powerful. Your whole face just lit up as soon as I said it, because I think that's what you mean by healthy competition.
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:19:54 I'm not annihilated by not achieving my personal best, but I strive every day to achieve my personal best, which is very, very different than the best in class, because the truth is no matter how good you are today, tomorrow somebody's going to be better.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:20:13 Yeah. Well, I think also the litmus test would be if your company goes bankrupt, or if you fail to meet expectations in the fourth quarter, or some other external metric doesn't hit properly,

how do you feel personally? I think that a healthy reaction to that, when you're younger, I think it's more difficult to disassociate yourself. But I don't think it's unreasonable to get to a place where you can significantly disassociate the way you feel personally and how your life is from your work.

- Jerry Colonna:** 00:20:44 I think you're using the word "disassociate"-
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:20:46 It's the wrong word.
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:20:47 Well, no, I mean the word that would occur to me is a Buddhist concept of non-attachment ...
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:20:51 Yeah, non-attachment.
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:20:52 ... which is different than detachment. Non-attachment is I am not attaching my sense of self-worth from the achievement of a particular financial outcome. There is something liberating around that. It doesn't mean I don't continue to pursue, it doesn't mean the removal of, say, ambition or competition. It means that I am motivated by achieving a personal best. I'm excited about the book, but my challenge will be to make sure that I am not knocked on my butt at the first negative review I get.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:21:26 Right. This is a particularly difficult line to walk, because the book is remarkably personal. No one could fault you for taking it personally. I mean that would be very easy for someone to say, "Oh, they don't like it. They don't like me."
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:21:41 That's right.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:21:41 I could say-
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:21:42 "They don't like it. They don't like me."
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:21:44 "They don't like me."
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:21:46 Well, see, it's that conflation, that's the danger point.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:21:50 Yeah. I have another question in the vein of what we're talking about. When people are younger, I've seen all sorts of ... And in myself too and in my own attempt to ... I'm a work in progress, as we all are.
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:22:03 Which means you're alive.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:22:04 Yes, yes, absolutely. I've seen how I was when I was a bit younger, in terms of how hard I worked and how hard I work now. I see other people at different ages. I think I heard you also ... I think it might have been ... We were talking about this earlier. You did an interview with Tim Ferriss, which was phenomenal. Tim is excellent at these type of interviews. I do recommend to listeners, if you want more of Jerry after this, to hear that episode with Tim.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:22:33 But I think with Tim Ferriss this came up, which is that when you see someone in their 20s working like an animal, you say that person's ambitious. But if you see someone in their 50s doing that, you really stop and wonder what is that person running from.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:22:49 I know people in their 50s and 60s, late 60s working like that. I think part of it is I think there's an irrational desire to believe that if you work hard enough and if you are important enough to enough people, that you won't die.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:23:06 Thank you for going there. I think that so much of what we're talking about is a fear of death. It's not just a kind of death, it's a fear of irrelevancy. It's a fear of blinking out. It's a fear of-

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:23:22 Of blinking out? What do you mean?

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:23:24 Well, Springsteen's got a wonderful song Fade Away. I don't want to fade away. Even if my meat bag of my body decomposes into the earth, I don't want to blink out.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:23:39 I don't want to go dark.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:23:40 I don't want to be a star in some distant galaxy that just blinks out and no longer shines.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:23:46 Is that in relation to others? Is it also about an existentialist loneliness, a sense of detachment from all that is?

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:23:55 The second half of your question, the existential loneliness, yes. I think that's what it's about. I think the first half of the question is, yeah, it's about ... I suppose it's about if that star off in some distant galaxy blinks out and no one's been looking at it doesn't matter.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:24:16 Do I matter?

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:24:17 Do I matter?

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:24:19 Do I matter?

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:24:19 That's the question. Just slow down. That's a powerful question. I think the corollary to that, I mean I do talk about this in the book, the corollary of am I a good enough man, there's a relationship with it. Have I mattered? Has my existence meant something?

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:24:41 Those questions start coming up a lot during the age that you're describing. It's got to come up.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:24:46 You mean they're coming up for you, or-

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:24:47 Oh, absolutely, they come up for me. We did an episode with Rebecca Goldstein. I don't know if you're familiar with her. It was on mattering philosophy. We talked about exactly this, this question of what makes life worth living? Do I matter? Does my life matter? Who do I matter to? That's the central driving question.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:25:07 I think this question has become more and more important in the age in which we live. I think it's one of the reasons why interest in moral philosophy and epistemology and things like this have been coming up for people. Moral philosophy, not epistemology.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:25:23 Well, I think it's one of the reasons why people are reaching for different wisdom traditions, different religious traditions, different spirituality. They're looking for a sense ... Well, I pause because I think we're going down a path that I'm not a big fan of, which is that is to presume that we're in some sort of new age. I think this is just the human condition.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:25:48 Some people do believe that. Is that what you mean-

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:25:48 Yeah, I'm not so sure-

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:25:49 ... the idea that this is some global awakening?

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:25:49 No.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:25:50 Yeah, I don't feel that way either.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:25:51 I think this is what our ancestors have been talking about for millennia.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:25:55 I think people feel that way when they're awakening.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:25:57 Yes.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:25:59 You're like "everyone's waking up too!" No, not necessarily.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:26:00 That's right, we're in this new age, when in fact if you go back in time, there are millennia-old field guides, if you will, to the human existence.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:26:11 Well, the late 1800s to early 1900s in America was a period, at least in the literature, that was profoundly more ... I don't know what the word would be to describe it, but you had this movement of mind cure and you had all this, what would be considered today, positive psychology, some version of it, or positive thinking or the secret.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:26:30 These things have been around forever. I think, if anything, they were bigger then, and they had to do ostensibly with a falling away of other things. I think that was a period where religion was being assaulted by the rising consumerism of the time. I think the world changes when the things that we anchor our lives to, ourselves to, fall away, it can leave people feeling desolate.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:26:52 Sure. I think that if you map human development, individual human development, against that, you could also look at this through the lens of the experience that you were just talking about before. Boy, do those questions show up "at this age".

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:27:10 I think, ultimately, the question is ... We got into this by talking about the fear of death, but the fear of death is very much linked to the notion ... It's not merely the fear of dying, it's the fear of dying and not having mattered. That, I think, underlies the sense of I need a purpose, I need a direction, I need a point to my existence. That chain of thinking often leads to existential philosophical shifts forward in new thinking, but all of the new thinking has lineages that go back millennia.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:27:53 I don't want to ask you about this now, but I want to throw it out there in case we get to it. I'm curious what you think about this movement in Silicon Valley that I feel has gone just totally unchecked. It comes in the form of uploading consciousness to the computer and biotechnological hacks to your body so that you can live forever.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:28:16 What's most interesting to me about this extremely banal and ancient desire to live forever is how it seems to have gone

totally unchecked today. It's seen as somehow being different than all previous dreams of immortality.

- Jerry Colonna:** 00:28:29 Yet you could dig up the sarcophagi of dead pharaohs who were trying to live forever.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:28:35 And took all their dogs and all their possessions with them to the underworld.
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:28:38 Right.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:28:39 I want to maybe put a loop or a bow on what we're discussing thus far with a quote from your book and ask you about it. "There's a wisdom in being able to discern when the job is done. For the job to be done, we must know that it's time to let go of the striving, to become and allow ourselves the restful grace of simply being. In my effort to simply be, I've learned to balance the disquietude of the past with the life-giving excitement of the future, the seedbed for the growing to come." How do we know when the job is done?
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:29:17 It's a great question. There is no external source of answer for that question.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:29:23 Because the reason I also say it in the context of what we're describing is because when you are young, let's say there is an appropriate age when you can work hard ... First of all, your body won't give in. It's not irrational. You're in the rising phase. You're trying to put together a life, put together wealth to be able to support yourself, maybe a family.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:29:40 But in later years, it isn't, but there isn't a clear line for that. So how do you know? How do you know when you're overdoing it? How do you know when you're chasing shadows on the wall? How do you know?
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:29:51 Isn't that the gift of community? Two things occur to me. The first is something that I often encourage people to do is, first and foremost, pay attention to your own life. So often people actually just aren't paying attention to their life, which means that they're missing the signals that would tell them the time of striving has now changed, or --
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:30:15 Self-awareness-
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:30:16 Self-awareness.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:30:17 ... and being in your own body.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:30:19 Your work in this endeavor is done. It is time to move on to a new endeavor. Not paying attention to your body can often lead to your body somatically reaching up, grabbing you by the throat, throwing you down on the floor and saying, "Pay attention, sucker."

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:30:37 There are people who could be dealing with stage four cancer and not know it.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:30:40 And not know it because they're not paying attention, they're not tuned in. They're not only not tuned in to their body, in their own existence, but they're not tuned in to the people around them. They don't even listen. They're not feeling the hearts around them.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:30:55 A corollary to that is when we are in true community, the people who love us will say, as they often say to me, "Jerry, put the pen down. You're done." I'm an old Yankees fan. One of the best moments, I remember watching Joe Torre come out and take the ball from the starter and say, "It's time for Moe. It's time for Mariano to come in. It's time to hand the ball over."

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:31:26 A lot of the younger starters, they would kick the dirt and say, "No. It's not. [inaudible 00:31:31]," and Joe would know. It was Joe's job to know when it was over. We all need a Joe Torre in our life.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:31:40 Oh, yeah. You're touching on a lot of themes from mythology as well. Oftentimes, for heroes on a journey, there is a sage. There is some wise elder.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:31:53 Elder. This is what we do as elders.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:31:56 This is interesting also that you say this now, because I was just thinking about this yesterday. It wasn't prompted by our interview. I had done a prior interview months and months ago, and it was with a journalist. I said that we've taken away the wise elders. I don't remember how I put it, but my point had to do with politics and everything else.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:32:16 He actually thought to was the opposite because he was thinking, "Well, look, you've got Nancy Pelosi, you've got Chuck Schumer. You've got all these different ... Who's the other guy on the Republican side?"

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:32:26 Mitch McConnell.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:32:26 Mitch McConnell. You've got these fossils that are in Congress. But I think that's very different because those elders are seeking to hold on to power. They, if anything, are stuck in this world. They very much are characters to evoke our sympathy.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:32:40 Can I go on that?

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:32:40 Yes, please, please. Absolutely.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:32:43 We'll talk about myths and we'll talk about politics. Do you know when the constitution was changed to prohibit more than two terms in the presidency?

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:32:55 Yes, that was after the death of FDR.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:32:58 Because prior to FDR, the tradition, and it was only a tradition, was two terms. You know the story. George Washington-

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:33:07 Yes, of course.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:33:08 ... who was offered the presidency for life. Cincinnatus. Cincinnatus was the Roman Emperor who gave up the empire. Washington as Cincinnatus, Washington handing back-

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:33:27 Solon.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:33:27 Well-

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:33:28 Same thing. I'm just saying. He could have put himself in as king.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:33:31 Washington walked away and went back to being a farmer. Well, plantation owner.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:33:38 Land surveyor or whatever. Yeah, plantation owner.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:33:40 Plantation owner. But the point is this. Some of our greatest heroes were wise elders who said, "Enough. The work is done." One of the ways of knowing who is a wise elder is knowing if they know when the work is done. There's something tragic and painful about someone who is in their seat longer than they should be in their seat, whether it's an athlete past their prime, whether it's a politician who is, to quote you, a fossil. That's not a wise elder.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:34:22 It's interesting because I've noticed a change, a shift in this regard, because you had folks ... I mean there are other ones. I don't know why they don't all come to mind, but Larry King is the one that comes to mind now who stayed well beyond his time and his position at CNN, and he was really forced out. What you saw with guys like David Letterman and others is they left on their own, Jon Stewart left on their own, which was very unique. That stuck out to me really.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:34:50 Johnny Carson.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:34:51 Johnny Carson also, yeah.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:34:53 There's something wise in being on the mound and calling the manager and saying, "I'm done." That's maturity.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:35:02 Another place where you see the two different examples in this regard are fighters. I don't know if you follow MMA or anything, but Georges St-Pierre has retired, it seems, and has done it right. Whereas other fighters wait too long, and it can have devastating consequences.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:35:20 For them and for the people who love them.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:35:21 For their family and for everyone, right. There is a time you're going to outstay your welcome. One of the other things that you talk about in the book that you make mention of is this notion of ghosts in the frame or ghosts of our past. It's in the context of memory.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:35:37 Another thing, this is part of this, is you talk a lot about childhood. I get the sense that what you're really talking about is that people that come to you trying to be better leaders, trying to step into the shoes of a CEO, what they're really trying to do, what they're really struggling with is stepping into adulthood.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:35:56 I think so.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:35:58 How much of that is a challenge because we're still fighting the wars of our childhood?

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:36:04 Oh, I think that's the root cause of most of the dysfunction and toxicity in these things we call organizations, whether it's a political organizations, communities, or business organizations. It's when those who hold the seat of power have not done their work, continue to avoid to do their work, and then flail around

and cause damage and violence to everybody around them. That work that I refer to are laying to rest the ghosts from their childhood, and not just their childhood but their parents' childhood, their grandparents' childhood.

- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:36:41 In that vein of what we said before of enough, the job is done, and how do we know when the job is done, these stories that we tell ourselves from our childhood, the person that we become when we're growing up in order to protect ourselves, that's another question I also have, how much of that comes from the fundamental security of being a little person in the world, and especially if you grow up in insecure circumstances, the way that you need to compensate in order to protect yourself. When do we know that that time is past and those stories no longer serve us? They're not for us anymore. We're past that now.
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:37:18 Okay. Let's lay out what those stories are. They're not just stories, right? They're belief systems, they're structures, they're habits. They're the way things are.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:37:28 Maybe give an example of that.
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:37:29 Yeah, I'll give an example. Because of the violence of my childhood, I internalized a belief system, and it went like this. It's better to be anxious than angry.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:37:40 Better to be anxious than angry.
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:37:42 Right. Every time I had an injustice done to me, a boundary violation or something, that got internalized as anxiety and I got afraid, because that was safer than being angry because-
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:37:56 Being angry with elicit a reaction.
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:37:58 Being angry, I would get hit. Either I would get hurt or somebody I loved would get hurt. Better that I internalize that as a kind of constant fear.
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:38:09 Now fast forward into adulthood, I have a certain amount of modicum of power. I am going to set up my organizations to be conflict avoidant. I'm going to make sure that we never ever disagree openly, that all conflict becomes passive.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:38:31 You hit a trigger point on me.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:38:33 Oh, yeah, yeah. Then what happens is I'm a really, really nice guy that's really well-liked, but inside I'm reaching. Now from an organizational perspective, I'll step in as a coach and I might see an organization stuck and unable to move forward with innovative ideas, because innovation causes conflict. Something has to be said no to.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:38:59 On a personal basis, we often see this constant low level of anxiety, "Nothing I ever do is good enough. Nothing I ever do is good enough," because their ability to just stand up and say, "Enough. I don't want to do this anymore. Stop attacking me. Stop it," that's been squelched.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:39:21 They've been made safe, they've been able to grow into adulthood, a form of adulthood, they survived their childhood, but somewhere around that magical age of about 35 to 40 years old, the house of cards starts to fall apart. At that point, the systems that got me to where I am breakdown. Organizations start to fail around them. They might even lose their job. They might even lose their spouse.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:39:53 Then that's why I say to blithely refer to this as midlife crisis, that's not fair. It's the moment in time in which the systems that got you to where you are safe, warm, and happy have outlived their usefulness and they need to be put to rest.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:40:15 There's a quote from ... I have a number of quotes in this rundown, by the way, for our listeners. I think it comes up to 14 pages. Yeah, a 14-page rundown. I've got quotes from a number of people. Most of them are yours, but I've got a bunch from Joseph Campbell. All of the Campbell quotes are from Hero of a Thousand Faces.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:40:35 There's this one part here, I'm not going to read the whole part, but it is in reference to a dream that he quotes from the journal of Carl Jung, which he recorded from a session he had with a woman. He's talking about what he calls vapors, odd beings, terrors, and deluding images that come up into the mind from the subconscious.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:40:55 He says, "These are dangerous because they threaten the fabric of the security into which we have built ourselves and our family. But they are fiendishly fascinating too, for they carry the keys that open the whole realm of the desired and feared adventure of the discovery of the self. Destruction of the world that we have built and in which we live and of ourselves within it, but then a wonderful reconstruction of the bolder, cleaner, more spacious, and fully human life. That is the lure, the

promise, and the terror of these disturbing night visitants from the mythological realm that we carry within."

- Jerry Colonna:** 00:41:37 What an amazing quote.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:41:38 Well, his work is phenomenal. I mean I have relied heavily not necessarily on Joseph Campbell, though his interpretations have been valuable. I've relied heavily on mythology growing up, since I was a boy. I find tremendous wisdom embedded.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:41:55 It seems to me that when those night visitants came to you, I'm sure you ignored them for as long as you could. But at some point in your late 30s, it seems that you made a decision to allow them to breach the walls, to stop trying to erect those walls to keep it all together. That has led to you on the path that has brought you here today.
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:42:17 I think that's right. I would alter what you said in one way, because the statement that I made a decision implies a certain kind of agency that I did not have.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:42:28 You tried your hardest and you just-
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:42:30 I had no choice.
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:42:31 ... broke at some point.
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:42:31 The whole fucking megillah came down. The whole house of cards-
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:42:37 Jesus.
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:42:38 ... just collapsed around me. I literally had to listen to those night visitants who came in and said, "We're here. We're not going away. You have to listen to us." "But I don't want to listen to you. You scare me." I have to pay attention.
- Jerry Colonna:** 00:43:02 In my book and in my [inaudible 00:43:05] and my mythology, I often think of the Buddha who was in his 30s when this happened, who, after spending years as a wandering mendicant out teaching all of his teachers, finally comes to the end of his journeys and sits under the Bodhi tree, and in the way I see it, and says, "Fuck it."
- Demetri Kofinas:** 00:43:22 Yeah. You said that in the book, "Fuck it."

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:43:24 "I'm just going to sit here. I'm not moving. It doesn't work. It's over."

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:43:31 Here's another quote from the book. This is yours now. "We're smacked in the head by the realization that life isn't unfolding as we'd hoped and all our careful plotting hasn't protected us from the shock of failure and disappointment. Our lives falter, our companies stagger. We're in the alchemist's crucible, and the heat of loss and pain is turned up. We're being cooked." It sounds like you're describing that partly.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:43:58 Absolutely. It sounds like I was describing my own life.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:44:02 When do people get to a point ... Because not everyone does. I think this is an important realization that I was fortunate to make at a younger age. It did not come easily because I was a fighter my whole life. That was how I approached everything.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:44:15 You talk about, for example, how you would have set up an organization based on your childhood experience, if I understood correctly, which would be to avoid conflict. I was all about it. I needed to learn how not to come swinging at everyone and everything.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:44:30 One of the things I learned was that surrender is not the same thing as giving up. It isn't the same thing as quitting. In your experience with people that you've worked with, is that an important realization? How does that come for people?

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:44:49 Well, first of all, I agree that surrender, as you describe it, is not the same as giving up or giving in. There's a wisdom in understanding that things are the way they are.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:45:01 And knowing when to take up arms and when to make peace.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:45:05 Exactly. I do speak in the book of strategic retreats, of being able to pull back and move into a different direction so that you can live to fight another day. I lost the train of thought. Sorry about that.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:45:18 No, it's fine. You were talking about the distinction between asteroids, which are the convexity of life, the fact that you open yourself to random events, being open, and strategic retreats in the context of surrender, being open to surrender, and the distinction between surrender and giving up.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:45:34 Well, I didn't mention asteroids, but I was going to lead there. We were tracking together.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:45:39 I've read the book.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:45:41 Well, the important thing about that is that when you can allow yourself to pause and recognize that things are not unfolding the way you anticipated, then you allow yourself the benefit of being struck by an asteroid. You allow yourself the benefit of having a random beautiful event show up and alter the trajectory of your course. But when you're locked in so terrified that things have to unfold the way they are, you oftentimes will miss the opportunity that is actually presenting itself in the random person who's just walked in.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:46:19 We did an episode, episode five, early on with someone I've known for some time. His name is Christopher Cole. He runs Artemis Capital. They have a volatility trading strategy where they focus on trying to build convexity into their portfolio. He's very philosophical. He writes very eloquently about financial theory or theory around portfolio management and construction. I think he would respond well to this idea of asteroids. Again, it's this thing where the path is not straight.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:46:46 You have another quote here. You say, "Sage Joseph Campbell, with love and joy, suggested we follow our bliss. But when facing that fork in the road, when at the crossroads, choosing to tack left or right, we want so much to know which path will lead to bliss." We do want to know, don't we?

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:47:08 Well, we want to know the end.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:47:10 We want to know how to get there.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:47:10 And we want to know the fastest set of cheat codes that will get us to the outcome that we want.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:47:20 I want to ask you about this. This is the point you were making, or I think you were going there or I'm steering you there. But I'm going to say one more quote. This is not from you, this is from Steve Jobs. I'm sure you've heard of it. A lot of people have heard this quote. "You can't connect the dots looking forward. You can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something, your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever. This approach has never let me down and it has made all the difference in my life."

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:47:52 I want to let you respond to all that, but I also want to say, having been through some things myself as well, many people have, I learned that there is value in having faith, having faith that things will work out. But that working out isn't that things have to be the way you want them to be, and also realizing that the way you want them to be doesn't necessarily mean the way they need to be, that they'll work out the way they're supposed to work out. This sense of a hidden order to life has been for me, in difficult moments, has made all the difference.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:48:27 Well, you touched upon a number of things. I'm going to go back to the first thing that I'm really feeling, which is the way you responded to the first quote I had, which is that fork in the road and we want to know the path that's going to lead to bliss.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:48:45 Let's just hang out with that painful wish and just think of ourselves at 20 or 21. I've just graduated a great school. I want to know if I take this job, will it lead to, I don't know, Millionaire Acres, the last spot on the Game of Life? Will it lead to the keep me safe, warm, and happy forever and ever? Or if I go left, where will that take me? Will I end up in pain and suffering?

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:49:26 And regret.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:49:27 That's the root of it. We then strive really hard. Where's the playbook? We strive really, really hard to figure out the right thing. We work overtime to figure out where we're going to get an A. We read books constantly. We look back into mythology for answers. We look and look and look and look. Let me know, because the possibility of choosing the wrong path is so painful.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:49:59 What is painful and scary about choosing the wrong path?

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:50:02 You answered the question. You're struggling with this now. What does your heart tell you what will happen? I think it's rooted in, "I will not feel loved, I will not be safe, and I will have no sense of belonging."

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:50:18 The third one for me is the big-

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:50:19 Oh, let that one land then.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:50:21 That's always been a big one for me, yeah. It's landed many times.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:50:24 Remember, before, you said to me, "Will I matter?" We were talking about death. Belonging and mattering are probably linked for you in that experience. I belong because I matter.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:50:41 Yeah, to the people that I belong to, or belong with.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:50:43 To the people I belong to. I know that I matter by the way they make me feel that I belong. That's what we worry about. We worry about being thrust out of the tribe. We worry about being tossed into the fireplace and becoming dinner instead of a dinner companion.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:51:03 Well, I can tell you that's a big, if not the biggest, part of why I started this program.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:51:09 Why? Say more.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:51:12 In the arc of my career and personal development, I had come to a point in my life where I felt like I had done that, where I had created ... When I look back on it, I thought that was where I needed to be. There were external events that occurred in my life I have talked about on the show that struck a blow against my life, against everything, sickness basically.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:51:34 Asteroid.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:51:35 Asteroid, exactly. When I was coming out of that, I was looking back and saying, "Okay. I've got to restart that engine. I've got to get back to where I was." I had a television show and I had to put together this life. I thought I was doing what I wanted to do, which I was, but I was also using that to fill a hole in my sense of community. Having an audience, having people who loved my work and would email me and let me know and all this stuff filled that hole. When I created Hidden Forces, it came out of that longing to reconnect.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:52:15 Longing for belonging.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:52:16 Yeah, longing for belonging. At some point, maybe after the first year, at some point between the first year and second year ... This show has now been out for over two years, like two years and four months or something ... it had become sufficiently successful that those metrics had been hit that would satisfy that need. That was when I had, for the first moment of my life, what we described early on, which is success or the kind of success that I was looking to have, and I didn't feel any better.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:52:48 Oh, magic. Look at that.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:52:51 Yeah. Since that time I've started working on my personal life, which I've neglected, and many of the lessons that have come out of that work are aligned perfectly with what you write about in this book.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:53:07 So I wrote the book for you?

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:53:10 I'm not that big a narcissist. No, no.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:53:12 But I did.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:53:13 I know, I'm kidding. I'm kidding.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:53:14 No. I wrote the book for people like you.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:53:16 Well, I think you've written the book for everyone. I think this resonates with everyone. I don't know that it's just me. I mean granted there are people that are more in that place than others, but if any book is written for everyone, this is the book.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:53:30 Thank you. That means a lot to me.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:53:32 Well, don't you think so? I mean we're all born, we all die. We're all vulnerable creatures walking this earth, and also incredibly strong as well. I mean that's a-

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:53:43 I wrote the book ... And I say it right upfront. I wrote the book for my children and I wrote the book to honor Dr. Sayres, my therapist. I wrote the book that I knew I would have wanted to read when I was 38.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:54:01 Oh, wow.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:54:05 One of the most deeply satisfying things is the notion that writing a book for those audiences that I just described has meant that I've written a book that has resonance for so many people.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:54:20 One of the things that I've learned, and you write about it in the book, is being the person today that you needed then. You are that person who your 38, 37-year-old self needed.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:54:35 I am the wise elder. I am becoming the wise elder. I'm not quite there yet. But I'm becoming the wise elder that I needed when I

was 38 standing above the stinking pile at Ground Zero looking to kill myself.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:54:51 We glossed over that.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:54:52 Yeah, we did.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:54:54 There's something else, we were talking about surrender and a few things, and embedded in all of that, there was this ... I think it had to do with the asteroids actually. That's what it was. You have this David Wagoner quote in your book ...

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:55:06 From the poem Lost.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:55:08 ... where he says, "The force knows where you are. You must let it find you."

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:55:13 Yeah.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:55:14 There's so much wisdom in that.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:55:16 Yeah. You should link to that poem. That poem is an amazing poem. Lost by David Wagoner.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:55:24 Is it particularly hard for high achievers?

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:55:27 Yes. Sorry, sorry.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:55:32 Well, I understand why you responded so quickly. But is it particularly hard for us to let go, to take the tools of manifestation out of our hands, to let the world happen to us? Is that particularly hard?

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:55:48 Well, the answer to your question lies in David's poem, in Wagoner's poem. What he says is that when you're lost, you would stand still. Now just hold that thought for a moment. High achievers in particular, when they're lost, first of all, a, don't admit it and, b, go faster.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:56:09 They're afraid to stop.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:56:11 They're afraid to stand still. Blaise Pascal said, "All of man's problems stem from the fact of their unwillingness to sit alone by themselves in a room." Stand still. Stop. It's not working. Stop. Slow down. Stop.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:56:30 I have one more question before we go to the Overtime. Jerry, you were born in 1963.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:56:37 I was.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:56:38 You were old enough to remember the assassination of Bobby Kennedy.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:56:43 I am, and Martin Luther King.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:56:44 And Martin Luther King. Bobby Kennedy, it is said by those who followed his life closer than I could have, that he was changed by the murder of his brother, the murder of his brother, the cold-blooded murder of his brother, and that it made him perhaps ready to be president. Perhaps he could have been a great president. We'll never know.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:57:12 But there's that famous moment captured on film on the back of a pickup truck, I think it was in Indiana, after he got the news of Martin Luther King's death and he quoted a line from Aeschylus about suffering, falling drop by drop upon the heart. It reminded me of a quote from your book where you talk about a rabbi saying that we put things on the heart. I can't ...

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:57:39 This comes by way of my teacher Parker Palmer. He tells the story that a student comes to the rabbi and says, "Rabbi, why does it say that we should place the words of the Torah upon our hearts? Why does it not say we should place the words in our hearts?" The rabbi says, "Our hearts, as they are, are hard. We place the words of the Torah on our heart, and there they sit until the heart breaks open and the words fall in."

**Demetri Kofinas:** 00:58:14 It reminded me very much of Bobby Kennedy and the way he talked about suffering. My question is: in the process of maturation, in the process of becoming a great leader, in the process of growing up, do we need to suffer? Is suffering a requirement to growing old, to growing up, and to become a great leader?

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:58:39 Your question is moot because it implies we have a choice. The first noble truth of the Buddha's four noble truths is that life is filled with suffering. The second noble truth is that avoidance of suffering increases suffering. The third noble truth is the truth of the cessation of suffering. Suffering can end. The fourth noble truth is the eightfold path, the steps to the end of suffering.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:59:13 I understand the implication. People will read my words and think that I'm glorifying and romanticizing suffering. God, no. It sucks. No one suffering. Unfortunately, we will. We are human. It's part of the human condition, because we are socialized, we are born wishing the world to be other than it is. Then we have to face the stark reality that the world is exactly the way it is, and that hurts.

**Jerry Colonna:** 00:59:43 People die. Dreams die. "Horse-chestnut trees die," to quote from my book. People, dreams disappoint, falter. We get illnesses. This is truth. But it's the avoidance of that truth that creates suffering.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 01:00:08 My own experience, the moments that I've experienced bliss, maybe there's a better word for it, have been in the deepest amounts of suffering where I've had acceptance of that suffering, acceptance of what has happened, of where I am, of who I am then and there. I completely understand what you mean about ...

**Jerry Colonna:** 01:00:31 You're going to be wounded. Can you make that wound sacred? That's the task.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 01:00:39 Jerry, thank you so much for coming on the program. We're going to switch to the Overtime now. For regular listeners, you know the drill. If you're new to the program, head over to [Patreon.com/hiddenforces](https://Patreon.com/hiddenforces) or to [HiddenForces.io/subscribe](https://HiddenForces.io/subscribe).

**Demetri Kofinas:** 01:00:55 You can learn all about our subscription and how you can support the show with either the audio file subscription, which will give you access to this Overtime, where Jerry will reveal the path to happiness and also gain access to the transcripts, not just of this episode but all prior episodes, as well as these beautiful, gorgeous rundowns. This week, I've got to murals of Theseus holding the sword and sandals he got from his father, Perseus holding the head of Medusa, and on and on and on. Thank you, Jerry, so much for being on the program.

**Jerry Colonna:** 01:01:33 Thank you for having me. It's really been a delight.

**Demetri Kofinas:** 01:01:37 That was my episode with Jerry Colonna. I want to thank Jerry for being on my program. For more information about this week's episode, or if you want easy access to related programming, visit our website at [HiddenForces.io](https://HiddenForces.io) and subscribe to our free email list.

- Demetri Kofinas:** 01:01:55 If you want to access to Overtime segments, episode transcripts, and show rundowns full of links and detailed information related to each and every episode, check out our premium subscription available through the Hidden Forces website or through our Patreon page at [Patreon.com/hiddenforces](https://Patreon.com/hiddenforces).
- Demetri Kofinas:** 01:02:17 Today's episode was produced by me and edited by Stylianos Nicolaou. For more episodes, you can check out our website at [HiddenForces.io](https://HiddenForces.io). Join the conversation at Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, [@HiddenForcesPod](https://twitter.com/HiddenForcesPod), or send me an email. As always, thanks for listening. We'll see you next week.