

Donna Cameron

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[00:00:00] Donna: Hi, Jeffrey.

[00:00:01] Jeffrey: Hello Donna, how are you?

[00:00:02] Donna: I'm good. How are you today?

[00:00:04] Jeffrey: I am wonderful!

[00:00:06] I want to thank you. Before we jump in here for extending grace. To me Monday, we had an unexpected last minute appointment. Pop-up and I truly appreciate you being able to kindly except Our scheduling change.

[00:00:19] Thank you for flexing and flowing very gracefully with us on that.

[00:00:22] And I truly am grateful that and appreciate willingness to move along with this. It's my

[00:00:27] Donna: pleasure.

[00:00:29] Jeffrey: Thank you for that act of kindness. You know what a great point to start our day on it? An act of kindness. I think that sets our tone.

[00:00:41] I am excited to talk with you today about the transformative power of kindness, how choosing to extend kindness and live a kind life, . Changes in individuals while changing the world. I think that's such a powerful point to jump in today.

[00:00:56] No act of kindness is ever wasted yet. There is somewhat of a difference from your perspective, and mine, both, between exhibiting kindness and I quote, just being nice. we'll get to that in a minute. I kind of want to jump in a little bit, looking at your book. You know, you wrote a book, not maybe the book on kindness, but a book on it.

[00:01:20] The book entitled &quot;A Year of Living Kindly: Choices that will change your life and the world around I think it's such a great point to launch in today in exploring what you discovered as you gathered your insights for this book. Share a little bit of background with this, if you will. Okay. You launched into this project.

[00:01:41] Donna: Jeffrey, I've always been interested in being in kindness and I always wanted to be kinder. I think for most of my life, I settled for nice. I had a mother who always said to her daughters be good, be nice, but she never said be kind. As I got older and went into the business world and everything, I saw that there was a real difference between nice and kind and thought that for most of my life, I really settled for nice.

[00:02:11] So in 2015, I decided I wanted to take a deep dive into kindness. I had no intentions at that time about writing a book or anything. I just wanted to spend a year exploring kindness, uh, investigating it. I'm kind of nerdy. So I really like research and I had noticed that. At that time, was a lot of research just coming out of major universities and institutions and research centers about the value of kindness about the impact it has on our health, on business success on so, so many things in our lives.

[00:02:48] so I started a blog, I'm a writer. So I learned by writing and I wanted to share with people what I was learning. So my intent was to really spend a year doing a deep dive into kindness, but not to say, oh, today I gave \$5 to the guy on the corner and, you know, I didn't want to get into that sort of thing, but I was.

[00:03:09] Talk about what I was observing about kindness and what I was experiencing. And when I noticed that I was failing about kindness, and then also share the research. I was discovering about kindness and I saw about probably three months into that year that this was really the path I wanted to take. I didn't, you know, it wasn't that I was gonna spend a year looking at kindness and then learn to salsa dance the next year or something.

[00:03:36] I, realized I had found my path and, um, it was actually the people who were following the blog and as the year went on more and more people joined in and we had this wonderful community of people who wanted to see more kindness in the world. And it was they, who said, Donna you're right? Or why aren't you turning this into a book?

[00:03:56] So that's when I started, you know, looking for agents and editors and publishers and things like that. and it did become a book in 2018, but my original intent was just to learn what was keeping me from being kind those times I wasn't able to be kind and learn more about kindness, see the power of kindness.

[00:04:18] And I do have to say it was, life-changing just, bringing more kindness into my life, even though I will never be a Paragon of kindness. And I, I will still have times when I'm cranky or oblivious, Just the, the amount of kindness that I've brought into my life and that I see around me, that I'm more aware of really has been life-changing.

[00:04:40] And, I'm pretty sure if enough of us do it, we can, turn things around. One of the things I learned really early on was that incivility and rudeness are contagious. Just like, just like, COVID just like a virus or the cold or flu. if we experience unkindness, um, if somebody treats us kindly, or is rude to us, even if we only witness unkindness between other people and we're not involved, our tendency is to behave more unkindly in our next encounters.

[00:05:11] So it just spreads like a virus. And I think right now, In the midst of an epidemic of incivility. but there's good news from science too. And that's that kindness works the same way. It's equally contagious. So if we extended kindness or receive a kindness or even witnessed a kindness, we will be kinder in our next encounters.

[00:05:34] It's a catalyst for more kindness. And then that person will be kinder. So what I realized early on, and maybe it's obvious to others, and it was just a huge aha for me, is that every encounter I have, I have a choice of which contagion I want to spread. And if I go into, meetings stores, you know, anywhere where I'm going to encounter people aware of that, it really makes me more cognizant of who I want to be.

[00:06:01] And what kind of a world I want to live in.

[00:06:04] Jeffrey: What an essential view to look at, to start here today? A year is a relatively short amount of time and most of our timeframe of life to commit to develop kindness, both for ourselves and others. You'll imagine what we can do if we embrace that for an entire lifetime.

[00:06:22] Donna: Yes.

[00:06:22] Jeffrey: For starters, what a noble project to launch into, and that ties into our very definition of kindness. We'll get to that in a moment. Let's begin by looking at that definition of kindness to begin our discussion, the quality or state of being friendly, gracious, and considerate.

[00:06:41] That's one of the starting points, perhaps generous, helpful caring about other people and ourselves. I mean, it's important that we add ourselves in there. If we aren't kind to ourselves, are we being kind to others? Or an act showing this quality origins to me are very interesting and

[00:07:00] Often very telling about how we come to experience things throughout our lives.

[00:07:05] they're also very often the limitations we experience as a result of that there's duality throughout our entire life. Let's look a little bit at that origin, the etymology, the background of kindness, the very word Springs forth from the word kin or kinship. We think of kin as those people we love and endear in life most often.

[00:07:30] Would you not agree?

[00:07:31] Yeah. We can define kin as, however we want to, for some it's family, for some it's the family of our choice, for some it's the whole family of, humankind or, or expanding that to, um, all living things. I guess I love all your definitions of kindness and I would sum it up in two words and that is extend yourself.

[00:07:58] Point to hang our hat on today?

[00:08:02] Donna: Well, and I don't want to take credit for that. There was a gentleman here in Seattle, um, a gentleman named Dale Turner who was a very well-known

Seattleite for many years. He was, an author, a speaker, a columnist for the Seattle times.

[00:08:18] He wrote several books and Dale used to hand out little cards that said, just set, extend yourself. And I've actually carried one of those cards in my wallet now for more than 30 years. And the more I thought about it as I, took my dive into kindness, that really is what it is. And that for me is. The difference between kind and nice.

[00:08:42] I think we can be nice without extending ourselves. We can be nice by saying all the right things, , kind of saying them and meaning them and putting action behind them. we can be nice and still make judgments about people or get impatient or, um, be intolerant, but still be nice. kind, really asks more of us.

[00:09:04] It asks us to suspend judgment and to care about how the other person is, getting something out of this interaction and kind also asks us to take some risk. I think that's something that a lot of us, are surprised to discover is that. Uh, you know, there's an, a misperception that kindness equates to weakness perhaps.

[00:09:25] Yeah, I think it's so not true.

[00:09:29] Jeffrey: Is not some of that kindness extending the security of yourself to simply experiment with life, to simply be open, to experience it. That's such an essential point, you know, to look at an interplay with looking at that act of extending kindness. So often, do we find ourselves, ask ourselves, you know, ask yourself right now as a listener, how often you look at whether or not you're receiving kindness or extending it.

[00:09:58] In service to others in a giving deliberate manner. there again, we're going back to this root of kindness, friendliness being one of the key elements deliberately doing good to others, falls back to the etymology of kindness.

[00:10:13] Donna: Yes. Yeah. Very true.

[00:10:15] Jeffrey: Compassion, , loving, tenderness, all falling into that very definition of what it means to be kind from my perspective and from my research to the background of

[00:10:27] it

[00:10:28] Jeffrey: How are we being towards others.

[00:10:31] Donna: And as you mentioned earlier, too, towards yourself, because kindness really does have to begin with

[00:10:36] self.

[00:10:36] Jeffrey: Starts inside.

[00:10:39] Donna: It's that old I'm really tired and cliché. Thing that we hear from every motivational speaker that, and from the flight attendant that you have to put your own oxygen mask on first, but it's true.

[00:10:53] You know, if you haven't the wherewithal to take care of yourself, you don't have habit in a sustained way to take care of others or to, to even care about others. So it's a both and not an either

[00:11:06] Jeffrey: or Yes. And rather than that, yes, but our patterns of being and behavior are neither good, nor bad until we empower with the belief in how we view them in the judgment and the discernment in the expectation, in the validation of them often, we're looking at that aspect of our human nature.

[00:11:29] Which reflects us, again, ironically, I'm going to go back to this origin because I feel it's so powerful to take, you know, that basic element of kindness and just blow it out of the water today. Going back to the Proto-Germanic origins of Kirundi K U N D I, and hope I'm pronouncing that right.

[00:11:49] kundi or natural or native, is it somehow within our innate human nature to simply be kind and mindful of others, you, I feel until we become conditioned to its opposite state, that might be a very good argument. It might be a very beneficial debate to look at. Is it in our human nature somewhat to simply be kind.

[00:12:17] Donna: Oh, I think that's a great question. And I think you're onto something there. Um, there's research showing that babies, even practically newborn get distressed. If they hear another baby cry and they want to help, you know, young children, if they see another child or an adult in distress, they want to go and help.

[00:12:38] So I think it's probably a behavior we unlearn. Um, I think probably the biggest barrier to kindness is fear and fear comes in a whole lot of flavors, Jeffrey. Uh, and I think maybe, maybe we learn early on when somebody says, um, oh, you know, don't, don't get involved or be careful you'll embarrass yourself or, you know, things like that.

[00:13:05] So we learn to withhold our kindness because We're afraid it will be rejected or misunderstood or we'll be clumsy and embarrass ourselves, or maybe we'll be perceived as weak. All those things inhibit us and we have to learn that kind of fear. Um, just like we can unlearn it.

[00:13:26] Jeffrey: Yeah. I think looking at, at its most core element, that fear reaction is based on our sense of security.

[00:13:36] How secure do I feel within this moment? I'm going to leave that out there because that becomes a whole nother, expanded conversation. But at its basic element, do I feel safe and secure?

[00:13:50] Donna: Yeah. That's as important. I think we, can't really be our genuine selves unless we feel it's safe to do so.

[00:13:58] Jeffrey: When we feel that sense of security being challenged, what our natural inclination sometimes to do lash out in some way to protect and guard it, to put up that wall of resistance.

[00:14:12] Somehow that then to me, leads to that state of becoming desensitized to others, desensitized to ourselves, disconnected from ourselves. We form that separation of all of the potential.

[00:14:28] Donna: Hmm. That's a good way to look at it. Yeah. I think a lot of people. I maybe don't feel worthy. Uh, some of us are really good givers, but we're not good receivers.

[00:14:42] And you have to be able to receive kindness to know how to give it. So, you know, we see people who, who will refuse even a material gift or a seat on the bus when really they really would like to take that or, or, you know, on a smaller level, we, we refuse compliments. Somebody will say, oh, don't you look nice today or something and we'll point out our flaws.

[00:15:06] Oh, didn't you notice that, you know, this is I've lost this button or whatever it is. We do that because we're not comfortable or somehow don't feel safe, accepting our own wonderfulness. And when we do that, though, we're denying the giver, the pleasure of giving that compliment or giving that seat on the bus.

[00:15:28] So it takes practice both to extend kindness and receive it. And practices are really big factor here. You can't just

[00:15:37] turn simply becomes

[00:15:39] Jeffrey: that habit, that way of being, how am I interacting and responding to my experience to life, to the being of others, to the experience of that.

[00:15:50] Donna: Yeah, yeah. we can't just flip a switch and say, well, I'm going to be secure and, and counting and all of these things, they all take practice.

[00:15:59] Yeah.

[00:16:00] Jeffrey: It's a basic pattern. You to break it down to its essential element, it becomes the basic pattern of who we are, what we are. Until we move into resistance with our very being our essential, energetic nature of not only ourselves, but the entire universe. Once we do that, once we disconnect and separate from those things, we start to become in some regards, unkind

[00:16:28] we're not honoring that essential.

[00:16:33] Donna: Yeah.

[00:16:33] Jeffrey: I think that's a big one to ponder today and I'm just kind of flowing with that.

[00:16:40] Let's go back a little bit again, let's dial it back a step here, because I know I took a left turn there from your perspective, , you shared that nicety and kindness may deviate from each other. Let's look at that a little deeper in how that might come into play from your perspective, Donna.

[00:16:59] Donna: Well, I think nicest, safer, most of us know what it means to be nice.

[00:17:04] We know the right things to say in the right circumstances. We know how to say, please, and thank you and I'm sorry, but we don't always mean them. And you know, that's really where the rubber meets the road. do? We mean it what's our intention behind those things. and as I said earlier, kindness does take some risk.

[00:17:23] Uh, sometimes being kind means saying something that's controversial, maybe it means standing up when everybody else stays seated and, and taking a stand on something, kind people are certainly not weak and they're not, pushovers, uh, and that's not saying nice people. are...And and, you know, I, I need to, to say that I'm sure for many people kind of nicer the same thing, they perceive them the same.

[00:17:52] So it's, it's really semantic difference the complexity there. Yeah. Yeah. Now I see them as different

[00:18:01] Jeffrey: . Nice. Is the gateway drug to Kind!

[00:18:04] Donna: Huh? Interesting.

[00:18:06] Jeffrey: Is the gateway drug to kind now, you know, drugs aren't necessarily always viewed in a positive or negative light, you know, depending on whatever we're going with, but is nice.

[00:18:15] The gateway drug to kind in some regards.

[00:18:18] Donna: Well, I guess I'd put nice as kind-lite. . Uh,

[00:18:22] Jeffrey: I liked that. I liked that at its core. You know, we go back to that aspect of interacting with others. Grace and faith come to mind that grace of accepting others and being open to others and having faith in who and what they are to simply allow and accept them to be who they are is a simple act of kindness.

[00:18:45] Donna: Yeah.

[00:18:45] Yeah. Well, you know, most active acts of kindness are really small things. Um, I've had after

[00:18:52] Jeffrey: Small things get bigger very often.

[00:18:58] Donna: Well, when I've spoken with groups about kindness, I very often have somebody come up to me afterward and say something like I really would like to be kinder. I know I could be, but I just don't have time.

[00:19:10] and that's not true. Kindness doesn't take time. You know, it does, it does take time to leave your routine and go help somebody or think about just what the right words are. Or if you're going to reach into your pocket and give someone a couple of dollars to connect with that person and not just rush off without making eye contact.

[00:19:30] But I think also a lot of people perceive, they think that maybe kindness needs to be a grand gesture. I need to, uh, you know, fund the wing of a hospital or join the peace Corps or something like that. When really the kindnesses that really matter are the everyday opportunities. We have to hold a door for somebody to allow a car to merge on the, on the highway to say, hello and smile.

[00:20:01] Even though these days, most of us are still wearing masks. Uh, we can still see smiles in people's eyes, to just say something kind to, to compliment somebody on their service or on their, um, on their great smile or on, you know, brightening, the, the room. There are just so many little things we can do that.

[00:20:22] Our kindnesses. And sometimes those little things that seem so inconsequential to us can change somebody's day. And then that person extends a kindness and then they extend one. And we just have no way of knowing how far our kindness has rippled and how big it might've gotten, uh, in somebody else's life, who we don't even know.

[00:20:43] Jeffrey: I think that element of time keeps jumping up for a reason. To me, that feels like a very essential element to simply question, how am I engaging with my sense of time that might be unkind to myself or others? You know, is it an unkindness to not allow yourself the time to simply engage with the life around you?

[00:21:04] The life you're living, the life you're being? Is it being unkind with your time? To cram your schedule to fall in order to achieve things that you don't give yourself, that breathing room to just simply be, you know, that can go down a lot of different paths to open a lot of doors of self-discovery of self-awareness and then also become a very effective way to guide and gauge how you're relating and interacting to others.

[00:21:31] Donna: Great point. Yeah. That's so true. I, I think if we just tweak really slightly, how we think about time,

[00:21:38] Jeffrey: we create the perception of it by and large of how we experience that time.

[00:21:43] Donna: Yeah. But I think a lot of people look at kindness as an add on it's something they do if it's convenient or if I have extra time, then I'll be kind.

[00:21:53] But if you just tweak that a little and say, no, it's not an add on it's the lens through which I view life. So I approach life with kindness. it's not something that I wait until it's convenient. As soon as you do that, it changes both how you look at time and how you look at kindness.

[00:22:11] They're together. They're, they're not something you separate.

[00:22:14] Jeffrey: I think that that's a good point to kind of hinge on a little bit here, reflecting back to. Is this nicety or is it kindness not to be overly harsh and judgmental of ourselves or others, but simply to bring it into our awareness? Is it an authentic kindness when we form those divides?

[00:22:34] Looking back at the definition of nice or nicety. I like those definitions because there, again, we form our origins in the meaning, a minor aspect of polite social behavior becomes a minor aspect. Are we placing a significant portion of our time and energy in being kind or dipping our toe into that pool of nicety of that minor aspect, simply being polite, being social.

[00:23:03] Are we just meaning to meet up to that bare minimum expectation?? Or are we giving our whole heart, our whole body, our whole mind and soul towards authentically being kind.

[00:23:16] We need to ask ourselves.

[00:23:18] Yeah. It's a simple prompt that's life based on those patterns is questioning those prompts. Not often even finding the answers, just being available to question what now. Yes and As we dip back into that minor aspect takes off on the final detail, which is the detail of etiquette, a detail of etiquette just becomes the wrap-up of that aspect of defining nicety.

[00:23:50] Am I just simply giving that one little detail? To engage in that minor social interaction. Or am I engaging with an authentic fullness, a genuine representation of myself.

[00:24:05] Donna: Mm Good point. from what you just said, it I'm reminded that a lot of it comes down to intentionality is my intention here just to get through this interaction and, and, you know, be polite and civil and do and say all the right things or is my intention to go a little further to, to offer the best of myself and to connect with this person

[00:24:31] There are probably times when it's okay to just settle for nice, because you're tired, you're hungry, you're you're, uh, overstressed or over-scheduled or something. I think doing that, it's good if we do it consciously and, and realize that we've always got a choice.

[00:24:50] Jeffrey: That choice, I think is essential, not only in displaying kindness, but being aware of every action of our being, not to become overburdening because when we truly own that with kindness to ourselves, embrace it, it becomes empowering.

[00:25:05] Donna: Yeah. And, and also I think the more we engage in kindness and the more we get in the habit of thinking about what contagion I want to spread as I'm entering this, this cocktail party or this event or whatever it becomes our default mode, nobody's ever going to be perfect at kindness. Uh, I suspect even the Dalai Lama or mother Teresa had a bad day, but the more we practice it, the more natural it becomes.

[00:25:35] And the more we'll we'll go to that tool and there are a number of tools of kindness. We just need to get in the habit of looking for them and using them,

[00:25:46] Jeffrey: Looking at that aspect, you know, looking at how we can often in some ways, look at it as falling down. In our kindness when we're being less than our authentic self and less than engaged with that kindness, how might we find vulnerability in inner fortitude, in our kindness to be available and open to it from your perspective?

[00:26:08] Donna: Well, you know, I think one of the first things we need to do is learn to pause. Most of us respond in sort of a knee-jerk fashion. Somebody will say something and we'll take offense and we'll respond right back. Or, we don't stop to think about maybe they didn't intend for what they said to come off that way or.

[00:26:31] even if that person is being a jerk and you know, there are jerks out there, even if they are, if I respond the same way, then I'm being one too. And, and that means jerks win. So, um, the very first skill I think of, of kindness is learning to pause and think about who we want to be and how we want this encounter to play out.

[00:26:55] Um, I often say that a pause gives us a gift of grace. It really does. I don't think you're ever, ever, making a mistake when you, when you pause and think about what's the right thing to do here. What, what upholds my values?

[00:27:12] Jeffrey: So pause is so essential.

[00:27:14] Donna: Yeah, it really is

[00:27:15] Jeffrey: We're creating that space. Sometimes we spiritually have to look at that as a sacred space.

[00:27:22] To simply open that door and be available.

[00:27:26] Donna: Yeah. And then it helps if we recognize sometimes when people have, a reaction that we see as offensive or rude or something that maybe their button was pushed. And maybe that wasn't their intent. If, during that pause, we engage our curiosity and think about maybe is this what they meant?

[00:27:46] Or are they feeling threatened or fearful about something? Can I give them the benefit of the doubt, uh, which is a huge gift to offer people because we've all done and said stupid things that we later regret. Um,

[00:28:02] Jeffrey: Perhaps that greatest act of potential kindness is simply in giving the grace to another, to say, you are responsible for your behaviors and action. And I am responsible for mine period, free of judgment, free of expectation free of the validation, and then simply being aware of where your energetic alignment with it is. We feel that sense of energy. And we'll get to that here in a moment, how that interplays, I feel simply allowing that energy to be is a great act of kindness.

[00:28:36] Donna: Absolutely. Yeah. Yeah. You, you mentioned judgment and I think that's another skill that we learn is learning to withhold judgment. I remember learning years ago that social scientists, say that we make judgements about people within about three to five seconds of meeting them. So we're making judgements on how they dress or how they talk, or, you know, they're, they're in our way in the frozen foods, aisle of the grocery store or something, but the judgments we make on so little evidence probably aren't fair.

[00:29:10] Uh, and we certainly don't want people to judge us on those things. So that's another, huge scale. As you said, learning to, to withhold our judgments or, or, or make different judgements.

[00:29:24] Jeffrey: Look at that. There was a lot of threads to unravel in that specific behavior. From a generalized aspect, you know, it's that act of judgment becomes nothing more.

[00:29:36] Then the pre-cognitive conditioning bordering on subjective bias based on our past experience, based on our own perception, based on how we feel in belief, we're simply forming what we believe another to be, what we even believe ourselves to be sometimes sidesteps that authentic interaction with the present moment and the present experience.

[00:30:01] Donna: Yeah. Uh, in my business, I was, I worked with nonprofit organizations for 30 plus years. We used to have something that we would put on the wall in meeting rooms are on the agenda of a board meeting. and it was just a simple phrase. We assume one another's good intent. And there's so much power in that.

[00:30:21] If it can really do it, we assume one another's good intent. Then we can not. When somebody says something that we disagree with assign personal motives to

them, that they're trying to get us, or they're, you know, they're a communist or, you know, whatever, whatever, whatever we think the evil thing is out there.

[00:30:42] They just, you know, they see things differently, but they have a good intent. And our, overall intent is to work together and come up with what's best for, for all of us.

[00:30:53] Jeffrey: Yeah, we look at that from the aspect of assumption, nothing more than social signaling, what we perceive. We put out, it goes through our energy.

[00:31:04] If we feel insecure, we put out insecurity others intuitively pick up on that insecurity and question why, if he's unsafe, why should I feel unsafe? Becomes the very nature of those back and forth battles through politics, through business, through every aspect of life. That insecurity is the key. If I don't feel safe, I question if I don't feel safe, I resist it.

[00:31:30] That energy doesn't have to even be expressed verbally or through our physical interaction. It proceeds us in our very state of being it projects out into the entire energetic field of the universe that becomes as woo woo. As expanded as beyond you, as you choose to create the resistance to it.

[00:31:53] Donna: I think that's absolutely true.

[00:31:55] Yeah, you nailed it

[00:31:56] Jeffrey: Has nothing to do with the rightness or wrongness of anything. We each see, feel view, interact and perceive things solely as we feel from within ourselves

[00:32:09] or up to the point where we start to accept the conditioned belief and pattern interaction with others. That's a whole nother conversation, but it all extends from the very element. Are we being kind to ourself and kind towards others opens up the doorway.

[00:32:29] Donna: Yeah. Yeah. Um,

[00:32:37] left today. You know, it's not, it's not that at all. I just, I think I just keep going back to something I've already said, so I don't want to be repeating myself

[00:32:50] Jeffrey: sometimes repeating that pattern, speak from the heart in the moment.

[00:32:54] Donna: Yeah. Um, you know, it just does take practice. Uh, I, I can't diminish the importance of practice for something like that.

[00:33:03] And often, you know, when I'm talking to groups, they'll ask, well, what do I do when somebody says something really rude to me? Um, how do I respond? I feel, I

feel like I'm being weak if I don't acknowledge that they're being rude. and I, I often give them a. Lines to practice, to practice at home.

[00:33:24] Um, because the first time you say it, they may feel, um, awkward or stilted or, or unnatural. But, it's amazing how good you feel if somebody says something really rude to you. And instead of saying something rude back, you say something with real sincerity, like, I'm sorry I offended you. Or, it's been a tough day.

[00:33:48] hasn't it?, or it's been, uh, these days we can say it's been a tough couple of years. with genuine recognition that we're all in this together and not say it with sarcasm, like, oh, you jerk, boy, Yeah. It's, it's not easy to do. It does take practice, but I have seen people just totally change when, their rudeness is confronted with somebody else's kindness and understanding and acceptance that yeah, we all have bad days.

[00:34:18] And I understand that you just said something that you probably will regret in a, in a while. I've seen people say, oh, I'm really sorry. I said that that way, I didn't mean that. Or, um, thank you for understanding, boy, does that feel good? And then, you know, in the next interaction that person has, they're going to pause before they say that, that rude thing, and maybe they're going to say something nice.

[00:34:42] Maybe they're going to wish that person a good day or something. So that ripple effect of kindness is so, so small and so big. It just something that, that we have to trust. If we can extend a kindness to somebody we're, you know, it's the old butterfly effect. Uh, we don't know how far that's going to reach, and who's going to be touched by it, but we've all read stories about people who, you know, were at the brink of suicide or, or just real despair and one person's kindness, maybe a note or a kind word or something gave them hope.

[00:35:29] and maybe that sounds cheesy or corny, but going into our interactions, thinking I can make a difference by how I respond. that makes a difference. It really does.

[00:35:40] Jeffrey: Let me share, . If I might where this, just went in my mind, practice, his presence. What we do in practice happens right now within our own action, without looking at it as challenged, without looking at it as something we have to do that we struggle with, that becomes reaction.

[00:36:03] That becomes that pattern of belief that becomes responding to what's past, rather than practicing in the present. What can I do right now? That makes a difference free of validation, free of judgment, free of seeking betterment. Just what can I do that makes a difference that becomes change. That becomes empowered by positive thinking, which interacts with our energetic signature, that state of our energetic being, which then vibrates out.

[00:36:38] And you're putting that into the world. If you will, can be, as woo woo as you want, can be as fuzzy, fuzzy touchy feely there again, are you embracing that with

kindness? I feel that's such an essential element in discovering who and what each of us are and what we might become, what you think you frequently become and bring into your being let's segue a little bit.

[00:37:00] If we will, let's look at those positive benefits of health and our being that co-relate with kindness.

[00:37:09] Donna: Yeah, and this was eye-opening for me, uh, because until probably about 15 years ago, there wasn't a lot of evidence. I mean, I think intuitively we, we knew that being kind was, was the right thing to do, but then, uh, people started studying it and measuring it and, quantifying it.

[00:37:31] And, you know, the health benefits are just amazing. When we experienced kindness, our body produces the hormones, oxytocin and serotonin, and they lower our blood pressure. They reduce inflammation. They fight heart disease, they reduce chronic pain. they slow the aging process and they also affect our happiness.

[00:37:55] We feel happier and less depression. So, you know, it's like kindness is a wonder drug. Another study, a study that I came across out of British Columbia is that kindness alleviate social anxiety. So people who are, painfully shy, even debilitatingly shy and find it difficult to enter into social situations.

[00:38:18] If they focus on kindness, it alleviates that, you know, these are pretty amazing things. those are just the health benefits. And th th there've been a lot of studies, uh, and one of the magazines that reports them regularly as Forbes. So you could actually just Google Forbes and kindness and get some of these, citations.

[00:38:39] But they've shown that, employees of companies with kind cultures, um, they perform about 20% higher levels. They're 87% less likely to leave their jobs. Now having been a business owner for more than three decades, some of these things are the difference between success and failure for a business, companies with kind cultures are more profitable.

[00:39:03] They're more productive. Publicly traded companies have a much higher share price. Uh, they have better customer service. If they have a kind culture, fewer absences, healthier employees, it just goes on and on. Plus the employees are more engaged, they're more loyal and committed. And then another one that, I'm not sure how they measured it, but they were able to measure it.

[00:39:27] They showed that where there's an atmosphere of kindness. There's also more learning, more collaboration and more innovation. So, if you're in the business world, you know that for most businesses, especially small businesses, the margin between success and failure is pretty small. And these things make the difference.

[00:39:49] Jeffrey: I think that intuitiveness for me, nails it on the head today, our bodies respond to the innate nature of those things. Which it knows to support. We intuitively

know what serves us best contributes to our somatic experience or our full bodied approach to our being brings together the heart, the mind, all of our physical processes, interactions, our energetic interactions, our sense of spirit and soul, our purposefulness, all coming together to be our very embodiment, the whole enchilada or the whole package we intuitively know by and large what those things are.

[00:40:37] We feel that resistance as we move out of alignment with it, when we do it causes that chaos, that disruption, that steps in and becomes our state of energetic beings. Starts that chain of reaction to somebodys response starts our emotional signal to how we think and feel about things. Now that's a very somewhat simplified view of other processes that step in other reasonings, why we might be engaging those processes, but as we demonstrate kindness to ourselves and simply accept that that is a part of our being, we move toward that more essential more holistic state of truly being involved.

[00:41:24] Donna: Interesting, very true. I, I, of

[00:41:26] Jeffrey: That's my speech for the day,

[00:41:32] I'm feeling it and flowing.

[00:41:36] Donna: One of the things you said in there may have gotten overlooked? Cause there was so much in that is, paying attention, you know? Um,

[00:41:46] yeah. Cause a lot of us spend a lot of our time being pretty oblivious, you know, whether we're caught up in our own internal drama and we don't notice what people around us are experiencing or you know, the person behind us whose arms are full of packages and we can hold the door for them or sometimes, and this is again, probably a cliché, but it's true.

[00:42:07] We're so absorbed in our devices that we don't notice what's happening around us, you know, with a smartphone or whatever it is. It's in our hand, has all of our attention and there's all of this life happening around us. And that's people who, Sometimes really need our attention. Um, so learning to pay attention is, is one of those skills of life.

[00:42:30] It's really easy or really simple, but not easy.

[00:42:34] Jeffrey: We look at that and I'm going to break this down from my perspective today, that awareness brings us into alignment with somatic coherence, being aware of that full bodied state of being what's going on in there. What's going on under the hood. Let's simplify it and leave it out there today because I feel like those will unfold as we go in our conversations down the road, heart rate, variability, how your heart is responding, governs, you know, how the blood flowing through your body interacts with a lot of other processes with your physical being.

[00:43:08] We're not going to dissect them all today, but also establishes the rhythm and rate of the energy flowing throughout you. Can be a much more expanded view perhaps in another talk, self moderation. As we pull into awareness, how am I being, how am I relating to my emotions? My thinking overthinking only becomes bad when we look at it and react.

[00:43:38] The simple act of thinking is just that natural process of perceiving, seeing, and forming that relationship. It only becomes bad. It only becomes over when we get caught in that act of ruminating, which is that endless cycle that doesn't lead us anywhere. We're jumping into that hamster wheel of simply cycling through that process of programmed response.

[00:44:03] This is my habit of being rather than my present state of awareness and how I choose to interact becomes emotional aperture aperture. We relate that to some regards I do from that aspect of a camera. The camera is the lens that just simply allows the light in. Simply allows us to see things simply gives us the view that emotional aperture is just the lens that we view, how we think and feel about things all has to be in our awareness in order to see it, or else it becomes subconscious or buried in our perception all contributes to the energy we project out into.

[00:44:51] The world out into our being, how we interact all simply our ability to create an interact with a sense of empowerment.

[00:45:00] Donna: Yeah. Lots in there.

[00:45:04] Jeffrey: You're inspiring me today, Donna, you know, this act of kindness, I'm being kind to myself and saying, Hey, I just am going to flow with this energetic touch with the universe, you know, today. And this sounds kind of crazy maybe but I'm going to be crazy and own it today.

[00:45:19] Donna: Well, and you're absolutely right.

[00:45:21] What we're paying attention to is what we're going to see. So, um, you know, if we're choosing to see all the things that are are wrong or offensive or broken, then we'll get really good at seeing things that are broken. But if we choose to look for other things and to find other things, We'll see the world very differently.

[00:45:42] Jeffrey: Yeah.

[00:45:43] Donna: You know, one of the things, and I'm not sure what you said that triggered it, but you reminded me of one of the loops that we get into is keeping score. Um, we'll say things like, I'm not going to call her, it's her turn to call me, or we have them over for dinner. So it's their turn to have us.

[00:46:02] And, you know, we do it in so many ways, little ways in big ways. it's your turn to empty the dishwasher. I did it yesterday. All these little things that keeping score

really does drain joy from our relationships. And if we pay attention and notice all those times, when we say that it's your turn, or I did it last or things like that, and learn to let that go.

[00:46:29] Oh, it really changes relationships. And that doesn't mean that there aren't uneven relationships, but you know, most of us, it all evens out. and especially with, with people that, you know, w not people we're living with, but, you know, friends, we don't know what's happening in their life. That maybe it isn't, they're not able to have us over for dinner, they're having money problems or health problems or something.

[00:46:53] so thinking that we can keep this Excel spreadsheet that tells who's turn it is for all these things is really unrealistic and it's unkind to others and really unkind to ourselves too. If we let that go, it just opens up places in our life where we feel joy instead of resentment.

[00:47:16] Jeffrey: I look at that, and this is something that's been kind of stewing within me.

[00:47:20] Something I've been sitting with over the last year. That competitive nature is very largely a resistive force. Why are we repelling things? Why are we pushing things away? Why are we dragging our feet on something nine times out of 10? Whatever the percentage of the largest portion of the time is rooted in some sense of insecurity.

[00:47:46] Donna: Hmm.

[00:47:47] Jeffrey: What am I currently being insecure about in this relationship? In this situation, in this experience is the simple question that opens that doorway. When we take a moment, when we ponder, when we really get in touch with ourselves and simply say, why do I feel insecure? Why do I feel unsafe with this?

[00:48:09] What am I questioning in a why?And why questioning opens all the doors we need to know.

[00:48:16] Donna: Yeah. Sometimes just being able to name it that it's insecurity or it's fear or it's, you know, whatever it might be, then we can say, oh yeah, sometimes I do that and I don't, I don't have to do that. there are other ways to respond.

[00:48:32] Jeffrey: Yes.

[00:48:32] There are other ways to respond. that to me is our whole pivotable point today. There are other ways to respond. Are we secure enough to simply question and consider? Yes,

[00:48:46] and...Yes

[00:48:47] Jeffrey: Yes. And if I respond this way, that pause again, that moment of kindness to simply sit with things and say, what is the potential in this?

[00:48:58] And what result would I like to interact with becomes such a freeing experience. Freeing. Just simply the kindness to free and accept, surrender, and be vulnerable to, and allow it to do nothing more than flow.

[00:49:15] Donna: Very true. Yeah.

[00:49:17] One of the places we have a huge opportunity to exhibit more kindness and also change the world is on social media. There's so much unkindness on social media and we don't have to engage. I think we often forget that we'll see somebody who's, says something that we disagree with and we'll, you know, especially if they're rude or trolling or something like that, we'll engage with them.

[00:49:42] Even if it's to tell them that they're wrong, we don't have to engage. And we have to remember that engaging with those trolls or those people who are really out there to deliberately spread, Unkindness and incivility, it fuels them. It doesn't matter whether you're agreeing with them or disagreeing with them.

[00:50:02] All they want is the, clicks. So if we remember that, we have a choice of how we want that social media world to look. And if we don't engage, if we just simply let those people go and enough of us do it, they're going to lose that platform that fuels them. and if we start instead focusing on the, pleasant things, the people who share good news, the, people who share stories of kindness or stories of compassion, And those are what we spread.

[00:50:36] And those are what we comment on and say, thank you for sharing this or whatever, it can change everything. But right now it seems like people just love to attack others online. Maybe it's because of being anonymous and you don't know these people, and

[00:50:53] so, what people do online just still amazes me. And we've got a choice there too.

[00:51:01] Jeffrey: Nope. There again. We're moving back to, am I giving myself the act of kindness to not move into that assumption? Not move into simply forming on my past conditioning, my past belief, my past response, my past experience.

[00:51:18] It's all going back. We're going back. We're going back. Three steps back and yet not a single step present or forward. Once we bring into that present frame, do we simply extend the act of kindness to say you are who you are? I don't have to agree. I don't have to push you out of the world or marginalize you.

[00:51:41] I don't have to pretend you don't exist. Those all become things that can be very hurtful in nature, even though we don't intend them, they can surrender that basic kindness till we move into that willingness to say, I simply see you for you. Nothing more

[00:52:04] is a potential outcome is a perhaps more objective. View of that experience. What am I willing to surrender in my own belief to meet that with kindness. And that does become a very challenging sometimes task to negotiate, been there myself. But when we move into that practice of simply meeting it with kindness, we open that door, we create that space.

[00:52:34] We allow it to be what it might be and what it might become.

[00:52:38] Donna: Yeah. And then there are some times when the kind thing to do is to, to not acknowledge that person to not give them the, the fuel. That they're looking for to not give them the platform and the place to spread, whatever it is they're spreading.

[00:52:57] And I don't think this is a lot of people. I think most people are well-intentioned and sometimes they get caught up in, in the, the drama, the passion, whatever it is, but not everybody is a candidate for civil discourse. And I think the kind thing is often to say for my own self care, I'm not going to engage in this with this person and for the betterment of the world, I'm not going to engage with this person.

[00:53:30] Jeffrey: And then that's such an essential point to look at where am I willing to extend my practice in order to become what I might become? And I get such a essential point that. Throw out there today, you will look back a little bit here. If we might back to that notion of kindness in how it pertains to our being to our health.

[00:53:54] In some ways that might be somewhat overlooked as kindness and interacting with that. We look back to that basic idea of intuition, all very energetic in nature. We sense those things because they are programmed in somewhat ingrained in us. We're somewhat attuned to that in ourselves, in others. And that kindness to simply consider the potential in that auras, you know, we look at auras, that ability or that belief that we can see and sense that energy, whether it be, you know, very visual scene of like the colors Or, you know, seeing the experience waves or that simple act of when someone walks in a room and you feel and sense that energy, our chakras, or our ability to tune in. And since that energy with kindness within our bodies, we just had a great conversation with a guest who's tuned into that awareness in her body and been able to utilize that to not only heal physical malady, but also to heal the traumatic experience tuning into that energetic level with an act of kindness hotspots in the body.

[00:55:15] When we think about massage or bodywork is all based on. Engaging that with an energetic form of kindness, able to sense where those tensions are being held in your body and why that energy is blocked or not flowing all becomes an act of kindness. And we can move that on. Looking at trauma energy, the act of elation, simply feeling full of joy is an act of kindness, an act of energy, empathy, compassion, sensing presence.

[00:55:49] You know, as I mentioned, when somebody walks in the room, that sense of empathy and compassion is tied to that energetic, intuitive sense of their energetic being and simply accepting it with kindness, mood projection. You know, when we spoke earlier about knowing when someone is in a bad mood, That energy is very often like a cloud that precedes him, kind of like pig pin on the peanuts, that little cloud that was always around pig bay.

[00:56:25] Now that's not to say we're passing a judgment on Pigpen and that was his case, but it's a very good way to illustrate that cloud of mood, that cloud of energy and particle of interaction that very often proceeds are being static. Electricity. This might be a push today is somewhat a form of that energetic reaction based on how we're interacting with the world around us.

[00:56:51] The thought crossed my mind because I'm petting our dog this morning, a little shaggy doodle dog, and as I'm petting him yet, we're in the dark this morning before all the lights are on and just little ripples of static, you know, I'm picky. Isn't that a lot like how our energy interacts within the university.

[00:57:09] All acts of kindness, looking at Voyance clairvoyance, all of the various others, you know, there are a number of what are deemed Voyance or that ability to sense and interact, whether it be spiritual, energetic, it's all wrapped in some form of kindness to first be open to perceive. Those are all left turns today.

[00:57:33] We're not going to necessarily open them all, but how do you now interact with that?

[00:57:40] Donna: your pig pen reference reminded me of something. you know, we don't know what, burdens people are carrying with. You know, we see just the outside. And so we might see somebody with a, you know, a frown or behaving in a way that we just don't understand. And I, I love your pig pen reference, but a way I've looked at it is only we could see the thought balloon that, is over everybody's head and we would be so much more understanding, you know, maybe, maybe somebody stopped balloon is, I'm really scared.

[00:58:17] I've never been in this situation before. I don't know how to respond. I'm going to do it wrong or somebody else's is going to be, I just broke up with my girlfriend and I'm devastated and I'm just barely holding it together. Or maybe it's, I can't pay my bills this month, but if we could acknowledge that what's inside people is so much more than we see, then we can give them that benefit of the doubt that we talked about.

[00:58:45] We can assume that, they're doing the best they can with whatever burden they might be carrying.

[00:58:51] Jeffrey: I think this is a great point to kind of sum up where we've been today. Donna Mayo clinic studies suggest kindness is good for the mind's ability to function.

Psychologically kindness can positively change your That's positive in and of itself being kind boost, serotonin and dopamine, which are neurotransmitters in the brain. They give you feelings of satisfaction and well-being causing the pleasure reward centers in your brain to what simply light up. It allows us to see and be in line with that kindness in ourselves and others.

[00:59:32] I think that kind of brings us full circle in some regards.

[00:59:36] Donna: Yeah, absolutely.

[00:59:40] Jeffrey: It's all about what lights us up inside and then how we shine that light on others can often become very cliched in our program yet such an essential. Throughout our lives, such a core element of what it means to simply meet ourselves and others with kindness in my mind,

[01:00:03] if there was one question today, Donna, that I have it asked, what would that one question be as a host of this show?

[01:00:11] Donna: Oh, you ask so many good questions. Let's see. Um,

[01:00:19] um,

[01:00:22] I think maybe it would be, how do I start? Um, if I want to bring more kindness into my life, where, where, how do I start? Uh, and I think my answer would be start where you are, uh, which is probably pretty obvious, but also it would be don't think you can make a huge. You can't switch from being oblivious and, uh, passive in and not necessarily unkind, but settling for nice to suddenly becoming the next mother.

[01:00:58] Teresa, it's not gonna work. So I'd say, um, Think about what you could do that would bring 10% more kindness into your life. Is there somebody you can call and offer to go help them do something? Or is there somebody you can, um, bring soup to, or, you know, any number of things or, or can you make a promise to yourself that you'll try to be a little bit more patient on the highway?

[01:01:26] Uh, when I talk to people, they'll often say, I think I'm a pretty kind person, except when I'm behind the wheel of my car. And then I'm terrible. Um, you know, go out of your way to allow cars, to merge or to give people the benefit of the doubt. If they forget to turn on their turn signal. Um, but start small.

[01:01:46] Don't think you're going to suddenly. Totally changed the way you are, because if you think, if you say starting tomorrow, I'm going to be the kindest person imaginable. You're going to have slips. You're going to say something, you're going to be oblivious to an opportunity to be kind, you're going to, you know, make judgements about people.

[01:02:08] That's okay. That doesn't mean you're not kind. It means you're human, but if you start small and say, I'm going to just do these couple of things. And then after a week, say, well, that worked and I feel real good about that. I'll add a couple of things. That's really how we become more consistently kind and make it our default setting.

[01:02:29] Don't don't think you have to suddenly totally change everything because it doesn't work that way

[01:02:36] that grace can often be the simplest act of kindness. I want to kindly thank you, Donna, for sharing this conversation with us today, I feel like this has been such an essential element, such a basic core element.

[01:02:53] In establishing our journey through life, such as frequently overlooked elements. So thank you. Nomis stay light me, acknowledges the light and you for sharing that with us today, where can our listeners Kylie reach out to you, Donna, to learn more about this act of

[01:03:10] kindness? Well, I have a website which is a year of living kindly.com.

[01:03:16] I'm on Twitter. I have a Facebook author page. I'm pretty easy to find really I'm on LinkedIn and I want to thank you Jeffrey for inviting me. I've really enjoyed our conversation and yeah. Yeah, it was great. Thank you. And

[01:03:32] where. Can we reach out to you to connect with the book? Cause I know we're going to put this up on our author page.

[01:03:38] Oh, well, I'd start with your local bookseller because I always want to support independent booksellers. If they don't have it, they can certainly order it. If you're in a hurry. Bookshop.org has it and always discounts it. Amazon is always an option too. It's on Amazon. And just again, if, you can support independent booksellers, that's a really kind thing to do because we need them.

[01:04:05] We need to, every community needs to have a bookstore

[01:04:10] reach out to Donna shove, a little kindness. I want to thank you today. This has truly lit my heart up with kindness. I love to do this again soon.

[01:04:20] Okay. Thanks Jeffrey. I enjoyed it thoroughly to you have a wonderful day.

[01:04:24] Jeffrey: You too.

[01:04:25] Thank you, Donna.