

Dave's Video Responses

What is your relationship to your body and the planet?

So this whole thing has kind of shifted my relationship with my body, which I suppose made me think about the way in which any of our relationships and our bodies, reflect our relationship with the planet.

We are surely made of the same dust, right? We all want the same thing.

So, I guess. I've had to revisit my ideas about what success and failure is. They certainly are words that have resonance and significance. But I've changed how I think about, you know, success. I think for me now success is about showing up, and trying to do that in a way that is sensitive, vulnerable and tender.

Because beating myself up, smashing it out, pushing myself, trying to win - all these kinds of habits, only result in damaging myself. And actually they limit how far I can go. And what's possible. So in the short term they can be gratifying, maybe. But medium term, longer term, absolutely toxic.

So, yeah, failure is losing sight of that stuff. Sort of forgetting my consciousness and awareness, my tenderness and falling back into bad habits. So yeah, it has changed my relationship to my body.

What's the relationship between inner and outer? What is my activism?

Well, I've been in this field before and in fact, last time I was here I was sort of thigh deep in grass. And here I am in the middle of summer, and perhaps counter intuitively, it's been mowed, ploughed and replanted. So whilst we would think it would be thick with grass this time of year, it's actually quite the opposite. And I think this relates to my own

activism, in that I feel like what sometimes appears to be scarce is actually quite the opposite, it can be abundant. It can be a beginning.

I heard a piece of indigenous wisdom which basically went along the lines of: *who are we to know or decide or even be able to tell when is the beginning, middle or the end of something?* Everything is cyclical. It kind of all blends. And just like this field, which may be at the beginning or the end, somewhere in the middle of its life cycle, I feel like my health, my relationship with my body and my health is kind of a parallel to our relationship with the planet. And the way we're living, in that who knows whether we are at the end.

That sort of scarcity story that we've been living, that consumerism is going to propel us, or perhaps we're just in human prehistory, perhaps future generations may be quite different. They may be more or less than us in numbers. Maybe they will look back at this time and think of it as prehistory.

And if it's not too much of a leap, maybe my diagnosis with these chronic diseases wasn't really the end of something. It wasn't really the termination of my ability to move or be alive, to be in my body, to be fully alive, but actually the beginning.

When I was a kid I used to think that there's no way I could ever be any good at cross distance running, cross country running or long distance running. And when I got my AS (ankylosing spondylitis) diagnosis, I was told to probably give up on any kind of intense sport. And as it turns out, these challenges become quite powerful gifts. They've unlocked huge abundance, which helps me to come out and be here in nature, which is by its nature abundant and regenerative.

And in spending time out here, I feel like I get in touch with the fact that my body is by its nature abundant and regenerative, and it makes me question stories of scarcity. Stories of not enoughness, stories of disease and disability. And it makes me think that maybe

what we need to do is change our perspective, that's my activism insofar as I have any. And so I guess it's less about statements, and more about questions.

What is partnership to you?

It's interesting to answer this one as I'm running down a hill. I think partnership starts by being friendly to yourself, trying to find the gentle, tender possibilities. And then, I'm not sure if there is a formula. You know, I know that coaching has always encouraged me to think about templates and patterns, acronyms. But I feel like a good partnership is about getting off that script and getting into a sort of like totally unexpected, unanticipated spontaneous moment of aliveness.

It's what I call 'complicity' or 'complicité': a kind of pocket in which you can both find yourselves in. Where you can get in touch with the great river of life, and the abundant possibilities that open up. And neither of you are really in charge, leading, coaching, but you're both just leaning into the unknown, and the possible.

So whether that's me and my body. Or, yeah, Jacob and I. Or even Jacob and Rox. I don't know. They are kind of coming together as two quite different energies. Together they can discover what neither of them can know or sense alone. This is like a process of becoming. For me, partnering is about becoming all that we are here to be.

What is enough?

I don't know. I will never know. But I do feel like that's a really important question to ask. It's funny, here I am in nature, and here is a man made intervention. (a train passage sign) So that's kind of obvious, you know, it's really important to *stop and look and listen*. And less maybe from a health and safety perspective than as an existential perspective, which kind of encompasses health and safety and goes way beyond.

But also because I think there's this idea that nature is some virginal, pristine thing that's other than us. And I'm not convinced it is. I've seen maps that show that 90% of our planet has at some point in our history been cultivated, husbanded by humans, and through a relationship between humans and all of the biodiversity there.

So, the idea that we want to kind of rewild, go back to some pristine, untouched area - it's a bit odd. I think that that would suggest that we're kind of somehow not enough or that we've done something wrong. I think we are enough. And I've heard people say that that's a dangerous thing to suggest, but I think we're enough because we're alive.

And if we choose to try to be life affirming in everything that we do, think, breathe, then we're certainly enough, surely enough.

So perhaps we have in some ways, you know, lost our way. And perhaps we have to rediscover parts, but that's like a life's work isn't it? Constantly looping back. Small, little loops of learning, cycling.

And rather than calling people out, telling them they're not enough or they've done it wrong. Well, you know, I think there's a very small number of people who have really negative thoughts, like a tiny naught point naught, naught, naught, 1% of people who have genuinely negative aspirations.

So all of those other people, we are enough and we're trying our best, and as long as we try to do what is life affirming. As long as we stop, look and listen to whether each of the things that we do say, breathe, act are life affirming; we are enough. We should call people into doing that with us, alongside us, because all of us are much smarter than any of us are alone. All of us together.

And, I do fundamentally believe that calling people out implies that, you know somehow I'm enough and they're not, whereas there is no me without them. There is no way without

us. So, yeah, that's a surprising way to answer, but in a coaching relationship, what that says to me is that whether me as coachee, whether Jacob as coach, we are both enough. We don't need each other. But what we can do is we can call each other in, again and again. And we can create reflective spaces to ask, explore, discover whether what we're choosing to do, is the most life affirming possibility, moment to moment, beat to beat, breath, the breath.

And that's where we really benefit from being in a relationship with each other, with our whole bodies, with the planet and nature, as we find it. Because then we can stop, look, listen and perpetuate life. Be alive together.

What did you learn?

Well, good things, live things never go quite as you anticipated or planned. There are no scripts. There's no formula. You just have to sort of remain open and responsive to the moment, which might feel a bit scary, but it's also pretty darn enlivening.

Jacob's Audio Responses

What is your relationship to your body and the planet?

I know we talked about fluidity, and gender and being transgender. And what it means when your body talks to you. I'm learning to listen. I'm curious what my body's rhythms can teach me about what my schedule looks like. I think my gender comes from somewhere else. It's boundless. It's not bound in this body. And so, my relationship to my body and fluidity comes from somewhere deeper. A physical transition is one way to experience fluidity, and there are so many other ways. The point for me is to continue to

listen. I see this listening when I take care of my cats, and when I water the garden after a long sunny day. What is the care I can give to the little patch of land I live on?

What is your activism? What is the relationship between outer and inner work?

I was born to do inner work. It's just my thing. Dreamwork, tarot, long-term therapy, coaching, exposure therapy, clowning. I continue to find new tools and ways to explore who I am and discover how I am in relation to the world. I've been reading about genetic memory. It makes me think about grandma and grandpa and the people who came before them. And what I know about them is that they lived on the land, working, working the land, just by themselves, their village and the wide horizon. Inner work gets me in relationship with what came before me, and helps me show up healthily to what the world is right now. The more I know myself, the more I can know you.

What is a partnership to you?

Gosh. It's honesty. Constant showing up. Not being afraid to see what needs to be changed about me. Understanding how I am impacting you. Understanding how you impact me. Putting words to what I feel, and what I need. Sharing these. It's saying this is who I am, and this who you are, and this is what we're learning about who we are together. How do we need to be with each other, so that we can spontaneously be ourselves? How do I need to change? And how do you need to change? It's constantly asking the question who are we together and what are we together for?

What is enough?

I think the way we framed this question was around what are the boundaries to a relational approach to coaching, where the coach shows up as a regular person, vs a neutral presence. I think we decide what is enough together, in constant negotiation and communication. What is enough today will be different to what is enough tomorrow. We found out together. We probed and tested and asked more of each other, we asked for

adjustments and we talked about our needs. We talked about what we were there to do and I think that defined the boundaries to our work and what we shared.

What did you learn?

To bring myself to work not only as a coach but as a person. To be ok with the fact that sometimes I want to have the answers and share them with you. And that sometimes I want to have my learning validated. I learnt to more often risk being vulnerable, playful and genuine. To risk being imperfect. I learnt that sharing my knowledge and perspective can be valuable. I learnt to share what I've learnt, what I'm learning and contribute the experience I have gained.