
CRUSHING DEBT DROVE HIM TO ROB 12 BANKS. SURVIVING PRISON TAUGHT HIM WHO HE TRULY WAS.

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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SPEAKERS

Reed Domingo, Naroop Jhooti

Reed 00:00

I found when you're in prison, you have nothing but who you are. That's where I really came into finding out who I was.

When things happen in your life, don't necessarily get so caught up in it, especially if it doesn't work out the way that you want. In fact, I use this phrase a lot when I talk to people: no matter what you think and where you find yourself in life, that's exactly where you're supposed to be. If you can look at life from that perspective, you're more able to deal with those times that you don't find yourself where you want to be.

If you can tell yourself, "You know what, I wouldn't choose to be here, but this is where I'm supposed to be, so let me maximize where I find myself," it will put you in good stead and will never see you wrong. Actually, it will help you deal with stuff. Even when you're like, "Oh, this is not what I want," as soon as you can put yourself back into that place, "This is where you're supposed to be," it's amazing how you'll be able to process that situation so much better for yourself. It doesn't necessarily mean it's immediately going to resolve all the things that are going to happen, but it will significantly change the way you feel about it.

Naroop 01:25

Imagine carrying the weight of expectations, silent struggles, and the pressure to always have it together. The Dad Project is a space for open, honest conversations about men's

mental health. Raw, real, and long overdue. In season 2, we go deeper, sharing powerful stories and fresh perspectives from those who've lived it and those who help others through it. Filmed at The Old Court in Windsor, this season is about breaking stigmas, redefining strength, and starting conversations that matter. I'm your host, Naroop Jhooti. Let's talk.

Naroop 02:11

So Reed, I've been racking my brain as to how to introduce you, right? Usually when a guest comes, I'll make some notes. I think about what I'm going to say, but with you, there's no way I could do it justice because your life is literally a movie, right? I remember getting introduced to you via my business partner Amit and he told me a little bit about your journey and I didn't believe him.

I did not believe him. He said there's this guy I've met called Reed and he's big, but he speaks like an English gentleman and he's had all these experiences in his life, and I was like, no, it sounds too good to be true. I want you to tell me about yourself. We won't go into the full story yet, but just tell me about your life and how you became this amazing man.

Reed 03:01

Okay, thank you, Naroop. Starting right at the beginning, I was born in South Africa to two wonderful parents, Rasheed and Morita. I came after my sister. My sister was born on the 30th of June. 1st of June the next year, here I come. So, born in South Africa. Through my father's work, we had an opportunity to immigrate to the United Kingdom in 1967. I would honestly say that one event was probably one of the most pivotal aspects of my life. It changed the trajectory of my life entirely.

After we got citizenship, my dad started his own business. As time went on, my sister and I were in regular school. Then I went to comprehensive school and completed my O levels, so that ages me slightly. Thereafter, my parents were in a situation where they could afford to send me to boarding school.

I remember when my parents first brought that up, they were saying, "Oh, go to this other school. It's a great school," which it was. But the kicker for me was it was 17 miles away, and my parents decided, "You're going to be a full-time boarder." Although I thought, "Well, can't I be a day boy?" No, it was actually one of the great choices. Being a boarder in a boarding school was phenomenal. Absolutely.

Naroop 04:28

Why was it a good choice?

Reed 04:28

The structure of it. You get to hang out with your friends all day long. Yes, there is an academic side to it: you have to learn and do these things, but after that, you're basically with your friends. I love my parents and I had a great relationship with my parents, so there was no issue there, but I definitely enjoyed being in that situation, being at school, and it didn't daunt me in any way.

Naroop 04:55

Did you not think you missed having your parents about a little bit? Because you're quite impressionable at that age.

Reed 05:02

Yeah, but it was interesting. I think even by that age, my parents had instilled a level of independence within me. I understand I'm 16 years of age and now I'm not living with my parents anymore, but I was fine. I was a strong individual. Interestingly, I think it was my destiny to go to boarding school. It absolutely was my destiny because it prepared me for something later in life.

Naroop 05:30

Okay, so I'm going to ask you an important question. You said you were independent and your parents raised you to be independent. How did they raise you to be independent? Because I think a lot of people struggle now with children not being strong, especially young boys at a young age. They feel lost. Whether they would say they're independent and strong, they probably wouldn't use those words. So, what was it that they did?

Reed 05:48

First and foremost, my parents loved me, and I was left in no doubt how my parents felt about me.

Naroop 05:57

What did that love look like?

Reed 05:59

It was interesting in the sense that from one aspect, the primary interaction with parents from my sister's and my perspective was my mom. My dad worked hard, but my mom

was a constant in our life all the time. We always got this nurturing and love from my mom.

Naroop 06:24

How did that show? In what way?

Reed 06:24

Just always being there for us. You know how a mom looks at their child? As I said, I always felt loved by my mom. The irony is my mom also gave us hidings, and it seemed to me like on a regular basis I would think, "Oh shoot, it's time for a hiding." That's the way I kind of felt. Even when I recount these stories with my mom, she doesn't correct me. What I'm just trying to say is even though there was some physicality in there, it was always given with love, and I was not harmed in any way by my mom being physical with us.

Also from that perspective, my dad didn't do any of the disciplining of his two children. He left that to their mother. But my dad provided a wonderful life for us. Obviously, we were unaware of the cost of money or this or that. I just knew that my dad did something in the day that allowed us to live the life that we did.

I remember being a young kid, probably five or six, and my dad would come home every day at plus or minus 6:00. My sister and I would be bathed in our pyjamas waiting for my dad to come home. When he came through the door, it was, "Dad, dad, daddy," then eventually "Dad." We were always happy when my dad came home. I'm not sure how many kids today have that situation where every day you have that anticipation of your dad coming home.

Naroop 08:01

Do you know what? That is such a beautiful memory to have, because you're right, a lot of people don't have that now. But the fact that you can remember it really says a lot about the love. Because I remember my dad used to always come back from work and he would hug me. I don't know how old I was, I must have been young, and if it was cold he would hug me and he would say, "Oh, you're my little radiator."

That sits with me now as a 44-year-old man. I can look back at that and I remember it vividly because of how it made me feel: I was important, I was loved, I was cared for. Now, obviously, I've still got a good relationship with my dad, but would he ever do that now? I don't even think he can hug me, right? It would be like a one-arm hug. But it's always love.

Those moments, you're right, we need to look back on them and remember them. So, it's beautiful that you can still remember that.

Reed 08:54

Yeah, absolutely. But that's an illustration. You asked me how that love manifested itself in my life: just like that.

Naroop 09:02

That's amazing. Carry on.

Reed 09:02

My dad was very academically driven. That was the yardstick that he kind of used as to how we were performing as his kids. I'll also be honest with you, I think that was one of the issues for my dad. He wasn't maybe as in touch emotionally. I think that's just a guy thing in general.

Naroop 09:26

Is it?

Reed 09:26

Yeah, and I wonder if in some ways we're kind of raised that way: you've got to be the man, you've got to be strong and everything, so don't show weakness. Sometimes that weakness is part of your personality and you shouldn't hide it. Sometimes you have to not embrace your weakness, but not be afraid of it.

Naroop 09:50

Do you believe that now in sharing your weaknesses? Because this is something I talk about often.

Reed 09:52

Yeah, even now, because I think it gives other people an opportunity to really find out more about the real you. If you've always got not necessarily a mask, but something up that's shielding some aspect of your personality, then people don't really get to know everything about you. So sometimes showing your weaknesses or even your vulnerabilities just makes you a more well-rounded person. What you're saying is true: this is all of me. So I would say it is good, but it's easier said than done, and I want to come back to that point a little bit later on.

I loved those two years at boarding school; it flew by. I completed my A levels, and that was a bit of a turning point. My father was academically driven, and I was an okay student. I'll be honest, when I completed my original set of A levels, I got C's and D's. C's and D's at A level, but I would say that was at a time when the A levels actually meant something.

I see the results that come out every year now, and people are getting three A stars, and not just one person in the class, 25 to 30 percent of the people taking the test get the highest grade distinctions. When I was in boarding school, when I looked at the list of our graduating class, I think there were two people that got three A's. Those people were destined to go to Oxford, Cambridge; I'm not sure where they went specifically, but they stood out. The two guys that got three A's stood out.

Then it was some A's and B's for most of us, a whole lot of B's and C's, and then B's, C's, and D's. But that was fine. Even with those grades, I secured a place to read biochemistry at Bath University. I think my dad had something to do with that.

Naroop 12:06

How did you feel about getting the low grades? Did you feel disappointed?

Reed 12:06

No, actually, I thought I got what I deserved. When you look at the relative scores, I was in the middle, middle to low, but it didn't really bother me. I thought, "Okay, so be it," and I wasn't so tied up in the academic aspect of it. But the reason why it became a problem was two weeks before I was supposed to leave and move to Bath, I told my dad, "I don't want to go. I don't want to do biochemistry." My dad was a biochemist, so he kind of laid my life out for me, but ultimately it really wasn't what I wanted to do.

Naroop 12:49

That must have been quite a tough thing for you to do, to go against a man who's loved you and given you everything, and then to say you don't want to follow that path.

Reed 12:57

Yeah, it probably was, but I don't remember really having a lot of angst about it. I just realized, "I don't want to do this. Now's the time to say it before you go and enrol and all of that. Say it now." I realized my dad was not happy at the time with what I told him. He said, "Well, you're not going to be sitting around here for a year. You've got to take some more classes for a year and then re-evaluate your university situation."

In that year, I did another two A levels: economics and accountancy. I went to a college of further education with a couple of friends from boarding school. We all went there, and I did all right. I got two B's, a C, and two D's, so now I've got five A levels.

Right at the end of that year, I met a young girl while I was in college. She did all of her stuff and she decided to go read sociology at Portsmouth Polytechnic. I thought, "You know what, wherever you're going, I'm coming too." Imagine breaking that news to my dad: "Now I've got five A levels, and Dad, I'm not going to go to university. I'm going to go to this thing called a polytechnic." Again, that did not go down well with my dad. But it was all just part of my life. I went and studied civil engineering, and I hated it.

Absolutely hated it. That was just an unfulfilled course because my girlfriend at the time was going. I looked at all the courses available, and one of them was civil engineering. I had a previous girlfriend whose father was a civil engineer in Africa; he built roads and bridges, and had a fantastic house with a full lion skin at the front of the house. I thought, "This guy's doing well," so I thought, "Yeah, I'll do civil engineering." That's how reckless I was as a kid. It was terrible, and obviously I failed and went back home with my tail between my legs. That relationship also came to a conclusion.

When everything came to an end, who was there for me? My parents, especially my mom. My mom realized, "Oh, I could have him back home," so she coerced my dad to give me a job at the lab that he had.

Naroop 15:36

So you ended up doing what he wanted you to do?

Reed 15:36

Yes, I ended up working at the lab. However, I wasn't doing biochemistry. Although I blew my whole time at polytechnic doing civil engineering, in my free time I got into this whole computer thing. I had this BBC computer with 32K.

Naroop 15:49

Big things. Yeah, big things.

Reed 15:52

Because I got more into computing stuff, when I went and worked for my dad, I was telling him about this new thing called PCs: "Dad, I think there's a future in this thing." My dad said, "Okay, is there some way to implement that within the laboratories, both in

manufacturing, sales, and all of that stuff?" I said, "Yes." My dad said, "Okay, fine. Look at how we can integrate that in here. We have a subsidiary company in San Diego, California. Why don't you go over there, see what they're doing, and see if you can bring any of that technology back to the UK?"

My dad in his infamous wisdom said, "It's Christmas time right now. Have Christmas, but on Boxing Day you're flying to San Diego." Really? Boxing Day? So I flew to San Diego for what was supposed to be two weeks. Two weeks turned into twenty years.

Naroop 16:52

And was that your first time to America?

Reed 16:54

Oh no, I'd been several times before, but just vacations with my parents.

Naroop 16:58

Right, so it wasn't like you were going to uncharted territory.

Reed 17:00

No. I went there for two weeks, and as I said, it turned into twenty years. Two weeks turned into a month, turned into two months, into four months. It was at that point that my father said, "I think there's a permanent role for you in San Diego. Would you be interested?" I was 22 years of age living in Southern California. Should I stay in Abergavenny, South Wales, or California? I opted for the California option. My life just went in another direction from that point. I had a blast, an absolute blast.

Naroop 17:43

What were your first kind of emotions when you went there and you experienced it? Because it's a very different lifestyle, right?

Reed 17:48

Yeah. When you first go there expecting it only to last two weeks, you look at it through one sort of prism. But the more time I spent there and the more I resonated with life in Southern California, the draw for it just got greater and greater. After four months, when my father proposed an opportunity for me to stay in Southern California, I grabbed it with both hands. I was very lucky also: my father was a very generous man, and I was 22 years of age making six figures. Also, I really stood out in Southern California.

Naroop 18:30

I bet you did.

Reed 18:32

When I worked out in the gym in Southern California, I looked like a schoolboy compared to all of the other guys in there. They had actual real professional bodybuilders in the gyms that I was working out in.

Naroop 18:48

Is that what really incentivized you to get bigger and bigger and do more and more, seeing these other people around you?

Reed 18:56

Yeah, I think seeing the people around you, to even be standing in the same room as them, I had to really elevate my game. What was fun for me was obviously I had this physique, but what was a massive asset was this accent. American girls love the British accent. In American movies, the bad guy or the villain always has a British accent.

Naroop 19:28

So, is that the role you played?

Reed 19:30

No, I wish I could, but I'm a real softie. That's really not who I am. I do this for me, and that's always been the case. What's ironic now is when I was young, I was a little cross-country kid, and I always suffered from looking young for my age. From that perspective, I didn't really get into dating girlfriends until I was 15 or 16. I never had a girlfriend, even a platonic girlfriend, below that because at 15 or 16 I looked 12 or 13, and 15- or 16-year-old girls don't want to be going out with 12-year-old boys. I had to live through all of that then, but now at 61, I think I see where I've really been blessed.

With that, I met an American lady. She was married and she was the boss of my girlfriend at the time, so I knew her through that relationship. Without going into the whole drama, it eventually occurred that she got divorced from her husband and we started dating. She was five years older than me, but that never really manifested itself in our relationship. Everything went great, and after about two or three years of us seeing each other, we decided, "Let's get married."

One of the big issues for us though, which we spoke about, was the potential of having children. I knew by this time already that my wife-to-be, Patrice, would not be able to conceive a child with me because she'd lost one tube through an ectopic pregnancy. After she'd delivered her third child, she was in the operating room ready to deliver, and her physician said, "While we're in there, are you planning on having any more kids?" She said, "No, probably not."

He said, "While we're in there, I'll snip that tube for you: \$200." Patrice, in all of her circumstances at the time, said, "Yeah, fine, I'll do that." That \$200 expense meant that for us to be able to have a child, we had to basically use an alternative method, which was IVF, which basically just cuts out the middleman. So that was basically the choice that we had to make.

Naroop 22:19

How did that make you feel when you were with her and she said that to you? Did you always want to have children? Because you didn't have any children before that.

Reed 22:26

No, and I was like a normal guy in the sense that, yeah, I always thought about having a family at some point or another. We started dating when I was 26 and she was 31. We embarked upon the IVF route in 1992, so I was 28 and she was 33.

Naroop 22:59

You must have really loved her to think, "I'm going to go down this journey of IVF," because it's not an easy decision to make. You knew you were in this, and nothing was going to change your mind. Even at 28, that's still quite young to be a father.

Reed 23:17

28, but I thought I was old enough and I was with somebody that I felt secure with. "We're going to be together forever," which I thought would be the case. "Let's have a child." For me, the way I viewed the IVF, it was just a means to an end. A simple procedure. I did not know it was going to turn into the arduous journey that it did turn out to be.

Our physicians that were assisting us with the IVF looked at the two of us. I was fairly athletic and in good shape; my wife was in even better shape than me. We were prime candidates for IVF because the reason we were doing it was simply because she didn't have any fallopian tubes, so we were just negating that issue.

Her egg, my sperm, put them together, put it back. They pretty much thought we would get a success first time round: "Yeah, you guys are perfect." We were all excited and did everything that we were supposed to. We didn't harvest as many eggs as we would hope, but it doesn't matter; we had some good quality embryos.

We put five embryos in the first time. We were having discussions as to what we were going to do if two or three of them took: are we going to have twins or triplets, or are we going to selectively reduce it to just twins or a single baby? I don't know why we bothered with that conversation, because it failed. It failed.

Naroop 24:44

And how did that make you feel?

Reed 24:45

Devastated. Devastated, because we thought... But it was kind of interesting, because we kind of mourned for a day when we got the news, "No, I'm sorry, you're not pregnant." We took one day to sort of lick our wounds and feel sorry for ourselves, but immediately the next day it was, "All right, now what's the plan moving forward?" We didn't dwell in that negativity; we came up with a plan.

Naroop 25:16

But you're skipping over something, which is how much did you pay for it?

Reed 25:16

The first time, it was somewhere in the region of about \$7,000 to \$8,000 for the procedure, and then about another \$3,000 or \$4,000 for the actual medication. So a little over \$10,000 to \$12,000 for a cycle. We were both doing well, we had the resources to cover it, and we thought, "Okay, fine.

Do we have the resources for another round? Yeah, we'll pull here, pull there, we can do it." So we immediately got back on it and asked, "What's the soonest that we can do it again?" We went again, and unfortunately, we got another unsuccessful attempt.

Naroop 26:05

Did they say why? What was going on?

Reed 26:07

We analyzed every single step that occurred, and it just seemed everything was perfect: the numbers were good, the fertilization rates were good, everything was good right until

we did the actual embryo transfer. Then for whatever reason, the embryos didn't attach themselves. Because of the things that we were going through, I had to, in conjunction with Patrice, come up with a way of dealing with negativity or bad news. Even at that time, I was using mental processes to deal with stuff.

Naroop 26:47

Tell me then, what were they?

Reed 26:54

First and foremost, just trying to deal with the disappointment. You want me to be honest? We'd have sex. We had sex. We realized, "Look, this is not going to happen today, let's have some fun."

Naroop 27:14

That's a healthy way, right? You've got to go down a different route.

Reed 27:16

Yeah, we'd have sex, have fun, and enjoy being with each other. The irony is, obviously, for us to actually conceive wasn't through having sex, so we thought, "Well, now that we're not doing that, should we try that sex thing again?" I'm being honest with you, that's how we dealt with it.

Naroop 27:36

I can understand that, because sex is physical, but it's also spiritual, right? It's an energy exchange. Coming together, two people saying, "We're in this together, let's share the moment, both be happy." I can understand that being a really helpful way of dealing with it. But even deeper than that, I'm sure there were things that you guys were going through personally because that didn't work, and now you're doing it a third time. Third time lucky, right? That's what you were hoping.

Reed 28:10

That's what we were hoping. After we had the two failed attempts, we realized, "Let's do it again," and we now were not that sure that we would get a success. At that time, we entered into an agreement with our IVF provider that we would do three rounds of IVF, and they said they'll do it for like \$20,000 if we pay upfront.

Naroop 28:35

Did that mean you were doubtful, because you paid for so much, keeping at it?

Reed 28:39

One of the big issues for us was just the financial aspect of it. I used to race motorcycles, and I had a fairly stark choice: do you want to race motorcycles, or do you want to have a child? I want to have a child; I can always race motorcycles again later. So to help fund it, I sold all of my bikes and all of my race gear to fund the IVF. We got those three rounds.

Naroop 29:08

Can I ask you a question? You're in the gym, you're in good shape, you've got these motorbikes, you're doing well as a man, you're feeling strong, provider, protector, you can do all those things. But yet you couldn't successfully have this pregnancy, right? Did that make you feel weaker as a man? Did you question yourself?

Reed 29:31

No, because we knew we were just having to negate a physical issue. From that perspective, I didn't take it on board like there was something wrong with me, that I'm not able to father a child because of some deficiency within myself. Not that I'm saying it was on Patrice either: "You're the one causing the problem here." This is just what we were dealing with, so no, I didn't.

Naroop 30:02

The reason I ask is because it seems like you were at that point very driven: whatever you wanted, you got. You did it, you got it. And this is one thing you couldn't get, right? So I know how that might have played on your mind.

Reed 30:12

It was a little bit difficult, but more from the perspective of the frustration of it not working, and then at the end when you realize, "God, we just spent \$15,000 and have nothing to show for it." That was frustrating, but you have to move on.

To save time, ultimately it was the ninth time that we did it, and probably the time that we thought we were least going to get a success. We'd now switched to a physician in LA; he was a big-time IVF specialist.

On this particular round in 1997, we'd now been doing it since 1992. On our ninth attempt, we go there and they tell us, "You've got two embryos." Two. One really big one and one that's sort of moderate. We thought, "What's the point of even doing this? Should we just go back to San Diego, freeze this one, and save it up for next time?"

Patrice and I spoke about it: "Look, we're here. We may as well just do it while we're here." So we went through the implantation procedure and went home pretty dejected, to be honest. Two weeks later, when they did the pregnancy test, they told us, "You're pregnant."

Naroop 31:37

Crazy. Wow. The time that you least expect it.

Reed 31:37

So much so, because we thought this was not going to happen, Patrice had arranged to take her daughter from her previous marriage back to school. Because I went to Monmouth Boys School, I was able to make arrangements for Patrice's daughter Amber to go to the equivalent girls school in Monmouth called Haberdashers' Monmouth School for Girls. I paid for Patrice's daughter to have a private education in the UK, which was wonderful for her.

We'd made arrangements for Patrice to fly to England to take Amber back right after we found out that she was pregnant. We thought we'd lost her on the plane and everything, but that's another story. We finally had a success, and in April of 1998, we were blessed with a little girl who we decided to call Anelique because she was our angel baby. It was wonderful. What a blessing, an absolute blessing, because this little girl was so loved.

Naroop 32:48

Describe this feeling, man. I've got a daughter too, so I understand that.

Reed 32:52

Because of everything that we'd gone through to have a success, when we finally were so blessed, it was everything to us. Absolutely everything to us.

Naroop 33:00

And it's a fitting name. I have a friend who had a daughter after a long time and called her Angel.

Reed 33:08

The name that we initially settled on was Angelica, but that was at the same time there was this very popular kids program called Rugrats with a really obnoxious, bratty character called Angelica. Because of that, we scrapped Angelica and went with Anelique, just so people didn't think we named our kid after that bratty kid. So we were blessed with Anelique.

What was so nice was I wasn't working for my dad anymore; I was doing something else, but I wasn't doing much at that time. For the first two years of Anelique's life, I was with her every single day. Around two years of age, on a Friday, I would take Anelique with me to go teach an exercise class at the gym. Thereafter, I would take Anelique to McDonald's and we would have lunch together.

Then I would run all my errands, and at the end of the day, I would go get my haircut. What this allowed was for Patrice to have one whole day every Friday that she didn't have to do anything with Anelique; she was fully my responsibility. I'd be out all day from 8:00 in the morning until about 4:00 or 5:00 in the afternoon with my little girl. It was wonderful, absolutely wonderful to be with her.

I remember one day we came home and the day was over. I come in and Patrice says, "Oh, here's Daddy. Daddy's back home." Walking behind me was Anelique. Patrice goes, "Oh, who's this with Daddy? He's got somebody with him. Oh, he's got a little chum with him. So who are you? You must be Chummy." That has been my daughter's name ever since.

Naroop 35:07

Still vivid, isn't it?

Reed 35:15

Very real. I remember it perfectly. My daughter has now just turned 27 and she's only ever heard me reference her as Chummy.

Naroop 35:28

She's still your little girl.

Reed 35:28

Oh yeah, I'm a lucky man. I'm a very lucky man. Life has moved on for her, and she found a young man that she was very taken with a few years ago. I am so blessed as a father because the man that has now taken my place in my daughter's life, a gentleman called Levi, absolutely is God-sent.

Naroop 35:58

Was it easy for you to allow that emotionally in your heart, for that space?

Reed 36:04

Not initially, because of what my daughter meant to me. But listening to my daughter and the way that she referenced her new partner, Levi, my daughter was saying the right things. Ultimately, it was listening to my daughter laugh and realizing, if you can make my daughter laugh like that, you've got my vote. Although it was difficult, it was in some ways easy because I knew she had the right guy, the absolute right guy.

I remember the first time I met Levi when he had to come to the UK. When they left and we were at the airport saying goodbye to Chummy, I had that exact conversation with Levi, telling him, "I realize that you are the most important male in my daughter's life now. As such, I'm stepping back and it's now on you." He took that responsibility and to date has never let me down.

Naroop 37:18

I'm just processing what you're saying, because I'll have to do that at some point.

Reed 37:22

You will at some point, and it will make you cry. I know that time's going to come, and as a man, it's a difficult moment.

Naroop 37:31

I was saying to you earlier off camera how my daughter is nine, coming up to ten. She's slowly finding her place. As a single dad, when you have multiple kids, they go through stages: one is nine and independent, but then you've got this other one. For me, there is no one else here, it's just her, so I've got that attachment.

Reed 37:54

I think it's two things. One: everything that you're doing right now, being involved and being there during your child's life, especially during these developmental periods, is very important. As we spoke about earlier, the fruit from this is the fact that your engagement with your daughter is imprinting on her what she is eventually going to look for in her partner in life.

That standard of relationship that you have with your daughter is what is going to be the minimum expectation that she's going to want with her partner. I'd like to think that by the time that day comes, your daughter will have made the right choice, similar to my daughter, where she won't settle for somebody less, and that you'll be there through that whole journey.

Naroop 39:06

Yeah.

Reed 39:07

I'm glad you brought it up, because here's one piece of advice I will give you, and it really has paid off massively for me: don't get involved in her relationships, okay? You're going to have to bite your tongue. The last thing you want to do truly is criticize her choice.

Don't criticize her choice, because your daughter will then make an extra effort to try and prove you wrong, and she will make a relationship that would have withered on the vine work just to show you, "No, Dad, have faith in my choices." This is why I'm saying don't get involved. I'm glad I didn't. I almost wanted to, but it was Patrice who gave me this bit of advice: don't say anything.

Naroop 40:04

That's a tough thing to do though, isn't it?

Reed 40:06

It is. As a father, as long as you're not seeing anything abusive, just step back and smile. You will be amazed: your daughter will see for herself, "No, this is not somebody I need to invest in," and she will make the right choices without you having to interject anything.

The reason I'm saying don't interject is because your daughter loves the relationship that you have, and when you criticize her choice, she views it as, "My dad thinks I can't make a good choice; I'll show him that I can." That's why I'm saying she will invest in a crappy relationship to try and show you something. That's just a little bit of advice: do that and you'll be amazed that all the crappy guys will just fall by the wayside.

Naroop 40:58

She's only nine right now, so I've got plenty of time. What she does now as a child is not to criticize her, but encourage and trust.

Reed 41:09

Yes. Everything was going great, but here's where the reality came home: over the course of that five years, when I added it up, we went through about \$250,000.

Narroop 41:28

Wow.

Reed 41:29

As a consequence, I'd taken out second and third mortgages on the house. I'd liquidated pretty much every asset that I had, and I'd also gotten myself into incredible debt. At that time, I must have had easily around \$60,000 on credit cards, and just servicing that every month was costing me \$2,000 to \$3,000 a month just servicing the credit card debt.

Narroop 41:58

So you were in a bad place, spiralling really, weren't you?

Reed 42:01

Yeah, we were. My dad had been incredibly generous to me on numerous occasions, but when it came to having a child, my dad's perspective was this: children are the responsibility of the parents. My sister and I were the responsibility of my dad and my mom. But from my dad's perspective, if you want to have kids, Reed, that's all on you; nothing to do with me.

There was no way I could cajole my dad or slightly blackmail him with, "Oh Granddad, don't you want to have grandkids?" From my dad's perspective: "No, that's your business. If you have kids, great; if you don't have kids, that's none of my business. But the bottom line is I'm not going to sponsor you having a child."

There were times when I didn't have money, and I knocked at my dad's door, and he made that abundantly clear to me: "If you want to have a child, son, that's entirely up to you, but don't involve me."

Narroop 43:14

So you felt abandoned by him a little bit?

Reed 43:16

No, I just knew that my dad was a man of principle. Once he made his position clear, there was no arguing with my dad. That's kind of how I was raised with my dad: I fully respected him. When my dad said something, that was it. If my dad gave me a bollocking, I never spoke back to my dad; I just listened to what he said, and at the end it was just, "Yes, Dad."

Naroop 43:52

So you had nowhere to go, no helpline, all on you.

Reed 43:58

I felt very much alone. At the time, I was working for a bank writing software, and we had a lot of bank training. Even though I wasn't customer-facing, I still had to go through all of the bank training. I was massively in debt, and my salary from the bank didn't even cover the mortgage. As a quick aside, to bridge the gap between my salary and what we needed, I set up a hydroponic operation above my garage and that kind of filled in the gap.

Naroop 44:48

So you were selling weed?

Reed 44:48

Yes. In Southern California, a lot of people smoked weed, completely across the strata of society: whether you collected bins or you were a judge, everybody was smoking weed. In fact, my two best friends were police officers. My one friend was a sergeant in the San Diego Police Department, and my other best friend, who was best man at my wedding, was the special agent in charge of the DEA. Neither of them knew that I was growing weed above my garage, because I didn't want to compromise their professional careers.

It got to a point, unfortunately, where I was under so much financial pressure. How it manifested in my life was I became slightly disengaged from my family. I used to work really early in the morning, getting to work at 6:00 in the morning to avoid the rush hour, which enabled me to leave at 3:00 in the afternoon. That meant I was getting up at 4:30 or 5:00 in the morning.

With the pressures, by the time I came home, I was worrying about the bills and everything. I ended up staying up too late, and at around 9:00 or 10:00 when Patrice was going to bed and saying, "Hey, let's go to bed," I was like, "No, you go to bed, I'm going to stay up." Obviously, I had all of this product, so I would just stay up and smoke weed until I pretty much passed out. I'd fall asleep around 11:00 or 12:00 and get up at 4:30 or 5:00.

Eventually, that's going to catch up with you. Things were not good between Patrice and myself, but that was because of me: I was the one who disengaged from the family.

Naroop 46:46

So everything was going bad.

Reed 46:47

Yeah, it was going bad, and it got to the point where I even thought about killing myself.

Naroop 46:54

How did you work your way through that?

Reed 46:59

I was just inundated with debt. I remember sitting up in my grow room above my garage and thinking, "I'll just kill myself right now. There's some insurance money; I'm not of any benefit to my family." Because I had this hydroponic setup, I had this big plastic bathtub that I used to wash the pellets that I grew the weed in. I remember sitting on the edge with my legs hanging over, and I took my .45 semi-automatic handgun and put it in my mouth. It does taste kind of funny. I put it in my mouth and thought, "Just squeeze the thing and everything is over."

Naroop 48:07

Wow. You were that close to the edge.

Reed 48:10

I'm sitting there thinking, "Be done." But here's the irony: I was even thinking ahead, because I thought, "I'm about to kill myself, but you can't leave a big mess for somebody else to clean up." That's why I sat on the edge of the bath with my feet over the edge, so when I shot myself, it would blow my head off and I would fall back into the bathtub, and all of my fluids would collect in the bath so nobody would have to clean it up. That's the thought process that I went through.

Fortuitously, whether it was God or whatever, something told me: "You can't do this to your little girl. You can't do this to your little girl. Look at everything you've been through to have your little girl, and to do this?"

Naroop 48:59

Still very raw for you, isn't it?

Reed 49:02

So I said, "No, I can't do it. I'm not going to do it." I took the gun out of my mouth, went back into the house, and put the gun away. I remember Patrice saying to me, "Are you

okay?" I said, "Yeah, I'm fine. Of course I'm fine."

About 20 minutes later, Tony, my best friend, the DEA guy, showed up at my house. Patrice had called him and said, "You need to come around to the house." He came around and took my two guns.

Naroop 49:36

She knew something was up.

Reed 49:37

She knew something was up to such a degree that she said, "I need your best friend to come here and remove something from the house." We had quite a connection.

I realized I was going to have to do something else. As I said, I had all this bank training. One of the modules was: what do you do in the case of a bank robbery? A person came in from the bank with about ten of us in the room, giving us all the instructions of what to do in the case of a bank robbery. Basically, here's what it is: if somebody comes in and wants to rob the bank, you do everything that is asked of you to make it run as smoothly as possible and facilitate these people leaving the bank. The last thing you do is aggravate or antagonize these people while they are there to get the money.

Somebody said, "So we just give them the money then, do we?" They said, "Yes." "What if I press a button or something?" They said, "Don't do that. If you do anything that interferes with a bank robbery, the bank will prosecute you to the fullest extent of the law and you will be going to prison." They made it abundantly clear that you do nothing to irritate or antagonize anybody robbing the bank. It's just money. The bank is federally insured. You don't need to put anybody's life on the line. They made it pretty clear that you just give them the money.

Naroop 51:56

But in the movies we see that they press a button.

Reed 51:59

They said those that have the ability can do whatever they do, but you don't do anything that communicates to the bank robber that you're doing something. Armed with that amazing piece of knowledge, my Eureka moment was: I'm going to rob a bank. Because I knew you don't have to have a gun, you don't have to threaten anybody, all you have to do is ask for the money. And so I did. Did they give me the money? Yes, they did.

Naroop 52:35

So you robbed a bank.

Reed 52:44

Yes, I robbed a bank. Another time I'll go in and tell you all about robbing a bank, but it went smoothly; everything went like clockwork. Because I was by myself, I could only basically get whatever that teller had at the moment.

Naroop 53:09

How much was that?

Reed 53:09

Plus or minus about \$10,000.

Naroop 53:13

That was enough though, wasn't it?

Reed 53:13

It was enough for one month's bills.

Naroop 53:19

What about next month's?

Reed 53:19

Back up to rob another bank. That's unfortunately what occurred. Before I knew it, I robbed 12 banks.

Naroop 53:26

You robbed 12 banks.

Reed 53:30

Yeah, and it's not my proudest moment, but you had to do what you had to do. It seemed to me like every single month, here come your bills again. I was always hoping that either the grow would take off or I would get another job in the interim and put that behind me. But because the bank robberies always went so smoothly... After every bank robbery, I would tell myself definitively, "That's it, I'm never robbing another bank."

I remember after that first bank I robbed, I came home and Patrice said, "Can you give Chummy a bath?" I said, "Yeah, of course." I gave her a bath, and when she came out, I dried her off and hugged her so hard, because I looked in the mirror and realized, "God,

you potentially could not be standing here right now."

Police in America have guns, so I took my .45 with me too. My point of taking the .45 was I knew I didn't need the gun to rob the bank, but if I came out of the bank and the police were outside, this was my game plan: my .45 had eight rounds in it. If I come out and the police are there, I'm not going to jail; I'm going to shoot it out with the cops.

They're hopefully better shots than I am, but as you're shooting, you've got to count: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. You've got one bullet left: that's the way it's going to end.

Naroop 55:21

How did you go from being a kind, loving dad with Chummy to having the mindset to be a bank robber, and then willingly take your life if it didn't go the way you wanted?

Reed 55:35

See, I didn't view the bank robberies in the same way that one would think through the movies, because I had this inside information. I knew that when I went in to rob the bank, I did not have to act aggressively, threaten the teller, or do anything that one might consider negative energy. I just gave them a little note because, as you can hear, I have a very distinctive British accent.

Every time I robbed the banks, I never spoke to the tellers. I would hand them a note that I pre-printed at work, and I even laminated it so I could use it again. It was about the size of a postcard, in portrait format, and it said this:

Stay calm. We are not joking.

Follow these instructions and everything is okay.

Put \$10,000 into the bag.

No fake money, no dye packs, no alarms, no tricks.

Stay calm. Do it now.

Those middle four lines were each underlined. Very straightforward instructions, and as you can hear, nothing threatening in there. All I was saying is if you follow these instructions, everything is okay. There was no "or else" or anything like that. Crazy as it might sound, I actually looked at doing the bank robberies like a secret shopper: just seeing, are you doing what you were instructed to do?

I never conducted myself in a manner where I felt I traumatized the teller, because they would just read my note, put the note down, put the money on the counter, I'd take the money and my note, and I would leave.

Naroop 58:11

But you still committed a crime.

Reed 58:11

Absolutely. I knew I was just going to do this and then stop, but what didn't manifest itself was another path out of my current situation. Because they went smoothly, in and out in less than two minutes, here you are. I'd always buy the newspaper the next day to see what they said about the bank robbery.

When I went into the bank, I carried a motorcycle helmet and wore motorcycle gloves so I didn't leave prints. Understandably, the teller would say, "Ah, he's on a motorcycle." But I never was. I would go in my truck or drive in my BMW. I remember leaving one of the banks, getting two or three blocks away in my truck, and seeing five or six police cars with lights flashing coming towards me. We passed like ships in the night, because they were looking for a motorcycle. As such, the FBI deemed me the 'Motorcycle Bandit'.

They had my ethnicity down as white, Latino, African-American, but one critical piece of information they never referenced was that he's British. By the fifth bank robbery, I realized the motorcycle helmet was becoming my MO, so I stopped using that and switched to a baseball cap, reflective sunglasses, and a sweatshirt: very nondescript.

I robbed these 12 banks and then I stopped because something did manifest itself: I got a much better job opportunity. I quit the bank, jumped to another software company, and more than doubled my income just by that simple move. At that same time, I said to Patrice, "Let's get rid of this house." It was then that Patrice told me, "Oh thank God, I hate this place. We're like prisoners in an ivory tower." I thought, "You could have told me that a year ago before having to pay for this."

Naroop 1:01:17

Patrice didn't know you were robbing banks?

Reed 1:01:18

No. How could you tell your wife, "Sweetheart, I'm robbing banks"? I could not burden her with that knowledge so that every time we go out, if she sees a police officer, she's

wondering if they're coming to get her husband. If anything, I told Patrice that the cash was just proceeds from the weed business, and I did that with her blessing. Weed in Southern California is much more of a social thing, so having cash wasn't a surprise to Patrice. But no, I could not tell her.

I robbed the first bank in June of 2000, and I robbed my last bank in June of 2001, basically one a month. The irony is, the first bank I robbed, I went full circle and robbed the same bank again a year later, and it was the same teller. I should have got her an anniversary card!

I stopped robbing banks in June of 2001. In September 2001, 9/11 happened. Homeland Security was established, and they prioritized investigations towards terrorism, stating that crimes without violence would be deprioritized. I thought, "Well, they're not going to come looking for me." I got complacent and got on with my life, thinking that chapter was closed.

We put the big house on the market for \$850,000 and found a new house for about \$400,000, which would allow us to pay off all our debts and start fresh. My birthday was on Saturday, June the 1st. Patrice and I decided to celebrate it the following weekend. On Monday morning, the 3rd of June at about 5:00 in the morning, I'm lying in bed in Southern California. All of a sudden, I hear banging on the front door. We lived in a private gated community with our own private driveway, so I wondered who could be knocking like that. Patrice woke up, and I said, "Don't worry, I'll take care of it."

I walked to the front door in my boxer shorts and t-shirt. Bam, bam, bam on the door. I thought, "When I open this door, somebody's going to be flat out on the ground." I opened the door, looked up, and saw three red laser dots on my chest: "FBI! Get on the ground!" I was right about somebody being on the ground, and it was me. They put me on the ground, put the knee to the back of my head, cuffed me, and brought me to my feet: "Are you Reed Domingo?" I said yes. Federal agents came pouring into the house in tactical gear. Two FBI agents had previously posed as husband and wife to view the house while it was for sale, getting a full schematic of the layout. The FBI arrested me.

Narooop 1:07:34

You spent how long in prison?

Reed 1:07:34

Four years.

Naroop 1:07:36

And after that, you had to come back to the UK.

Reed 1:07:40

Yeah, I came back to the UK with a federal agent on each side.

Naroop 1:07:46

And since that time, you've never been allowed to go back to the States?

Reed 1:07:49

No, I'm permanently barred from returning to the United States for committing a crime of moral turpitude.

Naroop 1:07:59

I've known you for a while as a friend, and I've always found what you went through to be an unbelievable experience. But what's even more interesting is how you rebuilt yourself after that. Your life has gone through so many waves of success and then the crash. You had money, got a new job, and then a massive crash again. Then you had to come back to the UK, while your daughter still lives in America, so you couldn't see her.

What enabled you to be so resilient to keep going? You told me the other day: "When the time will come, it will come, and until then I don't force it, I don't push it." Talk me through your mindset and how you were able to face being detached from everything you loved.

Reed 1:09:49

When I was due to be released from prison and knew I was being returned to the UK, Patrice said, "Okay, fine, then we're moving to England with you too." Right when she was going to join me, she was made an incredible offer to open a massive gym complex in San Diego.

We naively thought we could use that as a vehicle to bring me back to the United States, having no idea what we were facing from an immigration perspective. I pled guilty and complied with the government, which is why I got a lenient four-year sentence for 12 bank robberies, while a cellmate who was just a getaway driver in one violent robbery got 11 years.

Patrice had a three-year commitment for the gym, so she said, "I'm going to send Chummy over to you in England so she isn't neglected while I'm busy." What an amazing thing: I come out of prison and my wife trusts me to take care of our child. I returned in 2005, and that time with my daughter was fantastic; we picked things up right where we left off.

When I was in prison at Terminal Island off Long Beach, surrounded by water, the similarities between boarding school and federal prison were striking: you have no leverage, and you have structured routines. In federal prison, every person has a job. Because I had a high school education, I became a teaching assistant for Mr. Johnson. He gave me math and written tests, and I scored 100 percent on both.

Because of my rapport with inmates across all backgrounds, the head of education asked me to run my own class. Because Domingo is a common Hispanic first name, everyone called me 'Mr. Reed' out of respect.

In prison, you have nothing but who you are; nobody cares who you were outside. That's where I found out who I was: it was the birth of Mr. Reed.

Narooop 1:17:15

How would you say a man can find himself without having to rob 12 banks and go to prison?

Reed 1:17:24

That's a good question. Looking back at my life, so many aspects fit together. When I was 16 and sent to boarding school, I initially viewed it negatively, but it was exactly what I needed. There have been many instances where initial bad news turned out to be a good thing. When things happen in your life, don't get so caught up in it, especially if it doesn't work out the way you want.

When I started the process in 2006 to re-enter the United States, and finally received the decision at the end of 2022 that I was banned for life for a crime of moral turpitude, I was devastated after 16 or 17 years of trying. But sitting here now, I realize that was the way it was supposed to be. Where I find myself now is exactly where I'm supposed to be. No matter what you think and where you find yourself in life, that's exactly where you're supposed to be. If you can tell yourself, "I wouldn't choose to be here, but this is where

I'm supposed to be, so let me maximize where I find myself," it will put you in good stead and significantly change the way you feel.

Naroop 1:21:18

I think we could have spent three hours talking about this. The way you summarize it is really beautiful: you are always where you're meant to be. I sense a real sense of gratitude: you're not bitter or angry at the world. I see you as a kind gentleman with the physique of an action hero, but with a true heart of gold. You've taught me valuable lessons about parenting and resilience. Thank you so much for sharing your story.

Reed 1:23:05

Thank you. It's been an absolute pleasure. As that one famous American says: I'll be back.

Naroop 1:23:13

Thank you, brother. Thank you.

Naroop 1:23:13

Wait, the episode doesn't quite end here. Once we cut, Reed continued to share some of his feelings and emotions, and they were so beautiful and impactful that we wanted to include them in his episode. So, here you go.

Reed 1:23:29

For everybody that's here right now, I've only just barely scratched the surface of the story. I'm a blessed man, and I know I'm on a destiny path. The absolute proof of that for me is that lady: she's everything.

Naroop 1:24:11

Go give her a hug! A round of applause, guys, please. Thank you.

Reed 1:24:27

I haven't even mentioned the person that absolutely changed my life, Alexis. We met 12 years ago. I'm still legally married to Patrice; she left in 2013 because staying in the UK was making her depressed. The plan was for her to set things up in America and for me to join in 2016 when the 10-year exclusion was thought to expire. In January 2023, I told Patrice that I was permanently barred and couldn't return. I would never ask her to move to another country when she has kids and grandkids in America.

I had no intention of falling in love with anybody, but I've been truly blessed to find the most perfect person in my life in Alexis. When I go to sleep at night and wake up in the morning and see Alexis, I know today is a good day.

When I was in prison, we told Chummy that I worked on a ship that sailed past the prison window. In the third year, when she saw the sign 'Terminal Island Federal Correctional', we told her Daddy was working in England. When I was deported back to the UK and Chummy came over, it all made sense to her. We always put Chummy's best interests first, and Patrice never said a bad word about me to her. Because of that, my daughter truly loves me, and when she finally learned the truth, it just filled in the gaps.

Chummy met Alexis last year, and because I told Chummy how important Alexis is to me, she respected that completely. If you are ever in a situation where you separate and children are involved, please don't ever denigrate your partner to the child. Always remember that is their other parent. You give a profound gift to your child when they know their parents never spoke ill of each other. Anyway, I'll get off my soapbox. Thank you.