



Hogg Foundation  
*for* Mental Health



## Episode 162: It's a Texas Thing: Celebrating Recovery at PeerFest (Transcript)

Ike Evans:

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Ike Evans:

Hi, this is Ike Evans, of the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, and you're listening to "Into the Fold," the mental health podcast. And today, we are delighted to bring you Episode 162, "It's a Texas Thing: Celebrating Recovery at PeerFest."

Sir Billy Dorsey:

You're speaking, you're serving people, you're pouring out into other people, and it's very hard to have that replenished. But when you get the person that the light comes on for them, that they connect, that they see what you're sharing and the value in it. You mentioned me standing around talking with people for an hour and a half last night. That's what--That meant more to me than the opportunity to speak from the stage.

Jack Brown:

I could see that.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

The questions that people asked and the heart, the vulnerability that they had to expose in themselves to ask some of the questions that I was asked last night, that's what matters in terms of the work that we do.

Ike Evans:

As of this recording, we are a little bit more than one week removed from PeerFest 2024, which took place in Grapevine, Texas, just outside of Dallas, from April 15th to April 18th, 2024. Put it very simply, PeerFest is an educational and celebratory event for Texans who have faced mental health challenges and are on a journey to wellness. For those almost four days, people from all across the state convened to learn from one another and to directly experience wellness and recovery principles in action and to do so in a spirit of solidarity and celebration. Over the coming days and weeks, we will be putting out a wealth of material, including images, videos, and, yes, including this podcast, documenting this one of a kind event and what it meant for those who are fortunate enough to take part. But for right now, we are

going to give you hopefully a substantial taste of what PeerFest 2024 is all about with the help of our second-ever guest podcast host.

Ike Evans:

Jack Brown is a member of the PeerFest Planning Committee, and for this very special episode, he is sitting down with two of the featured keynote speakers from PeerFest. First, Dr. William DeFoore, author of, among other books, "Anger Among Angels: Shedding Light On the Darkness of The Human Soul." His keynote address was titled "Good Finding: A Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health Incorporating Emotional Intelligence and Positive Psychology."

Ike Evans:

The other guest, Sir Billy Dorsey, and, yes, an actual Knight. He was knighted by the King of Spain for his philanthropic efforts. During PeerFest, he delivered a keynote address, "In the Right Seat: Finding Purpose at the Intersection of Passion, Proficiency, and Positioning."

Ike Evans:

These two gentlemen, along with Jack, are in their own ways extraordinary, and each in his own way captures the spirit of PeerFest and why we felt that for the second time ever, this event needed to happen and why the Hogg Foundation is proud to be associated with this event. And so I take you now to Jack for a conversation about mental health, wellness, and what it means to make a difference in those areas for people. Take it away, Jack.

Jack Brown:

Okay. What I would like to do is let's take a minute, each one of you guys kind of introduce yourself, what you do, you know what I'm saying, where are you from, things of that nature. And then we'll just kind of organically go into the conversation. Got it. Let's start with you Williams.

Dr. William DeFoore:

I'm a human being. I'm a member of the human race, my proudest claim to fame, and I'm a therapist. I've been practicing for 50 years and now loving life at this point. As I mentioned, I'm 75 years old and just eating it up. Just glad to be healthy and able to participate in life. I'm really into the idea of healthy aging, since that's something I'm doing.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Which is obvious.

Dr. William DeFoore:

Right?

Jack Brown:

Right.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

You look good, brother.

Dr. William DeFoore:

And why not? Because that's part of life, and that's exciting to me. And that's body, mind, and spirit. That's not just one aspect. The aging is a whole-body, whole-spirit kind of thing. And then along the way, I love helping people. I've been, like I said, a therapist for 50 years, and I love helping people. I'm still in practice. I do it three days a week. It's not all the time. And I'm writing and I've got websites and things that I enjoy and doing stuff like this. This is great. And connecting with you guys and learning about, I just talked with Jack about what he's up to and learning about you. I went to your website and really like what you're up to.

Jack Brown:

Thank you, brother.

Dr. William DeFoore:

So this is the cream on the top here, is meeting you guys and getting to be a part of this.

Jack Brown:

Thank you, William. Oh man, I feel special almost. Thank you very much, Sir Billy Dorsey, introduce yourself, sir.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

So it's an honor to be a part of PeerFest. It's an honor to be here with both of you fine gentlemen this morning. For me I am a public speaker. I'm an award-winning music producer and songwriter. I'm a philanthropist. I utilize my resources and my gifts and talents to partner with organizations where I feel like I have the opportunity to have tangible impact, not to their bottom line, but to the lives that they actually are responsible for caring for. And I could probably talk for a lot longer about some of the other things that I do. But in a nutshell, I'm a husband, I'm a father, I'm a man of God, and that's me at the core. I want to utilize every moment that I've been blessed to have grace to have on this earth, to be a blessing to someone else. And I utilize everything that God's given me to do that.

Jack Brown:

I got to see you in action yesterday after you spoke. You literally gave a good hour and a half of your time to meet and take pictures with everyone that says a lot about your characters. So thank you very much for that.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Thank you, brother.

Jack Brown:

You know what I mean? Okay. Y'all lets get to it. Get it together Jack. What are some, let's start with you for a bit.

Dr. William DeFoore:

Did you know he was a knight?

Jack Brown:

I did.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Okay. I love that. I have to tell everybody that's my thing.

Dr. William DeFoore:

First knight I've ever met.

Jack Brown:

First knight I've ever met, right? Yeah. I'm going to highlight that. I don't brag a lot about my accomplishments and people that I meet and things, but I'm going to brag about you.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Brother, I appreciate that.

Jack Brown:

And the reason I say that is because I, off topic grew up Dungeons and Dragons and Knighthood, and it's all about that family Crest. Of course for me, I understand the Crest and I know you have one, and that's important, right? It's the family name, right. So that's why I'm excited about it.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Thank you, brother. I appreciate you.

Jack Brown:

Backstory. Okay, first question. What are some of your greatest mental health challenges you personally faced during your life?

Sir Billy Dorsey:

So I had two periods in my life where I navigated what I defined as crippling depression. I mean to the point of not being able to get out of the bed, not having a desire to eat, not able to function at my usual level. Two different times. One, when I was homeless, which I shared about last night as a part of my talk. It reached such a point where I had gone through periods of starvation. The loneliness that comes along with being on the streets. Also the fear for your life. That becomes a very real thing when you're in that situation. And that led me to a very dark place in terms of depression and suicidal ideation. And the second time was I went through a divorce over a decade ago. I'm remarried now, but I went through a divorce and it wasn't over the marriage failing, but I had kids in that marriage.

Jack Brown:

Okay, makes sense.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

And I had girls, I have daughters, all my kids. I have four daughters. And so three in my previous marriage and one with my wife now. And the thought of not being there in the home, raising my daughters led me to a depression. So I wouldn't say that that one was as dark as the first one, but it

definitely was a laying in bed for days at a time. People having to come check on me and say, you all right? Get up out of this bed. Get up and move around. Those would be the periods of time that I feel like it's been the darkest. During the pandemic, my wife and I, we talked about going through a period of languishing, and that was actually something that was documented, I want to say it was in the New York Times. They did an article about people that were, it's not quite a depression, but it's almost like an apathy that people fell into as a result of the isolation, the businesses being shut down. So you weren't able to go out and do--I love to speak. There was none of that. I mean, we could do it online, but it's not the same.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

And again, if everything I do is trying to serve people and those opportunities were taken away, we went through a period of time where it wasn't quite depression, but it was very akin to it called languishing that my wife and I, both and other people we knew, went through probably around 2020, 2021.

Jack Brown:

I'm smiling because I'm thinking, when we was all sheltered in place, I would still get up in the morning and iron my clothes. And my wife was like, "What are you doing?" I said, "Well, baby, I got a routine. I don't know what to do with this right now." Right. So I just know how to stay busy, if that makes sense.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

It makes sense.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

It makes sense.

Jack Brown:

Thank you. Same question, William, would you like for me to read it again?

Dr. William DeFoore:

Yeah, sure.

Jack Brown:

Alright. What were some of your greatest mental health challenges you have personally faced during your life?

Dr. William DeFoore:

Well, a couple, like Billy was saying, one was being born in 1948 in the aftermath of World War II and living in the unspoken story of my dad's post-traumatic stress from the war. He was army infantry, fought in the Philippines, horrific experiences and the trauma. And then he comes home, and he has talked to me a lot about this later in his life. But early when I was born and I was growing up, not a word was spoken. A lot of times, veterans don't talk. And these days, we're learning that it's important to talk, and that in those days, you don't talk about it. And he had real severe PTSD. He was able to work. He became a Baptist minister, and his strategy for dealing with PTSD was to save the world and ignore his family.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Wow.

Dr. William DeFoore:

But mom and dad stayed together, but it was rough. He was gone, and he was at the dinner table, and he'd take a phone call, and he'd be gone. So there was that. And then also one of the ways he dealt with his PTSD is that we moved a lot. We were born in Mississippi. Six months later, I was in Kentucky. Six months later, I was in Alaska for five years, and then Scotland for two years, and then Alabama. So I was always trying to figure out, "Who am I, and where do I fit in?" And the answer was nowhere. I didn't know the right lingo. I didn't dress right, I didn't know the sports. So I was the misfit, and I got picked on and stuff. And finally, I landed in Texas, and I haven't left.

Jack Brown:

You got roots placed.

Dr. William DeFoore:

But that was rough. And mom and dad both had some depression. Dad had his PTSD was all over. It was a mix of anxiety and depression. He didn't rage. Thank God.

Jack Brown:

Thank God.

Dr. William DeFoore:

Thank God he did not rage at us. And that is a real blessing because of course, that would've had a great impact on me and my brothers. But we lived in that unspoken experience of his anxiety and his depression. And mom was depressed because she didn't know what to do with him.

Jack Brown:

Of course.

Dr. William DeFoore:

And she was southern belle and used to everything being just right. And then she married this guy. So just dealing with all of that. And then there was a period of my adult life where I walked away from my life and I hitchhiked all over United States up into Canada and across the southern United States. I just left everything behind. I wasn't sure if I wanted to go back. I wasn't exactly homeless, because I had a rental property where I could come back to. But I lived on the road for a little over a year, and I experienced that life of being adrift. And I told myself I didn't have to go back if I didn't want to. But then I did decide to come back and reconnect with life and plug back in.

Jack Brown:

Yeah. So let me piggyback off that question, if you don't mind.

Dr. William DeFoore:

Sure.

Jack Brown:

When you made that decision to hitchhike, did you think that was time to--you needed to reflect to find yourself? Or was it just an escape to get away?

Dr. William DeFoore:

My life wasn't bad, but it felt formula. Like I was living out somebody else's story. And I remember that first day I had my backpack and I walked out onto the highway and put my thumb out. I felt like I was standing on the edge of the unknown. And it felt scary, but it felt good.

Jack Brown:

Liberating.

Dr. William DeFoore:

And one of the things I discovered, you guys, is that with a few exceptions, people took care of me. I got good rides. Human beings are basically good. I learned that through that experience. Now, I had some crazy people, as you might imagine, pick me up. I had a knife pulled on me one time, but no harm done in the long run. And I just trusted. I trusted me, I trusted God, and I trusted the people. So it was a choice. I wasn't thrust out of my life. I chose to step out of it. I wanted to experience you know, like the Paul Simon song, "We're All Off to Look For America." I wanted to explore this world that I had not experienced.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Wow.

Jack Brown:

I like that. Thank you, William. Alright, y'all, let's move a little bit forward. Second question. Let's start with you, William. What brings you the greatest joy in your work and your life?

Dr. William DeFoore:

In my work, seeing people's lights come on. I know Billy.

Jack Brown:

I agree.

Dr. William DeFoore:

And both of you guys, we're all in the service industry. See people light up from the inside and start to recognize their own beauty, their own worth, and their own value. There's nothing like that. It's like music to the soul. And on a personal level, the thing that brings me the most joy is my wife and I have a fabulous marriage 26 years. And she is just a dear, dear soul. She's struggling right now with an illness and I'm her caregiver and it's hard, but she's going to be fine. She's going to come through that. But that love is just growing stronger every day. I'm very grateful for that. And I'm a musician. I play guitar and sing and I have a great group. I jam with her in Denton every weekend. And that is just my heart soars playing music and it's eclectic. We bring in all kinds of music, jazz, soul, country, bluegrass.

Jack Brown:

Everything.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

When you guys are ready to record, William, let me know.

Dr. William DeFoore:

Thank you. I'll keep that in mind.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

That's what we do.

Jack Brown:

They say that's what we do. I love it. I love it. Yeah, man. One of my favorite, I guess in work would be when the light comes on for people, I feel like I actually really helped somebody. And in that moment, that is needed. And the reason I say that is because working in this field is almost like sales, right? You got to get 300 no's to get one yes. Right? So everybody don't get it. Even though I'm helping everyone all the time, everyone is not getting it. And so by the time that one shows up, my battery's drained. I needed that one. I needed that win. And then that gives me that energy to push and move forward.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Yeah.

Jack Brown:

Same question. I'll reread it. What brings you the greatest joy in your life? Greatest joy in your work and your life.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Got it. Same thing. I mean, I'd say sitting with you at the table last night and seeing the young lady that came over and shared that you had had a tremendous impact on her and how that caused you to light up.

Jack Brown:

Right.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

That's what we do this for. You're speaking, you're serving people, you're pouring out into other people, and it's very hard to have that replenished. But when you get the person that the light comes on for them, that they connect, that they see what you're sharing and the value in it. You mentioned me standing around talking with people for an hour and a half last night. That meant more to me than the opportunity to speak on the stage.

Jack Brown:

I can see that.



Sir Billy Dorsey:

The questions that people asked and the heart, that was--the vulnerability that they had to expose in themselves to ask some of the questions that I was asked last night. That's what matters in terms of the work that we do. The work I do at the Salvation Army, I shared last night during my keynote, watching those houses be built, seeing families get their keys to their new homes.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

And these were people that several months before were on the streets with their children.

Jack Brown:

Correct.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

There's nothing in the world in terms of work and being a rewarding sense of this is why I do what I do that'll ever mean more to me than that. And in terms of my personal life, my bride, and we have a three-year-old daughter that she was born a micro preemie during the pandemic. She was born at one pound, three ounces. She was born at 24 and a half weeks, just on the edge of viable. But her name's Reyna, but she's a fighter.

Jack Brown:

She here?

Sir Billy Dorsey:

And she's here, she's three and she's tearing our house up. My wife is fussing about her, banging her cabinets and opening closing doors and walking in bathrooms when you thought you had a minute of privacy, just seeing how the love that you pour into your family comes back to you. My wife, she's not able to be here for this, but her supporting her love is here.

Jack Brown:

Right.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

My daughter's not able to be here, but that FaceTime, when I'm away and I get to talk to her and she's looking at the phone and smiling when daddy's--those things--

Jack Brown:

Those are the moments.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

That's the moments.

Jack Brown:

That's that one sell.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

That's the one sell.

Jack Brown:

That's the one sell. That's exactly what I'm talking about. For me, part of my story is I call myself an absentee father. I was MIA for 17 years, and when I got clean, I went and found my kids on Facebook. And I've been building that relationship now since 2012. And so by the grace of God, and I don't mean to offend anyone when I say the word God, but that's just where I'm at.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

No offense here.

Jack Brown:

Ain't taken. None taken on my end either.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

That's just where I'm at. By the grace of God, I had an opportunity to be on NBC to represent my organization for our annual sleeping bag drive. And I called him from the news station, my son, my youngest son, and I called him from the news station. I was about to burst. I had to share that moment with somebody. And being his typical self, like his father, he like "Oh, okay, pops, that's nice." And it crushed me a little bit. But then a couple of weeks later, just out of nowhere, "Hey, pops, I was just bragging on you the other day." I cried. That's what I worked for, so that's my greatest. I'm almost crying now, but I ain't going to do it.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

It's okay, we'll cry with you.

Jack Brown:

That's just my greatest moment because I've been gone, and I want a relationship with my kids. And so my oldest son is in rehab, in prison. I'm making plans to go see him. Well, I remember a time where I vowed there, "If my kids ever went to jail, I wouldn't go to jail to see them." Right. And that was because I'm mad at myself for going to jail.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Yeah.

Jack Brown:

Does that make sense?

Sir Billy Dorsey:

It makes sense.

Jack Brown:

"How dare you do what I did."

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Yeah.

Jack Brown:

Right.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

"Do as I say, not as I do."

Jack Brown:

Right.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

All right. Okay. I digress. My bad.

Jack Brown:

Not at all. It's absolutely pertinent to what we're talking about. And that heart and your personal, shared, lived-in experience is what empowers you to be who you are and to impact the people that you serve. That's what matters. So you aren't digressing at all.

Dr. William DeFoore:

You came back. You came back. You came back from a deep, dark place.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Yeah.

Jack Brown:

Oh, I have no idea.

Dr. William DeFoore:

You know how hard that is?

Jack Brown:

Oh yeah.

Dr. William DeFoore:

That's amazing. It's an accomplishment.

Jack Brown:

Yeah. We feed the homeless every month. And so we have volunteers come through, and sometimes they ask questions, like, "Man, I just don't understand why they can't get their life together." Right. Oh man. And I said, "Do you know how hard it is to pull yourself up from nothing?"

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Yeah. Right.

Jack Brown:

You don't have no personal motivation. You don't have no cheerleaders. Everything you do, you got to do. I've been homeless, so I know.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Same.

Jack Brown:

Right. Same. And to wake up one day and say, "No more," and to live that one day every day after that is hard.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Yeah. Absolutely.

Jack Brown:

Extremely hard.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

But you've been doing it for how many years now?

Jack Brown:

Nine.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Nine years?

Jack Brown:

Nine.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Come on.

Jack Brown:

Nine years.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

That's something to celebrate.

Jack Brown:

April 1st, I celebrate nine years.

Sir Billy Dorsey:  
Of sobriety, right?

Jack Brown:  
Of sobriety.

Sir Billy Dorsey:  
Yeah.

Jack Brown:  
Right.

Sir Billy Dorsey:  
Congratulations.

Jack Brown:  
Never thought--thank you very much. Never thought that would happen. I didn't even see the nine. I've been so deep in business, I didn't see the nine coming. But I still make meetings. I still call my sponsors. I still work steps. The maintenance is what keeps us going. You and I were talking earlier when we were talking about exercise. That's a form of maintenance to me, right? Physically. Right. You're a pastor. When you sit down with your Bible, that's mentally, that's spiritually. Right. That's a form of maintenance. So if I don't have something in place for maintenance, my mental health challenges will consume me to that dark place.

Dr. William DeFoore:  
Ironing your clothes during the pandemic.

Jack Brown:  
Boy, that saved me. Y'all have no idea that saved me. Something is simple as ironing my clothes soothes my mind.

Dr. William DeFoore:  
I hear you.

Jack Brown:  
Right. It was just a ritual. It had nothing to do with the clothes. Clothes did nothing to me. It was the ritual.

Dr. William DeFoore:  
I get it.

Jack Brown:  
You know what I mean? Alright, let's start with you, Mr. Billy. Sir Billy, I'm sorry.

Dr. William DeFoore:

It's okay.

Jack Brown:

What do you consider unique about your approach to mental health?

Sir Billy Dorsey:

A lot of times, and I'll speak even from sitting on the board for major mental health organizations, there is a very structured and corporate approach to the service. And there's nothing wrong with that. I understand that people operate within their framework of thinking and their framework of the organizations that they're a part of. But for me, I have always felt and operated from the assumption that if you tie in the arts, if you tie in creativity, if you tie in things that don't just make people think but it makes them feel, that you're going to impact the person in a greater way. And so sometimes it's caused me to have to go my own way in how I navigate that because organizations are set up to be big ships that turn slow, they'll get there eventually, but they turn slowly. Bureaucracy, people having to make decisions running up the chain to get things done. So in addition to those things, I've always thought of incorporating music, incorporating film, incorporating the arts in some kind of way. The stories of people. I was asked yesterday if I had a PowerPoint. I intentionally did not bring a PowerPoint because I wanted my talk to be the stories of people that were impacted by--

Jack Brown:

I think it was very effective, though, without the PowerPoint because, and I didn't mean to interrupt you, I apologize, because most of the time if I'm sitting in an audience and you have a PowerPoint, I'm paying attention to PowerPoint and not you.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Right, right. And there's power in having a PowerPoint for certain types of talks. But if you look back at-- Historically, before there was books, before there was any of those things, how was information passed down? It was passed down by people sharing stories around a campfire. That's how it started. And if we want to connect with people, we have to get back to, my opinion, and what makes, what I do different and unique, to your question, is I'm very intentional on making sure that there's an emotional connection to whatever it is that we're doing. Because what's the expression that you may not remember what they said, you may not remember what they did, but you'll always remember how they made you feel. I take that into everything that I do, even in service. If I can make people feel something, they'll remember what I said. It'll resonate with them in a different way. Because the emotion that gripped them in that moment becomes something that they'll take not only take on with them, but they'll go and tell other people about incorporating the arts, incorporating storytelling, incorporating things that make people feel and cause an emotional reaction separates what I do from a lot of the organizations that I'm blessed to be a part of.

Jack Brown:

I like that. I like that concept. That's kind of what I want to do. Just I grew up outdoors. I'm outdoors kid. Right. Climbed trees and jumped off roofs and all that. And so I love being outdoors. Well, I was talking to you, William earlier about the equine therapy. That's just only a part of it. I want, excuse my language. So most of my black friends call me a black white boy. Cause of the things, I like archery, I like dirt bikes, I like adrenaline junkies type stuff. I didn't know it came with a race.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

It doesn't. But I get why people think it does.

Jack Brown:

Right. I just enjoy the moment. And so I want to build something where we can have archery. You can ride four-wheelers, or a pond where I can teach you how to fish because it was the introduction and the lack of those things that got me here today.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Yeah.

Jack Brown:

Does that make sense?

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Yeah.

Jack Brown:

I got introduced to some things, but no one cultivated the introduction. It was just an introduction.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Got it.

Jack Brown:

Right. Case in point, nine years old, I met the Dallas Mavericks. Went to a basketball camp. That was it. That was a one and done. So I mean, trust me, I cherish the experience, but no one cultivated my sports activity.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Got it. I got what you're saying.

Jack Brown:

Right. Does that make sense?

Sir Billy Dorsey:

There was no coach to take you to the next level. Nobody's saying continue to develop that.

Jack Brown:

It was more of like, "hey, this is a photo album for the Dallas Mavericks, y'all poor, underprivileged kids." And them not knowing, telling my own story, them not knowing I was considered the rich kid in my neighborhood. They wore Chuck Taylors, I wore Adidas and everything else.

Jack Brown:

Come on, I got right there. Look, you see, I checked them out earlier, right? I'm like, oh, he got an Adidas. And they constantly remind me of that, right? That I was different. I didn't fit in either. I've been from here to the west coast. And so yeah, I digress. Go ahead.

Dr. William DeFoore:

Fitting in is overrated.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Oh my god, yes.

Dr. William DeFoore:

Lot of times people say, well, I just feel like I don't fit in. I said, well, congratulations. That's part of being a unique individual. Now we need to belong. We need a sense of belonging. We need to connect with people, but not at the expense of your individuality.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

That's right.

Dr. William DeFoore:

That's what brings that light on is when that person starts to realize there's something good in here. There's somebody of value in here, and that's when the light comes on. And what I found, I was talking earlier about how moving all over the place, I didn't fit in anywhere and didn't feel like I belonged, didn't know the rules and the ropes. And I found out that I need to fit in right here with myself. I need to be comfortable in my own skin no matter what color it is. And then I can connect. If I'm good here, I can connect with whoever shows up depending on what the vibe is and how close we can get. You can't get close to everybody.

Jack Brown:

Right? Correct. I'm learning that the hard way.

Dr. William DeFoore:

So I've learned it. And also it really has a lot to do with love. I can love some people up close, like my wife and some really good friends. Other people have to have some distance to love them.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

I still love you, but I need you 500 miles away.

Dr. William DeFoore:

That's right. And there's so much beauty in that. If you find the distance from which you can love people, then you can love everybody.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

That's powerful. If you find the distance from which you can love people, then you can love everybody. I'm taking that with me, brother.



Dr. William DeFoore:

It's yours.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

I'm taking that with me.

Jack Brown:

They swapping out on us. They swapping out on us. Okay, so you kind of almost answered the question, but let's just make it formal. What do you consider unique about your approach to mental health?

Dr. William DeFoore:

I started out in 1991 focusing on anger. And the reason for that is I was working in some mental hospitals and I found some people in there all drugged up and all kinds of problems. They had this anger just boiling inside, but nobody was helping them with the anger other than to medicate, which we know medication is not the solution. So I developed some techniques and approaches to help people get their anger out in healthy ways. Nobody gets hurt. You talking about boxing earlier. Nobody gets hurt when you do, but you get some aggression out. And developed--I wrote a book on anger and called "Anger: Deal with It, Heal with It, Stop It from Killing You," because you keep that boiling inside, it's going to make you sick after a while. And I did that for a big part of my career, built my practice around working with anger management, helping people figure out anger's not something to be eliminated, because it's part of life. So what is healthy anger?

Dr. William DeFoore:

Unhealthy anger is fighting against something which can sometimes just make what you're fighting against worse, and healthy anger is fighting for what you believe in. Channel that energy--

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Righteous anger.

Dr. William DeFoore:

...of anger in the direction of what you believe in what you're for. And that is what really shifted my focus into good finding, which is a term that I first heard from a minister who was saying, "We need to be good finders in our marriages." We need to find--It's so easy to be critical. Of course, that person's right there every day, and criticism is just cheap and easy, and it's a relationship killer.

Dr. William DeFoore:

So find the good in this person. You chose to spend your life with them and focus on what's good and then love can arise. And so I expanded that to, "What if we do that with the whole world? What if we find the good?" Because that old default mechanism, you're talking about fight or flight when we were speaking earlier.

Ike Evans:

Yes, sir.

Dr. William DeFoore:

That fight or flight is looking for the threat, the problem. What do I need to be ready for? What do I need to be scared of? But that creates misery, it creates anxiety and all kinds of frustration, illness. But the good finding, it awakens the heart, it enlightens the mind, it gives us a connection with God, with spirituality and the best of who we are. So just that mental shift, like, "Okay, there's a lot broken in this world." There's a lot of insanity, there's a lot of sickness, there's a lot of harm being done.

Dr. William DeFoore:

And at the same time, there's incredible beauty, incredible creativity, generosity, and it doesn't get the news. The happy, good people doing lots of wonderful things all the time, they're not going to be mainstream news. It's the sensational stuff that gets to the top of the heap in that regard. So I've devoted the latter part of my career and the book that I wrote recently, "Good Finding," is to help people shift their focus, their mental focus to what's good, right, and working, the bright and beautiful of life. So that's my kind of mental health journey process there.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

There's a scripture that I quote to my wife very often that says, "If there be anything good, think on these things." That completely encapsulates what you're saying. Because it's so easy for us to focus on the negative within ourselves first, we beat ourselves up, too. If not--If we don't--We're talking about self-talk last night.

Jack Brown:

Yeah, I'm working on it.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

All of us are working on it. We might be at different steps or phases in our journey in that process, but all of us are working on it. The ones that are aware of it are all working on it. But to your point, in our marriage, it is easy to be critical. It's easy to look at the things that didn't go right, but it takes a bigger person, and it takes a heart of grace and compassion not just for your marriage but with everyone to say, "Yeah, I see the things that may be wrong or that could be improved upon, but let me make a special note of the things that are good, of the things that are worthy of honor."

Sir Billy Dorsey:

And when you point those things out, what you learn is that those things tend to expand the more you concentrate on them. I remember seeing a study, and it wasn't anything elaborate, but it basically said, "How many red cars do you see?" Before you were aware of it, you probably had seen a million of them and never noticed it. But the minute you start to focus on red cars, you see them everywhere. That is how we're supposed to approach the good things in the people that we have the opportunity to interact with. Where are the red cars?

Jack Brown:

Look, I like that. I never thought about it like that. Where are the red cars? I remember when I bought my Chevy, my truck,

Sir Billy Dorsey:

What color was it?

Jack Brown:

It was green, technically teal blue. And I never noticed that color until I bought that truck. I'm like, "I didn't know it was--" It's always the same. So I get look for the red cars and that's the thing for me. Believe it or not, I started a business for everybody else.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Got you. Let me elaborate. I have a janitorial service, it's called Clean Slate. It lives up to its name. It's geared towards individuals for reentry. First coming home, I give them a little job, pays them about 50, 60 dollars a week. But it's honest money. I know what it feels like to say I'm going to change my life when I come home and not have the resources or the tools or the support to change my life. And then it's easy to gravitate back to what I'm comfortable to--comfortable with.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

I'm sorry. And so that's why I created Clean Slate. You come work with us, you got clean slate. Peer to peer I love helping people in the community, but right now my focus is building a staff. Not so much a staff, but a team of educators that can be problem solvers. That's my season right now, didn't see it coming, but it's here so we're going to act in it. And so my creation is for everybody else. I want people to be able to pay their bills, take care of their family, things of that nature. I don't want anybody to be homeless. God just gave me a vision to help people and that's what I do. So that's my approach to mental health challenges. Once I'm in the community feeding, I'm at home and I can do my thing. And I tell them like, "Hey man, I was just like you." "What?" "Yes. Five felony convictions, homeless, all that, army vet." It means nothing when you're in the depths of everything. So I know the importance of being there for everybody else, if that makes any sense.

Jack Brown:

It makes sense. All right gentlemen, we making good time? I think. This question's for you William and Billy, you can interject--so Billy, you can interject. Your keynote today is about good finding. How did you come up with the concept, and which you pretty much just said. What makes it different from positive psychology many people are familiar with?

Dr. William DeFoore:

Now? That's a very good question. I think what makes it different--Positive psychology is wonderful. I'm so glad it has grown because it's a shifting from what's broken and what's messed up to what's good. How do we build on person's strengths rather than focus on their problem? What's different about good finding and unique is that good finding is--one definition is it's a practice of gratitude for the past, appreciation for the present, and optimism about the future. The mind is always in a time travel mode. We're always thinking about yesterday or five minutes ago. We check in on right now, once in a while, it's important. But our future, what's coming next? And if we let that run automatically and the fight or flight mechanism comes on, then it's what was wrong in the past? What do I need to look for in the present?

Dr. William DeFoore:

Is there a threat right now? What do I need to be scared about, worried about in the future? And that's anxiety provoking. It's a miserable way to live, but that's a default mechanism of the mind. So good finding is for the purpose of helping people shift out of the default, use higher brain functions. And in that higher brain--those higher brain functions, we actually connect with spirit. We connect with heart

and soul. And we start looking for, "Okay, yeah, that's a problem and this is not so great, but is there anything good happening right now?" I mentioned my dad, I told Jack earlier, he's 104, he's still alive.

Jack Brown:

Wow. It's in the DNA.

Dr. William DeFoore:

He's having a hard time at this point because it's hard being 104.

Jack Brown:

I'm sure.

Dr. William DeFoore:

Especially since he's always been active and he has limitations now. But he'll call me, he say, "Bill, listen, give me a pep talk." He said, "I just really having a hard time." I say, "Well, dad, have you got a place to sleep tonight?" "Yeah." "Anybody that loves you?" "Yep." "Got some food to eat?" "Yeah." And I said, "Dad, do you understand what I'm saying?" He said, "Yeah." And I said, "You got a lot to be grateful for right there." He's real quick. He says, "Alright, thank you. I'll talk to you later."

Jack Brown:

That's the military, ain't it? Right there.

Dr. William DeFoore:

Yeah.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Straight to the point. But let me interject. That is beautiful that you have that relationship, where your dad would call you and say, "I need a pep talk. I need a pep talk, son."

Dr. William DeFoore:

It is, I feel so blessed by that. Thank you for pointing that out.

Jack Brown:

Of course. Yeah. You beat me to it. That is like, "What, pops, okay, I got you." Right. So kudos for that, man. That is amazing.

Dr. William DeFoore:

It's a blessing for sure.

Jack Brown:

It really is, 104. It's in [inaudible 00:40:59]

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Come on, that's why he looks so good.

Jack Brown:

Right? This is still for you, William, I believe. It doesn't say. You've been doing this for a long time, over 50 years. What keeps you going after all this time?

Dr. William DeFoore:

Well, one thing is I do it, but I don't do it all the time. That is the counseling, the--

Jack Brown:

[inaudible 00:41:21]

Dr. William DeFoore:

I'm still seeing clients, but it's three days a week starting at noon. So what keeps me going is I am an exercise enthusiast. I'm working out six days a week and busy on the seventh day doing other things. I'm hiking, and I do a little bit of running, not a whole lot. I play music. I am writing. I'm involved in a lot of different creative projects with my online business. I've got eight published books in print. I've got about 20 books that are audio books that I'm converting into print and eBooks. And maintaining that and doing the online sales is an ongoing opportunity--

Jack Brown:

I'll say.

Dr. William DeFoore:

...and challenge. But yeah, I love my life, and because I don't do the counseling all the time. I went through a burnout stage. When I was doing 50, 60 hours a week and working in three or four different hospitals, it was not good. I was burned out. My clients were not getting the best services and that's not right. So I went from five to four days and then now I'm down to three, and I'm good for now three days and 12 sessions a week.

Jack Brown:

I want to get there, like three days a week, no bills. I can take care of my bills out of three days. Yes, that's the life.

Dr. William DeFoore:

But just having fun. I think it's one of the things about good findings is it activates positive emotion. If my heart is full of joy and love, I am of better service to everyone. I'm a better husband to my wife, a better friend to my friends, a better therapist to my clients. So it's ironic because being selfish enough in a healthy way to take care of myself makes me more selfless. If I am just pouring out to everybody else and ignoring myself, pretty soon, they're not going to get a very good deal. They have this sad, depressed, burned-out guy and say, "Go away." So I take care of myself so that I can continue to serve.

Jack Brown:

I remember meeting a couple of burned-out counselors and I was like--I was going to school to be a counselor at the time, and I was like, "I don't want to be like them because it's ugly." It's people first with me. And when you're coming just to work just to get a check, you're doing the people of disservice.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

And people can feel that.

Jack Brown:

And they can feel that. That's why I love about peer support. I have an opportunity to share my lived experience with someone and I watch the walls go down. Because he's looking at me as his equal or she's looking at me as her equal. And I love it. I didn't want to be a counselor. Too much paperwork.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Although you would've been a great counselor.

Dr. William DeFoore:

Oh, yeah.

Jack Brown:

I appreciate that.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

You have compassion.

Jack Brown:

I do. I have a colleague, he pushes the issue. I'm actually a LCDCI, licensed chemical dependency counselor intern.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Got it.

Jack Brown:

I need 2,000 hours so I can test to become a licensed chemical dependency counselor. It would--I promise you, and just me being honest, it would just be for the credential.

Jack Brown:

I got you.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

The boots on the ground, the micro work that I do is more important to me than the credential.

Jack Brown:

And that's what matters. I love that. All right. I got one for you now, Billy.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Okay.

Jack Brown:

All right. How did you get to be a knight?

Sir Billy Dorsey:

I wondered if I was going to get that question at some point. So I spent the last seven years producing global projects with my philanthropic arm through my company, the Bridge Life. One of those was a project called Your Word Project that we did with United Bible Societies, that is the world's largest Bible translator, distributor and publisher. So like American Bible Society is under their umbrella, the Bible societies of each country, our subsidiary to the United Bible Societies. And so I wrote a worship song. We had it translated into languages all over the world by some of the most famous Christian singers in each country. We released those songs, we did concerts in those countries, and the proceeds from that went to fund Bible translations in all those countries. The most successful of those projects was Spain. So you know where I'm going with that.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

And then afterwards, that's what put me on the radar of the Spanish crown. And then I produced a project with the Salvation Army over the last four years called The Safest Place Project that that's the one that we built the homeless for homeless people. And we used music and had families that had been homeless, Salvation Army helped them to get back on their feet. They shared their stories with me and I wrote songs based on those, produced a documentary based on those. We released it. That project brought in several million dollars and it built a bunch of homes. When that project became successful, the Royal Order reached out and offered me a knighthood. And so my first call, other than of course sharing it with my wife who was there when I got the call, was to reach out to my dad, who's military also 20 years retired Air Force. And my dad's the smartest man I know. Brilliant speaker, brilliant orator, he is a pastor, he's everything that I aspire to be. He's that. And so he was my first call outside of my wife. I said, "Is this real?"

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Because I'd always heard about Knights, sir Elton John, sir. So-and-so in the UK, but I didn't know that there were other legitimate royal orders that can offer you a knighthood. And so we did our homework and our research and we verified very quickly that it was legitimate. They had something called Fons honorum, which means the legal right to bestow titles and the such. And so I followed back up and said "I'd be honored." And so Prince Raphael and [inaudible 00:47:14] flew over from Spain. My family got to be there, my wife, my youngest daughter, my parents, my in-laws got to be there. And I was knighted in July of 2022 by the prince.

Jack Brown:

How big you got to be to get the prince to fly to you?

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Oh, man.

Jack Brown:

To knight you? Oh man, I'm doing you a solid. I know, right? Yeah. In my mind, and I'm just joking, brother.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

No, you're good.

Jack Brown:

In my mind like, "Oh, I'm going to knight you, but matter of fact, I'm going to come to you."

Sir Billy Dorsey:

No, trust me, it was nothing like that. But for me, the big thing is one, going through everything that I went through we're sharing about our experiences. When I was homeless and eating out of trash cans, I would've never imagined that I'd be kneeling and having royalty rise as a night and having that experience or any of the other opportunities that I am blessed to have now. And the thing that allows me to take it in stride is that internally, I'm always going to be that same person that was in that situation, that was homeless, that didn't know where my next meal was going to come from, that went through a period where I didn't want to live to see the next day. And I've evolved beyond that. I'm a different person in terms of my mentality and my perspective, my worldview. But at the core, I hold on to that so that I never lose perspective. That allows me to remember, instead of thinking I'm special, it's that anyone is special. And if they're just given the right opportunities to realize that and to implement the things that they realize, they can exceed even their wildest dreams for what they could accomplish. And that's what knighthood is for me.

Jack Brown:

Man, I really appreciate both of you guys.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Likewise.

Jack Brown:

And I want to say something I need to confess. I didn't read your bios on purpose.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

I got you. I never do when I do an interview.

Jack Brown:

I'm an organic person and that's why I say, Hey, we'll sit down and we'll have a conversation before the interview. And that was me getting to know you. And so I can build from there. Where I'll get this thing in my mind if I read the bio, I'll be read too deep into it. So I just like meeting people where they are, and that's what the work is that we do. Meeting them where they are. We do a lot of fundraising at AT&T Stadium. We work these concession stands. And again, I'm able to provide jobs for individuals. We pay them a small travel stipend, and they get an opportunity to go to AT&T Stadium. And that goes a long way with those individuals. So, yes, I wanted to tell you guys, I did that on purpose, so don't think I'm just like, "Dang, Jack is lame."

Jack Brown:

No, I'm not.



Sir Billy Dorsey:

Not at all.

Jack Brown:

I just don't like--I like learning about people on my own. I'm not that guy. I'm the guy you come to as a new person. When I'm new at a job and, "Hey, this person is like that." I don't like that person. And then not out of 10, if you point me to the person that you don't like, and I know that's probably going to be my new best friend. You are not going to like me either. You know what I mean? So, "You don't like nobody. So why wouldn't I be on the list?"

Sir Billy Dorsey:

No, you're good. I mean, to your point, we are not our resumes.

Jack Brown:

Correct.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Not our resumes. So it's a blessing to have accomplishments. It means that you've done something that other people see value in, but we are not our resumes. So you're doing exactly the right thing. And this was a wonderful conversation as a result of that.

Jack Brown:

I want to connect to your spirit. I want to know your spirit. I don't want to know who you are in words. We're all crafty with words and no disrespect--

Sir Billy Dorsey:

None taken.

Jack Brown:

...to nobody. We're all crafty. I want to make it eye catching and popping and you know what I mean? But who are you is what I want to know.

Dr. William DeFoore:

The heart comes through when you're face-to-face like this in the moment. The heart's going to come through, and the truth comes out of theirs.

Jack Brown:

Yeah. Alright, last question. Oh, let me say, I want to thank Hogg for this opportunity, for this interview and being a host. You guys are gracious and [inaudible 00:51:22]. I love y'all. Alright, last question. During the keynote, you talked about pain as both as a compass and a conduit. Can you say more about that?

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Sure. So many people, and William touched on it as well, he was referencing anger. But anger and pain to me are closely--they're first cousins. I think so many people take their pain and they allow themselves to be defined by it. They allow it to become something that in terms of the compass that it points towards whatever hurt them. The child whose parent was absent, the spouse who was abused or was betrayed or was left behind. They've gone to become defined by that. It's the expression "Hurt people hurt people." It's because they are using their pain to point inwards and carrying that out. Whatever hurt them, they're taking it out on other people or just wallowing in it and never realizing their potential. But when you understand that that same focus that you are allowing for your pain to become something that you dwell in, all it is is just a shift.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

It's literally a switch of, to William's other point as well, about looking for the good. "How can I take this thing that hurt me or this situation or this circumstance?" We're here at a mental health event, this diagnosis that I've been given, this chemical imbalance or whatever the case might be that has up to this point defined me and I've allowed it to consume me to some degree with pain, how can I just shift my perspective to say, "This may not go away, but how I look at it has the power to change every other aspect of my life?" It's a switch flip. So the compass that leads you to a destination, it points to true north. It allows you to know where you are and to find a way to where you're going. A GPS in your car is nothing but an electronic--But a GPS doesn't work unless you have a destination.

Jack Brown:

Correct.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

So as it relates to pain being a compass, it's a matter of deciding that I'm going to set the destination from being something that is self-defeating to something that allows me to utilize it to better the lives of other people and my own life in the process. As it relates to it being a conduit, we are constantly in every interaction--talking about feeling people's spirit--we're constantly pouring out in every interaction we have with other people. What you pour out is going to be determined by your perspective. By your worldview. There's a scripture that says, "From the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks." So what's in you is pouring out. You are a conduit, whether you're utilizing that in a positive way or not. Pain flows out that way, too. The parent--I remember watching some movie where the older brother--The younger brother was at school being a bully, and then all the other kids are terrified of this kid.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

But then they happen to see him with his older brother--I can't remember the film now--but they happen to see him with his older brother, and his older brother was beating him up. So now he's a bully to all the other kids because he's being bullied. That pain is a conduit. But if he had turned that around, and I'm using the film as an example, but in real life, if we take the things that hurt us and we choose to, instead of pouring out that venom and hurting other people, if we choose to decide that, "I'm going to find a positive way to be an advocate, I'm going to find a positive way to make sure that the things that damaged me, I don't allow them to influence how I interact with other people," your pain becomes a conduit for healing for others.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

It's the person that has an experience of now being nine years clean and has turned his life around that now has an organization that says to guys coming out of jail, "Met me give you something that allows you to make money in a healthy way. Let me give you a clean slate. Let me create an opportunity for you." You're using the pain of your experience as a conduit to deliberately and intentionally help other people to not have to go through what you went through. That's how you utilize pain as a conduit to help others. And I'm so proud of you, just a sidebar, for who you are, and watching you navigate last night through the room, how everyone--you may not even see it, that's why I'm saying something. Because the people in the eye of the storm sometimes can't see how others regard them, but how others look up to you and how you walking into the room lit up everybody that was interacting with you last night. It's because the pain that you've carried, all of the things that you've been through, the years that you felt like you weren't there for your children, but the decisions that you've made as a result are causing your pain to now be a conduit for healing for others.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

That young lady was in tears last night at the table with us.

Jack Brown:

Yeah, I almost cried.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

There was a young lady--We were talking about him not letting fear keep him from moving forward in what he's building. And a young lady that was sitting at the table was just ear hustling. She was just listening to what we were saying. She said, is it okay if I interject? And then goes on and tell him, "You being who you are changed my life." She's clean, what, 18 months?

Jack Brown:

Eighteen months.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Wow.

Jack Brown:

And she's at her first conference.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

But he couldn't see that because he's looking at all the things, the fear and the things that are in front of him, but they're not stopping him.

Jack Brown:

Right. He said that earlier. We were talking about my anxiety, and I was like, "Man, my anxiety is through the roof," but we do this, this, and he said, "Well, you don't let it stop you." I don't...again, the physical health aspect of it is alarming for me that comes with the anxiety, right?

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Yeah.

Jack Brown:

But I love what I do. I'm not used to receiving compliments. That's foreign for me. Right?

Sir Billy Dorsey:

I get it.

Jack Brown:

And I'm trying to focus on the good. I wanted to back up just a half a second because, how do I say this?

Jack Brown:

It is hard to find the positive things and change your perspective when everything around you is negative.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

But is everything around you negative?

Jack Brown:

In your--

Sir Billy Dorsey:

For example, when I was literally eating out of trash cans, there was a woman named Coretta, a Black lady. She was a crack addict. I'm in the middle of the worst period in my life. And this woman, she was, and I'll just say it, she was selling her body for the money to provide for her drug habit, but also to buy food. This woman, I didn't know her from Adam, I only met her because we were all in a shared situation of being homeless. I wasn't on drugs, but I was homeless along with them. This woman in the middle of the darkest period of my life would take money that she had earned from selling her body to make sure I was able to eat, and she didn't know me. So although every other aspect of my situation around me at that point was negative, here is somebody that is being kind and is sharing generosity with me when she didn't know me or owe me anything. I could have chosen to focus on the fact that I couldn't eat or I could have chosen to look at that glimmer of light in a human being that says, even though she's in a horrible situation herself, she's choosing to love on someone else.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

So is everything. This goes through everything William's about to talk about in his keynote. Is everything really negative around you, no matter how bad the situation is?

Jack Brown:

I have to retract my last statement.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Well, no, no, no, no. It's a conversation. Your kids, we'll use them as an example again because you shared it and because I'm so proud of you and the father that you've become and established yourself to be. They loved you even when you weren't there.

Jack Brown:

Right.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Was it negative, because all you could see was your absenteeism, or was there still the beauty there that your kids were longing for their father who is now active in their lives? We can focus on the negative, but it's up to--that's where the flipping the switch comes in.

Jack Brown:

Correct.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

The red car, what am I choosing to focus on? Nothing is all negative, no matter how bad it is.

Jack Brown:

I can normally flip that switch and find a positive in anything except myself.

Dr. William DeFoore:

Here's my contribution to this conversation, which I think is fabulous, is you mentioned earlier, Billy, about how when you focus on the good, it grows, it expands. So what we pay attention to grows. Now the problem with the negative emotions of anxiety and depression and that person, we get tunnel vision. The brain literally shuts down that ability to see the good, and all we can see is this horrible thing. And then that's when you have debilitating anxiety and debilitating depression. In that place, you go to someone who's in the midst of that and say, well, think positive. You might as well be speaking a foreign language. They don't understand. You can't relate. First, you've got to make a connection. You got to say, I'm with you. You're not alone. I know you're scared. I know you're hurting and the world looks bleak and dark to you, but I'm here. And when you make that connection, that's a little glimmer. And then they will often say, well, so-and-so still likes me a little bit. They might find their way out on their own, but making that connection and someone is lost in the darkness, man, you can't talk them out of it. You got to just be with them. And I know both of you guys know all about what I'm saying here because you've done that. You've been in the darkness yourself, and you had that woman who came and she fed you, and we've all been in that dark place and you've offered that to others that are lost in their darkness.

Jack Brown:

I have an example of that, and it goes along with that one cell that I needed. I was working for LMHI here in the metroplex, and I remember I was going into the detox center to do something, and there was a young lady standing off on the side, and I knew the look. I was like, "She's going to walk off," because the door is here, and she's on the other end of the building. So she's contemplating if I'm going in or not. And I was talking to some colleagues, and I stopped what I was doing, and I went and I talked to that young lady, and that young lady is clean today.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Come on, brother.

Jack Brown:

She got a job. She got her kids back. Not because of me. I just did what God told me to do.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

But you were obedient to do it. Don't dismiss your role in it.

Jack Brown:

And so I made sure I went and nobody talked to her. And she tells me thank you all the time. She's like, "Jack, I got my kids back because of you." A lot of times, why I minimize what I do is because I've been an egomaniac.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

I get that. I get that.

Jack Brown:

I got to keep self in check. I'm just being honest with you.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

I get that.

Jack Brown:

I got to keep to the point to where I tear myself down.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

I got you.

Jack Brown:

You know what I mean? I got to keep ego in check, but I'm working, changing my perspective.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Find the balance.

Jack Brown:

Yes.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Find the balance. I went through that. I believe God allowed me to go through being homeless to make sure that I would never allow my ego to get out. I firmly believe that is why I went through everything I went through. I mean, in addition to being able to minister to other people, God can't use ego, because you think it's all about you.

Jack Brown:

Right.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

But when you understand that you are graced to serve, it's still you being obedient in that. There's no shame in saying, "I'm grateful that I get to be the one God uses in that." As long as the focus isn't on the I, it's on the one using you and the people you can help.

Jack Brown:

And I love that, I get to see people get their family back. They probably one of them houses you built. You know what I'm saying, and I say that laughing, but those are the things these, so let me back up. What I always remember is the people that I serve in the homeless community is me.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Yeah, same.

Jack Brown:

Right? I never stopped being a good person. I never stopped being a God-fearing person. I never stopped being smart, I was just down on my luck. I was in a bad season in my life. And these are those same people. That woman did what she did, but the woman, the nurturer in her, the guide in her made her go get you something, make sure you had something to eat. Right? People don't know. The little homeless community is a community.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

It's a community.

Jack Brown:

You always got a mayor, but they look out for one another. And at that time, I was craving family. I was-- not even family. I was craving connection.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

I got you.

Jack Brown:

I just wanted to be connected to the world, and I wasn't getting that. And so the homeless community loved on me until I could get to the next place.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Same.

Jack Brown:

Right.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Same.

Jack Brown:

So thank you, gentlemen, so much for your time. I went a little bit over, but I really enjoyed this very, yeah, barely. We might be two minutes over really, because I think six, maybe we were supposed to start at 10:30. I think we were fairly close to that. And it's 11:36.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

Got it. Somebody's got a keynote to get ready for, right?

Dr. William DeFoore:

Yeah, yeah, have a little lunch.

Jack Brown:

All right. We will live stream your keynote.

Dr. William DeFoore:

Sounds good.

Jack Brown:

All right. Thank you guys so much.

Dr. William DeFoore:

You bet.

Sir Billy Dorsey:

My pleasure. Thank you, brother.

Jack Brown:

Yes.

Ike Evans:

We hope that you enjoyed that conversation, and thanks again to Jack Brown, Sir Billy Dorsey, and Dr. William DeFoore for blessing the podcast with their involvement and for sharing their unique insights. Before I let you go, I thought that I would take another dip into the deep well that is PeerFest by sharing with you some of the attendee testimonials that we gathered during the event. And once again, remember, it is a Texas thing. Enjoy.

Attendee 1:

I'm from Beaumont, Texas. My current position is the Drop-in center coordinator at [inaudible 01:05:07] Hope Center, which is a peer-run center. What brought me here this year is--this is actually my first time coming. I wanted to learn new things and meet new people that do the same thing that I do. I really believe that sharing our stories from my lived experience is such an inspiration. Many have shared your stories with me, and I enjoy sharing my stories with others. Being a peer specialist is truly a passion for me.

Attendee 2:



First time ever coming into one, I really enjoyed it. I met with some great people, very good, we networked, also learned how everybody can use resiliency to come back from their challenges. Also, it shows me that you can come back from anything. As long as you put God first, good things happen. And that's the main thing I learned. Learned about different nonprofits here, what they're doing, and they're doing some great things in the community. Great seeing a lot of people take care about the community a lot. And also just caring people, being around everyone who deal with challenges. Also, I deal with challenges myself, so it's also being good to be around those type of people and very nice general people. So I'm just here at PeerFest and I'm enjoying myself. Thank you.

Attendee 3:

What I'd like to say, I'd like to thank the Hogg Foundation and everybody who put this on. I've only been in the field for a short time, but it is tremendous just meeting people here that have done what I'm learning to do, but at the same token, just being on an open or even playing field with them and learning so much in seminars and different things. So I just want to thank the Hogg Foundation and everybody that's here and allowing me one to come and two to be a peer ambassador and just being able to give back even here. So thanks a lot.

Attendee 4:

Every support peer specialist, a certified mental health care specialist and the peer specialist supervisor. I have been around in the field for about a decade now and was actually able to go to the first PeerFest in 2016 in Galveston. This experience was quite a bit different. I'll say. I think the first one, it was fun and we had a lot going on, but there was less comradery. I think it felt like there was less kind of space just to just be. This time I think there were a lot more inviting of, you can do what you want, go where you want, you can have fun. We had this place, got a lot of really good perks. I got to do the ropes course and the flies, and that was so much fun. So yeah, I think that it was a really great experience overall. I think it was very welcoming and very friendly environment, and everybody was just very cognizant of the needs of each person that came.

Ike Evans:

And now for some final thoughts, like I said in the opener, this is just the second PeerFest that the Hogg Foundation has ever taken part in. The first one being back in 2016. You ought know that in 2020 there about to be another PeerFest, however and quite unfortunately, the pandemic forced us to scuttle those plans and much to the disappointment of the many who were involved with trying to make PeerFest happen a second time. It has been a recurring theme throughout the podcast that we take time to explore and appreciate the efforts that people make, even in turbulent times, to find one another, to build community, to take time away from all of their other very pressing concerns and shore up their spirits in companionship and fellowship with others. PeerFest exemplifies this, and this latest PeerFest is perhaps the best example yet of what I've been talking about.

Ike Evans:

And so if nothing else, I hope that you take from this episode even if you were not able to attend PeerFest this year, look for any opportunity to find community, whatever that means to you, whatever it may look like to you, especially if it seems that life just is not affording you the time and space in which to do that. In fact, that's when it becomes particularly important. So make those efforts, renew and strengthen those ties. Do it for the sake of your own wellbeing and for the sake of the lives of others that you hope to impact.

Ike Evans:

And that does it for this episode. We're so glad that you could join us. Production Assistance by Daryl Wiggins, Kate Rooney, and Anna Harris. Thanks, as ever, to the Hogg Foundation for its steadfast support. Just as taking care of ourselves strengthens our ability to help others, so it is as well that by helping others, we strengthen our own resilience. Please leave us a review on the podcast app of your choice. You can find us on Apple, Google Play, Spotify, TuneIn, or wherever you get your podcasts. And taking us out now is "Anna's Good Vibes" by my friend Anna Harris.

Ike Evans:

Thank you for joining us.