



JAMES **SCHRAMKO**

Purposeful Living: Navigating Your Business Journey in Good Mental Health with Amrit Sandhu

You can have business success and good mental health. Explore entrepreneurship with purposeful living in James's chat with Amrit Sandhu.



Amrit Sandhu

James: James Schramko here. Welcome back to my podcast. This is episode 1041. Today, we're talking about purpose and mental health and all things like that. And I've brought along my special guest, Omelet Sandhu. Welcome to the call. [laughs]

Amrit: [laughs] James Scrambled-eggs-ko. It is such a pleasure to be here, brother. Thank you so much for having me. [laughs]

James: We were just joking about how people can mix up names. Yeah, Scrambled-eggs-ko was probably one of the most extreme versions of mine. But of course, your real name is Amrit. And it's great to have you on this show. You haven't been here before, but I've been on your show. And we've known each other for hours now. So we go way back.

Amrit: [laughs] It's a real pleasure to be here, man. It was a really great conversation we had on the Inspired Evolution podcast as well, and I got a lot from it. So hoping to be able to return the amount of value here today as well. Thank you so much for having me, Bro.

A timely and important subject

James: Well, it's my pleasure. And it's such an important topic. We're going on a journey of mindset and discovery, and learning about ourselves as operators of the business. I think when we have a small business, we kind of build a lot of our identity and our life around that business. And also, the business can go as well as we can as a person. Like, you know, if we had major hangups and issues, of course, we wouldn't even start a business. So that's like the extreme example of how much it can affect your business.

We've all seen an entrepreneur go a bit off the rails for various reasons, from negative circumstances, unlucky circumstances, you know, they could drop out of the sky in a helicopter, or we've seen people who get canceled because of different viewpoints, from major organizations, etc. So things happen to us along the way. And I was just sort of reflecting on this the other day. I feel like entrepreneurship, sometimes it's like, two steps forward, one punch in the face.

And we can take all of that and it can become heavy. And it seems like you've been helping people work their way through around a couple of the macro points, like what are you supposed to be doing in the first place? And then when you're doing it, how can you maintain that mental health so that the journey is not too difficult, and you just want to give up? Why don't you share with us the sort of work you've been doing?

The identity and mindset piece

Amrit: Yeah, it's an interesting piece, the identity piece, because I think it's one of the largest bodies of work you can actually do on yourself is really trying to understand the identity that you roll. I think, I lovingly joke, after a while, all the personal development work balls into just playing identity politics with yourself after a certain point, and that's really where the mindset piece comes into the play.



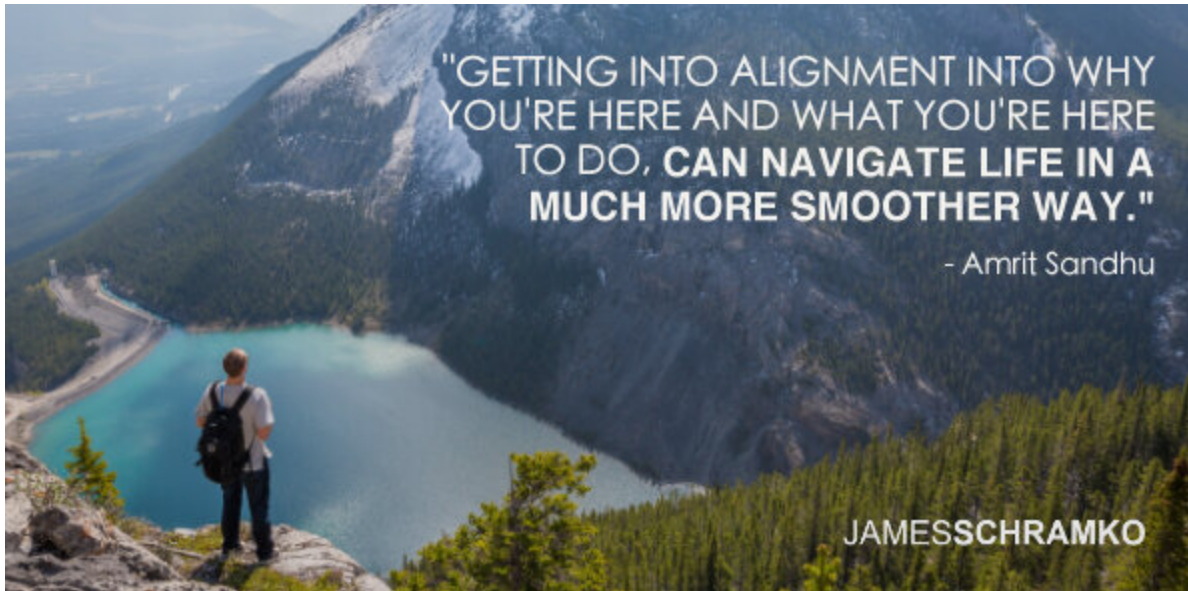
You know, people talk about abundance, manifestation, all the things that they want to try and attract. It really comes down to your relationship with yourself. And at the heart of that is, how do I identify with myself, right? And the two steps forward and take one punch in the face is very common.

I was actually just having that exact conversation with another dear friend of mine yesterday. And, yeah, the key piece in there that we were having the chat about last night was, again, if you know that you're going to take two steps forward, and you know, take one punch in the face, every time - not every time, but most of the time, if that is the entrepreneur's, sort of, you know, credo, then you definitely want to be taking steps in the direction around something that matters enough to you to be able to take the hits, right, that Rocky 4 sort of conversation, take the hits and get back up.

But if you're traveling in a direction that doesn't really matter to you, isn't really inspiring, is someone else's agenda, doing it just for the finances, in certain instances, that'll work for some time. But a lot of people live an entire life, you know, struggling through that. But what I found that it is a struggle, again and again, for the amount of people that I've coached, right?

That ultimately, if you find something that you're in alignment to your passions with, it makes it so much easier to show up for it again, with all the knocks that had kind of come your way, especially with entrepreneurship. One of my favorite quotes, which is a tough quote to swallow, is Elon Musk, you know, entrepreneurship is like sitting in a dark corner, all alone by yourself for extended periods of time, chewing on glass, right?

So there is that, you know, it is lonely, it is difficult. And, you know, he's got a mission that's bigger than him. He wants to make us an interplanetary species. Right? So when you look at it that way, it's pretty remarkable. And he's got a mission. Right? That matters to him, for some reason or the other.



"GETTING INTO ALIGNMENT INTO WHY YOU'RE HERE AND WHAT YOU'RE HERE TO DO, CAN NAVIGATE LIFE IN A MUCH MORE SMOOTHER WAY."

- Amrit Sandhu

JAMES SCHRAMKO

And so, I think when it comes down to really, why are you showing up? Why it gives you meaning? Brings us back to purpose. And so yeah, I fundamentally believe that, you know, and this is, starts bleeding into a bit of a spiritual perspective, but I do believe everybody's here for a reason. It's not just a coinkidink, or it's not just a coincidence. And yeah, getting in alignment into why you're here and what you're here to do, can navigate life in a much more smoother way, especially when it comes to your business offerings. Yeah.

James: Yeah, I wouldn't have thought of Elon's life navigates in a smooth way. Is it possible people attract drama into their life on a continuing basis? I mean, he's embroiled in all sorts of wrangles with Twitter/X. He has disrupted an automotive industry; he's doing space exploration. Apparently, he forgets his own birthday and sleeps in his office a lot, which sounds terrible. You know, it must be hard on his kids. I think about that.

What demons do you run from?

Amrit: Yeah, and I think it's really interesting, because if we're honest with ourselves, and we dig deep, there's usually two things that are driving us, you know, the podcast is called the Inspired Evolution. Absolutely, your inspirations drive you as well. But, you know, if we're going to have a holistic, robust conversation about it, we are also running from our demons to some degree, right? We have traumas, we have challenges.

And, you know, I definitely am not an expert on Elon Musk. So I can't say whether what he's running from or what he's running towards. But I think it's important to have that view as well, to just make sure like, you know, a big part of like, me growing Inspired Evolution, just to sort of give people an idea what it looks like, growing a YouTube channel and building a social media following like, one of my biggest challenges is an anti-value of mine, which is significance, right? Like, I struggle with insignificance. I want my time here on the earth to have meant something. Right?

So having that clarity is like, oh, a lot of what I'm doing is running away from insignificance. Right? So if I'm on this path, now I can sort of see that I'm actually being driven by something that is not necessarily the most refilling of my cup. Let's just put it that way. Right? So what are some of the things that do fill up my cup? So it's like health, family, right? My top values are connection, contribution and celebration. But in there, I'd like to sort of unpack what I really find the most joy around is like, family, taking time to basically go to the gym and go for a walk, like looking after my health and vitality. Those are the key places, and freedom is really up there, which is, again, an ode to what the Inspired Evolution is about.

So there are things that are pulling me forward. And there are things that I'm also repulsed by, but it's probably a good way of looking at it, right? As a magnet, you're sort of pushed away from certain things and we're pulled towards other things as well. And yeah, don't imagine Elon's life is super smooth. And it is a curious thought experiment to think about what drives him to do such things of such a massive level.

And, you know, we've had some conversations on the podcast around trauma and your nervous system and the things that sort of get pent up in your body as well, and how you sort of react from that place. So it's an interesting foray into also recognizing that, you know, childhood years that we spend between zero and seven form so much of us subconsciously, right?

When you start really looking into mindset, there's multiple types of brainwave frequencies that we can occupy at any given time. And we spend most of zero to seven in a delta wave state, right? Which is basically hypnosis, which is why we learn things so well, right? We're in like, a sponge state, we just soak things up. But we've soaked up things, potentially modeling patterns and behaviors, you know, from our parents that don't necessarily serve us.

But then also checking out some things like, okay, if I play the victim, mom will respond lovingly then, you know, we act out for love. So they don't have to be big T traumas, like you got into a car accident. You know, there's these little niggly things that then play out down the line, which are like little T traumas, if you want, that sort of play out and dictate, you know, like what you're driven to avoid and what you're like, attracted towards.

James: When you said car accident, I immediately thought of Brendon Burchard, because I've seen him crying on stage so many times talking about the exact same thing. It's like he never moved past it, and it feels like marketing to me. I'll be able to tell you all about Elon Musk soon, I just got this huge book arrive from Walter Isaacson, who did the Steve Jobs one, which was probably one of the best books I've ever read.

Amrit: Yeah, I'm halfway through the Steve Jobs one, actually.

The chasing of significance

James: Such a good book. Well, this is brand new. And I'll be able to update listeners what I've discovered about Elon after it. Obviously, just a fascinating, unusual character. And it does make me wonder about things like that. But just back to your point about significance. Slight sore point there, actually, I once purchased the domain significant.com at auction. And I got it for a steal, too. It was something like \$12,000.

And then the Auction House basically reneged on the deal, they didn't transfer it to me. I went back to the holder to get the electronic passcode to send to me the authority code. And they said, Oh, no, no, that's not supposed to be sold, that just expired because your system was broken. And they basically kept it. It sucked, because I'd already identified, and this is about 12 years ago, I'd already identified that that's what drives most people, we want to be significant.

But then it comes down to this sort of subcategory. Who do we want to be significant to? Is it us? Or is it for other people? And, you know, I know other people, a friend of mine, Jaemin Frazer, for example, he's coming on this show next, he built his whole business around this concept of insecurity, that if you can fix that, you can fix most things, and that most people are walking around insecure.

And I love what you just said before, the kid who has a problem gets the attention from the mommy or whatever. That's the same deal that Jaemin talks about where there's a payoff for having an unresourceful state. So if people are upset or depressed, they can keep using that to get things they need, or to have other people pay them attention.

So when you said that we have to understand ourselves sooner to find our purpose or whatever, how do you suggest we go about having that conversation or going through that process?

Amrit: We're already halfway through the process in the conversation that we're talking about. Right? So we've talked about the things that we're repelled by, when having conversation, deep conversation around significance, and then also values that pull you forward.

Starting with your values

So ultimately, getting clear on your values, I think, is the fundamental place to start.

Pretty much everybody that I go into a coaching journey with, that's where we start. Because I find, even if we start looking at, okay, what is it that, you know, you want to build a business around? What is it that you really want to achieve in the world? Because I find a lot of people have a curiosity, right?

So you can have a curiosity around coffee. Yeah. And then you're like, Oh, I want to go build a business around it. You know, and sure, you can absolutely do that. But you know, over time, it didn't really have a lot of passion in it for you. It was just a curiosity, and you built a business around it. Now you've created this behemoth of a vehicle, maybe you've done well in it. And now it's kind of your trap. It's like it owns you. Right?

James: Or it's no longer fun.

Amrit: Yeah, right?

James: It's not fun waking up at four going into the coffee shop to open up by 5:30 to get the message from your staff saying that they can't come in today. And that your delivery of the beans is delayed. And people start coming in. That's like, gosh, I used to like coffee, but now I don't like it anymore.

Amrit: And it murders something that you were curious about. But the challenge I find in there is people don't take the time to cultivate their passions to get clear on where their values show up the most. For those that want to tune into how to find their values, inspiredevolution.com/values or amrit.coach/values, 20 minutes from now, you'll be as clear as I am. You know, connection, contribution, celebration for me is what I show up for. Right?

So James, should we do a podcast? Do I get to connect? Do I get to contribute? Are we going to celebrate life a little bit more? Absolutely. Right? So it's a total full body yes, for me, right? Am I going to be a podcaster? Yes. Connection, contribution, celebration. Am I going to be a coach? Connection, contribution, celebration.

The career I came from, right? So was it, engineering manager? Connection? Not really. Contribution, somewhat, but I had to really look at the outcome and really convince myself that it was there. Celebration, not really. Right? And that's an amazing career for somebody to be an engineering manager. Many people told me that, and I know people that are out there, they're amazing engineering managers. But it just wasn't suited to me. Right?

So there's nothing wrong with a career, it's just trying to fit a square peg into a round hole. Right? So I belonged in something that becomes much more aligned to what we're doing today, teaching coaching, that sort of stuff, right? And so, getting clear on my values, then goes, Okay, if we do build out something like, exactly how I describe it to you, if I'm building out a coaching business, will I get the opportunity to connect? Yes. Will I get the opportunity to contribute? Yes. Will I get the opportunity to help people celebrate life a little bit more?

That kind of feels like it's something you should do, Amrit. And honestly, if I speak my truth, I would - and I have done it for free because I get so much from that. It's who I am. We talked about the identity piece before, right? I was having this chat with a client yesterday. And he was like, I would love to make something part of my life. You know, like, I would love to make this business part of my life.

And I was like, Yeah, but is it who you are? And it stumped him for like, 10 minutes, he just sort of stuttered and worked his way through it, is it who I am? And it's interesting, right? Because connection, contribution, celebration is who I am, those are my values. Then I'm just looking for vehicles where I can express that.

Now, coaching is a vehicle where I can express that. Yeah, but it's who I am, I'm connecting, I'm contributing, I'm celebrating, I'd be doing this, I do this with my friends all the time. Like, I'm the go-to person for advice. Touch wood, right? They just call me up, and I'm just that guy. Then I've gotten savvy over time and figured out how to monetize it, so I can support myself, my family, etc., through it over time. And based on the conversation we had on our podcast, still learning, still growing, right? About how to do that better and better as well. Yeah.

When people tell you what to do

James: So it's interesting that you're audacious enough to think that you have a choice in this. I imagine there's some doctors, lawyers, accountants, from cultural families, who were told that's what they're going to be doing.

Amrit: Yeah, so for me specifically, as well, I think I'm a great case study, because I'm Indian by heritage, right? Hence the omelet. [laughs] And I had the option growing up of becoming a doctor, or a lawyer, or an engineer, or a failure. Those were my four options.

And me being the overachiever, again, you know, running away from insignificance, and, you know, being the overachiever, looking for, again, that connection, which was my highest value, trying to get my parents' approval, I was really good because I was really good at Math and Physics, it was just something I was, you know, I can just speak maths, touch wood, you know, the language, and I just got it.

But also, my parents wanted me to be a doctor, typical immigrant family, right, from India. And so, I was like, I'm going to combine both. I'm going to build intelligent prosthetics, I'm going to become a mechatronics engineer, automate, you know, like, that's medicine and engineering, everything wrapped in one, I'm going to do both, like, watch me go.

And that's the career and the trajectory that I went down. Right? And, yeah, it's interesting, because the word audacious is interesting, because when you look at it, it's basically audacious only because of all the sea of programming that you're embedded in, right? Societal, cultural, like, I can't even blame my parents on wanting me to be a doctor. It's - society gave so much prestige to Indian kids that became doctors, right? The Indian kids that then became engineers, that became lawyers, right?

And that they just soaked that into their subconscious, it's like a societal-based thing as well. I'm not putting anybody on the hook, I'm not letting anybody off the hook. But the key thing in there is discerning that, is this in alignment to who I really want to show up as? And I'll tell you this interesting point, James, because I remember when I got out of high school, touch wood, I did really well.

And you know, and I don't want to alienate anybody that didn't, but I just sort of say it for the point of the story, which I remember when I went to put my subjects in, because you get to choose your top six subjects at the top six universities you want to go to, and you get to choose. And I chose Robotics Engineering, right? Or like mechatronics, automation, you know, at the top four universities.

And then at the bottom there, I had psychology as number five, and I had physio as number six. Both health and wellness sort of oriented and was, you know, and I look at what I'm up to today with the podcast, everything's about wisdom, wellness, success and fulfillment, right? And I remember having this moment as I was sitting there about to click submit on my choices, looking at like, everything I had sort of groomed myself and society had groomed into me, my parents, my school, everybody, right?

And I remember looking at it and just having this moment and you know, intuition is a very deep fascination of mine where the voice, that deep voice comes from, I had this moment of intuition, touch wood, and I look back and I go, what would this look like if I just put it the way that I wanted it to be?

And I remember doing the exercises, I was like, Oh yep, bum, bum, bum, bum bum, psychology, physiotherapy, and then all the automation engineering, right, followed right after. And I remember looking at it, and I viscerally felt the panic. It was like, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, that's not right. That's wrong. Yeah? It was absolutely fuck*ng right. Pardon my French. Yeah, it was absolutely right for me.

But I was groomed to believe that it was wrong because of the sea of programming that I swim in, or swam in. Right? And so, then I quickly flicked it back, and clicked submit, and off I went. And I got accepted into university, right? Ensued six years of depression as at that point, because I was showing up for something, an independent learning environment, where I was meant to be someone that was really gifted academically and performing very poorly, right?

And so then I started to like, that's where the journey of recognizing, what is going on here? It's like you're showing up for something that you don't care about, and you have to show up. It's an independent learning environment. And you're not showing up, and you're not succeeding. And the identity that I had up until that point was, I succeed really well, right? Things that I invest my time and energy in, and this is what I've chosen, I've chosen apparently, to commit my time and energy too, but I don't think I really chose.

James: No, I don't think you really chose, you had the illusion of choice, maybe from a predetermined outcome. It's interesting, the path I took, because when you did your high school certificate, was it out of 100? Or 500?

Amrit: It was out of 100. Yeah.

James: When I did it, way back in the olden days, it was out of 500. And I got 227, I think, or 223, something. I didn't even pass, not even half a mile. And the only university course that I qualified for was food technology at Penrith, which was the other side of Sydney. And I didn't feel like I wanted to learn how to make peanut butter.

So I declined that, ended up doing an associate diploma in accounting. And I'm not really an accounting type. I mean, I'm okay with the numbers. And I got most of the way through it. But I didn't even finish that.

Amrit: Why did you choose that?

James: Again, my parents thought it would be a good grounding course to do to set me up for whatever else I'm going to do later. And in their mind, I imagine, I could use that as a bridge towards getting back into a proper university course. And they'd invested a small fortune into exclusive private school, because that was the best thing that they could do for their kid. And I don't blame them at all for that.

I'm literally in the same scenario now as with another young kid lining up for school, looking at what are the best options for my child as a parent, and so I totally relate to that. So I don't blame them at all. I did not enjoy school, and I didn't perform well at school. I believe I probably had something like ADHD at school, I have a lot of trouble focusing, and it was diagnosed, and I was given Ritalin.

I was also younger than everyone else in my school because I came from a different state, migrating from Victoria to New South Wales. I ended up just being very, almost at the youngest end of the scale. So everyone was just a year older, or they're physically developing quicker.

Amrit: Makes a difference.

James: Yeah, it did, in an all-boys school. It was basically hell for me, not a good experience. But it probably would have been like that at any school. So again, I want to be very clear, because I know my mom listens to this podcast, she did the right thing at the time, all the right choices. It's just the school, the academic environment wasn't for me.

And then as my kids have gone through school, I've heard the teachers keep talking about the same thing. We're building walls here for the house, and we'll put the roof on it and then you'll go to university. And even as very recently as just two days ago, we were doing an interview with the school, and they're talking about how they've listened to the employers and found out what they're looking for and they help guide the students to be perfect to be employed by these employers.

Back in my mind, I'm screaming, well, why the f*ck would I want that? Do we ever build students that might be employers? Because, like, I'm an employer now. I contribute an enormous amount of tax back to the society. Not just me, but even the people that I hire are all putting money back into society. I'm creating value as an employer.

I think the main point I'm trying to make here is the earlier you can get off the path of what you've been told you have to do, the easier it's going to be for you to find what works for you.

What will you be when you grow up?

But I do have one question around this. Do we even need to know what we want to be when we grow up yet?

Amrit: It's a great question, Bro. Yeah. So I think that's completely unfair. That, you know, at some point, we hammer kids with a question of, what do you want to be when you grow up? What are you going to be when you grow up? And even like, me sitting in front of that PC, choosing which subjects I'm going to be, you know, investing my time and energy in my, you know, to like, my entire trajectory in many ways, which is what we're told, right, by the way, like, when you unplugged.

Anyway, that's another conversation. But we're told our entire trajectory is based on, okay, if you go to university, or what happens to you when you come out of school, right? And so, it's this immense amount of pressure. It's like, what is it you're going to do? And I think, even like, I don't even have to be who I am to really realize that like, touch wood, like, that's kind of, how are you expected to know what you're meant to be at 50 when you're 18? That's 32 years away.

You've only seen 18 years of life. And were you really like, sensible for, you know, the first 12, 13 odd? Probably not, right? And so, you've had what, like six years' worth of somewhat adult, maybe, barely adult, right, maybe five years, let's be kind to it. You've got five years of somewhat semi adult years, which you really don't. And now you're meant to pick what you're going to be doing 32 years from now.

James: Well, here's the thing, I reckon, kids starting school now, the courses and the opportunities available to them by the time they finish school, which, let's call it 12 years. How would you predict that? I mean, good example like, because I'm 52. Let's wind the clock back to when I was even 22. There was no internet. Right? How am I going to say, Oh, I'm going to be a podcaster on the internet and coach people with an online portal. How am I going to say that?

Amrit: Online, what? [laughs]

James: But here's the thing that gives me a little sort of tingles in my spine, I don't know if it'll work for you or not. But one of the books that you can probably see just about where my finger is, if you're listening to this podcast, I'm pointing to something on my bookshelf, some red and green books. They're my great grandfather's journals. He used to write journals out and they've been photocopied and turned into print, into books, thanks to one of my relatives, which is great.

But it turns out he did something very similar to me back 100 years ago. He used to travel to different countries. He would engage contractors when he went to those countries, like he'd go to the west coast of South Africa and he would hire people to carry around their gear and to set up camp. He would buy mineral mines and deposits, mineral things, and then he'd get on the ship. And then he'd go and sail to another place, like the United States. And then he would sell the mining rights and the outcomes and stuff.

So he was buying and selling, he was doing geo global arbitrage. He was using contract labor, he was journaling his journey. And he would also partner with people, and he was one of the founding members of the Sydney Stock Exchange. But he would go and set up mines and then get people to buy in and to be partners in that. And then he would then float that company in stock exchange and sell shares and stuff. So he's an investor as well.

So turns out a lot of those things are in common with what I do. I've traveled around, built a global market, I have contract team members, and I have done arbitrage. I've bought and sold. I'd buy labor and produce services and then sell that when I had my SEO business and my website business. But there was no way that he could have predicted the internet.

But my main point that I'm making today is with what's happening with AI, and with, I guess, global politics and there seems to be some turmoil, I imagine there's always turmoil, but there seems to be quite a lot of turmoil at the moment, I imagine it will be an unfair question, even if you're 50, to know what you want to be when you grow up.

I feel like I'm coming out of my apprenticeship. I've served an apprenticeship as an entrepreneur where I've been able to get pretty good at some of the things that are important. Like the sales and the marketing, the team, the scaling, the time management and all of that productivity. And now whatever I turn my energy to, which in particular is my partnerships, they go well. But I've been pretty picky with my partnerships. It's taken me eight years so far to find the right partnerships that work well.

But there's still that idea that maybe I'll cross categories into something else, so I'm starting to make content for my [surfing site](#), and socials. And that's really fun. But I don't want it to be the coffee scenario. I don't want it to kill my surfing. So I'm cautious about that. But there's this great opportunity around, if we can let go of the need to do things to please other people. And if we can let go of the need to do something to please our parents. Of course, you don't want to upset your parents, you want them to be proud of you, perhaps, deep down, like the love of the parent is probably a big strong driver.

But also, if you feel judged by them, that can handicap you. If you feel that you'll be judged by them, and it would stop you ticking the right box on your application form instead of the wrong one, then that can have massive consequences. You've spent half a decade in the doghouse. And I don't know - have you ever spoken to your parents about that? And what would they say about that?

Amrit: Yeah. And the conversation has happened, because obviously, they're aware of everything that Inspired Evolution stands for, right? It's people living life on their own terms, dedicated towards freedom, and basically blasting through a whole bunch of bullsh*t limiting beliefs that society imposes amongst us.

But again, if you tune back to the episode, the way I dialogued it before is much the same. It's, you know, they were doing the best they knew with what the information they had. And so, when we had the conversation, they were like, we just wanted a really secure future for you.

And back to even what you're describing, and I think this brings a few points together, back to when it came to us needing to be able to choose what we're going to be doing for our future, and also, then back to the point of, yeah, with AI and information technology, like, I'm hyper aware that me as a podcaster is not something that was offered to me at university, similar to what you just described before. Right?

James: Well, you would also be hyper aware that the AI can script and produce shows with your likeness in the future as almost, which should be deep fakable to the point where we don't know if it's you or not.

Amrit: Yeah, absolutely right.

James: We're already at the point where we could make a video with just you in this scene talking that could be pre-scripted, because we've already seen those ads coming through, but I can imagine it's going to accelerate. So like, we've got to keep working with the basis that the things we even decide that we want to do might not be around for us to do.

It's not a matter of age

Amrit: And so, decide is a really good word, right? Because in there, when it comes to the decision, instead of looking at the outcome, back to what I described before, which was, if all I can help my son with really is understand a whole bunch of values and morals, right, and if he's really clear on his values, which his values don't have to be my values, and they're very unlikely that they're going to be, some of them are going to be aligned. And would I like him to have the value of family, absolutely, I would, but if he's not that way inclined, then he's not that way inclined, we're all different, right?

But now that the key thing is, no matter what careers present in an AI future, when I'm 50, and I have to say I take a lot of heart from you saying, I'm 52 and I've just come out of my entrepreneurial apprenticeship. And if you guys are wondering why I'm taking so much heart from that, go back to listen to the episode we did at Inspired Evolution.

James: You know, I just went for a surf before this episode, which is why I'm so happy. But I'm only 10 years in my surfing career. So I'm still a grom, I'm a surfing grom. So I have such a fresh and new and enthusiastic approach to this sport, because I'm just in the - I'm literally as good as a 10 year old, if that.

Amrit: [laughs] And you get newbie gains as well, got the newbie gains as well?
[laughs]

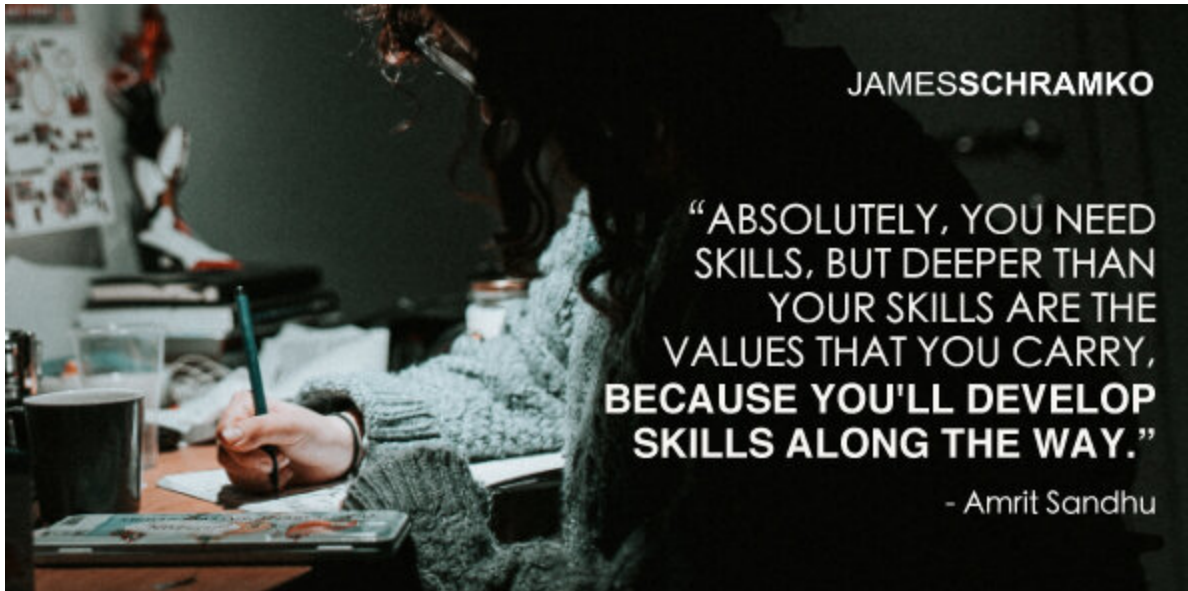
James: I do get newbie gains. There's a saying in surfing, I'll lose everyone here, but when you do a turn, you'll see that it makes some spray. And they call that throwing buckets. Like I'm up to maybe I can throw a teacup, I can like maybe splash about a cup's worth of water out, like little tsk, tsk. But in my mind, I'm Kelly Slater. He's the same age as me. So that's a very good competitive comparison. This guy's 11 times world champion, same age as me, and I'm like, about as good as a 10-year-old. But I'm still having a lot of fun with it.

But I do take the approach that no matter what our starting point is, that can still be an early part in the overall journey rather than - it could be a little bit defeatist to think, well, maybe I've had the best day of my life, and it's already passed, or I've had the best relationship and it's already passed, or I've maxed out my career, and it's already passed. I definitely don't look at things like that.

What options should you invest in?

Amrit: Yeah. And I think it's really valuable. And I think we're bleeding into another topic, which I'd love to riff on. So just to tie off what I was saying before, was, yeah, now that I know my values, no matter what career presents itself, what options present themselves, connection, contribution, celebration, I know I'm willing to invest in that, right?

And especially, that's been super helpful when it comes to - people pitch me things all the time now that they see an online social media offering. And it's like, yeah, does this help me connect, does this help me contribute, does this help me celebrate? And if it doesn't pass at least two of those three, it's a no, as amazing as the opportunity could really be. Because I know that down the line, it's going to feel like that coffee business we discussed earlier. And I know this partnership doesn't feel right for me, because it's not aligned to my values.



So, you know, navigating an uncertain future when you know, AI and technology is evolving so fast. Yes, you know, absolutely, you need skills, but deeper than your skills are the values that you carry, because you'll develop skills along the way. I learned how to podcast over the last six and a half years. I learned how to coach over the last six years. I learned how to do public speaking, right? So I learned all these skills, because I was driven by my values.

They're so much more fundamental and innate than where I really land, with just skills, right? So if I'm looking at just, you know, what skills can I develop for what future do I want, absolutely, it's a useful conversation, but check in first with what your values are. So that you're actually building something that's in alignment.

And the beautiful thing is, and I don't know how to describe this, but I'm going to give it a crack. Because when I started, I wasn't a coach, I wasn't a public speaker. I was following my values and connection, contribution, celebration. I ended up with a podcast, but it started with me actually inviting people over to my living room every fortnight, and we would just shoot the sh*t on philosophy, spirituality, personal development, business, entrepreneurship, all this random sort of stuff, every fortnight, and then that grew into a podcast. There was plenty of connection and contributions and celebration in our living room.

James: That's every two weeks for our international audience.

Amrit: Sorry, yeah. Geez. Some people call it bi-weekly, which confuses the Aussies.

James: That's got ambiguous meanings.

Amrit: Yeah. I know, right? And so the gathering in my living room grew into a podcast, and then it grew into a coaching, and then it grew into public speaking. Now I do all the above, right? But it's just morphed and evolved. And I think the part that struck, like I struggle to articulate to people is, because I was doing one thing that was so aligned to my values, it just naturally opened up the next thing.

And it felt so robust, even though I was a newbie at it. Like, when I started coaching, it was just natural, because it was like, I've been having these conversations in my living room with people that are deep, profound and transformative for like, years already. And now I'm just having them with you one on one, right?

So there's like this momentum that gathers when you're living in alignment to your values. Despite whatever vehicle you invest yourself in, you pick up so much more because you're just wired. It's the lens you look at the world, it's the pillars of who you are, that you pick things up and more momentum is generated in your offerings because it is in alignment, you're still kind of doing the same thing because you're still doing you.

We've all got filters

James: Well, I think you're building a back category of experience that guide your scoring system, your filters. We've all got filters, whether we acknowledge them or not. I go to great lengths to help people who work with me identify what decision-making filters will keep putting them in a good position. Because I have found some people keep attracting themselves towards chaos. Because they don't have filters.

Or if you're not conscious of it - I've seen this before, and maybe you can relate - I've seen people - okay, I'm going to talk about myself here. I'll be vulnerable. Sometimes I buy the same thing over and over again because I just like them, and I don't have a filter to say, you've already got that. Example, I keep buying 6'6 twin fin surfboards. I just love them. Even I have more than a couple. If I saw a really good one that suits me, I'm just going to get it anyway.

But a normal person might have a filter like, we've already got a 6'6 twin fin, let's get something different. It's like so, or people who keep buying black and white stripy shirts, not mentioning any names, or like they don't have a mechanism to prevent them from repeating the same behavior. I'm not saying it's bad to buy a twin fin surfboard, 6'6 twin fin surfboards are good.

Amrit: No one's saying that. [laughs]

James: Yeah, or you know, black and white stripy shirts, they're awesome anyway, that's your look and your style, get as many as you want. But some people do it with bad things that aren't good for them. Like, maybe they buy a lot of alcohol, or they waste money on things that are consumed, and they never get a real benefit from it or it only gives them negative experiences. But they keep doing it because there's no filter stopping them.

How Amrit beat depression

How did you turn your depression upside down?

Amrit: Yeah, it was, whew, well, basically, following along the timeline and trajectory where I left off before getting into university, six years into university, I basically got kicked out, which was seismic, because we talked about into schools before and touch wood, again, you know, when I left, I was only half a mark off of 100 out of 100. Right. So like, I had solid identity around being an academic.

James: Amrit, what happened to the other half? [laughs]

Amrit: [laughs] That sounds very familiar. And then imagine that guy, like six years down the line, is now being kicked out of an academic institution which he works so hard to get into. And I knew something was wrong at that point. Like, you're not like, because I was still young. You know, like I was still what, 23 or something. Like, it's not like I had my life figured out as of that point.

And I remember just knowing like, something was completely belly up, because it wasn't like, innate, it wasn't intuition. My whole world came crashing around with me. My friends were like, What the f*ck, who are you, you've been lying to us about, you know, you doing well and all this like, because I was keeping it a secret, I was burying sh*t. Right? Just burying, and you know, you mentioned the word depression, being, the expression like I was burying so much stuff, with my parents, with my love relationship, I was just, I wasn't able to authentically express - express being the opposite of depress - in my story.

Now, quick little asterisk in there. There are definitely people that have chemical imbalances in their mind and can be supported through medication. But for a lot of us that have like, situational depression, right, which is, again, living it out of alignment with your values, like, which is what was happening to me.

James: And I've heard it also described as depression can be when you don't know what you want.



Amrit: Yeah, it's, well, you don't know what your values are. So how are you meant to know what you want? You're just doing what everybody else wants you to do. It's the same thing as like, you get a job, you're doing what your boss wants you to do, right? But when you're an employer, you have to have a vision, you have to have values, you have to be clear on what the f*ck the task is. So that everybody can get behind it. Right? Because otherwise, if you're lost, then your employees are lost, right? And that's where leadership comes into owning a business as well.

James: But you have to transfer it onto yourself.

Amrit: Absolutely.

James: That consult with the mirror. Powerful application.

Amrit: Yep. Yep, having real hard conversations with yourself.

James: So you basically got kicked out. Was that like, the moment of truth? The curtain's up.

Amrit: It was the moment of truth.

James: Wizard of Oz.

Amrit: Yeah, the curtain was up. And I could see that, like, I was in a sea sh*t. Like, basically, I'd created a whole bunch of stuff that wasn't working.

James: So you took responsibility for it.

Amrit: Not really, to be honest. I knew that something was wrong. And I went to see a doctor, right? And I'm so grateful that the conversation around depression and anxiety is becoming more and more widespread. At the time, you know, this is over a decade ago now, it had just started getting into society.

And I still have this image in the back of my head of a bus that rolls past, and it just had depression, question marks, speak to your GP. I don't know where that filtered into my subconscious, but it made a massive difference for me. One in two people now across the globe are anxious or depressed. Like, that is a f*cking staggering statistic.

James: That's quite a lot of people.

Amrit: Right? That's a lot.

James: Billions.

Amrit: Yeah. And so, I remember that bus, and I was like, see a GP. And I was like, I don't know, but like, I didn't even know that I was depressed. But I knew something was wrong. I went to the doctor and I didn't know where else to go. And I ended up speaking to the doctor, having a chat to the doctor, the doctor's like, Oh. Like, he did this whole mental health check, right? And he's like, Dude, like, he didn't put it this way, but he's like, I'm going to refer you to a psychologist free of charge. Went to the psychologist. The psychologist was like, Yup. You've been struggling with depression this many years.

And this is where the filter, back to your question, came undone, because she said, Listening to your story, I can identify, you're going to be okay in a few months. And I was like, What? You just told me I struggled with depression for six years. I'll be okay in three months? This was like the macho man in me, just like, I've been a victim, man. And you're just saying I'm going to be all right in three months? I was attached to that.

But the key thing she said was, You're going to be okay because (A) you know something's wrong, your whole world's come crashing down around you. And you're looking to change. You're here, right? Very useful points in coaching to recognize that. That didn't mean anything to me at the time. But fast forward as a coach, career as a coach was like sh*t, those are valuable.

The thing she said to me was, You need to install honesty as a value. Just be honest about your situation to everybody around you. Like if you're failing, let people know. And someone can help you. But I was in this place where I had this identity around being this...

James: Superstar.

Amrit: ...excelling academically. Yeah. And then I was just like, oh, and I didn't know how to deal with that. So I just faked it. And I thought everybody was faking it to a certain degree. And she was like, You can install honesty. And the minute she said that, I was like, Oh, things are sub-in and sub-outable, like, I can reprogram myself. That wasn't a concept prior to that moment, it's like, I can install, I can adopt honest, I can become different, like my character is not entrenched?

James: You can update the software from DOS to the latest version of OS.

Amrit: And that's where the filter started to come undone. And then I would love to tell you, like as of that point, as of that time, I just had the OS firmware upgrade and I just became honest. No, it took work, which is why I coach, because it takes work to do this stuff. Right? To have someone that's aligned and allied with you to support you. I had counseling for years. Yeah.

The difference that healing made

And so, in there, like installing honesty, I was like, okay, I can, you know, this is now becoming my values. And then, you know, touch wood, not to sort of again gloat, but when I graduated, I finally did again, you know, I didn't learn the values piece, but I learned the honesty piece. And I installed honesty. And I tried to follow through on a career, and I got a really good degree in structural engineering. And when I graduated the next university with that degree, I graduated top of the university. You can look it up, RMIT online.

And I don't say that to sort of gloat, because the key thing, when they interviewed me if I should win that award, they asked me why I would use it. And I said, Look, I would use it to inspire others. Because if you can see the same individual that got kicked out of a university, cleaned up and came top of another university, and the only thing that was the delta between the two was poor mental health, it's quite an ode to the difference that mental health makes in your system. Right?

Like, that's the exact same kid. That's the exact same individual. Right? What changed? Yeah? He took charge of his mental health. Yeah. And I started to learn how to meditate, I started to learn how to adopt mindfulness. I started with all these strategies, and I installed the value of honesty, that was the biggest shift. Yeah. And that was honesty with others on the outside.

And then when I got into the career, spent seven years in the career, and all of a sudden it was like, I'm not being honest with myself, this is not what I want to do. The journey continued. And that's where I started getting clear on, what are my core values, connection, contribution, celebration.

James: Love it. And you've been sharing all this on Inspired Evolution. You've given us the diagnostic link earlier on. So what's the best website for us to go and deep dive into this?

Amrit: Ultimately, if you want to check out the podcast, it's youtube.com/inspiredevolution. If you look up the handle inspired evolution, you'll find we do two podcasts a week, and there's heaps of content coming around like this stuff. An amazing podcast with James is there if you want to go check it out as well.

And so yeah. But if you're looking for coaching, amrit.coach is the place to go. But if you want to check out all things podcast, like podcast-related, definitely check out YouTube, I like to sort of collate everybody there as the home of the podcast because people are commenting, we're having really robust conversations in the comments section. That's literally me writing back to you.

We're at a point, you know, 20,000 subscribers, still small enough, big enough to have like, really interesting conversations from lots of different people from all over the world, but also like, not too big that I can't reply back to everybody. So it's a lot of fun there at the moment, especially at the time of this recording.

But yeah, if you're looking for coaching and wanting to dive deeper into, you know, your direction, and you know, what is the most, richest direction that you can really create in life, amrit.coach is the place to check out.

James: Okay, thank you. So mental health, purpose, expression, transformative power, mindful living, true freedom. Amrit, it's been a pleasure to catch up with you. Thank you so much for sharing today.

Amrit: James, I'm so grateful for you, mate, and the way you show up in the world. It's such a pleasure to have such a great friend, and yeah, just really a treat to be here. Thank you so much for having me again.

James: Awesome.

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