



The Millennial Life

podcast

with Liz Higgins

Episode 33: Men, Relationships, and The Necessary Inner Journey, A Conversation with Jack Lafleur

Liz Higgins (00:02):

Hey, y'all! Liz Higgins here, and welcome to the Millennial Life Podcast, where my main goal is to share conversations that will inspire you and drive you toward the life and relationship you desire. I'm here to share what I've learned as a licensed therapist and relationship coach specializing in millennial relationships and wellness, as well as transformative conversations with other professionals. Thanks for listening and enjoy today's episode!

Liz Higgins (00:33):

I'm really excited for this conversation today because you have a history, um, of doing some, I think, amazing work with men and relationships. And so, the subject today of men and relationships is one that I've been wanting to do for quite a while. And we crossed paths through a joint, um, methodology, I guess you could say that we are into (and people that have tuned into this podcast and have followed me know what I'm talking about) - Relational Life Therapy. It has transformed my practice, my, my experience of relationship. And so I know that you are also practicing that in your work.

Jack Lafleur (01:14):

That's right. Yeah. RLT has been a revolutionizing element in my practice as well. So it's really, it's also really helped with my work with men.

Liz Higgins (01:24):

Well, for people listening, um, I know my listeners don't know you. And so I just wanted to kickstart this conversation by letting you introduce yourself. Who are you? What is your mission? Tell us what you do.

Jack Lafleur (01:38):

Okay. Well, I've been a practicing psychotherapist for quite some time, um, a little over two decades. And yeah, so I, I have always really been into personal growth, I think, since my early twenties. I'm somebody who has had no compunction to sort of be able to dive into the deep end of the pool, uh, when it comes to personal exploration, and personal growth and all of that. So that's, that's always been with me. Um, and I guess that sort of turned into a vocation, um, a career. And so I won't give you the whole, you know, the huge resume here, but essentially one thing led to another, and essentially, uh, getting here was a series of steps. Training, all kinds of work around making my focus, uh, relationships, right? So couples, uh, difficult guys, but just guys in general... I've always had a, I've always had a proclivity towards working with men,

understanding really, you know, the sort of the inner workings of guys and what makes them tick, uh, and helping them to kind of, you know, be more liberated.

Jack Lafleur (02:49):

So, to the degree that I've been (or become) more liberated through the work that I've done, my own personal work, I want to share that. That's kind of world I want to live in. Is to see guys come out of their shells, right? Come out of the man box, right? The one that is so constrictive and restrictive to, uh, what allows us to just be who we are. And so having broken through a lot of those barriers myself, of course, it's something I want to share. I don't just want to keep that to myself! So the whole purpose is to, is to bring that into relationships. So I help guys who are relationally "challenged" in some way, shape or form. And guys who are, you know, feeling frustrated, stressed out, absolutely. You know, just disconnected, uh, inadequate, right, about their ability to show up in relationship.

Jack Lafleur (03:50):

And what I help them do is essentially, you know, feel more confident, skilled, right, uh, equipped and, and essentially more connected to their partners. And that it's possible that even though guys, we are not given a great start as far as how we're socialized, uh, it is absolutely possible to, uh, learn how to be more relational. To create more connection, have great relationships, and be healthy at doing it. But my real mission here, I would have to say is, uh, is really making a difference on the planet. And, uh, helping guys come into the power of their hearts. Right? That sounds a little woo or cliché, but really it's, it's, it's, it's a deep down mission for me is having the, uh, the two sides with the hearts and the power. Right? Guys, really, a lot of guys, uh, identify with that whole power issue. And so... But bringing that, you know, redefining that, reframing that as something that can allow them to show up more in their relationships... In the way that families, relationships, women, uh, partnership in general, needs them to.

Liz Higgins (05:05):

Yeah. Yeah. Well, I'm feeling really excited after, after hearing you say all of those things, and I don't know if... I know you said, like, a part of what you're ultimately here to do is change the world. And I don't know if you've heard this from anybody, but you are, you are. And you know, to have men teaching the world, teaching others about men, and somebody teaching men about relationships. And I just love what you said that this can be learned. Um, cause I see so many people and you know, I'm, I'm mostly sitting in that millennial realm of the 30-somethings that are just defeated in relationship because they truly believe, like, at our cores, this is how men are, this is how women are. When really it's like, going inside and looking at that conditioning and looking at where we learned to do relationship the way we do. And that we do have the ability to create empowered shifts and function differently! So this is so exciting to hear you say this.

Jack Lafleur (06:10):

Yeah. I think it really does break the mold of people who are jaded, I think, because of their bad experiences with guys who, the... the parts of the population where the old guard basically runs the show. Where guys are still pretty much very constricted, kind of uni-dimensional, you know, invulnerable, and sort of abide by that code. And there's still a huge part of the population that lives by that. What's giving hope, I think, to, you know, people in your cohort is people who I see on a daily basis. People who are actually believing that they can learn something different. If you learn something you can unlearn it.

Liz Higgins (06:54):

Woof. Yeah, absolutely true. Absolutely true! Well, yes. And, and take me back to, I want to talk more about some of those common misconceptions that you see people have. I guess, male and female, any gender, all genders... What are common misconceptions that you see about men in relationships, or just men in general?

Jack Lafleur (07:15):

Yeah. Well, occasionally I will get the disgruntled woman who just says, well, that's just who he is, so I'm going forward and he can do whatever he wants to do. So there's often this sort of, like, sort of sweeping him to the side because he has proven himself to be completely uninterested in doing what it takes to look at himself. So there's often that critique from women is the, the guy who refuses to take the mirror and just do a little bit of this to his benefit, right? For his own enlightened self-interest. And so there is, there's definitely a lot of that. There's a lot of women who complain that guys are just emotionless. They're just totally stoic. Um, and that's, that's it, that's all they are. And they're as deep as a pond. There's not much to guys. They're really simple, which is really a caricature that has been put out there that is just... couldn't be farther from the truth, uh, with the guys that I see. There is great depths in men.

Liz Higgins (08:23):

Yes... You see the great depths. But I guess as I even think about my own history and gosh, I say this all the time, if I hadn't gone down that path of becoming a therapist and getting into this whole realm of like relational awareness, I probably would have continued down that path of believing the same. 'Cause I guess the reality is, is due to the conditioning, due to the socialization, um, men oftentimes can present in that way. You don't see them cry a lot. You don't see them expressing, um, in an emotionally literate fashion, you know. So I dunno, just putting that out there, because you're saying these things are not inherently the truth about men and I completely agree, but so many people still see that.

Jack Lafleur (09:08):

Yes. And the sad part about it is that, because a lot of guys do, you know, the consequences of appearing, you know, of jumping out of the man box or the old guard, you know, protocol of being a guy, what it is to be a guy, has serious consequences, right? And depending on which part of the world you're living in those consequences can be pretty, um, pretty negative. And so there's a lot of guys who are just not willing to speak the truth or be who they are, or be authentic, um, for fear of coming across, uh, as feminine. As something that a man shouldn't be. And so that's, I think that's where a lot of those notions that women have about men, right, as the guys are kind of stuck in this cage of presenting at a certain way, or feeling like they have to, uh, in order to be accepted by both genders.

Liz Higgins (10:06):

That makes so much... That, that makes so much sense. And, and the consequence of making shifts and "out of the man box", as you're saying, and into this more relational life, and introspective life, could bring great results, but also comes at the cost of maybe letting go of certain aspects of that position, that role that have actually worked for them. Or helped them reach certain levels of success or, or whatever in their life. So, it's not as simple as 'I'm going to become more skilled in my relationships today.'

Jack Lafleur (10:43):

Yeah, exactly! It's not just a, you know... It's not just learning a few new moves, right? To be able to dazzle their wives and their partners. Um, we're, we're talking about complete transformation here. And nothing less than that will do. We're talking, you know, when I work with guys, I let them know like, 'Okay, uh, I can be nice, uh, or I can help you save your marriage. Um, which do you want?' Um, because it's, you know, the chips are down, right? And women I think, are getting more assertive with what they want. Uh, that's certainly what I help them do, right? As a way of sort of leveraging the guy's intentions and his motivation. And it takes a lot, sometimes, to get guys to embark, right, to buy in to that whole process.

Liz Higgins (11:40):

Absolutely. And I'm wondering like, what is it typically that gets a guy to buy into this process? Because I know, I want to ask you about, like, who do you see in your office? Who do you tend to work with? And you mentioned like, sometimes it's prompted by the woman that's fed up and she's over it. And she's just like, 'he is just not XYZ.' And so there's already that dynamic of maybe the guy feeling pushed into this space that he didn't even ask to be in. Um, so I'm wondering, like, with which men does it stick? This idea of, you know, 'I can be nice to you or I can help you have a better relationship', who are the ones that go in and say, 'Okay, yes, I'm down'?

Jack Lafleur (12:23):

Yeah. Well, there's certainly a big part of the population, I think, that is characterized by what you just said, right? The guys who are being dragged in, and given an ultimatum... It's like, it's either this or this, buddy. You know, time to, time to wake up. So there's a big part of that too, but there's also guys who are fed up with themselves, right? Presenting in a certain way. Um, here up in this region where I work, there's, there's a lot of guys who are seeing themselves not showing up in the way that they want to show up in their relationships. And so, whether that's parenting or being a spouse. So that's, you know, I do see a fair amount of guys who are just coming from their own motivation, from their own reasons of, 'I just don't like, you know, the way I'm coming across.'

Liz Higgins (13:21):

What a pivotal space to be in for a guy (or really for anybody) to be like, 'Ooh, I don't like me in this. I'm not okay with who I am and how I am showing up in parenting and relationship and whatever.' Uh, that was huge to hear.

Jack Lafleur (13:38):

Yeah, it's helpful. And, and thankfully, I'm very grateful, actually, that I get a lot of those guys. So that does tend to color my perception of what's going on out there as far as guys seeking out help, counseling, mental health resources... Whereas somebody else in another region, (say the United States, or even other parts of Canada) that may not have that same optimism or that same view of guys based on their experience of their, of their clients. With all the work that I do, I do get both. I'd have to say I get the, the guys who are being, you know, pushed, pushed rather hard. And I'm getting the guys who are self-motivated.

Liz Higgins (14:25):

Right. So it sounds like it is a mix. And I'm wondering for those guys that end up in your space with you who have kind of been pushed to go there - is there still hope for a guy like that? For the lack of not sounding terrible there, but is there still hope for him to become relationally minded? To transform? To, you know, get into a healthier place?

Jack Lafleur (14:54):

Good question. Uh, at a certain time I would have asked myself the same question, right? God, is there hope for these guys? So, but I think in the advent of, of, of taking on RLT as, as a modality, right, as a way of working with guys, uh, that question is more easily answered. And so it is possible because, you know, when you consider, you know, the density of the conditioning, right, that is put upon guys to not be relational, to not even want to be relational or let alone having the skills to do it. That's how, you know, guys are, are... Males are conditioned to be very disconnected from themselves and everyone else. And from a very young age, right? That of course being considered "normal". And so as adults now, we're, you know, we're trying to reverse that whole, you know, programming and conditioning. So it often takes what I call the, um, 'two by four across the head' intervention.

Liz Higgins (16:02):

Tell us more!

Jack Lafleur (16:05):

Well, sometimes I don't particularly like using this intervention, but every now and then it's, it's necessary. Where again, I come across as 'Well, I can be nice or I can help you save your marriage, which would you prefer?' And so there, I will use some leverage, right? So if this doesn't change, what do you think will happen? Right. And they ask and ask his spouse, right? Well, if nothing changes - if she doesn't change, nothing changes, what's going to happen? So when we put those kinds of questions to people and really help them face the reality of somebody not willing to change right then, uh, hard decisions start to come into the mix pretty quick. And so often guys, you know, care, care very much about their relationships, about their children, about belonging to a family and not being put out into the cold. So that two by four, uh, intervention, uh, often does the trick. Not always, but I'd say for the most part, it does.

Liz Higgins (17:12):

So it's like a bit of a process, you know, to helping people wake up and, and to really see where they're headed if nothing changes. And I know you're mentioning the RLT stuff and that's something that really stood out to me was how it's like you as the professional in there, you do take that stance towards helping them, uh, beyond the side of healthy intimacy, healthy relationship. And so you're going to say the direct things that help them really see where they're headed. And it sounds like that really lands for some people.

Jack Lafleur (17:49):

It does. And the other message too, I think is just, um, like you're going to live longer. Right? I tell that to the guys I know. Sometimes I'll pull up the stats card and wave that one. To them, it's like your lifespan, right? Uh, as a single guy, right, it's likely going to be 5 to 10 years less. Being in a healthy, egalitarian relationship is going to help. It's going to promote your longevity. And you're going to live longer. So I throw that into the mix as well. And that seems to arouse some interest with some guys who are like, 'Oh, okay. Didn't really think about that.' And so, yeah, you're right. It's, it's all about bringing things to their awareness, to their consciousness, that allows them to take that first step.

Liz Higgins (18:41):

Obviously a lot of what you find yourself working with to help men become more relational, (more in connection with themselves, as you mentioned earlier) it, it derives from the conditioning, the

"man box". What men and the world and our culture, I think, have been taught. Like, this is how to raise men. This is how we should treat men. This is what a man should do. I'm just curious to, to ask you, like, in, in your years of doing this work, are there a few of those messages - I'm thinking back to like childhood and stuff - a few of those pieces of the conditioning that just stand out as the biggest ones to kind of break through?

Jack Lafleur (19:27):

Absolutely. Yeah. There's a pretty high percentage, or ratio, of the message of 'not good enough'. Um, so the whole self worth issue, this exists both in men and women, but you know, the 'guy version' of this is most guys, I think, were brought up with the experience of shame and having been shamed in some way. And so that never getting corrected or healed from guys will bring that into their adult hood. And that is a big part of what prevents them from even wanting to be connected! Because wanting to be connected or the, the experience of closeness itself, will inevitably bring them in close proximity to that wound that happened many, many years ago that is still there. That's been fossilized right in their system. And there are a lot of guys who will not face that, who refuse to face that. And then there are some guys who are like, 'If it's for my kids, absolutely no problem. I will do that for them.'

Jack Lafleur (20:38):

Right? And so guys, really muster up the courage to face that kind of will, which I think is, is by and large, you know the, the biggest one that a lot of guys are facing. Yeah. That, you know, there's different versions of that, but essentially it centers around that essential shame core of 'I'm not good enough. I'm inadequate. I don't know how to do this. Nobody loves me anyway. So why bother trying, putting myself out there? Uh, I can't be myself because myself, I believe is a piece of. So what's the point of doing that?' So there's a lot of those sort of one downing, uh, positions and stances that guys take.

Liz Higgins (21:19):

It's just so interesting because I think (just culturally) we can really tend to put guys up on this very negative pedestal. What's that whole grandiosity thing of being the asshole, the narcissist, this notion of toxic masculinity. You know, I wanted to ask you about that. Um, like just what you think about that. Is that real? And how does that come into the conversation?

Jack Lafleur (21:50):

Well, that's a good question. I think it depends on who you're talking to, but I think, you know, in this culture anyway, uh, in Canada, this is a huge conversation. Um, yes, toxic masculinity is real. It does exist. Uh, you can, anybody who has ever been healed from it, uh, can smell it. Right? It's like becoming, you know, you're getting over smoking, right? If you were a former smoker, uh, and then when you were around that, it's like, 'Oh wow!' There's just such an adverse reaction. Um, so guys, similarly, who have been out of that way of thinking for a while can, as soon as they come across and it's like, 'Oh God, that's who I was.' Um, so this, this repulsion of toxic masculinity, which is essentially this sort of yeah, that's, that's what I see. Uh, there's a real repulsion, uh, to this oppressive version of strength. And that somebody feels the need to have to throw their weight around in order to, to matter, to somehow matter to people. To appear, you know, in a certain way, which we know is like the core of the false self, this falsely empowered way of being in the world that just doesn't get someone anywhere.

Jack Lafleur (23:17):

Um, I mean, you know, maybe on the ladder of wall street and the government, right, is on the, on the trajectory of wanting, you know, power and success. Sure. But how, how fulfilling are their relationships? How are their relations with their kids? You know?

Liz Higgins (23:34):

It's like, even looking to those examples, I don't know that, uh, we would look to that as real relational success. It is, it's, it's power, it's control, it's all those things. But you know, what I think is so interesting is how you explained that thing of the core wound... Of, really, it being about shame in a lot of ways. As I, as you were talking about that, I'm thinking about this notion of toxic masculinity, and 'men are so awful and they're so angry and blatant and can be so grandiose'... Like you're really saying, like, at the core of that is this deeper rooted issue of shame. And, and so am I hearing you correctly? That it's like, when you're in that place of shame and inherently your worth is like, 'I'm a piece of shit, I'm nothing', then you find external markers, external things to kind of give you that false sense of self? Like performing really well, or making a ton of money, or buying, you know, five sports cars... Or like, like people... Do they kind of compensate, or overcompensate, for what they feel is missing on that deep level that they're not even aware of?

Jack Lafleur (24:48):

Yeah, I think that's true. Uh, there's these, you know, self-esteem... These external sources of self-esteem. I think the, the guys who have been shamed... And a lot of these guys, you know, it's a way of, of being able to get out of this sense of shame, which feels absolutely horrible. It is the worst thing that I think one can feel. And so, as a way of, you know, guys having very, very little tolerance for that, we'll learn to go one up. And it's kind of what we were just talking about, trying to get out there, what they feel they're missing, whether that's wealth, whether that's, you know, acquisition, you know, a beautiful wife, uh, money status. I mean, all of that stuff that you know, is trying in some way, trying to fill that hole. And so, yeah, it, it, it can become an endless search for that. And guys will live and die on that ladder.

Jack Lafleur (25:46):

Right? Of trying to compensate for that shame, that... Of actually just really taking a look (and for some guys that feels, like, worse than death, right? That's something I'd rather die than, you know, stand at the precipice of that cliff and actually, you know, take a look.) And it's so interesting that when guys actually do that, it's, you know, they don't die, right? Life doesn't end. If anything, you know, they, they start to... Yeah, it's painful for sure, but it's something that is actually, you know, they start to get more freed up, right? Start to feel a little better in their own body, in their own skin. These toxic forms of masculinity, or very well, they're hard to break because they're, of course they're supported by our culture. Right. As you just so eloquently said. So, uh, breaking with that narrative, breaking with that story is a very difficult thing to do. Especially for one guy as an individual. Because guys, I think, often will feel isolated. Um, there's a lot of lone wolves out there, um, who take great pride in being a lone wolf.

Liz Higgins (27:00):

You mean like lone wolves that are trying to be better, but don't feel like they have a space to go? To be like surrounded by other men who want the same?

Jack Lafleur (27:12):

Lone wolves, I think, that feel that they're out in the cold. Lone wolves that are just doing what they're doing. And then somewhere life pushes them, uh, into my office. And, you know, we start talking about things, and then inevitably the conversation comes around to, is this what's going on? Right. Uh, I might, you know, put up the mirror there and sort of focus that on him and say,

'Well, do you have this? Is this something that you struggle with?' And for a lot of guys, it's like, 'Oh my God. Yeah. You know, you kinda nailed it, um, as the source to why I'm such a lone wolf. I'd rather be a lone wolf than have to face the complexity of how, you know, effed up I am on the inside.' Right? Because that's what relationships do. So, guys having had that experience in relationships don't want that, you know?

Liz Higgins (28:10):

Yeah. So it's more of a, I don't like, I don't want to look at that. That I'm, I'm standing at the edge of the cliff, that looks painful. That looks like no fun. So maybe leaning to more of a disconnect and I'm, I mean, yeah. And I'm sure you see the news on what we deal, what we are dealing with here, just with the violence piece, and mass shootings, and things like that. And it's very interesting to be in this realm of therapists where we're having these conversations about how, how far that, that experience of disconnection to self, to others, can maybe take things.

Jack Lafleur (28:58):

Yeah. It's, it's, it's pretty scary. Um, I heard somebody say once that all human problems can be pretty much boiled down to one essential thing. And that's just a lack of self-worth. When I heard that, I was like, yeah, that makes a lot of sense. Um, especially with guys, in terms of what we don't give them, uh, to grow up with experiences. We don't, you know, we don't give them...

Liz Higgins (29:34):

Right, right. Yeah. Yeah. You know, I'm in one of the RLT coaching groups. In one of the RLT coaching and, uh, the facilitator, Kim, she talks a lot... She, she talks a lot about that. How even for her, she's like gotten even more into parenting stuff with her couples, like teaching parents how to raise children out of these kind of conditionings and expectations that we put, especially related to the gender scripts. But you know what I wanted to ask you, um, Jack, because you... When we spoke before this, this particular conversation, you know, you were talking about this thing of integration work. And it sounds super relevant! And that, this is a huge piece of what you do with men in your work. And we were talking a little bit about this piece of integrating the masculine with the feminine. And I just want you to kind of talk about that. Because I think even hearing me say that, listeners are probably not super familiar with it, or feel confused, or it becomes this thing of masculine with the feminine, like... So we're, demasculating men. Like what's happening here. So what is that?

Jack Lafleur (30:51):

Well, that's a good question. So I think in this time of polarization, right, where things are so polarized, it's very easy to look at things in a binary way. So the integration part is certainly something that's been a part of my own journey. Having grown up in a family where there was a lot of toxic, toxic masculinity in a very, you know, sort of "traditional" way of being male. And so I came from that, healed from that, had to work on that. And so that's something that's near and close to my heart as far as my own process. And so being able to teach it or facilitate it has just become a part of my work - an integral part of my work. So it became most concrete in a retreat that I was trained to run and facilitate called The Inner Journey. And this was, oh, almost 20 years ago! I started facilitating this and essentially this retreat, the philosophy really is about becoming whole. Um, and it's great. Terry talks about this too, right?

Jack Lafleur (32:01):

In RLT, the whole goal here is to become whole. So for guys, in the traditional sense, yes - there's a huge fear of being seen or known as anything other than masculine, right? That being known as "feminine" in some way is just like a scarlet letter that is being put on your head. And so there's a

real fear with that. And so we... This program actually puts out the value of, in order for one to be, and to live life to its fullest, to be the most present, to be the most passionate, right? Uh, and show up in your life! It's about integration. It's about being able to see those parts of you that you learned to disown, uh, and to get some of them back, right? To see which ones are perhaps, are still there. Right? So the guys' feminine side is something that is, um, shown to him.

Jack Lafleur (33:07):

And basically the message is - this is not about becoming less of a man. It's not about diminishing your strength. It's not about diminishing your ferocity. Uh, all of those things that kind of make you, you know, "have your edge" right? As a guy, it's about making you bigger in all dimensions, as opposed to reduction of who you are. And so that's really the heart of the integration message here. And what we, what we promote with this retreat and that, you know, in my work, right, it's about, it's going to make you better at much more things than you are now. So there's the part of you, that's the warrior. Uh, that needs to go out and needs to be strong, needs to be ruthless, sometimes needs to be fierce, uh, strong and all of those things. And that's fine, right? Out in the world sometimes, you know, guys needed to do that.

Jack Lafleur (34:04):

So in other words, you know, metaphorically, they need to wave their sword. But when they come home, right, they put, they have to put the sword away, right? Then it's time for the 'family man' or the 'generous gentlemen' to come out. Um, and the warrior is not needed anymore. Right. It's, it's this other part of the guy. So integration is really about having access to parts of you, uh, when you need it, to be loving, sensitive, tender, gentle, caring, right? When the situation calls for it. And I think most women, you know, healthy women are looking for that in men. They're looking for that healthy integration, right? They want guys to be guys and do manly things. Right? They just don't want to be oppressed by it. Right? And so guys, I think, you know, learning to kind of cultivate this other side of themselves, um, I think helps to accommodate that need in women. We, we want to get closer to guys, but of course can't do it when the guy has just, uh, you know, a wall of, 'I don't want to be feminine'. When that's running the show.

Liz Higgins (35:17):

Right. Well, and I'm sure you see some of this play out with couples that you see, like you're, you're... When a man does wade into that area and say like, 'Yes, integration, all right, let's do it.' And they start to maybe become more intimate, more emotional, just that, that depth that he starts to experience. And then for, like, a heteronormative couple dynamic here - for a woman, I see women sometimes in that place go like, 'Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa.' Like they're perpetuating this notion of 'your emotions are weakness. Why are you doing that? You're supposed to be strong. You're supposed to be the warrior, XYZ.' All those things that women say, they want to have a man. That when a man starts to become more intentional about deepening himself, it's like, kind of scares the woman! So it's an adjustment, I guess, for, for all members of the relationship, the partnership.

Jack Lafleur (36:18):

Yeah. That is true. That is true. I mean, you know, when you think about what patriarchy does to everyone, um, we all get brainwashed, right? That invulnerability, not even just for men, for women too, right? I mean, they'll buy into that whole thing as well. Women going into a man's world or into the industry where they feel like they have to be more masculine and essentially 'disown' their femininity. Right? We work with that too, in the journey and helping women own that, that feminine quality that, that they have, which often, you know, patriarchy forces them to kind of let go of. So yes, within, you know, I think the, the culture that we're in and patriarchy is still being a pretty big influence. It's about convincing people to swim upstream, right? The salmon who swim upstream,

um, and are seeking something else. And it, it does take that kind of conscious intentional energy to know what your conditioning is and leave it behind. Or what I, you know, another teacher of mine used to say "Transcend, and include it." Try to transcend and include it. Because we can't break those off of ourselves where we have to bring them with us.

Jack Lafleur (37:39):

Um, it's not like you can amputate your arm.

Liz Higgins (37:43):

I love that. Wow. That's amazing. Sure. It's, it's untangling from the notions that don't serve you relationally, but you're not, yeah, you're not, like, amputating parts of yourself. You're never going to forget the history. You're never gonna forget the journey. It's expansion, integration, and including who you have been in that process. That's really amazing. This has been such a great conversation! I love hearing you talk. I'm like, oh my gosh, I feel this so much. As far as, like, being a millennial, being in a relationship, knowing that we want a certain kind of partnership, (generally speaking) and, but not feeling like we have the tangible skills and tools to get there. And it is so cool to hear you talking about this because you've been doing this work for quite a while. And to me, it's very hopeful, and hope-inducing, for men and women, because it's like, the solution is already there. It's about finding your fellow traveler, finding somebody like you, Jack! Finding somebody to help guide you into that process. We didn't learn this stuff in school. We don't get these tools, um, at our jobs. So this is very much a personal undertaking that you have to decide you want to get down with and say yes to. Yes.

Jack Lafleur (39:06):

Yeah. And everybody has their way of coming to that decision. Um, and life, uh, will push different people in different ways to come to that decision and to realize that, 'Oh, you know, I can be more than what I was set out to be.' And so yeah, somebody might... Like me, I really am a, you know, a cheerleader. I stand for that, more of who they can be in the potential, right? That is inherent within all of us to realize and develop. And that's, that's a really big message around the integration is like, you were meant to be so fully human. That the man thing, right. It's kind of secondary, right? It's you were a human first, right? You were male second. Um, for a lot of guys, they need to kind of get over that, uh, that split. And so that's something that's been extremely helpful for me in terms of redefining who and what I am.

Jack Lafleur (40:06):

Right. I'm a human first. I got conditioned as a male second. I came into this world as a human. And so, uh, the path of integration is really about being more focused on realizing your innate potential for, for everything. Not only its' connection, uh, connection, you know... Realizing all of your gifts, your talents, uh, what you were meant to do here on the planet is super important. So it's that unrealized potential that I think most people are afraid of not developing, of not realizing. So that's what I help them do when they come into my office, is I sort of point that out, like, you have the potential here, which I think most people find empowering.

Liz Higgins (40:55):

Absolutely. I can only imagine how that moment must feel for guys in your office that can hear you kind of shine this different way of thinking and being in their life. And for those that say yes to the, to the process, how, how incredibly empowering that must feel. And that's great! So while I'm like... okay, Jack. You have to come back on this podcast again, because you're so well-versed in these things. It's really fun to hear you talk about this stuff. Clearly you have been doing this work professionally, personally. And I just, I really mean it when I say like our, our culture, our society,

our world needs more people like you that are kind of putting this message out there, because it's where we're headed. We're just not there a hundred percent yet. So how can people find you? Give us your contact information. I want listeners to definitely know what you're up to, what offerings you've got going, anything like that. And just where they can find you out there!

Jack Lafleur (41:56):

Sure. Uh, so you can reach me by email - Jack Laf, uh, J A C K L A F @magma.ca. That's probably the best way to do it. Uh, I also have a Facebook page. I will often put posts up there, uh, contributions to it that I think people can also contact me. So it's, uh, The Relationship Sensai.

Liz Higgins (42:20):

Perfect. And we will put links to, um, your Facebook page and we can even put your email down in the Show Notes so that anybody listening, if you want to hop over there and grab those links, you can reach out to Jack directly, just land right in his inbox. You can do that!

Jack Lafleur (42:38):

There you go. Well, I've, I've also really, really enjoyed this conversation, Liz. And you know, it really it's about, I appreciate the opportunity to kind of get the message out there. I know you're committed to, you know, this, you know, this kind of message as well, getting out there, clearly.

Liz Higgins (42:55):

Wonderful. Well, thanks so much. I look forward to some future conversations with you.

Thanks again for listening to the podcast. If you like the show, leave us five stars or write a review. If you're interested in learning more, sign up for my free ebook "The One Barrier to Commitment All Millennials Face" at millennialrelationships.com.

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