

Episode 97 [TRANSCRIPT]

Andrew Love

Welcome back to another episode of Love, Life and Legacy, a podcast dedicated to helping you navigate those hypersexualized times of ours. And in today's episode, Benjy and I are going to unpack the conversation about mental health and sexual integrity, because it's a buzzword out there. And a lot of times, when things become buzzwords, the nuances are lost. And so we wanted to get into the weeds a little bit about why it's really important to know when to stop and when to go, when to put on the brakes and when to put on the accelerator, when to lay on a couch and when to get up and dance. So if you're interested in staying mentally fit, spiritually fit, emotionally fit, then hop on in, and let's get into it.

Andrew Love

Welcome back, everybody. Andrew Love here, along with my compatriot...

Benjy Uyama

Benjy Uyama.

Andrew Love

And today, we're going to help unpack a conversation that is, I guess, you've unwillingly or unknowingly already taken aside, in terms of this conversation, without even being aware of it. And so we wanted to talk about mental health because a lot of people are either, it seems like super hyperconscious, overly like cuddling a kid, like, don't touch that! Don't touch that. Don't do that. Kind of like that with their mental health. They just don't do anything in the name of mental health. And other people completely avoid their mental health, and they just say, let's just push through it. It's like the male masculinity, male energies just walk it off. And we wanted to talk a little bit about that because it really impacts your journey with sexual integrity. Because it's important to take multiple different tones with sexual integrity. It's not just to be one tone, oh, push, push, push, go, go, go, or rest, rest, rest. I'll get to it later. I'll get to it later.

Andrew Love

So Benjy, do you have any history with this topic? How do you deal with when you're feeling burnt out, or when you're feeling like you're unraveling? You're a father of two, you have responsibilities. What happens when you start having that eye twitch?

Benjy Uyama

Yes. My tendency, honestly, Andrew, is to push, push, push, and to go, go, go. And my first reaction, especially in the mornings, is to take care of my kids and to just do what needs to be done for the sake of the whole. And I am not so good at just decompressing and taking a moment to listen to what I need to do or take care of myself, self-care, or whatever you want to call it, self-help. But I do need that because if I don't, especially in the mornings, if I don't, then it really sets me up to be aggravated all day, and frustrated at other people, and take it out on other people. Because if I'm not at my optimal state, then I'll tend to just upset other people which is, of course, unfair and unrealistic to expect everybody to be perfect to me all the time, my kids to be little good children. So I need to do something in the morning. Usually, I'll just sit outside by myself in a chair, looking at the trees in the backyard. And recently, I've been starting walking, because I just like being out in nature. We have a greenway. Andrew has been to our house. We have a greenway behind our house, and they just go on there and start walking, taking a walk, especially now that it's cold, because no one's out. And I can just be by myself. So yes, that's to the extent of what I do for myself.

Andrew Love

So we want to start out light, and here's the thing, okay. We're talking about mental health. But that's the problem with the topic of mental health, is that it's so broad. Broadly, I turned into a New Yorker. It's so broad. And this is, I would say largely negative because everybody's reference point is completely different. Some people might think that mental health is really like you're on the streets, you see that person who's really wiggling out. They're on drugs. They have all sorts of issues. That's obviously the mental health aspect. But then there's the day-to-day to just taking care of ourselves. And what happens if you don't? It doesn't have to be so obvious. And so what we're talking about is, we just want to unpack it a little bit so that you can see how you're doing in both the big things like making sure you're stable and all that. But also the small, making sure that you're enjoying life, and that you're going with the ebbs and flows of your journey. Because if not, if you just push, push, push, push, you're missing out on so much. And you and I, Benjy, know many people who push, push, push, push for 40 years when the result isn't so spectacular. Because although you're working, you're not really doing it from a powerful state. You're a lot of times doing it from just this need to feel like you're doing something. And you're not actually

doing much of anything. If you really look at the spectrum of somebody's life, you just stop and breathe, and then to push, push, push with power is really, really important. And part of the reason why we're talking about this is two. One, on the one side, is like I, myself, notice that I was getting like Benji.

Benji Uyama

What do you mean getting like Benji?

Andrew Love

You know it's just a comma, and then I was going to finish the sentence with another comma. But as Benji mentioned, I could have said, I, too, was starting to unravel a bit this week. And I started to notice that my maintenance wasn't enough. So even though I meditate twice a day, typically, I've been going to the gym a lot, eating really well, all this stuff was not, I wasn't getting enough sleep. And that was stockpiling. My sleep patterns are disrupted for many reasons. And so it was like, I put on the brakes. And I said I'm going to take a day off. And I first asked my wife, and she's like, yes, of course, which is awesome to get that support. And then I went to the spa, and I admitted this today, and I'm in a staff meeting because this is not something that I feel a lot of men are very common. I went to the spa, everybody.

Benji Uyama

Good for you.

Andrew Love

It's like you whisper it. Yow, by the way, I went to the spa. But I did. I went straight up to this. I did a ton of research. And I found one that really sounded cool. And it was with this one lady, she had her own practice. And one thing I didn't even mention in the meeting, because I was still... because I had those first foot massages. Second, a facial. I got a facial, bro. And then third, I went into an LED light sauna, infrared laser, laser beam, cellular sauna. But the reason I brought this up is because my body was showing me signs that it was exhausted. Not because I was over-exerting my body, but because my mind was exhausted from lack of sleep or poor sleep patterns that were now cascading into my body. And then it's like this ripple effect where little by little, you start to unravel. And luckily, I can see it now. It's harder to tell when you're younger, to be honest, because it's just like you have boundless energy. But the 40s is right around the corner for me, and so my body's much better at telling me, and I'm getting better at listening.

Andrew Love

So for me, it was like, I needed to do this in order to be more effective. So the first thing is like, how many of you out there listening should take a break? A day or two, go somewhere for a weekend. If your parents did have the guts to ask your family for a couple of days off of being a parent and to take care of yourself, we don't have a culture of that, especially in religious movements or spiritual-based movements. There's no time for rest. But do you have the guts to admit to yourself first that you need to rest and ask for permission, to whomever you need permission to, to take a break for a couple of days especially if you're a young parent with demanding needy children? Have you ever asked to just take off your dad hat from your wife, Benji? Have you ever had the guts?

Benji Uyama

Not for a whole day to go to the spa. No. But I do it once a week. I go play volleyball with some of the guys and gals in our community, stuff like that. Like out of the ordinary of what I would usually do, but sometimes I do that. That's been nice.

Andrew Love

Would you want to? Like if you felt like it was in the realm of possibility, would you desire a day of plugging in? However, it doesn't have to be a spa day.

Benji Uyama

Oh, yes.

Andrew Love

That's very much *me* thing.

Benji Uyama

Yes, I think so. Yes, I would.

Andrew Love

What's preventing you from doing it?

Benjy Uyama

Just asking. Just doing it.

Andrew Love

Well, what's in that? Even beyond the asking, why do you think that it would be difficult? And I'm asking you not to put you on the spot, but as an example to probably most people listening. Why do you think it's so hard for you to simply ask your family to have a day to spend investing in yourself so that you could be a better dad and a better husband? Why do you think that's complicated?

Benjy Uyama

Well, to be honest, I'm pretty satisfied with my current lifestyle. To be completely honest, I have a lot of well-balanced self-care. In terms of fitness exercise, like yesterday, I went to work at a cafe. No. To work in a cafe, not at the cafe.

Andrew Love

Did you get a part-time gig?

Benjy Uyama

In a Starbucks. I went really far, to a really far away place, and I walked through the old neighborhood that I grew up in, in Raleigh, North Carolina. I grew up in this really beautiful neighborhood, that's where the church was. And I grew up in that church. It's a really beautiful place. And I went to just see if I could meet some of the neighbors, and they just walked through it to go to the cafe. And it was a few mile walks. I was like, that was really the highlight of my week. And honestly, I do that kind of stuff pretty regularly. So there's not something outrageous or spectacular that I want to do. But yes, I do try to intertwine a lot of fun stuff like exercising and biking. I bike a lot to different destinations around our area.

Andrew Love

Yes. You know, I hear you. I think that's a great strategy, is to try to weave it into what you're already doing. But for all the people out there, I would love to challenge everybody. What's your excuse for not taking care of yourself? I think a lot of people like yesterday, my excursion, I gave a nice tip to this lady. It was a lot of money. I definitely couldn't afford to do that on the regular. But I don't regret it at all. Part of me wanted to regret it because it's not usual that I would spend all that money and all that time on myself. But what's your excuse out there for not doing it, is it money? Is it time? Is it, oh, I can't do that because I got to save the world? To be honest, like yesterday, I got back after this thing. My wife picked me up, and then I just had a nap. In the afternoon, I had a nap, dude. And then at night, I slept so well. So obviously, my body was so grateful for what I did because I feel so well rested right now, much more focused and all that. So out there, guys, what is your excuse for not taking care of yourself?

Benjy Uyama

I think I can address this a little bit with my morning routine of going on a walk. It took me a while to have the courage to do that, actually. And it's hard to do because of the, I would say, the guilt of leaving my kids and wife in the morning to go on to a 20 or 30-minute walk.

Andrew Love

Sure.

Benjy Uyama

The opportunity cost of doing that is I'm not spending quality time with my kids. It's the opportunity cost. And I see that opportunity, and I'm like, Oh man, I could be doing Legos or setting my kids up for the day, to do a cool project or just give them some energy and love so that they can do well throughout the day until the evening. But I just realized, when I do that, I'm so much happier, actually, when I get back. Because I took a walk, I found this bench that there's always sunlight hitting that bench through the trees every time I go. And I just sit there, and I just feel God or whatever. I just feel love, or try to listen to whatever my mind or conscience wants to tell me. And they sit there for 10 minutes, and then I walk back like a brisk walk. And I just feel so much better. More energized and happier to give to my kids as opposed to waking up all groggy and being like, okay, what do I gotta do?

Andrew Love

A crusty dad, like where are we? What are we doing? What's going on?

Benjy Uyama

I get so aggravated, and I say terrible things to my kids. That's what's keeping me back, is the sense of guilt. But realizing that the benefits far outweigh the drawbacks of taking care of myself even for a little bit.

Andrew Love

Well, the crazy thing is like, pay now or pay later. So again, out there, all of you who are listening, I would love for you to think back to all the low points in your life and think about how much that point in your life would have been avoided if you were happy and fulfilled? And how so much of it comes from our lack of connection to our power? Which doesn't happen when we're filled with adrenaline and filled with all sorts of negative chemicals that arise when we're stressed out and feel that anxiety. Which arises, again, when we don't take care of ourselves. So there's that. Think about those times. And I would say that there's a direct link between, for sure, my low points in my relationship with my wife or my kids, and my stress levels. How deeply correlated are they? And it could have been avoided if I just made that effort. Because the other thing too is your health. A lot of people are like, I don't have enough money to go to a spa, for instance. Do you have enough money to pay for all the hospital bills if you have a heart attack because you don't take care of yourself? In retrospect, when you're in the hospital, you pay anything to stay alive. Well, what about now? If you're not... if you're feeling well, how much would you pay to stay well? Or to be happier?

Andrew Love

Let's talk about your sexual integrity. Let's talk about your journey in life. Why would you want sexual integrity? Why would you want a good relationship with your spouse or with your kids? It's because it's these moments throughout our lives, these precious moments that only are there when we're able to be present. So like, attend a moment with your spouse, Benjy. Like with your wife, when you just hug and you just feel like one, or when your wife says something to you and you just feel like, I love this person so much. Those are moments, and those moments are only available to us when we're present. And we're only able to be present when we're taking care of ourselves. When we're too stressed out to notice any of this stuff that might be all around us and we don't have access to it because we're too stressed out. And also, like in movies and music and all that stuff, you don't love every second of that song or that movie, you love the moments, the bits by bits. So it's like, how do you curate these moments? Well, you have to be in a state to look for them. You got to be in a joyful state. And so, it's really worth prioritizing being in a high place, being in a joyful place because that's where you're going to get your best ideas. That's where you're going to get all the good energy to do the things of your day. That's where you're going to have the best health. And that's where your relationships are going to be the most satisfying with yourself, with God, and with the people in your life. And so without prioritizing that, you might be working really hard. Great. But are you enjoying the journey? Because the guy that you know is probably not... You know God's toenail because you're working so hard. But you know God's heart. The range of emotions I was talking to somebody yesterday about, we're meant to experience the full range of emotions in our lives. But when you're grinding it out, the only emotion you really know is not enough, like stress, anxiety, fear, scarcity. All this stuff exists when you're in the grinding state. That's not really a spectrum. That's a spectrum of gray, like dark gray, light gray, and the rest of the colors that I completely missed.

Benjy Uyama

What's an example of something that really thrills you, gives you joy, that they've done recently?

Andrew Love

Yes, so art. I don't prioritize arts, creating or enjoying music, and all this stuff if I'm stressed out. And even if I do this in music, it's like, I don't feel it. I hear it, but I don't feel it. But when I stop and allow myself to remember that there's this beautiful spectrum of emotions of color and all this stuff, and when you participate in it through art, either by creating or observing or witnessing whatever, then that's the stuff I can only feel when I slow down. Again, like I could see a piece of art. But if I have a meeting to go to, I'm like, yes, it's a painting. Who cares? Some guy with a paintbrush, or some woman, well, I don't know. I don't care. But when you really stop and take it in, you're like, wow, look at this. They really put something together here. And you can even feel it. You can feel what they were feeling on some level. But that's only accessible when you slow down long enough to enjoy it.

Andrew Love

And then it starts to speak to you. And then you start to realize that God is speaking through all these small moments, but you're not listening. You're deaf to it. You're blind to it, because you're running at this lightspeed. And let's say you're going down the highway, and you're going 90 miles an hour. You're going to notice a lot less than when you're cruising at 20 going through a park. You'll see the squirrel, you'll see that...

Benjy Uyama

Biking.

Andrew Love

Yes, biking. Exactly. But both are good. To just stroll, it gets frustrating. Jim Gaffigan, the comedian, always makes fun of hiking because it's like, you're just walking, and then you turn around and you walk. You didn't do anything, and I get that. But it's important to do both. And it makes your grinding, when you are in grind mode, so much more satisfying. When you're hustling because you're doing something that you're passionate about, you have all the energy in the world. You have all the ideas in the world. You can just fly and create 10 times more than just you trying to make stuff out of nothing, just in a perpetual grinding state.

Andrew Love

But I wanted to introduce the other half of this conversation, Benjy, which is that there are a bunch of people who are using the word "mental health" to excuse selfish and lazy behavior. I could see that, wow, I like having a spa day. Well, why don't I have two or three or every day spa day? And then I just turned into one of those ladies from LA who are just in the spa all day every day drinking wine. And then life becomes about Botox and blah, blah, blah. It just becomes really self-absorbed. Have you experienced anything like that where it's like this cover-all, this almost like an excuse?

Benjy Uyama

Well, I think it's underneath all that. For me, in the context of people who are working on their sexual integrity is how to be honest with yourself and how to recognize when you're being lazy. Especially with something like pornography, masturbation addiction, as the saying goes, "Addicts make the best liars." They also make the best liars to others and also to themselves. And especially in this context, I think it's really, really easy for people to make up excuses and reasons why they can't address it, why they can't just join a group, a High Noon group, or just have a conversation is because it's always like, oh, once I turn 25, but once I'm blessed, or once I'm in a relationship or once the new year comes around or the new month starts, then I'll get serious. How the reasons go, and it's the inability, to be honest, and realize like, okay, maybe I'm just not as serious as I want to be. And if that's the case, well, that's something to work on. Maybe you don't realize the impact of your decisions right now, so it's just a hypothetical- someday or maybe when I'm married, it'll affect my relationship. And then if it does, then I'll address it. That kind of thing is at the back of our minds. So anyway, we ask that. That brings that up to me is like, are we really being honest with ourselves or are we just tricking ourselves into being lazy?

Andrew Love

That's a really good point. I think we had this conversation in my group like the thread, the text thread that I have with the boot camp. But the difference between laziness and intentional rest, and the difference is intentionality, I think. Laziness is the act of avoidance. You're avoiding doing the tough work by doing everything else other than that. Whereas resting is, you do it with intentionality for a specific reason so that you can get back to the hard work of life. And so that intentionality is really, really important that you need to observe in yourself because we do have people who have been in our world, the High Noon world, who haven't made much progress in, sometimes, years. They're kicking the can and they're like, well, I'm joining a group. And there they show up, but they're not really doing the real work. They're like, I'll get to it, I'll get to it.

Andrew Love

And I had a conversation with another facilitator last week about this because he always airs on the side of, it takes time, it takes a long time for some people. And so he's just there to support them and love them. And to me, that's a very amazing maternal energy of that, like, I'll always be here to nurture you and to love you and to hug you. Whereas the masculine energy, like me in the boot camp, it's more like, I know what's possible in three months. But the difference is, there's a season for both. If you're ready, then don't make excuses and just do the work. Do the grind, but do it with intentionality and with all the power of knowing that this is for this reason, for this amount of time. Versus, hey, I'm just not ready. And if you're not ready, that's fine. Don't judge yourself. Just be honest with yourself that yes, you just don't want to take this seriously. Because we've had people who joined a High Noon group who didn't really do the work, and then they leave and they say, Oh, this stuff doesn't work. That's not real. What do you mean it doesn't work? What about High Noon doesn't work? Being in a group with other people sharing, honestly, that doesn't work? The age-old tradition of connecting with other human beings doesn't work? Of course, it works. But you have to be in the space to let it work. And if you're not great, just say, I'm not. But then if you want to change, just know that there's going to be a time when you have to cross that line and say, yes, I'm ready, and then to be willing to do that work. Does that make sense?

Benjy Uyama

Yes.

Andrew Love

Do you feel, as a facilitator, are you a more nurturing person like maternal energy? Or do you think more kicking butt, paternal energy?

Benjy Uyama

That's a good question. I think I'm like, everyone will make decisions on their own time. But at the same time, outwardly, I'm very aggressive with people. If they'll ask me, if they want my help, I'll be like, you can get your act together, your S-H-I-T together in a very short period of time. If you do the work, if you do it, you can. And especially if you're honest with yourself, you stop lying. You do the thing that you know you need to do, but you don't want to do it and you have that thing. Especially regarding sexual integrity or being in a relationship or being married or being a parent, build the thing we wanted me to do. But we don't want to do it because we secretly have an agenda, an underlying agenda to keep this habit with us, our old way of being with us because it's a nice, comfortable comfy couch. It's a crutch that we lean on. But if people are honest, the people that we work with in High Noon, vary, of course, in their addiction levels, especially in the Ascend Program in pornography from 1 to 10, most of them are quite frankly not in a severe 9-10 range. And if you're not up there, it's pretty simple. Just to have a mentality shift and get you to a place where you can be. As long as you're willing to be serious, intentional, make tough decisions, and actually, just get rid of that gremlin in your closet that you're keeping with you because of whatever reason. So yes, I think there are a lot of people who can do it. So I try to push those buttons, especially if they're willing to do it. And if they're not, then I try to ask them the right questions to get them to be honest with themselves.

Andrew Love

Yes, that's great. So that's a challenge to everybody. Look, in terms of mental health, in terms of taking care of yourself, are you grinding too much, and do you need to take a break? That's more, again, that masculine energy of go, go go all the time. Push, push, push. That's probably the energy that's been ruling the world since the beginning which is why war starts. People just don't stop and talk. Oh, you're a human, I'm a human. Instead of like, hey, I want that stuff under your feet, what happens when you're stressed out and just go, go, go. Are you grinding too much? Or on the opposite side, are you using too many excuses? Do you have a pallet of excuses to be the reason why you're not making progress? And if so, how long do you want to stay there? How much do you really actually want to take on the stuff that's holding you back?

Andrew Love

So, guys, this is a really important time to know yourself, to listen to yourself, to get in tune with, how's my mind doing? How's my body doing? How's my heart doing? How's my spirit doing? When you become conversant in the languages of mind, heart, body spirit, like when you speak those languages fluently, it becomes very apparent what you need to do. You understand when you should eat and when you should not eat when you should work out and when you should rest, when you should pray and when you should get up and do something, when you should apologize and when you should just cut somebody out of your life. It becomes very apparent when you take the time to build self-awareness. And that will make your understanding of why you do the things you do, watch porn, masturbate, or fantasize about other people or all this stuff, become very obvious when you're doing it. And it starts to also become more obvious why you do it. And then you can start to change your habits.

Andrew Love

You cannot do any of this without self-awareness. You're just locked into emotions. You don't know how to get out of them so you try to escape them. And that's why porn is so prevalent in this society because so many people have so much thrown at them, and they have no idea how to deal with all the stimulation, with all the problems, with all the stuff in the news. They don't know how to handle it. So they just want the greatest escape possible.

Andrew Love

So if you guys are really serious, guys and gals, are really serious about achieving a High Noon life which is a life that you're really proud of, then please get to know yourself. Please understand when to push on the gas and when to push on the brakes, and when to coast and when to pull over. I'm going to use this analogy until it's dead, pull up to the side of the road, and take a nap. Yes, we want the very best for you. But you, deep down inside, only know what's best for you. But you can only know what's best for you if you learn to understand what's best for you. It's not always the first thing that you think of, it sometimes requires you to go deep. So if you ever need any help, that's what we're here for. If you ever want to be challenged, that's what we're here for. If you ever want an embrace, that's what we're here for. If you ever want a group of other people like you, please sign up for a group. All of our staff has always been free. There's at some point, we're going to

start charging a minimal amount. But we're nonprofit, we're doing this because we want as many people as possible to experience the High Noon life. Isn't that right, Benjy?

Benjy Uyama

Yep, that's right.

Andrew Love

And so please take action, whatever action that needs to be, you define it. And let us know if we can help. Okay, so thank you guys so much for listening. And we'll see you somewhere, sometime.

Benjy Uyama

Yes, we will.

Andrew Love

Adios.

Benjy Uyama

Thank you very much.

Andrew Love

Hey. Before you go, I wanted you to consider checking out High Noon Connect. So if you go to our website, highnoon.org, you'll notice, first of all, we have a brand new website which is beautiful. And also, you'll notice that there's the opportunity to join High Noon Connect. The essence of what High Noon is morphing into is a community. We are better together. And sexual integrity involves other people. If you're struggling with pornography, you need the help of brothers and sisters, of people in a community dedicated to helping lift you up. And even if you're not, if you're in a relationship and you just want more intimacy, more love, more joy. Or if you're single, and you just want to be a person that can live according to their values in the area of sexuality, and you want to be around a group of people who are fighting in the same way then please go to highnoon.org and sign up for High Noon Connect. There's a free version and a paid version. We want to make this as accessible as possible. And we're nonprofit, so we're not trying to make a buck here. We're just trying to create a community off of Facebook that gives a focused conversation, focused energy, focused attention on building sexual integrity as a cultural intention. So go to highnoon.org, we'll see you there.