

THE COMBUSTION CHRONICLES

WITH SHAWN NASON

PRESENTS

KISS YOUR *Dragons* :

Get Radical with Relationships

WITH
AUTHORS:

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EPISODE 40

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Shawn: Welcome to *The Combustion Chronicles* podcast, where bold leaders combine with big ideas to create game-changing disruption. I'm Shawn Nason, your host for navigating the upside-down world of disruption. We're excited to depart from our usual programming for a few weeks to present a special mini-series based on my new book, *Kiss Your Dragons: Radical Relationships, Bold Heartsets and Changing the World*. Throughout these mini-episodes, I'm joined by my co-authors Robin Glasco and Michael Harper. Together we'll be digging into the heartsets and mindsets featured in the book and getting real about our personal journeys that led us to launch all of this into the world. Like it or not, you've got some dragons in your life that need kissing. So, pucker up and let's have some explosive conversations.

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Shawn: On today's episode, we're going to be talking about radical relationships. And Michael and Robin, we've defined radical relationships at the beginning of the book as, "Radical relationships are about depth and authenticity, boldness in heart, but more importantly they're about being willing to be in relationships with people and systems that are very different from where you are and embracing the mess that comes with it." So, I would love for us to share about our radical relationships. Michael, tell me a little bit about your take on radical relationships.

Michael: That's a little hard place for me to start because I'm the one who is the first to say that I'm not good at radical relationships, and I don't love them most of the time. I think a lot of people out there are more like me than like y'all. Radical relationships, and my life, I have got to say, I'm the one in the threesome here that radical relationships are the hardest part. I am uncomfortable with radical relationships, and I am not afraid to say it. And, I will say that being a part of writing this book gave me permission not to say it...

Shawn: Good.

Michael: ...because that was a big moment for everybody out there who is a little bit confused about radical relationships, or people who are not really ready to dive in headfirst, like some of us have. So, for me, on the side of radical relationships, and it doesn't feel natural, what it is is an opportunity to put yourself out there, to be vulnerable with the things that make you uncomfortable, and then over time be ready to learn, and to grow, and to imagine opportunities that you just never knew existed beforehand. That's probably the clearest way I can say that is that it's not always fun, it's not always easy, but in the end, I'm thankful for being able to do it.

Robin: And I just got to call bullshit.

Michael: Why?

Robin: Because every time we're in a room, you're the first to scan and call out, "There's way too many white people here."

Michael: Absolutely.

Robin: You're the first to call out that there is too much of something.

Michael: Yup.

Robin: And so, from a radical perspective, making sure there's diversity in the room, not just of the obvious, but pushing to get to a different place, a different idea, a different...That's why I call it bullshit. Because for me, it's less about the stuff that you tell him he can't do...I'll let you say that. But more so around surfacing the difference. Because, if you are just rolling around with people that are bobble-heading with you all the time, you're going to get to the same place. We've seen it again, and again, and again. If you want to get to a different place, you've got to bring in different experiences that typically come with people who don't look like you, that from up and down, don't look like you, don't think like you, don't act like you, they have different experiences than you. And you always call that out. So, I mean, that's why I call bullshit.

Michael: I do. But I have zero patience for anyone who can't call it out like I do.

Robin: Oh, okay.

Shawn: Yeah, so I think that that's a big thing. And continuing on, what we wrote in the book, it says, "This is about taking the time to sit with people you don't usually sit with. This is also about sitting in the mess even when every ounce of your being wants to run and hide." And I think that is where Michael calls it out, but when it gets to the mess, that run and hide, is what I think is what he's sharing with...You know, and it says, "Done well, radical relationships are enlivening. They give us confidence and energy in the face of ambiguity, confusion, difficulty, danger, and even despair. They build our trust in ourselves and in others, and we need them now more than ever." And I really want to talk about that, because we also talked about up here, and this may get a little uncomfortable for some people, but we talked about radical relationships with people and systems. And I think, here's where I would call this with you, Michael, and we're not trying to pick on Michael, but Michael, you are really good at radical systems. You understand both sides of all systems. And for the listeners that are listening to this, you know, we have three different political aspects here at the table, right? And so, you are all about radical systems, where that's probably more of a challenge for me sometimes, but I'm more around radical relationships, right?

Shawn: We live in a society today that can't even embrace radical relationships or radical systems. Like, if we want to call bullshit, right, that's what we're going to call it on, right? And I think that's what's so powerful about us sitting at this table together is we have given permission to call bullshit on each other.

Robin: Yeah. And that's not easy to do, that's usually not the kind thing to do, the polite thing to do, and you're not being real if you can't. So, you know, bullshit. And I know for me, whenever I'm around folks and they say, "You know, I'm going to push on that," I'm like yes, bring it. I love it, because you will get to somewhere better. And that's the, you know, part of this radical relationship is that I think what gets in the way is that a lot of people are focused on the destination, and not necessarily not the journey. And that journey, it's messy, that journey is, you know, you're focusing, you're flaring, you're debating, you're calling bullshit on one another. But if you're focused on, you know, it has to be here, we have to go here, you're going to continue to be frustrated. Rather than sit in it, and let the conversation, and let the experience evolve to wherever it needs to go.

Shawn: And we also talk about the case about more show, don't tell. Right? This goes back to the mindsets that you actually taught me. Mindsets around show, don't tell, and the way to put it. And I think this is a powerful thing here with what has happened and why we wrote this book is we can actually do this. And as we're looking to lean into this more, as we talk about it, what would be the one piece of advice that each of you would give on how to embrace the mess, and how to really nurture radical relationships. Because as we wrote in the book, it seems to be more natural for me, I just do it. And, Michael tells me, we get on these, that we wrote in here, no more best friends, Shawn. Right? Like, we just can't do any more of this but, what's the one piece of advice that each of you would give to the listeners, and to anyone that says, "Here is how to lean into radical relationships."

Robin: Just one piece of advice, I would start with the question that you have to ask yourself in the mirror. "Are you happy where things are right now?" If your answer is no, then that means you must do something different. In order to do something different, you have to take a different path or a different step than what you might have historically done. And actively seeking out someone who doesn't look, think, act like you is a really good step. And that person, someone that you can trust to be honest with you. I'm not saying this has to be your best friend, but you can trust to be honest with you, I think is a very important first step to that path, that journey of getting to a different place.

Michael: That's good advice.

Shawn: I love it.

Michael: I think mine is that you've got to figure out what you don't know. I'm so tired of hearing people talk about, "Oh, yeah, radical relationships. I have those. I do that all the time." I'm sick of it.

Because 90% of the time, because I don't want to make assumptions about everybody, but almost every single time someone has said to me, "Oh, no, no. I already have radical relationships," you don't. You really don't. So just because you're social, and you have friends, and you like to share your feelings, and you feel like you can go deep, that's not a radical relationship, because chances are you're doing it with somebody who is very much like you. If you want to do all that, plus some, with people that you completely disagree with, we're getting closer to have the radical relationship. And it's like anything, you've got to put the work into it. And so even for you, Shawn, when you say it comes naturally to you, sure, but it still takes work, and there is still times where we have to have conversations about you just think you're being radical there, you're really not, you're taking the easy way out.

Robin: I love that because there's something in your gut, where, you know, when you get that uncomfortableness, that means okay, you might be stepping into a little something, you might be getting a little bit more radical. Someone's calling you on your shit, someone's holding that mirror up to you, you might be, and you're feeling that uncomfortableness, that is I think when you are on the path.

Shawn: And I think also, a big thing around radical relationships is you also...and this would be my point of advice, you also have to be willing to be hurt.

Robin: Ooooooh. Say that louder for the people in the back.

Shawn: Right?

[00:10:00]

Shawn: You have to be willing to be hurt, and I can share personally, in the last three months, in a couple situations, of people that I felt I had radical relationships with that I have been deeply hurt. And that's where it's been really difficult to embrace that mess. Because, when it does feel natural, then when you get into that place, you're like, "Shit, I don't want to feel this way," and is it worth it? Is it worth still doing this? Because, I'm going to get hurt, and I think that is embracing a mess.

Michael: And let me re-frame that with you're high emotional, I'm highly not emotional. Robin can make it can happen. So as a person who's a more thinking person, hurt is relative, and my feelings don't get hurt in the same way. But they do get hurt. And I do process it differently, and I think a lot of people out there, if they're looking at this thinking, "Okay, that this radical

relationship is just another touchy, feely thing, and that's part of my call out,". This is about processing how we are built to process and getting to a place and acknowledging a side of ourselves that makes us uncomfortable.

Shawn: You just gave this, like, lightbulb moment, Michael. For you to be able to explain to people, because again, you're not emotional. You know, when I get hurt like that, I have to go through a lot. But I remember a journey embracing the mess with a radical system that you were very tied to for much of your life, that it took you two years to walk through that journey, because you were in a radical system, in a radical relationship with that system. That was not an easy... And I remember watching you walk through it, and I remember the day, and I think you share a little bit in the book, but when you leaned in, can you just share just a tad bit? Because I think that's powerful. The people have to understand that it's not just people, but it's a system.

Michael: And it's a journey. And so, for me, it's a story in the book about being in Puerto Rico when I was resisting, resisting, resisting. I have every excuse why I shouldn't do this, why I shouldn't jump in and take this risk. I am risk averse. And everything cleared up to the point that I just had this moment of clarity of it's time to take a risk, and it's time to do it. And I think my closing bit for this is that that risk, as scary as it is, and whatever risk means to you, because it means different things to different people, it's absolutely worth it if you've got the right radical relationships around you.

Shawn: I love it.

Robin: Great.

Shawn: Well, thank you guys. This was awesome. Talking about relationships.

Michael: Bring 'em.

Shawn: Thanks so much for listening to this special presentation of *The Combustion Chronicles* featuring the lessons and stories behind our new book, *Kiss Your Dragons: Radical Relationships, Bold Heartsets, and Changing the World*, which is available now at Amazon. If you'd like to bring *Kiss Your Dragons* into your life or workplace, head to ShawnNason.com, where you can check out our resource kit for teams, a free book club discussion guide, and information about self-paced and in-person training. If you're ready to dive deeper with us, you can also learn more about our mastermind group and personal coaching. And don't forget to connect with us on Facebook, Instagram, and Clubhouse so we can continue the conversation about radical relationships, challenging the status quo, and being the people the world needs us to be. Thanks for joining us . . . Now get out there and kiss some dragons!