

THE RESISTANCE – EPISODE 16

Pandemics and Presence – Episode Transcript

[Intro]

Matt: Welcome today to a special one-off episode, because we're all stuck indoors.

Jay: Yes, we are.

Matt: Jay has a fancy studio.

Jay: Yeah, I have a fancy studio that is now doubling as my wife's office and my, what do you call it, "introvert bunker," call this.

Matt: I'm surrounded by my wife's winter wear and an endless array of sewing machines and patterns, because I'm literally in the closet, because Jay told me this is where I should go.

Jay: That's the start of an R Kelly song, though, isn't it? I don't know. Never mind.

Matt: I don't know.

Jay: We shouldn't talk about R Kelly.

Matt: Let's avoid all that at all costs.

Anyway. So today, what we thought might be helpful, even if it's just for us, was to process where we're at. These are weird times. We have a podcast called The Resistance, in which we talk about facing the hurdles, the fears, the lack of resources, the limitations that we feel, between where we are and where we say we want to be. And I think all of us would say right now, I want to be out. I want to be somewhere else. I want to have more control than what I have. And right now, as an entire world, humanity, is facing a new level of resistance. Almost like an oppressive, overwhelming amount of resistance. So we thought, well we can't just keep putting out episodes that pretend as if we're not all facing this looming, haunting thing. Let's just talk about it. So here we are. Jay, how are you doing with all that?

Jay: Uh, yeah. I think as an introvert, it's a very difficult – I know some of the people listening. My wife's an extrovert, and she loves being around other people and interacting, engaging. She grew up in a 900 square foot house, and she had 3 brothers. So it was one bathroom, 4 kids, 2 parents, and half of our house, minus a bathroom. So she's, I keep telling people, she's a saint. And I feel like she's equipped mentally, emotionally, a lot better than I am, who had, we would be in the same room at my house, but we weren't necessarily interacting. And I love my alone time. So I think when you get into this place, your bandwidth starts to get taken up by a lot of engagement as an introvert. So the hurdles and the other things that come along. What's that movie in the 70s, the Christopher Guest movie? Spinal Tap, where it talks about the turning up to 11. Well I'm at 9 or 10. Hopefully I have an amp that goes up to 11, because anything that comes along, I feel like I'm already tapped out. So yeah it's been up and down.

Matt: Wait, are you saying having a 1-year-old and a 3-year-old –

Jay: And a 12-year-old.

Matt: And a 12-year-old is somehow bothersome at times? I don't relate to that. That's so weird.

Jay: You know, I love my family. It's beautiful, and at times I want to run out into traffic. But I feel like I run outside into the street, and there's no traffic. There's nothing. Yesterday, running down the street 15 minutes, you can't find anybody to hit you. So yeah. Ups and downs and dark places, and beauty. It's hard and awesome and different, I guess.

Matt: Our house feels so upside-down right now. A couple nights ago, I'm putting my son to bed, and I was like, "Hey, go upstairs. I'll be right up." He's six, by the way. And so, when I get in his room, he's totally nude. And I was like, oh my gosh, what's happening in here right now? Because it's not bath time. But apparently it should have been, because he said, "Uh, I just really needed to change my clothes. It's been 3 days." And I'm like, oh. My 6-year-old's dictating the fact that we have really sucky hygiene habits right now. I don't even know how long my own clothes have been on.

Jay: The fact that Mommy and Daddy didn't notice that might have –

Matt: I know, we only have one kid, and I'm like wait. I have a kid? What's happening? Does he need a bath? What's happening? Anyway, yeah, so you can tell who's running our house right now. And I think there are funny moments like that, and then you're right. There are days when certainly the marriage just is strained, just over the fact that you're together so much. And everything feels heightened. Everyone, even online, is responding with their worst selves, because there's no margin.

Jay: Yeah, I was talking to somebody the other day, or actually yesterday. And we were just kind of talking. For me it feels, this is a time where you're forced to slow down and get out of the boat of the river, that you've been navigating, of life.

And it feels sometimes like, I don't know if this will make sense to you, but it feels like when you're basically forced to look and feel and not have to deal with everything that you put in place to kind of keep you busy or distracted, it feels sometimes – yesterday I told somebody, it feels like I might have been going down the wrong river for a long time, and there's another river over here that I'm supposed to be in. It's much more important, there's more important things, there's more fulfillment, there's more beauty. And this river over here is one I've been kind of just letting take me in my boat, and when I'm forced to get out of my boat, I'm like, oh man. Those things aren't as important. Those things aren't as fulfilling. And there are other times I think, man, those things are, there's some things there that I really miss and love, that I was kind of thinking I was getting tired of and didn't want.

So I think that's all fodder, as for creatives, I guess for people who have to sit and kind of realize that maybe the river they've been going down has been the wrong one, which is a great thing. But it's definitely not easy with nowhere to go and no place to run. [laughs]

Matt: I love that. I love sitting with that in creating space to really, using this time to really analyze and reflect. For me, there are days in which, so I'm at my worst during this Coronavirus quarantine when I'm focused on all the things I cannot control, which is really everything, right? Like is freelance work for me going to dry up? Will the people who owe money to me right now actually pay their invoice? So it's about finances. It's about future. It's about politics at the highest level. It's about school and whether it's going to happen. When is this all going to let up? It's all that stuff. But I will say this.

I think the beauty that I have found in this situation that none of us asked for, is I'm actually at my best on the days in which I'm really present only to that day. I don't know if that makes sense. But the days in which I'm in tune with, okay I can't control any of that, but I can control today. And so that means, oh, it's really nice outside. Let's go make some memories with Elliot. And let's go practice his soccer. So the season may be canceled, but he can grow up remembering that we did that. Or let me do some writing that I've been meaning to do for a long time. Let's get some cleaning done. So for us, I can say, my wife and I

have actually talked about some very, very hard things for the first time, because we have to. We're stuck with each other. I can't just leave the house anymore and pretend that we don't need to chat about this or that. It's forcing us to make some memories. It's just tuning us in to the beauty of the moment, which is really profound, even as I hate all of this.

Jay: Yeah. It reminds me, I can't remember who it was who I was reading a book. It's been a long time, and I'm paraphrasing here, and I'm not going to say names, because I don't want to get carefronted on it's the wrong name and the wrong person. Carefrontation might take me to 11, somebody Facebooking us and chiding me. But basically a story of a guy. I want to say that he was having dinner at this house of, actually, a Buddhist monk. I think it was a Buddhist monk. And they were having dinner, they were getting done with dinner. Time for dessert. The monk's like, "Oh, we've got some of this, we've got some dessert." So this guy's like, "Oh, well let me do the dishes and we can have dessert." And the monk's like, "No. No, you're not going to do that." And this person was kind of taken about. He's writing about, I thought I was going to serve this monk. I was going to do something out of kindness and servitude. And the dinner guest says, "Hey, well why can't I do the dishes?" And the monk's like, "Well, because you want to do the dishes to get to dessert." And he pauses and says, "And I do the dishes to do the dishes."

So this whole chapter is this reflection of this monk, this person reflecting on this monk who just basically taught him with dishes about staying so present in the moment and being kind of in the beauty of everything you're doing, and how he spends most of his time in one thing, looking to another, and not really being fully present. That's something that I've struggled with. You've struggled with it, you've talked about. And I think that's the one thing I'm learning, is that being present fully in the moment and just kind of realizing that it's now that shapes you. This is the only moment that exists, really. The past is gone, and the future is a fantasy. There is nothing that really exists except this, now. The beyond isn't beyond. Isn't over there. It's in the depths of here.

I can't remember who said that, if it was St. Francis of Assisi or something, but the beyond isn't in the beyond. It's in the depths of here, is what he said. So being forced to go into the depths of here and now is maybe what the greatest artists and creatives, that's what they did. They went deeper and deeper into now and here, and sucked the marrow out of every piece of it and wrote about it, and those are the things that influence and inspire me. And I realize that man, we're all in that place. [laughs] And we're not out in the desert and have had to travel far out beyond into a cave. We've been forced, by circumstance, to be here and now and to plumb the depths. I think it's a beautiful and very difficult thing.

Matt: Yeah, I think you're right, man. And that actually feels like a good place to stop, that we all hate it, and yet we're all learning, and we're trying to mine for what's meaningful. It's something we're all in together. To any of you listening, I just want to say, first of all, thank you for your support and just being responsive to The Resistance overall. But certainly we just wish you well in the midst of the coronavirus. And stay tuned. Jay, you want to say anything?

Jay: Thanks for listening, and we will see you next week.

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Matt: You've been listening to The Resistance. If you've enjoyed this episode, please rate us on iTunes and subscribe on your favorite podcast app. For more information and further episodes, you can find us at listentotheresistance.com. Engineering, production, and additional music by Jay Kirkpatrick. My name is Matt Conner, and I'm your host. Thanks for listening.