Scot McKay (00:02.518)
All right. How's it going gentlemen? This is your main man, Scot McKay coming at you again with another episode of the world famous Mountain Top Podcast. Listen, gentlemen, have you ever gotten into a relationship with a woman and you're doing all the right things? You're making all the right moves, but somehow the relationship is less than it isn't where you want it to be. Sometimes you might even be getting some friction with your significant other and you don't even know why it's there. Well, have I ever got a show for you today, if you can relate to that at any level.

My guest is Dr. Anthony Silard and he is a PhD, a professor of leadership and the director of The Center For Sustainable Leadership at the Luiss Business School in Rome. And he's got a book called Love And Suffering. And boy, are we going to talk about that Today. Before I introduce him to you, however, I want to remind you that you can find our website at mountaintoppodcast.com. If you haven't yet joined the Facebook group.

It is The Mountain Top Summit on Facebook. And of course, all over social media, I'm @scotmckay except on Instagram where I'm @realscotmckay. So with that out of the way, Dr. Anthony Silard, welcome to the show, man.

Anthony Silard (01:16.716)
Hey, thanks Scot for having me on. I'm honored to be here with you.

Scot McKay (01:20.588)
Yeah, man. Well, the honor is mine. You've done great work around this whole idea of, well, I guess, relationship health. Is that the best way to put it? You've got several books. One of them is called Love And Suffering, which, you know, these guys can find it mountaintoppodcast.com/amazon you know, full disclosure up front. a couple of you're going to get away A couple others that you're going to give away free The Myth Of Happiness and The Myth Of Friendship.

Man, those are some scary titles for guys getting into relationships with women. So I guess I want to ask you what brought about your interest in this work?

Anthony Silard (01:59.822)
You know, it's interesting, Scot, because I spent 10 years researching a book on how our screens are affecting us and our relationships. And it came out a week before the pandemic began. What timing, especially just before an event that gives everyone license to use their screens all they want. as we were all in. Yeah, no, exactly, exactly. And so, but that book, you know, there was there was a lot of negativity in that book about all the

Scot McKay (02:20.686)
Well, it sort of forced us into it.

Yeah.

Anthony Silard (02:29.422)
you know, the effects on loneliness, depression, anxiety. And so I just started asking myself, well, OK, but how how do we actually make relationships work? How can we make them more positive, independent of our screens? And that really became the genesis for Love And Suffering. As you can tell from, you know, The Myth Of Happiness the subtitle is how your definition of happiness creates your own happiness. And then The Myth Of Friendship

how your misunderstandings about friendship keep you lonely. So between that and Love And Suffering, you can probably gather that I am one of those people that I like to find something that I really don't think that the way we understand it conventionally works and find a counterintuitive way of understanding it

because that to me is interesting. It's almost like a detective trying to find like, okay, what's the hidden key here?

Scot McKay (03:25.774)
Well, I got to tell you, your audience here, these guys are going to love that about you because after 500 and some odd episodes of, uh, people say, Oh, just be yourself or try harder or stay in your lane or do better as a masculine man. Uh, not that we talk about that on this show, but man, some of these themes that guys are hammered with again and again, these platitudes, they don't have any practicality behind them.

Anthony Silard (03:41.187)
Yeah.

Scot McKay (03:55.872)
And then on top of all else, they're not even sensible. They don't even really work. So, you know, guys are hammered with, you know, exhortations to be resilient, you know, just be a little tougher, you know, or to man up or be stoic and don't show your emotions. And then another guy comes on and talks about, you know, Alexi, themia and how men have been somehow weirdly completely detached from their emotional involvement at all.

Anthony Silard (04:11.918)
Right.

Scot McKay (04:24.472)
Guys are like, yeah, I had a couple of girlfriends tell me that, everybody's always, but how and why? And that's where you come in. And indeed, even on your Amazon, kind of description of your book, you know, Love And Suffering, you have counterintuitive bullet points. And I want to hit each and every one of them because I think this is the meat and potatoes of this show. I think this is really going to be life-changing for a lot of men. The first one is the suffering you've experienced in your life

Anthony Silard (04:29.603)
Mm-hmm.

Scot McKay (04:54.232)
can enable you to love more deeply. And what I'm reading there is, look, you think you have to have been Mr. Perfect and live this charmed life with nothing bad ever happening to you or anybody you love in order to have a healthy relationship. You can't have any bit of a broken halo at all. And furthermore, avoid any chick who's been broken in any way, because she would be terrible, not relationship material. That's what we've been told, but it's unreasonable, first of all, and second of all, you're coming along saying,

Hey, what we've experienced in our lives, you know, individually and collectively, I'm sure, actually helps us and enables us, empowers us to love more deeply. What is your viewpoint on that? Explain.

Anthony Silard (05:39.694)
Well, by the way, Scot, this is wonderful question you're asking. No, but the way you're framing it, I think, is excellent. And I have a quote in Love and Suffering, which is, don't let someone else's suffering spoil your own. OK, and what that's all about is that we've all suffered. Each of us have suffered in different ways. I'm sure most of you guys out there

Scot McKay (05:43.95)
Well, it comes right from your bullet point. So, you know, yeah. Okay.

Anthony Silard (06:08.204)
You've fallen in love with someone who's broken your heart. You've had other relationships where you just wondered, how did I blow that? Like, what did I do? Why did I mess it up? Why do I keep repeating the same patterns over and over again? Right? Why am I not more emotionally involved? Well, like, why am I not really showing up here? You know, we all ask these kinds of questions to ourselves. And I think the interesting thing about suffering is that a suffering is a void.

It's something in our lives that we wish were different. And that's also what leads us toward love, is that there's something that we experience and we don't want to experience it anymore. In fact, if you look at the word passion, the etymology of passion, passion comes from patire in Latin or pati, which is to suffer. So for example, if we look at like in Christianity, you have the crucifixion, the suffering, the passion of Christ.

If you look in like many African cultures, you have this sort of image of the phoenix rising from the ashes. Whether it's cultural, religious traditions, almost all of them have this construct of that like out of suffering can come something really beautiful. If you look in like trauma research, there's the concept of post-traumatic growth, which is that like you go through something traumatizing, it doesn't have to take you under. In fact,

it can cause you to change your priorities in life, the way you value relationships, your spirituality, what you value. So I'm leading the largest qualitative study of trauma in police departments across the US. In Kansas, Georgia, and California, we have like 10 different departments. And when I do these interviews, I ask all these officers and their...

and their civilian staff, I say, you know, like, well, so what is this, the trauma you've experienced, tell me about it. And then what's it led to? And so we have like about 40 minutes of the interview, which is like gloom and doom and all the depression and substance abuse and marital problems and so forth from the trauma. And then I, and then I, and then I ask, I ask another question after about 40 minutes, I say, how has the trauma you've experienced benefited you? And like the interview goes silent.

Anthony Silard (08:33.23)
You're like, excuse me? Like, if you think about your values now and your values before you started doing this police work, how have they changed? Like, how are they different because of what you've experienced? And now the whole tone changes. It goes from negative to positive. And you should hear what these officers are sharing. It's like, you I hug my children tighter. I...

you know, I value my friendships. I value... I got one guy that I for a previous book that I interviewed and he was a bus driver in Washington, D.C. And he was caught in the middle of a gang fight right on his bus. Right. Got shot twice. And I talked with him a few years later. And he said, you know, because of what I experienced, like I don't take anything for granted anymore.

He goes, before that happened, I just cared about like I was so focused on looks and money. He goes, after that, I'm just grateful to be walking on this beautiful earth and I'm connecting with people more for what's inside, not just what's outside. So whatever we've experienced, I'll tell you in my own case, so my parents divorced when I was five, I'm 58 right now. So my parents divorced when I was five. I had a few...

stepfathers, one who was very physically abusive. And going through that, you know, we think about like passion coming from suffering. Like, you know, I ran away from home, I slept in parks, I didn't feel safe at home. Right? When a guy comes into your home who's not your father beats you up and sleeps with your mother, you don't feel like much of a person, man. That's how I grew up. And so what's interesting is from that, those feelings of powerlessness.

Like what wakes me up in the morning is to help others feel powerful, to like be able to, I think a lot of us, we cover our eyes with our hands and we cry about how dark it is. And I want to help people like remove their hands and see the light and the love that's right in front of them. It just involves, it doesn't involve like going anywhere different. It's just imagine seeing what you've been seeing all along, but seeing it through a new lens.

Scot McKay (10:45.42)
You know, here in Western culture, it seems like we complain more than anybody else in the world, even though we're the most blessed. And you see that over and over again, because I think we have more time on our hands and the luxury of complaining about it. Several things come to mind as well from what you just said, Anthony. One of them is that Ascetic value of pathos is almost as a cleansing, purifying

step in your life, this process, whether it be a shorter term or a longer term one, it helps you. It really does help you see things more clearly. I once applied for a job where I was going to help at-risk kids. And I crushed the interview, man. I I mean, I was absolutely thinking I got this in the bag and the guy sat me down and he goes, you know, you're a great guy. Everybody loved you, but you're not getting the job. And I go, what?

And he was like, well, you just haven't... Everything's gone too well for you. You need to be, you know, you need to be kicked around the block a little bit and experience some suffering in your life before you're going to relate to this crowd. And I remember being so completely upset about that. Like, you know, how dare this guy tell me that, you know, how are you going to tell me that I can't relate to you? And so the funny thing is

years later, I go through a divorce from a crazy woman, ruined my life, know, knocked down to rock bottom where the only thing I could do was bounce, right? And I'm now a better dating relationship coach because of that experience. Because without that experience, I couldn't relate as well to the guys who come to me who are going through very real problems like that. And I think this is hard to see until it's in the rear view mirror, isn't it?

Anthony Silard (12:40.394)
I I mean, I think you're right, but I also think you had a right to be angry at that guy because that wasn't fair. And let me tell you why. It's not that we have to go through adversity to relate to others because it can also be that we observe others going through adversity. So if you look like passion comes from suffering, the etymology, but compassion comes from com... com with, and passion suffering.

And a lot of people misinterpret it to think compassion means to suffer with. We suffer with others, we lose our capacity to help them. But instead of that, compassion means to be with others in their suffering. And that's what you would have been doing in that position. And it depends on you and who is Scot McKay. What you have inside, you could have done perfectly well relating to those young people. So at any rate, it sounds like

you're on the right track because from what you've experienced, what you experienced in your prior marriage, it's gave you kind of a wake up call to how you wanted to relate to others. And that's what you're teaching to others. And this is very common. Like I have clients, so I do a lot of leadership. I'm a leadership professor and coach and trainer. I do a lot of coaching with people. And you know, it's interesting thing is that no matter how high up someone rises, I even, I work with a lot of fortune 500 CEOs, senior leaders.

No matter how high up people go, they're still facing challenges in the way they lead and manage. And it always comes back to someone in their life that they've never forgiven. And so when we're not able to forgive someone, that's where, especially you're talking about... Yeah, because you're talking about guys who wonder why they keep experiencing the same dysfunctional patterns in relationships.

Scot McKay (14:20.29)
That's your next bullet point here, by the way. Yeah. Nice segue there. Yeah.

Anthony Silard (14:32.71)
I'm not saying once in a while, it's always because we never forgave someone and we need to do it. We need to move forward.

Scot McKay (14:41.08)
Well, let's go ahead and list this next bullet point then. And by the way, I appreciate everything you said. I think I would have crushed that job also for the exact reasons you said. But then again, after I did get kicked around the block a little bit, I saw his point a little more clearly. I was better at understanding and relating when I didn't have this silver spoon upbringing and everything had gone well emotionally and hadn't had anybody die on me or,

Anthony Silard (14:57.943)
Mm-hmm.

Scot McKay (15:10.274)
you know, get really terribly abused. Although in retrospect, there's a few things I could have told him that may have changed his view because I didn't have an absolutely perfect upbringing, but that was... He just thought I was a little happy-shiny for what needed to go on, which probably would have been a fair assessment at the time. But, you know, then then again, we also turned 30 and things change a little bit from the idealism perspective. You know what I I mean? But,

Anthony Silard (15:29.558)
I I mean, it's shit.

Hahaha

Scot McKay (15:38.828)
The second bullet point you have here that I, I, I copied and pasted, you know, wrote down here is forgiveness isn't as kind as you think. While it is kind judgment, it's still judgment, but you can't forgive someone unless you have first judged them. Well, that seems like quite the word salad on the surface because it seems almost contradictory. Hey, you know,

you're not so kind to be forgiving this person because it's still judgment and you can't forgive someone unless you first judge them. So where's the chicken and the egg and the cart and the horse there, Anthony?

Anthony Silard (16:16.174)
Well, Scot, we create the problem, which is judgment, and then the solution, which is forgiveness. If you don't judge someone, there's nothing to forgive. And think about it. What's it sound like when we forgive someone? Like, hey, you really did wrong to me. You really hurt me. And I want you to know that I forgive you. It's kind of like,

Scot McKay (16:41.774)
Still kind of selfish, isn't it?

Anthony Silard (16:43.402)
Yeah, and it's also a power move. It's kind of like, you know, I hold this like moral propriety over you, but I'm going to forgive you for it... I'm going to give this to you. And, and so I'm not saying forgiveness is wrong. Don't get me wrong here. So in Love And Suffering, there are what I call four love plateaus,

which are acceptance, forgiveness, gratitude, and love. Each one has an obstacle that has to be overcome to reach it. So to reach acceptance, we have to overcome suffering. To reach

forgiveness, we have to overcome resentment. To reach gratitude, we have to overcome judgment. And then to reach love, we have to overcome what I call incarceration, which we can talk about later if we have time for it. But when it comes to forgiveness, forgiveness is a step on that path toward love. We need to be able to forgive when we feel someone has wronged us. But what happens over time is that often we realize that that person

that we think wronged us actually righted us. Let me take my own example again, okay? So physical abuse from this guy, right? I'm growing up, it's like, I was not going in a good direction. I mean, relationships were failing left and right. I really had trouble holding down any kind of relationship. I held all this resentment. By the way, for your listeners out there, do you know where resentment comes from?

It comes from re, which is again, and sentire, which is to feel, is to feel anger again and again and again until we become paralyzed. And I was paralyzed. And it wasn't until I went backpacking alone in Argentine Patagonia. And I was just out there in the woods for like 10 days by myself. I got this, like I started to realize that,

you know, that actually maybe I could forgive this guy. Maybe, maybe like, you know what? It's pretty pathetic what he did to be like, like, physically violent toward a toward a kid. You know, he almost broke my back. Right. But I started thinking about like, what was it like for him? He was unemployed. He grew up in a society that kind of spit him out. And that was the only way he could claim his sense of power. Right. And I was, you know, I was no easy kid. I was very opinionated. and.

Anthony Silard (19:07.19)
And that's how my mother raised me, right? To be opinionated, to be strong. And so, over time, I started to, the more I thought about it, the more I thought, well, maybe like if I'm judging him for being like callous, insensitive and so forth, I started, and this is one of the exercises in Love And Suffering. I said... The exercise is take what you feel resentment towards someone for.

Take all those behaviors that they've committed. So for example, for him, yeah, you know, for physically striking me, you know, and so forth. Then what is the character quality associated with that? So that would be like, you know, insensitive, that would be abusive and so forth. And then the next step in the exercise is write down the names of the people in your life who would attribute those qualities to you. And so I did that myself on this walk and in this hiking, I started thinking like,

who would accuse me of being abusive? And I'm like, you know what? Actually quite a number of people. Actually, I remember after my parents divorced, I remember this kid named, this kid David Nassau in my neighborhood and we were at summer camp together. And I just like hauled off and punched him in the nose, gave him a bloody nose for like no reason. You know, it was just I had so much anger inside of me for my parents splitting up. And that was one way that I tried to deal with it. I thought of other people

where they would also consider me to be have been insensitive. And the more I thought about it, the more I thought, you know what, I don't want to hold on to this anymore. And so one of the chapters in Love and Suffering is called To Forgive is to Give For. And the idea is that to forgive, you give for someone else to yourself, for them not being capable of giving you what you needed from them. And the more I could do that and realize like this man was in such a dark space

that he wasn't able to give me what I needed from him, which really just to lay off would have been fine, would have been enough. And that actually really helped me a lot. And then what I realized after that is that forgiveness is necessary. So I'm not saying don't do it. It's necessary. But we have to go beyond

forgiveness. And so let's take, for example, for your listeners out there, imagine like the class you had in high school or college where you learned the most in your life. Like you never learned so much from this,

Anthony Silard (21:32.815)
from anyone as this teacher. So visualize that you're going back into that classroom or that football or soccer or field or tennis court or dance studio or wherever it is. Imagine you're going back there and you're about to leave for the last time. The last time you're going to see this wonderful teacher. Well, now you have the opportunity. You've gotten up from your desk or wherever you're sitting. You're walking out. And in this visualization, turn around,

look toward that teacher and you have opportunity to say something to him or her, what would you say? Most people are going say, thank you. And that's the thing. We go through life resenting the parents that didn't give us what we needed, the women in our lives that didn't give us what we needed from them and so forth. And what we don't realize is that these interaction partners through them, we learned

how to become better as human beings. And so if it wasn't for this stepfather, I can tell you right now, I'd be on Wall Street driving a convertible, earning a ton of money in my fourth marriage, having my third affair on my wife, because that's the kind of person I was. And that's not the kind of person I am now. I'm married with two kids and I feel like...

I don't know, I'm just much able to connect with others. And like as you were sharing, Scot, it's from what I went through. so, And so when we realize that the person that we resent, that we need to forgive is actually our greatest teacher, that we've actually learned a lot from them, we wouldn't choose it again. We wouldn't say, I want to go back and experience that all that suffering, but it's what happened and we learned from it. And if we can, if we can change the way we think about those most challenging moments in life.

It kind of gives us a new lease on life because then it's like the resentment just fades away. We're not stuck anymore.

Scot McKay (23:36.898)
Well, you know, everything you're talking about is fascinating to me. Not only does it ring true, but I think there are practical steps we can apply that really help us get to the place you're talking about. Around here, man, you know, Jocko Willink's company sponsors this show and he is the most anti-victimhood guy who's ever anti-victimhooded. You know, he runs the entire anti-victimhood neighborhood, I think.

Feeling like a victim is disempowering. It gives too much power to the people who hurt you. And it leaves you in that pain and that suffering that you, that you speak of. Whereas this forgiveness is an active exercise that will serve us, you know, in, in removing victimhood from our mindset.

Cause now all of a sudden we're empowered. Lots of things came to mind. First of all, there was that word again, patire You said, you know, what your, what your stepfather did was pathetic. Well, same root word, you know, but it's right. You're here. You are sitting in the pathos of realizing what's been done to me. Was not only unacceptable, but it's kind of weak. This is just, you know, you almost got to laugh it off. Right. Um.

Anthony Silard (24:50.296)
Pathos, that's right.

Anthony Silard (25:01.496)
Hmm, totally.

Scot McKay (25:04.577)
The idea of us being in our heads so much that we just sit there and simmer with all this hate and this resentment that you talked about. I love how you really got to the etymology of that as well.

Anthony Silard (25:17.39)
Well, and Scot just, go ahead, sorry, I didn't I mean to you, go ahead.

Scot McKay (25:17.976)
But it.

Scot McKay (25:21.582)
But it seems, you know, on top of all else that, uh, you know, the Hawaiians figured this out. The ho'oponopono thing is kind of in sync with what you were talking about. In other words, I'm sorry, please forgive me. Thank you. I love you. So in other words, you know, I'm going to weaponize this, this, I forgive you just to make you feel like, you know, you're really a terrible person. There's that removal of all the pain.

there's this kind of a getting over ourselves inherent in that. And I think that's what you're talking about, isn't it? Is, is, know, you got to let this go. You got to, you know, you can't just sit with it for your whole life. You deal with it, you recognize it, you do something about it. You let it build you and craft you into being a better man. And then you have better relationships with women, better relationships at work, better relationships everywhere, because you take that and treat it as a gift that helped you grow

through that adversity rather than something that's that it's like The Man keeping you down for the rest of your life. Am I onto something?

Anthony Silard (26:22.926)
Well, yeah, and Scot, all psychologists agree on one thing about happiness, is that the number one panacea for a happy life is the relationships we have, right? It's social connection. And gratitude. Well, I'm glad you said that because in Love And Suffering, I say that there's two panaceas for long-term happiness. The interpersonal panacea is close relationships.

Scot McKay (26:38.784)
A lot of gratitude too. Yeah. Yeah.

Anthony Silard (26:51.766)
And the longest study of adult development in history at Harvard, it's all about that. It's all about that the closer relations people have, for example, in middle age, the happier they are as they grow older. But throughout life stages, that's how it is. And the interpersonal panacea I write about in Love and Suffering is gratitude, like you said. And that's the whole thing about forgiveness is that we think of forgiveness as being for someone else. It's not.

Forgiveness is for yourself. The benefit of forgiveness is that you become unstuck. What we need for a relationship to continue is not forgiveness. Forgiveness is part of it, but we need trust. So forgiveness is about personal development. Trust is about relationship development because you can forgive someone and not choose to have a relationship with them again. So for example, I can tell you I forgive my stepfather.

Am I like, he's not alive any longer, but if he were, would I be knocking on his door? Like, hey, give me a hug. I don't think so. You know, but I've, but, but I've let it go. And, and that's the thing, you know, we also, we're also told as children, especially like, like forgive and forget. And I'm not saying that either. I would say forgive and remember. Like if you, if you, if you walk into a ditch at night,

I don't think it would be a good idea to forget the location of the ditch. Like you want to know where that ditch is so you can avoid it, right? I I mean, so for example, Scot, like you may choose to forgive your ex-wife. Doesn't mean you're going to go back and be with her again, right? But it's just like, if forgiveness is a way of sort of unleashing ourselves from the clutches of resentment and paralysis, but then we go, like you said, to gratitude. And that's where we say, well,

Scot McKay (28:22.891)
Indeed.

Anthony Silard (28:48.258)
You know, you know, we, know, that forgiveness is, you know, is about like going beyond it is like, thank you for giving me this experience because of this experience... Like for sure, I imagine Scot that, that I don't know your situation now or the next lucky woman that's going to have an opportunity to a relationship with you, but they're going to be because of what you learned in your prior relationship, you're going to show up very differently and what you're looking for is going to be very different from what you valued before.

And that's that values. Yeah, know, most people, Yeah, you know, most people go through life. And what I'm trying to say to your listeners is that you can choose instead of going through life, you can choose to grow through life. So there's the platitude that we're hammering you guys with. But, you know, that's it.

Scot McKay (29:18.252)
All of that's very true, by the way, and has been for nearly 20 years.

Scot McKay (29:35.896)
Well, yeah. I mean, if you're forgiving somebody, you're not just offloading the blame and just getting this off your chest. I mean, that may feel cathartic in the moment, but what's the long view here? What's the strategy instead of the pure tactic involved? Okay. And to me, I like, you know, that for give the give for, I think that's, that's clever. And I really think that for a lot of us.

We grow from it. We learn from it. We become better men because of it. And then we also become a mentor to someone else when we can with it. And, you know, that's, that's where we as older gentlemen, can really have an impact and leave a legacy on the younger generation. Cause we've gone through some of these things. We've lived it. We've forgiven it and we've moved on. and,

So, yeah, I agree with you. I don't think forgiveness should be ceremonial or just simply symbolic. I think it should be a step in the right direction, but I will say this and you know what happens when you use the word "but"... I'm also with the military, you know, trust, but verify. I don't offer the trust, you know, glibly or just offhandedly.

just like you suggested. And I think that's a point that needs to be driven home. It's like, okay, great. Now we're all friends again. So, you know, you'll be vulnerable and I can take advantage of you because then you'll just come forgive me again. Awesome. No, you can't be naive and stupid. Um, you've got to grow from it and also, you know, increase your wisdom from it as well. And I sense that's what you're saying. And I love it. Um, in the interest of time, I want to get to a couple more of these.

Whatever you do not learn to love in your life, you will repeat. And I'll, you know, my question out loud is why would I not want to repeat what I learned to love, but I don't think that's where you're coming from there. So describe.

Anthony Silard (31:42.863)
Well, that's the thing is that what you don't want to repeat is what the things that you didn't enjoy that you didn't like, that you didn't feel were fair. People that you didn't feel treated you well. And I'm saying if

you don't want to repeat those, you even need to learn to love those experiences, which is, I think very challenging for many people get their heads around because it's like, well, you're asking me to love like someone who hurt me. And...

You know, there's actually a really interesting parable by Neil Donald Walsh where he's got this parable of where there's this angel up in heaven and the angel says, you know, I'm here to be like a guardian angel for human beings, but I don't really know what they go through. I don't know how they suffer. I've never suffered. I'm just up here in heaven, like, you know, enjoying this beautiful place. And so he goes to God and says, hey,

I'd like to go down to earth and I want to experience what it's like to suffer so I can really understand other people. And God looks around and says, okay, we need another one of you angels to go down to earth with this angel and help him understand what suffering means. And another angel raises his hand and says, okay, I'll go. And so the first angel goes up to the angel and says, like,

you'd do that? You're going to come down to earth with me and show me what suffering is? Like, why would you do that? And the other angel says, because I love you. And that's the thing is that is that when when we are unable to forgive it's because we... and we judge it's because we see why doesn't why doesn't this other person act the way I'd like them to act? Right.

And what we don't understand is that what we do for ourselves, we have to do for others. Like, I'm sure each one of your listeners here, I'm sure you've had experiences where you say, I really messed up. But you know what? At the time, even you and I both have shared this on some level. At the time, that was what I was capable of. But now I'm capable of much more. Well, it's... Yeah.

Scot McKay (33:52.364)
I have to share something with you right here right now. How annoying are people who try to pretend they're never going to screw up?

Anthony Silard (34:00.175)
Well, none of the annoying, but those are the people you can't trust. Yeah.

Scot McKay (34:01.73)
I I mean, guess what, you know, in your, In a marriage and, your friendships, your business relationships. Yeah, it's exactly... There are the people you can't trust. There's no such thing as someone who's never going to annoy you. I love to tell the story about my wife and I, how we had pretty much recognized each other when we met, we knew this was going places together. And a couple of weeks into the relationship, I screwed up, Anthony.

I don't even remember what it was because of course anything since then has... You know, paled and compare it pales in comparison to the bedlam that's happened in the last 20 years, I'm sure. But I did something that was untoward or I said something in anger or, yeah, I was a jerk at some level. And I looked at my dear, future wife and I said, my God. I I mean, what do you think of me now? She goes, actually.

I'm glad this happened because I was wondering if you were going to be like Mr. Perfect for the rest of your life and never misbehave because I can't live up to that. And so I think the pressure is pretty much off. I was like, God, I love this chick. You know what I mean? And, and that trust that we achieved from that conversation of I'm going to have a bad day. I'm going to be hangry. I'm going to get yelled at by the boss and bring that baggage home with me. All of that has just allowed us to

Anthony Silard (35:12.323)
Yeah.

Scot McKay (35:29.688)
forgive and, you know, also understand more about each other. Okay. Because we had this misunderstanding. Now I learned something about you. Well, how does that change how we relate in the future? And I know this is sounding so darn evolved and amazing. Like I'm just, you know, looking down my nose at everybody, but this is hard-fought wisdom. Oh, my God. You know, we get 20 years in with my wife and I now we have a pretty good relationship.

Anthony Silard (35:52.366)
It's very hard.

Scot McKay (35:59.628)
You know, but it is all hard-fought.

Anthony Silard (36:00.591)
You know, as I'm listening to you, Scot, I'm thinking about, you you talked about how as we, you know, as we become older men, that it's, you know, it's really necessary for us to mentor younger guys. And I was having a conversation with this guy, this guy about a week ago, and this guy is 31 and he'd been with the same woman for 14 years and they just split up, right? And she's the only woman that...

Scot McKay (36:15.342)
Absolutely.

Scot McKay (36:29.516)
Mm-hmm.

Anthony Silard (36:29.526)
only woman that he'd ever been with. And he told me that she said to him before she broke up with him, I just kind of feel like you've lost that spark. Right. And you know what I said to him? Yeah, you know... Every day, you know what I said to him? I go, you know what? My wife and I each lose that spark at least once a month. You know, sometimes five times a day. And that's the thing, you know, so.

Scot McKay (36:41.538)
See it all the time, man. See it all the time around here, every day.

Scot McKay (36:53.671)
Sometimes five times a day.

Anthony Silard (36:58.966)
I think what you're talking about how like people who never want to admit they think they're perfect and never admit that they've ever messed up. You know, Carol Dweck at Stanford, psychologist, she writes about what she calls the growth mindset, which is really this idea that's really just been the last two decades that this has become widely accepted. People used to think that personalities were static, that you're just extroverted and that's it, or you're sensitive or whatever your personality traits.

Scot McKay (37:19.886)
All right.

Anthony Silard (37:24.588)
Like, you know, that's it for life. And so that was the calling card of narcissism. Like, well, if you, you know, if you insult me, I can't change. So I better defend myself and lash out against you. And, what they realized in the last 20 years is that personality is malleable and we can change.

Scot McKay (37:40.206)
Well, Dr. Benjamin Hardy, who's been on this show, that's his, that's his wheelhouse. Personality isn't perfect. You know, and I found that out myself, you know, and I think this is tangentially related to what we're talking about. I didn't like my Myers-Briggs and I realized I'm not stuck with it. I don't have to be the person who inherently takes forever and compiles all the information to make a simple decision.

Anthony Silard (38:01.163)
Mm-mm.

Scot McKay (38:06.966)
I can go, got enough information, make the decision. Jack Welch, a bad decision's better than no decision, move on. I liked that about myself. I wanted more of that. You know, I wanted to, I was more of a thinker than a feeler in my decision making. And I wanted to balance that out. So I did. I mean, and I made those adjustments. And when I take a Myers Briggs test now, personality inventory.

I'm not the same four letters I was when I was 25 and that's purpose built. That's because I decided it should be that way.

Anthony Silard (38:34.68)
No.

Anthony Silard (38:38.904)
That's about growing through life. And I would say two things for your listeners to take home. One is that all dichotomies are false dichotomies. As soon as you say that, OK, you're either introverted or extroverted, OK, that's a whole 'nother conversation, but that's totally false. And the other thing is don't ever let anyone tell you who you are. And that includes psychologists.

Scot McKay (38:43.436)
Yeah.

Scot McKay (39:05.88)
Well, because the next person will come along and tell you you're someone completely different and then you'll have no identity. Yeah. Yeah. Of course.

Anthony Silard (39:09.642)
Yeah, no, exactly. It's dangerous to internalize any of that. In fact, I've gone through all the psychology research and leadership and there's no conclusive evidence that any personality trait really in a significant way leads to stronger leadership or more effective leadership. And so, you know, I see so many companies spending so much on these personality tests and then literally I'm not going to name them right now. I don't want diss them, but like

Scot McKay (39:14.647)
You bet.

Anthony Silard (39:37.185)
literally, you go into the, I've been brought in as a consultant, you go into these huge offices and it's like, this person's got these letters after their name on their name plate outside their office door. And you're like, well, what is that? Oh, that means, and they're talking about like, means this trade or that strength. And there's no conclusive evidence that that leads to any kind of better form of leadership. In fact, even like...

Scot McKay (40:03.852)
When I, when I was very, When I was very young, I applied for a job and I got it. And it was a rigorous

process to get the job. They put you through testing and everything. And it didn't work out. I wasn't the right guy for the job. And I quit and did something better. And it was just a matter of mere months. And the guy I was... The guy I was answering to said, you know, before you pack your stuff and walk out the door, I got something I want to show you.

Anthony Silard (40:06.947)
Mm-hmm.

Scot McKay (40:34.254)
And he reaches in his desk, goes through his files, he goes, give me just a second. And he takes a piece of paper and he throws it on the table and it has a 100 on it. And I go, what the hell is this? He goes, that's the assessment after your interview of how perfect you were for this job. None of us had ever seen anything higher than a 93. I go, this is a 100. He goes, yeah, you were perfect for this job. Says this piece of paper.

And then we both burst out and laughing, like a laughing, crying emoji, like apparently not, you know, cause it was all just, it was all just, just academic, academia is all it was, you know. And in real life, the paper, the paper couldn't tell you everything. You know what I mean?

Anthony Silard (41:21.484)
No, because we don't make decisions based on rationality. We make decisions based on our emotions. You know, basically we just try to choose reasons that fit with what we already feel.

Scot McKay (41:24.78)
now. Fantastic.

Scot McKay (41:33.708)
Yeah. So whenever we come to a relationship with this checkbox effect, like I'm looking for this and I'm looking for this, know, famously women in New York City will show up on dates with this. And it always seems to backfire like a cheap cigar. And absolutely not. Last one before we close. Your happiness emanates from how in your mind you construct your relationships. So if I'm putting this

Anthony Silard (41:44.017)
god.

the whole the whole is not the sum of the parts not at all

Scot McKay (42:01.922)
facade onto a relationship that I've crafted myself, this expectation or even this sexpectation, right? I might just be shooting myself in the foot, right?

Anthony Silard (42:08.942)
You

Anthony Silard (42:14.604)
Well, absolutely. I mean, I think that's the thing is that is that we, you you know, the term significant other, our first significant other is our parent of the opposite sex. And then the new significant other, you know, so there's like our family of origin and then our family of destination. And... it's very Freudian. And but this is this is what happens is that we we we don't really see others. We see we see our

Scot McKay (42:32.706)
Sounds Freudian indeed. Yeah. Yeah.

Anthony Silard (42:44.596)
image of what we expect from others. You know, it's like almost like we have this lens over our eyes and we're not really seeing anything. We're just, we're just seeing ourselves and our own preconceptions.

Scot McKay (42:54.252)
It's not that the other person's wearing a mask per se, it's we've projected a mask onto this other person.

Anthony Silard (43:00.29)
Yeah, that's right. That's right. And so we don't actually really get to see them. And I think that's the thing is that especially, you we're living in this era of kind of, of kind of, you know, liquid love, liquid dating, everything is, you know, you know, you just, can just choose another person. Yeah, yeah, exactly. You can, can, you know, no, I I mean, I I mean, I don't like that she's got like a hair on one of her toes or, like there's, there's, there's these little things now that say, okay, that's not going to work.

Scot McKay (43:14.776)
There's an energy drink brand in there somewhere.

Scot McKay (43:27.095)
Me either.

Anthony Silard (43:29.364)
And we don't really give people a chance. And that's the thing is that a lot of times, especially us men, we just don't want to be vulnerable. I've had these conversations where I'm doing conferences for senior leaders and we bring up the issue of vulnerability and women are much more comfortable with it. Guys are just like, it's like kryptonite vulnerability. They're just like...

They're just like, why would I do that? Why would I give anyone the keys to the fortress? And that's the thing, you know, we end up just being in this kind of self-protective shell. You know, Virginia Woolf, the English novelist, she had this great image of that what we call communication is really like each of us is inside our shell, just scratching on the interior of the shell. And all we hear is the faint sound of another person scratching. And that's what we call communication. That's what we call connection.

Scot McKay (44:24.952)
Sounds a bit nihilistic.

Anthony Silard (44:27.246)
Yeah, I I mean, that's the thing. It doesn't have to be that way. But most of us don't want to do the internal work that we need to do to get past that. and to move to a place where we would.

Scot McKay (44:36.302)
Well, the internal work should be for us, not for someone else.

Anthony Silard (44:39.65)
Well, that's right. It's for us, but it's also for others because we show up very differently after we've been doing that work. So when I'm teaching leadership, I tell people, if you want to become a leader on the outside, you first have to become a leader on the inside. So it's not just for intimate relationships or friendships. It's also for success and work. I mean, if you look at, for example, leadership, the most common definition in the literature is

it's the capacity to mobilize a group of people toward collective objectives. In other words, it's developing relationships toward shared goals. Leadership is relationships toward a common purpose. And so to be able to become effective, and I don't I mean just leaders like CEOs, anyone who's developing

relationships... Especially in a... You know, parenting is the rawest form of leadership, Scot. Especially in the family. No, and being a husband

Scot McKay (45:27.188)
especially in the family.

Scot McKay (45:33.485)
and being a husband.

Anthony Silard (45:37.743)
or a spouse. So absolutely. And it all comes down to relationships, but we're not... So the thing is, it's not just for ourselves because we need relationships to thrive. It's not, they're not optional. Like if you, you know, I, whenever I hear people say, I like being, spending time by myself. Okay. You know, go spend two weeks in the woods by yourself and then let's have a conversation. Right. Like even if you look at like Thoreau at Walden pond, you know, he, he used to write about like, if someone came along,

and to sort of knock him out of his solitude, he would be like so, so happy to talk to this person, please stay over for a day. You know, we all need to balance togetherness and separateness. And it's all about that finding that equilibrium. And so whether it's relationship with others or our relationship with ourselves, which is the sort of the foundation of all of our other relationships, it comes with like...

start with not being, it's fear, getting over that fear of having those difficult conversations with yourself. One thing I'll say to your listeners, one thing you can do.

Each day, a few times a day, just say to yourself, like, I feel, and then let it come out, whatever you're feeling after that, whatever emotions. And so, know, whatever, I'm feeling frustrated, I'm feeling angry, I'm feeling disappointed, I'm feeling concerned, feeling afraid, whatever it is, I'm feeling insecure, let it come out and then write down those emotions and then do this kind of in your mind. Have a dinner party with those emotions, invite them over.

invite over your insecurity and your fear and your anger and your disappointment and say, okay, so here's disappointment sitting across from you at the table. Disappointment, thanks for joining here. Let me ask you, why are you here? Like, what can I learn from you? Yeah, I think they did that already.

Scot McKay (47:26.444)
I think there's a Pixar movie for that. Well, I think this has been a wonderful conversation and two last pieces. First of all, once again on this show, gentlemen, there's that relationship with love between love and fear as opposites. And that's, that's significant that you would bring that up out of nowhere. Also, you know, you're talking about Thoreau and the isolation and I get energy from solitude, classic introversion.

That's one of those Myers-Briggs personality traits you can workshop. You know, if you don't like being introverted, then you can become extroverted if you really want to. And vice versa, I actually went from being extroverted to finding my personal happy place in my solitude. So I wouldn't be instantly lonely as soon as the people disappeared. And that served me well. Much to the chagrin of my wife at times, who's very extroverted.

Anthony Silard (48:01.167)
That's right.

Scot McKay (48:22.478)
But I think, I think it's, it's got once again, practicality to it that I think can be extended very well in terms of what we're talking about today. So I think that's great. The name of the book is Love And Suffering

and gentlemen, can find Dr. Anthony Silard's book when you go to mountaintoppodcast.com/amazon right there at the top of my Amazon influencer queue, which of course is just a

douchey way of saying that Amazon gave me my own dedicated storefront, which comes in very handy when I have guys on like Anthony who've written books and put them on Amazon. Now, Anthony, you were also saying you have two free books for these guys. If they go to mountaintoppodcast.com/silard... six letters S I L A R D. just saying yes to lard in our life is what we're doing in Spanish, if we're saying your name. But you're not Spanish. So that has absolutely nothing to do with it, but I know I, I,

Anthony Silard (49:13.838)
You

You know, I never thought of it that way, Scot, but yeah, that's absolutely true.

Scot McKay (49:20.302)
I'm good for those. Yeah. I, I actually, the gal who cut my hair the other day was named Alandra. And I said, well, did you, did you just lose your ex or were you born without one? And she goes, what are you talking about? And I said, well, your name is Alandra. You know, that it used to be Alexandra, but now the ex is gone. She goes, no one's ever brought that up before. said, well, we had time for you to get the joke. Cause I'm sitting here in the barber's chair with you.

Anthony Silard (49:25.422)
Hahaha

Anthony Silard (49:29.494)
my God.

Anthony Silard (49:42.615)
Yeah.

Anthony Silard (49:46.264)
You know, that's a new one for me, Scot, both of those. That's pretty good.

Scot McKay (49:50.06)
Well, I'm a, you know, I live in San Antonio, man. So we're right there on the Mexican border. So, you know, and, you know, every time we open up a can of refried beans, we're saying yes to lard. not so good for my health, but you know, you look great over there in Italy, eating all that Italian food. So, you know, you've got your own, you've got your own ax to grind. Oh, well yeah. If you only knew,

Anthony Silard (50:03.298)
You

Anthony Silard (50:06.958)
You got another career out there on the standup stage, Scot, I think.

Scot McKay (50:16.182)
When the guys go to mountaintoppodcast.com/silard, they will go to a much longer URL obviously, and they'll find the two books there, The Myth Of Happiness and The Myth Of Friendship. No strings attached. They have to sign up for their, for your newsletter or anything like that. What's going on there at that website.

Anthony Silard (50:33.582)
Yeah, let me explain how it works, okay? So a leadership principle I really believe in is give people

something extra for free, right? And so the idea behind that is that whether any of you listeners, whether you buy any of my books or not, like it's an honor for me if you read something I've written because that's why I do it. That's my passion, right? So The Myth Of Happiness, how your definition of happiness creates your own happiness.

Scot McKay (50:54.766)
for

Anthony Silard (51:01.978)
and The Myth Of Friendship, how your misunderstandings about friendship keep you lonely. Each one has about three chapters, about 60 pages. All you do is you go to that link, you put in your email, which does mean that you'll get my newsletter in the future, about every few weeks. But here's the good thing. You're going to confirm your email, and then you're going to get the links for the two books. You can download them, you can unsubscribe from the newsletter, and go on your merry way. And that's totally cool.

And I'll be happy that you're reading a couple of my books. And yeah, the newsletters are articles. This is basically the kind of stuff we're talking about here today. So yeah, so they're going to be articles on leadership, loneliness, social connection, work-life balance, relationships. But either way, I got to say, Scot, you've been a great host. I really enjoyed being here on your show. So much gratitude. Absolutely.

Scot McKay (51:34.254)
Well, I'm sure your newsletters are wonderful as well, though.

Scot McKay (51:57.006)
It was a fun conversation. Yeah. And you know, much gratitude back at you, especially for, you know, your generous offer to these guys and listen, man, I echo your sentiments. Gentlemen, you guys spending time listening to this podcast. I consider it a sacred beholden duty to deliver for you guys. You know, if you're spending your time, you know, here with us, with me building that relationship then I owe it to you to give you something you can use in this life to be a better man who's getting better women. So man,

right on the money there, Anthony. And I appreciate you coming on. Hope you'll come back. You know, you were talking about other things that you can talk about at length, you know, The Myth Of Happiness and The Myth Of Friendship, just being two of them. So definitely come on back, man. Let's have a big old conversation about one or both of those as well.

Anthony Silard (52:44.782)
Well, I've had a good time, so you're not going to twist my arm for me to come back. I would be happy to.

Scot McKay (52:48.526)
Right. Yeah, I think these guys are going to love you too, and want you back as well. So thanks once again for being on man, much appreciated. Yeah Yeah, and guys go over to mountaintoppodcast.com if you haven't tried VAMANOS yet the AI app that you can get and use to ask any question you want any time The only answers you're gonna get are X & Y Communications answers. You don't have to worry about some weird subreddit

Anthony Silard (52:55.416)
Thank you, Scot. Appreciate it. Appreciate you.

Scot McKay (53:16.558)
uh, creeping into the answers like you would on ChatGPT. And you can use it 24/7, three o'clock in the

morning. If you want, uh, 8 a.m. on Christmas morning, if you like, and it'll be there for you. That's one of the cool things that we've added lately. And you can find out more about that at mountaintoppodcast.com as you can about our three main sponsors, Jocko Willink's company, Origin and Maine, the guys over at Hero Soap and the guys at The Keyport.

Anytime you partake of anything from our wonderful sponsors, please use the coupon code mountain10 to get an additional 10 % off. And you'll find that is so much more at mountaintoppodcast.com. And until I talk to you guys again real soon, this is Scot McKay from San Antonio, Texas, X & Y Communications. I'll talk to you again real soon. Until then, be good out there.