

Philip McKernan: People will literally travel thousands of miles and sometimes pay thousands of dollars for the clarity that they don't actually want, because they're afraid if they uncover the clarity, their truth, then they're going to have to live it and if they live it and fail living their truth, then there's nothing left but darkness.

Robert Glazer: Welcome to Elevate, a podcast about achievement, personal growth and pushing limits in leadership and life. I'm Robert Glazer and I chat with world-class performers who have committed to elevating their own life, pushing the limits of their capacity and helping others to do the same.

Welcome to the Elevate Podcast. Our quote for today is from Conan O'Brien and it is, "The beauty that is through disappointment you can gain clarity and with clarity comes conviction and true originality."

Our guest today, Philip McKernan has built his coaching career around helping others find the clarity and truth they are missing in their lives. He's a professional coach, sought out by top-performing teams and leaders across the world, best selling author of three books, and his most recent book, One Last Talk, outlines a program of the same name that helps people find their truth and speak it out.

Robert Glazer: Philip, welcome. Excited to have you join us on the Elevate Podcast.

Philip McKernan: Yeah, thanks for having me. I appreciate it.

Robert Glazer: So how did you start your career and when did you transition into coaching?

Philip McKernan: Whoa, big one. According to my mother, I started my career many, many years ago as a very young kid. I was always the go-to guy for people who had had challenges or were seeking clarity of sorts, even when I was a young kid. And then how I started officially was, and also ironically in my mother's kitchen, when I was basically, at one of the lowest points in my life, mentally, physically, emotionally, financially. I had \$200.00 in the bank account. The business we poured our hearts into came to an abrupt end with the market correction in the world and in that moment I realized that I had been hiding from the very thing that I've always wanted to do, but the story that I had was when I make enough money and I have enough financial freedom, then I can go and do what I want to do in this world, and no one really gave me permission, including myself, to do it sooner, rather than later.

So, it was in a moment of frustration and the pain of not doing what I wanted to do, which is what I do today, just finally caught up with me.

Robert Glazer: Is that when you left Ireland and moved to Vancouver?

Philip McKernan: We had left Ireland the year before that and we were building a real estate business and we came back for the Christmas and my wife said, "I'm not going

back to Canada." And I said, "Why?" She said, "It's not working." And in that moment, I said, "Okay, I'm going to do this." And I sent out an email to our massive database of maybe 20 people and somebody came back and said, "About F'ing time." And I said, "What do you mean?" He goes, "From the day I met you, I believed that you were destined to be a coach and I'll be your first client. That's how it started.

We were in Canada a year when I officially set up the coaching. I was doing it behind the scenes, in a pub in Ireland for years, doing it where people would contribute to a charity of our choice or whatever, but officially we settled up and that day was the very first day of the business.

Robert Glazer: Having heard you, having worked with you, having heard you speak with a lot of people and knowing where a lot of things come from, I'm curious, how did you choose clarity as the focal point of your coaching?

Philip McKernan: I just think that's something that organically manifests itself. I think I have always had a knack and I'm not saying that, I'm not trying to put myself on this kind of pedestal where I feel I'm something I'm not, but I've had this, I suppose unique ability, call it that, some people call it a gift ... Just to be able to see things clearer than perhaps other people can see them.

I'm not different than a carpenter whose own house is falling apart. It doesn't mean I can do it for myself all the time, so we could easily turn the tide at any point and Robert, you'd be able to ask me four or five questions and expose a lack of clarity in me and equally be able to help me. But I can do it in other people and I can literally, without trying to frighten you or your guests, or your viewers or listeners, I can literally almost, it's almost a sense that I can sense and see in real time how things are going to pan out. And it's this sense of almost, not predicting the future, but almost seeing exactly how it's going to pan out.

It's a scary thing to have, but I can see it and I can see it for other people in ways they can't see it for themselves. It's been a burden and it's been a gift and it's been something I've really been challenged to allow myself to live with. But that's within me, I don't even know what it is, but it's there.

Robert Glazer: It's interesting that you said that, because the first time we met and spoke, I think in about 10 or 15 minutes I felt you knew as much about me as people who have known me for years or my whole life. In the realm of skills and talent, are you have a clairvoyant aspect to you or is this a skill that you've really honed, or is it some sort of combination?

Philip McKernan: You know actually, honestly, right now, you ask that question, and I'm going to be honest with you. Right now my heart's starting to beat very fast, and I've never shared this before, and I think I've been asked various, this question in various different ways. I think what I'm scared about is I'm scared to understand it. I'm scared to name it. I'm scared to understand the subtleties of it, because I

think by understanding it, I think I might lose it to some extent if that makes any sense whatsoever.

I think my wife would simplify this. She said to me this morning, she said, "I've never met somebody who listens the way you listen." And I know I'm known either jokingly or seriously as a guy who just never stops talking, but I listen. And I don't listen, I hear. Someone may say something to me and sometimes the words don't even register. I don't even catch the words. I'm too busy trying to hear what they're trying to say. And sometimes the words are completely and utterly irrelevant.

I think what I do very, very, very well, is I hear. I don't necessarily listen. And that's a different thing. And I believe only recently I've begun to really understand where that comes from. And without getting into too much detail, without trying to expose people, or throw people under the bus, as a young child, I did not feel heard. I say this, and I believe this to my core that our greatest gifts lie right next to our deepest wounds. And as a young boy in this world, as a young teenager, as a young man, I didn't feel heard.

Now I can choose to blame myself for that, blame humanity, blame society, whatever. Leave all that aside, but I was not heard, and I think that's part of the reason why I'm so desperate to allow people to feel heard and to feel seen in this world. And that drives so much of my work.

Robert Glazer: That's powerful. Yeah, I've heard you say, a lot of ... Well talk a little bit about, for a lot of people going back where their purpose, or their pain comes from and honoring that without being defensive about it. Because that's a topic that's come up in a lot of conversations.

Philip McKernan: Yes, absolutely. I think that's the thing. I think people get very defensive around going back and looking at their past and places where they were uncomfortable. It was ugly, it was painful and yet it defines so much of who we are, whether we like it or not. And I think to be able to embrace that without the judgment, without the defensiveness and be open to where it brings you. You and I have a mutual colleague or peer, friend, Jessie, who has the baseball team, and I don't think Jessie will mind me sharing this one nuance where after reading the One Last Talk book, he says, "I finally realized why I've built the business, why I've built the baseball team, why I built this community. Because it was the very thing, it's the opposite of the very thing I did not have growing up as a young kid.

So many of us are building empires or building businesses or movements, or attempting to, because we say we want success, but in really fact, when you strip it back and go beyond it and go deeper, some of the biggest communities are being built by people who didn't have community when they were around. Some of the biggest online communities or live events are being driven by people who were very lonely as young people.

We often try to create the opposite of what we grew up in. And that's a good thing, but it also comes with a shadow side as well.

Robert Glazer: And I assume in Jessie's case, he's all about fun, right? So I assume it had something to do with that. I won't get too much into it, but he is very obviously about making things as fun and as exciting as they can be.

Philip McKernan: Exactly. Exactly.

Robert Glazer: I've heard many people say, "If you want," and this is a testament to your work, "If you want clarity, you call Philip McKernan." But I've also heard you say several times that most people really don't want clarity. Can you help explain that?

Philip McKernan: I think there's nothing more frightening than ... I think one of the most frightening things ever is to actually walk down the road and meet yourself or stand in front of a mirror and meet yourself, or realize who you really are at your core. That might sound like a really counterintuitive statement, but the more you get introduced to yourself, the more you find out who you really are in this world. The more you find out who you're meant to be in this world, or the greatest reflection of who you are, the greatest, the way you can show up in this world.

What happens for some people is that, a minority of people is they start to really get excited by this possibility of meeting themselves in a way they've never met themselves before, showing up and doing work that really aligns to who they are and live their legacy and not get as obsessed about just leaving a legacy in the future. But there's this very large part of the population that when you bring them really close to their own individual truth, they start to resist. They start to get very antsy. And when you start to pull away the beliefs that they've held for a very long time that don't serve them, the story they're holding on to, or the lack of belief that they have in their own soul, when you start to ruffle those things and loosen those things and start to dissolve those things with somebody's help, they get very defensive, because some of us really want to hold on to stuff that doesn't serve us. We don't want the clarity that sometimes we seek.

I say to people, sometimes jokingly, people will literally travel thousands of miles and sometimes pay thousands of dollars for the clarity that they don't actually want. Because they're afraid if they uncover the clarity, their truth, then they're going to have to live it. And if they live it and fail living their truth, then there's nothing less but darkness.

Robert Glazer: And you said this about yourself, but I guess it's a formula. I'll do X when Y happens. Is that what you hear from 90% of the people that you work with, or how often is that the theme?

Philip McKernan:

Yeah, I do actually, in some way, shape or form. They may not use that language, but energetically, they're saying the same thing. One of the things that I've noticed is that often we're dragged kicking and screaming to the very thing that we're meant to do. And I said this this morning to the man I was doing a coaching call with a gentleman, a very successful man in the context of business. Really successful. Has built some really great businesses and he's got multiple businesses, very successful and on making an impact. But there's something just missing in his life. There's something that he's missing and what I said to him was something that I've worked on a lot. Is that I'm holding up my hand, my left hand as a fist. This is what he's doing right now. And now I raise my right hand in a fist and this is what he thinks he wants.

What I often find is what you really want lies beyond both of those. So we get very attached to what we're doing, and the way we're doing it. Sometimes we can pivot in our current business or change to a new business or a new lifestyle or a new location. But I actually, what I find is what's beyond both of those, attachments to some extent, what we do and what we think we want, beyond that is our truth, which is the very thing, the place we need to live in, the relationships we need to have, the conversations we need to be having in the world. The book we need to write, not the one we think will sell. The business we need to build, not the one that we think we should be and so on and so forth.

Robert Glazer:

And this is all in sort of service of a core purpose, right?

Philip McKernan:

It's got to be aligned to who you are and I think ultimately, in my personal experience, I've had the privilege to help people, and I think people give me probably too much credit. I think at the end of the day, the clarity that people are seeking is already within them, as corny as that might sound to some. And as frustrating as that might sound to others. But the end of the day, I have yet to meet somebody that when they get more aligned, or very aligned to what they're meant to do or what is a better reflection of who they are, every single time it has a bigger and better impact in the world. It just, I feel that we're all here to make an impact in the world.

Not everybody believes that and not everyone can see that, but every single time somebody has pivoted a current business or shifted to a new business or a new lifestyle or a new way of being, it's always amplified their impact in the world, and that to me is exciting, because then I get to play a very tiny role in a much bigger picture for somebody else and to be able to sit back and watch them impact the world in ways that perhaps they were hiding from.

Robert Glazer:

I'm sure another objection to that is the financial implications. So, I'm curious how, how do you work through that with people ... Well, if I just, I make money here and then I can do that here, or they're afraid from a financial standpoint, maybe what they do and what they love doesn't put food on the table. Have you found that that's unfounded or is that an inverse or where does that fall on the spectrum of excuses?

Philip McKernan:

Well, nowhere in my work nor on my website says you need to do the thing you love full-time and make \$500,000 plus doing it. It's never about doing it full time, it's about honoring it and bringing it into your life, so if for example, writing is something that you want to get to when you build your business I would argue and say you're betraying yourself every day if you don't write daily, weekly or even at the very least, monthly.

You don't need to suddenly become a best-selling author and live off the royalties of your book. And good luck doing that. It's very small minority of people that can actually do that. I don't get into those nuances. It's not about doing it full time, it's about doing it and honoring it. And then maybe the opportunity may present itself for you to do it full-time if that's something that you choose and something that the universe wants for you and so on and so forth.

The other thing is that I often find people who say, "I want to do this, and I want to do that. But I never want to give up on the lifestyle that I've created." Again, I'm always intrigued by that statement. So then I go into their lifestyle, and you might find things like, they've got a house, they go off on their second holiday, they've got their boat, they've got this, they've got whatever and to me what's more important, holding onto this lifestyle and the perception that this is success and what you think this means for you versus going after the thing that you want to go after and where is the cost? Because at the end of the day, as sad a stat as this is and this has been proven in multiple studies, 90% of the people die with major life regrets. I think it's bullshit. I think 90% of people live with major life regrets, 99% of the people die with major life regrets.

It's completely unnecessary. And we're not talking about stupid people. Which I don't believe exists. Regardless, it never says 90% of stupid people die with regret. 90% of the world's population die with major life regret. These are smart, intelligent beings. Not one of them ever wakes up any morning, any given morning and says, "I'm going to make a decision today that's going to lead to a major life regret in the future," or very few of them do.

Yet, we happen to find ourselves in that situation. So I think what's happening along the way is we're not taking stock of our life on a regular enough basis. We're not asking the real questions, and we're too busy chasing the things that we think intellectually will make us happy as opposed to honoring a more intuitive part of ourselves, which is, I believe, our soul. Call it spirituality, I don't really care, but I just think there needs to be a place for this. But you don't have to do it full time.

Robert Glazer:

Writing is a good example, because I find one of the biggest things you probably hear, I hear all the time, is that I want to write a book. I used to say it for years, and I joke around, really I was at a leadership program that I was in with a bunch of people that has accountability and I just, I left that thing one year, and I said, "I'm going to write a book, from I want to write a book" and it just totally changed all my energy to writing the book, but in the example you gave before

about, oh, well when I'm done building the business, I'm writing ... Wouldn't a possible solution for someone to grow the business by focusing on writing, or figure out how to ingrain that into the way that they grow their business rather than having to make it something separate. I assume the more you can unify, the better.

Philip McKernan:

Yeah and again, when you follow that slightly more intuitive element of yourself, in other words, what I'm asking people to simply consider is to honor the creative part of themselves, the artistic part of themselves that has lied dormant, or the one that you have just ignored for a period of time. And we're in a world today that in many cases doesn't reward you for artistic expression, unless it's magnetizable. In other words, you've no right taking a day out a week to write a book, unless you can sell and be a best seller, or it can be a New York Times best seller, or whatever.

Yet, when we don't honor ourselves in that artistic sense, that creative sense, we're actually starving a part of our souls, which ironically allows us to be more creative in our businesses. So we have it ass-ways, and the story I often use is that the entrepreneur who looked at me, told me about his life, and I said, "So what else do you do?" And he goes, "My business." And I said, "I get that, I've heard that nine times in the last four and a half minutes. I don't want to talk about your business. What else do you do? What else do you got in your life?" He goes, "My family." I said, "I also heard that. What else?" And I was asking the wrong question.

I basically turned to him, and I said, "Okay, let me reframe the question. What have you given up in your pursuit of your business?" And he goes, "Oh, yes, sailing!" And I went, "Okay." And I said, "Describe sailing to me." And the next minute I felt, Robert, I was on the God damn boat, because I was like swaying back and forth, he's talking about the wind and tacking and ... I have no idea about boats, so apologize if I'm butchering the terminology. He was talking about like, you know, moving the boat and the water, moving the sails. And he was child like. And then I said to him, "God, it must be a pain in the ass, after a day like that, that's so exhilarating, that's so beautiful and so magical to come off the water." And he goes, "No! Now that I think about it," he said, "You come back. You have a beer, and you talk about moving the boat and who won the race, whatever the context of it.

And I said, "Yeah, but then you've got to go back to your kids and your wife and you've got to go back to the poopy diapers and the shit and the hassle and the sleepless kids and all," because he had young kids. And he goes, "No, now that I think about it, I'm never better as a father, or for that matter, a husband." And then I said, "Yeah, but hang on a second. Then there's Monday morning. And you've got to go back to a business that you're not really aligned to, and you have that context of being alive and open and free in the ocean and then this business that controls you or contracts you or this heaviness."

I was making this up to try and create a point here ,and he goes, "No. Now that I think about it, I'm never more creative." And I looked at him, and I said, "You're one of the most selfish people I have met in many years. How dare you? How dare you not sail?"

Up to this point, he was guiltling himself. He wouldn't allow himself sail because he felt guilty that when he's not in the office, he should be with his family. I said, "How dare you deprive the people around you, your business, your children, your wife, yourself of that opportunity to sail and be creative and to be free? How dare you."

He didn't like it. He was pissed off. But I would say the same when it comes to any creative expression. You have no right to starve yourself of that, because you know what? Everyone else around you pays for your pissy attitude because you're starving yourself of the thing that you want to do, but you don't give yourself permission to do it.

Robert Glazer: And how did the conversation end, because I know half the people, maybe three quarters of the people who talk to you end up crying in some way, shape or form.

Philip McKernan: No, he didn't cry, he just got really angry. He couldn't cry because he wasn't in touch emotionally, because he was too busy living with being angry, judging me, judging himself, and he didn't like it. Because a lot of leaders, despite what they'll tell you about this open door policy, and I meet them every day, "Oh, I have an open door policy. Anyone can say anything to me." Really? Give me your CEO's. Give me your production manager. Just let me ask them truthfully, do they feel that they can walk in and say whatever they want? The truth is, probably not, because they feel this very, very, very low-toned passive-aggressiveness that you can tell me whatever you want, as long as it's what I want to hear.

As a coach, I think one of the challenges with a lot of coaches is they spend too much time telling people what they want to hear, and I refuse to do that. Now, as a result of that, I pay a price. Not a significant one, but a price for a lot of people avoid me and avoid my work, because they don't want to be challenged. But I'm not a yes man and I never, ever, ever will be.

People often cry and there's this rumor going around that Philip McKernan makes people cry, which is complete bullshit, because you know what? I'm not that powerful, I'm not that good. If people cry, they simply are exposed to emotion that they've been hiding from, they haven't been honoring, or they need to release. That's all it is. It's as simple as that.

Robert Glazer: You just alluded to this, but the interesting thing about your coaching practice is that you're working with very high achievers, typically. Not low achievers, to gain better alignment. What causes the feeling of emptiness that a lot of people

experience after achieving their goals, that they hit what they thought they were going to hit, but it's still, it's not making them happy?

Philip McKernan: On a very, very, very basic level, they chose the wrong goal. They chose goals that were not truly aligned to them. They chose goals that they thought would make sense. They chose goals that were long to society. I just spoke to a man, a beautiful human being this morning, I've been privileged to work with this amazing man and at the end of the day, I was stuck. I mean, I woke up, last night I went to bed with a degree of anxiety, and I woke up this morning concerned, because I felt stuck with this client and despite the fact that he's paid up front and all that kind of stuff, it really means nothing to me unless I can help move the needle, and he's got to lean in.

Rather than that continuing the same conversation, I stopped him today, and I said, "Listen, this is not working. What am I not saying? What are we not getting to or what am I not doing right here? What's missing?" And we had a massive breakthrough moment where he finally realized, because he is so attached to his current business, he won't let go of it emotionally. Not sell it, just emotionally to see what's possible in the world. And that is one of the critical mistakes a lot of entrepreneurs and leaders make. And when he let go emotionally in the moment, he just finally says, "You know what, I've realized in this moment," he says, "I've done all of this for my dad. I've done all of this seeking something from my dad."

Now we can do the real work. Now we can do the heavy lifting. Now the possibilities start to arise. So, he was doing many of the things that he's done, deep down, subconsciously, he was unaware he was doing them for ... Not the wrong reasons, because that sounds so judgmental, but I can guarantee you they weren't for the right reasons.

Robert Glazer: Right. So another one of your favorite lines that I've heard is when people tell you they don't know when you ask them a question, you typically will respond, but if you did know, what would it be? And then they will blurt out the answer and I've seen it several times now. So, where did you learn this and why is it so effective?

Philip McKernan: I have no idea. You're asking some really interesting questions I've never been asked before, which doesn't surprise me with you because you're so thoughtful and you're a pain in the ass, because you're asking me questions I can't answer right now. But I don't know where that came from. It's not a strategy.

Back to this thing that my wife pointed out this morning. Literally this morning, over coffee. When someone says something to me, I go beyond that and I look at, it's not even body language. I don't know body language. I've never studied body ... I have no idea about body language. But it's this intuitive sense, I go beyond them, I look at their eyes, I go through their eyes and I hear the words that are coming out and it just isn't true. It just doesn't feel right. It feels like

they're trying to tell me that they don't know so that they don't have to answer something.

Rather than accepting that or accusing them of bullshitting which is very condescending and very attacking and very judgmental and I trust implicitly my starting point is always the individual, not the client, but the individual that I have the privilege to work with. They have every single answer that they'll ever need. What's getting in the way is the layers of complexity they've created, the lack of simplicity, the beliefs that they hold and their lack of desire to actually uncover the clarity which we've touched on. I just believe that they have it, so I just intuitively one day just turned it back and said, "If you did know, what would the answer be?" And almost 99% of the time, they have the answer or at least a better answer. It just works. I don't know why it works, but it does.

Robert Glazer:

Jedi mind trick. The first time I saw you at work it was in a group setting at a mastermind talks event and a person was presenting the issue of they didn't know what to do with their business and they had been struggling with it for years and I think in the first 30 seconds you said, "Tell me about your business. Do you like your business?" "No, I hate it. I hate coming to work." "Will you sell your business?" "Well, I don't know what I'm going to do next." And then I think you said, "Well, if you did, what would it be?" And I don't know. I think it was something like, "I'd go paint pottery or do this or that." And you said to the person, "Okay great, so by January first, we're going to sell your business, you're going to go through this. We're going to do the pottery and this is all we're going to do." And the person is like, "Great." And this relief came over their face.

This was, no joke, this was like a two minute conversation for what the person had been struggling with I think for five years, where you got them to commit that they were going to sell their business in three months and go do what they wanted to do because they really hated getting up and going to work every day.

Robert Glazer:

It was amazing watching that question in real time and how quickly the person came back with the answer.

Philip McKernan:

Yeah. I had a classic one down many years ago. I was in Florida and a guy called Jim Shields and Brian [Scrona 00:25:15], they brought me for dinner or whatever and there was a girl who worked with them. I won't use her name for obvious reasons, but we ended up meeting and we're chatting away and I said, "I hear you're going out with somebody." And she goes, "Yeah, I met this guy and it's going really well."

And I looked at her and I just ... I heard the words, but I just again, I listened to the words but I felt, really, and heard something different. And I looked at her and I said, "Do you love him?" And she goes, "What? What kind of a question is that?" And I said, "Just a question, you don't have to answer it if you don't want to. Do you love him?" And she looked at me and she said, "No." And she ended up breaking up with this guy that she was telling everybody she was crazy

about, but she, in her case, I think it provided ... It filled a gap to some extent about loneliness and insecurity within herself. And ironically, as soon as she let that relationship go, and she was right to do so for both of their sakes, she ended up meeting the guy she got married to.

So, we were in Hawaii six or eight months later and the guy walks up and he says, "I owe you a drink." And I says, "Why?" "I'm getting married to such and such." And I went, "Oh, you're the guy!" And he goes, "Yeah, and I heard your question jarred her into letting go of a relationship that didn't work to clear the way for a relationship that did."

Again, I just think so many of us know intuitively and we've lost ... We haven't lost, we have stopped trusting this intuitive voice, which by the way, if we all tap in on ... my business is gone overnight. We'll shut the doors and we won't exist. We won't need to. But I tell you, if people can just get back, and my job is to get as many people back to that slightly more intuitive place to feel their way through life as opposed to think their way through life. And if I can do that for as many people as I can before I die, well that's my job done and hopefully they can pass it on to the next generation.

Robert Glazer:

That's a good segue as your latest book and initiative, One Last Talk, love to chat about that. Tell us a little bit about what One Last Talk is, the book, how you created it and all the momentum building around it.

Philip McKernan:

Yeah, I think to some extent it builds on what we talked about earlier on and that's being heard and I feel that one of the big pivotal drivers here is to make sure that people who want to be heard have an opportunity to do so. I was getting slightly more frustrated with the speaking circuit if you like where it's the same people speaking on the same stages or similar stages and there's this perception that when you're a speaker, therefore you have an authority, you are an authority and people should listen to you. I wanted to just not knock that off its pedestal, but I wanted to challenge the status quo. I wanted to disrupt that place a little bit.

I wanted to create an event where the speakers are made up primarily of the audience. So 80% if not more of the speakers that's down on the One Last Talk stage basically have never spoken before and if they have, they've never shared their one last talk before. So they get 15 minutes or less to share the one last talk they'll ever give before they die. We don't encourage people to necessarily rely on doing it on the stage, but we encourage everybody who goes through the One Last Talk process to go through the book, to do the exercises and to deliver their one last talk to at least one other human being and I can give you multiple stories, many stories of how that one act has freed people from their own truth, has shared part of themselves with somebody they love in a way they've never done before and what it's done for them.

We're getting quite a bit of momentum, we're launching it in different cities around the world and North America and we launched in a prison yesterday.

Officially we've just been asked to bring it into a university, so it's gathering this momentum and I'm a little uncertain where it's all going. It excites me and it scares me at the same time.

Robert Glazer: That's very meta for you. An experiment in itself. I don't want to jump to the, you alluded to what was going to be my next question, but before I get into sort of specifics of One Last Talks, when typically you start this process with people, this was outlined in your book, but give me an example of what they present as their One Last Talk, versus where they end up as their One Last Talk, because I thought that was a really interesting repeated narrative in the book.

Philip McKernan: Yeah, I think one of the things that when people reach out to us and say, "Hey, I want to do One Last Talk, I've built this really successful business and I think it'll be a great One Last Talk," They don't realize what a One Last Talk is and what a One Last Talk is not. And typically what ends up happening is people come in, they design a narrative that makes them kind of look good, because I think all of us want to make an impact, but almost everyone that I have ever met, including myself, want to look good doing it. In other words, we don't want to feel exposed and if we can get beyond their ego, if we can let go of the need to looking good and we can share a part of our truth, not just our story.

One Last Talk is not, and I'll give you a quick example. At a workshop, a speaker workshop recently, one man started his One Last Talk by going, "There's so many people in the world that are out of alignment with the work they do." I go, "No. That's not a One Last Talk. That's a lecture. That's telling people." A One Last Talk is, "I have spent the last 20 years doing work that I'm out of alignment with." So you're inviting people to journey with you, you're not telling them yet again, they're wrong. Because a lot of conferences and events you go to, you might feel fired up and powered up, but you leave feeling kind of inadequate. You feel, you leave feeling I'm not doing enough. I am not enough. Etc, etc.

People end up coming back to something that's way more personal. Something that they often never want to talk about. A part of their shame or their regrets in their lives. But the end of the day, it's all about connection. It's all about this human connection or lack of connection, or desire for connection is really in the essence of what people talk about. And the very thing they're afraid to share is the very thing that they are loved beyond belief for in the end of the day. I know that may not make sense, you've got to experience a One Last Talk before really you can understand it. And at the very least, I would encourage people, if they don't want to buy the book, they're not interested, that's fine. But at least go online. Listen to one or two of the talks without any judgment and just get a sense for how powerful they are.

Robert Glazer: Can you talk about, I know there's a story I think about maybe it was your daughter or your son, but what's been one of your favorite moments from One Last Talk?

Philip McKernan: Wow.

Robert Glazer: I know that's like asking, pick amongst your children, but ...

Philip McKernan: Yeah ... No, I think there's a moment where Quan who spoke, and his talk is on YouTube and I think when he talked, there was so much judgment in the room and I think there's a moment where a guy called Derek stands up at the end and says, "Can I just apologize to you for judging you so significantly?" He spent twenty-something years in prison for murder and he didn't stand there and justify his behavior. He didn't justify it or rationalize it, he just simply said, here's my story. This is what I've done. It is absolutely wrong and he just basically shared it from this very deep, authentic place.

What was really fascinating for me on a very deep, personal level, is my own son who is nine years old, so I can share this with you, went up to him and we didn't ask him to go near Quan. He walked up to Quan, hugged Quan and said, "Thank you. I really liked your talk." And Quan started to break down and that to me was just this incredible moment where this man who had made a catastrophic mistake in his life, who has continued to pay for it and will for the rest of his life, was seen by a nine-year-old, not for what he had done and the mistakes he had made, but for the human being he is beyond it all.

I think if One Last Talk can do that for a nine-year-old and for a man who has spent most of his life behind bars and to create that, narrow that divide, I think we're on to something very special and something that is bigger and more important than Philip McKernan will ever be.

Robert Glazer: So you said you've taken One Last Talk to prisons. What's the next venue? Where does it go next?

Philip McKernan: The most important thing for me is that people literally do the One Last Talk themselves, because I think it's one of the greatest ways to understand who you are, what drives you. I think there's no greater -- and I really mean this -- I don't think there's any greater exercise or concept, and I know it sounds very self-serving, but I really believe this. And One Last Talk is not about me. I've written the book, I've created the concept, but I really feel detached in the sense that I will never sign a copy of the book, because it's not about me.

I don't think there's a greater way of really getting to the core of what's important and there's a little nuance I heard recently, it's a true story of a man who went to the hospital to see his father who is dying and the doctor came out and said, "It's time." And he said, "He's dying." And he goes, "No, he's not right now, maybe the next couple of days, but it's time for the conversation." And the son says, "What conversation?" To the doctor. And the doctor said, "The conversation you probably should have had 20 years ago."

I find that a lot of regrets that I talked about earlier on are simply regrets not of things that we've done, it's really regrets of the things we haven't done. The conversations we haven't had. The things we didn't let go. The apologies we

didn't make. And I just want to create a platform and a space for us to begin those conversations, to have that dialog now and not wait for it in the future and hope that we get a chance to say these things when we're dying.

All I can tell you right now, and I can tell you 50 stories, but the lightness that people experience, the clarity that they experience, the freedom and the peace of mind they experience from going through One Last Talk, even the begrudgers. We had one guy who read the manuscript before the book went live and he came back with feedback. We couldn't use any of it, because it was so venomous. He was so angry at the book. He hated the book. He hated me, even though we had never met. He thought it was the most stupidest, ridiculous concept he had ever experienced, so much so that he said, "I'm going to go through the One Last Talk process, I'm going to create my One Last Talk and I'm going to deliver it to my parents, just to prove how full of shit this guy is and how bad the concept is.

It transformed his relationship with his mom and dad. It literally has that power to do that. But again, it's not about me, it's about the men and women that have done it and the men and women who are going to do it in the future. And we want to bring this to the world, not just to prisons, not just to universities, we want to bring this to the world. And we want to do this in companies. We've done it in our first company and it was absolutely outstanding in terms of team deepening, not team building as we call it.

Robert Glazer: Did everyone do it in the company, or did a select group of people do it?

Philip McKernan: No, they basically selected ... 10 people volunteered and out of those 10 they selected four. They all read the book and four put their hand up and basically I worked with those four and then they delivered in front of the company. All I can tell you is they, standing ovations. The way the individuals were received and then the company came back and said, "We're going to be bringing this in every six months, we're going to be doing this in-house."

Robert Glazer: Yeah and I can see how having read the book, having watched a bunch of the talks, everyone's focused on a Ted talk these days, if you wanted to give a great Ted talk, this would be a good format for Ted as well. It comes from what's true to you and what's real and not what you want people to perceive or think.

Philip McKernan: Yeah. Absolutely. And Ted have done, listen, Ted have done an extraordinary job. We're not here to compete with Ted. What we're just doing, we're just, their idea's worth spreading and that's their tag line, that's what they do, that's what they've done and that's how they've created something so fantastic. We're just going a little bit more emotionally deeper than that and basically just this is truth worth sharing if you had to compare the tag line if you like.

We believe that there's no greater truth than the truth will set you free. But it'll also set the rest of humanity free and when you share your story, which often

we don't put a value on our own story ... That's probably one of the biggest blocks that we have Robert, is when people say, I ask people to speak, they go, "Really? Well, I don't really have a story, but my friend Robert, he's got ... Wow, his story's amazing! You should phone him. Can I give you his number?" I go, "No. I found you. I want you. And when people get off that stage and realize that their story matters, it gives freedom to other people somewhere else in the world to go, "Shit, maybe my story matters too." And what it does is it allows people to feel that they're not alone, which is a pandemic in the world today, despite how socially socially connected we apparently are in the world.

Robert Glazer: No, that's interesting. I think more not that you're competing, but you'd end up as sort of a ... A developer or the minor leagues for potential future Ted speakers.

Philip McKernan: Absolutely.

Robert Glazer: So, we'll try to lighten it up before wrapping up here. I'd love to learn how you ended up getting chased by an elephant in Nigeria.

Philip McKernan: Holy shit, you've done your work! Wow. So, I was about 16 years old, I think, 17 years old and I was in about 5th year in high school in Ireland, which basically means I'm about 17 or so. My girlfriend at the time, her dad worked for Guinness in Nigeria and he ran one of the big breweries, the big brewery over in Lagos. And they invited me over, my parents let me go, which was brilliant and then we traveled up North to a place called Yankari National Reserve, which I'm not sure it's still available or still there.

Stupidly, I felt I was in a zoo, but yet we're out in the wild. I got out of the car and went into the jungle because I heard the elephants to take a photograph. Naive, stupid and absolutely ridiculous when you think about it and I eventually got really close to this calf elephant and then the mother and the bull comes in, hits the little calf out of the way, stares at me. Its ears are going crazy flapping at me and I'm thinking, "This is the coolest thing ever!" And I'm flicking away and rolling the camera on, rolling the film on with my finger, taking the next snap, rolling it on. No zoom lens, nothing.

The next minute, this elephant goes back on its hind legs and launches itself at me. I'd love to tell you that I was athletic and I was clever. I don't even remember what happened. The only thing that saved me was I ran around a tree, because he was like a tank, he went through everything. I came around the corner, dived past the car and he skidded up to the front of the car. I was probably within four or five feet of being knocked over, trampled, thrown up in the air and most likely dead, yet it was arguably one of the best things that's ever happened to me.

I could not speak for apparently three or four hours, maybe five hours afterwards and that is a rare thing in the world, okay? As you know. So I was in

complete shock. But here's the one thing that in hindsight, while I would never want anyone to come that close to death, and I had one other example. I think by facing your own mortality, not just talking about it, but truly facing it, I think it allows you to be a little bit braver in the world. In other words, to take more risk, to let go of what you think is serving you. To leave the country you love. To put yourself out there. To step into the very thing, like public speaking, writing books, despite being dyslexic. All the things that I do and I'm not here playing a violin for myself or giving myself a gold medal, but I think it allows you to let go and be a little bit more unapologetic in the world, when you've literally faced your own mortality as close as I did on that and one other occasion in my life.

Robert Glazer: You mentioned the dyslexia. So, when you said you felt you weren't heard, was that audibly or because you couldn't, is that part of you couldn't express yourself in writing the way other people could in school?

Philip McKernan: Yeah, actually I think the dyslexia and not being heard is actually two different things. I think that was a further compounding effect that yeah, you know what? I can't be heard verbally, now I can't even be heard in written format. So, I think it compounds it, but I actually don't think it's the same thing. I think they're two different things. I just didn't feel heard. I was in a busy household, my dad wasn't there a tremendous amount. He worked very, very hard and again, just inter-relationship challenges with my brothers. In school, looking at the floor all the time. It just felt, and again, I'm not blaming them, I'm taking as much responsibility as I can for this. It's just not feeling heard and then feeling, when you're not heard, then you don't feel worthy and it just compounds over a period of time.

It's the one thing that I see in humans and really want to create as many spaces as I can for people to be listened to, to feel heard, to be seen and then to encourage them to show up like that is the big thing and that's what I really bring to the table is to help people show up in this world unapologetically, to do the things they're meant to do, to step out into the world and be the person they are. Not to become something they're not. I think that takes a lot of chipping away with a lot of the masks and the personas the people have created to show up in the world. It's easier to do that as opposed to show up exactly as who you're meant to be.

Robert Glazer: For the last question that I like to ask, you may tell me that you answered it two questions ago. What is a personal or professional mistake that you've learned the most from in your life, or career? The elephant was a good one, but I'm sure you might have another one too.

Philip McKernan: Professional mistake I've made ...

Robert Glazer: Personal or professional.

Philip McKernan: Wow. It's not that they're not there, trust me. I'm just trying to get in touch with something that's meaningful and I've made so many mistakes in my life. I think, you know, I think one that was consistent over a very long period of time was the mistake I made was I was telling myself a story, or various stories, that just simply were not true. Call it lying to yourself, whatever you want to call it. That sounds very dramatic and also, again, judgmental. But I was telling myself a story and a narrative that just simply wasn't true about how aware I was and how connected I was to the work and how much I loved the work I did and if I had just let go of that narrative and just allowed the truth to show up, I think I probably would have saved myself a tremendous amount of time, probably a tremendous amount of pain and I probably would have arrived at a place where I would do more meaningful work sooner in my life.

I think the mistake I made was not a one-off bad business decision or personal decision which, by the way, there's many. But telling myself a story. And one of those stories was when I make enough money, then I can have the freedom to go and do what I do. That was a critical mistake for me and one that was consistent over very long period of my life. And that was a catastrophic mistake when I look back at my life.

Robert Glazer: How can people get involved with you and your work?

Philip McKernan: Well onelasttalk.com is a place that we encourage people to go and just have a look at that movement and then philipmckernan.com is my main site where I do a small number of off-site retreats is my main focus in there, where we go deeper and it's very unapologetically deep. It's not for everybody, but One Last Talk is a great place for people to start.

Robert Glazer: All right, well Philip, you do an incredible service to so many people by helping them find clarity and live life on their own terms. Thank you very much for taking the time to share your story and other peoples' stories with us here today.

Philip McKernan: It's been an honor. Thank you.

Robert Glazer: All right. We'll include links to Philip as well as his books, One Last Talk and Upcoming Retreat. The episode page at robertglazer.com. To our listeners, thanks for tuning in to the Elevate Podcast today. If you enjoyed this episode, I'd really appreciate if you could take a few seconds to give us a review on Apple Podcast, under our new Elevate name, to help us get a quick start.

If you haven't done a review before, you can learn how to review us by following the review link right on the podcast page. And until next time, keep elevating.