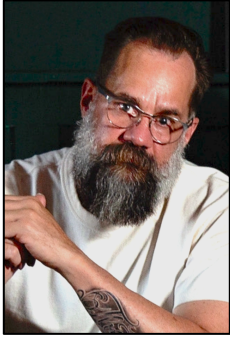


MASTERS by Winn Claybaugh, April 2026

Corey Gray, Host of “Your Day Off” Podcast



Corey Gray is the cohost of Your Day Off, a weekly podcast with over two million listens. Interviewed by **Winn Claybaugh**, Corey has an unmatched love for the professional beauty industry. With experience in multiple roles, he passionately shares what he learned along the way. His goal is to make sure that everyone from up-and-coming students and new professionals to seasoned beauty industry pros are headed in the right direction, primed with great advice and mentors. He is a goodhearted man with a beautiful message.

Winn: Hi everybody, Winn Claybaugh here. Thank you so much for spending time with me, listening to my issues month after month. And I recently read that 90 percent of podcasts never make it past five or six issues. And yet here I've been going every single month, a new issue, for 30 years now. And that's because of my incredible listeners. I appreciate that you give me a platform. I appreciate the loyalty and that you turn around and share this information. And I know that this issue with Corey Gray is going to be an issue that you're going to want to share with other people as well. So, you know, first of all, Corey, welcome to MASTERS with Winn Claybaugh. I'm so grateful that you said yes to this.

Corey: You know, I'm more grateful, Winn. I'm so honored to be, to sit with you today. And, you know, I say thank you to you for the platform as well. What you've done and what you've accomplished is definitely something that, as a podcaster, that I've looked up to. I really appreciate your interview style and I may have stolen a little bit of that. Although you're way more prepared than I ever was, but you know.

Winn: Well, you know, you actually made this happen because I don't know about you, Corey, but for me, the phone does not ring. I never, never wait for the phone to ring. So, I did a podcast yesterday and of course the guy was hinting around, “Hey, I want to interview you,” and “Hey.” But of course, you know, I'm the one that made it happen. I'm the one that said, “Really? Are we going to do this? You know, give me the date, give me the time.” And that's what you did to make this happen, which I'm grateful for. That's what we do, right? We make things happen.

Corey: Well, listen, nobody's—like you said, nobody is waiting around for you. You know, you have to do the ask. You know, one of the pillar learns that I've had in my life, that the answer is always no until you ask, you know? And you have nothing to lose because, before you ask, the answer is already no. So, you might as well ask because you might get a yes and that might just be awesome and it's just another opportunity for yourself. It's definitely like one

of those things that—whenever I get that thing in my chest like, “Ahhh, should I ask? Should I not ask?” That mantra goes through my head. That mantra is: the answer is already no; what do you have to lose in asking? So, I ask.

Winn: Oh my God, already you're giving us great information and great nuggets here. Cause, you know, I hear this from my students all the time. You know, “I really want to work at that salon.” “Did you reach out to them?” “Yeah, I did, but I didn't hear back from them.” And so, they assume that because they didn't hear back that it's an automatic no. And what I'm saying is, well, first of all, they're very busy. And if they weren't busy, you wouldn't want to work there.

Corey: Yeah, exactly.

Winn: Because they are really busy and you really want to work there, you got to keep on asking. So, great, great, great message.

Corey: Well, you know, it's funny because when I saw you speak last year, I guess, when you were at The Temple in Annapolis, you actually brought it up on stage. And that is like, make people aware of what you want to do and what your dreams are. And then, you know, maybe the universe comes together. Maybe that is the secret, Winn. Maybe that's the secret that Oprah talks about. You know, it's just putting your intentions out there and, you know, people want to see you succeed and people want to help out. So, if you just ask, even if it doesn't work now, you know. Even if you said no, maybe your eyes are open for another opportunity to come my way.

Winn: Wow. Wait, I haven't even shared with everybody who you are, so I'd better give you a little proper introduction here. So, Corey Gray—

Corey: I just said that you were prepared, Winn.

Winn: I'm so prepared, it's that you keep on interrupting me.

Corey: I'll take that. *[Laughs]*

Winn: *[Laughs]* So, Corey Gray has spent more than 30 years behind the chair as a hairdresser and has built a career around service, which I'm glad that we're going to talk about. And, you know, my roots in doing my MASTERS podcast for 30 years, my original roots were the beauty industry. It was—the first person I interviewed was Vidal Sassoon. And so probably the—I don't know, the first 10 years was specific to the professional beauty industry. Then, of course, I had the opportunity to branch out and bring on all sorts of amazing guests to interview. So, I appreciate the time to get back to the professional beauty industry, which you proudly represent. So, Corey is the co-host of his own weekly podcast titled “Your Day Off” with over 2 million listens. He sits down with people who shape the hair world and people who shape lives. The show mixes real conversations, personal growth, and stories that help listeners feel seen. Corey produces live education events for hairstylists and creates spaces where people feel supported, encouraged, and challenged to grow. And Corey, you probably have one of the shortest bios I've ever shared on here. So, either you're super humble or your mom forgot to write more

information about you, but I know there's more and I'll drag it out of you. You live in Maryland; you did put this in there. You live in Maryland with your family. So, Corey, thanks again for agreeing to do this.

Corey: A hundred percent. Once again, my pleasure. My pleasure to sit down with Mr. Claybaugh.

Winn: *[Laughs]* Okay. I always like to start these off with your personal story. So, if we jump into your personal story, how'd you get into the beauty industry? You know, how'd you get into being a podcaster? I mean, we have all kinds of things to cover here.

Corey: Yeah, we only have, you know, like a few hours to do it. So, it's going to be a long one there.

Winn: Corey, I did a podcast like a couple of months ago: two and a half hours.

Corey: That's heavy, man.

Winn: No, where the guy was interviewing me. He's like, "Okay, next question." I'm like, I'm like, I'm like, "Are we done? I think that people are sick of me by now."

Corey: Yeah, I have a rule of 60 minutes. Like when we do our podcast, like I think 60 minutes is that sweet spot. Anything more than that just seems to be too much. But if I could do it in under 60 minutes, too, I'm cool with that as well. You know, as long as the information is getting there and we're not just having conversation. I mean, we're not just talking to talk. If we're still getting information, we can go forever.

Winn: Right.

Corey: But you know, it doesn't seem to be that way after 60 minutes. Actually, you know, my hair career started before my hair career started. Back in high school I wanted to get into hair. However, a dear friend of mine—I don't even know who the dear friend was—but said that I was no good with my hands and I'm not very artistic. So, instead of going into the hair, which is what I really wanted to do, I went into the military instead. So, I served four years in the navy. I went halfway around the world a couple of times serving in the navy. And then literally the day that I got out, Winn, I started hair school. And I started at Graham Webb International, whatever the hair school was called in Arlington, Virginia, over here. So, yeah, I did that for a couple of years and then started my career business, my hair salon business. As a lot of us, I went in and out of a lot of salons until I kind of found my place. My first real home, I would say, was when I started working for Reg Laws at PR Partners, again, in Virginia. And I was there for 14 years and then I moved on to another salon and worked at a Summit Salon there, learned a lot about how to build business and how to be business through the Summit Salon. And then, after a few years there, I went into a salon suite, which is—I'm at the same salon suite now, but I've been there for I think just under 10 years now, which is so wild to think about, that I've been there for just under 10 years. But just under 10 years there. So, I've seen like every level of the hair industry

and I've experienced through every level of the hair industry. And then in 2018, I started a podcast. You know, we—for years, I was a very early adopter of a podcast. I started in about 2008, 2009, listening to podcasts. And I knew that I wanted to do something in the hair industry but I couldn't quite figure out what that was going to be because, you know, up to about 2014, the only way that we ever talked about hairdressing was like either like color formulas or color techniques or haircut angles or whatever, you know, like what we learned in school, what we learned at a master class. And I couldn't quite figure out how to translate that into a podcast. Like it might be interesting once, but I don't know if it's going to be interesting for a sustained podcast. And then what happened is, I put this in quotes, I was at an influencer event in 2017, and all day long, people were handing me their cameras to take pictures with influencers and that moment it dawned on me like, “Oh, like people care about the people that are in the hair industry.” And certainly at that time and I was like, “Well, that's it.” And I went to my friend Tony and I said, you know, I pitched it as like I wanted to be the Jimmy Fallon of the hair industry. And he rightfully corrected me and said, “Well, if we're going to do this, we have to bring heart to the conversations. We have to bring like real conversations to the conversation.” And so, even really before the podcast started, it changed, you know, and that became our guiding light. Like where's the heart? What's the conversation here? And then, you know, here we are, 2025, '26, and, you know, still going strong from, you know, 2018.

Winn: So, you were going to be dubbed the Jimmy Fallon of the beauty industry's podcast series. I was dubbed the Larry King of the beauty industry. And that's my claim to fame. And Larry King, I've told this story so many times, Larry King read that. *Modern Salon* magazine is the one who said it and printed it in their magazine. He read it and then called me and said, “Come to my house so I can teach you how to be Larry King.” So, Jimmy Fallon needs to have you over and give you a little tutorial there.

Corey: [Laughs] You know what? Yeah, Jimmy Fallon, where's my hookup, man? Hook me up.

Winn: [Laughs] We can make that happen.

Corey: I would love that. I love the Jimmys.

Winn: Well, who's his hairdresser? That's the angle.

Corey: Absolutely. That is the angle.

Winn: I love telling this story as well. People, “How'd you ever get to work with Dolly Parton and Betty White?” I called their hairdresser. That's how I got to them. You call the hairdresser their hairdresser. So, who's Jimmy Fallon's hairdresser? Let's find that out.

Corey: Yeah, we need to find that out. If anyone knows, like hit me up. Get in my DMs. Let me know so we can make that happen. Yeah, man, it's been amazing. You know, it's—for when we started the podcast, I was a

hairdresser working at that point, my 20 years in the industry. And with just doing that, working behind the chair, and then started the podcast. And it's amazing how quickly, how openhearted the entire industry was when we started it. They just kind of brought us in. Here's a story I like to tell is, Tony and I had a goal for the first year of the podcast to have 10,000 listens. You know, so we started in January and then in June we went to Premiere Orlando, which is our big, you know, 50,000 like hairdresser event. And that was our first live event that we went to. And when we walked in the door, we had 5,000 listens. So, we're about halfway through the year and we were about halfway to our goal. Winn, on our one-year anniversary, we had 150,000 listens. So, we picked up 145,000 listens in less than a half a year and it was like, it was cool. It was—it was fire, man. You know, I was like, really, really proud of that, you know, and it's weird because you play this validation game and it wasn't like the validation of the podcast necessarily, but it was the validation that we were doing the right things, you know.

Winn: Congratulations. You said that this is an industry of people who, I think you said openhearted individuals, which is totally the case. You know, when I interviewed Vidal Sassoon, now again, go back 30 years ago, I probably weighed 95 pounds and I at least had hair back then but I had zero listeners. I had zero followers. And yet, Vidal Sassoon opened his heart and said, “Absolutely, I'll be the first person that you interview.”

Corey: That's awesome. That's awesome. I wish I had the opportunity to meet him. We interviewed Eden Sassoon, his daughter, and we've interviewed Beverly Sassoon, his former wife. But I really wish that I had gotten to interview him or at least to have met him. I think the world of Eden and Beverly and super appreciative that they came on the podcast.

Winn: Yes, they're very, very dear friends. So, good for you.

Corey: Well, give them some big hugs for me.

Winn: I will. I will. I was just recently with them and, you know, I'm glad that you captured their story. I've interviewed Eden, but I haven't interviewed Beverly and that's—now I might have to steal that idea from you.

Corey: No, no, you definitely want to interview Beverly because she gives you insight just to what their life was at the time. And it wasn't—you know, she told a story on the podcast about like how glamorous their life looked, but it was really, it really wasn't that glamorous. And she was giving details about, you know, how a lot of it was a façade. Not in a facade in judgment, but just in a facade of like, like we all struggle, you know, there are struggles in all of us.

Winn: So, if you were to break down your career now, sounds to me like you have five jobs or ten jobs like the rest of us. How would you break it down percentage wise? Like how much is still behind the chair? How much is it in the podcast? How much is it, you know, travel, putting together educational events? And by the way, I ask the question because everybody's thinking that

if they choose the professional beauty industry, they're stuck behind the chair or they're stuck in this role and don't have the opportunity to do it all.

Corey: Well, I think as far as commitment goes it's a hundred percent commitment. Whatever you're doing is a hundred percent commitment. I'm behind the chair four days a week, Wednesday through Saturday. Now Saturday, sometimes those get shifted a little bit because I travel a lot on the weekends, but ideally it's Wednesday through Saturday. The podcast is Monday and Tuesday. And when I say podcast, that's also like time where we're planning the Presley Poe and Friends event. Those happen on those two days there, but also as life happens, sometimes you have to take a call in the middle of your workday. Sometimes, especially being on the East Coast, sometimes we'll do a lot of West Coast calls in our evening, so earlier in your guys' time zone there. And Presley's on the West Coast, too, so either she gets up at seven o'clock in the morning to have a call with us or we're doing calls with her at nine p.m. or whatever, but you just work it how you have to work it.

Winn: Right.

Corey: I want to bring something up, Winn, is you said that, you know, people think that in this industry that you have to work behind the chair or you work behind the chair, and you know, when I've heard you, when I've heard anyone really address like hair students or future professionals, you know, the conversation is pretty much the same and that is you can do anything in this industry. And when I sat in those same chairs, what that meant to me was I could be a barber, I could be a colorist, I could be a hair cutter, I could be an esthetician, I could be a manicurist, I could be, I think I hit them all, did I hit them all? Anyways, you know—I could be a makeup artist. Like this is what “doing anything” meant. But now 30 years in, I'll tell you, Winn, because I'm a hairdresser, I've traveled the world. I've been around the world. I've seen things that I could only dream of and some things that I never even dreamed of. You know, like the hair industry has just opened my eyes and opened my world up like far, far greater than I ever intended. You know, last July, I spent almost a month in Cambodia as a hairdresser. And it was an incredibly emotional month for me because literally every step of the way I got teary-eyed because I felt a responsibility to represent as a hairstylist, you know. And as I'm standing on top of Angkor Wat I'm looking out going like being a hairstylist is what brought me here. And it's beyond like what I can really comprehend, you know, like I'm just a, I'm just a hairstylist. Remember? Like I'm just a hairstylist and you know, I was very proud of that and also like humbled and moved by it as well.

Winn: Well, I know about your trip to Cambodia and we're going to talk about that. But back to your original story of your growing up, you speak often about curiosity, emotional regulation, the lessons that you learned growing up. Can you share more with us about that?

Corey: Yeah, we can definitely get into it. So, I'm very lucky and very fortunate that I married my high school sweetheart. And listen, I adore her. However, that

being said, we never learned how to argue, we never learned how to fight fairly. And, you know, I never dated somebody at 25 or 26 that said, "Hey, you're not going to talk to me that way" or "hey, you're not going to treat me that way." You know, we were very immature as far as like how we communicated until about my mid-thirties. And then, in my mid-thirties, I just kind of decided that I was done fighting and I wasn't going to do it. And if she wanted to fight, then I would have to like walk out of the room or whatever. And what I realized in this practice was that I had asked myself a question. And Winn, I'll ask you this question, I'll ask anyone that's listening. Have you ever been reactive in a situation and gotten a positive result? For me, it was an absolute no. I've never reacted to a situation and gotten a positive result. It might've felt good in the moment. However, you have to look at the big picture and like, you know, did I humiliate them? Is this more than just my ego talking? You know? And then what I learned in that is that it's much better to take the beat. It's much better to take the pause and to respond as opposed to react. And I got to tell you, just by taking that beat, that beat's the most powerful thing in my life, honestly. The pause is the most powerful thing. Because once you take that pause or you take that beat with the understanding of like, that you want to respond as opposed to react, it was a secret sauce to me. And like now at this point, you know, that was 20 years ago. And at this point, like we literally don't fight at all anymore. You know, we don't. It's just like, there's no more power.

Winn: I think the mentor that taught me that, kind of along the same lines of what you're saying, but the lesson was, do you want to be right or do you want to be happy?

Corey: [Laughs] Well, yeah. Yeah.

Winn: And, oh my gosh, we just want to be right.

Corey: Just want to be.

Winn: I know I'm right.

Corey: I know I'm right.

Winn: And just sometimes it' like, "Uh, who cares. I just want to be happy."

Corey: That's it, man. I mean, well, yeah, I mean, that's my new thing in life too is like all I'm seeking is peace. You know, I have a client who just retired and she says, "I do things that I want to do and I do things that I need to. Everything else is gray space and I don't have to do it." And I love that. I go, oh, that's such a great learning lesson, right? Like, what do you have to do and what do you need to do? And anything else is gray space.

Winn: Well, so, based on your messages and advice to people; based on, again, what you're sharing with us, who want to let go of that old belief system and step into a clearer version of themselves, what's the advice? What are the steps?

Corey: I—I had to say what's really important, you know? And I think it goes back to that right thing, you know? What's really important, like, is it important to be right or is it important to, you know, again, to have your eyes on the big picture there? For me, it's always about having your—my eyes on the big picture. And again, to take that beat and to take that pause in that. I don't thrive on chaos anymore. You know, I thrive on the peace and whenever I can bring peace into my life, that's the only kind of a window that I try to look through. I always want to be the person in the room that you can trust to come to. You know, like even if it's like a hard conversation that someone needs to have with me, I want them to feel comfortable enough to have that, that I'm not going to go off the chain or whatever. I think it just comes down to absolute accountability. And accountability: how you show up and how you perform in that sense.

Winn: Okay. Well, you said that you don't want to thrive on chaos anymore, which means there was a time that you did want to thrive on chaos. Or you just automatically, that was your default.

Corey: Yeah, that was my default. I mean, growing up in my house, it was chaos. You know, I can honestly say that growing up, I probably missed, I don't know, 10 days of school because, you know, my father punched my face in or punched my eye in or busted up my face pretty good, that I kind of had to hide from or had to hide from him, which is kind of weird. Like now as an adult, like I was hiding to protect him, you know, which is kind of crazy. And that was absolutely my default. And to be honest, Winn, my daughter's 32 years old right now and I've never raised my voice at her. And not because that's right or that's wrong. But it's because I'm so terrified of what I could become that I never kind of wanted to, like, climb that wall, I never want to peek over that wall. I'm way more fearful of what I can be than where I've been.

Winn: Oh my god, I love that language because I share that. Like I know what I'm capable of in a negative way. I know if I allow myself to get off track, my gosh, I know how low I can go.

Corey: Yeah. Well, that's it and that also, you know. I've also felt depression most of my life, too. And, you know, and I have to have real boundaries about what my thought patterns are, what I'm seeing, what I'm consuming. All of that I have to be very aware of because I can also get dark in that sense, too.

Winn: Well, you brought it up. Let's talk about it. What does that look like? You mentioned boundaries. Keep yourself on track. So, what does that look like then for you?

Corey: Yeah, well, a lot of it is, for me and like where my head is now, is a lot of it is consumption. You know, right now we live in a time where there's mass consumption and it's really mega important for me not to consume anything that's negative, not to consume anything that's like negative but funny. You know, so many times we get caught up in, "Like, yeah, but it's funny." And like I try not to consume any of that. I don't consume any news whatsoever. I don't

consume any—my goal the last two years is to be disconnected for anything that I don't have control over. I don't have control over the news. I have control over how I can think about it. Here's what's interesting is I grew up as a sports fan and once I became like disconnected, like I'm still a sports fan in the sense of I'm a fan of a sport, but not necessarily a team. I've kind of like disconnected from that. And now I watch like American football almost as ballet. You know, I watch it as like these guys are the most gifted athletes in the world. But I'm disconnected from the fandom of it. I'm disconnected. I don't care who wins or who loses or whatever. It's just watching it as an art.

Winn: Oh wow. So, you enjoy the sport but you're not connected. You're not placing bets, so to speak.

Corey: No, not at all.

Winn: And I don't mean that just financially. I'm talking about your time and your energy and your loyalty to a team.

Corey: Yeah, I always thought it kind of weird anyways growing up. It's like the Ford-Chevy thing. You grow up like, "I drive a Ford and this is this." Or "I drive a Chevy and Fords suck." So, I never really understood that and I never understood like, I mean, I kind of blame it on men because these are the conversations that we've had you know with each other. I know that it's a way for us to bond as well but I also find it like so silly at the same time, you know. It's like I don't get that, like that competition of—I mean, trust me the companies love it, the corporations love that kind of conversation, right? Like you're showing loyalty to that but I've never really bought into that. Not that I never have. I can say I never have but I kind of pretended that I did because I think we all kind of pretend that we do. But again, once I made it a practice, it made it just that much more silly to me. And I don't, I don't really understand it. I don't understand the loyalty to a brand. And with that, I didn't intend to like leave fandom, like when it comes to sports, but you know, once you're living on a different plane, it just doesn't have that importance to you anymore. And once again, it allows me to see these athletes as, once again, ballet or once again, like just art.

Winn: That's a very interesting way to look at it. So, if you have loyalty to the team, you could be watching a sport that you love, but you're not enjoying it because your team's not winning.

Corey: Yeah, I refuse to do that. I'd throw my brother under the bus. When his team loses, and his team loses a lot, it'll kind of ruin his whole Sunday. Again, I don't understand that. I don't understand putting that much whatever. If you don't control the outcome, why is there that much depression put into it or why is there that much like energy put into it? You know, I just enjoy for what it is. And you know, honestly, and once the last whistle blows like I'm done, you know? I go watch another game but as far as like being connected to it, not at all.

Winn: I'm curious more about what you brought up with consumption and exactly what you mean by that and or what did that look like for you? I mean, I don't, yeah, there was consumption that I had that I cut out of my life. There was consumption of drugs, there was consumption of alcohol, you know, those are gone. I think probably the only consumption, if I'm on the same track that you were referring to, the consumption that I have to really control is social media.

Corey: Yeah, that's part of it, you know?

Winn: If I consume too much of that, then I am not in a good place, or I'm not as good as I could be. I'm much better if there's zero consumption of social media, I'm a better person.

Corey: Yeah, that's kind of right on where I'm at. And the same, you know, you are what you eat, right? Now it just means it's different, you know, you are what you—it used to mean like eat an apple a day, but you know both I stopped consuming vices as well. I proudly say since 1999 was my last consumption in that sense. But yeah, it kind of started with politics. I should say politics slash social media, right? Because I'm consuming so much of the politics. And that it just, it kind of bummed me out. And my saying is that I am not mature enough to have a relationship with politics. I just not, it just, it's going to ruin my day.

Winn: Right.

Corey: I'm not mature enough to kind of like put it away, you know?

Winn: Right.

Corey: What I realized, Winn, was that it wasn't necessarily the stuff that I disagreed with, but then it was the stuff like politically that I agreed with. And now I needed to go tell the world why I agreed with it. And I just thought that that, what a waste of kind of like energy that is. And what a kind of waste of like, it kind of removes me from me. You know, I'm a better me when I'm not consuming other people's stuff. And with social media, certainly whenever we're consuming Instagram or whatever, like it doesn't always make me feel great. And when it doesn't always make me feel great, it's time for me to kind of, to check off. You know, now I still consume some stuff, but I'm just really aware of how I'm feeling as I'm consuming it. You know, like Instagram to me feels a little heavy. You know, I have to be on there because I have a podcast. I have to be on there because, you know, a lot of our friends and stuff. Certainly, when we're—the show and we're doing promotion and stuff, but it's not a place that I spend a lot of time in. It's more of like, okay, I've got to, this is one of those like, remember we talked about want to do and need to do. This is kind of a need-to-do check, you know, but I'll do, like, YouTube because I'll want to do it or I'm spending more and more time on TikTok, but my algorithm is really more about the truest sense of me and what I'm consuming there. And the algorithm kind of knows who I am so I can just watch that without a lot of like connection to it and just to be entertained. But I don't consume ugly entertainment. I don't consume, you know, body shaming.

I don't consume negative stuff. I don't consume any of that kind of stuff. What I consume is dogs, you know. What I consume is history. What I consume is interesting facts. What I consume is that kind of stuff. But you know, the murder, the mayhem stuff, I don't consume it because it just lays heavy on me.

Winn: Yeah, oh my gosh, I'm with you on that. I've never felt bad about myself after consuming a bunch of videos on dogs.

Corey: Yeah, same. You know? The dog training. I love watching the dog trainers and watch them kind of like, you know, work out the—well, I'd say work out the dogs but really they're working out the owners. You know, working out, working out the owners. I love that kind of stuff, too.

Winn: Do you mind if we talk about your sobriety for a minute?

Corey: Sure, we can.

Winn: Because I just feel that, again, as we tell our own stories. Because, you know, people are looking at you and they're like, "Well, he looks like he's doing okay and somehow he became sober so maybe there's hope for me." Can you talk about your sobriety?

Corey: Yeah, I had a very long evening in Mexico in November of 1999 and here's what happened. And anybody that's drank too much or used too much or whatever is we've all had the conversation with God. And we say, "God, if you get me through this evening, I promise never to do this to myself again." Well, I've probably had that conversation a hundred times with God, which means that I've been in a bad situation a hundred times. But this one was different. And this one was because, for a couple of reasons, is I grew up in a household filled with addicts. I grew up in a household filled with anger. And I remember praying to God saying, "God, don't let my daughter go through this. Don't let my daughter experience this." And here in 1999, she was six years old. And this was the last time I had to have that conversation because I was bad that night, you know, and I felt like I was going to OD. And I thought, like the first thought that I had or one of the first thoughts that I had was like, if I die here in Mexico, like that's my daughter's plight. That becomes her story. And I thought like, how incredibly unfair is that to her? And that was really like the wakeup call to like, if you want to make a difference, if you don't want this to be her future, if you don't want drugs, alcohol, and all that kind of stuff to be her future then the buck has to stop with you. You know, now I can't promise you that that won't be a part of her story but what I can promise you is that I did the best that that isn't a part of her story and I know for a fact, I say fact but it's not really fact, but you know, had I died there in Mexico, had anything like that happened, there's no way that that wouldn't be her future. There's no way that that wouldn't be it, you know. And that just I—I felt responsibility to her, felt responsibility to myself and that was kind of it. It wasn't easy necessarily, but it gave me a really strong guiding light that I can't let the decisions that I make affect my child.

Winn: Hmm. Wow, congratulations.

Corey: Thank you, sir.

Winn: So, I want to switch gears here a little bit. And yes, in a minute I am going to ask you about your work with Hair Aid and your trip to Cambodia, but I want to ask a few other questions first.

Corey: Sure.

Winn: Core values that guide you, that show up for you in life and in work. What are some of those core values? Obviously, being a dad is a big part of that. Sobriety is a part of that.

Corey: Yeah, I mean, I think we kind of hit on it before. I always want to be the one that people can depend on as far as emotionally. I never kind of want to be the person that you're worried about flying off the handle. And I believe that being that person and being responsible in that person, your light is brighter than that. You know?

Winn: So, when you say how you choose to show up, you're giving us a list. So how you choose to show up is that person that people can depend on emotionally. That's how you want to show up.

Corey: Yeah, that's my goal to show up all the time. And that's with everyone. That's with my wife. That's with my daughter. That's with like just the consistency and to be very, very consistent in who I am and how I show up.

Winn: I love that word *consistency*, you know. Last thing that I want to be is the person who, it's a guessing game. What version of Winn are we going to get today? My daughter and I, she had a book assignment. Now I'm trying to remember the name of the book, but I read it with her over the summer and we sat down together and read it. And one of the—that was one of the messages. Oh, it was *The Last Lecture*.

Corey: Oh, I love that book. Oh my gosh.

Winn: Love it, love it.

Corey: Randy Pausch. Oh.

Winn: Yeah.

Corey: That—Winn. Hold on, I can't believe you brought this up.

Winn: [Laughs]

Corey: Like, everything in my life changed when I read that book.

Winn: Really?

Corey: Yes. It's such an, oh, I can't recommend it enough. It's a very, very short book. If you're listening to it, get *The Last Lecture* by Randy Pausch. Holy cow. Yes, because everything that he did in that book was just about like, oh my gosh, I'm going to miss the word, but it was just about (a) being consistent and not taking yourself so serious.

Winn: Well, in that book, he brings that up. Which version do people get of you? Are you the Eeyore today or are you the Tigger today? You know, the Eeyore in Winnie the Pooh is all frumpy and life sucks. And then there's the Tigger who's just bouncing off the walls and everything's wonderful and everything's fun and everything's positive. And that hit me hard, too. I want to be consistent where people know if Winn is going to show up, that doesn't mean that there aren't people in my life, a very, very small, small circle of people who see me when I'm not the Tigger. But for the most part, 99 percent of the people who are gonna see me on a regular basis or on a semi-regular basis, they're gonna get the Tigger version of me.

Corey: I love that and like, even if we go back to social media and like, you know, years ago when social media first started, we're like, I don't wanna see anybody else's meals. I don't wanna see anybody else's curated version of their life. And I'm like, I do wanna see that. I do wanna see the curated versions of your life because we all know, and if you don't know, then it's on you, not on me. But we all know that everybody has life, you know, and I want to see the curated version. I want to see the best of you because that can inspire me to be the best that I can be as well.

Winn: So how else do you, when you say you choose to show up—and again, you have this consistency. How else do you choose to show up for people then?

Corey: Just I mean, just to be dependable with people. But I don't even want to like lighten this up. Like it's really important to stay consistent in how you show up and who you show up for. We interviewed—it was one of the first interviews that we did it was Teresa Scanlon, Teresa Scanlon was, in 2011, she was the youngest Miss America ever. And in her story she grew up in Nebraska. She was homeschooled So you have to imagine that she won Miss America when she was 17 years old and she was homeschooled. So from zero to the time that she won Miss America, she had never left her parents' house.

Winn: Wow.

Corey: From zero to 17, she had never been without her parents. And then for the very next year, literally the next day, for the very next year, she was gone out of the house for something like 300 days or something. She was traveling the world and stuff. And I was asking her about that. I was asking about how hard that was to make that transition from family life to living on the road. And then I asked her how her family responded to her. And her response, and this sits with me all the time, and it also sits with me in this practice, is she says, "You know, your family never gets the best side of you." And I thought, man, what a learn that is. And it's absolutely true. Your family doesn't always get the best side of you, you know? And again, back to the lesson is that that sticks with me in the sense of I want my family to get the best side of me and I want my family to have the best side of me. And that doesn't mean that there's not depth or that there's not other sides of me, but I also want to make sure that I have space to give them my best side as well. I don't know if that answered the question, but.

Winn: It totally does.

Corey: That's where I went with.

Winn: Yeah. And I think most people listening to this, that would cause pause for them. Does my family get to experience the best version of me? Or is it people at work get the best version of me? And what my family gets is I'm the exhausted version of me. I'm the over-it version of me and that's what they get all the time. So that's a great question.

Corey: I used to make the excuse too that, not that they deserve this side of me, but they get this side of me because, you know, even being a hairdresser, you're on a lot. You know, you're on all day long. And when you come home, it's hard to give them the best side of you. And maybe that's not the time to give the best side of you, but please, please, you know, on a day off, give them the best side of you or give them the best that you have to give.

Winn: So, as you have navigated through, you know, your own personal life experiences from fatherhood to sobriety to multiple roles in your career, at what point did you start to realize that your story, what you've been through, could actually help others? And I like how you put it: not just help others but help others feel seen.

Corey: Yeah, I think you talk about the industry for a second, then we'll back back up. But like, I think so often, certainly when you've been in the industry for a long time, that your clientele—and again, this is an eye-opener for me—your clientele comes to you because they want to be seen and they want to feel beautiful. And so often, certainly with your old-time clients, certainly when you've been in the industry for a long time, we forget that bit, or I forgot that bit. I can't point fingers, but I can point fingers at me. I forgot that bit at times. And it's literally like they come to me because they want to feel beautiful. And I shouldn't forget that, even though they've been coming in to me for 30 years. It's really important to remember that and why they come and see you.

Winn: Well, how do you solidify that? They've been coming to you for 30 years and you never want them to feel that you're just taking it for granted. So, what's your self-talk? They're getting ready to come in. What's the habits that you have? What do you do so that that person still feels like—

Corey: I think it's pretty simple and it's something that we learn on day one of hair school. But it's one of those things that we drop the ball. I think it comes down to like still having the consultation. Still having the consultation about how they're feeling about themselves, about their hair, about their whatever. And it doesn't have to be a long consultation but just one that shows that you care and that you care about them and that you're not just becoming—you know, if you don't want a robot to take your job, stop acting like a robot.

Winn: [Laughs] That's a good one. Wow. You know, I guess I have to drop names again.

Corey: Yeah, yeah. Name drop. I love name dropping.

Winn: Vidal Sasson. I probably learned that lesson from him more than anybody else because he would, for whatever reason, I have no idea why, but he would often invite me to accompany him to certain events. Like he told me, "I feel comfortable, Winn, if you're standing close by while these events are happening," and I obviously wasn't there to be his bodyguard because I couldn't protect him from anything or anybody. But I would stand close by. There'd be a thousand people there at these events sometimes, and you better believe that all of them wanted to have a picture with him. They all wanted to have a conversation with Vidal Sasson. But I was standing close by so I could overhear all of his conversations. And the lesson that he taught me was, how do you place that value in people? How do you make them feel seen and that they have value and worth is to make the conversation about them. What's a person's favorite subject? Themselves. And he was this master at it. You know, "Tell me about you." Again, there could be a thousand people all tugging at him and yet if he was talking to you, he was so focused and he was so genuine in his interests and in his questions probing people to open up and share more about themselves. It was just this—because again, he could have stood there and talked about his wealth and his fame and his notoriety and all the awards, and people would still be mesmerized by all of that. But that's not what he wanted to talk about. He wanted to talk about whoever was in front of him. It was fascinating.

Corey: That is certainly a gift. Sam Villa very much has that as well. I love—I'll sit back and just watch him work a room and that's exactly how he works the room. It's like, "How can I be of service to you?" You know, and I think for people to be seen, it's much less about us and it's more about them, you know. Having someone feel like they're seen actually has nothing to do with being seen at all, but it has to do with like having open ears and to hear about them. You know, I think that's such a great story, Winn, in that sense, is like, you know, for open ears for what they're up to or what motivates them or whatever. Just having open ears as a friend. The greatest thing that Katie, my business partner, the greatest thing that we have is that whenever we start a conversation, we go, "What role are we playing right now?" Okay, I need a friend. I need a hairdressing friend or I need a business partner. We need to talk to business and we open up, not all the conversations obviously, but when we need that role filled, none of that other stuff means. I can go to Katie and I can be like, "I need a friend." I can go like, "I hate this podcast thing." Not that we have this conversation but, "I hate this podcast thing." And what I need her to do is to hear me as a friend, not hear me as a business partner and not hear me as like this is going to get in the way of the business. You know, sometimes it's just like I just need an ear, you know? And when it comes to hairdressing, you know, I need a hairdresser friend. You know, maybe we have to vent about, not really about clients and stuff. I don't do that, but you know, maybe we need a vent about whatever's happening at work. You know, and just to have that back and forth with that. And that's been a gamechanger with her as well. That we, I mean, she relies on me for the same thing. It's like, you know, and sometimes, and I learned this actually

- from my friend Katie but I've brought it into the marriage. When my wife wants to talk to me, I'm like, "Who do you need right now? Do you need a friend? Do you need a husband? Do you need—what do you need right now so I can fulfill what you need?"
- Winn: Wow.
- Corey: I'm not great at that, by the way, but man, I sure am trying but it's definitely something that I learned with my relationship with Katie: to be able to bring that kind of communication back to the marriage or even back to my daughter as well because now she's an adult. So, our conversation is certainly a lot different and they're a lot more about ears open with that.
- Winn: Well, what you're bringing is awareness. I don't know that we're really masters at anything, but at least we're aware of it. "Okay, this person right now does not need me to respond. They don't need me to give advice unless they ask for it. What version of me do you need right now?" And you have that awareness to ask the question or to put yourself in that position to be there for that person.
- Corey: I was 50 years old when I learned how to hack my marriage and at 50 I realized that sometimes my wife just needs me to say I'm sorry and she doesn't need a solution. But it took me 30 years of our marriage for me to realize that. And to be honest, Winn, as a guy, I kind of feel like I'm cheating a little bit. Not cheating on her but cheating in the marriage a little bit because this instinctual kind of like thing goes where like I want to fix and I want to take care of and I want to fix, you know. And sometimes as guys, like taking care of is to fix, you know, so now I feel like when I say I'm sorry, which, by the way, I love because like there's no other—"Oh, that's fine," and that ends the conversation. But I still have to fight that thing inside of me: that I'm not here to fix. She just needs someone to hold her hand.
- Winn: Right. So, you believe that a person's story can change someone's day. What do you mean by that?
- Corey: I think we all have our stories and I've gotten so much motivation out of hearing other people's realities. I don't think any of us are uniquely different in this sense. Like we all can succeed or we can all fail. But to hear other people's stories and to hear—it's honestly why, again, going back to Tony and about why we have to bring heart to the conversations in the podcast. That was it. Like it's so cool to hear about like what you've accomplished but how did you accomplish that? And in the moments that you failed, what was the workaround with that? You know, and to learn from other people's experience about the path to greatness, not necessarily just to hear, you know, like gossip. So, I get super motivated about how people have succeeded in the steps that they did to—and you know, those steps are always a story.
- Winn: Thanks for that. I'm always endorsing people's stories. I'm always telling people, "You have a story to tell," and they're, "No, I don't have a story to tell. I'm young, I'm inexperienced, I'm not successful, I'm not this or that and

therefore my story doesn't have any value, doesn't have any meaning." And I'm like, "No, it absolutely does have value. Just tell your story." Fifty things happened to you this week and all of them could be a story that you could tell other people that will help them. I remember once interviewing a woman for my podcast and I knew her so I knew her success. An hour after the podcast, we finished and I said to her, on the spot, said, "I'll be honest with you, I'm not going to release this interview". She said, "Why not?" I said, "Because you didn't tell one story." And she said that she had a life coach that told her that in her presentations, whether in a podcast or on the stage or in education, she should never tell personal stories because that would come off as though she's an egomaniac just talking about herself. I'm like, "You know, that's the worst advice you ever received. Tell your stories."

Corey: [Laughs] Oh man, that's amazing. You've given me that advice, too, Winn. I'm trying to be better, telling the stories.

Winn: Mm. So, let's talk about your podcast for a little bit and then, you know, as we start to get closer to wrapping this up, which we're not there yet, I do want to talk about your trip to Cambodia. So, with your podcast, which is again called Your Day Off. It's a weekly, so a new issue every single week.

Corey: That's the goal.

Winn: Who have you interviewed? Some of your favorites, some of your most profound?

Corey: Um, favorites is hard. We've done over 600 episodes, so favorites is hard. But there certainly are some that I'm really proud of. Way, way, way back in 2018, we interviewed hair legend Michael Cole. But we didn't talk to Michael Cole about money or whatever. We talked about—and it was the very, very first time he had ever talked about his sobriety in public. And I don't necessarily think that we broke new ground when it came to having these conversations but I think that the industry was ready to hear them, they were ready to talk about them. So, you know just really proud that we were the one of the very first ones. You know, before social media and growing up in the industry, the entire narrative of the industry was controlled by the brands. You know, whether it was—whatever it was, the narrative was controlled about that. And the one thing the brands never wanted to talk about was mental health. They never wanted to talk about sobriety. Now, I don't—well, you've never worked in a salon, but I've never worked in a salon, Winn, where alcohol or drugs wasn't a concern. Like it was affecting somebody in there, whether it was like actually in the salon or whether it was a spouse or whether it was a whatever. And I think it was like, we need to have more conversations about this. This is how I felt in 2018 and we haven't. So, when we brought Michael on to talk about his sobriety and we had a super open and frank, honest conversation about it, that's one that I'm really, really proud of. And then to watch, you know, shortly thereafter, the industry start to talk about these things. You know, we did some early conversations about mental health, you know, this is before really anybody was talking about it. And I'm really proud that we were

there at the beginning to have those conversations as well. And hopefully it motivated people to talk about these things. You know, I think that those are the ones that I'm really proud of, you know. And then ego wise, there's some that I'm super proud of. Like, you know, when we talked to Trevor Sorbie, like that was like a big like star in our kind of like, my gosh, because being when I got into the industry, we were about a half a generation past like Vidal Sassoon. So, we were on the next level of stuff. We're like Robert Lobetta was the people that we looked up to and Trevor Sorbie. Of course, we looked up to Vidal but, you know, just he wasn't like really actively doing hair when I got into the industry. But these guys were and they were the ones that we were like, "Oh, that's the key there. That's the Superman there." So, when we talked to Trevor, that was a really, really cool one, again ego wise, you know, got to rub our back. Sam Villa. You know, I adore Sam Villa and Sam, you know, since then, you know, Sam and I have become very close friends and that's very cool, too. You know, sometimes I still have to pinch myself to be like, "I'm really friends with Sam. That's pretty cool." Of course, you know, again, to name drop a little bit as well, like I adore Tabatha Coffey and Tabatha has been on quite a few times and I just, I love her. She was the very first media outlet that I actually believed in, as far as like how hairdressing is. You know, a lot of times how hairdressers are perceived by the media—and I mean like TV and stuff, you know—it's always like some queen in the back yelling at people or some kind of gossip thing or it's just kind of gross. And I loved that, although Tabatha's show had that, but she also went in there and like she scrubbed it down, right? She bleached that out a little bit, too. And it was the industry that I believed in and that I wanted to. Also, you know, again, I bring up Reg Laws again. While I'm watching the show, I realized that Reg taught me right because everything that she was teaching, I had learned at the most foundational level and I had no idea that the industry operated in another kind of way. So, for that, it was a little bit of validation as well that my training was spot on as well.

Winn: I want to ask you about this. You know, my experience in the professional beauty industry. And again, there's a lot of listeners here right now who are not from the professional beauty industry, but we certainly want you to know this. My experience in being a podcaster, asking some of these people and I've had the honor of interviewing Tabatha and Sam Villa and Robert Lobetta and Trevor Sorbie, all of them, you know. I am more hopeful of what the professional beauty industry is all about by contacting the top of the top, the best of the best, and the humility and the generosity that they have. And by the way, I have friends who tell me that in other industries, it's the exact opposite. In other industries, the higher up they go, the more disillusioned they are by what they find at the top. And I'm like, "Man, that's not in our industry. In our industry, the higher up you go, you're going to find incredible, beautiful, kindhearted, generous, generous people." Have you found that to be true as well?

Winn: More than a hundred percent. However, I have a caveat to that. Those that are standing on top of the mountain collaborate. Those people that are

crawling up and trying to get those spaces, those are the people that can be ugly. Those are the people that I find that ugliness more than anybody that kind of stands on the top. Now, by the way, when I say that, that's not a hundred percent but it's pretty doggone close to a hundred percent. There are some people on the top there that I wouldn't go have dinner with. However, 99 percent of them, I would definitely go have dinner with them. But it seems to be like that next tier of people. And actually, Winn, though, I think it was much, much worse 15 years ago because—this is just my opinion by the way—but you know, like you had Sam that like stood on the stage for Redken, and then you had the Doves that stood on the stage for Wella, and every year that you went to a hair show, it was the same people standing there and there wasn't a lot of room for other people to be recognized and that created a lot of like “eh,” you know, in the industry. And then I think when social media came out, and getting back to being seen, right now there's more people that are literally being seen and there's more people out there representing the industry that I've just found that there was kind of less than that and that there's people that are being validated for whatever their work is. I don't know if I just talked in a circle or not, but it made sense in my head.

Winn: Well, it's just your head that we need to worry about, that's it.

Corey: *[Laughs]* I'm always—

Winn: As long as you know what you are talking about, that's—you can sleep well tonight. The rest of us might stay awake late saying, “What the heck was he talking about?”

Corey: Now that you're positioning it like this, I don't think I'm sleeping tonight, Winn.

Winn: *[Laughs]* Okay, let's shift gears again and talk about Hair Aid. So, Hair Aid, just so everybody knows, was founded by Selina Tomasich, who I love. She's an Australian-based, incredible woman who created this charity that takes volunteer hairdressers to street and slum communities and developing nations to teach those living in critical poverty how to cut hair. So, she's literally pulling people off the streets who have desperate, some horrific stories that we have heard and that we're witness to, of the life that some of these people have. And yet by giving them the skill set of how to cut hair, it totally is pulling them out of those scenarios and saving families. And so, I think each project that she puts together has like up to 30 volunteers, people like you. Hairdressers who train like 260 people at a time to perform basic haircuts in a five-day period of time and then gives them a kit. And literally, those five days and that kit is enough for them to then pull their kids off the street, literally pull their kids off the street, and bring income into the family. So, your Hair Aid experience was in Cambodia, correct?

Corey: Yeah, Cambodia. My heart is still in Cambodia, you know. I absolutely fell in love with that culture, with those people. It was just pure magic for me, you know. Cambodia, I just adore those guys.

Winn: You said that “presence lives on the other side of surrender.” What did you mean by that? Is that something that you learned in Cambodia?

Corey: It's something I put into practice in Cambodia, for sure. So, about two months before I left for Cambodia, I was fortunate enough to have a guy named Light Watkins on the podcast. Light Watkins, which by the way, you should definitely get him for your MASTERS podcast. Light Watkins is a meditation coach. He's Meghan Markle's meditation coach. But being a meditation coach, he spent a lot of time in Southeast Asia. Being a meditation coach, he's traveled alone a lot. So, I had him on the podcast and it was about two months before and I go, “What advice can you give me to—going to Cambodia and traveling to Southeast Asia?” And he gave me a very thoughtful about 10-second pause, which, on a podcast sounds like forever, but you know, it was a very thoughtful pause. And he says, “Well, here's the advice that I'm going to give you.” He says, “You're going to be on two journeys. The first journey is the one where you booked the airline tickets. It's where you booked a hotel. It's where you booked the excursions. It's where you take care of stuff.” And he goes, “But that's not the journey that the universe needs from you. The second journey, whether it's God, the universe, spirituality—that's the one, that's the real journey that you're going to be on. And that journey is going to happen in between all those plans and it's going to feel an awful lot like stress.” And he says, “And when you're feeling that stress, my advice is to stay present.” Now, what I didn't realize, Winn, although that was top of mind to stay present and it's a mantra that I've had for 10 years. And what I learned in Cambodia: that presence only shows up when you're in full surrender. And to surrender everything, meaning like the way that things are supposed to be, the way that like surrendering to your ego, surrendering to Americana, know, like this is the way that things are supposed to be. And only when you're in the—the Buddhists call it the truth, when you're standing in the truth. And only when you surrender all of that are you standing in the truth. And that is what being present is. And you're present to what is real and what's in the moment. Not what you think or what you think should be or what you think is, but it's just the truth. And during my trip in Cambodia, like literally there was an opportunity to surrender every single day, you know. And that surrender was much easier day by day to get to because I knew that it was a space that I wanted to be in as well.

Winn: Do you have a profound story to share with us, something that happened to you or happened during the experience there?

Corey: Yeah, so on Wednesday of the project, I worked at a prison system there and I had a couple—we had 12 guys that we were training, hair cutting techniques. With those 12, you kind of have to imagine. Like it was a very long thin room. It's not a hair salon. There's no mirrors. There's no haircutting chairs. They're little plastic picnic chairs that we're cutting out of. And I was teaching a technique and I'm in this long vestibule or room and I've got 12 guys behind me and guess what, Winn? All 12 of them have six-inch shears in their hand. You know?

Winn: Wow.

Corey: And so, you know, every like prison movie that I've seen, every prison podcast that I've listened to, everything that I've ever seen, you know, the take is like, how do I get a shank? Well, I just gave 12 guys these shanks, you know? And for the first two hours, I was absolutely beyond myself as far as like stressed out. You know, just like, *Oh my gosh, is this my time?* You know, and my co-teacher Jerry was great but, you know, she's a 69-year-old, five-foot woman, you know? Like she wasn't gonna be—by the way, I wasn't gonna be much like distraction, either. However, you know, I didn't have a big bulky guy. We had no guards, we had no translators in the room. And so, for about two hours, I was like way stressed out beyond belief. And then I just, what I, again, what I went back to was like, you know, I'm here in service. If this is part of my service, this is part of my service. Also, my friend Gino had worked there the two days before. So, I also leaned into like, *Well, he's alive.* You know? So, he made it out for two days. So, you know, there's not that. But here's what was profound about that, Winn. And I had to surrender to that moment. I had to surrender as to why I was there. What was the purpose of being here? You know, and I had to surrender to that. I had to surrender again to my own ego, own energy, the way that things are supposed to be. And here's what I realized was that—oh, back up a little bit. None of the guys in that room made me feel that way. None of them. In the conversation I had to have with myself on our tuk tuk ride back to Siem Reap was like, how often do we enter a room, put our energy in the room, and then blame that room?

Winn: Wow.

Corey: And for me, it probably happens weekly, you know. But that was kind of like that, *Oh, oh, okay. Well, what energy you put in that room is how you're to define that room.*

Winn: Wow. Wow.

Corey: So, I would say that that was pretty profound.

Winn: So, you have this experience there. You're there for a month and I'm sure there's many, many, many more stories and I hope that you talk about and share these stories; I know that you will. But after that whole experience, how has that pushed your commitment to service even deeper?

Corey: Yeah, to serve. To serve is the only validation that I need. You know, like I want to continue to serve. I definitely want to continue to do the Hair Aid projects. I think they're going to have six in 2027. From the U.S., the easiest one to get to is Guatemala. I think that that's going to be my next one. For me, it's about a four-hour flight. But, you know, it's amazing. Actually, I can't tell the story without talking about Sotharine. Sotharine is a woman that I met while I was in Cambodia. And whenever you do anything in service, whenever you do any kind of humanitarian thing, there's always the question that you're asking yourself: *Am I making a difference? Am I here just spinning wheels? Am I really making a difference?* And I think you just experience it, I think it's

part of the process of how you process through these things. And this is definitely going on. And then I met Sotharine and Sotharine was a 2018 graduate of Hair Aid. And today she's a very proud salon owner in Siem Reap. Not only is she a salon owner, but she continues to train people with the techniques that she learned in Hair Aid. Two of the people that she's trained have opened up their own salons. So, you look at throwing that small Hair Aid rock into the water and you're watching these ripples go across. We're not just changing people's lives, we're changing communities. We certainly have the opportunity to change communities and that's huge. Now she has two graduates from her program that are now training their people. The compound interest on this thing is absolutely amazing and the people that she's training are also leaving her salon and going into other salons who now can continue to train as well. Like that was one of the most emotional like bits about—like learning, learning the success that's happened because of Hair Aid was one of the most emotional moments as well.

Winn: I really hope people will learn more about it. I actually did a podcast interview with Selina Tomasich and people—you still might, even though Corey and I are still talking about this, you still might be thinking to yourself, *Oh, come on, they, in five days, you—how is this going to change their lives?* Literally there are parents who are like, you know, which child am I going to send out onto the streets? Which child do I need to sell? Which child do I need to give up? And by learning this skill of hairdressing, they no longer have to make that decision. They don't have to, you know, pick or choose. They don't have to put their kids or themselves in danger in order to bring food into the family.

Corey: The weekly income in Cambodia is about five bucks a week. So, you're not talking about a lot of money to be able to survive there. You mentioned like the five haircuts in five days, or the six haircuts in five days. It's really four days because Friday's graduation. So, it's really four days or four and a half days at the most, you know. But here's the thing, Winn, is that we taught six hair cutting techniques and nobody was looking over at the other person. And in the quote that I say and the quote that I live by is that when opportunity is your only distraction, you learn. We're not going to be there next week. You know, this was their opportunity. Of course, I'm generally speaking, but you know, most of them took full advantage of us only being there for four or five days and they can do it because it's an opportunity. And you're talking about a culture that doesn't get a lot of opportunity. And for us to show up, and they were so incredibly grateful. For the people that we worked with that are absolutely in critical poverty, you know, they gave everything that they possibly could, you know, whether they drew you a picture. Or certainly at the prison, some of the prisoners, they made these like dandelion crowns, you know, and they gave them to like all the educators that worked in the prison. Like they gave what they could, you know, and it was just, that was also incredibly emotional as well.

Winn: I'm a little curious and I'll put you on the spot because, you know, we hear this a lot. You know, "Oh, I love that you raised money for Food 4 Africa, Winn. I

want to fly there so buy me a plane ticket—first class, by the way—so that I can go to Africa to feed those starving orphans. I'm like, I think that there are starving people in your own backyard. Can you comment on that? So, you've had this experience, and I'm going to call it a life-changing experience, in Cambodia. Has that given you different eyes and a different perspective about your own backyard?

Corey: Yes, certainly. You know, I would love to work with—there's this great woman locally here named Laura. And Laura goes out on the weekends and she does a lot of homeless haircuts and stuff. So, you know, I've reached out to her about how we can do more there. Certainly, when I was in Nashville, I was in Nashville at an event and Mark Bustos was there so I certainly grabbed his ear a little bit about, you know, how Mark Bustos is changing his community. And, you know, honestly, I'm hopeful that conversations like this can drive more people into, you know, either doing Hair Aid or to—I hate the word “give back,” but you know, can give back to their communities as well. You know, I think that I'm kind of doing my part in that sense as well, just to keep having the conversations about why these things are important. Especially in these days, too, where we seem to be losing less and less access to take care of our fellow country mates.

Winn: Right. Congratulations. So, to wrap things up here, you say that generosity is a daily practice for you. Tell us why.

Corey: Yeah, man. It's a mantra and a practice. You know, I like to think that if, like you hold the door open for somebody or you let somebody in in traffic or something, if your expectation is to get a thank you or your expectation is to get the thankful wave, then for me, that's not the reason why you ever open a door for someone. You don't do it for the thank you. And if you're irritated that they didn't say thank you, then that was never the intention in the first place. You know, it's like I like to look at life much more as a gift than an investment. And if you're expecting a thank you or you're expecting a wave back, then that was an investment, not a gift. So, I try to live in a space of gifting. And at any moment where I feel like annoyed because I didn't get a thank you, because I didn't get a this or I didn't get a that, then it was never intended as a gift in the first place. It was intended as a gift. If there's any expectation of return, it's an investment.

Winn: And how often do you have to remind yourself of that mantra, that practice?

Corey: Oh, daily. Yeah, I mean daily. The more times that you say it, then the better you do in it. You know, the better you feel about it. But I also don't want to give my energy to anybody else, you know. I don't want to give my energy to you know someone not saying thank you. Like that's even weird for me to say out loud. You know what I mean? You didn't say thank you to me so my day's ruined. I don't, I don't understand that and it feels weird. Yeah, but whenever I catch myself, Winn, whenever I'm like, “Oh, that person didn't wave,” I have to have that conversation like, “Bro, you did it as a gift. You definitely didn't do it as an investment.”

Winn: Oh, Corey, you're great. Thank you so much. Do you have a final message for our listeners?

Corey: Yeah, honestly, I think that all change and all—everything in your life is going to happen to curiosity. Every conversation that you happen happens to curiosity. So, I don't remember who said it, but maybe you can remind me. But, you know, stay curious, my friend. Stay curious.

Winn: Wow. Perfect. I can add nothing to that.

Corey: Stay curious, Winn.

Winn: Good job, my friend. Thank you so much. And of course, we will share with our listeners in the bio information as this is released, of how they can track you down and find you and tune into your podcast and sign up for that and anything else that you have going on. I think that people will find that you're a good friend to have. So, thanks.

Corey: Well, Winn, I appreciate that. Thank you for the opportunity. And until next time, stay curious, my friend.

Winn: Thanks, Corey.