

MASTERS by Winn Claybaugh, March 2021

Jim and Jamie Sheils

Family Board Meeting: Bridging the Gap Between You & Your Loved Ones



Jim and Jamie Sheils help busy professionals create deeper, more connected, more meaningful relationships with their spouses and children so they can have the family life they always imagined. Interviewed by **Winn Claybaugh**, Jamie and Jim share a simple method to create lasting connection with our children. Because the entire planet has been faced with complex lessons related to parenting, spousing, and business life during the Covid-19 pandemic, this MASTERS podcast includes powerful strategies for lessening the effects of the outside world on our family relationships.

Winn: Hi everybody, Winn Claybaugh here and welcome to this issue of MASTERS, which, by the way, has been on my wish list for several months now, for many, many reasons. First of all, I'm a dad. I have an eight-year-old daughter. With everything that we have learned through Covid and through being quarantined and, you know, so many people want to focus on what was taken away from us. You know, we can't jump on a plane, we can't go to the gym, we can't do the things that we used to do, but what we were forced to do—and I use that word *forced* not in a negative way but what we were forced to do and required to do was to stay home, was to homeschool our kids, was to focus more on family life. And for some people that turned into a disaster, unfortunately, and for some people that turned into a magical, magical thing. Well, I love what this interview is going to be all about because that whole idea of being on purpose, that whole idea of turning your relationships, your personal family relationships, into something meaningful. You know we have mentors when it comes to our taxes, when it comes to how to become an entrepreneur and how to be successful in our jobs. Well, we need mentors and heroes who lead the way and guide the way so that we can navigate through, again, what is the most important part of our lives and that is building great relationships with family and that's what this interview is going to be all about. So, can you tell that I'm excited? So, let me tell you who I am sitting here with. I'm sitting with Jim and Jamie Sheils. They are the founders of what is called 18 Summers, which they're going to explain why is it called 18 Summers. So, I'm going to read this here: "Jim and Jamie Sheils help busy professionals create deeper, more connected, more meaningful relationships with their spouses and children so they can have the family life they always imagined. As successful entrepreneurs with a family of six"—haha, boy!—"Jim and Jamie speak all over the world, guiding others in igniting their family life as they grow and nurture their business life. Through their book, the Amazon bestseller *The Family Board Meeting*," which we're going to get into, "and their entrepreneur family serving organization, which is called 18

Summers, Jim and Jamie are helping to transform families and show them how to make the most of the time they have together.” So, you have this book called *The Family Board Meeting*. You know, before we jump into this, because I have so many questions, we’re going to be all over the map here so just strap yourselves in and try to keep up, everybody. But Jim and Jamie, first of all, welcome to MASTERS.

Jim: Oh, thanks for having us, Winn. It’s a pleasure to be here.

Jamie: I’m so excited to hang out with such a nice guy.

Winn: I better be a nice guy—

Jamie: [Laughs]

Jim: [Laughs]

Winn: —right?

Jamie: Yes.

Jim: So we’ve heard.

Winn: [Laughs] Oh, and by the way, just right up, we were introduced by our very good mutual friend, Tim Storey, who I just have so much respect for that man and he has never steered me wrong and, “Hey Winn, you need to meet this person. Winn you need to meet this couple. You need to learn about this book.” So, thank you up front to Tim Storey. We love Tim, right?

Jim: Yes—

Jamie: Oh yes!

Jim: —huge fan.

Jamie: Wow, talk about a nice guy. For sure, love him.

Jim: Yeah, big fan of Tim; very big.

Winn: So, why do you call this 18 Summers? What is that all about?

Jim: We had a mentor years ago, when we were starting to get into doing some family work with entrepreneurs. He was helping with my talks and he said, “Wow, Jim, just remember this is great things you’re doing.” He was 75 years old at the time and he said, “My daughters are still my daughters, but I’m telling you, it’s different. Take advantage of those 18 summers.” I said, “18 summers?” He said, “Do the math.” And for me, Winn, that was really extra powerful because I adopted my two oldest sons at seven and five. So, I was already behind the eight ball with that math equation. So, 18 Summers is a

constant math equation Jamie and I are doing in our heads to say, “We know that the years are not all created equal and the time we have with our family now, even down the road if we do it right, it’s probably not going to be as abundant as it is now. So, we want to take advantage. Even when we’re building our businesses, we want to make sure we’re there for our children through these pivotal years.

Winn: So Jamie, what was your approach through all of this?

Jamie: Oh, wow! Well, you know that statistically 80 to 85 percent of the time you spend with your children will be in those first 18 years, which man, when I heard that it made me want to cry. I think of my big boy who’s 17 and still flops in our bed and I think, wow there’s a tiny percentage that’s, you know, I’ve got like five percent left of this 85 percent or whatever. And then I just think, wow, but I know what we’ve poured into him and what we’ve poured into all of our children, he’ll want to come on more of those family vacations. He’ll want to come to the holidays. He’ll want to call his mom more often because, just like any return, the more you invest, the more you see come back.

Winn: Well, a lot of our listeners are family members but a lot of them are young entrepreneurs or they’re new employees of an organization or they’re bosses or they’re—we have every demographic. So, this isn’t going to be a conversation about family only, but you’re going to help us navigate on how to create that balance. And reading something that you wrote, it said that you were “motivated by what you saw as one of the most tragic challenges of modern life: the disconnection of busy entrepreneurs from their families.” So, what was it that you were seeing or experiencing or witnessing that just broke your heart?

Jim: Yeah, there was a story, Winn, years ago about a guy named Isaacson. I read it back in 2011. And Walter Isaacson’s claim to fame is he was the biographer for Steve Jobs. And he was interviewed a few days after Steve Jobs had passed away and the article went like this: Steve Jobs spent his final days surrounded by close family and used the opportunity for a final interview to explain to his wife and children why he wasn’t always there for them. Jobs was quoted in the article as saying, “I wanted my family to know who I was. I wasn’t always there for them, but I wanted to explain why and for them to understand.” And this guy, Walter Isaacson, I don’t know him, but I really admire him. Right there on the death bed he said to Steve Jobs, “Steve are you glad you had a family? Are you glad you had children?” A tough question at a time like that but Steve fired right back and supposedly this is what he said: “It’s 10,000 times better than anything I’ve ever done.” And reading that, Winn, I had—I think they call it a *satori*, in Japanese culture, like an instant awakening, and I’ve never looked at family life the same. I decided that day, reading that in my little home office, as I grew my businesses my family was coming with me, they would not be left behind, because I wasn’t

above that. I got wrapped up in my own pursuits and my own endeavors with the best intentions, but I just really set the line in the sand that day, Winn, that as I grew my businesses my family was coming with me.

Winn: Okay, and we're going to have to figure out exactly what that means because you're not necessarily meaning take your kids to work *[laughs]* —

Jim: *[Laughs]*

Winn: —every day, because we don't get that opportunity, although my daughter would love that. She's already ready to run my company.

Jim: I'm sure.

Jamie: I'm sure.

Jim: I'm sure. What that means is you want to stay involved at home, Winn. You can't sprint the whole way. So as we build and work hard in our businesses, we should still be involved in family life along the way. So, that doesn't mean that they're coming to work with you every day or, unlike the pandemic, you have to stay home every day, but you want to stay involved. You want to stay connected. You want to have a relationship and not put family life completely on hold for your career for five years, 10 years. Because that's been bad advice in the past and I don't think it has to be that way. I think you can integrate a successful career and a family life at the same time.

Winn: So, Jamie, give us your wisdom on this.

Jamie: Oh yeah. So with what we've seen with other families, in the entrepreneur world, you know you meet these people and they're super nice, like you say Winn, super friendly, outgoing and nurturing, and they love their families but they're never home with their families. Or maybe they have a disconnected relationship with their spouse, or they don't really know much about their children or their friends, or they're on the road 300 out of 365 days out of the year and so on and so on. You ask them what their values are or what matters to them but when you look at their calendar it's incongruent. And so our hope is that we continue to help bridge that gap between congruency of what matters and where you spend your time.

Winn: I have a feeling that as you communicate that to people—and that's a challenge: make your family the priority—there's a lot of guilt associated with that. And I'm sure that people, they might even get offended at you saying that. "But you don't understand. I have to work two jobs. I'm working 60, 70 hours a week. I have this obligation. How dare you say that I'm not being a good parent?" What's your response to that?

Jamie: Oh Winn, what's amazing is that even when people start thinking about their family, it means they're already doing to great job. And that's one thing that

we really try to encourage family. The fact that you're even thinking about it means you're already ahead of the game. It is easy to feel shame, guilt, depression, but start somewhere so you realize, "Wow, I need to get more involved." Let's set some boundaries and expectations. You have to be on the road 300 days out of the year? Okay, well let's make sure everyone knows which days those are. Let's make sure, when you are home, what can we expect from you? How will we interact? Things such as that really set yourself and your family up for success because you know when you're on at work you're on at work. And when you're on at home you're on at home. So it just sets everybody up to win.

Winn: Okay, I want to give our listeners a preview, so they have lots of hope as they listen to this. We're going to talk about what you guys call the five steps to harmony, home life, and business life at home. We're going to talk about the Three Steps to Connection. I have a whole bunch of questions. Wait. We haven't really talked about your book which is called—

Jim: *The Family Board Meeting.*

Winn: *The Family Board Meeting*, which I love the title, by the way. And where did that come up?

Jim: Well, that was a friend of mine who's an author, helped me name it because I started to have these quote unquote meetings with my sons every quarter to make sure I wasn't losing touch with them. And so all of a sudden it became a talk and then a book and now a movement where we're trying to encourage entrepreneurs, programed the way they are, to keep their children in priority position and schedule quality time with them. So, we'll talk about that in the Steps to Connection but that's what the book is about.

Winn: Did your kids look forward to that quarterly meeting? Because I know some people heard that right now and they're like, "Oh my gosh, that's like being called to the office by the boss or by the principal." Right? *[laughs]*

Jamie: What's so great—yeah, right It does sound like it. What's so great is it's actually a super fun thing that they do look forward to because the steps that we'll get into more later—

Jim: We'll go through the Steps to Connection and you'll see. They have been— Jamie calls them the re-grounding points of my relationship with each of our kids.

Jamie: I can always tell—

Jim: Whenever I come back—she can always tell we've just had a day together. It is probably the most important thing I've done with my children, and a lot of the people that we work with have now said the same thing.

Winn: The thing I love about you guys is that we're not just going to talk in theory here, you're going to give us some real point-by-point, step-by-step, here's what you need to do, here's what you can do, here are the opportunities. That's what you're going to share with us and that's why this is real exciting for me.

Jamie: You know what's so great, too, Winn, just going on what you just said, and you can start anywhere and you can start anytime, and that's what's so amazing and beautiful about all of it. Signs that you're winning at home would be more laughter than arguments, you feel confident, you're looking forward to going home and being home. You feel like you're a part of things. You're not a stranger at your own home. The good keeps increasing, more adventures, lots of just those positive feelings.

Jim: Yep, so I think people look too hard, Winn, actually. We know if we're winning at home just because we want to be there and we want to talk to the people around us at home and they want to talk to us. That's the best way that I can sum it up. The best way I can tell you're not winning at home is when you feel like a stranger, when you have a bitterness like you're missing out, you have a guilt. The problem with guilt, though, it's always not a good marker because we seem to all carry a lot of guilt, especially when it comes to our family. So, we have to work through whether that's real or not and that's why clear benchmarks and principles can help us alleviate a lot of that.

Winn: What if somebody listening to this thinks, *Well, I blew it for 16 summers, I only got two left*. Is it ever too late?

Jim: I don't think it's too late and one thing we talk about, Winn, is there is a magic to saying the unspoken words. And if you've missed the first 16, there's two things that can go a very long way, very long way, and we've watched it happen in our own lives and others. A sincere apology or genuine compliments can go a long way, and you'd be shocked how many 16-year-olds out there are in that situation and if they could just get that from that parent that's been away, that's going to be a starting point to rekindling.

Winn: So, those are the unspoken words you're talking about: a sincere apology—

Jim: A sincere apology or a genuine compliment. The harder of the two, Winn, I've found, a sincere apology is really tough and you clued in on it before when people are going, "But do you know how hard I'm working? Do you know all of the effort I'm putting in for the family?" And that is very honorable and noble but it's not just provide and protect, it's love them as well. So, we have to be there as well. So it doesn't discount all those efforts when you apologize but we can apologize and say, "Hey, my efforts were pure. I'm sorry I couldn't always be there, but I want to make the most of the time we have now." And that goes a long way. You know Brené Brown, I'm sure you're a big fan of, Winn.

Winn: Love her.

Jim: The art of vulnerability is just so powerful but especially as businessmen and women who are in the tougher business world, sometimes we have our dukes up and we don't even realize it, and we gotta be willing to lower those when we're talking to our kids, especially something like a removed 16-year-old.

Winn: Wow. That's just profound for me because I do a lot of business coaching for leaders and I'm always encouraging them, "Come on be more vulnerable, be more open. Apologize. Let your people know that you don't have the answers, that you made a mistake. Do you know how far that will take you in their eyes?"

Jim: Mm.

Winn: "How that will build trust?" But I'm not coaching parents at home. That's where you guys come in. So, for you to say that as well, to genuinely apologize to your 16-year-old kid, wow!

Jamie: And it goes for spouses as well, because I'll tell you, Winn, as we were preparing and looking forward to talking with you, I said, you know, when we were talking about sincere apologies and I was reading your book and I was thinking, "Wow, bitter or better!" What a beautiful perspective. What a transition of—apologize swiftly and sincerely.

Jim: Yeah.

Jamie: So if something happens—you know, in real life, we have our setbacks in our relationship, even though we help others; our family. We're real people. But I will tell you, it always feels better to not be bitter and to just make that apology sincere and swift.

Winn: Tell me about some of your family rhythms.

Jim: Sure. I think one of the most important that I'm going to talk about is the art of tech distancing. We've all heard of social distancing now with the pandemic. We're big fans of tech distancing. I love the connection and the abilities that technology does, but you have to disconnect to reconnect. For your family, you have to have times of complete and total unavailability in order to really connect with the people right in front of you. Because if you get one text, one email, one thread when you're sitting there with the people you have said you love the most, it can interrupt things. One of our family rhythms, every day, Winn, is to have everyone have their electronics off in the house for an hour. Now, we do two hours now, but we encourage with families out there to start with one hour a day where they're doing tech distancing. There's no news on, there's no TV on, everyone's phone is off at the right time. It almost feels creepy at first, Winn, because everyone looks around, "What do we do?" But you kind of move into your own life and your own space and conversations

start to come up/ More planning of adventures, more storytelling. This is such a magic principle of tech distancing and this one thing we've seen have huge effects on people.

Jamie: And you don't just sit around and look at each other for the period of time. You know, we might have one teen in a room drawing and another one reading and the toddlers running around like crazy people and Jim and I may be trying to read a book. But the fact is that we all know we're available in that time. Our brains are all getting a rest, our thumbs are getting a rest from texting, and we just know that we have that space. End even if you are single, I encourage your listeners to just give your brain and your emotions and your life a break. Just set that rhythm in place for whatever time you can each day.

Winn: I feel like we could do a whole 90-minute interview just on that topic.

Jamie: Ahh!

Winn: The importance of getting unplugged. And I'll confess, to be vulnerable here and transparent here, I felt like I was doing pretty good prior to being quarantined.

Jamie: Mmmm.

Jim: Yeah. Yep.

Winn: But then all of a sudden it's like, okay, there's more information out there that I need to know about, I need to go to my phone. I can't go to the office so now I'm doing work from home on my phone. I'm bored, so what am I doing? I'm on my phone.

Jim: Yep.

Winn: So you know those reports that you set up, where your phone sends you the report of how much screen time you've had?

Jim: Yes.

Winn: And again I was doing so good and all of a sudden, it's like, "Your screen time was up 60 percent this week." I'm like—

Jamie: Oh no!

Jim: *[Laughs]*

Winn: —what happened?

Jim: Yep, we're guilty of that, too, Winn, and that's the thing that we found. As parents, we're in a constant state of open revision. No one knew about the

pandemic. I didn't even know what the word *pandemic* meant before all of this, Winn, but all of a sudden work got brought home, school got brought home, everything is home and we turn to electronics and that's okay. We fall off the wagon, but again, we're in that revise, revise, revise state. Okay, we realize this now. It's not going to do any good to sit there and beat ourselves up because now we're definitely not going to change the habit, but to give it some awareness and then say, "You know what? I can do it for an hour." Then you make it easy: set it for the same bat time, same bat channel every day and you aim for that. Now, if someone like Sofia or your spouse, George, they're going to start to recognize that and it almost is like a friendly bell ringing, like, "Oh wow, this is the time that everyone is down," and there's a relaxation, it starts to become a rhythm, a habit, and a feeling around the family environment.

Winn: So that's one of the rhythms that you have. Can you share another one that you have? Which by the way, that's a great one. If we just applied that one idea, what a difference. What other rhythms do you have as a family?

Jamie: Yeah, for us, so usually our—like as Jim mentioned, our two hours of tech fasting falls during our dinner time and so we make it a high priority to have dinner together at least five nights out of the week and we really—how many years ago was it?

Jim: Sixty years ago.

Jamie: Sixty years ago, the average dinner time was an hour. And now do you have a guess as to how long it is, on average?

Winn: I'm going to guess 30 minutes.

Jamie: Ahh.

Jim: Twelve minutes.

Jamie: Twelve.

Winn: Oh wow! Oh wow!

Jamie: Right? And so we really challenge ourselves and we challenge our clients to make that time intentional. We call it the mealtime challenge. Sit down with your family, set a benchmark of how many days a week it's going to happen. Try to make it the same days each week. So, for us, it's Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday. Those are our four definites. Wednesday is always date night for us, and our older boys go to church, and which date night is my favorite rhythm.

Jim: [Laughs] Mine, too.

Jamie: [Laughs] It's double dessert and double wine night around here.

Jim: [Laughs]

Winn: Oh my gosh, that's great.

Jamie: And so those are some of our rhythms. Also, along with the meals, what simplifies my life hugely is that we have a consistent rhythm on what we eat. So, Monday is Mexican Monday, Tuesday used to be taco Tuesday because all my guys around here like to double dip on the tacos. And then as I said, Wednesday is date night. Thursday is usually something grilled. Friday is pizza Friday. Saturday is we eat out. Sunday is family meal, so we invite any family or friends; it's kind of an open-door policy. And so those are some of our rhythms that we've put around the tech distancing around the meal table and bringing everybody together.

Jim: Yeah, and a fun thing you want to try, Winn, this is our favorite. To have a break meal together five nights a week and there is a magic to this simple question: What was your best part of the day; what was your weirdest part of the day? The answers you're going to get out of Sofia are going to be so much fun, are going to be so engaging, so enlightening. I learned so much about my kids, through the pandemic and how they were experiencing that, Winn, by sitting down for that dinner and saying, "What was your favorite part of the day; what was your weirdest part of the day?" And each one of us has to go around so you can imagine my four-year-old's answer was different than my 17-year-old's. We all learned, we all laughed, and it's been such a simple rhythm to keep us engaged and keep us in touch with each other through that crazy time.

Jamie: And it gives a stage for us to ask further questions. So, say if our 15-year-old says the best part of his day was that he got a great score on an English exam. We're like, "Oh, how is English going?" And then it opens up another door and then maybe our older son will say, "Gosh, you do so well in English. I'm terrible at it." And so it gives an opportunity to continue to go deeper or to ask further clarifying questions and then it also models to our toddlers how we sit at a table, how we stay at a table, how we communicate at a table, and it just is really powerful.

Winn: I like that because sometimes the question that a parent asks the kid is, "So what happened at school today?" "Nothing." "How was your day?" "It was fine."

Jim: Exactly.

Winn: So, I like your questions, your scripted questions. What was the best part of your day? So you're challenging people to bring out the best part and the weirdest part. I never heard that one. That's—

Jim: Yeah, so it's not really negative, it's weirdest, so—

Winn: No, it's fun.

Jim: It's fun and we've had some funny answers come out of our littler ones and actually everyone, but it does give a good balance and you will get to know them. A few weeks into this you're going to go, "Why weren't we doing this every night?" We now have our teens' friends come over and they'll be like, "Are we doing best—

Jamie: Best and weirdest.

Jim: —and weirdest, Miss Jamie?"

Winn: That is great *[laughs]*. I love it. It's tradition; family tradition.

Jim: Yeah.

Winn: You guys have a blended family, right? Give us an idea of your blended family. How many kids are at home? What are the ages? Tell us about that.

Jim: Yeah, so and again this was a big part of behind our movement. Jamie and I met many years ago. She was a single mom, running a Waldorf school. I fell in love instantly. She had full custody of two beautiful little boys that were seven and five. We fell in love right away and the boys asked me to adopt them, which was, I mean, such a powerful part of my life, Winn. I mean totally changed the type of person of who I am and, again, brought about—most of this 18 Summers came from my love for those two. We went on to have two more children. Those guys range from six and four now, so we go four, six, 15, 17. And then, since Jamie likes to really spice things up, two weeks into the pandemic we also fostered an additional two- and four-year-old that were with us for six months. So during pandemic we actually had two, three, four, five, 15, and 17. *[laughs]*

Jamie: *[Laughs]*

Winn: Wow!

Jim: Yeah, a big part of this was my relationship and getting to adopt the boys at such young ages and I wanted to make sure I was a good dad. And the breakthroughs that we saw me have with these two beautiful little boys, I started to share these stories as an uncomfortable businessman and I think that's why people resonated with us, Winn, because I was very vulnerable, very raw. And that brought about—anyone can do this and it doesn't have to be complicated if you'll just put a few rhythms into place, it will get you 80 percent of the way there.

Winn: Wow! Wow! You guys talk about teachable moments. What do you mean by that?

Jamie: Wow, yeah so teachable moments are everywhere. I think, especially when we brought our children home, so many parents thought, *Oh my gosh, now I have to be a teacher too?* And it's important for parents to know that you don't have to teach all the things that are taught in school, you just have to facilitate a space of learning. So, for example, our daughter, who we've said is six, she loves to build with blocks and they make different shapes and stuff and she's beginning to read, she's really interested in shapes, and so she put some blocks together and she's like, "Mom, look at these letters!" and it like blew her mind that she could take something like a building block and make a letter out of it and so the rest of our day we spent making letters with blocks. Also, alongside of that, with our older sons, we were on a road trip one time and we got lost and we were trying to figure out our way and maps and heights for our RV and all these crazy things, like something you'd see on a television show, and we ended up in the parking lot of a bad neighborhood and this big guy comes out and he's like, "Do you guys need some help?" And what was beautiful is this man said, "Follow me on my run," and we followed him in an RV and he ran us to the nearest interstate *[laughs]* and it was so beautiful but what it brought about was the conversations that we had with our children about connecting with people, about asking for help, about maps and heights and preparedness, and all of these things. And so really, Winn, almost every moment of our life, if we just take a breath, if we look around, is a moment in which we can teach our children or each other something.

Winn: You guys talk about why boredom is a gift, and when I saw that I immediately was drawn to that question—why is boredom a gift?—for a couple of reasons. Now again, I'm 61 years old and I remember walking to school, not that I would let my daughter walk six blocks to school by herself because I absolutely will not—

Jamie: Right!

Winn: —until she's 30 years old.

Jim: *[Laughs]*

Winn: I guess I was six, seven years old, walking to school pretty much by myself, and there were a hundred adventures during those six blocks, because you're outside and you're drawn to this. Well, I then heard a speaker that came into my daughter's school and he actually owns a company that does video games and he says, "I don't let my kids play these video games."

Jim: Wow.

Jamie: Exactly.

Winn: He says, “In fact what we do is we plan at least a couple of hours a day where there is nothing scheduled.” Because he was talking about how sometimes we overschedule our kids. You know, they have 10 different lessons for karate and for horse riding and piano and dance and whatever. They’re overscheduled, is what he was saying.

Jamie: Absolutely.

Winn: And that you need to plan at least an hour to two hours a day where there’s nothing scheduled so that in that boredom, so to speak, they’re forced to use their own creativity and imagination. And again, that’s how I feel like I was raised. There were eight kids. There’s no way my mom could keep us all entertained. We didn’t have social media or our own devices or not sure that we even had much of a TV back then. So, we were bored, so to speak, but I never felt bored. There was always an adventure. So can you talk about that?

Jim: I think you’re hitting the nail on the head, Winn. It’s such an important, simple concept and principle but people almost feel like they’re doing a bad job if the children are bored. Our big thing is, like Jamie said, values and schedules play a big part in family life, so we need to look at them and we look at them for the kids as well. Winn, we would look at some of these 9- and 10-year-olds, they had a busier schedule than your average CEO. And we’re going, *Man, when is there time to reflect? When is there time to discover creativity? When is there time to figure out their own passions and interest?* So, we’re with you of that power of just having nothing scheduled because what can come out of it is huge. But I think there’s, again, that word *guilt*, a guilt of parents: “If I don’t have them scheduled in 15 karate, piano, this, that, it’s just we’re not doing a good job,” and the answer could not be farther from the opposite. The more we’ve loosened those reins, Winn, and bringing it back to exactly what you said your childhood was and say let there be the simplicity of boredom where they have to create something, where they have to really dig. That is one of the biggest teachable moments we’ve been able to find is to have boredom, to have time that’s totally unscripted and see what they’re going to do.

Winn: What do your kids come up with? And you have such a broad range of ages, so what do your kids come up with in that so-called boredom?

Jamie: Our big boys, at 15 and 17, are still incredible fort builders. We currently, I’m laughing as I think of this because—

Jim: Fishermen, acrobatics. I mean they do—

Jamie: —everything.

Jim: Tons of things.

- Jamie: But they'll wake up and be like, "Mom, can we build a fort? Okay, we need this power tool and that thing," and it's just so fun to see their wheels turn and watch it go from building forts indoors with boxes to using power tools and two-by-fours in the woods.
- Winn: Wow! What's the advice that you give because I'm sure you have parents who are kicking back on this and it's like, "Wait a minute, they're scheduled. They really want to learn piano. They really want to learn karate. They really want to have singing lessons." What's the advice that you give to those parents who are pushing back on that?
- Jim: Well, first of all, I would definitely re-ask the question: are the children showing the interest in this or you're feeling they should have an interest in this because you think it will help them? That's always a big question that we need to constantly ask ourselves with our children. And secondly, I would say all of those can be great but, again, remember what I talked about: complete and total unavailability. If you give that gift to children—we all say we want to support our kids' gifts and talents. It is in these periods of boredom—like our son, our oldest, is on the way to become a professional fisherman. He wants to have his own fishing charter business. He's already been mentoring in the Florida Keys and that seemed like a pipe dream at 13 but now he's 17 with a lot of wind at his back to actually do this. And it all became from those things of boredom. If you want to see your kids' gifts and talents, do it. You have to be willing to see nothing happen.
- Winn: Wow. I want to jump into some of this other stuff, what you call the five steps to harmony, home life, and business life at home.
- Jim: Sure. Well, let's go through it. The first thing we do is we're setting the leadership tone. And again, we've read your book, Winn. I loved what you talked about, about happiness. You set that tone. If you decide to not be nice, that's going to trickle down. It was a lot easier for your family to probably trickle down with niceness than not because that's the value that you hold. So, I always remind parents that focus breeds increase. If you are being frantic and bitter and grumpy at home, just remember you're setting that tone and you can set a different type of leadership tone. The tone of leadership always rests in the parents first; that's number one.
- Jamie: Your outside of your home can be chaotic. There can be a pandemic, there can be all sorts of things happening outside of your home, but you get to choose if it's chaotic inside of your home. That's a huge difference in how you set that tone. You can't control what happens on the outside, but you can control what happens on the inside.
- Winn: Which is what we teach our kids. Like I feel like it's my job to teach my daughter how to wake up in the morning and make the choice that it's going to be a good day.

Jamie: Ah.

Winn: I get up an hour and a half before she does because I don't want to wake up while she's waking up. I don't want to be trying to get my day going while she's trying to get her day going. I want to be well into my day and I'm good to go, the candles are lit, the music's going, I've had my coffee, the dogs are fed. All of that is already well into play before I then pull her out of bed and my words—ask my spouse—my words as I'm pulling her out of bed are, "Oh my gosh, Sofia, it's going to be such a great day." Like it's my job to teach her how to make that choice that it's going to be a good day.

Jim: Yes, absolutely.

Jamie: For us, at bedtime, we do it similar just like you're saying. Actually, our mornings are a little different than yours, but our evenings always end with, "Today was a good day," and then we list some of the highlights, only highlights, and then end with, "Today was a good day and tomorrow will be another one." And just like you said, Winn, with those affirmations, like "God is good" or "Thank you, God," as you had said, those positive affirmations. Every night I do, right before the boys go to bed, I peek my head in and so my rhythm with them is I'll say, "Wow," and I give a couple of highlights of what was good. I don't do it quite in the same way with the littles because they tend to roll their eyes at me a bit like, *Mom, we're not five anymore!*

Winn: *[Laughs]*

Jamie: But I always end with, "God bless your sleep." And they've told me since they've grown up, they're like, "Mom, I don't even know what to say back to that. Is there like a proper thing like, 'Oh, you too?'" *[Laughs]*

Winn: *[Laughs]*

Jim: *[Laughs]*

Jamie: But they know it's coming and they know it means they're loved and that Mom's kooky and it is a beautiful way to wrap up a day for our loved ones.

Winn: It's what you guys call a rhythm. It's a rhythm, it's a tradition.

Jim: It is. Rhythms and traditions and you don't need many of them, Winn. A couple of them can really keep things binded together.

Winn: That's great.

Jim: The first thing—

Winn: Five steps to harmony.

Jim: Yeah, we say first thing you need to do is you got to set the leadership tone in your family. The second thing, you got to put the practice of tech distancing into motion right away because there's way too many people work-puking in their living room on top of their children or on—

Winn: What did you call it? What did you just call it?

Jim: I call it work-puking in your living room.

Winn: I love that.

Jim: That's a no-no. We've all done it. You're on that text thread or the phone calling and your work-puking in your living room. It's just not good for your spouse, not good for your children, not good for you. So, let's do some of that complete and total unavailability with the tech distancing like we talked about. There's a time and a place for those calls and emails but it's not on top of your family, especially through these times where we all got brought home together. You can go to a separate room or closet or car to take that, but you don't need to do it right in your family.

Winn: Got it. Number three.

Jim: Number three is revise, revise, revise. This is the most important, Winn. We got taken home during the pandemic. Work got moved, school got moved, and we want to just hold on to the past of, "Gosh, we were in such a good rhythm." And then we get thrown out, like you said. Guys like you and I, I'm in. I prided myself on having my tech distancing in line but then I was globbing onto my phone more than I had been. So we've got to be in that open state of revision, saying, "You know what? We need to revise. This new school schedule is not working. We wrote one up, didn't work, but we can revise and keep going." So it's a constant revision.

Jamie: And what's great about revising is that it's not crumple it up and create something completely new. It's, okay, so what is working? We've created a rhythm, we've created a schedule. What parts of it do work and what do we need to improve upon or completely change? What's really neat is not only will you take all members of your family into account as you're creating these revisions, but you can always ask. It's a great question. What could we do better? What would you like to see more of? What would you like to see less of?

Winn: I love that. And again, the words that you're using, the dialogue. You know it's so funny. It's like, this could be a brilliant business session, right now. As the boss, you have to set the leadership tone. You need to have some tech distancing because you're destroying relationships when you're constantly on your phone in front of your team members.

Jim: Yep.

- Winn: You have to pivot your business, you have to revise. What do they say: the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again while expecting a different result. We use this terminology for business. The fact that you're applying this to family is just so heartwarming.
- Jim: We found that wealth and relationships really overlap, Winn. The three subjects we want to teach our kids—and this something that I'm sure a lot of people want to hear. We feel that the most undertaught things are personal development, relationship skills, and financial intelligence. We're always trying to teach those three things, Winn, to our children because I feel whether they become the butcher, the baker, or the candlestick maker, school's not really teaching that and Jamie and I can. And if we do, it's going to help them personally and professionally.
- Winn: Again, we're talking about the five steps to harmony. The first one was leadership; you have to set the leadership tone. Second one: tech distancing. Number three: revise, revise, revise. And Jamie, I like what you added to that. You're always asking the question: what's working and what can we improve upon; what can we change? What's number four?
- Jamie: Our number-four step is inventory, educate, and action. And so, what that means is you find yourself in a situation like the pandemic and everybody's coming home. You're like, *Oh, what am I going to do in this situation?* You educate yourself. Okay, what do we need to do? What do we not have to do? How could we navigate this situation? And then you put it into action. So you take inventory, you educate yourself, and then you put some action behind it.
- Jim: I've had a real estate investment company for 22 years. The toughest time in my life, by far, was the end of '07, '08, when we had the great meltdown of the financial markets. And I went from having a very successful business to near bankruptcy and it became very clear I had to look at this situation. I didn't want to, Winn, it wasn't comfortable, but this inventory-educate-action helped me through this where a lot of people fell. And this was the one principle that helped me through. I said, "Okay, I need to take inventory truly on how bad business was," because I was heavily invested in California and Florida. I'm talking some tough markets that got hit right on the head. And so I'd say, "Okay, things are really bad. What happens now? Do I go to banks to negotiate debt? How do I work things with suppliers?" There were so many things that I had to get educated on that I'd never thought about in my business, but I did, and I took action on them. And just by taking that, we were able to protect our investors, see our way through, and come out the other side. It's not always a comfortable process. Just like for some people that said, "I don't even want to look at bringing my kids home for education." But it's the parents who said, "Okay, I'm going to take inventory on the situation; how bad it is, how it's not working. I'm going to get educated in this new home schooling I need to do and I'm going to take action on it." They

saw better results. So it works personally and professionally. It's not always a comfortable situation, Winn, but it's very rewarding if you go through it.

Winn: You gave that example, then, of home schooling our kids. We all went through that: distance learning our kids when the pandemic hit, and that is a great example. Do you guys have another family example of when you, as a family, took inventory, educated yourself, and then took action?

Jamie: Absolutely. One thing about this that we find with entrepreneurs, they are typically very proactive people. Those of us that run our own companies, we're very proactive. So this step—all these steps are proactive, but this is one that you really need to inventory, educate, action. When our oldest son was, I guess kindergarten or first grade, we started to notice, okay, so he's still not reading. Okay, so his posture. You know, there were some things that were—he was incredibly spatially intelligent, he could build anything in the world, time management was great. There were so many great things but then there were also a couple things that were different and we weren't sure, you know? And so taking that inventory and then getting educated: okay, what could this be? Who do I need to reach out to, to find out maybe what these differences are? I just consumed every bit of information that I could and I realized he needed some evaluations. We discovered that he was dyslexic and then we took action on educating him differently and we still do. And you know what? Both of our two oldest boys are actually dyslexic, come to find out, and they see it as their superpower now because we didn't take it—again being super proactive—we didn't take it like, "Oh, tell me what I'm supposed to do here." Instead, we decided, "This is how we're going to approach this," and they think that the way that their brain works is the most incredible way of thinking.

Winn: Isn't that awesome? I love that.

Jim: Although our 15-year-old, who's the jokester, sometimes if he gets in trouble or messes up, he'll go, "Mom, I'm dyslexic, does that help get me out of anything?" And she's like, "No."

Jamie: Nope! *[laughs]*

Jim: No. *[laughs]*

Winn: That's funny. That's great. Okay, what's number five; the fifth step to harmony?

Jim: Five is probably one we like the most because it's had a big effect on our life and it's the simple strategy of reframing the situation. The way that we were able to reframe the situation in the beginning of the pandemic, Winn, was an activity that Jamie and I designed called the 75-year-old self. When all this happened, everyone gets brought home, business gets brought home, unknowns, all these things. We're fostering two extra kids. I was feeling

overwhelmed and the question I asked myself one day—it was about a week into the lockdown. I said, “What would my 75-year-old self say?” And it was actually a meditation that I just started doing, saying, “You know, what will you be?” Hopefully, I’ve still got a little hair, I’m still surfing, I’m still hanging out with family and friends. What advice would my 75-year-old self give to me now? That would be about 30 years in the future for me. And the answer I got back, Winn, was this nicer, older man just saying, “Ah Jim, that’s the good stuff. Those toddler meltdowns and the teen grumpiness and chaos; that’s the good stuff, that’s not going to be around all the time. Eat that up right now. Everyone’s home, everyone’s safe, everyone’s got food on the table for them in front of them. Make the most of this. The unknowns will become known but make the most of this. Don’t become insulated in anger. Open up and just laugh with this.” That was a huge aha for me. So, we’re always encouraging people through it. Again, why did I go through that, Winn? Because I was bitter, I was short, I was worried, I wasn’t setting a good leadership tone. But I tried to look at an older, wiser self of me and say, “What advice would he give me?” And the more we’ve asked this question to people, Winn, the more it’s enlightened and the more the answers have enlightened Jamie and I.

Winn: I love that one. That’s a powerful one.

Jim: We’d love to hear—like this is something we just have for fun, Winn. I mean Tim’s answer was phenomenal of what he said for us saying, “Hey, I’ve been here before, I’ll be through something like this again, and it’s okay for me to laugh and listen to music through this.” What would Winn say? I mean, you’ve been doing this 30 years; interviewed the top people on the planet. You went through the pandemic. What advice would the 75-year-old Winn give to Winn today, do you think?

Winn: That it’s all going to be okay. That it’s all meant to be. That it’s all for a reason. That the reason is for my good and to just soak it all in. Thank God I became a dad because I tell people had I not become a dad I would just end up a rich old jerk, but having a daughter, I can honestly tell you that my spouse and I, we fought over being able to change her diaper. It’s my turn, no it’s my turn. I get to. I get to!

Jim: *[Laughs]*

Jamie: Aw!

Winn: But somebody had told us to do that. Somebody said don’t ever fight, saying, “It’s your turn to get up; it’s your turn,” because those days are going to go away. So, I think my 75-year-old self would say, “Gosh, just take this in and just soak it all up because one day you’re not going to have this.” So I just really want to enjoy the moment. What a great little exercise.

Jim: Yeah. Thanks for sharing that. We love to hear answers like that because it's usually simple and profound and it feels like your feet become firmer on the ground. Every time I hear someone like you, or one of the people we're working with give that answer, I feel so much better. And it's simple wisdom.

Winn: Yeah.

Jim: These are not, as you can see—the one thing that we've always prided ourselves on is we don't think the solution has to be as complicated as we made the problems, Winn. We always try to have simple benchmarks and action steps and principles that people can follow.

Winn: Got it. You talk about the three steps to connection. Can we jump into that?

Jim: Sure. Three steps to connection, that was the basis of our book about those days I started to spend with our sons, and then we started to use it for mine and Jamie's relationship, and then even our individual relationships. So, these three principles have been definitely the peanut butter and jelly of what has strengthened our family and our individual relationships.

Winn: I love the language that you use: peanut butter and jelly.

Jim: *[Laughs]*

Jamie: What I think is super powerful too, as you said, your listeners aren't just parents but all of your listeners, I bet, are children of someone. And so what's really neat is Jim started doing these three steps to connection with his father as well. So, it doesn't just go down, it also goes up. And he went on to donate a kidney to his dad and, I tell you, those meetings that he had with his own father really solidified that relationship going into the donation.

Jim: Yeah. Yeah. He was a stubborn little fella, Winn, and he was not going to accept the kidney and using these principles, which we later reflected back, it's what opened him up to say, "Okay, this is something I'll allow you to do for me," and here he is, still here clocking away with us, and he would have been dead years ago so it's very important to me, obviously.

Winn: Actually, I'd love to hear that story. After you share with us these three steps to connection and then tell that story because I know that you say that donating a kidney to your dad was one of the greatest adventures of your life.

Jim: Oh, for sure; for sure. And this all ties together. All these things come back to square one and these principles that I'm going to talk about is what took a stubborn little Irishman who just said he was going to let himself die without putting me out, was able to accept that gift and see more grandkids be born and just really help this whole family movement from another generational side. These steps for connection are very simple, Winn. The first one is probably one that is the most potent, most powerful, but yet the most

overlooked. And the principle that we encourage for people, if they hear nothing else in this interview, it's listen to this: you have to separate the parts, Winn, to strengthen the whole. So, principle number one is one-on-one time. If you don't do anything else, make sure you're getting one-on-one with the people you love the most. I grew up, I was born into an Irish-Catholic family, raised Irish-Catholic, which means I have like 7,000 cousins, which is great;. You know, big get-togethers and that. But it's been one-on-one time that helped my son overcome some real learning disabilities. It was one-on-one time that helped my father finally sit down and get to know me for the first time in my life. I grew up in a family of five. We weren't that close growing up but able to really get to learn who each other were and be able to be willing to accept the kidney. And it's one-on-one time with Jamie and I every week that really concretizes our relationship. But it happens very rarely, especially with close-knit families. It's great for you and George and Sofia to spend time together but it's really important for just you and George to spend time together. It's really important for just George and Sofia; for you and Sofia. And the more that we've taken this one principle with our own family and helped other families, Winn, it is that old simple saying: separate the parts to strengthen the whole. So, principle number is the one-on-one principle.

Winn: You said, as you do that as a couple, I heard that it was double dessert, double wine.

Jim: *[Laughs]*

Jamie: That's just my portion of the date.

Winn: Ah, okay. It doesn't matter if Jim's there or not.

Jamie: Right. Exactly.

Winn: What does that look like for your kids, that one-on-one time, and how often does that get to happen?

Jamie: So, what's great is that our board meeting strategy, as we spell out in the book, we design it as once a quarter. Now, we're fortunate that even though we have lots of children, since this is what we do and we are intentional about it, we do get one-on-one with our children more often than that but it is such a great grounding stronghold, island of consistency. Once a quarter you get one-on-one with each of your children and what's amazing is you let the child choose the activity of what you're going to do. It's not, "Hey, let's go look at a car race."

Jim: Like if I like football, "Yeah, come to the football game with me," but they have no interest in football. You let them design and plan the day. I've had times of princess parties and dress-up, Winn, that wouldn't have been my first choice but, man, was I so happy I went all in.

Winn: I'm going to send you my makeup video.

Jim: *[Laughs]* I'd love to see it.

Jamie: Oh!

Winn: I was the model. My daughter did makeup on me, so I'll send you that.

Jamie: Oh, I'd love it.

Jim: I'd love to see that.

Winn: So, Jim, what did that look like, then, with your dad because I like what you said, "Oh, let's go to a football game together," but if they don't like football, so what did that look like between you and your dad?

Jim: Me and my dad, we started to go for some meals together and then sit on the beach and I had never done that with my dad, Winn. I was 36 years old and I had never really spent one-on-one time with my father and I love both my parents but my mom will do all the talking. My dad will just kind of sit back.

Winn: Okay.

Jim: So by me spending one-on-one time with him, Winn, for the first time he had to come out of his shell and really talk to me.

Winn: Okay. So step number one, three steps to connection: one-on-one time. What's step number two?

Jim: Step number two is repeat, and we call it without electronics. We're going back to tech distancing on this. On these one-on-one days, I do one day a quarter with each of the kids, one-on-one. My phone is off and if's it a teen, their phone's off. So, no electronics. I don't want any interruptions from emotions of an email, a text, a Facebook thread; nothing. When I'm spending this one-on-one time with them every quarter, my phone is off. When Jamie and I go on date night, every Wednesday night, 5:30 to 8:30, you cannot reach me. My phone is off. So, one-on-one time coupled with tech distancing: incredible connection points.

Winn: Isn't that amazing that something—because this has come up a lot in this interview and it comes up a lot, I'm sure, in most conversations and family lives and relationships: getting away from our devices.

Jim: Yeah.

Winn: Like how much do we have to talk about that right now. I sometimes wonder if in 50 years from now, we'll all look back and say, "What were we thinking?"

Jim: Yeah, it's going to be a big question, that's for sure. And a lot of it is just second nature. We don't even realize we're doing it, Winn.

Winn: Wow. Okay, what's number three?

Jim: Number three is a fun activity of their choice with focused reflection. It's a very simple saying: a fun activity with focused reflection is the shortest definition for experiential education. Jamie is really versed in alternative educations like Montessori and Waldorf, all things that I really love and respect. And she helped teach this—the power of experiential education—and that's the shortest definition that there is: fun activity with focused reflection, which means time at the end to talk. So we'll let each of our kids, Winn, no matter what it is, plan the day. We'll go all in, do a fun activity together, have a meal, and at the end we usually spend a little time talking. And this is not a time for a parent to give 50 lectures. Your next 50 lectures are not welcome.

Winn: *[Laughs]*

Jamie: Nobody's in trouble—

Jim: No one's in trouble. If they are, it's held off of that. The time for this, Winn, you've done something of their choice, gone all in, had a great time, usually shared a meal together. Now it's just the two of you, maybe driving back in the car, maybe sitting someplace in a park or something like that. This is the time, Winn, where I've had some of the deepest connection moments of my children and normally it's been me having to be vulnerable and either give a sincere apology or a genuine compliment. And if you give one of those two things at that time, holy potency! It's heard, it's respected, it's received. Again, it sets the stage for connection. So, principle number three, fun activity with focused reflection just means let them plan something fun, go all in, and save a little bit of time at the end to talk.

Winn: Okay, I have lots of questions.

Jim: *[Laughs]* Go ahead!

Winn: Okay, so Jim, you say often times this is you being vulnerable that might also require an apology. Give us some examples. Like, what are you apologizing for? Trust me, I could produce my own list every single day of what I need to—

Jim: Yeah. No, it's a great question, Winn.

Winn: —apologize for.

Jamie: Give us the dish.

Jim: Yeah, no it's sometimes—

Winn: Yeah.

Jim: —I've said, so here's an apology for my teen boys. One of the last board meetings we had with them, I said, "Hey guys," one of my older sons, one of my older sons, I said, "Hey, I just want to let you know that you were really helpful with us bringing an extra two- and four-year-old into our house and I know that took away time from you getting to do things, from me getting to spend time with you, being a little shorter. I just want to say thank you and I'm sorry that our time got messed up at different times or if I was shorter. That's not fair. It was a lot to take on, but I really appreciate you stepping in and helping with that." So, that's one that happened. There's times where I've been working or I feel like I've been short and I can say, "You know what, guys," to one of my older sons. I'll just say, "I'm sorry if I've been short or even seeming bitter. I've been working on this business deal. It's really weighed heavy on me and that's not fair to you so if it's come across like I'm showing any sort of anger to you, or to Mom, or anyone, I'm very sorry." That's the type of apology that I usually do.

Jamie: And sometimes it involves electronics. You know, we keep coming back to this electronics. Sometimes, I may be in the middle of an email, thinking that nobody needs me at the moment and so I may have snuck into a corner and I'm responding to an email, and then a toddler comes slinking up and is like, "Mommy, Mommy, Mommy, Mommy, Mommy," and is asking some question and maybe I have to take a minute and say, "I'm sorry that I didn't hear the question that you asked. Could you please repeat yourself?" And sometimes that happens between Jim and I. Sometimes that happens between the children and I. And I'll tell you another time, just this last week, we've been home kind of on lockdown recently, again, after being exposed to the virus, and I had a really sad day and I went to Jim first and then to each of our children and I said, "I just want to let you know, I'm not feeling myself today and I just want to get that out there. I'm going to apologize ahead of time. I'm just going to let you know today's a hard day for me." They really respected it and they were like, "Okay, Mom." And I think that the more that we show our children we're human, the more that they know it's okay to be real themselves.

Winn: Do you guys have some guidelines for our listeners on what is a legitimate, heartfelt apology and what sucks?

Jamie: *[Laughs]*

Jim: *[Laughs]*

Jamie: Okay, well.

Jim: An apology—

Winn: Because sometimes it's like, "I'm sorry but," and we have—

Jamie: Right.

Winn: —an excuse, we have no blame, we have—

Jim: Yeah.

Winn: Meaning you just basically took the apology away with the “but” after that, so—

Jamie: Right.

Winn: —give us some guidelines of what is a really good, legitimate, heartfelt apology that goes somewhere, that lands somewhere and makes a difference.

Jamie: A heartfelt apology should never include “why.” It should never justify why you behaved in such a way. It shouldn’t say, “I’m really sorry,” like you said, Winn, “but.” No buts allowed in the apology. And of course eye contact, making sure that there’s nothing else going on, that you’re sincere, that you approach them. Don’t ever make somebody ask for an apology. But I would say, is there anything else that you would add to that?

Jim: The “but” is a big thing. You can’t say, “You know, I’ve been a little short and maybe even seeming distant at home because I’m so wrapped up, but I’ve noticed that you’re also on with your friends so—”

Winn: Oh my gosh.

Jamie: That sucks.

Jim: So that’s—

Winn: That one sucks.

Jim: So don’t make it loaded. It is again, Brené Brown, completely vulnerable in saying, “Hey you know what, I’ve been working hard but that’s no excuse for me to seem distant or short-tempered at home, so, I’m sorry. You deserve better than that and I really appreciate your patience with me.” When there’s no place to go, Winn, the kids have really good BS detectors; really good.

Winn: Yeah, they do.

Jim: So, they’re going to sense it if there’s some ulterior motive, so just don’t have one. Just lay it out like, again, I always go back to Brené Brown, I’m going to be just completely vulnerable no matter how much it makes me want to throw up. I feel very uncomfortable. It’s not my natural state to do this but I’ve really continued, almost like if you remember the old Toastmaster days when you first learned to public speak and you feel like you’re going to get sick. It’s the

same thing with apologies and sincere compliments. For me it has been with my children, anyway.

Winn: I was told it's a basic human need to hear this. It's oxygen—

Jamie: Mm, that's so validating.

Winn: —for people to feel those sincere apologies, for them to experience that vulnerability, for them to hear the accolades. It's oxygen for them. Now I'm thinking that you guys have been vulnerable and practicing this and giving apologies to your kids for many, many years. What if there's somebody listening to this and they do have a 16-year-old or a 17-year-old at home or a 30-year-old; hopefully not still at home but—I'm kidding.

Jamie: *[Laughs]*

Winn: And they've never done this, they've never done that, they've never apologized. What's your advice to them?

Jim: I got a really good quick story on this, Winn. I spoke about a year ago, not his November, the November before. Everything was still open. Up in New York, big entrepreneur group up there, and one of the leaders of the group was a very intimidating guy. I mean he fit the part where I almost felt there was some Godfather music playing and I talked about this importance of a sincere apology or genuine compliment. He walked straight up to me, Winn, and he said, "I'm going to try it," and I was like, *Oh my gosh, I hope this works [laughs]*. So anyway, it ends up this guy had a very successful wealth management practice. I got a note the day after Thanksgiving that this gentleman, for the first time in his life, had a meaningful conversation with his 30-year-old son who happened to be his partner in their wealth management business.

Winn: Wow. Oh, that just makes me want to cry.

Jim: It started with a sincere apology where he had been wrapped up in the business. This guy was a very successful businessman. He was intimidating, Winn. I'm telling you, I was a little intimidated by him but I could tell he had a good heart, but it was so hard for him to say to his son, also his partner, but they said that was the first meaningful conversation they had ever had, that Thanksgiving.

Winn: How do people learn more about you or find you before I then start to wrap this up?

Jamie: Sure, 18summers.com is a great place to find us because all of our social media is on there. Instagram: 18summertribe. We're also really excited this year. We are building a retreat sanctuary so that we may bring families to our

area on the beach and serve them and teach them these lessons. So, this year we've got the 18 Summers House going up on Instagram.

Winn: Wow!

Jamie: You can follow our journey there and watch the dream come true.

Winn: Will it have double desserts and double wine there?

Jamie: Oh my gosh, all day long.

Jim: Of course, we couldn't have it without that, Winn.

Winn: By the way, eighteen is not spelled out, it's—

Jim: One-eight. The number one-eight-Summers.

Winn: The number 18summers.com

Jamie: Yes, and so Facebook, Instagram; we don't do much on Twitter but Facebook, Instagram, and 18summers.com where we also have a blog that I chronicle some of our travels with the family as well as the incredible journey of bringing my grandmother into our home for hospice and Jim donating the kidney; just some fun family stories.

Winn: Wow. I'll tell you, I strongly believe that the best teachers and leaders and mentors are storytellers.

Jamie: Mm.

Jim: Yeah, I agree.

Winn: Like for that entrepreneur, that businessman, that intimidating CEO that you just mentioned, I bet if he stood up in front of his—and maybe he probably has—stood up in front of his employees and told that story of, “Hey, I resisted this and yet I was challenged at this seminar to apologize to my 30-year-old son and this is what happened,” his whole team would fall in love with him.

Jamie: Wow!

Winn: His team would be more and more loyal to him because they get to hear that side of him. They get to experience that side of him, that vulnerable storytelling I just think is magical.

Jim: Yeah, I think it is definitely a gift to have and a gift to give.

Winn: You know, again, we believe that everything happens for a reason and what do you think parents can take from this time we've been in for the last year?

What are the lessons that you've learned about parenting and spousing and entrepreneurship during the pandemic?

Jim: I think Jamie has something good so I'm going to let her take this, Winn, but I'll say with just this one thing. Stop the pressure of this perfect family. There is no perfect family. I don't know where the words got put together. We all have challenges, setbacks. There's no perfect family. It's not about perfection, it's about bridging our imperfections and making the most of the time we've got.

Winn: Wow.

Jamie: What's really important to remember during this time is that we've all experienced trauma and so often parents, spouses, even people that aren't in your home, if you're struggling during this time, it's a real thing and your struggle is just as real as the next person's not struggling. Sometimes we discount our spouse or our children when we think, *Well, what's so hard on you? Now you get to do school at home in your pajamas. What's the problem?* Well, what you have to take into consideration is they lost their friends. They lost their normalcy. They lost their freedom and now they have to hang out with you all day long. And on that same line, I saw a—I hope I don't mess this up—I saw an incredible meme that really made me laugh and it said, "This lockdown needs to end because my spouse is realizing I'm really not better than them." [Laughs]

Jim: [Laughs]

Winn: [Laughs]

Jamie: "That I'm actually not out of their league."

Jim: Yeah, that was it.

Jamie: So, such as that just understanding that sadness and difficulty in this time is real and just because your perception that what you are carrying is heavier than someone else's, you have no idea how heavy what each person is carrying. Just really keeping that in mind and taking that empathy, kindness, and consideration with your spouse, with your children, and even with your family members that aren't in your home.

Winn: That's great. Wow. This has been a very, very interesting experience and I heard somebody say, "It's like God sent everybody to their room." The whole planet: "Go to your room."

Jamie: [Laughs] Yes!

Jim: [Laughs] Very true.

Jamie: That's great.

Winn: "Time out, everybody."

Jim: Very true.

Winn: And hopefully what we've learned is to prioritize family. Wow, how important is our family.

Jim: Yeah.

Winn: And so now we need these principles, we need these guidelines and these steps and these how-to's that you're sharing with us. Yeah, we want to always improve business. We always want to figure out how to make more money, and there's nothing wrong with that, but that you're guiding us through this as well. What do they say, that no success on the planet in your business life can compensate for failure in the home.

Jim: Yeah.

Jamie: Mmm.

Jim: Well, remember that story, Winn, that I told before. If Steve Jobs said on his death bed his family was 10,000 times better than anything he's ever done, I'm pretty sure that I can learn some lessons from that statement.

Winn: Wow. Jim and Jamie, you guys are amazing. You had me on a little bit of a rollercoaster and now I have to clean up my office and clean up my face from crying and everything else, so—

Jim: Well, we appreciate you and love your work and, again, we love simple principles and the way you took the value of being nice and have really shown its potency, it just resonates with us, so thank you for that.

Winn: Well, it's my pleasure. You guys, thanks, and this is the beginning of a wonderful relationship with you guys as friends and mentors and I'm grateful again to Tim for making this happen.

Jim: Us, too.

Jamie: Absolutely, thank you.

Jim: Yeah, thanks for having us, Winn.

Winn: It's a pleasure. Thanks so much.

Jamie: Thank you.

Jim: Thanks.