

**MASTERS Podcast Club, June 2020**  
**Michael Cole**  
Six Dimensions of Wellness for Live



**Michael Cole** is a world-renowned teacher, author, and developer of training programs and the recipient of numerous awards for helping thousands of salon professionals transform their businesses. Interviewed again for MASTERS by **Winn Claybaugh** (the first time was in 1996), Michael reveals his personal struggles and conquests, adding a level of transparency and realism to his heartfelt message. His “six dimensions of wellness for life” will prove to be an effective compass as you take inventory on your journey toward bliss, prosperity, happiness, and wellness.

**Winn:** Hey everybody, Winn Claybaugh here and welcome to this issue of MASTERS. Now, at the time of this recording, we are in April 2020, so we’re still quarantined with COVID-19 and I’ll tell you something, this is the very first time—I’ve been doing MASTERS for 22 years, back before there was even a thing called a podcast. I’ve been doing this, capturing the voices of my mentors and my heroes for 22 years now, and this is the very first time that I have not been face to face, physically in the presence, of the person that I was interviewing. So to do this virtually, this is like pulling teeth for me because I’m breaking a tradition here. I always wanted to just be physically with that person, which meant that in 22 years I did a lot of recordings in somebody’s hotel room. I would capture them on the road someplace and say, “Can I grab you now and let’s go do an interview?” So that happened a lot. I actually interviewed Larry King in his bedroom, so there you go. So I’ve had all kinds of experiences but they’ve always been physically face to face with the person that I’m interviewing and so when this came about, the first person that I contacted, knowing that this had to be virtual, the first person that I contacted is the man that I am sitting with right now, virtually, the amazing Michael Cole. So Michael, once again, welcome to MASTERS.

**Michael:** Oh, thank you, my friend. It’s been a long time, many moons, and it’s always a pleasure and a sacred honor to be with you. I just had the opportunity to watch you evolve and transform over the decades and it’s been a good ride for both of us.

**Winn:** Well, can I tell you that I evolved because of your mentoring? Like truly, Michael, you were the staple. You were the legend. You set the bar so high. And it wasn’t just me, there were several of us. And I could name who they were, where we would sit and talk with each other and talk about what our goals were in developing our careers as speakers and you were always the

standard. We were always like, “Well, gosh, if we could become as successful, as good as Michael Cole, then we would achieve something.” That’s truly from my heart. That’s exactly how it was and I remember, before I even had the chance to meet you, and I’m sure I stalked you is how I eventually met you, but I had bought, it was all VHS tapes back then, videos, and I bought the whole series—what was it called?—about just professionalism in the salon, and you had acted out and put on different costumes. What was that called?

Michael: Panic in the Parlor, Psycho in the Salon, A Little Off the Top, The Power Wheel, you know.

Winn: Well, I bought it all. I had all of it. I use it as part of the curriculum to train my salon team as well as the team in my schools and my own future professionals, so thank you for that many years. And the first time that I had the privilege to sit down and interview you, I looked it up this morning, it was in 1996. That’s the first time that we got to do this interview.

Michael: And it’s been, you know, you blink. It’s almost daunting to how quickly time collapses. And to your point, thank you, first of all, for your gracious words, but I’ve had the opportunity to watch you and what you have done in that same window is nothing short of profoundly extraordinary. I can say I remember, I knew you before you were whatever you want to call it: rich, terribly happy, you have all these schools and the brand and just to watch that explode over the decades, it’s been inspiring. So kudos to you. It’s been a good ride.

Winn: It really has. Thanks, Mike. Coming from you Michael, that’s huge. Now let me just share with our audience who Michael Cole is. Now, you’ve been in the professional beauty industry for 35 years, starting off as a licensed barber and hairdresser in 1975. So you’ve been at this for a while but the thing that’s exciting about the message that we’re going to share today is that your outreach, the influence that you have, is way beyond the professional beauty industry. Your outreach and the messages that you have are for everybody and you’re going to have an incredible message, so if you’re listening to this right now, this is not the time to check out because you’re not a hairdresser. This is the time for you to absolutely listen closely and realize that you’re going to want to share this message with so many people. Michael is a teacher, an author, developer of training programs that have empowered thousands of professionals worldwide. You are also, Michael, the founding partner of the Summit Salon Business Center, which you can explain to us, share with us exactly what that’s all about. You’ve been doing this for a while and your messages are amazing. Before we jump into this, tell us what is this Summit Salon Business Center?

Michael: It’s a training center that was started from a glimmer in a couple of people’s eyes, I think it was 1999-ish, where business owners come together for three

to four days and we just kind of dive deep into what it is that runs a good company but when they go home they go home with a coach. So what's different about Summit is that we now have 100 consultants and the business attendees that want to take the ride are going, "Okay, I get it, I want it," and somebody goes home to help them implement, to give them the support they need to hold themselves and their team accountable so that we can close the gap between what they fear, what they can do with what they've heard and seen, and the result that they get. And now in that 20 years I think last count we had about 5,000 businesses that have been—

Winn: Geez.

Michael: —and when you really look at that community of employees inside of that, probably somewhere around fifty, sixty thousand people so I'm awestruck by watching it continue to unfold.

Winn: So how important, before we jump into this, and I keep on saying that, but you mentioned having a coach, which is just so important because how often do people go to a motivational seminar and they leave there on fire and by day three nothing has changed, nothing has been implemented, and there goes that initial high that they had experienced while they were at the actual event. Talk to us about the importance of having a coach, especially in business and personal development and all of that.

Michael: I would say important to the tenth power. I think every now and then you will find an extreme exception to the rule. I think I'd like to underscore you as being one of those exceptions. A few minutes ago when you said once upon a time you and I were in a classroom, you were on the receiving end of some of my teachings and while you heard, bought, took home with you—you unpackaged, you read, you watched, you did. And by and large, with a very high degree of self-initiative that, I think, is a supreme exception to the rule. Most people leave, as you said, with the intention of doing it but they bump into themselves: their own resistances, inertia, fear. If they have to lead people, they bump into that resistance, they get scared, or they just get swept away by life. So I'm to a point now in my life that if somebody isn't willing to work with a coach after a class, I would say to them, "You're not ready to be in my group because I love you too much to allow you to go back home without a coach." I'd rather say to you, "You know what? See if you can figure something else out but I just love you too much to do that to you."

Winn: I tell you, hearing you say that makes me love you and respect you even more because a lot of speakers and teachers, they focus more on the effort. You know, the effort was, *I stood on a stage and I got a standing ovation; I'm now done*, and they're not even checking on the result. They have no idea where their information, where their brilliance landed. The fact that you're saying, "I love you too much to let you just go home and try to figure this out on your own."

Michael: Yes. Indeed. Indeed.

Winn: Well, let's jump into this. You talk about what you call the "wellness for life story." Can you—

Michael: Sure.

Winn: —share that with us?

Michael: Yes. Well, you know, if you do the bio on me, I've been in the game for a few decades and 25 years ago, walked through—you know, every now and then it's our turn to go into the barrel and some barrels are bigger than others and this barrel that I went into 25 years ago, it was a big one. I was on the front end of colon cancer. I had major surgery. Everything that could go wrong went wrong and what I thought was going to be a 60-day sabbatical was an 18-month sabbatical and spent a lot of time convalescing. I entered into, in addition to physical recovery, some other recoveries with the issues of life and have been there since. It's been very, very private; I rarely talked about it. The effects of my recovery showed up in my professional life as a teacher, and not long ago I kind of saw the back end of a glorious ride coming my way. So I'm 67 now, so it's like, "Okay what's next? How am I going to spend the last quarter of my life, the last quarter of the game?" There's four quarters; age 60 to 80 is the fourth quarter. You go over 80, you're in overtime. So I—

Winn: [Laughs]

Michael: I thought, you know, like, "What's left?" And I just had this intuition, a kind of a calling. I didn't want to retire, I didn't want to stop teaching, but I really wanted to pivot to something a bit more profound, a bit more relevant, and now after the historical crisis that we're walking through, people need, more now than ever, restoration; recovery, restoration. Whether we're talking about financial, mental, emotional, relational, spiritual. And I've been a student of that for 25 years and, in my private life, in my philanthropic life, I do that gratis. There are a lot of people that I teach and I thought, *I wonder if we brought some of that into the business world what the receptivity would be*. Now, I don't know if it's because of the COVID thing or whatever, but it's now exploding where people are going, "I want that. I want to stay in the business game. I still need the strategy, structure, system, leadership stuff, but give me that wellness," and we just called it *wellness* because it's a safer-sounding word. It's not therapy, it's not rehab; it's wellness. Sometimes people will refer to it as self-care and it addresses all of the dimensions of our life, from our financial, relational, physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, environmental. And so that's the deal. And I'm just so excited about it. I think it's younging me down [laughs].

Winn: [Laughs] While you're in the fourth quarter.

Michael: Yes, yes. So I'm 67 going on, you know, it feels like 20-something and now you know, as you know Winn, we're in the digital age so we call this the virtual center—

Winn: Right.

Michael: —of wellness, that I really want to do the overwhelming majority of that service on Zoom or a Facebook platform or an Instagram Live platform so that, like you, planes, trains, and automobiles, especially now, they're more difficult for me. So the idea that I could be in a studio and render this service is very exciting.

Winn: Isn't that great? Yeah, we have to have our own wellness to be able to offer what we do, which is a great message. If we're still jumping on trains, planes, and automobiles to be able to deliver this message, which we proudly and happily did for many, many years, but to continue doing that means it's taking away from our ability to be able to be of service.

Michael: Yeah.

Winn: Can I ask you a question? How old were you, what age were you at when you went through colon cancer? And the reason why I am asking that question is because I remember Noel DeCaprio, who passed away in 1998—

Michael: Yes.

Winn: —shared with me that when she found out that she had breast cancer she said that she was embarrassed. She said that she was embarrassed by the fact that cancer could show up in her body and she was very, very angry about it. Was that kind of your experience, too? I mean how did—

Michael: Yeah.

Winn: Were you at the point in life, "Wait a minute. I'm a speaker, I'm a mentor, I have great information, people want to hear what I have to say. How can this happen to me or why is this happening to me?" What did that do to you personally?

Michael: Well, the story is a little bit different and I loved how you—somewhere in your language you were saying when you get into this we want to be living what we're teaching. Long ago, and it was what it was, there was more of a gap between what I was living and what I was teaching than I wanted to admit to myself, never mind the world. And I was diagnosed with chronic ulcerative colitis in the late '80s and I kept it a secret; I found that to be embarrassing. And in retrospect it was just kind of—sort of how I was living my life. And every year it got worse and worse and the symptoms showed up. And I was just this side of 45—43, 44— and after minor surgeries and all that goes with that disease, it was wearing me out. I was on steroids to control the disease,

amongst some other things, so I was having side effects from prednisone to—I was on medication to offset the side effects of some—I was just a wreck. And I just went to my surgeon in '98 and I said, "Take this out of me." And he said, "It's time you have"—I can't remember what the word was but—"You are on the very, very, very front end of colon cancer." So I said, "Let's just go," and I had everything removed. And like I said, I was way sicker than he had diagnosed so I almost died on the operating table.

Winn: Wow.

Michael: It took a long time to get back and then everything imploded, from, "Okay, I'm overusing, I'm depending on these meds that have been controlling my disease," so it was time to rehab and recover everything. You look back on it now and it was a divine intervention because they say some people are afraid of dying; when they die they are going to go to hell. People that are kind of spiritually oriented, going to hell doesn't scare them because we have been there a few times [*laughs*], in fact, and so I really got interested, 25 years ago, I want to practice the preachings, I want to walk the talk, I want to attempt to live what I teach. And I'll tell you, it's way, way different. And I'm still not done. People say, "What's next?" I go, "The only thing that's next is just to continue to—I call it wake up, clean up, step up and show up, and really walk the talk."

Winn: I wonder how many people listening to this right now have diminished their influence because of having gone through something that, you used the word *embarrassment*, or shame or whatever. I have a very good friend who's very, very visible and has a huge big following, minister of a church, and then he got divorced. He's like, "What does that mean? Have I lost all credibility? Here I'm the person who stands to mentor all of these followers about a successful life and yet my marriage just fell apart. What does that mean for me?" He talks about the embarrassment that he had to go through and really what is the value that he brings if that credibility is, according to some people, shot. What did you have to personally go through to be able to then stand back up on that stage and say, "Okay, I'm ready"?

Michael: Yeah. I would call it finding humility through humiliation [*laughs*], which—

Winn: Wow.

Michael: —is really—my pride was surrendered. So I have more appreciation now. I think humility, the act of being humble, has to be, for me, the highest demonstration of courage.

Winn: Wow.

Michael: I've always liked you. We're brave, you know? And if we've got to fight to the death, we fight to the death and that's bravery. Self-confidence, I think, is another demonstration of courage. Sometimes you just have to fly the damn airplane as you're building it and you've got to be confident and you've got to

stand in front of people and act like you know what you're doing. Courage has always been not the absence of fear but the willingness to not allow fear to stop me from being brave, stop me from being confident. But with humility, it's disobeying the fear of getting honest with myself about myself. Getting honest with other people about myself and telling the whole truth and saying, "Look, yes, this is what's working well for me but this is all of the stuff in my life that isn't working well." What does my therapist say? "The self-limiting, self-defeating, self-destructive patterns in me that, left unchecked, they not only blow my life up but they make the lives of the people I care about more difficult than they need to be," and I want to get real busy at finding those patterns and learning how to get them removed. It's addition through subtraction. To me, that's transformation. Find out what isn't working, get rid of it so that presence that's in all of us can come through and no longer be obstructed.

Winn: I want to jump into these six dimensions of wellness but before we do, what message do you have for people who have disappeared for embarrassment because maybe they went through a divorce or they had to overcome an addiction or something happened in their personal lives and they feel embarrassed by it and therefore they diminish their presence; they disappear, so to speak, but the power and the influence that they could have because of that embarrassment. By the way I love the term that you used that you have to "disobey the fear."

Michael: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, your question is profound, it's very provocative, and all that I would bring to the table would be my experience as it relates to that question and for me it was get close to people and learn how to forgive myself, so that to the degree that I can—what happened to me and all of the things that I engaged in that I look back and have regret, it happened because it happened. It's no longer good or bad. It was what it was. I'm going to forgive the offender, and the offender in that case was me. I'm going to forget the offenses and I'm going to remember the lessons.

Winn: Wow.

Michael: And as I go out into my life, if there were other people that I was on the receiving end of their offenses, I forgive you the offender, I forgive the offenses, I remember the lessons. Not to learn by history is to be condemned to repeat it. And I'm going to go out into my life: if you were on the receiving end of my offenses, I want to humbly acknowledge that, make any amend that I can, restore my relationship with you because I love you, and if you forgive me, great, and if you don't, well, it is what it is; we'll both get on with our life. And I found by practicing that over 25 years it made the demonstration of humility less difficult. Nothing's easy, it's just less difficult. I would say to anybody and I now sponsor a lot of people in recovery and what you are pointing to is so relevant and it's almost like the higher we go in our life, we're all obsessive-compulsive achievers *[laughs]* and when we fall

gravity sucks. So there's something about taking a giant sigh of relief and saying, "I'm going to get back in the game and I'm going to demonstrate transparency." And you look at all the greats; the Eric Claptons of the world. I think he's coming up to 40 years in that and you see the transformation so I would encourage anybody, give it a shot.

Winn: God, that's profound. I could end this interview now and what you've already shared is so valuable and we haven't even gotten into the meat of this. But people listening to this right now, if you're 18 years old or 80 years old, there might have been something in your life that has caused you to step back. Again, some embarrassment that you somehow were less than your expectations of yourself, you didn't fulfill those, and now you stepped back. And the message from Michael is move forward, forgive yourself, disobey the fear. In fact, to quote Michael, you say, "Restoring and transforming wellness in ourselves empowers us to show up better for serving, supporting, and soothing others."

Michael: Yeah. Yeah. It's a sacred teaching but I just—and the idea that through passing that on I get to have—as you know, we teachers, we're trying to learn what we're teaching and so we get to live it more so it's a beautiful thing how that works.

Winn: Congratulations. Thanks for that. Okay, Michael, let's just jump into what you call the six dimensions of wellness for life. What's the first one?

Michael: Well, if you Google "wellness" you're going to see "dimensions of wellness" and see kind of the model that we're talking about. For wellness to be whole and integrative and address our life as a whole, it involves financial: the money. It involves people: the relationships that we have with people. Then it goes to something a little bit more personal: physical. And then as we start going inside: the mental, the emotional. And then whatever you want to call that deeper part: the spiritual, the soul. The approach that I take is that any practices that we engage people in include all six so that we're trying to integrate our life in a way so that as we kind of learn this, we see the manifestations of this showing up in our entire life; it's just not a segment. It took years for me to really kind of learn to live this as a student and that's kind of sort of how I'm poised.

Winn: Okay, which one do you want to start with first?

Michael: Well, the part that most people can see right off the bat is the money part: the financial and the relationships. So the money part is really about, "I want to understand the difference that I can grow my income." There's a difference between growing income and having security and wealth so I want to be able to manage, not only my income, but how I handle money. How we handle our money is how we handle our life. So as income goes up I want to pay attention to my burn rate, my spending. I want to use that difference: if I can

spend less and earn more rather than to overspend and charge the rest, I'm going to have some surplus. I want to start doing some things with my surplus to lower my debt and save for long term, and over time that to me is wellness. If I can level that up, oh my goodness. Then it translates to wellness in my relationships; the people in my personal, my interpersonal life, my professional life. I want it to be based on companionship, mutual trust, mutual love, respect. When I'm talking about this, I've always been a student of the 80/20 metaphor. If you read the literature, the 20 and the 80; and I no longer talk about the 20 and the 80 as people, but the 20 are those parts in my life that are working and the 80 are the parts that aren't. So when you're talking about money where is the 80? Where are the parts in my money life that aren't working? I want to raise awareness about that, accept the responsibility for making that better, learn the actions I need to take to make that better, so that I can move the parts that aren't working—the 80—into the 20. The 20 are the parts that are cooking; where I am well in my sleep. You can take that concept into financial, you can take it into relationships, I can take it into my emotional life. Where are the parts of my life that aren't working emotionally? Where are the parts that are working and how do I [*claps hands*] close the difference? Do the same thing with mental and the same thing with spiritual.

Winn: Well, you said that how we handle money is also how we handle our life. I want you to expand on that a tiny bit more.

Michael: Oh sure.

Winn: But if this were to 50-year-olds only and you were talking about the importance of saving or investing or spending wisely, that's an audience that's ready to hear what you have to say. How do you get that same message across to a 20-year-old?

Michael: Well, part of what I do is I'll not only share my story as it relates to any of those dimensions, but I will bring many, many people that have been students of this conversation into this conversation so that they can see I'm not making it up and it's like, "Okay, how old are you?" "I'm a twenty-something." Oh. I'm going to go get five or six twenty-somethings so that they can tell you what their story was like, what happened when they woke up, when they started practicing these principles and one, two, three, five, ten years later, how their life is different so that you know it's not about an old guy.

Winn: Got it, got it.

Michael: If I'm talking to the, let's say late Gen Xers or Boomers that it's like, "It's too late for me." It's like, "No, no, no, don't say that." I said that coming in, that if only I would have had this 5, 10, 20 years later and my teacher said, "If you get as focused about this as you were about other stuff you can jump time, you can collapse time. Get as excited about your recovery and restoration as you were about anything else." And I said, "You know, I don't know if that's

true or not but if it is, it gives me hope. I'm going to put as much of my passion into restoration as I did my career," and I did that. And so I tell people in their 40, 50, 60-something, "It's not too late. You can make up for lost time and finish the game with a sense of retribution and redemption." I just keep bringing people to the table to let them see that I'm not making it up.

Winn: Have you found that for a lot of people, or some people, that every other area of their life could be going well—so their relationships are going well, their physical wellness is doing good, they eat well, they sleep a lot, they are at the gym every single day—but if things aren't going well for them financially it overshadows the rest of their life. So if things aren't good for them financially, all of a sudden they let that affect the quality of their relationships, their marriage, their lack of sleep. Have you found that to be the case?

Michael: Oh, it is so true. The statement, "How we handle money is how we handle our life," if we're having a problem identifying those issues in our life that are kind of holding us up, follow the money. Follow the money.

Winn: Follow the money [*laughs*].

Michael: Follow the money.

Winn: So before we move onto the next one, what's the final wakeup call and challenge that you're giving to people about this one dimension of wellness for their life: the financial side of that.

Michael: Well, there's a triangle in the teaching that I would call—and you find this in the recovery community—awareness, acceptance and action.

Winn: Okay.

Michael: And really based on—those are three principles, they're like three higher laws. What we're aware of we can handle; what we're not aware of handles us. What I'm aware of I can stop; what I'm not aware of stops me. Begin to wake up and become aware. Once I'm aware of what's in my way, what the pattern is, I'm going to accept the responsibility for correcting that. I'm going to stop storytelling. I'm going to stop blaming. I'm going to stop shaming. I'm going to stop rationalizing, minimizing, denying and say, "If this is going to get handled, I want to be the one that takes the turd out of my own punchbowl." And then the actions are—

Winn: [*Laughs*] What did you just say? Oh my God.

Michael: I want to take the turd out of my own punchbowl. The turd's in the punchbowl and—

Winn: Got it.

Michael: —we need to get it out.

Winn: [*Laughs*]

Michael: And then the actions: I want to become a student. I want enough tutors around me. Show me that actions I need to take so I can demonstrate the responsibility that I'm accepting, to make better, whatever it is I'm now aware of. The acceptance is: what we accept we can change. What we accept fully we can change for good. And the action is, boy, actions ignite the energy and massive action explodes it. Once we are clear, the action part is, frankly—I don't want to say the easier part; it's less difficult, it's—the awareness and accept the responsibility. A lot of us frankly, "I don't want to look that closely at my life." [*Laughs*]. Why not? "Well, because I don't want to know." [*Laughs*]

Winn: Right.

Michael: Well, why don't we want to know? "Well, because I'm not ready to change yet."

Winn: Right.

Michael: Sometimes we just need to wait for a crisis, and crisis makes it less difficult to go, "You know what? My pants are on fire. I need to get this handled before it handles me."

Winn: I think was it Tony Robbins that said, "We learn through inspiration or desperation." For a lot of people—

Michael: Yes.

Winn: —it's that desperation. It's crisis that now forces them to run to the doctor: "Oh, I guess I better have the blood work done to find out what's really going on." Not knowing is not acceptable anymore. I have a friend of mine that said she was ten years sober but only three years into recovery, meaning although she had the awareness that there was a problem with her drinking, so she had an acceptance of that, but she wasn't taking action. So she wasn't drinking, she stopped the drinking, but she wasn't doing the work that it takes. By the way, I have the luxury of looking at the triangle that you're sharing with everybody right now. I have it in front of me; awareness, acceptance, and action. And as long as we're in the blame mode or making-the-excuses mode, you can't be pursuing your dreams while making excuses at the same time. You can't be reaching your brilliance and your potential if you're blaming somebody or something else. So for you to explain it in this very easy-to-understand triangle: awareness, acceptance, and action—where do people get stuck? They have the acceptance and the awareness of it but do a lot of people just get stuck there? "Yeah, I know my health is out of control but, oh well."

Michael: Right. Well, as we begin the wakeup, if we're not ready the first thing we bump into is the denial. And whether we want to call it blame or rationalization, minimizing it, we got a story and it's a great story and all we need to do is find a handful of people that will sign on to the story, the narrative, and I have this false sense of "You know what? I'm okay and it really isn't that bad." And people give me theirs all the time and I used to, like, bust them and I don't now. I'll listen, I'll say, "Great, I see there's a lot of truth in your story. There's one thing better than the truth; that's the whole truth." So stay tuned, more will be revealed. What is it? "Sooner or later time always reveals where the whole truth resides." *[laughs]* And so we'll see. And the explanation: While the explanation you're giving me is solid, my heart goes out to you. The explanation doesn't excuse anyone from the consequences of keeping the pattern in play. If you keep the pattern in play, the consequences are you get to have a crisis, regardless of the story. So at some point you're going to get sick and tired of being sick and tired. Holding onto the story is going to hurt more than the fear of laying it down and embracing the truth. You know that old saying, the truth will set you free, but at first it freaks you out.

Winn: Right.

Michael: It makes you angry. So it's that. And then once I get over the denial, there's a time of depression. Depression, I think, is part of waking up and I think part of the depression is the ego is kind of being crushed into dust a little bit so that more truth—and you're either going to loop and go back into denial or you're going to accept, break through, and start the walk to restoration and recovery. I've had the opportunity to watch it for 25 years in my own life and other people that make it and those that don't.

Winn: As we go through this, I believe that the best teachers are storytellers. We tell our own stories and we tell the stories of other people, so anytime that you have an example, a story that you want to interject, with or without names, that's always great. So we talked about the financial; what's the next area that you want to go into?

Michael: The relationship part is very important and you can brew that down into just—to the degree—show me two or more people that have a pattern of when they come into agreements with each other, they keep the agreements that they come into. There's a clarity around it, there's a commitment to follow through; not that everybody bats a thousand, but when somebody falls short on an agreement it's not backpedaling and blaming and excuse making but stepping up and saying, "You're right. I dropped the ball on that. How can I make that right? What can I amend to get restored with you?" And then the biggie, "What can I learn from this so that I don't end up in this position again with you?" and then vice versa. Two or more people that have got that as a rhythm, a dance, and I'll show you a relationship that's going to continue to grow and evolve. On the other end, agreement breaking is what makes

relationships dysfunctional. That old saying that when you make a promise it builds hope; when you keep the promise it builds trust.

Winn: Wow!

Michael: So if you're—

Winn: Say that again. That's powerful.

Michael: When I make a promise with you or come into an agreement with you that I'm going to do something that's important to you and for you, that gives you hope. And if I can keep the agreement and follow through, now that gives you trust; trust that when I say I'm going to do A, B, C, you can hear what I say, watch what I do, and not see any different. But when I'm overpromising and I'm underdelivering and then coming to you with a story as to why that happened, you might give me the benefit of the doubt the first couple times but after a while I hear what you say, I watch what you do, you're trying to behave yourself out of problems that you behaved yourself into and that's when relationships get wonky.

Winn: Wow! What you just shared in five minutes is the perfect context and content for a successful marriage—

Michael: Oh.

Winn: —as well as a successful business team of people.

Michael: Indeed. Indeed.

Winn: Good for you.

Michael: Yeah.

Winn: That was perfect. What's the next area? So we've done financial, relationships. What's the next area?

Michael: Now we start going on the inside.

Winn: Right.

Michael: The emotional, the mental; they're kind of tied. I love this thing where emotion is energy in motion and I use a wheel for that and I just call it the wheel of emotion. It's a wheel that, on the inside hub, the very first circle on the inside is what we would call *the presence of the I am*: the power that's in us that's greater than us, that waits on us to wake up to its presence so it can begin to work for us by coming through us. We've heard the teachings before. *I am* are two of the most important words in the human language because what we say after it we bring more of that in. So I am love, I am fear, which is the second—

the two fundamental feelings are love and fear, and in my wheel fear is red and love is blue. And when you go out from the wheel you see the emotional forms. In fear, whether we're talking angry, anxious, bothered, depressed, despaired, overwhelmed, worried; there's just a plethora of them. And when you start going into the blue, a feeling of balance, centered, hopefulness, grace, peace, joy. And it's interesting because as I state this, people—they can find what I'm stating in their life. It's like, "Oh my God, you know what? That's true. That is true." The idea is in emotions I want to begin to move from red to blue.

Winn: Okay.

Michael: I want to have more experiences coming from blue, less in red, and I want to do that independent of, "Are the people, places, and things in my life changing?" If I'm going to wait for the stuff to change I'm going to be in hell on earth; I'm going to be in red. I want to learn how to get my experience of life changed so that I can have a better emotional experience of life regardless, with the faith that it's easier to change my experience than it is my life. And after my experience changes, sooner or later the law says my life, the conditions, will begin to change. I'll either be—

Winn: Well, I have the luxury of looking at the wheel right now, myself, so I have it in front of me and we'll invite people to go to your website where they can pull up these diagrams because this is so helpful. Michael, 20 minutes before you and I logged on to do this interview, I was on another podcast and what I shared with that audience there was that there are two powers that rule this universe: one is fear and the other one is love. Now the reason why I was sharing that was because again we are quarantined. As we're making this recording right now, it's COVID-19 and there's a lot of fear. There's a lot of fear that is ruling this planet right now. And as leaders—and all of us are leaders, all of us have influence over somebody, which makes us a leader—we have power and influence to change the fear that exists on this planet right now, and the opposite of fear is love. And I was taught to believe that love is a verb, which means it requires action. So with the fear that exists right now, because of COVID-19, or the fear that exists for whatever reason, what are some of the actions of love that you recommend, that you challenge people to accept, to follow through with, in order to dispel the fear in their own lives as well as the fear in other people? Boy, that was a loaded question.

Michael: Oh no, it's very profound and provocative. That one, in and of itself—when I think of actions, I think in terms of my personal actions, some financial. If you go through every one of those dimensions you'll see a list of actions and if you don't know what the actions are, find a coach. The actions—that's not front page news, it's just do I have a willingness to take the action, now that I've accepted the responsibility for changing the experience? A lot of times somebody will say, "I know but I don't understand how taking this action is going to make my experience better." Well, you don't need to. This is not a

program of understanding; it's a program of action, and understanding isn't required [*laughs*] before. Taking the action is simple, is what you're saying. It's, "But I want to understand." It's like, "Well, you're not going to take it." You need to have a willingness to believe that, "If I take the action, sooner or later my life is going to get better, and later will come sooner than I think, even *though I don't understand the why.*" *We call that type of willingness to believe hope.* I'm going to believe in something that I don't understand yet, demonstrate the belief by taking the action, and then hope that this is not BS, that this is—and as I start seeing the fruits on that action as we get skillful at taking them, now it's like, wow, wow, wow, wow! My faith, it went from hope, I now trust. I have trust in this because I understand why the action I'm taking is working.

Winn: Isn't that amazing how many people are stuck because they want to understand why rather than just surrender. You can ask an audience, "Is surrendering a weak thing or a strong thing?" and people will say, "Oh, it's strong." So people believe that. If I surrender, that actually is a strong, courageous move on my part. And you're asking people, "You don't need to understand why, I'm your coach—"

Michael: [*Laughs*] Right.

Winn: "Trust me, have the faith to surrender. You don't need to know why, just surrender and just do it. Just go through the motions if that's what it takes."

Michael: [*Laughs*] I'm laughing because most of us—I needed a crisis to make it less difficult surrendering. It's like you go, *Okay, I'm damned if I do and damned if I don't. I'm going to surrender.* And I realized that just because I surrender and say I'm powerless to change something doesn't mean I'm without power. There's power there but that power goes to that last piece of the wellness and that's spirit: that I have access to something that transcends me and that something exists within me. I can't use it. I need to surrender and allow myself to be used by it and there's something mystical in that. When that happens, *boom* goes the dynamite.

Winn: So before we get more into spirit, can you give us some solid actions that people could take right now, whether they're listening to this while being quarantined or they're listening to this two years after COVID-19 has come and gone, to move forward in their life—

Michael: Yeah, of course.

Winn: —overcoming fear as well as in helping other people overcome that fear?

Michael: Fortunately we live in a day and age, and because we're in lockdown, I can spend more of my time on the receiving end of tutorials on YouTube. There are great teachers, profound teachers, and there's more power in taking that act, as we know. And I want to not only watch, I want to study it, I want to

write down—you know, we use the words *ahas*, A-H-A, and ahas now is more than aha. Ahas are the *actions that honor the awareness* that I'm having. What were the insights and what actions do I want to set for myself to take on the awarenesses that I've had? And then get together with other people that are in this conversation. I want to share mine with yours, I want you to share yours with mine. Let's be companions, because the power of *we* is greater than *me*. And you'll figure it out, and one question leads to the other. But for right now I would say become a student of YouTube. As a student, now when pairing my mobile to my car so I can—it is no longer a YouTube webcast, everything is a podcast. I don't need to watch something; I can listen to it while I'm driving or whatever.

Winn: Yeah, I go through two, three, five TED Talks a day while I'm sitting at my computer. I don't need to watch the speaker; they're just kind of playing in the background as I'm going about my day.

Michael: Yeah—

Winn: So I hear—

Michael: And our soul, our intellect, our heart; we're being fed, and that frankly is what inspires us, impassions us to get it together.

Winn: Okay, well, now let's dive more into the last dimension of wellness for life and that is spirit.

Michael: Yeah. Well, spirit is just, you know, and I have to be very, very respectful when you go there because people get wonky about that, so I—

Winn: Why? Because they think it's religious only? Is that why—

Michael: Right, yeah.

Winn: —that Michael's trying to promote some religion or lack of religion?

Michael: Yes. So I stay away—you know spirit is—and I may even change it to presence; to be more present when you're in the moment and what do I want to be present for? The presence that's in you, that's around you, that's in front of you, and see that there's a power in that presence: that if you devote some of your life to understand it and getting synced up to it, we're going to have a better experience of life than if we didn't. That sounds safe, simple, relevant, practical to me and it brings out—you've heard the word *potential* all the time and potential in my mind is the good in me that is yet to be, or the God in me that is yet to be. Yet to be what? Discovered, awakened to the awareness. And as I wake up to more of that in me and take actions to manifest it, my life becomes extraordinary.

Winn: Can I ask you, is your personal circle, is it a small circle or is it a medium-sized circle? Meaning that the people that—I mean, you have influence over a very, very large, vast circle but when it comes to you and your marriage or your physical wellness, is that a small circle of people that you are trusting of and that you share with?

Michael: I love your question, my friend. When you go to the—I think one of the last wheels on something that—I took the dimensions and I put it in a wheel. It's the same thing but you are looking at it from a different metaphor. My circle is really big when you look at relationships and financial. Then you start going inside, the circle gets a little bit smaller because that's where people get a little bit shaky. You start going inside of spiritual and the circle becomes even smaller. So in my spiritual communities and the communities in spirit that I'm in, I'm a meditator: contemplative meditation, quiet time, helps me to get centered. I talk about centered is spiritually aware, mentally quiet, emotionally calm, and physically relaxed. If I can bring that with me into the world, I and people around me will be more served. But to do that before I go into the world, I need to take some time, take pause and get to that center. One of the ways I do that is just through contemplative, meditative; I go on silent retreats. Two or three times a year I go off the grid and I like to get close to people that have adopted this to their life so I can just kind of get it deeper in me to go out to live it and teach it. That circle is very small. People want to know: "What do you do when you go on retreat?" "Nothing!" "Well, you were gone for ten days. Did you talk?" "No talk. [*laughs*] It's a silent retreat." "Who were you with?" "I was in a monastic community with monks." "Oh my God, and you didn't say anything for ten days?" "No." "Well, how was it?" "Well, it was excruciatingly wonderful."

Winn: [*Laughs*] That's great.

Michael: Whatever it was, it wasn't relaxing, right/ Because it sometimes takes, what do they call it, a breakdown to have a wakeup?

Winn: Hm. If you could go back and erase that period of your life, medically, the things that you went through; you said that there was even some embarrassment that went along with it and then it was the surrender to the doctor: take this out of me. However long that period of time was, whether it was a year or several years that you medically, physically went through that, if you could go back and change all of that, where that never happened to you, would you?

Michael: No. Everything that happened to me, my stance, was exactly what was supposed to happen. So part of acceptance is, I accept my present and my past for being exactly as it was supposed to be in that moment. Now, that's not a "get out of jail free" card. My life is subject to change moment to moment, but acceptance is, what happened wasn't bad, what happened wasn't good, what happened was what happened and it brought me to this place. Had I not walked through that I would not be at this place. And this place that I'm at—I say this with gratitude, not grandiosity—it's a place of grace. And if you get me talking about it too much it comes out of my eyeballs in Niagara Falls gratitude. So it's all good.

Winn: I think we need to share our personal stories more often. My story was in overcoming a drug addiction. I've interviewed people who have lost limbs and I go and ask them, "If you could go and change that day, when you stepped on the bomb and lost three of your limbs, would you go back and change that day?" The answer is always, "No. There's no way I would. I would not be the parent that I am today; I would be a jerk if that didn't happen to me."

Michael: Yes.

Winn: I love asking that question because experience is a great teacher, but the value of those personal experiences diminishes in the time that it takes to have the experience. So we can learn from other people's experiences. I don't need to lose my legs to learn the valuable lessons that somebody like a Cedric King could teach me. I don't need to become a drug addict to learn what Winn can teach me about recovery. I don't need to almost experience colon cancer to learn what Michael Cole can teach me.

Michael: Yes. Yes.

Winn: Michael, do you have final messages for our listeners?

Michael: Keep the faith, more will be revealed, and this too shall pass. Whether your life is going extraordinarily well or it's your turn in the barrel, keep the faith, more will be revealed, this too shall pass, and it will be a good ride so thank you for having me on.

Winn: Michael, tell us again how people can find you, especially because I want them to be able to go and find these tools that I had the privilege of having in front of me as you walked through them. Where can people find more information?

Michael: Well, if you Google Michael Cole Summit, it's going to take you to Facebook and Instagram, a website. If you go to Facebook and say Michael Cole Summit or Michael Cole Next, it will get you to the Wellness Program. SummitSalon.com kind of gets you to, if you're in that field. And so finding me shouldn't be difficult. Michael Cole Summit on YouTube; Michael Cole Next

on YouTube. So thank God we're in a digital age, you don't have to do much clicking and navigating to get to what you're looking for.

Winn: And I invite people, if you've never seen Michael in action, if you've never seen him through his videos, I absolutely invite you to do that. You've been entertaining me now for all of these years, 30-plus years. To listen to you is one thing; to watch you is a whole other world, which I loved for all these years. Thanks, Michael.

Michael: You're welcome, my friend. You stay well.

Winn: You do the same. I appreciate you so much. I love you, I am so grateful to you all these years. What you contribute is just short of a miracle, truly.

Michael: I love you too and Namaste.

Winn: Thanks, Michael.