

Doug Smith: 0:07

Well, hey, leader, and welcome to another episode of the L3 Leadership Podcast, where we are obsessed with helping you grow to your maximum potential and to maximize the impact of your leadership. My name is Doug Smith and I am your host, and today's episode is brought to you by my friends at Beratung Advisors. We also recorded this episode live from the new returncom studio. If you're new to the podcast, welcome. I'm so glad that you're here and I hope that you enjoy our content and become a subscriber. Know that you can also watch all of our episodes over on our YouTube channel as well, so make sure you're subscribed there. And, as always, if you've been listening to the podcast for a while and it's made an impact on your life, it would mean the world to me. If you leave a rating and review on Apple Podcast or Spotify or whatever app you listen to podcast through, that really does help us to grow our audience and reach more leaders, so thank you in advance for that. Well, leader, in this week's episode you're going to hear my conversation with Ramsey personality Dr John Delony. This is John's second time on the podcast and it was a fantastic conversation. If you're unfamiliar with John, let me just tell you a little bit about him. Dr John Delony is a bestselling author, mental health expert and the host of the Dr John Delony show. John has two PhDs and over two decades of experience in counseling, crisis response and higher education. He is the author of bestselling books building a non-anxious life, own your past and change your future, and redefining anxiety. John has appeared on Fox News, fox Business and Today and has been featured in the real, simple and fast company magazines, as well as the HuffPost. He has also been a guest on the minimalist podcast and the Dr Jordan B Peterson podcast as well, and if you've never heard John, you are in for a treat. He's incredible. I know you're going to love this episode and, if you do, I'd encourage you to go back and listen to our other conversation as well. But in our conversation today, we talk about his new book Building a Non-Anxious Life. We talk about how to raise kids who live non-anxious lives, which is really, really fascinating. I talk to him about his thoughts on alcohol and marijuana when it comes to anxiety, and so much more. I think you're going to love this conversation. But before we dive in, just a few announcements. This episode of the L3 Leadership Podcast is sponsored by Beratung Advisors. The financial advisors at Beratung Advisors help educate and empower clients to make informed financial decisions. You can find out how Beratung Advisors can help you develop a customized financial plan for your financial future by visiting their website at beratungadvisors.com. It's B-E-R-A-T-U-N-G-Advisors. com. Securities and investment products and services offered through LPL Financial, member of FINRA, and S-I-P-C. Beratung Advisors, LPL Financial and L3 Leadership are separate entities. I also want to thank our sponsor, hennie Jewelers. They were jewelry earned by my friend and mentor, John Henne, and my wife Laura and I got our engagement and wedding rings through Henne Jewelers and had an incredible experience. And not only do they have great jewelry, but they also invest in people. In fact, for every couple that comes in engaged, they give them a book to help them prepare for marriage, and we just love that. So if you're in need of a good jeweler, check out HenneJewelers.com. And I also want to thank our new sponsor, returncom and Leader. Let me just ask you this have you ever had an interest in investing in real estate? Well, now, for as little as \$500, you can become a commercial real estate investor. Just visit Returncom to learn more. That's R-E-I-T-U-R-N. c om. If anything involves risk, please consult the Return offering circular if you're interested in investing. And with all that being said, that's Divered In. Here's my conversation with Dr John Delony. John Delony, welcome back to the L3 Leadership Podcast. So good to see you, my friend. You too, doug. Yeah, why don't we just catch up, man? So it's been probably a year or two since we've caught up, but what's going on new in your world? What's new at Ramsey?

Dr. John Delony: 3:39

Man, we are running and gunning. It's been another wild year of being on the road and writing books and shows growing really well, so it's just been another chaotic year. I still have my two little kids and we started the year with 15 chickens and there's a bobcat in the field, so we're down to nine.

Doug Smith: 3:57

So we're all over the place, man, you going bobcat hunting, what's up.

Dr. John Delony: 4:00

Dude, I had to run in with the bobcat, but I was with my daughter and she let the bobcat live and it's cost us a bunch of chickens and it's become an existential thing for my daughter. She was like dad, I saved it, why is it doing this to us? And I was like this is how the world works. It's a whole thing.

Doug Smith: 4:20

So yeah, is this? Is this anything like? Are you getting into farming? Do you want to expand into like cows, sheep?

Dr. John Delony: 4:26

Oh, dude, I've. I try to get sheep in a cow. Every year my wife is like, hey, let's just slow the roll because I'm on the road, so that like when I say, yeah, we're, we want to get a cow, what I mean is I want to buy a cow and I want my wife to raise it.

Doug Smith: 4:38

She just doesn't want to do cows?

Dr. John Delony: 4:40

Yeah, one day I would love to, but right now we're just running around.

Doug Smith: 4:45

Yeah, man and Ramsey, obviously you've been busy. You have a new book out which we're about to dive into, but I think when we last connected you know I don't know how early you were into your career, Ramsey, but you were still kind of getting used to the whole sales thing and, you know, promoting yourself how are you feeling now? Like, are you, are you in your comfort zone now with all that stuff? No, I'll never be in my comfort zone there, like the I.

Dr. John Delony: 5:06

here's what I've become more comfortable. Comfortable with is um, somebody gave me a, had a good conversation with me that was really valuable, which was hey, when you are trying to be all shucks and like for your listeners. I don't like being like hey, dude, buy my book or buy my questions for humans cards or listen to my show. If I actually believe in what I'm doing and I know that there's hurting people out there and I don't speak up and say, hey, I got a tool that can help you, I'm actually like this false humility I walk around with and this all shucks it's. It's actually hurting people, it's not helping and so that was a good hey. If you write a book that you think is good enough for people to read, it's going to actually give them some tools to help their life. What kind of jerk are you to just be like, oh, no one, talk about it. Or if you think your show adds value into a world that is in media landscape it's increasingly full of nonsense, then open your mouth and talk about it. So I? It's less about talking about me and someone to sell my stuff. It's more about hey, dude, if I think that I have developed a tool that can help people have more peace in their life and a better marriage and be a little more intentional parents. What a jerk to keep my mouth shut about it. And so and honestly, that's whether it's my stuff or whether I stumble on a workout program by

the Mime Pump guys and I'd sell, I I I tell everybody about it. Or the protein I buy from laying Norton, like I tell everybody about it. The L three podcast, I tell everybody about it because it's good stuff, right, and so I have to, I have to be a part of that same camp.

Doug Smith: 6:36

Well, a mum pump workout and protein shakes Talk to me about those two I've never heard of. Well, I know what protein shakes are, but what do you take and why do you promote these?

Dr. John Delony: 6:43

Mine pump. Is it's?

Doug Smith: 6:44

three guys out of.

Dr. John Delony: 6:46

San Jose, or four guys, four guys out of San Jose, three in front of the camera and one behind, but they were personal trainers for years and years and years for decades. And basically they're doing for personal training and nutrition what Dave Ramsey did for finance, which is all of the popular advice, ends up being very self-serving for a small group of people and it traps and essentially enslaves people. And so Doug and Sal and Justin and those guys give some what I would call counterintuitive advice and wisdom, same as Dave Ramsey does with money. And Lane Norton is the same way. He's got a PhD in physiology. He's a protein synthesis guy, but he's a weight lifter, he's a meathead and he's also a savant. He's brilliant. And so when you have a PhD and you win the strongman competition every year the lifting comp, powerlifting competition I want to know like, hey, what protein do you take? And he's like I take this, and so that's the stuff I buy. So I can't stop talking about it because I'm using it in my own life and with my kids and my family, and it's amazing, can you?

Doug Smith: 7:49

share the protein. I'm always looking for better yeah.

Dr. John Delony: 7:53

The company is called Biolane B-I-O-L-A-Y-N-E and it is phenomenal. Just amazing yeah.

Doug Smith: 8:00

All right man, so you're going to be the world's strongest male competition next year?

Dr. John Delony: 8:04

Not even no. I'm just trying to keep old age at bay, and protein intake is a huge part of that, and lifting weights, especially, is a huge part of it.

Doug Smith: 8:12

So beautiful man. Well, hey, let's dive in the new book and then we'll see where else we go. But I believe this is your second big book with Ramsey. It's called Building a Non-Anxious Life, and so talk to us about why did you write this and what do you want leaders to get out of it.

Dr. John Delony: 8:25

Well, somebody asked me that when I first launched the book and I think it was on stage they asked me and I have a rule that if I get asked a question that I wasn't prepared for, I just answer it honestly, and then I got to deal with what it is. So here's the truth. The truth of it is I did not want to write a book on anxiety. I wanted to write a book on loneliness or adult friendship or marriage, and because I think both of those ideas need to have some different conversations around them. And the publishing team was like, oh, that's really cute. So, but you're going to write a book about anxiety. And I was like, yeah, I don't want to. I want to talk about something else, and I've been talking about anxiety for 20 years. I'm kind of done talking about it. And they said, oh, that's so great, and you're going to write a book on anxiety. And so I thought, since I'd written a number one already, that I had some clout. I did not, the truth be told. Once I got into it and I sat down to start writing it, I got several chapters in and I realized, oh, you don't want to write this book because you're not living this life. You're being hypocritical, you're not telling the truth. And so it started as a science, like here's the stuff about anxiety. And then it turned very much into me pulling up a seat at the bar and being like, hey, pastor Nachos, I'm with you guys and let's figure this thing out. So it turned into a much more. I'm walking alongside you, not preaching at you. And it ended up being I told my wife once the book was over, once I had submitted the last manuscript. I said if not one person buys this, my life is better, my marriage is better, my relationship with my kids is better, my mental and emotional health is better because of this exercise. So it's a very personal book, but it's also a. It's a path to freedom, man, it really is.

Doug Smith: 10:05

And talk about the need out there. You know, last time we talked I think we were just coming out of COVID and everyone was kind of talking about mental health crisis. You know, fast forward to today, I work at a rescue mission in our city. I think we talked about that and, man, we're seeing mental health issues like we've never seen before. I feel like in the leadership space, I'm having more leaders come to me and saying I'm struggling with anxiety than I've ever heard before. What do you say? I mean, you have a daily show on this. You know what are you seeing out there for the need for this book.

Dr. John Delony: 10:31

I think the need is twofold. Number one we've created a world our bodies can't live in, and so it's no surprise that everybody is spinning out the original idea for this. The original seed is planted. I guess the fruit is this book, but the original seed was planted about a decade ago and I was at one of my nerd conferences that nerds go to to talk to other nerds and somebody's talking about the genetics of ADHD, and partway through the presentation the one nerd turned to the rest of us nerds and was like hey, by the way, this cannot be exclusively genetic. That's not how genes work. Everybody did not suddenly get an ADHD gene that turned on at the same time. So there's got to be environmental complexities here, there's got to be some heritable complexities here, and on and on, as I that planted the seed and I asked a question to myself walking out, what if ADHD is right? And I begin pulling the string on that question along, all among a number of things in our culture and in our lives and in our biology that we try to quote, unquote, fix. And so this book is really asking a scary question, which I think is the right question, which is what if our anxiety isn't the problem. What if our anxiety is telling the truth? If the last number I read if you take burnout and you take chronic stress and you take anxiety and you just dump it all in a bucket, it's about half of America. So what if everybody who burned out, everybody who's just chronically buzzing all the time, and then the rest of folks who either have pervasive anxiety symptoms or fall under some clinical diagnosis for anxiety, what if they're right? What if their bodies are working really well? It's easier to say, hey, let's just the analogies in the book. Is anxiety is just a smoke alarm in your kitchen? It's easy to get up in real quick and take a baseball bat and just smash that alarm, or just get up there and pull the battery out. That's the easy thing. So you're dealing with anxiety, chronic stress, burnout. The easy thing is to blame somebody like oh, you need to do seven steps or you need to just shut the alarm off medicinally or

with sitting in a cold field like meditating. That's the easy part. The harder part is asking what in your life has your body identified as such a pervasive threat that it has to sound the alarms all the time? And that's a much more complex and scary question to ask, and so I am pretty direct in the book. This book is not like what are the four things you can do when you feel anxious, or how do you stop a panic attack. That book is every. There's a million of those books written and in fact you can Google that. This book is a harder, yet, I think, better question, which is what changes do I have to make in my life so that my body, which I think is working pretty well, stops trying to get my attention? 24, seven, 365. And this book is my best attempt to distill those things down and not have a nerdy science book put to give people a roadmap. So that's, the conversation about anxiety is a mess. But I think those business leaders dude, if you're out of business right now, you should be freaked out of your mind. It's chaos. If you're a parent, you should not. I mean, of course you should be losing sleep. It's mayhem, right. And so let's don't get mad at our bodies. Let's ask the bigger, harder questions and go after those.

Doug Smith: 14:08

And the first. You lay out in the book six different choices that we can make every day, and the first one's choosing reality. Can you talk about that? You know someone that's saying man, I'm relating to what John's saying. Where do I start?

Dr. John Delony: 14:20

So, yeah, we so kindly call our new era the attention economy, right? So if you're running a business, we want to get each other's attention or the attention of our customers with lead magnets and funnels and all those things Great, smart advertising, smart advertising. You know all that. I think the more honest thing, honest economy we're running is not an attention economy. We're running a distraction economy. If our consumers actually stop and ask themselves do I need this, will this make my life well, is this a problem I need solved in my life, which was what the point of business should be, I think our economy would implode right now. And so the question is where are we all being distracted? And I think we have reached, almost overnight, a world where we don't have to traffic in reality. We traffic in feelings and we traffic in I'll pay for it later and we traffic in this feels good right now. And so choosing reality. Here's the challenge. With that, our frontal lobes, our thinking part of our brain, can rationalize anything, but your amygdala, as the great vessel Vanderkalk says, is always keeping the score. And so I can sit down next to my wife in a house. That is a 30 year mortgage at 7.25% APR, which is what it was earlier this morning A house that takes up 40 to 60% of our monthly income. But we had to have a house because we didn't want to rent anymore, because somebody told us rents just throwin money away. And we sit down on that house and I'm on my phone and my wife's on her iPad and our kid comes in and slams the door and goes right into his room. I can tell myself, no, look, I'm sitting right by my wife. Things are great. My body knows that I'm two inches from my wife but I'm 2,000 miles away from her relationally. I can tell myself, oh, that's just teens or teens. My body knows my kid's not all right and I don't have the tools to bridge that gap. I can say, well, it's just what we have to do to buy a house in this town. My body knows, hey, dude, if you get fired or if that one sale doesn't come through, you lose everything. You're home and when you think of it like that, your body would be failing you, doug, if it let you sleep all night knowing that your house could go away, that you and your wife are not doing okay, that your kid is off the off I mean out of the tribe, and so when I tell people to choose reality, that is just being honest with yourself. That is a starting line for living a non-anxious life. Which is what are the state of things? My finances, my marriage, my business, my kids, my friendships? Where are you for real? And that can be a harrowing set of questions for people.

Doug Smith: 17:09

Do you feel like most people just ignore? You know, I think about people who call you all on Ramsey. You know you talk about that. Enough is enough calls and you know usually people are calling you when

they've had enough. Why do you think it takes a long for people to get there when it comes to recognizing reality versus, you know, dealing with it when you first, you know, start to justify whatever decisions that you're making, I mean, I think there's an old trope, that's true Change is hard, it's uncomfortable, it's scary, and our bodies are really geared towards this homeostasis.

Dr. John Delony: 17:42

Right what it knows, and it will choose the thing that it knows, even if it's dangerous. That's why people who are in abusive relationships often go to another abusive relationship. It's what it knows, right. And so the old saying people don't change until the pain of change is less than the pain of staying the same. And I think it takes somebody saying I'm not living like this anymore, and I wish it didn't have to be that way, because that's my hope, societally, culturally, for our country. I wish we could all say hey, we can see where we're headed. Let's let's just stop before we get there, before we have to clean up a traffic accident, let's just slow the car down.

Doug Smith: 18:24

Yeah, I think with a lot of people, when they start dealing with the reality, it's often too late and a lot of times, I think, as adults, it's things that you know, maybe even be triggered from childhood. I'm a dad of four under seven and you know I think I should. Let's go. How old are your kids? Again, 13 and seven? Okay, good gap. Oh yeah, but I got four under seven and so, you know, last time we talked, I went through a mental breakdown and you know the fall of 2020, dark season. My life, I've had seasons of anxiety. You know. My hope is that my kids won't have to go through the same thing. Do you have any advice for parents, regardless of how old their kids are? How can we raise kids to have non-anxious lives and not have to deal with some of the junk that we've dealt with?

Dr. John Delony: 19:07

I think that's such a great question and I think it's easier and it's simpler than we might imagine and it's harder than we might imagine. Simpler in the greatest gift we can give our kids are in control regulated parents. Because kids get all of their emotional reactivity, they absorb it from the adults in their lives, and so when they're surrounded by raged out, scared, anxious, overly combative parents who are telling them the doctors are trying to kill you, your school is trying to kill you, your church I can't believe they're preaching that your government's just trying to. Well, you just destroyed a child's world, you just pulled it apart. And so there's a difference between being afraid and scared and nervous and that powerful riddling anxiety. And so the challenge is A I'm going to give my kids regulated parents who don't rely on them for emotional regulation. It's not my kids job to make sure I'm okay. It's not my kids job, whatever my son says. Oh, dad, it's okay, like, okay. Here's a good example. I got mad about something the other day. I went to pick up my son and I've never been through this particular pickup line after school at this particular time. I picked him up before but, dude, it was like a war zone. I didn't know what was going on, but everybody knew what they were doing. I didn't. So at one point I stuck my head down and I texted my wife I'm in line, whatever, am I in the right line? And my window was down and all of a sudden this coach starts screaming at me and a dog. I don't know what happened, but I haven't felt like this since I was at an old punk show, like in my early 20s. It was straight up go time. In the parking lot. I was like I stuck my head out and I go, do we have a problem? And he looked at me and I said I'm not doing this on purpose. I've never done this. I'm trying my best and he goes. And he got quiet and he goes. Man, just pull up here, right when he said that, like a security guard at the school goes. Oh, I guess we're just parking wherever we want to. I guess we're just. And, dude, I lost it. I was in my car and my son got in and, dude, I said some things I wasn't proud of in that car because my son was like dad, what's wrong? And I pointed at the guy and he didn't hear. Anyway, we got to the edge of the parking lot and I pulled my car over and I looked at my son and said, hey, that was completely responsible of me, has nothing to do with you, has

nothing to do with them. I was trying my best and I was exhausted and I didn't know what I was going and and and this is on me. And he said and I said I'm sorry that I just used that word in front of you. And he said oh, dad, it's okay, it's okay, it's okay. And here's the deal he was he had taken it upon himself to make me feel better and that's not his job. He's 13. And so I said hey, hey, it's not okay, it's not your job to make me feel better. I screwed up, should not have talked to that man that way. He probably deals with a bunch of morons on their phones in these lines all day long. I get that he's frustrated and I'm glad he's trying to make a joke out of it instead of him coming over and trying to taze me yourself. And I need to be more in control and I swear in front of my 13 year old son that's on me and he just goes thanks, dad, right. So I think a kids need that regulated adults and if you get dysregulated, we all do immediately stop and take full, 100% ownership of that. The second thing they need and this is the other side of the teeter totter they need to do hard things and they need to learn how to fail. They need to learn how to stub their toe and they need to know you're next to them and that they can learn to pick themselves back up. With you sitting right there. We have a generation of kids that, like you and me, we didn't want our kids to feel like this and we end up clearing the deck so much so they have less and less and less and less struggle. Oh, a kid was mean to you on the bus. I'm getting on that bus, I'll deal with this and they got to learn how to do that, and there's a fine line between that and bullying. What we've done inadvertently is we go into the gym, we've taken all the weight off the bar for our kids because we don't want them to get stuck under that bar like we did, and in the process we rob our kids the ability to get strong, and so I think it's a balance. But we have to give our kids the ability to do hard things and fail. My daughter's taken a piano. They had the holiday recitals, but it was optional. She came home and gave a really like a very articulate rundown as to why she did not believe she needed to do the recital, and my wife and I both looked at each other and were like you're for sure, doing that recital, you have to get up in front of the people and it's going to be hard and it was miserable and she didn't want to do it. She was trying to self sabotage. It was amazing and she got up and she crushed it and then she sprinted. And anyway, I'm so glad I didn't take that painful, scary experience from her, because now she knows she can do it Right. And also I didn't leave. I didn't say shut up, you don't need a thing to worry about. No, it's scary for her, for my son it's not scary, for her it is. And so my job wasn't to wipe the deck either.

Doug Smith: 24:22

Man, that's so good. Thank you for sharing. It's funny, man. I almost had the exact same experience, although I wouldn't say my reaction was fighting. So first time I was ever at my daughter's elementary school, pulled into that line, I had no idea it was out of parking, I thought I could just park there. So I park in what was the bus line? Go inside, man, I'm eating Thanksgiving lunch with my daughter and literally the security guard of the school starts screaming my name like not knowing where I was. And, man, it's for me. With my background, I literally reverted back to like middle school, doug, when I got called to the office all the time and literally like tucked my tail in between my legs and I was like, oh my gosh, just so funny man, anyway. So thank you for sharing that. Just because I have you here, you know you're, you're in the middle of parenting, you're in the thick of it. Is anything else working for you and your wife when it comes to raising your kids that you would share? Maybe practical ideas or thoughts?

Dr. John Delony: 25:13

Yeah, a couple of things. Number one is I know, especially with my teenage son, that ended with my daughter, but my teenage son life is getting harder and it's going to progressively get harder. And I've I've told him since he was young you have weird parents so he doesn't have a phone yet he has, especially doesn't have social media or anything. That means he's the only one and that also means that he misses out on a lot and it breaks my heart and we'll figure out the phone thing. We'll have a bunch of archaic, I mean like draconian rules to it and all that. But I, unfortunately for him and I've told him this, I've just done too many investigations in my student conduct role where kids lives are ruined because of the stupid

device, and I just read all the studies about social media. I'm not going to do that to you. And also, I had a phone when I was, so I know that. So here's what we did. I meet with them for breakfast once a week and we never miss every Tuesday. We went this morning it's a Monday recording this, but every Tuesday we meet at Waffle House and it's off. I'm super Annoying about what I eat and yet that's where he picks out. Here we go, man, and I remember asking it. Well, I was like guys, can you please have a fruit or a vegetable in here? And they were like, but? But here's the thing. Probably seven out of the ten times we laugh we talk about just random things music, hunting, things were into three out of ten. He's like hey, dad, and he asked me something heavy and or asked my opinion on something, or do I think about something? About politics or the economy, or a girl? He's interested in something, but what? Here's what I'm doing. I'm laying the groundwork because I know when he's 17, those things are gonna get big. Hmm, and I can't drop in when he's 17 or 18 and be like alright, let's talk deeply about college. That's too late, man. He's got his information from other students and so I started when he was in sixth grade, doing it every week and, dude, it's exhausting, it's expensive, it's not good for my digestive system and probably metabolic health. But I'm playing along. I'm not playing a game, but I'm investing in him long term with my daughter. She's in second grade. We started doing it once a month. Every week's too much, but once a month we're starting. Here's the second thing with my daughter. My son and daughter are very different. And my daughter, early on, I took everything personally because my son was a hugger. That's how he made himself feel safe was by hugging my daughter's way she makes her feel safe is by withdrawing, and so I took her withdrawal personally. I Needed to be the adult. She does not have permission to hurt my feelings. And when I adopted that position kind of lover and I can I mean we get it, but she can't say anything. That makes me lose my cool. She doesn't have that kind of power over my life. She can't say anything that just devastation. Dude, she's Seven. I'm not giving her that kind of power. Yeah, and by hanging it, showing up, and showing up, and showing up, I'll tell every parent who's got young kids it was a rough couple of years, years. Hey, can I do bedtime? Can I read your story? No, dad, I don't want you in here. Hey, you want to come with me to the? No, dad, I Went in counts, I had to go to counseling, had to deal with my own childhood stuff so that I could show up without a turbo charge, anxiety, you know, nuclear reactor in my chest. And Now, dude, that girl is almost eight. I can't keep her off of me. She's coming all over me all the time. She always wants to go with me. So I'll just tell you keep showing up and keep showing up, and keep showing up and keep showing up. All your kids are gonna be different, so those two things invest in them on a regular basis. Let them don't do lip service. Let them feel that they are a priority in your life. I'll say three things. To don't let them think the world revolves around them. My kid doesn't get a vote on where we live or like what vacation we're going on. He can't handle that weight. He's 13. That's an adult decision. And the third thing is don't let them, don't give them permission to hurt your feelings. It's your job to deal with your drama.

Doug Smith: 29:19

Yeah, and all this? We're talking about how to build a non anxious life your book. Take it back. Talk to me more about the technology thing. I I'm curious, you know, do you plan on keeping that boundary in place till 18? I remember interviewing John Mark Comer and he I think he's 18 and then no social media till college. He said his parents were very strict with him and he hated them for it. But he's, he is extremely grateful now. And you know, depressions at all time high, suicides are all time high, and I think so much this has to do with our devices. Can you just talk more about that, that boundary, and maybe how you guys are processing that?

Dr. John Delony: 29:53

Yeah, there's. I cannot see a world where I Let either of my kids have access to social media before they leave my house. And when they leave my house they're gonna have to make some grown-up decisions. The the data is in and it's so clear it's. It's disturbing that we're not rallying around it. It's just Absolutely

poison to children. Social media is period. End of story Conversations closed. Now the other side of it is I did have a home phone when I was a kid. I would grow up before so for cell phones. I did have a home phone and I was able to talk to my friends. I was able to talk to a girl on the phone, right, I was able to talk to my buddies and make plans. And so I have to live in the 21st century where they we don't have home phones. I haven't had a home phone since 20, like 2003 or something like that. Um, and Like my son missed birthday parties because a parent sent out a text to everybody, or kids sent out a text to everybody. He's missed after. Like he's in cross-country, he's missed things after meets because that's how they communicate, and so I can't be so ridiculous that I don't let him communicate with other people. That's just cruel and unfair. So we will probably end up getting him, as a teenager, in eighth grade, a phone that stays in the house, that he can't have in his room, that he knows I'll read every text, that I'll have some apps that give me everything, so that will not have the. I'll delete all the internet off of it and all that kind of stuff. As for my daughter, god, no, dude, she's seven. Yeah, she's seven. Like it's, it's madhouse. I do show her hilarious things on YouTube sometimes and my son and I I want him to know hey, if you want to know how to fix something, it's on YouTube. But, dude, I'm brought back to early on. It's probably 2011, 2012. I was part of a task force with the university and one of our people who gave us a lot of data was on the board at Apple and Google some of these big tech companies. These things were just launching out all over the place, and I remember there's a bunch of educational initiatives and I believe it was Apple, but it may be Google, but I think it was Apple. And I remember a conversation about hey, why are all these executives going to these Montessori schools and these schools that have no technology? Yet you are selling all these technology initiatives and it's haunting. But there was a response by one of the execs of one of these tech companies that said I don't let my kid near these devices. This is not about learning. Learning is a great teacher and a student and a whiteboard, and I'll never forget that that there was. This sense of teaching is as much a relationship as it is a transfer of information back and forth. And when we make it transactional and hand a kid a device that is serving somebody else's needs pedagogically, period, end of story. And so AI is going to change a lot of stuff. I know that, but I'm just constantly pulling my family back, not my family back, my wife's in with it too. But we're constantly saying what's the best thing for our kid? Not how do we make our kid cool or how do we make our kid fit in. I could give a crap about those. What is best for my kid right now? And sometimes it is for me getting over myself. My kid's got to be able to text his friends and it's also dude. You're not getting social media. I don't care how uncool that makes you. I'm not going to hand you a cigarette and a loaded weapon and say make good choices, you're a freaking team. I would be a terrible human if I did that.

Doug Smith: 33:25

So good. Thanks for sharing. The other thing you talked about in raising non-anxious kids is correct me if I have this wrong, but in control regulated parents. You told me you wanted to write a book on I think you said adult marriage. Man, what can we do in our marriages when it comes to raising non-anxious kids, Like, how can we get ourselves under control so our kids aren't in unhealthy homes?

Dr. John Delony: 33:45

Man. That's the number one question I get from parents and the number one answer I give. They don't like it and they say, hey, how do I help my kid be less anxious? The first thing I say is the first place I want you to look is I want you to go fix your marriage, go heal your marriage. And the second thing is stop introducing your child to adult problems. And if somebody can answer those two things, awesome. Then we'll move on to what's wrong with some chemistry issues. Is there issues in the classroom? Is there issues with a teacher relationship or is there bullying going on? Let's go to those rabbit holes. But one and two almost always begins with the energy source of a home, which is a marriage the two adults in the house. I know that's hard if there's only one parent in the house, which there's in millions and millions and millions, that's harsh and the data is clear. It's challenging, it's not as advantageous and we can bury our

heads when it comes to that data or we can get in trouble for saying that out loud. I think it's more honest to say it's very hard to do that, very, very hard. Is it impossible? No, very challenging. But again, let's double down on those relationships with our kids, not giving them everything they want, not being their best friend, not being their cheerleader, but being the regulated adult presence in their house. So I often tell people, if you say the words, hey, don't say that your dad's going to get really mad. Or do you remember what happened last time mom got really pissed off about? When you do that to your kids, they understand in their bones. Oh, it's my job to make sure dad doesn't get mad. It's my job to make sure mom doesn't quote unquote feel crazy. Whatever dad said. A kid cannot carry that weight period. And so mom and dad has to say, not, you made me mad, because the kids can't. I chose to act like this, the same as I told my son I didn't say that guy made me mad over there. I said that guy said a thing and I overreacted because that school security guard doesn't have access to my soul. I just gave it to him. What a nook. That's on me, that's not on him. He can do whatever he wants and I need to be detached enough to say, all right, I'm just going to go. So kids cannot carry the weight. The other thing with kids is they've got to have in person communication. They've got to have less screen time. They've got to have some successes and be given opportunities to do hard things and fail at them. They've got to be a part of teams. They've got to do all these things that we know innately but man. They've got to have plugged in relationships with stable, regulated adults period.

Doug Smith: 36:31

Yeah, this could be an assumption about us, though I would love to hear you just talk about anger. So I think about my parenting. I'm super, super impatient and so raising my voice is very, very easy for me to do. I don't get super angry. But yeah, I'm just curious you know, as a parent, any advice for you, know, or thoughts or pushback or challenge around raising our voices in anger? You know, obviously no abuse or anything like that, but I'm just curious what does anger do in a household and how can we kind of tame that in the moments where our children are frustrating us?

Dr. John Delony: 37:01

Yeah, I man. This is people don't like my answer on this and this is also the pot talking to Kettle here. Number one, end of story Don't raise your voice around your kids. There's no reason to do that. That's me reverting back to a five year old who did not have control of his life because he had parents making him do this and teachers and coaches make him do that. My kids don't get that. So don't raise your voice around your kids. Now that doesn't mean like if you hang out with me and my kids, we're all raising our voice but we're laughing and clowning and being goofy and pointing finger. I mean like, like jiving at each other. So that's not what I'm talking about. Out of anger, just make it a point to not raise your voice and people are like how do I do that? Stop, you can do that. The second thing is I don't want to conflate yelling with being angry, like. I think anger as the great rage against the machine said, anger is in many ways a gift. It points you towards something that should be a different way. It points you towards something you care about. That's not a bad thing. I think it's important for our kids to see us angry. It's very important for them to feel anger and then to watch adults in their life respond in productive ways. So if they see us angry at a football, at a college football game, when the coach makes the wrong call and a bunch of teenagers don't perform right and we get angry, our kids are going. They're not going to know what's real because they're teenagers. Right, if our kid sees somebody cut us off in traffic, it's okay to get angry. It's not okay to flip them off and act like a child. It's okay when somebody threatens your safety with how they're driving or with their, how they're in your face or they, you know, are hurting another child. My son has seen me step in on a situation one time. My son has seen my daughter has seen me get involved in some things and not in a way that if something happens to me suddenly I've put my daughter in, but my daughter has felt it. My son has felt anger. And then they get a chance to see me respond appropriately. I don't want them walking through life thinking, if they get angry, something wrong with them. So I want

them to experience it and I want them to see me respond appropriately. And sometimes that is hey son, hey daughter, my body's getting over-regulated. My feelings are really heavy and on fire right now. I'm going to take a break. I'll be back in five minutes and that might mean going to walk around the house. You know what the kids learn? My dad takes a walk around the neighborhood before he comes and talks to us. Awesome, if our kids can put that in their back pocket when a kid goes. Hey, I'm fighting you and they goes, I'm going to go take a walk for a minute Like man. Then we've got a much better world.

Doug Smith: 39:49

Yeah, anything else. Just while we're on the subject of parenting or marriage, anything on your heart to share?

Dr. John Delony: 39:56

Can I give you the last thing Give it. This has been a revelation in the last 18 months for me and this comes from my wife and the great Gabor Mate, dr Mate, be somebody that your kids would like being around. Here's what I mean. By that. I don't mean I can be softy, not hold people accountable, and all that. I really loved being around my high school football coaches and dude, they were really, really hard on me. They demanded excellence. They demanded things that at the time I did not believe I was capable of doing. They screamed, they yelled. That wasn't the thing, but they also were hilarious and they told jokes and they called me in like, hey, you want to prank this guy over here? So when I say be someone likable, I found myself every time my kids walked in the room hey, tuck your shirt in. Your shirt's on backwards. Have you fixed your hair? Why are you wearing that? Oh my gosh, will you just walk quieter? Push that table. Who wants to be around that person? Forget the father, daughter, father, some relationship. I don't want to be in the presence of somebody who's critical of every single thing I do, and so I had to talk with my son. Hey, look, I'm never going to mention to you that your shirt's on backwards again.

Doug Smith: 41:06

I'm going to let social Darwinism heal you.

Dr. John Delony: 41:09

Your friends will let you know and from this point forward I'm just, if that's the way you want to leave my house, unless it's to a funeral or somewhere, knock it like that. And unfortunately his friends don't seem to carry their money. Somebody will somebody, but here's the deal I'm still holding him accountable. We still have a set of priorities and a set of values that we hold firm in our home, really firm. I'm a pretty strict parent but also dude hike man. We laugh and I want the first thing my son. He walks in the room, we hug. That's just what we do now. My daughter walks in the room, we do this weird flip thing, but we're hugging. Basically, I want them, our relationship, to be one of joy and relationship and interaction and hilarity. Last night at a restaurant, much to my wife's chagrin, my daughter made a face and I was like it looks like you're constipated and she goes no, that's this. And she did it. And then my son did it and I was doing it and my wife just had her hand in her face. But they're going to tell that story at my funeral, like, remember how, at the Mexican food restaurant, we used to pretend we were constipated and there was people around us who were like, I've got that guy's book, but hey, that's how we roll. So be silly, be fun, be somebody that your kids want to be around. So when you need to say, hey, you've got to stop doing that, you're going to get hurt, then they can actually hear you and you're not just a gong in their life. All right, I'll get off my parenting soapbox, that's it.

Doug Smith: 42:37

That's good. One other area I want to dive into and again can go back to building a non-anxious life but health. I heard you mentioned you're super strict with what you eat. I'm curious is that just a getting shape thing, or has that been part of your journey that's really helped you, Because I think a lot of times our health and fitness has a lot to do with healing anxiety, but people don't realize that. What have you learned in that space?

Dr. John Delony: 42:56

Yeah, I'm still navigating some of that. I recently had a conversation with a Harvard psychiatrist about the interaction in the gut by home with anxiety and some of the food, and so I 100% believe there's some interactivity there. I have struggled with body image issues my whole life. I've struggled with body dysmorphia my whole life with I can always get a little more ripped, a little more in shape, a little more. This I don't look right. My wife has gotten onto me for 25 years, as long as she's known, because I always wear a shirt in the pool and then I'm doing something around the house without a shirt on. She's like my god, dude, take your shirt off out in public. But it's just this innate struggle which has been anxiousness If somebody sees me, they're going to think I'm less than they're not going to think I'm enough. And so that comes back from a personal conversation I had with Sal, the Stefano of the Mind Pump guys we talked about earlier, which was this this is just a personal conversation and he's done personal training for decades and he's like bro, you can't hate your body into better shape If you're not eating a piece of cake because you think you look like a piece of crap if you're going to the gym because you think you're disgusting and you want to be less disgusting. That will always fail long term always. If you don't eat that piece of cake or, by the way, it's your daughter's birthday frickin' have the piece of cake. What are you kidding me? Have the cake. Or if you're really onto a plan, have half of it and let her see you laugh and smile and make sure you get some icing on your face. Do that because you love yourself enough that you know I'm going to feel my best tonight when I sleep. I'm going to feel my best in the morning when I wake up. If I only have half a piece of cake. I'm going to go to the gym because I love my wife and my kids and my office and the people that I wake up and serve in my community so much. I love myself so much that I want to give them my first fruits and I can only do that. If I've exercised for an hour today, you'll do that. You'll show up to the gym forever. And so, when it comes to healing and health, I ain't going to the doctor. I'm fixing this. I'm getting on YouTube and finding some dude in a trunk of his car with essential oils. Like I can fix cancer with what Dude? I'm going to honor myself and my kids and my wife. Enough to feel good and men are the worst at this and I haven't felt good for a couple of weeks. I've had trouble with not me personally, I'm just being every man here. I've had trouble with erectile dysfunction. I've had trouble with my guts. I haven't gone to the bathroom in a while. I've had headaches. My neck has hurt. I ain't going to the bathroom. You know who wears that Our families. Stop, our clients. Stop Go to the doctor, dude. Love yourself enough to show up for the people that you've committed to, and so a lot of that is health and healing has become a gift I give to myself. Not a way I punish myself for being gross, and Dr Norton Lane's helped me a lot with that too. Love yourself enough to take care of yourself, and when you begin to love yourself enough, that is a posture that takes your eyes out of your belly button. Oh, whoa, it was me. Whoa, it was me. It helps you look up and say I'm exercising now for the grandkids I don't have yet, because I want to be able to roll around with my grandkids when I'm 80. And when they're like, grandpa, let's go to the zoo. They'll have aliens in it or whatever, but I'm like let's go to the zoo, I want to be able to walk around the zoo. I don't want to have to say, hey, I can't do that. Let me hand you a device. Let's play a game on an iPad, and so those things fuel my workouts. Now, and dude, I want to be the rip this 45-year-old you've ever seen, I get that and it's going to happen. It's not going to happen. Because I also really love Chick-fil-A and I really really love gummy candies. But, dude, I am playing a longer game now, if that makes sense.

Doug Smith: 46:47

Yeah, this triggered a thought when you were talking about your body. I'm curious your view, especially on alcohol and even just marijuana, I guess because I feel like so many people are like oh, I use marijuana every night to help me cope with my anxiety. Anyway, I'll just leave this really, really open-ended. I'm sure there's lots of controversy around both, but where do you stand when?

Dr. John Delony: 47:07

it comes to that and building a non-anxious life. I'm not going to tell somebody what to do, I'm just going to answer what I've done in my own life. Yeah, I had once one or two drinks a day because I read that research. One time Come and find out. It's pretty much shenanigans. But I had one or two drinks a day because I was quote unquote. Good for me. And here's the thing about alcohol it works. It made my day suck a little less. It brought me down at the end of the day. I run really hard. I'm always just all the time at work at home. All the time it does bring me down and it did make me sleepy. It really changed when I started tracking my sleep with some of these wearable devices. I've got a garment now. I've got no financial relationship to them, but it's been pretty remarkable. Every night I had a sleep, I had a drink, my sleep quality was in the toilet. It was terrible and if I had a second one it was brutal. And then Matthew Walker's book why we Sleep came out. I think everyone should read that book and if you don't want to read that book, he's got a three-part podcast series with the great Dr Peter Atia, I think you should listen to all six hours of that. It's a master class, but they're able to pin back. People thought that they got, they were anxious, they had anxiety and so they quit sleeping, or they had PTSD and so they quit sleeping. Come to find out its reverse People stop sleeping and that lack of sleep begins to spin up all sorts of mechanisms that your body tries to prop you up with. One of those is being hypervigilant, that's anxiety, or it shuts the system down, that's depression. So getting great sleep. So I started experimenting with not drinking and now I probably have a drink every two months. Wow, and I know going into it. Kind of like, my son and I went on a hunting trip yesterday, just the two of us, in the middle of the woods, and we had a pretty wild adventure. And so I said hey, dude, I'm pulling into this gas station, I'm getting us some trash, and he goes all right. And I got a bag of like fruit snacks and gummy fruit snacks and he got like some twinkies. I mean we just I mean I intentionally got off the wagon and rolled around in the mud and so I do that, and I know it's going to come at a cost and that's fine, that's okay. It's like people who are like I could, who are millionaires dude, go to Vegas and you have enough money to sit at a blackjack table and have some fun Because you have enough money to lose it. I did that yesterday. I pay so close attention most of the time that I can get off the rails a little bit. That's okay so, but now I do. I just I almost completely avoid alcohol simply because of my sleep, and then my fitness has just improved significantly. I think the jury is still very much out of marijuana. I think it's very similar to it works when it comes to helping people feel less anxious. It just does. And, by the way, some of it, some of the super potent stuff, makes people way more anxious and paranoid, but it does work, and I think the data is starting to roll out that it has a delirious effect on sleep also. So it makes you sleepy and makes you fall asleep, but it doesn't give your body that deep, restorative sleep that you need. All that to say is this I want every single person listening both like. Sleep is a core human function that should have evolved out of us millions of years ago. The idea and this is from Dr Walker that our bodies would stop, be completely defenseless, not mate, not get food, just curl up in a defenseless position for one third of the day, like evolutionarily. That's insane, it doesn't make any sense. Which tells us it's very, very important, and so anytime you have to do a thing to enter into a core biological function, I want you to go look at the stages of the non-anxious life, because your body's keeping you up for a reason, and I think that reason is because it's detected. You're not safe and I want to address that issue. Not try to drink to fall asleep or smoke to try to fall asleep.

Doug Smith: 51:17

Well, the book is Building a Non-Anxious Life by Dr John Deloni. This has been a great conversation. We've gone all over the place, which has been a lot of fun. Anything else you want to leave leaders with today as we close out?

Dr. John Delony: 51:27

If you're anxious, ask yourself the question what if my anxiety is right? What if it's telling me the truth? What would that mean about my business, my marriage, my relationship with my kids? How leveraged in debt I am, how safe my world is? Ask yourself that question, because I think you'll find your anxiety answers there.

Doug Smith: 51:48

Beautiful. Thank you, John, for the conversation. Thanks for all you do for people. Keep getting your stuff out there. It matters and it's making a difference. Thank you, brother.

Dr. John Delony: 51:54

You're awesome man. You too Appreciate it, brother.

Doug Smith: 51:56

Well, leader, thank you so much for listening to my conversation with Dr John Deloni. I hope that you enjoyed it as much as I did. You can find ways to connect with him in links to everything that we discussed in the show notes at I3leadership.org. And, as always, I'll like to end every episode with a quote, and today I'll quote Tony Robbins, who said this. He said if you want to be successful, find someone who has achieved the results you want and copy what they do and you'll achieve the same results. So so good. Well, leader, I hope you enjoyed this episode. Know that my wife Laura and I love you. We believe in you and I say it every episode. But don't quit, keep leading. The world desperately needs your leadership. We'll talk to you next episode.