

Jerry: Hey Danny, it's great to see you and really make this connection.

Danny Feltsman: Thank you. Thank you for having me on. It's a pleasure.

Jerry: Sure, sure. Why don't you take a minute and just introduce yourself. Tell us your name and, and position and then we'll talk a little bit about what you're here for.

Danny Feltsman: Sure. So I'm Danny Feltsman. I'm the founder of Generation Transfer and we're building a platform that's supposed to help parents share values, life lessons, meaningful life experiences with their kids. Uh, I've been working on the platform for about two to three years now. Came up with the idea when I became a dad. Um, it's been amazing. It's been fun. It's been difficult. Uh, and um, when I came across your book, uh, it was you know probably one of the better, if not one of the best books that I've read about the, you know, uh, experience of being a founder, um, and how experiences in your childhood and in your life can shape the way that you are, and just, you know, I found a lot of things resonated, uh, with my own background-

Jerry: Hmm.

Danny Feltsman: ... um, also being from New York and, um, you know, I wanted to reach out and I'm very grateful that you responded.

Jerry: Sure. Well, I'm, I'm, I'm really glad, uh, that the book landed with you in that way. And you know, um, I think probably every single episode in some form or another, I mentioned my kids, um, and I think you can relate to this. That's because being a parent is by far and away, um, the greatest learning experience I've ever had, um, and the most profoundly important experience I've ever had. Um.

Danny Feltsman: Hmm.

Jerry: So I'll say back to you, I appreciate the work that you're doing and, um, I'm curious to hear more about that. But so having read the book and listened to our podcast and you know, that, um, in some ways, perhaps not, you know, the conversations that we have are not necessarily the standard how to conversations as a leader. So I'm imagining you've been forewarned and you've got your box of tissues nearby. (laughs)

Danny Feltsman: Listen, I, to be honest, I had tissues when I was reading the book, man. I mean-

Jerry: Hmm.

Danny Feltsman: [inaudible]

Jerry: What was it-

Danny Feltsman: Its like. Yeah.

Jerry: Yeah. Well tell, tell me a little bit about that experience. What was that about? What, what, what was happening and what struck you?

Danny Feltsman: You know, the one moment that stands out was, I think it was the end of chapter three when you were talking to another founder who worked on a company where they were giving food, I believe it was to employees, and she, you know, she tied it back to, if I'm recalling it right-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Danny Feltsman: ... her experience as a kid, feeling ashamed, feeling, maybe ashamed is not the right word, but, um, being shy about eating in public, I mean, I'm probably getting the details a little bit wrong, but there was something tied to a feeling of fulfilling a lack that she had during childhood.

Jerry: Yeah.

Danny Feltsman: And unknowingly, that's what she ended up doing, right?

Jerry: Right.

Danny Feltsman: Um, and when I read that, I'm just like, wow, that's what I'm doing because, you know, I didn't have the most ideal relationship with my parents. Um, you know, I had a, you know, parents were separated. They were there, but not really there, sense of kind of not being seen. And then I'm like, wow, I'm trying to give my kid what I feel like I didn't get. And when I, that, just, you know, that just had me, uh sitting on a plane.

Danny Feltsman: Yeah. Flying from Europe to New York just like trying to hold back the tears in front of people. Yeah.

Jerry: Yeah.

Danny Feltsman: But it's true.

Jerry: Yes.

Danny Feltsman: You know.

Jerry: Yeah. You're referring to Tracy Lawrence's story and uh, we just rerun her, the podcast episode in which I spoken with her about her experience. Um, and so,

you know, it sounds like having launched Generation Transfer shortly after your son was born, there was one level of conscious awareness that was going on for you, which was this, there is something I want to do for my son. But it sounds like part of the experience is the realization that, that, um, wish actually goes both ways. Meaning it is rooted in you being a son, as much as it's rooted in you being a father.

Danny Feltsman: Of course.

Jerry: Am I hearing that right?

Danny Feltsman: Yeah. Because, you know, you take your own experiences and you take it kind of, you know, the lessons that I took from being a kid and kind of seeing the situation that I went through and yeah, I mean, absolutely. And it's also, you know, part of the experience was realizing that I'm not only just making an app for myself, right. I'm also making an app for other parents, other sons, other daughters, mothers, fathers and grandparents and grand, you know, uh, grandmothers and grandfathers. Um, and, uh, yeah, it's, it's, it's not an easy thing to, um, it's not an easy thing to make because we're asking people to, uh, look inside. We're asking them introspective questions, um, about who they are, what they believe. Um, and we're asking them to take time from, you know, busy days and busy schedules to give thought to these things and write about it, to share with their kids later in life.

I know that the connection that a parent has with their kid, like you mentioned, is one of the strongest parts of like the universal human experience.

And I think that if we focus on strengthening that relationship and focus on creating, you know, some sort of way, uh, for parents to share kind of their love, um, their values with their kids and give their kids a sense of belonging, maybe the sense that I didn't have as a kid, um, that'll help kids grow up with a sense of family and belonging and I, you know, sense of identity and self, things that they don't get from social media.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Danny Feltsman: Um, so yeah, that's a long winded answer to your question.

Jerry: Hmm. It sounds really appropriate. It was a random fact that just popped into my head and I may get this wrong, but I think that's right. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for folks in their twenties and thirties.

Danny Feltsman: Yeah. I, I, there's research coming out from Common Sense Media Child Mind Institute. Um, kids are spending I think eight times more time, uh, sitting on their phones on social media than they are talking to parents, and kids that report, kids that have so, heavy social media usage, which is around six to eight

hours per day, record 70% increases in depression, fear of missing out, social isolation and low self esteem. So-

Jerry: Hmm.

Danny Feltsman: ... that's another reason why I wanted to work on what I'm working on, what I'm working on this 'cause I don't want my son to grow up, uh, and be affected or at least have, be affected by these platforms, right? I want to create a, you know, I want to create a place for parents like me and a lot of other parents where they can actually, you know, on board their kid into the-

Jerry: Hmm.

Danny Feltsman: ... world of social media and give them a place where they are going to get positivity and they are going to get reinforcement and they are going to understand who they are, where they came from. And I mean, my son, he sees me working on the app, he comes up to me super excited, he's asking me, "Are you working on my gift?" And-

Jerry: Hmm.

Danny Feltsman: And yeah.

Jerry: That was sweet.

Danny Feltsman: Like. Yeah. And that's-

Jerry: Now you're gonna make me cry, dude.

Danny Feltsman: I mean, if, if you needed a stronger motivating factor to do something, like that's it, you know.

Jerry: What's his name?

Danny Feltsman: Um, Myron.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Danny Feltsman: Or Myron in English.

Jerry: Hmm.

Danny Feltsman: Um, and yeah, and I tell him, "Yeah, I'm working on your gift."

Jerry: So how's it going for you?

Danny Feltsman: Uh- (laughs)

Jerry: Yeah, that was the question you were afraid I was going to ask.

Danny Feltsman: I was not, I'm looking, I'm not afraid. I'm looking forward to it. I mean, God, um, how to split up, how's it going for me or how's it going for the company? Um, probably both. Well look, um, how's it going? We have an MVP that's out in the app store. Um, it's been used by a couple thousand parents. Um, I've had trouble raising money, um, for a couple of reasons. Uh, the first is I probably spent too much time talking to the wrong investors in the beginning. Um-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Danny Feltsman: ... this is my first tech start up. I've done, you know, I've ran businesses before. I had a commercial real estate brokerage company. I worked in investment banking, but, um, as a tech founder, this is my first company. So probably spent, you know, too much time talking to VCs that want to see a lot more traction, a lot more revenue. Second is, you know, for some reason, and this is one of the questions that maybe I do have, uh, couldn't find a co-founder just yet. Um, and it's been tough to, uh, raise the funds that I was looking for. Maybe I'm, you know, I haven't talked to the right investors, didn't um, found the right advisors just yet.

That being said, um, the people that do use the app love it. It's beautiful. We have great reviews. I've gotten a lot of good feedback from our users to understand what they want to see added, what they're willing to pay for because that's, um, you know, unfortunately, unfortunately that's the most important thing that, um, you know, most investors want to see and have an answer to is how you can make money off of this.

Jerry: Hmm.

Danny Feltsman: Which is absolutely fine. And I'm confident that building the product that we're building, like we will be able to make money. That being said, I've been working on it for the last two years and you know, hearing a lot of nos, and you know, it's, it's, if you're asking me how I'm doing-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Danny Feltsman: ... my answer would be something from your book where it's like a sea of contradictions where I'm both, uh, hopeful and terrified, um, optimistic and doubtful every single day. Uh, but I got to put on the game face and you know, I walked into six schools yesterday in Palo Alto, two Montessori's at JCC and, you know, telling people about what we're doing, doing the work from the ground up. And, you know, I'm, you know, I'm not afraid of the nos. I'm not afraid of the

rejections because I genuinely believe in what we're doing. And it's just a, you know, like it's just a numbers game, you know, 'cause I have a sales background. Um, so yeah. I used to do cold calling and all that. You know, I used to be a waiter and a bartender, so I have no problem being in front of somebody and kind of putting myself out there. So, but yeah. Yeah.

Jerry: So if I was to ask my famous question, no really, how are you?

Danny Feltsman: Trying to keep it together.

Jerry: ]Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Danny Feltsman: Yeah, but I think I'm doing a good job, you know.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Danny Feltsman: 'Cause there's more positivity. Uh, there's more love and there's more belief than there is doubt and terror. Uh, yeah. But you know, I'm away from my son. I've seen my kid probably like two, three weeks since the end of October. So obviously I miss him. But again, like, you know, when it does come over me and I'm upset or you know, I want to break down or I like have doubts, I just, I don't know. The other side of me is like, just keep going, you know, so.

Jerry: So let's roll back a little bit 'cause you just said something really meaningful and powerful. You've only seen your son two or three weeks since October and it's now middle of January. What's that about?

Danny Feltsman: So in the beginning of 2010, I moved to Moscow, I moved to Russia. Uh, the reason I moved is because I was originally born there and we immigrated to New York, uh, in 1987 when I was four. Um, after finishing grad school, working in New York, um, working in Washington DC, I decided to move to Russia. Um, and while I was there, you know, a couple of different businesses started, dating somebody, we had a kid and got married. So, uh, he's there with his mom and I'm out here working, you know, because this is the place where I need to be raising money and building the team and launching this thing. So yeah, the priority has been the project and he's actually, um, he's almost five. He's turning five in a month and he's, I mean, he says some things that just blow my mind sometimes, like he's-

Jerry: Hmm.

Danny Feltsman: ... so smart. Um, and I'm always honest with him and I'm always direct looking him in the eyes and I'm telling him exactly why I'm here. This is why I'm not around and what I do and other reason why I use the app is I record videos of myself saying, "Hey buddy, you know, I know I'm not around, but this is what

I'm doing, this is where I am. Just wanted you to know that I'm thinking about you and I'm working on our gift," you know?

Jerry: Hmm.

Danny Feltsman: But, um, here's another quick, like, here is a thing that I was thinking about. It's like I'm creating an app to share life experience with the kid, when I could be next to the kid, right? And then-

Jerry: Sharing your life experience right there.

Danny Feltsman: Yeah. So.

Jerry: So. Yeah, the irony isn't lost on me.

Danny Feltsman: Yeah.

Jerry: So what do you think is going on there? What's that about?

Danny Feltsman: What? Which part?

Jerry: [00:15:30] It's an interesting setup you've got going.

Danny Feltsman: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Well, here's what it is. Um, I'm doing this and I'm away from him because I honestly believe that this is something that can be huge. I think this is something if we do it right that can be used by every single parent on the planet that has a phone or a kid. Call me crazy, call me super ambitious, call me delusional. Maybe I am, I don't know. I just like, I want to be able to test it on a massive scale and really see if there's something there. And I think that there's something there. Um.

Jerry: I don't think you're crazy. I don't think you're delusional. I think you're, um, you may be, uh, operating according to the confines of some old subroutines. Remember that term?

Danny Feltsman: Yeah.

Jerry: So subroutine is the term I use to describe the belief systems that set in as children. And so as you're describing this, I got an intuitive question rose up, which was, tell me about your parents. Tell me about mom and dad.

Danny Feltsman: Hmm. So my, my parents, my father is a, uh, pianist. Um, he was like very, very well known, one of the best pianists that was coming out of Russia. Um, they were married, they had one kid. Um, we immigrated to the United States in 1987. Super successful. The first concert that he played was for Ronald Reagan

in the White House. Um, it was a pretty big story, um, that we made it out of Russia during Soviet Union. Um.

Jerry: Uh, were they Jewish?

Danny Feltsman: Yup. Yup.

Jerry: So it was part of Glasnost, it was part of the opening.

Danny Feltsman: Yup.

Jerry: It was part of, uh, allowing people to immigrate.

Danny Feltsman: Right in the beginning. Yeah. He actually applied for an Exit Visa in 1979 and they wouldn't let him leave for eight years. Um, and it was, you know, it was a big deal.

Danny Feltsman: So, you know, dad's probably one of the smartest people, one of the most, you know, well-read people that I've ever met, but, you know, um, they separated. I wanted to live with my dad. Um.

Jerry: How old were you when they separated?

Danny Feltsman: The divorce took I think, like four years. So I think it was somewhere between seven and 11.

Jerry: Hmm.

Danny Feltsman: Um, and wrote about taking bus rides and train rides. Like I used to take a bus up to New Paltz in upstate New York, like every single weekend, uh, as a kid. Um, and-

Jerry: Is that where dad was?

Danny Feltsman: Yeah. Yeah. Um.

Jerry: Hmm.

Danny Feltsman: So I would spend the weekends in the summers with him and you know, we, I had a much, you know, I had a closer relationship at that time, uh, with my dad than I did with my mom. Um, and I wanted to live with him, but you know, didn't work because he's always traveling. He's always playing concerts. Um, but I think, you know, whether it's true or not, but I think I did or do have, did have, uh, some sort of feeling that, you know, you're unwanted or you know, it's not a priority and things like that.



And I grew up basically, you know, feeling like you also mentioned in your book, like just completely alone, you know, because I didn't have brothers and sisters, I didn't have too many friends, and I didn't have, you know, I know my parents love me, right? I don't have any doubt about that. Um, but you know, they just weren't too engaged. Like I never had a conversation with a parent that genuinely sat down and said like, "What are you interested in?"

Jerry: Hmm.

Danny Feltsman: "What do you want to do?" So, you know, uh, childhood growing up in New York because of that was, um,] you know, a very, uh, colorful mix of things that most kids should not be doing when they're 13, 14, 15 years old.

Jerry: Hmm.

Jerry: Where is mom?

Danny Feltsman: So mama's in Washington Heights. Um, and Dad is still a New Paltz.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Danny Feltsman: So yeah, and having a kid actually made me really reevaluate, uh, the relationship that I had with my parents because when you become a parent, I mean you probably noticed a lot more things, you know?

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Danny Feltsman: Um, and I started having conversations like, Oh, why did you guys do this? Or how come this was happening? 'Cause you never really think about that until you say, Oh, I have a kid. Like what? I do the same thing. Would I do something different? Um, so yeah.

Jerry: And what did you come to or did you come to conclude? Especially around this ironic situation that you're in?

Danny Feltsman: Hmm. Um, well, that nothing was done on purpose. Nothing was done personally, like against the work for me. Um,

Jerry: It wasn't because they didn't want you,

Danny Feltsman: Well, I don't, I don't think that they, I don't, I'm not sure if I believe anymore that they like didn't want me. Um, but-

Jerry: Hmm.

Danny Feltsman: ... I believe that I felt that and you know.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Danny Feltsman: Luckily, hopefully that's, you know, I talked to them and realized that that was just my, you know, because there's plenty of, look, we always remember the negative situations. We don't remember the a hundred situations where you got a hug where you've got a Christmas present where everything was all good. You were sitting at a table and everyone was smiling. Do you remember the one time when you were left alone or you felt, you know, for some reason those memories stick out, right? Those are the ghost of stories that we tell ourselves, right? But if you realize that that's just one experience in your experience or remembering of that experience, then it's much easier to say, well, that's not the case.

Jerry: Hmm.

Danny Feltsman: Hopefully, right? Ideally.

Jerry: Yeah.

Danny Feltsman: Um, so yeah, I've, you know, I'm doing the work. I've done the work. I've always been introspective. I've always been interested in, you know, this sort of stuff, so.

Jerry: I can.

Danny Feltsman: You know.

Jerry: I can feel that.

Danny Feltsman: Yeah. So the relationship with them is good. It's better. You know, the relationship of my mom and I was great. Uh, when I was younger it was bad. Um, but you know, we're all humans and you know, nobody's, nobody's perfect. So, yeah.

Jerry: So, um, I'm just gonna make an observation. It's not really an answer cause you're not really asking a question. So we'll just hold onto that for a moment. Just make the observation that, that we thought about the irony of the situation right? Here you are trying to create this mechanism, this container for parents and grandparents to share life experiences with, with folks when they are young. So that when they are older they get to have those experiences. So there's a, there's a wish in here for having those experiences. And yet there's this sort of corollary track that you had as a child that you've replicated, which is that dad for work is away.

Danny Feltsman: Yes.

Jerry: For very important work.

Danny Feltsman: Yes. But my plan is to have my son move and live with me in about two years. When he becomes seven or eight years old. That's the plan.

Jerry: Right.

Danny Feltsman: I'm going to move-

Jerry: Right.

Danny Feltsman: ... here. He's going to live with me in California.

Jerry: Right, right?

Danny Feltsman: Maybe even. Yeah. But for now, yes.

Jerry: But, but for your amygdala, the old part of your brain, which may be re-experiencing the feelings that you had as a kid, they kind of operates, time, out of time

Danny Feltsman: Hmm.

Jerry: And there's this kind of re-experiencing, not so much with you as the child, but you now as the father. Um, there's a wonderful line from the poem I often quote called *Men at Forty*. And the line that just comes to mind right now it's about men turning midlife. But the line that comes to mind is "They are more fathers than sons themselves now." Now they are more fathers than sons themselves now.

Danny Feltsman: The kids?

Jerry: The men at 40.

Danny Feltsman: Uh. Well.

Jerry: And here you are.

Danny Feltsman: Still playing both kind of-

Jerry: Kind of being in both roles and, and um, I just bring your attention to the fact that um, and I'm not doing this, to, with a judgment. I just, what I note is there is a, when I asked you before about how are you, the word that came into my

mind, and it could be a projection on my part, but the word that came into my mind was, "This man's exhausted." Yeah. Now you're, now-

Danny Feltsman: Why already. Of course, yeah. I mean if you say burnt out like I've been living burnt out for the last year, like it's already my mistake, but you know. Yeah.

Jerry: Right. And there is some external stuff that's going on that's contributing to the exhaustion. I think in one of the email exchanges you wrote about living on two continents.

Danny Feltsman: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: Which really tells me you're living in airlines. You're living in the in between zone. Where one part of your heart is one place in another part of your heart isn't in another place.

Danny Feltsman: Yeah.

Jerry: One part if your heart is in Washington Heights in another part of your heart is a New Paltz. And I'm struck by the replication. Like a lot of entrepreneurs, you're exhausted by the fundraising and like a lot of entrepreneurs, you're exhausted by the rejection. And like alone, a lot of entrepreneurs, yours too, you're dealing with all this, but like a lot of entrepreneurs, you also have this pathologically optimistic streak and it keeps popping up every phrase. "But I believe, but I believe, but I believe.." and that experience alone is hard. It can be fulfilling. But it's hard. And then you layer on top of that, this, this interesting, subtext. I, I'm not even sure it's a subroutine that's replaying itself as much as it's, uh, a re-experience of the childhood. Only you get to play all these different roles. You're not just the child, you're the parent.

Danny Feltsman: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: That would exhaust me.

Danny Feltsman: But what, I mean, what are you gonna do? You've got to keep it, Yeah.

Jerry: Yeah. There it is.

Danny Feltsman: You know. You've got to keep going.

Jerry: That's, That's the New Yorker.

Danny Feltsman: No.

Jerry: That's the New Yorker. (laughs).

Danny Feltsman: I mean.

Jerry: What are you going to do?

Danny Feltsman: Yeah. Like you know, I'm not gonna I don't want to, I don't like, I'm not going to stop. I want to give it the full shot before saying it's not going to work and I think it's going to work. You know, it might pivot, it might change. We might obviously, you know, the packaging, what we call it, whether it's a time capsule or a journal or platform, what you want to call it, we can call it whatever we want. But the driving force behind it, which is a way to pass down to values, life experience. And then, I mean this is what the parents should be doing, right? It's our responsibility to teach kids about good and evil. Love, success, right?

Jerry: Who taught you those things? Yeah, right there, buddy, boy.

Danny Feltsman: Hmm. Look, I can't, look, I got to give my parents some credit. I can't say they were completely absent. I mean, you know, I've, I've had conversations with my dad and with my mom and you know, I don't want to make it out like I was completely alone, 'cause I wasn't. But you know, 80% of my education was life books, movies, mental.

Jerry: You've raised yourself.

Danny Feltsman: Yes. I mean I've lived, I stopped living with my parents when I was 15.

Jerry: Yeah, that doesn't surprise me.

Danny Feltsman: Oh, and here's another, well this is actually a question that I was thinking about asking you is, have I become too, 'cause I haven't been able to build a team, right? And like every job, most of the jobs that I've had, whether there like fixed income broker or real estate, I was solo, I was competing hitting against other people. But I was so I was a wrestler in college, in high school. So like have I, two part question I guess. Have I become too self-reliant or am I lying to myself thinking that I'm self-reliant when in reality I really do need a team to build a spot?

Jerry: All right.

Danny Feltsman: Right?

Jerry: I'm going to answer that question cause I think that, that gets to the heart of a question and it speaks to the co-founders and it speaks to what may be going on with the company, the obstacles that are in front of you and quite frankly some choices that you're going to end up having to make. And what I'm going to share now, um, my partner Khalid Halim, um, helped me understand more than

anyone else. And the basic belief system is the, the way we are wired, works like this, the conditions that we survive as children become the conditions necessary for our thriving as adults. I'm going to say it again slowly because it's important.

Danny Feltsman: Hmm.

Jerry: The conditions we survive as children become the conditions necessary to our thriving as adults.

Danny Feltsman: And that's true, I guess.

Jerry: (laughs) Well, I don't say anything that's not true. Just kidding. (laughs).

Danny Feltsman: Well, okay. I'm, I'm fine. Yeah.

Jerry: Right. Right. So if you think about that, let's presume for a moment that it is true. The conditions-

Danny Feltsman: Yeah.

Jerry: ... include, needing to spend 80% of the time or, or provide 80% of our parenting to ourself. The condition that you survived was being, was feeling alone. It almost doesn't matter if in fact you were alone.

Danny Feltsman: Yeah.

Jerry: Right? This, this is, this is the little bit of the conundrum that your optimism creates for you. You, you, I think it's beautiful that you have come to an understanding of the complexity of your parent's life. God bless them. I can only imagine what it was like for your father as talented as he was to be denied freedom, essentially because of his religion.

Danny Feltsman: Yup.

Jerry: Whether or not he was practicing, and the trauma that that experience because guess what? He grew up with parents who had to live with that environment as well, and we haven't even touched upon mom, but I'm sure mom has a similar kind of experience, because the post World War II Soviet Union was not the friendliest place in the world. So all of that is true and operating and we want to give them a large space to be themselves. Nevertheless, what was true for you was that your child brain, said, "I am alone."

Danny Feltsman: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yup.

Jerry: It also said, "I really want a connection with my father. I want a connection with my mother, but I'd like to live with my father, who is a really important man,

who's out in the world." And perhaps Danny, perhaps occasionally you say you, you, you stayed home and the, the, the house with your mother and you said to yourself, "Is he even thinking of me?" And so one of the things you're doing through the app, for your son is telling him, "I'm thinking of you."

Danny Feltsman: Yeah.

Jerry: Right? So all of those conditions are starting to be replicated, including, and here what, here's what I find really fascinating. Your inability to find a partner.

Danny Feltsman: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: Because something is going on there that ensures that Danny is alone.

Danny Feltsman: Ah, okay. I see where you are getting there. Yup.

Jerry: Okay. We're communicating via, via zoom and we're, we're looking at each other video, right? What is this apartment that you're in? What is this place that you're in?

Danny Feltsman: So this is a, um, I guess, a partner of my roommate's house in San Mateo.

Jerry: So it's not your home?

Danny Feltsman: Uh, I don't even know where I have a home.

Jerry: I don't even know where I have a home.

Danny Feltsman: Um, yeah. But-

Jerry: How did you get from Manhattan to New Paltz?

Danny Feltsman: Via bus.

Jerry: That bus?

Danny Feltsman: I hated that bus. (laughs)

Jerry: You hated that bus.

Danny Feltsman: I hated that fucking bus.

Jerry: Fucking bus?

Danny Feltsman: The smell of Port Authority. Oh my God. Man.

Jerry: Right, right? Your son in Moscow?

Danny Feltsman: Yeah, so he's in Moscow. Um, and I moved to-

Jerry: How long does it take to fly there?

Danny Feltsman: From LA where I've been living for the last three months, straight flight 12 with, I mean 17, 18 hours a day.

Jerry: Right.

Danny Feltsman: But I love flying there, cause I go to see him.

Jerry: Of course you love flying there. I'll tell you a quick story. Um, you, you read the book and you resonated and you and I have very similar stories going on here.

Danny Feltsman: Okay.

Jerry: And, um, you're helping me realize something about myself, which is that I love airports.

Danny Feltsman: Hmm.

Jerry: They're gruesome, they're horrible and yet they have the potential for movement and there is a piece of me, that needs to be in motion, all the time. I know the feeling of hating the Port Authority smell. Those of us who grew up in New York near the Port Authority bus terminal. My God is there...

Danny Feltsman: (laughs).

Jerry: It's like it's the sixth circle of Dante is hell, okay. It's not the seventh there's worse places, but not many. And what I find really fascinating, Danny, is not only you replicating the wish that you had as a child, for the connection to the parent, which I think you're conscious of, not only are you creating the conditions for connection to your son, but there are attributes here that you may be replicating because those are the conditions that you survived as a child. How do I know you survived? You're here, you're alive. That's survival.

Danny Feltsman: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: But there's a replication of those such that this is your life now. I don't even know what home is anymore.

Danny Feltsman: Yeah. I mean, I had an apartment in Moscow that I was renting for nine years and I got rid of it right before new year's, before I flew to LA.



Jerry: I'm going to take a stab.

Danny Feltsman: That was tough.

Jerry: I'm going to take a stab here. Was the bus Greyhound Trailways or Peter Pan?

Danny Feltsman: Trailways.

Jerry: Trailways?

Danny Feltsman: Trailways. And it was, and it was the gate that was downstairs like in the basement.

Jerry: In the hell.

Danny Feltsman: Yeah. So, yeah, man. Yeah. Yeah.

Jerry: Do you see the replication going on, dude.

Danny Feltsman: Yes, yes. Obviously. Yeah, of course. Of course. But you know, I.

Jerry: I understand the, but.

Danny Feltsman: Yeah.

Jerry: I'm really enjoying you. I get the, but the, but the, the follow into the but is, but what are you going to do? But what are you going to do?

Danny Feltsman: I mean, like, I'm divorced, you know, I mean, we're not together with, yeah. I mean, um yeah.

Jerry: I get it.

Danny Feltsman: When think about all the circumstances and everything like that. Yeah. It doesn't, it doesn't make a difference because in reality that it is what it is.

Jerry: Right. But it is what it is that has such a profound saying. It is what it is. But here's the thing, Danny. It is what you're conscious of.

Danny Feltsman: Hmm.

Jerry: And yes, you have some choices you have to make. And I do not want to set off to self-critical, guilty choices that you are worried about. I don't think you're doing something wrong, but by creating more awareness about what's actually

operating, right, you have a belief system right now. Um, go out on a limb. Tell me if I'm wrong.

Danny Feltsman: Hmm.

Jerry: The belief system goes kinda like this. Either I do this in exactly this way or I shut it down.

Danny Feltsman: (laughing). Uh, that's a good question. What's the other option?

Jerry: Ah.

Danny Feltsman: (laughs)

Jerry: Nicely done, sir. Nicely done. See, part of what I think may be going on is by us looking into the darker places, the more difficult places, which are hard to look at because part of what may be going on for you right now is to re-experiencing the hell realm of the lower level of the Port Authority Station as you're waiting for the god damn Trailways bus again. In re-experiencing that we get to move to this other question, which is probably the most important question you have. Is there something else that I can do? Can I see my son more frequently and launch this business, because I think the false premise that you are carrying because of the childhood, because of the replication, the false premise is that you have to choose.

Danny Feltsman: Hmm. Can I jump in?

Jerry: Please.

Danny Feltsman: Um, I don't, to be honest, I don't, I feel like I can do both. I want to do both. Maybe on a subconscious level you are right and I'm not, maybe its different-

Jerry: Well, how often are seeing your son?

Danny Feltsman: Well that's 'cause I'm literally like here fundraising and trying to build a team and get, get, get this thing up and running. But once I do and once we are moving then obviously I, you know, I'm planning on bringing him here and you know, spending time with him here and seeing him. I'm not just going to, no, I'm not planning on sitting here in nonstop 24/7, like I'm going to be-

Jerry: Four, five or six, 10 years.

Danny Feltsman: Well I want, you know, this is what I've been doing since February is I've been basically here for two months. And then I go back there for two or three weeks here for two months ago, back there for two, three weeks. And then I take him for like a month, once in the winter, once in the summer. That's, you know,

that's a pretty good schedule for the next two or three years, he is five years old.

Jerry: I see.

Danny Feltsman: Yeah. By the time he turns seven or eight, he's going to be less, you know, kids at that age, especially boys are very dependent on their moms, and you know, he's I think okay with me not being around. But I think by the time he turns seven and eight, his mom has no problem with me bringing him here to the States 'cause I mean Southern California school system, air ocean. So I mean I have, you know, I have it all plotted out ideally.

Jerry: You have a plan.

Danny Feltsman: Yeah.

Jerry: Yeah.

Danny Feltsman: Yeah.

Jerry: Yeah.

Danny Feltsman: So you know, and if, if, and if you asked me, I mean, what, uh, that's a good question is, you know, if I'd have to choose-

Jerry: Hmm.

Danny Feltsman: ... that would be a difficult choice. But I think, and I want to do both.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Danny Feltsman: And I think I can do both. I think it's doable 'cause there's nothing, not, there's nothing. Not doable, you know. I. But again, that's maybe me just being super optimistic, but I don't think so. But I'm wondering how does, you know, are these circumstances and these conditions and the Subtext that we've been talking about, do they hit, do they come across and do people feel that, which I think they do because you feel it, but you're, you know, not like most people.

Jerry: (laughs).

Danny Feltsman: You know, But I think it comes to the cross, you know.

Jerry: Does it come across to investors?

Danny Feltsman: Yes. And do they feel, you know, 'cause look, I got a lot of things going for me, but I have a lot of things. If you just go on a strict checklist of what do we look

for when we look for startup, there's a lot of places where I don't check the box, first time founder nontechnical. It doesn't have a co-founder. You know, it's not generating revenue. You know, it comes from a completely different background, you know.

Jerry: Sounds like Snapchat. I'm kidding.

Danny Feltsman: You know, yeah, yeah. But at the same time, all those, you know, that same guy took an idea, which he was inspired to make the day that he became a dad and wanted to make a video for his son and look in the son of the world somehow, you know, could raise some money. We did raise money from friends and family and some angels, you know, did hire a good designer and did make an app. It's actually in the app store and works, you know, so it's a question of what do you focus on? And it's so, yeah.

Jerry: Hmm. Well, what do you think the answer to your own question is?

Danny Feltsman: What am I missing? What's missing from the company? Picture, you know, us as a company-

Jerry: No. What, you, you, your, your question was, was to wonder out loud whether or not you're sending off a particular vibe or a particular message.

Danny Feltsman: I think.

Jerry: What do you think?

Danny Feltsman: I always, yeah. Huh. I always put the blame, even though the blame might not be the right word, but I was put it on myself, right? That means, so if something's not happening, it's me. Maybe that's wrong. Maybe. What's your quote? Um, something about, well, what are you doing that's complicit about the circumstances that you want to change-

Jerry: How by being complicit in creating the conditions I say I don't want.

Danny Feltsman: No, there was another one. Um, it's something that's like when you do too much introspection, like there's a fine line between being introspective and then just creeping into full self doubt, right?

Jerry: Hmm.

Danny Feltsman: So how much blame do I want to play at place on myself? I should put a decent amount because obviously, you know, there's something that's happening while I'm not closing these guys, but is it really me or is it because a, they're not interested in the space. I mean, you know, that's a question. It's like, where do you really, what is it? You know?

Jerry: You remember the story of my grandfather in the book, Dominic Geido, the Iceman and His Lemon Drops.

Danny Feltsman: Yes. I remember-

Jerry: Okay.

Danny Feltsman: ... the lemon drops, but yeah. Remind me-

Jerry: Right. So, the connection to the story is that one of the places that I felt an enormous amount of safety was my grandparents' house.

Danny Feltsman: Same.

Jerry: My grandparents always had lemon drops. And the reason was that my grandfather, who was a self-made entrepreneur, always manage to have more money at the end of the day-

Danny Feltsman: End of the day that you did at the beginning.

Jerry: Right. All right, so what if there was a way to build this company, such that, you were generating revenue from day one?

Danny Feltsman: That's what I'm-

Jerry: One of the guests who's been on this podcast is a guy named Amir and Amir helped build a company called, um, uh, Doist and their product is to do list, and I'll probably have some of the facts incorrect here, but I believe he built Doist with no venture capital, completely remote. He is, uh, if I remember correctly, he and his family were refugees from the Bosnian war. They grew up in Denmark and I believe he spends most of his time living in Santiago, Chile. And he built an app that is useful and produces revenue from day one. And that enables him to live in a kind of stateless fashion, where sometimes he and his wife and his son go back, go to Denmark and sometimes they stay in Chile. And this is the point. There's a whole set of belief systems that you have that's implicit in it is what it is. Is it? What if it was something else? What if it was a revenue producing business from day one? Even if it's a dollar a day, that's more than you had yesterday.

Danny Feltsman: Yeah.

Jerry: And what if you weren't focused on building a unicorn but focused on building a business that enabled you to see your son whenever you'd like.

Danny Feltsman: You're absolutely right.

Jerry: Okay. Now what I'm suggesting is really hard. It's not the easy path, but it is a path and what I think may have been going on and may be going on here is that the old structures that you survived are getting in the way of you seeing the possibilities are at actually in front of you.

Danny Feltsman: Yes. And lack of, you know, a team to give me that perspective as well. You know, because I'm in my own head. [00:49:00] Advisors-

Jerry: Well I, I, I, I thought you were going to say this is the way I thought you were going to finish the finish the sentence and a lack of a good friend who smack in the side. The head didn't say, "What are you doing?" (laughs).

Danny Feltsman: Yes, same thing. (laughs) Same thing.

Jerry: (laughing) Same thing-

Danny Feltsman: Yeah.

Jerry: ... exactly.

Danny Feltsman: Yeah. I mean I've, I've taken way way too long to make this thing paid and I've been, you know, I think like many founders thinking of that, the product's not ready, the product's not ready. We just have to do this. We just have to do this when, I mean I've had parents say, "listen, we're ready. You know we can pay for it now. Like what are you waiting for?" "But wait a sec its not ready."

Jerry: Excuse me, hold on, hold on.

Danny Feltsman: Um.

Jerry: Let me reflect back what you just said. So yeah, we've had customers who were ready to pay me and I'm not taking that money.

Danny Feltsman: 'Cause I'm thinking, yeah. My head's been-

Jerry: But how have I been complicit in creating the conditions I say I don't want?

Danny Feltsman: Yeah.

Jerry: Okay. Now what I often say Danny and I, and I'm watching your face here, 'cause I can see the self-criticism coming in. We do not ask such questions in order to induce self criticism. We ask those questions so that we can see clearly.

Danny Feltsman: Yeah. And to get through it. Yeah.

Jerry: That's right. And what's going on for you is what are the blocks here? What are the blocks? I gotta be honest. I think you're so wrapped around the axle in the parent, son, son, parent relationship and trying to meet those needs and, and perhaps even redoing childhood in some way that you're missing what's in front of you right now, which is go build a company, go build a product which people want to pay for. Wait, you did that. But Jerry, I may not pay all the bills. That's okay. You start somewhere.

Danny Feltsman: I mean within a month I already talked to my, uh, Dev guys, you know, got 'em on equity already, which I should've done a long time ago again, you know.

Jerry: There you go.

Danny Feltsman: And yeah, with, within a month we're going to be releasing a paid version of the app. And what, you know, the reason why I mentioned that I went to six schools yesterday is because without a marketing budget, that's the only way that I can go around and get people find out about it. Parent-teacher, associations, flyers.

Jerry: That's the way my grandfather built his business, knocking on doors saying, I'm selling ice.

Danny Feltsman: Yeah, that's what I'm doing. And people are pleasantly surprised when they see, you know, when I come in and say, Hey, I'm a founder of this company, like I'm literally walking into all the schools-

Jerry: Right.

Danny Feltsman: ... and the neighborhood. They're like, "Whoa! People-

Jerry: Right.

Danny Feltsman: ... actually do that." You know?

Jerry: Right, right? Now, look, I'm not saying, I don't know, this is the answer to the businesses challenges, but what I would say is that there, what I'm experiencing is that there's a kind of limitation of view here that may be going along with the exhaustion and the fact that you're sort of trapped in a loop of self-talk. And I think that part of the gift that you've given yourself, not just by reading the book, but by actually writing in and saying, Hey, something's up here for me is the, is the opportunity to cut through the self-talk, right? That's the point of radical self inquiry. That's the point of asking those ourselves, those questions so that we are free of those structures, not so that we can then ruminate on the structures for the rest of our life.

Danny Feltsman: Yeah. I just wish I knew what else. And we've touched on it. You know, and, but I don't know if that's the only, I don't know if what we've mentioned, uh, you know, being stuck in that-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Danny Feltsman: ... son or father cycle. Yeah. I'm hoping that's the only thing that's kind of, that's the only ghost. That's the only story or a lock.

Jerry: Well, it would be unusual. It would be unusual if that were the only structure.

Danny Feltsman: Yeah.

Jerry: Okay. This is the gift of being human is that we have multiple complexes running simultaneously. The important thing, Danny, is to understand and develop the capacity to cut through and see them more clearly for yourself. That's really what I think you're being called to do at this point. I don't know if Generation Transfer is going to succeed. I don't, whatever success means, I don't know. But I do know that there is an opportunity in this business. Which you yourself felt when you read Tracy's story. There's an opportunity in this experience to really confront some of those issues inside of you? Yes, there's an opportunity in the market.

Danny Feltsman: Hmm.

Jerry: But there's an opportunity here as well.

Danny Feltsman: Hmm.

Jerry: And the difference between you as a father and your father as a father is that you, by having had him as a father, have the opportunity to do things slightly differently and you're already motivated to do that. You're doing that. How much further can you do? What does your son, what would you like your son to pass along when he's speaking into Generation Transfer to his son? What would you like him to say? That's your organizing question.

Danny Feltsman: Hmm.

Jerry: 'Cause that's the experience I would like you to give him now. My father was away, but I never felt alone.

Danny Feltsman: Hmm.

Jerry: Yeah. I just got ya.



Danny Feltsman: Yeah. I think I gave it to them that, well that's what I'm, that's my goal. That's my goal. Yeah.

Jerry: Right. You probably do give them that feeling, but that's the wish that you have.

Danny Feltsman: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jerry: Right. And that all of a sudden becomes not only an organizing principle for you, perhaps it's a life mission as a parent, but an organizing principle even around the company. What is the purpose of the, of the, of the company?

Danny Feltsman: Our purpose?

Jerry: Well, it may be embedded in this. So that children don't, even if they are physically alone, they don't feel disconnected from their parents.

Danny Feltsman: In my mind it's love, life experience. Um, you know, and the benefit is you give kids like a sense of belonging, family, self. But you know, is that important? I hope so. Is this the right platform to do it? We'll see.

Jerry: We don't know.

Danny Feltsman: We don't know. Yeah.

Jerry: Yeah. I think the aspirations are right. It may manifest in this, in Generation Transfer, it may manifest in the next iteration of Generation Transfer.

Danny Feltsman: Yeah.

Jerry: We'll see. Well we need to start to wrap Danny, um, but I want to thank you for coming on the show and sharing a very real and visceral experience as an entrepreneur. Um, I know from having done dozens and dozens of these shows and conversations that this is a help to other entrepreneurs out there. And as you know, the struggle of feeling alone is kind of universal. And, uh, one of the benefits of these kinds of conversations is it makes people feel a little bit less alone.

Danny Feltsman: Hopefully.

Jerry: Yeah.

Danny Feltsman: But yeah.

Jerry: Yeah. Yeah.

Danny Feltsman: Thank you.

Jerry: Thank you for coming on the show. I appreciate your, your doing so.

Danny Feltsman: Thanks Jerry. I appreciate it.