

The Seekers Forum Transcript

Love What You Do: An Interview with Dr. Gabor Mate

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Mark Matousek: Welcome, Gabor. Thank you so much for visiting The Seekers Forum.

Gabor Mate: Nice to be with you, Mark. Thank you.

Mark: Thank you. You've said that the difference between passion and addiction is that between a divine spark and a flame that incinerates. I love that. Can you say, how do you define passion? What is the value of passion in a human life?

Gabor: Well, passion, really is a flame that burns within you without consuming you. In fact, it enhances you. I liken it to the burning bush in the Bible, in the Old Testament, which burns, but it doesn't consume the bush. Fire, it heats, it illuminates, it guides. It enlivens, it inspires, all of that. Passion is anything that has those qualities in it. It's usually something that's directed, it's not to do with the ego. It doesn't enhance the ego as such. In fact, the ego may not even like it. It's beyond the narrow self.

Mark: There's no such thing as a personal passion, a purely personal passion?

Gabor: Well, give me an example.

Mark: For example, let's say I have a passion for writing.

Gabor: Yes, but that's creativity though, you have a passion for creating. Usually, like you, I – we – write for others. We don't purely write for ourselves. There is a passion to communicate, to teach, to inspire, to invite, to engage with. That goes beyond the self.

Mark: Yet, honestly, when I began writing, I did it for myself, and it wasn't really to communicate with someone else.

Gabor: Sure enough. You just wrote and you didn't show it to anybody else, is that what you're saying?

Mark: Yes, for a long time when I was a young kid. It was a way of actualizing myself.

Gabor: That's not the ego, is it? Because the ego wants to show it to everybody and say, "Look what a good writer I am."

Mark: Oh, yes. I see what you're saying.

Gabor: Your passion there is for self-expression and creativity, which has nothing to do with enhancing the ego, which is all about how we look to others.

Mark: I see what you're saying. I see. It's not about ego, isn't just selfish. Ego is all about other people. It's not just about—

Gabor: Well, ego is about enhancing oneself from the outside.

Mark: Right, I see what you're saying. Why does passion get such a bad rap? I speak to people particularly in the spiritual world, and they say passion is all about pain. The root of passion, of course, comes from pain. Passion, some people think is a detriment to awakening, to equanimity, and to opening.

Gabor: It all depends on how one uses the word but in the spiritual world, it can be seen as an attachment, so that you're attached to something and attachment in the spiritual world, especially the Buddhist spiritual world, is seen as a limitation, is seen as an imprisonment. I don't think passion has to be that way, but if it is, if you define it that way, then it's a spiritual limitation, but it doesn't need to be. You can be passionate without being attached to the object of your passion.

Mark: I don't think that most people believe that's possible. I think that probably is the sticking point that people think. Do you think that attachment in itself is detrimental spiritually?

Gabor: Interesting. Attachment has two meanings, really. One is the psychological meaning and it's used— Attachment theory in the psychological world, in the developmental world, I say the child developmental world. It just means the connection with another human being is the gravitational drive to connect with somebody else for the sake of taking care of them or for the sake of being taken care of. An infant has an attachment drive to the parent. Even birds have an attachment drive to the parent. The parent has an attachment drive to take care of the child. You can't say that's good or bad, it simply is. We don't survive otherwise.

Then that same word, attachment, is used in the, you might say, the Buddhist sense of desperate clinging to certain outcomes or certain experiences. Now, the irony is that people whose attachments or needs are met in the first place will not develop the attachments in the second sense. Because the attachment in the second sense comes from besides the emptiness and hunger that arises from your needs not having been met. Now you have this emptiness and this hunger, and you keep trying to satisfy them from the outside. That has negative consequences on you.

The first kind of attachment is simply how human beings are. The second is what happens when those needs are not met, and now you have this emptiness and craving, insatiable craving. Now you've got, in a personal sense, addictions, and in the social sense, capitalism.

Mark: Say more about that, about capitalism and the connection between capitalism and the unmet attachment needs of a child.

Gabor: Well, I'm just writing a book. The book I was writing when we met a year and a half ago in Costa Rica, and have had quite a lot of trouble writing it. I was almost desperate enough to call you to get some help with it. Anyway, it's called "The Myth of Normal Trauma, Illness, and Health in a Toxic Culture." One of the points I'm making in there is that this society, by the way we raise children, stress families, tear communities apart, isolate individuals, leaves us with parenting situations where children's needs are not met for attachment. Therefore, they're left empty and hungry and seeking stuff from the outside.

Then we have a whole economy that's based on meeting those secondary needs, those false needs because our primary real needs were not met, now we have these false needs.

Whole industries are based on selling us stuff that have no other purpose than to temporarily satiate that need for completion, but since they can't do it, doesn't matter how many Lamborghinis you drive. Look at any number of rich people whose lives betoken misery.

The whole system is based on this idea, the more you get, the happier you'll be. You're all alone, your individualistic attachments don't really work. You have to be aggressive, selfish.

If you believe sufficiently in that you get to be president of the United States. This system is based on exciting, but not meeting that attachment, hunger, and then filling it with products and activities that can't possibly satiate, therefore become addictive, so you can sell more products and more activities.

Mark: That's the vicious circle.

Gabor: That's the vicious circle. That's capitalism. Now you have a system where— Like look at COVID, where we had this scare gradually climbing out of doo-doo. Really remarkable mobilization of resources and concern, and science, but then you have other conditions that kill many more people than COVID. For example, air pollution kills every year, more than double the number of people that died of COVID internationally. Who's doing anything about that? Why not? Because air pollution is profitable. COVID threatens the economy. That's capitalism for you. Whatever it is.

There's a Canadian writer, a philosopher, John McMurtry, who coined the phrase life capital. Life capital is anything that enhances life. Now in this society, life capital doesn't matter at all, doesn't count. Requiring to sell people products that kill them, make food that makes them unhealthy, and kills them. Sell them products that make them addicted. Engage them in activities that can possibly fulfill their needs for the sake of profit and that's capitalism.

Mark: Is a healthy or helpful capitalism possible, do you think?

Gabor: Well, I want to see it happen. I've yet to see it happen. First of all, capitalism is based on slavery. Even the concept of race was you might say a capitalist invention. Race wasn't always a concept. It came along when it became necessary to enslave people and they had to explain how they were inferior to you so you could enslave them.

Mark: It all comes down to profit and loss.

Gabor: Well, slavery, it was an economic enterprise in the mass murder of indigenous people around the world, from Canada to the United States, to South America, to Australia, their exploitation, their subjection by the British Empire, the French Empire, and now the American Empire, these are all based on— They make millions of people dead around the world and unhealthy. Now, at home, William Blake, the British poet, wrote about the dark Satanic mills, the factories where young children were made to work.

From the very beginning, this system was based on the most severe exploitation. Now, it had a grace period after the second world war, where there were more social services, corporations were reigned in a little bit in their capacity to extort profits, there were strong unions, but that was a 30-year period, which was totally torn asunder on their neoliberalism, Margaret Thatcher in Britain, Ronald Reagan in the States, now we're back to extremes of inequality.

If you look at the American population, something like 70% or at least on one medication for some chronic condition. Now, is that an accident or is that an outcome of the system? If a healthy capitalism is possible, I want to see it. Nobody is yet to prove it to me. The fundamental assumptions that I referred to before by human nature were aggressive, individualistic, selfish, and cruel. This is a falsehood. It goes contrary to what human nature is actually all about. How can you have a system based on a false assumption, result in any

healthy outcomes? If you're asking me, the answer is no. Somebody wants to believe otherwise, let them show how it's possible.

Mark: Right. Let's talk a little bit about workaholism, which is so endemic to what you're talking about. How would you distinguish workaholism from healthy ambition or passion for work?

Gabor: Let's just define an addiction, any kind of addiction. An addiction is manifested in any behavior that a person finds temporal relief or pleasure in and therefore craves, but has negative consequences and in spite that, they can't get out, so pleasure creating relief in a short term, negative outcome, inability to give it up. That's what an addiction is. Now, if somebody works but is— The Buddha, the Eightfold Path talks about the right work, the right livelihood.

First of all, if your livelihood is right in the sense that it doesn't hurt people and doesn't hurt the world and you love it because you're passionate about it, and you're not so attached to it that you give up your personal life, your social life, your intimate relationships, and you don't give up your spiritual goals, then it's just a passion, it's wonderful, more power to you. But if you engage with it in such a way that it encourages negative consequences such as spiritual suffocation, harm to your relationship with your spouse, partner, child, friends, because you're not available and your mind is always on the work, harm to yourself because you can't dare step away, and you're taking all these stresses, then you've got an addiction problem. That's the difference. It's a fine line between the two, really is, but really that fine line creates two totally different worlds.

Mark: You brought up spirituality. I was just going to ask you about the role of spirituality in countering this cultural toxicity that you talk so much about. How would you begin to talk about how spirituality can modulate ambition and capitalism?

Gabor: I will, but you tell me what you mean by spirituality.

Mark: I was going to ask you.

Gabor: It's like one resource, like God.

Mark: How do you define spirituality?

Gabor: Well, it's an awareness of on some level and the desire for belonging to and understanding and recognizing something greater than your little self. That's the way I would put it. No, I'm not somebody who's had deep spiritual experiences that I could talk about with any articulation nor in truth, unlike somebody who spends significant time in what would be recognized as spiritual practices, although I've done a lot of spiritual reading.

The problem with spirituality is that it can be as much as an addiction as anything else and it can be a bypass. How many— never mind the Catholic Church, which serially and chronically, and relentlessly abuses children. I don't mean the church, I mean people high up in the church with the best credentials. This happens in any denomination, by the way. It happens in the Orthodox Jewish Community, it happens certainly in other Christian denominations, it also happens in the so-called spiritual world.

I could off-hand name you five well-known, internationally revered spiritual teachers even leaders, who've abused their followers, very famous claims. So, spirituality, as such, it

doesn't offer you any kind of out, if by spirituality we mean the practices that are called spiritual. It has to be combined, very often, it's a bypass. So, that's why personally, I'm far more interested in the emotional work that people do. If I had to advise somebody if they had to make a choice, which they don't, but if they did, between so-called spiritual work, which is to say pursuing beautiful mind states, meditating, and so on, and doing the inner work, I'd say, do the inner work.

Fortunately, there's no necessary dichotomy, but the one without the other, both without the other are inadequate, I would say.

Mark: It seems to me that when you talk about cultural toxicity and you talk about a culture of addiction, it strikes me as fundamentally a spiritual hunger, an emptiness that comes from the attachment to their care, grief, and all of that, it also comes from a lack of sense of being a part of a greater whole.

Gabor: Look, we can call it spiritual, but that's just a word, isn't it? When you look at what human needs are, most people who study what human needs are, they agree that human needs include a sense of belonging, a sense of meaning, and a sense of transcendence. You can call that spiritual, but that's part of our nature. When those needs are not met, we suffer.

Mark: Right. Is there a lack of belonging, do you think, in our culture? Do you think that that's connected to the epidemic of addiction?

Gabor: There's an epidemic of loneliness. The number of Americans who define themselves as lonely has gone from 20% to 40% in a few decades. Your former surgeon general, Vivek Murthy, has written a book on loneliness that's been documented. Loneliness actually is physiological consequences. People who are lonely, they get sick more easily and they die more rapidly of their disease for physiological reasons. So long as this a huge problem, but then what do you expect in a society that says, "You're a separate individual, you just thought for yourself at the expense of everybody else." That's one of the toxicities of the culture.

Mark: The selfishness, the isolation, the disconnect.

Gabor: Yeah, the induced selfishness and the induced isolation. Then we call that human nature. It isn't human nature. It goes contrary to human nature.

Mark: If it were human nature, we wouldn't have survived as a species.

Gabor: Exactly. Yes, we wouldn't have survived as a species, nor would any mammalian species survive, if that was their reality.

Mark: I think people use that definition of human nature to justify a lot of bad behavior, justify—

Gabor: As Noam Chomsky points it out, any society needs to have a working theory of human nature. The view of human nature that any society will have will reflect the dominant structures of those societies. There's a so-called human nature is used to justify the very system that created that view of human nature. Again, it's a beautiful circularity. As somebody pointed out, when somebody does something selfless, or kind, or compassionate, nobody says, "Oh, that's just human nature." We say it when people act selfishly, they say, "Oh, that's just human nature." Why is the one human nature and not the other?

Mark: I'd like to ask you a little bit about trauma. I think it's one of those words that's so overused. Of course, you are such an expert in it. Does everyone experience trauma? How does trauma differ from pain? It's a two-part question.

Gabor: That's an important distinction. I would say that, on the one hand, the word is overused or used too loosely, on one hand, but on the other hand, it's not used nearly often enough. There's a complete lack of trauma awareness throughout our culture, in medicine, as I know very well as a physician, in psychiatry, in the law, in the educational system, there's an utter lack of trauma awareness. We're hardly overdoing it. It's a question of using the word appropriately. You're right, trauma is not pain.

Sometimes people say, "Oh, what you said traumatized me." No, it didn't. It just hurt you. "Oh, that movie last night traumatized me." No, it didn't. It just left you with some upset feelings. Trauma and pain and upset are not synonymous. Trauma is a wound. Trauma is a chronic wound. In fact, the word trauma comes from the word wound, a Greek word for wounding or wound. Trauma is a wound that really hurts and you retain the pain. You retain your defense against the pain without actually being aware of their source.

Trauma is also like what happens to a wound when it forms scar tissue. What's the nature of scar tissue? It's protective, but it's not like real flesh. It doesn't grow, it has no growth capacity. It doesn't feel, there's no nerve endings in it. It's not flexible, but stiff. When traumatized, we become wounded, we have a lot of pain, and we become scarred, we become limited and less flexible, and harder. We don't feel so much.

The outcomes of that trauma— trauma, by the way, is not what happens to you. Trauma is not the fact that you went through a tsunami, or genocide, or abuse. Those are traumatic for sure but they're not the trauma. The trauma is the wound that you sustained and still carry. You could have gone through those events, and some people do, very few, but they do and they're not wounded for whatever reason, we can talk about that. The term is not in what happens to you, it's what happens inside you as a result.

Trauma is this chronic, hidden wound that we carry, where we hurt a lot, where we're inflexible, where we don't feel as much because our hearts are shut down. We have trouble growing. That's why growth invites or demands being vulnerable and being open and that's very hard for people to do when they were hurt in their vulnerability and when they were small.

Mark: What are some of the reasons that certain people are traumatized by events that don't traumatize other people? I know this is a general question.

Gabor: No, I think there are two very distinct answers to it. One is that some people are just born more sensitive, about 15%, 20% of the population are born with the genes that make them more sensitive. The sensitive is a very specific meaning, again, *sentire*, the Latin word to feel, a sensitive person feels more. Let me illustrate that for you. I'm going to guide you through a little experiment here, okay. I want you to tap yourself on the shoulder gently. Did that hurt?

Mark: No.

Gabor: No, okay. Now, imagine the same experience if your shoulder was bare, and there was a burn there so that the nerve endings were very close to the surface. If you did it again, what would you feel?

Mark: It would feel painful.

Gabor: It would be excruciating, actually. Now, the external event didn't change but your sensitivity made all the difference. Now, that's not a bad thing. That same sensitivity can make you more creative, more alive, more insightful, more empathetic, more compassionate; you can become a leader but it all depends on how their sensitivity is responded to by the environment. If you grew up in a hurtful environment, it's going to hurt a lot more, you're going to be a lot more wounded. That's the first point.

The second point is then what's the context? Because you may feel pain as a child but if there's somebody there to hold you to that pain, and to validate your experience and your emotions, and to not regulate your undeveloped little mind that doesn't yet know how to move through pain, then you won't be wounded, even though you've experienced pain. Again, it depends on degrees of sensitivity and then how much empathetic holding did you receive. This is why some people are more wounded than others. If you're less sensitive, you won't be as wounded. If you're more supported, you won't be as wounded but— though, that's the basic answer.

Mark: When people talk about being re-traumatized, is that a misuse of the word or are they feeling some pain, but they're not really being re-traumatized?

Gabor: I think for most of them that's the case. It's certainly possible to look, for example, let's say you are traumatized and you go to a spiritual healer. Because you're so desperate for help, and your gut feelings have been shut down, you don't realize that this person is an exploiter and they're exploiting you but that's a re-traumatization. That's adding to the original trauma. That can happen.

On the other hand, very often, when people say, "I'm re-traumatized," they just mean that, "I felt that my original trauma was triggered." It doesn't mean that they were re-traumatized. In fact, most of the time, I would say people use that word but what they really mean is all this pain and all this rage, and all this terror rose in me and I was really traumatized. No, you weren't. What happened was that something happened to trigger those states in you. You could actually use that to learn from actually. That could be a learning experience.

Mark: That's what I was about to ask because students say this to me all the time, they'll be writing about something and say, "Well, I'm being re-traumatized by the question." I think, "No, you're not actually." All feelings are coming up to be looked at.

Gabor: Yes. It's just what the person is saying is, "I'm having these emotions and I don't want to look at them. I don't want to deal with them," which is actually furthering their trauma. Of course, if people haven't had compassionate holding, and if they don't feel 100% safe, they do have a hard time experiencing their pain and they don't want to. Partly, it depends on the context and the question and who's asking the question, and then what spirit are they asking the question.

Mark: What about healing from trauma? Is it necessary to know what happened in order to heal from trauma?

Gabor: Well, it's impossible in some cases to know the trauma because you can really be traumatized in the womb. I mean the emotional states of your mother can already have a wounding impact on you, and much of what happens even before you have the awareness to form memory threads. Not only is it not necessary, it is in some cases not even possible, on the one hand. On the other hand, it's a lot more accessible than most people think they are. I've yet to talk to anybody really where there's, "I don't know how I was hurt." I said, "Then give me five minutes of your time." Really, it takes no more than five minutes. You just have to ask the right questions.

I know it is not necessary because life every day will show you how you were hurt if you know how to look. If you cannot interpret your experience, life is showing every day how you were hurt. It's helpful to know, but it's not necessary, and as I said, it's a lot more accessible than most people believe it is.

Mark: If someone comes to you and has early sexual abuse, let's say childhood sexual abuse, and they know something happened, but they don't know what happened. How do they heal from that? They often say to me, "Well, if I don't know what happened, how can I heal from it?"

Gabor: Well, what they're saying is that if I don't consciously know what happened, because inside them the knowledge is there. Well, I would say to them, "How do you know that you're hurt?" Look, the problem is not the sexual abuse again. That it isn't the problem, but not in any way minimizing it. The problem with it is the wound that they are carrying. Now, let's give it a physical metaphor. Let's say you came to me with a wound on your arm and it was inflicted while you were sleeping, so you don't know how it was inflicted. If I'm a doctor or a surgeon, would I start with, "Well, I'm sorry, I can't help you until you actually tell me how exactly did you incur this wound." You don't need that. Secondly, ask the right questions. That person who doesn't think they know, they know a lot more than they think they do.

Mark: They may have shut down around the pain.

Gabor: Yes. Then that's what they defended themselves. They shut down around it. Having said that, I worked off from the psychedelics and they don't know what happened to you. Go on a psychedelic journey or go under hypnosis sometimes.

Mark: Oh, sorry, sorry. Go ahead.

Gabor: No, I'm only saying that it's not totally necessary to know the details, and secondly, there might be a way of accessing it anyway, if you really want to know.

Mark: Does changing the story or creating a story or changing the story you were living with help to heal trauma?

Gabor: Well, looking for the word, typically, I can't find what I'm looking for, but here it is. I'm just working on chapter 22 of my new book, okay?

Mark: Yes.

Gabor: I'm quoting Dan Siegel who's a physician, a psychiatrist, and he says – and this chapter is actually in the possibility of healing. Dan Siegel says, "People can change their lives by freeing themselves from narratives that are literally making them sick." It's not what

happened that makes us sick, it's the story that we tell ourselves as a result of a brain that's making us sick. We can certainly change the narrative. Now, I can't change the fact that as a Jewish infant, I almost died in the genocide and of my grandparents death. I can't change that fact. That happened. Nothing I can do about it. I can change what I made it mean. I made it mean a lot of things that were limiting and constricting. I can change that so I can't change the narrative of what history actually perpetrated or continues today to perpetuate and look at Gaza and the deaths of the children there. We can't change that, but we can certainly change what we make it mean.

Mark: What do you mean by compulsive positive thinking?

Gabor: Compulsive positive thinking? Oh, some people insist that they only look on the positive side of things. Well, Michael J. Fox, the actor, he's got Parkinson's disease. He wrote this biography, the title was *Always Looking Up: The Memoirs of an Incurable Optimist*. Now, you're a writer. Just parse that title. Now, as a metaphor, always looking up. What happens to somebody who's always looking up and they're walking along the road and always looking up? What happens to them?

Mark: Hey, they get in accidents. They bumped into other people. They walk off cliffs.

Gabor: Yes, exactly. Look at the second part of that title, an incurable optimist. Well, he's got this significant condition. I'm not criticizing the guy, bless his soul. He's a very sweet man. Parkinson's, as many of these other chronic conditions, arise out of trauma and suffering, in my view. I've known people to heal from severe conditions. As much as I have known them, other people have known them, have documented them, have written about them, who healed by looking at exactly the so-called negative, the suffering.

I think that people are compulsive positive thinkers. It's good to be optimistic, to believe in possibility, your own and everybody else's, that's good, but it's not good to be unrealistic. Reality has to take in all aspects of human experience. The composite positive thinkers exclude a huge range of human experience.

Mark: It's a form of tyranny, I think. We just had a president in this country who was a compulsive positive thinker, and he used that to justify all kinds of cruelty, and selfishness, and denial.

Gabor: Well, I wouldn't put them in that camp. It's an unconscious tyranny, first of all. Secondly, Trump, was he a positive thinker when he talked about immigrants? Was he a positive thinker when he talked about homeless people or people of color? He was full of negative thinking. He just projected it onto people he didn't like. He's the one, by the way, the so-called positive thinker, let me read you – he actually said, I'm going to look for the quote, but he actually said, "The world is a horrible place. Animals kill for food. Humans do it for pleasure. Your friends want your house, everything that you have, and your wife, and these are your friends." He says, "Now, what about your enemies?" That's not a positive thinker. That's a man who is completely stuck in a zero-sum ugly view of the world that he then does so much to recreate it in his own image. That's not the usual positive thinker.

Mark: Not the usual positive thinker, but he worshiped Norman Vincent Peale. His first mentor was his father, and then Norman Vincent Peale.

Gabor: Yes, it's a big bypass of reality.

Mark: It's a big bypass. Right. That's the toxic positivity.

Gabor: Yes. There's nothing consistent about Trump. One of his traits is that his mind is totally unintegrated.

Mark: Yes.

Gabor: I don't think the guy even lies. The media calls him a liar, but I don't think he lies. I think he believes that a lie or somebody who – I'm going to speak an untruth and I know it's untrue. I'm going to go in front of the United Nations and I'm going to say that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction when I know that that's garbage, that's Colin Powell, the Americans' Secretary of State at the time or whoever it was at the time. Oh, that's a liar. Trump is not a liar. He's far more disturbed.

Mark: Dangerous. Delusional.

Gabor: Yes. He actually believes that he won the election because his little ego can't handle the concept of losing. Because in his family of origin, he was made to suffer at the very thought of losing. His father tormented his kids with this must-win aggressive mentality. One of his brothers, Fred, drank himself to death as a result of all this. Trump's way of dealing with it was to fragment himself. I don't think he's lying. I think he comes from a place in himself that's at the level of a two-year-old denial of reality. Whatever reality is not pleasant to him, he denies it.

Mark: What about attention deficit? You say that attention deficit has an emotional meaning in people's lives. What might an emotional meaning of attention-deficit be in [crosstalk]

Gabor: All mental health conditions do so that rather through biological diseases, mental health conditions, they are responses to life. Let me ask you a question here, Mark. Real-life experiment again, okay?

Mark: Yes.

Gabor: Let's say I were to become abusive towards you now, call you names, yell at you. What would be your options?

Mark: I could listen to it and I could end this conversation.

Gabor: You could just leave, right?

Mark: Yes.

Gabor: You could also tell me to go to hell. You could fight back. Let's say you're feeling really hurt and stressed by what I was saying to you and leaving or fighting weren't options, then what would you do? What do you think you'd do?

Mark: Check out.

Gabor: You would check out. Checking out, tuning out, is a coping mechanism. What's the hallmark of ADD? Tuning out. Absent-mindedness. It is not an inherited disease contrary to all this medical nonsense that people put forward. It's not genetic. It's what it is. It's a

response to early stress when the brain is programmed to tune out because the stress is too much and the more sensitive you are, the more the stress is going to be too much for you.

Like in my case, I have already told you my history. There are all kinds of reasons why I checked out as an infant, but you don't need second world war or genocide, you just need parents who are stressed, economically stressed, racially stressed, socially stressed, traumatized. They haven't dealt with the trauma yet, fearful and the child just absorbs all that, can't handle it, checks out, and then that becomes programmed into his brain or her brain.

Now you've got this so-called disease. It's not a disease. It's a condition, all right. It exists, but it's not who the person is. It's not a disease they inherited, it's how they cope with their environment. Problem is with those early coping mechanisms, later on they become sources of problems.

Mark: It's a response to pain.

Gabor: Everything is a response to pain. As a physician and researcher, when I say researcher, reading research literature, I have found that all mental health conditions, so-called mental diseases, and most chronic physical health conditions are responses to pain, unresolved pain.

Mark: So many people blame ADD on technology but that's obviously just a symptom.

Gabor: Well, we've had these problems before we had the technology. Technology makes it worse because it's very addictive and it further isolates people. Furthermore, it's a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it really allows a lot of information to be available to a lot of people. On the other hand, it also allows a lot of lies, this information, fantasy, and venom also available to a lot of people.

It's addictive and interferes with human relationships but it's not the problem, it's a sign of a system that's deeply problematic, and it exacerbates the problems that we already have. At the same time, this conversation wouldn't be possible without technology. A lot of your listeners say, "Oh, that'd be a good thing. I don't want to hear this stuff," but that's up to them. The point is those that want to hear can hear and that's a good thing. Technology in itself is neutral. It's how it's used. In this society, it's used in pathological ways as well as in productive ways.

Mark: What gives you hope, Gabor? What gives you hope?

Gabor: I don't do any hope because hope is always about something happening in the future that I wish would happen. Hope really is absconding from the present. Noam Chomsky is one of the greatest minds who ever manifested on this earth. He was asked once if he was an optimist or a pessimist and he said, "Strategically, I'm an optimist, and tactically, I'm a pessimist," which means that in the long term, I see the possibilities of human beings. In the short term, I see all kinds of problems. I'm the same way. I see the possibility of healing and transformation both on the social and the personal level, I wouldn't be writing this book or other books if I didn't believe so. That possibility is not however our future possibly, the possibility is inherent in the present.

Mark: Just one last question. Can you tell us something about your book? I know it's not coming out until next year, but can you give the audience some sense of what to expect?

Gabor: Well, if I can be a bit self-serving first-

Mark: Please.

Gabor: -or informative, whoever wants to interpret it that way. I've written four books already out there. They address many of the issues that we've talked about. I'm not going to go through the title of them, but anybody who wants to check them out can just go on Amazon or don't go to Jeff Bezos. Go to my website and you can check out the books so you can just find them online.

Next week, Mark, I'm re-recording this on June the 2nd, I think in next week, depending on where you're at, there's a documentary about my work coming out called, *The Wisdom of Trauma*. You can Google that. You can go to thewisdomoftrauma.com. You can sign up to see it. There will be a week of conversations with people like Dan Siegel, who I quoted, and Steven Porges, Peter Lavigne, Esther Perel, a lot of people in the trauma world, and the psychological world, spiritual world as well, psychedelic world who have interviewed that week online. You can watch all that.

You're asked to make a donation. The filmmakers are going to defray their costs. Nobody needs to make a donation and most people don't. That's up to you. The film is still available to you. Just check out thewisdomoftrauma.com. You can see the trailer and you can sign up to see it so far. A few days ago, over 200,000 people have signed up to see it. I know they're hoping for many more but that's available. Now, in terms of my next book, can I actually share the cover with you? Do you have time for that?

Mark: Yes, please.

Gabor: I have to just open up-

Mark: Take your time.

Gabor: -this beautiful cover that just arrived yesterday so I'm rather excited about it. I'm going to open up the cover. I just have. Now, I'm going to screen-share. The host has disabled screen sharing. Can you enable screen sharing? If you know how to do it.

Mark: I think what I can do is make you a--

Gabor: Co-host?

Mark: Yes. There we go.

Gabor: Okay, share. Can you see the cover?

Mark: Oh, nice.

Gabor: Trauma, Illness, and Healing In A Toxic Culture. I'm going to stop the screen sharing now if I can.

Mark: That's a great cover.

Gabor: I love the cover. It's really dramatic. I don't know how to stop the screen sharing. Stop share. There we go. What it's about is what we've been talking about. That this is a

toxic culture, both in the positive sense of the word toxic, positive in the sense that it actively toxifies people to so many of the products and foods and pollutants and psychic pollutants. Toxic also as in the sense that it doesn't meet human needs. You can hurt a people by doing bad things to them or by not giving them what they need. If I didn't give you oxygen when you needed it, you would die.

This society deprives people of some essential needs, some of which we've talked about. It's a toxic culture. This book is about our individual health is not an isolated biological phenomenon. It reflects our relationships from conception onward, a relationship to the ones close to us, our community, and the entire culture, and when we try to understand the illness or trauma as an individual event, we're missing the point, I'm also missing the possibility of healing. That, in a nutshell, is what the book is about.

I talk about everything from culture, to politics, to individual biology, to relationships, to spiritual, everything we've thought about. Because this book really encompasses everything I've come to learn and understand. I'm trusting, by the way, at this point, because I'm almost finished revising it, and so far, I didn't like the original version, which I was working on when I met you. I was totally caught up in the bushes trying to cover every detail. I think I've been able to hone it down to something that'll be both informative, and interesting, and also, I hope inspiring.

Mark: Fantastic. I can't wait to read it, and I recommend it to anyone who's watching this, and you're a big inspiration for me, and I just appreciate your taking the time.

Gabor: Thank you, Mark. I'm grateful for your invitation. It's really nice to see you.

Mark: You too. Thank you, Gabor.

Gabor: Take care.