

The Brave Files Podcast

Mike lamele: Failure: Just as Valuable as Success

Episode 170

Mike lamele 0:02

Vulnerable, zany and aligned.

Heather Vickery 0:07

Well, hello there brave hearts. Welcome to The Brave Files Podcast. I'm your host, Heather Vickery. Hey, have you heard the exciting news, I have a new book coming out. The book is called Fuck Fearless: Making the Brave Leap, and it's officially being released on October 28. The book breaks down my coaching platform, The Brave Method, which isn't an entered a an exit z, step by step guide how to do anything. It's a creative and strategic approach on how to build a life that's full of authenticity, bravery, joy, and love and how to do it on your own terms. I share the brave method with you from a series of personal stories memoir style, case studies from both people I've coached and other guests on this podcast. We call those brave spotlights and actionable items that we call, of course, brave action for you to step right into this beautiful, authentic, brave life that you most desire and deserve to build. But I need your help. Will you help me get the word out about the book by joining my brave circle book launch team. It's gonna be so much fun. If I have you there with me. There are several ways that you could support me and the book launch. Visit Vickeryandco.com/BraveCircle and let us know a that you want to be part of the Braves Circle and be how you want to participate. We really want to use whatever resources you're most comfortable with, to have you help us spread the word. I'm so excited to have you with me on the team. I look forward to connecting with you. We're going to give away fun prizes. It's going to be worth it. It's gonna be fun. I hope you'll join the brave circle. Alright, folks, the episode we have for you today is so much fun. I loved my conversation with Mike lamele whose name by the way I totally butchered at the start of this interview. And we do talk about that towards the end of the conversation. Mike has a fascinating story. He stumbled into the spotlight in 2014. After his highly unusual coming out story went viral. He built a business off that viral blog post and when it failed, Mike was crushed. But rather than letting the failure itself define him, Mike decided to host a failure celebration that changed his life. Turns out failure is a really valuable resource and it leads to an awful lot of success. Today, Mike helps others discover their life's passion and purpose was something he calls sensitivity mapping. And this conversation Mike and I talked about value of failure, how our minds and our bodies align or in Mike's case on align the power of being vulnerable and asking for help and why it's important to prioritize your health in order to have a successful business or career.

This is Heather Vickery and you're listening to The Brave Files, stories from people living courageously. When we choose bravely and big and small ways, it powerfully elevates our lives. I hope these stories connect with you and encourage you to embrace bravery in every possible way, day after day. Together, we could build a movement of courageous living that enriches both our lives and our communities. And if you enjoy the show, I asked you to please share it with others. Maybe think of someone who you want to choose bravely right alongside you. Thanks

for tuning in. Now here's the show. Hey everyone, today I am joined by Mike lamele. And he is a life purpose expert and brand strategist. But he's helped hundreds of people to connect the dots between their lived experiences to find the common thread that explains their subconscious motivations, unique genius and life purpose. Those are so many things that sound really cool to me how your subconscious motivations connect to your unique genius and your purpose in life. I am super excited about that. Mike helps folks do all sorts of things from branding and building a business to exploring identity and sexuality to finding their artistic voice and even rediscovering themselves after a life altering events like divorce or retirement. He's also an author, his book out is called Enough Already: Create success on your own terms and that is speaking my language. Mike is here to share his provocative and vulnerable take on life with his story about rethinking sexuality after his first same sex relationship and so much else. Mike, welcome to The Brave files.

Mike lamele 4:54

Thanks so much for having me.

Heather Vickery 4:56

I'm excited to have you. I really am you hit all my hot button words I love all of that. And before we dig too far, I know people want to know, what is a life purpose expert?

Mike lamele 5:09

Yeah, right. I'm always figuring that out. So, you know, I don't think that you fall into a job like this right? You often don't know your purpose. And that's why you get to where you get. And so for me, what I actually do for work, and I've been doing it for about eight years now, is I map people's lived experiences. So I listened to stories. And what I'm doing is figuring out what you subconsciously do every time you're successful. And so in your relationship, and your friendships, when you're successful at work, every human being is doing something, we all have this subconscious success formula. And I'm understanding what that is, and what makes you feel purposeful, so that you can understand why this launch works. But this one failed, why this relationship work, but that one failed. And we're starting to understand just who you are, and what makes you feel purposeful and successful.

Heather Vickery 5:51

Okay, so I love all of that. And I think it's really cool. I also that you admit that these things are always ever evolving, right? Like, the more we do, the more we know, the more things shift and change. A person doesn't just decide to do that. And I don't think there's a degree in that. So I'm guessing that your life experience led you to recognizing that you had this gift, maybe you've done so for yourself, but to share with others. So can you tell us what led you to doing this? Like, what is your journey in this?

Mike lamele 6:19

Yeah, you are in for a story. So you know, I was pretty successful early in life. I started a public relations agency when I was 22 years old. And this was a pretty successful agency. So I worked with billionaires, I worked with healthcare politicians, I specialized in health care reform. And a

few years later, I was making a lot of money. I was working long hours. I woke up one day in my mid 20s. And I was vomiting blood. And that was, yeah, obviously scary. I didn't know what to do with that. I was vomiting blood every day for about two months straight. I was hospitalized to get fluids because I was losing some fluids. I was losing weight. I couldn't eat anything. It got to such a point that I actually had an accident at work. So I literally shit my pants at work. Which was devastating. Right? Yeah, I couldn't control my bowels. I that's a whole nother story. But I got to such a bad place that I couldn't cook for myself. I could drive myself to appointments. And I really thought I was going to die. And so in the midst of this, I had one roommate who was in a relationship and she was never around. And the other roommate was a guy I knew from college, I kind of knew him. And he was on pharmacy residency. So he knew the medical system. And he was just there during the day. And so he would drive me to appointments and start to take care of me. And when I couldn't cook for myself, he would cook for me. And about two months into this process, I realized I was developing feelings for him. And this was strange for me because up until this moment in my life, I had never been with a man and to my conscious knowledge never been attracted to a man. And so here I was, and you know, to put you in my psychology at the time, I'm thinking like, hey, am I just scared? I'm gonna die. And this is a human within proximity, right?

Heather Vickery 8:11

Absolutely, we do develop attachments to people who are loving and caring and especially when we're super in need of that, that that's normal.

Mike lamele 8:21

Right? Totally. So I'm kind of like, Is this real? Is this not real? And also, I was doing crazy radical therapies because I thought I was gonna die. So I was, you know, acupuncture, Reiki reflexology, I was writing handwritten letters to every member of my family, telling them everything I never said out loud. And so I'm in this mindset of just like, if I'm vomiting blood, I've gotta let everything come up. And so I decided one day, I'm just going to tell him about this. Now, it didn't feel sexual or even romantic, but it felt like something. And I said, I'm just gonna tell him that I feel something that doesn't feel like a friendship. And so I got the nerve, his name's Garrett. And I said, Garrett, I don't know how you're gonna react. I don't know if you're gonna want to punch me in the face. If you're not gonna want to be friends with me. But I feel something here. Something has changed. And I feel like I need to be honest about it. And I'm so grateful that he's one of the most thoughtful people in the world. Because he said, okay, it's a lot. But let me think about this. And so today, you know, I'm condensing months down into just a few minutes. But over the course of conversations and emails, we decided to try to make a relationship work. And it was one that wasn't physical yet. We still dated women, but we explored the emotional relationship with one another.

Heather Vickery 9:37

And so may I ask then, is this was this also Garrett's first same sex relationship?

Mike lamele 9:42

It was. Absolutely. Yeah. So he was recently out of a six and a half year relationship with a woman is actually Garrett had only ever there was that relationship and then me, so yeah, so this is all going on. And we start to explore this relationship mean While I knew I needed to leave my job, because if you're vomiting blood, probably not. Yeah. So I thought, okay, I've got to leave this job and I don't know what to do. I am a writer, I'm a public relations, I'm very successful. This is all I know how to do. So I started going to every school you can imagine. And I did the thing I never recommend anyone listening do which is I gave a year's notice at work. I don't recommend you do that.

Heather Vickery 10:26

Why would you do that?

Mike lamele 10:28

Because you know, I was an owner of this company. And I thought, like, I've gotta do right by these people. I'm gonna, you know, put them in a good position and get the company in the right spot. It was hell, I'll be honest with you. Yeah, slowly phased out my assistance didn't know my clients couldn't know, because they might jump ship. It was a disaster. But while that's going on, I'm working full time. I'm navigating my first same sex relationship. I'm trying to heal myself. I'm now going to herbal school full time and nutrition school full time and going to a whole bunch of intuitive classes. It was quite a year. But I finished that year and I decided, you know what, I'm just going to be like the herbalist to Boston's tech entrepreneurs, because I know all of them, right? I'm an herbalist. Now I want to help people not get sick. And so I finish garritan I have now been together about a year and a half. And we decided it was real. We were now exclusive. And we started telling people in our family, not wide networks of friends yet, but people in our family because we knew this was a real thing. And so,

Heather Vickery 11:31

Just to clarify when you said Garrett and I are now, you mean now as in then.

Mike lamele 11:36

Yes, now is a year and a half after we had started right when I was losing my job. So it was kind of a one sided thing. And so we moved in just the two of us, no roommates at this point. And I started being this herbalist and I wasn't making a lot of money. But worse than that, I hated it. I didn't love it. And I'm a writer, I missed writing. So I said, Okay, Mike, you have ghosts, written books and articles your whole career. Why don't you use your own voice and write for yourself for the first time ever. And so I started a blog. And now I wasn't going to talk about my relationship because that wasn't public yet. But I could talk about being very successful at a young age, realizing success wasn't was cracked up to be I got really sick and redefining success this I could talk about. And so I started a blog writing every weekday. And about three months later, a publisher reached out to me and said, Mike, I love your voice. I've been following you. Can I give you a book deal?

Heather Vickery 12:29

That's amazing. That's everybody's dream. Nobody gets that.

Mike lamele 12:32

Right. So I'm sitting here like, does this happen? I mean, I just got a book deal out of the blue, yeah, you're gonna pay me to do what I'm doing? Sure. She's had. And she even said, you know, you can just combine a bunch of your blog posts and turn it into a book. And so I am writing this book. And she was a queer editor. And she said, A such an important part of your story is your relationship I think you need to talk about in the book. And she convinced me to talk about in the book. And so I turned in that manuscript, and then I think, oh, shit, I have to tell people about this before it shows up on the shelves of Barnes and Noble, right? Like, I tell people, my wife that I'm in this relationship. And so I decided, I'm a writer, I have this blog. Now. It's not huge, huge, but it has enough followers that people in my life know that what I can do, instead of telling one by one people, I can write about it, let them all talk shit behind my back, and then come to me, I don't have to deal with their emotional mass in the moment. I thought, This is beautiful. This is what I want. And so I write this blog post, a publication that I was writing for picked it up. Long story short, I went to bed that night, and I woke up next morning, with 100,000 people sharing this blog post,

Heather Vickery 13:41

You're coming out story isn't that much different than mine. I feel that a little bit.

Mike lamele 13:45

Wow, Oh, my gosh, I can't even tell you what it's like to wake up to millions of people talking about your sex life. I mean, it was just the most surreal experience. I mean, I had phone calls from NPR and Huffington Post, and I was like, I don't even know what's going on. I had 1000s of emails in my inbox. And really everything you can imagine, you know, people supporting me people, you know, saying, I'm not part of the queer community, or I'm ally or people attacking, you're asking me for nude photos of me. I mean, it was just across the gamut. And I was being asked to speak at pride events. And I was like, I'm not qualified for this, like, this is not. And it was a very surreal moment. And so as all of this is going on, I'm realizing I'm a mess. Like, I have a book deal. I have millions of people talking about me. I'm making \$0. And I have no business model. What am I doing with my life? And so I decided to become obsessed with this idea of life purpose, because I couldn't figure out my purpose. I couldn't figure out what any of these things had to do with one another. And I felt like I was going after the things I wanted, but it was all over the place. And so I've read every book, I mean, you name a life purpose book, I promise you, I've read it. And I know you've read enough of these things. And they all pretty much I'd say the same things, figure out your passions, figure out what the world needs, figure out your skills, figure out that middle point. I thought, okay, okay, okay, I can do this. What does life purpose and PR and branding, and blogging and book deal and same sex relationship and vomiting blood? What do these things even have in common? And weeks later, I realized, oh my god, it is so obvious. I meant to create a blogging course. And this blogging course, yeah, it's gonna be about helping people get a book deal. But it's gonna be deep and spiritual, healing yourself, finding your wounds, finding parts of yourself, you didn't know, this makes total sense.

So I put everything into this blogging course. Right? Because like, you know your purpose. I know this, I don't care that I've got no money. I don't care. I've got a year without working. I put everything into this. So I've got the fancy lighting kit, that microphone, my business partner, my web designer, like you name it. 1000s of dollars later, there I am. Put this thing out into the world. I know, this is my meal ticket. And I think five people bought it was

Heather Vickery 16:02

I was like this isn't gonna go well,

Mike lamele 16:04

This is not going well. No, I lost 1000s of dollars. And I thought I'm done. I am done. Yeah, but I have publicly failed, because now all these people are watching me, I am so embarrassed. I'm done. I'm going back to public relations, begging my partners to take me back. I don't know if I have a job at my own company, but begging them to take me back. And I quit. I just quit. And so before I quit, I did something that changed my life. And I didn't know this at the time. But we're going to see in a moment that my future work would have predicted this. I decided to host a failure celebration.

Heather Vickery 16:40

Yes, yes. I love that.

Mike lamele 16:42

Yeah, well, you know, the thinking at the time was Yes, I'm a failure, I totally failed. But at least I did things that got me to failure, at least risks, right? That is a risk. And so I went for love. I went for a vulnerability and honesty, right, I went for to be a truly aligned life. Maybe I failed, but I went for it. And so as part of this failure celebration, I took the one thing I was still confident in, which is branding and public relations. And I said, You know what, I'm just going to celebrate everyone out there who feels like a failure, I'm going to offer all of you free branding sessions, I'm going to help you build your business and brand for free, and then I'm out. And so I went into a Facebook group, I was a part of who had all spiritual entrepreneurs. And I said, all of you, as many as I can do in a day, I'll give you nine hours of my time, I will build all of your brands, because this is something I've done public relations over and over again, I'm really good at mapping your brand and telling you exactly what your brand is and how to build from there. Okay, so I did nine hours worth literally stopping sessions to pee, but I didn't care. I was giving this away. And I'm used to working with, you know, these tech billionaires and healthcare, politicians and people with big, big companies. But the people I worked with that day were artists and psychics and healers, and, you know, entrepreneurs, therapists, all types of cool people. And I do these sessions. I think I did six, I fit in six that day. And all six people said to me some variation of Yeah, Mike, this is great about my brand. But this isn't about branding, you just explained my whole life purpose, it all makes sense. And I'm sitting there, like, What the What, what are you talking about? Like, I don't even know what you're talking about here. This is about branding. And they said, I get that mic. But my brand is my purpose. I'm a solopreneur. And this is really my purpose, what you've just mapped. And so I sit with this, and I, you know, get off that last call. I'm planning on quitting. And I decided to try this on myself. And what did I have to

lose at this point. So I start mapping my own brand. And I came out with six words at the end of it. And you've already heard three of those words, aligned, zany, free, unmistakable, successful, and vulnerable. And there was just this moment of like this click. And I started thinking about Garrett, I realized, Oh, my God with Garrett, I've never been that safe to be vulnerable. I've never felt like I literally can't make a mistake. I am unmistakable, and in PR. I can see how I was for these words. But I wasn't vulnerable. I wasn't aligned. And it just clicked into me. Any time in my life, I felt all six words, everything worked out for me. And it felt purposeful. Anytime I felt the opposite or less words, it didn't work out. And things started making sense. And so I went over to my email, and I saw that I got an email from one of the women I worked with that day. And she said to me, Mike, I loved our work today. I've been raving about you. My friend wants to buy this. What do you call this thing? Do you sell it? I don't know. But if you pay me I can. So I said, Okay, it's branding. But you're telling me it's life purpose. I'll call it sacred branding, made up that term. The next day, I had a client. I wasn't making a lot of money. But I had one client, I figured you know what, I'll make a rule that I won't leave my job until I don't have any more clients because that just makes sense. And so I had this one client today after that I had two more clients. Here we are eight years later, I never ended up leaving and I can tell you with certainty in those Eight years, my understanding of life purpose has changed radically. And the way that I work with people has really evolved to me basically being able to map their life purpose in two and a half hours.

Heather Vickery 20:10

That is so cool. And so when you say your job, this is your business that you have created out of, almost accidentally out of your failure celebration. Absolutely. Yeah, this is my best. Yeah. That is so awesome. I love that now. That was you clearly have rehearsed that very well. And it was, it was cool the story a few times, you might have told the story from the stage once or twice, but that's okay. I really want to let you get it out. Because I think it's great. But now I have questions. I have so many questions. The first one is, what was your medical diagnosis that you were so sick?

Mike lamele 20:47

Great question. So I've been diagnosed with a few different things. You know, I have an inflammatory bowel disorder. I've also at the time was diagnosed with severe pancreatitis, based on my pancreatic enzyme levels, and I had infections and a few major organs. So basically, the I had a few diagnoses, but it was chalked up to something autoimmune.

Heather Vickery 21:10

Yeah. Okay, that makes sense. And then safe to jump to the conclusion that all of it was triggered by extreme stress.

Mike lamele 21:18

Yeah, I mean, we think so obviously, still today. I have you know, I'm gluten free and dairy free. I try not to get too stressed out. I don't do alcohol, caffeine. Yeah. I mean, I feel healthier than ever now. So I think my life was 100% lined, I think that I was really stressed out. And fortunately, I feel a lot healthier today.

Heather Vickery 21:37

Yeah. Oh, my gosh, I love that. You said something that I really just it really resonated, that you had these words. And you recognize that in your relationship with Garrett, you were finally showing up in some of these ways that you had never been able to or even thought about doing. Prior to that? What? What was that awareness? Like? And what about that your relationship with him? Or maybe that coming into yourself? I think is maybe part of it. gave you that sense of freedom?

Mike lamele 22:14

Yeah, you know, well, first of all, free is one of those words. So it was an incredible freedom. But I think that I had never been with someone and I've mapped Garrett's sensitivities, of course, and one of his is safe, and another one is proud. And I've really, you know, one thing I'm loving my work is exploring how couples can support one another, and how through, you know, him being proud of me, I can be more successful through his safety, I can be more vulnerable. And so it started to as I kind of come to understand this work more analytically, it started to make sense to me the way that Garrett is the most non judgmental person in the entire world. And like I said, I came to him saying I had developed these feelings. And he was kind of like, Okay, let me sit with and think about this. And so even that reaction tells you so much about him. And he works with, you know, a lot of homeless population patients who have diabetes. I mean, he does incredible work in the world, so incredible patients. And so I think that for me, it just felt like extreme safety, it felt like there I can literally not make a mistake. Anything I say is the right thing, because I am right.

Heather Vickery 23:19

I love that so much. I love that awareness that other people's strengths can help bolster us in ways I mean, that's what true partnership is about it. And it can be with a romantic partner, but it could be with anyone and finding the ways to do that. I wonder Do you ever almost like matchmake in companies, I'm thinking like, if everyone came together, and you did this for all of them and said, this is these are the best ways for you all to work together.

Mike lamele 23:52

Yeah, so I have actually I've worked with a few hospitals, I've worked with a few, you know, startups and basically exactly that. So what I'm doing is really mapping and understanding the culture, the sensitivities, how they best work together, how they can work as a team and sell to other people. So sales strategies, all that type of stuff.

Heather Vickery 24:10

That is really cool that I love that something that I hadn't anticipated chatting about today, but now I when you went I love your Vegas blog and come out and crazy that everyone was reading that like that that went mine went viral, but only in my life, not like viral. it you know, internationally. So you've got one up on me for sure. And that had to event I remember how I felt so that had to have been incredibly, incredibly overwhelming. And it sounds like some folks especially in the LGBTQ community, but wanted right in and some want to challenge you right

away How to where it has that ended up and how does that process moved you as being a member of the community?

Mike lamele 24:56

Yeah, you know, it's been a very complicated up process for me because I think that I really retracted a little bit and felt like, I don't know that I fit in here or where I fit in or want to be part of this and like crazy things have happened. So there's actually a musical about us coming out next year. I'm not kidding about this, right, really, really crazy, right? So supposedly, it's going to be off Broadway next spring. So we will see. But I've heard a few songs from it, but really crazy things. And so it was this really interesting moment where on the one hand, I was put on this pedestal, and that was kind of like, I'm just a human, we might break up like, I have no idea what our relationships going to be. Don't put that pressure on me. On the other hand, I was kind of vilified and hated and even recently actually had an interview. And I was told the interview would not air because I might be too triggering to the audience, quite frankly, because she felt I was too articulate. And she wanted to poke more holes in my story. And which was really interesting. Yeah, right. Super surreal to hear that, right. Very strange. But so, you know, for me, I really had a lot of insecurities about my body, and about my sexuality and how to explore, you know, internalized homophobia, because I felt so objectified and uncomfortable with some of this stuff. And we had a stalking situation. I mean, it got released really strange. And so basically, I decided that I really wanted to work on some of this. And I created a local organization and kind of Meetup group, a little support group here in Boston to have gay men come together, or LGBTQ, human come together, and really support one another. And it's been phenomenal. And that really shifted so much for me, I then went ahead, and if you check out my Instagram, you will see it, I have a number of boudoir photo shoots to learn how to love my body and hosting conversations about that. Yeah, and actually it's fun. I don't know when exactly this will air. But we are starting in September LGBTQ plus men's group, to begin to explore their sensitivities in community with one another and work through some of the issues that happened in the community.

Heather Vickery 27:04

Oh, my gosh, Mike, that's so cool. I love that. And I always appreciate as a member of the LGBTQ community, that everyone's entering into this space from such a unique standpoint, from our own lived experiences with different needs and desires out of it. And we all just want to have our own little spot, we just want to fit, where it's not, we're not all created the same way. And that's what makes it so beautiful is that it's different. And I hear the very thoughtful intention. When you drop the owl. I'm alright with that. So what you're saying is anybody who identifies as male and queer,

Mike lamele 27:48

exactly, for this particular group. Now, obviously, I've worked a number of times with lesbians number of times with, you know, trans women a number of times, I mean, in many of my groups, so this is just this one particular group. Yeah, I think it's near and dear to my heart. But I realized how important it is sometimes to have these very specific identity groups and how people can feel safer to talk about certain issues.

Heather Vickery 28:10

Yeah, no, I love it. I think it's great. I mean, women, we it's okay to be together in that way. I just am really thrilled to hear you say that trans folks and non binary folks are welcome and affirmed and that space, because I think it's so important to have spaces that they can opt into, like, wait, I don't if I don't fit anywhere, where do I fit? And it sounds like you felt that way, even though it wasn't a gender thing for you, from what I'm hearing, but also, if I don't fit, where do I fit? What do I do?

Mike lamele 28:42

Exactly. And I think that, you know, queerness, this idea of queerness is the radical notion that who we are is Right, right. That is that could be about gender, that could be about sexuality, but it's who we are as right even, you know, desires, right? That could be a sexuality. So it could be anything across the spectrum. And I think that's liberating for all people queer or not, right? Because what we're saying is we're starting with You are right, forget the rules, forget the labels, you are right. And if the world doesn't understand you, or have a label that defines you, you've just taught us all more about what it means to be human, right? You've just exploded the labels. And that's fantastic. We won't learn more about humans, the labels aren't right. And we fit into them. It's the other way around. We are and labels are trying to explain us. So if they don't explain your lived experience, guess what? Throw them out. You've just taught all of us more about what it means to be human.

Heather Vickery 29:31

Yes. Oh my gosh, I love I love all of that. I think you are so much fun, and I really am enjoying how you've what I've been talking about. You're looking for the signs and being aware and paying attention. manifestation isn't just something that you decide you want to create and it magically happens. We identify it and then we put ourselves in positions, to make intelligent decisions, to see what's in front of us. And take action and you're really doing that in such a beautiful way. Are you and Garrett still together?

Mike lamele 30:06

We are. Great question. I shared that earlier. We are married. We've been married now for about four years. We've been together for a decade. So we are still happily together with two dogs.

Heather Vickery 30:15

I love that I love I would say congratulations. But it sounds like it's been a long time. I'd love to just spend a minute like, it's fascinating to me, you went from roommates, and neither of you in any way identified as queer, too fast forward to getting married, like, what was it like to make that decision? And to have that beautiful? commitment? legal commitment, ceremony, love with your families, like what was that experience? Like?

Mike lamele 30:43

Yeah, I mean, you're asking me to condense, you know, seven years into a few minutes here, but long, so there was certainly not one step. And I say that to people, because I think a lot of people who are in the process are exploring, I get emails all the time, of course, feel like oh, my God, you did so easily Mike. I was like, Whoa, slow down, you know, you're seeing me on a short podcast for 30 minutes. There's definitely a lot that goes into it. And, you know, you

Heather Vickery 31:07

Say a decade, we know these things take time.

Mike lamele 31:09

Exactly, exactly. But you know, it was so beautiful. And it was so I'm so grateful, you know, vulnerable is one of my sensitivities. And I'm so grateful the way that we got together because we had to be super vulnerable, right? Like the first time we kissed was uncomfortable. And we didn't kiss for a while after that. And so to be that honest and open about our desires, our fetishes to explore things with one another was such an important foundation of our relationship. And so that really got to carry through in every step of our process. And I actually secretly love being same sex in a wedding. Because there are no rules, we got to make sure no one cares what we did. We are not stuck to these norms. And so we chose to have we got legally married in the US just a private ceremony, me and Garrett and a friend who married us. And then we had a at home reception, which was beautiful with a lot of people. But we had our actual ceremony in Aruba. And so we had a three day event with 50 people, it was so fun, and we rank include everybody. And so one thing that was important to us was the fact that these people, everyone who was there told a story of our lives, whether a friend or a family member, they were part of who we are and how we came to this moment. And so we asked each person to walk the beach during those three days and find a shell or a stone that really call it to them and bring it to the ceremony. And then before we got there, my sister and Garrett's brother put together a line in the sand of all of these shells and stones. And so the way it works in Aruba is a little bit different than here in the US because you want the gorgeous sunset behind you. That's what you want your photos. And so instead of you know, the couple facing the same way as the audience and the officiant facing back towards the audience, it's reversed. So the couple is facing the audience and the officiant. And what we chose to do was having that line between us and the officiant and the rest of the wedding. And so we were separated from everyone. And when we got announced as married, we were announced with everyone who brought us to this moment, everything that brought us here and really honoring and acknowledging that we're bringing together families, we are, you know, summation of all these moments and people in our lives. And now today, we are one of those people who have shells in our bathroom, which makes me cringe a tiny bit. However, they are so meaningful. And so we still have all those shells and stones house.

Heather Vickery 33:31

Oh my gosh, I've chills I love every bit of that. You know, what you probably don't know, I think my regular listeners know I was a luxury event and wedding planner for almost 20 years. So I know the industry well. And I did a lot of same sex weddings. And I tried to bring that energy of

there are no rules into all weddings, because that is one of my favorite things about same sex weddings is that you get to invent it all the time. And I've never had all the years and all the events that I've done. I'd never heard of having your guests go get a shell or rock or whatever and how you incorporated that I literally had chills up and down. Because that is so beautiful and magical and a way to bring create community. It's so lovely. Thank you for sharing that. I love that you share that with us. does all of this work this wonderful stuff that you've shared all these things that you're doing? Does it feel brave to you?

Mike lamele 34:31

Yes, I think but you know, in the moment, I don't know that. Brave is the word you necessarily say? I think it's vulnerable, scary, intense. You know, oh my god, what am I doing? And maybe that's the subjective version of what brave feels like because I think it just feels like coming from the heart that I just can't do it. You know, I was at that point when I was so sick that I was vomiting blood. It was I can't keep living this way. If I keep denying Who I am my truth, whatever, I'm going to die. And so it feels like this compulsion that I have to be vulnerable. I have to live my truth because there's just no other way to live literally.

Heather Vickery 35:11

Yeah, yeah. I mean, that's really my whole mission. My home I just a couple weeks ago, I was out at podcast movement, and people would say, oh, what do you do? And I would say brave is my business. And my whole mission is just what you said, which is to help folks identify those things with bravery, everyday bravery, the things that we do that make us our most authentic, vulnerable selves, where we say no, or we say yes, where we just show up for ourselves and our community, and people in a way that may feel simple and easy to some folks, but it's really hard for others. And to claim that as brave like I, that gets to be brave for me to do this. So I love that. What are some of the ways now I know you said you're gluten free and dairy free. And it sounds like you have a lot of things in the air a lot of moving parts at one time. How do you maintain your own sense of well being and balance and self care?

Mike lamele 36:05

Yeah, well, you know, for me, morning routine is a non negotiable. I'm one of those annoying people and I have a story for you. So trust me, it's not glamorous story of how bad things got, I ended up with a morning routine. But I get up at 530. And I just have to not for my body. But for my sanity to you know, move my body release stress from the day before journal, meditate, pick up my house, you know, just a few hours and really allow myself to just kind of recenter with myself, I think you're aligned is one of my sensitivities. And I'm extra sensitive to being aligned or being misaligned, it's so important for me to take even if it's just five minutes in the day to recenter and realign for a moment.

Heather Vickery 36:47

Yeah, I love that. And people. The morning routine is one of those things that comes up. I will say that, for folks who do not have children, it is so much easier to have that type of morning routine. And I understand the importance of it. For those who do have children. And you're going you're sitting here and you're listening. And you're going here that if I can sounds great. Like I

wish you can find ways to build in small non negotiables. For example, my alarm clock went off this morning. And I can't get up at 530 because I break if I get up that early, but it went off and I reset it for eight minutes. And I laid in bed and I did my visualization meditation exercise eight minutes, just enough to center myself before I start looking at email before I start packing lunches and negotiating whether or not we've got socks for our shoes, eight minutes to visualize the life and the day that I want to be having. So there are ways to bring it in that morning routine is really important. And if you can't get it when you first wake up, it's okay. Do it an hour later, just find time in your space for your for yourself. I love that. You have so much to celebrate Mike, I'm thrilled with your idea. Actually, let's dig in for just a second on your failure celebration. We've interviewed several people here, one guy who calls himself me who calls himself the fail coach, which I love. But people who have really started to embrace those failures. First of all, what I'm gonna ask you is how do you celebrate? And I want to ask that question. But what made you think Let me have a failure celebration?

Mike lamele 38:20

Yeah, you know, I think for me, it was really like, I want to feel like I got something out of this year because I did things I went for love. I had a viral article, I had a book deal. I tried things like this has to be worth something. Yes, I'm leaving broke. But this has to be worth something out there. And so I think it was really for me finding the treasure in the trash, quite frankly. And that radically changed my life. And we talked about one of my sensitivities is successful. So understanding that actually finding success and seeming failure is one of those hallmarks, the subconscious thing I do every time I'm successful. And so this could have been predicted by my sensitivities. Had I known them at the time.

Heather Vickery 39:04

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. So how do you like to celebrate big or small, joyful moments wins all of that. How do you like to celebrate?

Mike lamele 39:16

A lot of different ways. I am a huge fan of food. So food, especially food that makes me close my eyes. And I can't even speak after I take a bite is just that I had this experience for the first time since the pandemic started last night. So you're catching a good day.

Heather Vickery 39:32

I love that.

Mike lamele 39:33

My first really delicious restaurant. And so you know, dancing is a huge one for me, you know so much of my body image, you know, learning to claim and love myself was dancing naked in front of the mirror every day while the water heated up for an entire year. Even when I hated while I lucked out. I still kept dancing. That's a huge one for me. And if I have the funds and time massage is another favorite of mine.

Heather Vickery 39:56

Yeah, yeah. Oh, those are great. I might try to find The dancing naked in front of the mirror, I'm struggling, full, full disclosure of vulnerability here, I'm going through menopause and a little bit early, I'm only 46. And when when that happens to a woman, our bodies shift, everything shifts. And it's jarring, quite frankly, because we don't recreate, we wake up one day and we don't recognize ourselves. And I love this idea of regardless of how much you're loving yourself internally and externally, giving yourself that gifts. So I may just borrow that I hope other people do as well. I think that's so cool. Like, if you were to give our listeners one thing to do if they wanted to start to find their own life purpose, what's the first thing you would suggest for them?

Mike lamele 40:44

Absolutely, you know, just start mapping what's already working in your life and what's not working? So basically really simple questions here, as you can just ask yourself, you know, in these jobs, they really liked what was making people feel in these moments that felt, you know, challenging, What traumatic? What did they feel and what did they want to feel, and I guarantee you, they're going to be the exact same things over and over again. Now all of our emotions can be boiled down to the same core sensitivities over and over again. So start realizing, Hey, wait a minute, there's a pattern going on here. And if you ever need help, on my website, we have a free worksheet you can download at Mikelamele.com/map totally free and just answer a few questions. It's gonna help you do that.

Heather Vickery 41:26

I love that. I was just gonna ask you how people can I reach out to you. And I realized that I've been pronouncing your last name wrong. It is a bit of a tough one.

Mike lamele 41:42

It's weirdly anglicised, so it's not totally Italian. But it's not what you think in English, so don't worry about it.

Heather Vickery 41:50

I am le is spelled i a m e, l e, y'all. That's how it's spelled. So I apologize for getting that wrong. And I'm not even going to have Andrew, my editor edited out and fix it. Because I think it's really important to own our mistakes. And it's also really important to respect people's names. So if I'm going to practice what I preach, we keep it all in and we speak the truth. And thank you for being humble about it. And I will not make that mistake again. Okay, I feel like I could talk to you for a really long time. I'd like to stay connected and learn how we can support one another. I hope that you're you're down with that. But in the interest of time, I get to ask you what is your favorite charitable organization to support?

Mike lamele 42:34

The Trevor Project is a really special organization, I think.

Heather Vickery 42:37

Yeah. So you want to tell folks what the Trevor Project is? They've been a charity of the week of ours before, but we might have some new listeners this time.

Mike lamele 42:45

Sure. Sure. Sure. So it's an amazing organization that helps support LGBTQ especially at youth at you know, suicide risk, and just mental health issues. And it's really just amazing, support affirming organization.

Heather Vickery 42:59

It is an amazing organization. We are big fans here on Team brave of the Trevor Project, they will be our charity of the week, you'll get to know them give it you can time money, likes, shares, or just introduce the organization to maybe some folks who could really use what they bring to the table. I appreciate that. Michael, you share your three words with us one last time,

Mike lamele 43:20

Absolutely aligned, vulnerable and zany.

Heather Vickery 43:25

I love that and tell me about zany.

Mike lamele 43:28

Yes. So we're This is why I always tell people my work. sensitivities are not about desires. So it's not what you want. Because desire is a fleeting and conditioned, but it's who we truly are and our lived experience. I hope you got a little taste of that today. But I can be this kind of weird, Goofy, high energy, kind of a lot of things going on. And for so much of my life. I shamed myself for that. And I felt like I'm too much. I'm too intense. I'm too passionate. I'm too emotional. And it's really been in claiming that part of myself that I've come into even deeper alignment.

Heather Vickery 44:00

Wow, that's beautiful. I'm so glad that I asked you to clarify that. I just want to remind everybody you can connect with Mike, what are the social media platforms you're on Mike? How can folks find you?

Mike lamele 44:09

Sure the main one right now is Instagram. I am just getting into it. I'm coming out of my shell. So hang out with me on Instagram. It's just @Mikelamele. Or you can always go to my website. Of course, Mikelamele.com.

Heather Vickery 44:20

Okay, very good. Thank you so much for being here with us, Mike.

Mike lamele 44:23

Yeah, thanks for having me.

Heather Vickery 44:26

All right, friends. Well, I loved this, this conversation went in some directions that I didn't anticipate. And that's kind of my favorite thing about interviewing and doing it without a script so we can learn so much about each other and about how we all can embrace everyday brave. And this notion of finding your purpose and how that's different from fleeting passion. I think that's really incredible. So if you are finding your purpose, and that's a lot like finding you're brave, and you want both of them to help you build a life that you love, it's a whole lot easier. To do that when you're surrounded by others who are doing the same thing, and that's why I actually created the Brave on Purpose collective. We're on Facebook, it's a group filled with people who are vulnerably, learning about themselves and intentionally building a life that they love that fulfills all of their dreams and their expectations and their purpose. Membership is free. And we would love to have you with us just search Brave on Purpose on Facebook, answer three simple questions and bam you're in. I look forward to seeing you there. If you have thoughts, questions or feedback about this episode, or any of our episodes, or if you simply just want to connect, get to know one another or tell me how you're out choosing bravely. Send me an email at Heather@Vickeryandco.com. I promise to respond to you personally, I can't wait to connect with you. I'll see you over and brave on purpose. We'll see you next week for the next episode of The Brave Files Podcast. Thank you for being here. This is Heather Vickery reminding you today and always to go out and choose bravely.

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