



# JIM HARSHAW JR.

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## *Revealing Failure as the Path to Success*

### **Success Through Failure Podcast**

Action Plan Episode #151

Dr. James Kelley

Dr. James Kelley, author of *The Crucible's Gift: 5 Lessons from Authentic Leaders Who Thrive in Adversity*. Dr Kelley brings a fresh perspective to leadership. From a humble home in Portland, Oregon to earning his PhD and living near Dubai with his wife and four children, James' journey is full of adversity.

He also has a keen interest in the adversity that shapes great leaders around the world.

Whether it's on his podcast, *Executives After Hours*, or giving a keynote speech at a conference, James loves to dive deep and share stories of how and why leaders need crucible moments to be a better version of themselves. James believes that his unique journey filled with ups and downs, twists and turns, and a driving curiosity, equips him to bring great value to the world of executive leadership.

### **Quotes**

"As I was interviewing leaders for my podcast, I started to see this theme which was adversity, self-reflection, growth, and then become a better leader."

"Often, your own worst enemy is yourself. Your own negative voice is the one that dictates the choices that you make."

"I think we've lost the sense of humility in humanity in our society, and that we are all people and that we put pants on the same way."

### **About Learning the Lessons That Come With Adversity**

"One of the things that we preach to our kids is don't let fear conquer you, you conquer your fear. And what does that mean? I'm not talking about jumping off a bridge without a bungee cord. That's stupid. That's good fear. I'm talking about unhealthy fear where something is uncomfortable emotionally. If you're able to step

back and look at the bigger picture, it's probably worthwhile for you to do it. When people ask me that question about what do you do in the face of a crucible, I think first one is just acknowledge it. The second one is to let it ruminate. Let it percolate in your being of who you are, because if you're willing to be open to it, that's when the lessons happen."

### **About How You Frame Your Adversity**

One of the things I talk about in terms of adversity and realizing it is the death of my father. My dad died when I was 20 years in college. I didn't really comprehend for the first three or four years. I drank a lot as a coping mechanism. I wouldn't say I was an alcoholic, but I was definitely the college binge drinker, all the way down as you can be. But what I realized is that when I separate myself from the emotion and looked at the reality of the situation, I had a choice to make in how I framed that adversity. Is it horrific that my dad passed away? Absolutely. Am I sad that he misses my kids and doesn't get to know anything about my life now? Absolutely. But am I thankful that I learned to be a better human being, a better person and to make better health choices because my dad was unhealthy? Absolutely. So it's not focusing on what could have been, it's focusing on what I can control and what I can do moving forward to have a different experience that's more positive for those around me.

### **About Flipping**

There's this thing called flipping. I'm reading a book about this, *How to Ask the Right Questions*. It's a really great book and it's super simple. So let's take my dad's death as an example. For most people, rightfully so – no judgment on my behalf – it's a woe. It's 'How could this happen to me?' The idea of flipping is when you say something that's negative, like, 'My dad's death has destroyed me,' the idea is asking yourself, 'What's the exact opposite of that?' The opposite of that might be, 'My dad's death has given me strength because . . .' So it's taking what's diminishing you as a person, what's voiding you, sucking your soul, your confidence and flipping it. So if you don't get a job when you go for a job interview, instead of saying, 'What's wrong with me?' you flip it and say, 'What's right with me that I didn't get that job? What's right with me that another job will be better?'"

### **About Compassionate Environment**

"I do feel like sharing real moments of struggle actually builds a compassionate, honest, relationship-focused environment and culture. There's research that talks about this. There's research that says, when you have a compassionate environment, when you have an environment full of integrity and being honest, when you have an environment that actually perpetuates positive micro-moments and meanings, you actually have better ROI. These are all soft skills that hardcore

CEOs that are old school that don't fully understand miss, because all they're looking at is return of their investors, their shareholders."

### **About Being A Complete Human Being**

"One of the things that I really think capstones the whole book (*The Crucible's Gift*) is these leaders that really embrace their crucible, the one thing they had consistently was a learning mindset or what I call a growth mindset. Within that means that they wanted to learn more about themselves, their career, the people around them. They're always trying to be a more complete human being, for whatever that means for them."

### **Recommended Tool**

"I use [inaudible 47:02] scheduling for myself. It basically is I create when my availability is and I email my link out to whoever I'm going to be talking with and they find the time that works and they can have a selection process. It makes life so much easier. Another thing I use is Grammarly. It's embedded on my browser, in my Word docs and a lot of places on my computer where it's a site that checks your grammar and the mistakes you make. It's not great but it's good enough that when you make those silly mistakes, it'll catch them."

### **Website and Social**

Website: <https://www.drjameskelley.com/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/kelleyjamesb>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/drjamesk/>

Book:

<https://www.amazon.com/Crucibles-Gift-Lessons-Authentic-Adversity/dp/0999891510>

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