

Episode #2: How to Stop Getting Triggered

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Caneel: All of us have good days and bad days. One thing that often makes me curious is why is it that sometimes I act in ways that I wish I didn't. I surprise myself. I might get triggered by someone that I love and lash out or go into shame and guilt.

In this episode today, we will better understand why that happens, why we get triggered, why we get reactive, and how to begin a process of healing those raw spots and reclaiming a sense of wholeness. You can't talk about triggering without understanding a concept called shadow. Shadow refers to the parts of ourselves that we no longer love, own, or take responsibility for.

Carl Jung said, "until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate." Do you find yourself dating the same type of person over and over? Do you find yourself in the same job time and again, even though you were at a different company, it's a different year. Maybe you're even living in a different city. Basically in these situations, we keep recreating the same patterns that are holding us back. Why does that happen? It's all related. You spot it, you got it. Sneak peek to the end is that you are allowed to love all parts of yourself and getting triggered is one of the ways we can uncover what's there to love. Now let's begin the show.

Thank you for being here today. Thank you for showing up for yourself. This is the beginning of the holiday season. We've got Thanksgiving coming up next week. It's a really important time to be grateful for yourself and for all of the things that are good in your life. Also, we know that Thanksgiving, holidays, family events, gatherings, parties, all of these things can bring some stress. Sometimes even frustration or other intense negative emotions.

Holidays are a great time to get triggered and we can learn from getting triggered. Our guest today is Luke Entrup, executive coach and partner in Evolution with me. We are so excited to have him here. He is a really good friend of mine. I've collaborated with him a ton. We love working together. We share a lot in common in our backgrounds from growing up acting, to design thinking, to the depth of work that we love to do together. And he's really one of the top experts in shadow. Anytime a book is written about shadow, almost always he gets contacted to be a

reviewer on that book. So he's really one of the best and it's a big honor to have him spending time here today. I'd like to share a bit about this concept of shadow.

Luke will get more into this, but really briefly, the shadow is the part of ourselves that we don't own, we don't want to own. We deny that it's there. We might even repress it. Usually at some young age, we were taught that part of ourself was not allowed. Where we come into this world with this sparkling, completely unique, innocent, exuberant essence. Then we receive a message and for whatever reason on that day, from that person into our ear, we hear this message that we're not allowed.

We shadow those parts of ourself. We try to show up in the world for a long time as if those parts do not exist and that we're somebody else. And eventually it breaks. That plan does not work. And we begin the process of adulting, where we fetched that lost child and we parent it and we bring it back and we love it and we integrate it into who we are.

As an executive coach, I work with founders and CEOs. I find when we can identify and reclaim our shadow, that's where we find our brightest gifts. So why are we talking about shadows so much on an episode about how to stop getting triggered? Triggers and shadows are deeply interconnected.

A trigger is basically when I get really, really reactive and all of us can understand this, we have an outsized reaction to something. Someone pushes our buttons, something pushes our buttons, and we are immediately bothered. We are activated. We might even surprise ourselves by lashing out or going quickly into a shame or guilt or blame cycle and feeling a little bit out of control. But yet it's so, so familiar. So I'm sure everyone can relate to this, this experience of being triggered. And right now in this moment, I just want you to identify, what's something that has triggered you recently?

When's the last time that something just pushed your button and before you knew it, you were in a really different heated, emotional state? Usually anger, sometimes shame, blame, guilt. Okay, you got an example? It could be anything. It could be getting stuck in traffic. Someone cuts you off. It could be that there's crumbs on the counter top when you get home from work.

I remember I used to work with somebody and if there was only one space after a period, he would just hit the ceiling. So angry. For him that was a trigger. It really can be anything. Often it is something kind of mundane and especially it's often something that somebody else does. Or a quirk of something. These are your pet peeves, right? So find that thing and think about how you react.

Now I'm going to share the secret. When we're triggered, you want to know why that happens? Usually it's because we just saw our own shadow. We saw out there

in the world or in somebody else, that part of ourself that we don't want to own. We don't want to claim, we don't want to talk about, we don't want to feel or experience. And we certainly don't want it to be seen.

When we see that part of ourself out there, we freak out. We get triggered. Our ego reacts and fights against it. Trying to really keep us from waking up to, "oh, there's this part of myself, I left in the basement. I haven't yet pulled it out and loved it yet." We're in denial. So this often is a little bit of a hard pill to swallow because we don't want to believe that these things that bother us so much in others are true of ourselves.

I want to give you a couple of examples. I hear this from clients - you know, it's really hard to manage these millennials. They want to be CEO yesterday. They are always wanting a lot of praise. They're very entitled. We've all read these kind of stereotypes about the millennial generation, which is an incredible generation, by the way. When we hear those things, the useful question is not "how do you manage other people's sense of entitlement?" It's, "how are you being entitled?"

How are you not owning that? You too, want appreciation. You too, want to be promoted. So what might you be entitled to? Well, for instance, you might be entitled to the idea that people who report up to you don't constantly ask for appreciation. Simple as that. Or the people who report up to you are happy to stay in that position and they're not trying to move ahead. It's that sense of entitlement.

The process goes like this: I shadow something in my life, usually very early on, something about myself. Later on in my life, I see it show up in someone else. Boom, I get triggered. That's the cycle. So here's how the cycle goes: early in life, you shadow something about yourself. You deny that it's there. Later on, you see that part of yourself in someone else, unconsciously recognizing it as your shadow.

Deep in denial, your ego lashes out, you're triggered, you blame them. The magic move here is turning that finger of blame that you're pointing at them around and pointing at yourself and say, "how is that true of me?" But doing it, not from a place of blame, but one of creative curiosity. Like, I want you to get hungry about, "Ooh cool, I just got triggered. There must be something for me here. Something for me to learn. Let me check this out and see how that's actually just as true of me as it is of them."

In fact it might be completely a projection on them. It might be only true of you, but you're just seeing it everywhere. You hear a lot like, "why is everybody like X, Y, Z?" That patterned ways of perceiving the world is a really good indication that we're triggered.

So this is the connection between triggering and shadow. As you might imagine, some of our favorite people to get triggered by tend to be those closest to us - our

loved ones and our families. And in our family, that's often where we also decided to shadow parts of ourselves. It's nobody's fault. It's completely human. There's nothing more normal than this process and it's a gift.

It's a gift to get to wake up and see what else is there of me to love. Reclaim it, own it and become more whole.

I'm so excited to have Luke Entrup, executive coach and partner in Evolution here on the show with me. Great friend, a really wise person, incredible human being. Let's dive in and see what we can learn from Luke about shadow today. Hi Luke.

Luke: Hey Caneel. So good to be here. Love the new studio. This is exciting.

Caneel: Thank you. Familiar territory for you, huh?

Luke: Indeed. Not my first time in a studio, but first time in a studio with such a stellar view of the ocean.

Caneel: Oh yeah. Thank you. I really feel very fortunate about this whole setup here. I glued these sound panels on. My kids helped me put them together over the weekend and we stuck them up there when we were building this studio.

So, you and I have many things in common. We have in common that we both are former startup executives and operators. We are coaches. We love to have a great time and laugh. We love design thinking. We're actually doing some design thinking training videos later on today after we do this podcast. And we both grew up on the stage as child actors.

Luke: Indeed. We Did.

Caneel: I think we knew this about each other without even ever knowing it because there was this instant recognition, that your one is going to be really fun to play with.

Luke: Exactly. Child actors spot each other.

Caneel: So how in the world did you end up doing what you're doing now given that you began your life thinking you were going to have a really different path as an actor?

Luke: I grew up loving being an actor. And then at some point that dream kind of shifted for me. It just wasn't there. It didn't feel like the thing to do anymore. When I was in my early twenties, I had a period of like a dark night of the soul. Where I was spinning my wheels a bit in my late teens, early twenties, and traveled a bit and worked and was kinda in and out of college. At an early age I found myself in men's work. So personal development work for men and something in me really shifted around this. I got connected with some just amazing mentors, elders, older men,

who were very formative for me in my early twenties around what it means to live with a sense of purpose, a mission, and integrity.

I spent much of my twenties doing that type of work and leading retreats myself, and kind of transformational personal growth retreats and spent much of my twenties coaching, and doing some organizational work around young talent. Then at some point, I decided, like, I was done helping other people build their dreams. I wanted to go out in the world and do something myself, to build something myself. So I went back to graduate school, got a couple of masters degrees and essentially worked in health innovation for several years in running health clinics and working in health tech and healthcare innovation.

Caneel: Another thing we have in common.

Luke: Yes, exactly. So really bringing some of the design thinking into the healthcare space, and with a wonderful organization by the way, Center for Care Innovations.

I did a lot of my training with them, and over the last eight years or so, this call to really help people become better versions of themselves and to hold them through some of their most critical transitions in their life and helping kind of shape their dreams, really just never died in me. And kinda my deepest calling is to hold people through radical transformation. This is kind of the return back to coaching for me and that's how we've worked together these several years now.

Caneel: Well, I'm so grateful that you made the turn back. And interestingly, I also dropped out of acting around my early twenties, but I feel I'll never stop acting. Obviously, being an actor and to have that background I feel is so valuable for so many things. And I certainly use it just from the standpoint of understanding how to get into embodied empathy, emotional empathy with a client in an experience that I've personally never had, but being able to kind of feel in my body, what's it like to be there?

Luke: I know you want to talk about shadow today, right? So, what better way to understand shadow than to be able to step into roles, parts of ourselves or an actual role of a character. But to actually fully become it and embody it. That actually is one of the cornerstones around this idea of emotional integration and kind of reclaiming lost parts of ourselves. So, there is a thread between that of becoming fully, some parts, some aspect of ourselves through a character, through an archetype, through an emotion. It's a really important ability to cultivate in ourselves if we want to be a fully embodied leader.

Caneel: Yeah. And the shadow work is not child's play. You're getting into some of the darkest corners at times and these are the parts that can be really, really reactive from the self. This is where the ego really tries to defend itself and resist.

And working deeply with someone's shadow and really being able to hold them as I've seen you do in ways that have just floored and stunned me and I cannot believe the way you hold space for people in the most dramatic situations. I just want our listeners to know that this is kind of heavy duty stuff and working with someone as skilled as Luke or someone else who has been really well trained, is super, super important. Luke, what are some of the qualifications that you have in particular around shadow and what are some things our listeners could look for?

Luke: Yeah. I was blessed when I was in my early twenties to be able to be mentored by a guy named Cliff Barry who started a training organization called Shadow Work Seminars. It really was one of the very early disciplines, borrowing from this lineage of Jungian psychology and psycho drama and other places. But Cliff Barry's one of the original folks that really develop this way of working with people. So I was blessed to be certified in shadow work seminars when I was in my mid twenties. You know, I went to Nairobi University, which is a Buddhist-inspired university, and got a degree in contemplative psychology, which is essentially the meeting of the contemplative practices of the East with Western psychology.

So yeah, I mean I would have classes in Tibetan Buddhist meditation, and then I'd go into a class around personality theories. And it's a really wonderful training ground around, not just the theoretics, but the kind of embodied experiential components of what it means to be kind of a transformational leader. And then I did my graduate studies at Tulane and did a master's in social work, a master's in public health and, you know, kind of that classic training around psychotherapy.

Caneel: Dang boy. You know a lot of stuff.

Luke: Way too many hours in a university.

Caneel: With your shadow work training, I seem to remember that you need to go back every single year to get re-certified.

Luke: Yeah, it's like every two years. But I go back every year at this point and the certification is brilliant. It's very simple. You have to facilitate someone doing their work and you have to do your own work. And that is the certification because one of the cornerstones of holding people in some of these most tender vulnerable places is that you have to be able to have done your own work and know how it moves through your system and to make sure that you're constantly looking at your own shadow.

Caneel: So Luke, what is shadow?

Luke: Yeah, so shadow comes from a Swiss psychiatrist's term; Carl Jung coined the term. And it's really just the parts of ourselves that we repress, deny, hide. So it's

parts of ourselves we push away that we don't want to feel, or experience, or express.

Caneel: And what's an example of that?

Luke: There's many. So, one way we think about this, Robert Bly, the poet, talks about this as being born as 360 degrees of light - pure potential. If we've ever looked into an infant's eyes, you know that there's like nothing but possibility there, right? And over time things happen to us. People tell us to be a certain way or not a certain way. We're encouraged to not behave or express certain parts of ourselves. And those little bits of light start to get hacked away. And that full expression becomes a little diminished. Maybe as a young child we were told things like the art stuff, that's for girls, that's not for boys. Or we may hear something like, you're so ugly when you cry and these messages start...

Caneel: For mine it's, "you're so dramatic." That one hurt for a long time. And then I'm like, wait, you're right. I am so dramatic.

Luke: Great. So you flipped it. That's the the Aikido of shadow work. Once we start to own it, then it just, we get all that energy back from it. So, as we move through our lives, these messages that we took on as children shape a lot of how we show up. And this is really important as leaders that we're tracking these subtle messages because we can leave quite a wake in an organization if we're not tracking our shadow.

Caneel: Have you seen a situation like that where someone's shadow was leaving a wake?

Luke: Sure, absolutely. So, I've worked with several clients around this particular dynamic that I think we see a lot in startups, which is this shadow. It occurs as a behavior that others see as being like a very hard driver, like just working very long hours and driving their teams really hard. And the people around them feel very burnt out and pushing so hard. And when thinking about what is beneath the drive, oftentimes there's some smaller part of ourselves that believes that we'll only be validated, or seen, or acknowledged, by what we do in the world, not who we are. And this is certainly one that I have, right?

And that's the belief, like, I'm probably worthless unless I can create enough success in the world, or enough financial security, or enough buffer from the judgment of others. And so these are some pretty deep-seated messages that can drive a lot of behaviors that aren't always helpful. So we see this a lot with, you know, hard-driving founders that are burning out their teams, or burning out themselves, where they are growing resentful towards their business or their company. And often if we can trace it back and actually shift that message a bit, then they can have a different relationship to that driving part.

Caneel: When I think of who's impacted by my shadow most, it's definitely my family. Thanksgiving is right around the corner here and each year I notice of course my own growth, the growth of people in my family. And then I also noticed, I go back to being a two year old and an eight year old, a 16 year old, 22. All of those parts of me show up. And I think it's when you're with your family of origin, you know, like many of us will be at Thanksgiving or even with our chosen family of friends, if you're doing a Friendsgiving like I used to do when I lived in London abroad, there are opportunities when we're with those that we really love to get really triggered.

And I understand that there is a very specific connection between getting triggered and our shadow. And I'd love you to talk a bit about that because all of us have this big opportunity coming up at Thanksgiving to really start diving in and doing some work on this. So what's the connection between triggering and shadow?

Luke: It's such a, I mean, this is maybe one of the more important questions, right? Because obviously, what happens is we go back into the dynamics, the messages, the environment, the actual characters, you know, that are the cause some of these shadows or helped form some of these shadows. And so they become incredibly amplified. If you think that you don't have any shadows, just go home for Thanksgiving for a week and just notice how you feel about yourself halfway through that.

Caneel: So, it's human. The human experience, very normal.

Luke: Absolutely. But it's also a wonderful opportunity for those of us that are interested in continuing to "eat" these shadows - as we say - or continue to integrate these lost parts of ourselves, to go back and see where we're at and see what's our next phase of work that we need to do. So if we treat Thanksgiving as an opportunity to do some reconnaissance on the next layer of soul work, the next layer of, of parts of ourselves that may still be disowned and it's a very valuable experience.

And again, this is obviously where the contemplative practices and finding some stillness in the midst of the insanity can be really, really important. I mean there's some other ways that we can discover our shadows as well. And triggering is the mechanism, right? Where are we getting lit up?

It could be in our family. There's this concept that we work with a lot in our work around projection. So it may be in our organization, in our workplace or just in the world. We bump up against people that really rub us wrong, that have us feeling angry, or feeling repulsed, or feeling instantly set off. So this is a clue. This is the idea of projection where we're projecting onto those around us, some part of

ourselves that we don't want to see or some dynamic that's probably rooted in our past.

Caneel: No it's them. They're wrong. It's their fault.

Luke: Exactly.

Caneel: Oh, so it's the five finger point. So if I see it in you and I'm pointing at you, there's three fingers pointing back at me and there's one pointing straight up. And so it's that, you know, if you spot it, you got it. You, if something over there is really, really bothering you and you go instantly into reactive mode, most likely it's something true of you that you haven't yet owned.

Luke: That's right. And so it's a wonderful clue. I mean, when we get lit up by someone or triggered or set off, it's a wonderful opportunity for us to learn about some part of ourselves that were not fully integrated. And as you get a little more sophisticated in this, in working with these projections, the next step around this is knowing that whose face is that on this person that just cut me off or the person that I believe has wronged me or, or that I feel like I've hurt in some way. I'm going into my own shame.

Like whose face is that? Is that my father's? Is that my little sisters? Who's face am I putting on top of that? And how long ago was that? And then we can start to actually, you know, release some of the energy that's wrapped up in the dynamic. There's one other way, which you and I work with a lot and with our leadership clients, which is just ask people like, what are my shadows? And we do 360 reviews, they are like the classic way of doing this in an organization, a really powerful, very effective mechanism at surfacing ones shadows.

Caneel: For those who don't know, can you explain what a 360 review is?

Luke: Sure. Yeah. So in organizations where we spend most of our living waking hours, we are constantly bumping up against people that we're working with and they probably understand - other than maybe our intimate partners and our family understand our shadows - better than anyone else. And so, we'll go in as coaches and interview or survey the 10 or 15 closest collaborators in a leader's network and ask them point blank like, what are her blind spots?

What are his blind spots? What are his strengths and gifts, like when he's at his best, how does he show up? What are some of her biggest ways that she leaves a wake, or trips herself up, or gets in her own way? And what are some of the challenges that she's facing? And it's all, usually it's always anonymized, right? So like people can speak freely and we'll synthesize that and give it back - you know, report, but more importantly, in some sessions, to help them digest and to do

some of the coaching sessions to help them digest and make sense, and really figure out how to respond.

Caneel: For many human beings receiving feedback is scary. And when we are scared and we are alone, it can be really difficult to learn debriefing on feedback in a setting with a person who's going to slow it down enough that you can actually dwell and spend some time in a safe, supported, loved way on the things where there is the most learning for you is just essential for onboarding any feedback. And you can do that with a coach. And I think that in this skill set there is hugely valuable. You know, that our training, our credentials, our professional ethic is really, really extremely important. But also you can create conscious relationships where you can receive feedback and have somebody else walk you through this kind of feedback. Most people can kind of predict what's going to set you off in a workplace.

And that's a really good starting map of what about me might I still not love? We're allowed to see those parts and we're allowed to share those parts. We're allowed to heal those parts. We are allowed to love those parts. Like there's no part of ourselves that's unlovable. And I find that really so many of our deepest, deepest gifts are in our shadows.

Like they're the parts that we've pushed down into the basement. And I love that process of just slowly giving someone the space to open up enough to like walk a couple steps down into that basement and find those unclaimed parts and then look at them in the light and see like what jewels are there. You know, just dust them off and figure out where they are gonna go in your, in your life in a conscious way. So they're not growing mold or creating problems.

It is really, really important work. And last Christmas, you know, speaking of Thanksgiving coming up around the corner, I decided last Christmas I was going to take all of December and not drink any alcohol specifically because I wanted to go through all of the holidays, like fully conscious and just greet whatever learnings come my way. Total disclaimer here, I have like a really wonderful family that gets along super, super well and we all really, really love each other and there's just no family in which shadow dynamics do not exist. You know, they're alive and well at my house, but it's all opportunity.

Luke: Absolutely. Yeah. So it's the best opportunity to see where we are in relation to freeing ourselves of the past.

Caneel: Is this, this sounds a little bit extreme, so you believing that you're worthless or without value, is this something that would, would kind of, you'd see in a, a child that comes out of a really abusive home or perhaps lost both their parents, or you know, is this an extreme case or is this actually pretty normal?

Luke: Yeah, it certainly happens in the extreme cases, right? Trauma has a very pervasive way of shaping beliefs about oneself. But it really, I mean, my belief is that we all have shadows. We all were formed in a certain way. That's just the nature of being human is that we're going to inevitably bump up against hurts and pains and disappointments and betrayals.

That's just part of the human condition. And so we'll take on beliefs about ourselves based on these experiences. So whether we were explicitly told these messages of being you're, you know, you're worthless. Some people hear that, right? Other people, the behaviors of those around them, they weren't explicit messages, but there were implicit messages through the type of love they got, conditional love or the certain way they were shaped subtly. So we, whether we heard the messages very clearly or whether we inferred them, it doesn't matter. What really matters is the message that lives within our own heart and soul.

Caneel: Yeah, I can imagine that. Being a parent of two isn't - you know, Luke and I, we have kids basically the same age and lots of similar personality quirks in, in our kids, which is fun - but, I know that I'm role modeling for them, things that come from my own shadow and that I haven't yet reconciled. And this was a pretty depressing thought to me for a while that even though I've done so much personal work and so much therapy and so many retreats and that still, I'm gonna mess them up and in sharing this with my therapist one day, she gave me a book and it's called, I'll never do what my parents did to me. I haven't read the whole book, but the point is basically, yes, you will, but hopefully less, hopefully, less.

Luke: Exactly. And this is, I mean, in some ways this is the very definition of a shadow is like the, we tell ourselves we will never be a certain way or never do a certain thing yet we find ourselves doing it anyway.

Caneel: Even if you do the opposite thing, it creates the same response.

Luke: Yeah. And so what's the path through, right? So the path through, and this is where we get into some of the shadow work is we can spend our whole lives pushing away, trying not to be a certain way, trying not to be seen a certain way or show up as a jerk or show up as in the same way that our parents did. And we find ourselves doing it anyway. So what's the way through is by actually allowing ourselves to find a place, a space, a container, to express that ourselves in a way where there's not a real life consequence.

So whether that's with a coach, whether that's on a retreat, whether that's with a therapist, allow ourselves to go into the part of ourselves that could just completely destroy those around us and actually feel what's beneath that or our own self-loathing or self hatred, finding places that are safe enough for us to really feel the bottom of those feelings and this oftentimes is a long process. And once we get through that, then it frees up all this energy that we've been storing. And not being

a certain way. And that's really fundamentally that's what shadow work is, is embodying, experiencing and expressing those, those parts of ourselves that are either taboo to the culture or we have some sort of mental block or message or blind spot around not wanting to be a certain way.

Caneel: This reminds me of something I do with my, I have a year long leadership forum. It's focused on conscious leadership and a lot of the practices we do, you know I picked up from the conscious leadership group and they've got some fantastic resources to offer that I can, I'll post them in the show notes, but one of the things that we do in conscious leadership is we do persona parties and we find some, some persona that that drives us some of the time and often we've got a lot of personas within us, different elements of our personality that often are at odds with each other and get into little arguments and they're always fighting for who gets to be in control or who gets to drive the bus right now. So we pick one of those. I bring bins and bins full of costumes and I lay them out.

We do this in the middle of our program on a three day retreat. I lay them out all over the living room of our, you know, rented home and then people go in, they find costumes that speak to one of their particular personas and the second they put them on and they come out of that room, they're in persona for the rest of the night. They're not allowed to break character.

So they act like them, they talk like them. And then we'd go out into the world. Last year we did it in Malibu and we went to a restaurant, we ordered food, we were interacting, we were over the top. It's hilarious. It's super interesting and you learn so much about, if I only let this part drive, you know, here are the costs, but you also learn, wow, there's a lot of benefits to this part of me too.

So for some examples, you know, one of my clients has this part of herself that is very controlling and wants to just control outcomes and control other people. And make sure that everything's perfect. She's an enneagram type three. And she got to play that role full on this time. And coincidentally, her mother happened to call while she was in persona and she found that her, how she was going to interact with her mother naturally, was that persona. And then she just got to do it bigger and oh, she learned so much.

And I, that year I played a shy person because I really love to pretend I'm not shy. That was not something, you know, especially like acting, growing up, that was not something that I valued. It was, I didn't feel safe to be shy, I didn't have a lot of support around how to navigate it. But on the inside of me, there is a very, very shy person and it was such a relief to just get to go out and play small. Like I loved it.

Luke: Yeah. I mean there's so much energy that can be freed up when we allow ourselves to step into these parts that we push away, right? That's so much information can be delivered to us. And there's a lot of different ways to do it. I

mean, you're talking about like, we do these things called shadow dances, which is very similar where it'll be, you know, for a couple of hours or a lot of different costumes and you can go be Elvis or, or kind of the Santa clause, whatever it is, you know, just like whatever that part of you that you've always wanted to experience some of them a little more manipulative or a little creepy or you know, to actually allow yourself in a place where there's not going to be any real-life consequences to kind of move those energies through.

So that's one way. The other way is there are certain methods that you can actually step into parts of yourself, like, a sub-personality that is maybe one that you're not always fully tracking and but is making a lot of decisions for you. So the part of you that's constantly surveying risk, right? Like, what if you could fully become your risk manager, a part of you that is tracking risks in your relationships, in your business, in your life and completely step into that part for maybe 10 or 15 minutes and let it fully give its expression of how you've set up your life in a dangerous way. How your business is going to fail and all of that paranoid thinking, contingency planning and that all gets to happen that night.

I do this often with my coaching clients where, you know, just allow each person to step into their risk manager completely or the part of themselves that is a, we might call it like the higher self, the part that sees through all of the tricks that are being played and the confusion and can just look at your life from kind of a higher place in a more noble or sovereign place, or the part of you that wants nothing more than to be connected to those around you - that place of emotions - and kind of that lover energy and certain qualities that we all kind of carry, putting people in these specific parts of themselves and then allowing them to look at the situation in front of them. That's another way that shadow work can work.

Caneel: Fascinating. So you do this with all kinds of clients, executives, CEOs, founders. And what are some of the results that they noticed or that their organizations feel?

Luke: I would say this type of work I do with most of my clients at some point, right? There's a lot of different ways to work with people. I'm in a coaching setting, you know, sometimes we just need to give them some skills, or a framework, or some models or help them run a meeting. This is a shadow work is a rather specific tool for specific dynamics.

So persistently painful patterns that like, you know, we've tried a lot of other things and nothing's shifting; things that are a bit deeper in the inner workings of an individual that are, that are causing a misalignment or harm in their life for those around them. And so this fundamentally is about shifting our beliefs about who we are in the world and so it takes a little bit more space, it takes a little bit more time and, you know the results.

So I alluded to this dynamic that I see often, which is the kind of the hard driving co-founder, right? Or founder or CEO that often when we get underneath that, there's usually some smaller part of them that is feeling vulnerable or needing to be protected.

And when we can shift that, then often, it allows them to relax and redesign how they are in their role. Maybe they actually don't need to work 16 hours a week, a day. They can start to bring in a team to help and start trusting other people. Or maybe they realize that not everybody needs to push at the same level of that as them and they need to create a slightly different culture in their team. I'd say that's one of the most common ways that I use this kind of way of working with people.

Caneel: Wow. That must really transform what it's like to be in those organizations.

Luke: I think so. I hope so. You know, I think the, I mean this is back to the, we can work at a few different levels. We can focus just on changing behaviors and sometimes that's what needed. We need to give people a new kind of methodology or new operating agreements amongst themselves. But I believe that deeper work actually comes by shifting our beliefs about who we are and our beliefs about the nature of the world around us. And that's fundamentally what shadow work is. It's actually shifting our core beliefs about our place in the world and how we relate to others. And that's, you know, that it's a rather unique way to do it.

Caneel: So we've talked about the "Be", you know, the importance of being as a leader and not just doing, and those shifts at the "Be-level" have so much more leverage and the ability to have change happen more easily - once you've made that "Be-level" shift - it has exponentially more potential than any one change in behavior. I think it's not as easy to do and it certainly requires a lot of support.

Luke: Yeah, and I'm sure you've experienced this. I mean, for me, some of the deepest changes I've had in my life have been around beliefs I have about myself. You know, as you mentioned, like I came up as a child actor, I got a lot of like external validation for who I was. And in that process, you know, kind of became really necessary to get a lot of applause and, at an early age, that's how I formed my sense of self.

And so as life happens and things change and hopes and dreams change and things come and go, those messages still live within me. And I found over time the more I can shift those beliefs of needing external validation and really become quiet in my own heart and soul and change those beliefs around what actually feels best for me, not what is best for those around me; it's dramatically changed my existence, right? And that's, I mean for me, that's just about going into those kind of hurt places, and all those places that get formed early on, and shifting those beliefs.

Caneel: I relate so much to what you're sharing and, for me, acting, I think it made it that my default mode of operating was performing. Like, that there's this, I need to get up and perform and be a certain way for others as my interface to protect myself, to protect just the vulnerability of, "I don't know what's gonna happen next", which is when I'm more in presence. And I'm not trying to control. Relaxing out of that performing mode has been something that's taken me, well, my whole life and I'm really still working at it a lot. But I also love performing. So how do you reconcile that? I mean, and you know, this is certainly part of my shadow, but I feel it's also part of my gift.

Luke: Absolutely. And this is, I mean, this is where we go when we actually start really living our life through this lens of anything that feels a little unexpressed. I'm going to actually lean into it and maybe even make some art out of it, make some sort of creative expression about it. My need to be seen or my need to be validated or that darker part of me that could just like take advantage of people around me, like, I actually can in love.

And I can create some sort of expression of that. It actually shifts our whole reality where there is less of a push-pull and less of a this pushing things into our shadows and behind us where we become just much more alive in the moment and can express these things. These things that used to be our hurts and our kind of things we didn't want to show to other people. We can be playful with it.

Caneel: You and I, we've had a lot of fun in that.

Luke: I'm just like owning the part of ourselves that just either used to be seen or needs whatever to be perfect or feel. So I'm not terminally unique in that - no one ever is.

Caneel: We play a lot with that assignment. You know, for those who don't know, the Enneagram is an amazing personality system. It's very ancient. It's complex and nuanced and beautiful. And is based on the idea that there are archetypes that show up in the human experience and that each of us has one of these archetypes. That's our core archetype. We all have all of the archetypes within us and there are strengths and weaknesses to each of them. And so if you want to learn, I will link to some resources about this in the show notes. But you know, at Evolution we work a lot with shadow and a lot with the Enneagram and they are deeply, deeply connected.

So, you know, Luke is a type three like my husband, that's the achiever type, and I am a type four, which is the individualist, which is kind of the tragic artist type and I get made fun of a lot. And I make fun of myself a lot within the Evolution context because type fours have this core belief that something is missing. There's something that's not here that never will be here and I'll never be able to get it. But

I really, really want it. And it's basically envy, right? It's this envy of some other ideal possible reality.

So, we say there's something missing, there's always something missing. It's not enough. I'll never have what I want. These are my previously shadowed experiences that now are out in the open and it's just fun. It's like, Oh yeah, of course there's always something missing. But I'm really good at finding what's missing. Luke, what's yours? What's your kind of core Enneagram?

Luke: My core is that I will project an image of success even though underneath that I feel deeply insecure and can get a bit plastic basically like, I project out what I want people to think that I am experiencing or giving. And so often people experience me, actually experience me as, sometimes a bit arrogant or aloof or a little disconnected because I put up a facade.

And so to play around with this, I often will just go super, like this Elvis, like the just total strange, disconnected projection of what I want you to think I am - a rock star. But underneath all of that often is feeling very needy but never wanting to show my neediness. So the other side of this is like just playing around with neediness. And that's always fun.

And I'd say there's one other thing about shadow that's important to mention, which is for us to really understand in a meaningful way what our personal shadows are, it requires us to have the ability to get quiet and to really find a place of stillness in our own being so that some of these deeper messages become clear. And so for me, this is also just where the importance of contemplative practices - meditation, yoga for me, martial arts - where I can still down my mind enough to unravel some of these more pervasive, darker things that I don't want others to know about me - this is where contemplative practices are really critical. You know, we can't just do shadow work. We also need to tap into something that connects us to a deeper place of stillness in the same way that we can't just meditate to find a way towards personal development.

We also need to do emotional integration work. We need to be able to work with our bodies. So I think for me, these are two fundamental pillars in leadership and in personal development; contemplative practices and emotional integration work - or shadow work.

Caneel: Yeah, that makes so much sense. There's not one silver bullet approach to becoming a better human, essentially. Man, we really need to mix them all together.

Luke: Yeah. It's taking kind of an integral view of different, we have different lines and stages of development and we need to work across all of them. If we just sit in a cave our entire life, then we won't actually be relating with others. We may reach

some level of enlightenment, but it'll be in a very specific way. It won't be of the world. And in the same way that if we just look at our trauma, healing our past, and expressing these unexpressed things there will be a lack of depth in our being, as we need to be able to also go to the quiet places so that we can bring both the depth and the connection.

Caneel: Thank you. It's beautiful. So for those listeners out there, I'm imagining some of them are wondering what could I do now to begin to understand what my shadow looks like? What are some things that we can do in our daily lives?

Luke: Yeah, there's a great there's a great exercise that I've used many times. I did this myself for years and share this with clients often, but yeah, one of the gateways into our shadows, are through our core emotions. And I like to, there's a model we use, which is five core emotions. So mad, sad, glad or afraid and shame. So anger, grief, fear, joy and shame. Shame being different than guilt. Shame being how we feel bad about ourselves, not about what we've done, but about who we are. And there's a way in which we can journal from each of these five emotions.

In some cases you can use your non dominant hand or you simply just write as if you're fully in each of these five emotions and the way you do this is you set up a space like a physical room, and you would imagine the room is your life and you would move physically move in the room where you believe your anger lives or your sadness lives or your fear.

And you go fully into it just for two or three moments and journal. Just allow it to move through you. So as part of this, this exercise, you can actually move. The invitation is to actually move into the location in the room. If the room was your life, that, you moved to a location in the room, that perhaps your anger lives or your fear or your shame, and you can even allow your body to take that shape a bit. Spend a few moments breathing into it and actually stoke the feeling and then from there journal briefly for a few moments from the place of your anger and asking questions like, how long have you been here? What do you believe about Luke, or Caneel, or yourself?

Caneel: So you're asking the fear, you're asking the anger, these questions, you're listening for the answers and writing them down?

Luke: That's right. And you actually want to move completely into it just for a few moments. Knowing that you'll come back to yourself at the end, but allow yourself to fully, fully feel your grief or your shame or your joy, letting all these other parts of ourselves fall away and becoming that part completely.

And then tracing it back, being curious about its origin, what its messages are, how does it serve you, how does it not serve you, how does it get in the way. So this is just me using the emotions as the gateway and we can actually, we can amplify this

by actually using our bodies to amplify it. So my body's kind of like an antenna for these emotions and for these shadows. So if we're in shame, maybe we actually allow our shoulders to roll forward and take on the posture of shame and then allow the message to flow through the pain.

Caneel: Wow. That's powerful. We'll describe this for our listeners in the show notes. It sounds like a great exercise that you can guide yourself through. A lot of times on this show, I'll talk about five basic emotions as well, and I didn't realize that shame was one of them.

For me, the fifth is sexual feelings, which includes creativity and inspiration, kind of motivational drive desire. You know, in a corporate setting I usually call it desire. That one would be really interesting to explore too. And I realized that that's probably one of my core modes when I go down to journal. Just into that creative space, you know, what is my creativity want? What is, what am I desiring right now?

Luke: Yeah, I love that. I love that model as well. I think maybe for me, that creative sexual kind of generative place, it's often a through-line for all of it. For me, you can include all of the others. And so there's, I think, you know, there's a way in which it's really probably more of an individual kind of choice of making meaning about what your core emotions are.

I think fundamentally what it, for me, this exercise of distilling them, the importance of this is that human emotions are so complicated that if we force ourselves into an oversimplification, it really makes us get clear on what we're feeling in the moment and helps us clarify the truth of what's moving through our being or our bodies or our minds in that moment.

Caneel: Each of our emotions has like such an intelligence to it. Every emotion has its own unique wisdom or its own thing. It's trying to tell us, you know, for anger, it's like something is not serving me. Something is not serving my people. For joy, there's something here to be celebrated. For sadness, there's something that's been lost and often, you know, I feel like we walk around with a base-level of sadness that we haven't wanted to resolve. We haven't wanted to dig into or even experience, especially in our, you know, very pro positivity culture. Many of us have not touched our sadness and sadness is just saying something's been lost. What's been lost is such a great question to ask when sadness is here. I love this exercise.

Luke: Yeah. I mean for me, my sadness is a symbol of what I love. Honoring my grief is a way of honoring what I love. And there's something really powerful about, you know, "the longing for" that's tied up in grief and sadness. And longing for me is a clue into what I really care about.

Caneel: Yeah. Beautiful. Another way that I know I've learned a lot about my shadow is in relationships and in community and specifically, you know, in kinds of

relationships where there's a lot of trust and safety and where we have some implicit or explicit agreements about, you know, I care about you so much, I'm going to give you feedback. I know that I've learned a lot by working with you about that. Has that been your experience?

Luke: Oh, absolutely. Yeah. I think this is, I mean this is the thing. What I found for myself is I grow best through challenge and seeing others grow. And some of this may be kind of in the realm of like masculine, feminine, or just personality differences. My rapid growth always happens through getting called out on how I'm not showing up fully. And so having someone like you and some of our colleagues and relationships and having the opportunity to be called out for ways that we're maybe not showing up at our best is super powerful.

So I've always been grateful. I mean, you gave me a couple of doozies lately around, I think you called it a bit of like, well let's just playing small in a certain way around finances and like hanging on a little too tight. And it's really allowed me to kind of look at how trusting am I that my work will be received in the world and that, yeah, the world will continue to provide. I think there's a way in which you really called me out on that. You've also called me out many times on my aloofness in my seeming arrogance, which I'm always grateful for that even though I've been hearing that for 25 years. But to hear it from you, it's like, Oh, I guess I still haven't sorted that one out yet.

Caneel: To illustrate, you know, what it means to challenge someone, you know, and that word, Luke and I use that in a very, very specific sense, which is I see something in you that you're not letting through. I see a gift in you, there's something lovable in there that you're not giving and you're not letting be seen and you're not loving it enough. So like I stand for you letting that gift through. I stand for you loving that part of you that I love. So when I've, you know, these are good examples because I can challenge you on your playing small because when look at you, I see just a rock star, superstar and I, you know, the world sees you that way too. And so when I see these little niggles, I just want to be like, Luke, you are amazing. And so it's safe and you're, we're allowed to do that with people that we love. We're allowed to do that when we have a sense that there's more that can be shared, there's more that can be allowed. There's more that can be free. We're allowed to do this with our friends, our colleagues, our family and it's because we have that two way relationship where you do it for me.

I do it for you. I mean I can't even - the last time we did some significant shadow work, I actually literally don't remember what we were talking about in terms of the content. I just remember looking up while smiling and also crying with just the sense of relief of like, I'm okay. It's okay for me to have this part. Like it's okay for me to be this way. And I got completely disoriented and I think I was supposed to

kind of go back to my place in this circle, but I was just so like lost in the moment. And then I remember you saying you can sit down now. It was a powerful moment.

Luke: Yeah. I think my belief is what you're describing, this kind of thing that we help each other with. This is also probably the most valuable thing that I give my clients and I'm guessing that you give yours is like when, when we've actually been working with them long enough to see where they're either playing small or holding themselves back or hurting themselves or others and they're not fully getting it. For us to actually compassionately give them that challenge is in my experience probably the most important thing that I do in my work in the world.

Caneel: Amen. Luke, is there anything that those listeners who are really, really interested and we hope we have some listeners that are very committed to going deep on personal growth. Is there anything that you're offering soon that they could become a part of? Any programs or retreats that you're leading?

Luke: Yeah, I teach a very specific model around shadow work called Shadow Work Seminars and we regularly do weekend retreats where each person that comes has an opportunity to be facilitated by me and one of my partners in doing some of this part's work that I described and I've got one coming up. I think the next one is January 17th in the Bay area in San Francisco, just North of San Francisco.

And so if people are interested in that, they can register at the website, evolution.team under the events tab, they'll find that event and several other events. It's the 17th through the 19th. It's a Friday through Sunday - Friday night through Sunday afternoon. And there are limited spots. We usually have about 12 people, 12 to 15 people. That's an opportunity to really do a piece of work around owning your specific shadow and in shifting your relationship to a specific shadow.

Caneel: That sounds really powerful. What if people want to get in touch with you and do some one on one work or follow some of the things that you're teaching?

Luke: Yeah. So they can visit my website, lukeentrup.com or they can also find me at evolution.team. I do one on one coaching. Also launching this year, I'm launching a men's leadership group, so working specifically with men around how to work with a deeper sense of purpose in the world and in their relationships. So that's launching a little later in 2020, in March.

Caneel: Awesome. So, lukeentrup.com and we'll have all of these links for you listeners on the show notes and some resources as well that you can put to use right away. And the URL of course for our show notes is at caneel.com/podcast and you can find all of this and more there. Well, Luke, it has been an amazing conversation. Every time I'm with you, I learn something new and I feel a little part of me gets changed.

Luke: Yeah. Thank you, Caneel. Likewise.

Caneel: Thank you so much for being here today and getting to explore a topic that I believe will be really illuminating for you and is a core concept to personal development and growth and truly in mending your relationship with yourself, which is the foundation of all other relationships that you have. So really thank yourself for taking the time to be here. And next week we have an episode for Thanksgiving on gratitude versus entitlement. I'm really looking forward to that one. I can't wait for you to be here for it. It's gonna be airing on Tuesday, so make the time during your drive down to grandma's and I will see you then.