

David: So, Harley, so great to have you with us here on Regen360.

Harley: Yay, so glad to be here.

David: Yes, we're great to have you. And Burning Man is an enigma and it's definitely become a global movement in 50 countries and you've been so instrumental and involved, along with the other co-founders and founders. And I'd like to learn more about its culture and why it's spreading all over the globe and distill what we can learn from it, to apply to the rest of civil society and more than ever we need it.

Harley: I concur. I totally agree.

David: Now, you have an interesting background in, a lot in city planning, art, in city management and creation of Burning Man and teaching as well. We're also going to not just learn about Burning Man, we want to learn about you and your passions and your vision and this show is very much about one-on-one engagement. I like to get into the soul and the DNA and the spark of the person.

Because I believe everything's ... We come together, but when it gets rough or we're trying to climb these steep mountains, we got to get to the inside deep, what sparks us and keeps us going and makes it regenerative. So, first, tell us a tiny bit about your story and how you came to Burning Man, and a little bit on your role with the Burning Man and Black Rock City.

Harley: Well, how can you pair down a lifetime? I'll do my best to keep it pithy. I am born to a family on both sides of ministers. So I came from a sort of a ... Even though I'm not religious myself, I came from a spirit of giving and of being in support of something larger than myself. And I stumbled into Burning Man by happening to live in a building where all those people were congregating at that particular moment, where the constellation was just forming, and I was a painter. So, I was around a lot of very creative people.

And I just became relentless. I just kept knocking at the door and saying, "Come to my house, I'll have the meeting at my house and I'll serve you dinner too." And, "Remember my name and give me something to do. Give me something to do." Until finally people started giving me things to do. The first thing I got was, I'm managing the volunteers, which I'm passionate about. So I've been managing volunteers for the Burning Man organization, but for the Burning Man movement itself. Continuing ever since then.

David: That's interesting. I have to note the painting part. Because for those podcast listeners, I'm also video recording here, and she's got tons of photographs on this beautiful yellow-green wall behind Harley. And I'll move my computer up, you can see my painting behind me, I'm a painter also.

Harley: Oh great. Very nice.

David: So, we both come at merging civil movements with art, which seems to be very much a part of Burning Man. How did art become so front and center of it, and what's art about creation and ideas and culture?

Harley: I think art is a really easy medium to get people engaged. The way we use art as a tool really. We're 30 years into this. So, it's not like we're still creating it. We have some formulas now that work for us. And one of them is interactive art. So it's not just a painting or something that people look at. It's something that people can be engaged in. From the creating in their mind of what it is, to the physical manifestation creation of it, to the experience people are having with it, and hopefully it's something they touch, play with, engage with and then even taking it down and then where do you store it.

The whole process is participatory. And what we've discovered, is that all great civilizations, always, you can tell they're sort of at the pinnacle when they're supporting the arts. You can look at the Renaissance or the Greeks, whatever. We're kind of doing the inverse. We believe the interactive art creates community. It brings people together, around something that is fun, playful, meaningful, challenging, not for money. But for passion, for belief, and out of that, people often become more civic minded.

They start caring, not just about their own community, but the communities around them, and it starts changing their perspective on how they interact with everyone in their entire lives, beyond just making the art project. The impacts go deep and through people, in a way that ripples out to other people. So, it's this wonderful vehicle that allows people to engage, and I think get more in touch with our society and our world today.

David: So, we do art in school. I remember the finger painting my kid would come home with and her crayons and colored pencils everywhere. Everything's art, including sometimes hitting the white walls of the house. At a certain point, a lot of us lose the artist. We're told we're not good, and we start being critical of ... "I'm not an artist. That's not for me." And maybe we observe it or appreciate it, but art leaves our lives.

And it sounds like you're trying to reintroduce into our lives through Burning Man, which then you said, creates this more collaborative spirit. Talk about that loss of art and how we can learn from Burning Man if we haven't gone there, to bring it back into our lives and the importance of it.

Harley: Yes. My particular story was, I was in art school and I was managing a gallery in Manhattan, and I have a lot of judgment about art. I thought I knew what art was. And I was snotty about it. And I came to San Francisco and started hanging out with a whole bunch of people that just literally called themselves artists. I'm like, "Whatever. You're an artist, show me." And I had to get over myself pretty quickly.

Because first of all, they were having more fun than me. Second of all, they were living more alive lives, they were just more present in their day-to-day lives. And pretty soon, I

had to say, "I don't really care whether it's good art or bad art, the effects it's having on the people who are making it, the people around the people who are making it is just really wonderful, and I need to get over my own snobbishness, and just let it be for me."

And once I let that happen and stopped ... took the judgment out of it, I realized that it's everything we do. Isn't everything art? I have some people I work with in my office here. They consider every day of their life to be art. They dress art, they act art, they be art all the time. It's just their essence. And I don't have the personal fortitude to be able to take it to that extreme, but I admire them for doing it, and they live very rich and fulfilling lives. So, I just feel, again, there's this ripple effect of being less judgmental about the things around you and enjoying the things around you, and keeping the creativity alive, the spirit of creativity, in whatever you're doing.

Even if it's a spreadsheet, "Can we make it fun?" None of the things we really believe in is having fun. If you're not having fun, you're doing it wrong.

David: Well, it seems like a lot of our jobs, even the word job or work, can know, it's not fun.

Harley: Yes, we tend to not use the word job when we can. Particularly when I'm dealing with volunteers. We a role. Like, "What's your role?" Because when you embrace it, you embody it. And I want to just talk about when I say "Volunteers," and what I really mean. I don't mean you come and you work three shifts and you get a ticket to come to Burning Man. Actually one of the first questions we ask if somebody wants to volunteer with us, first thing we tell them is, "You don't get a ticket."

And if somebody's motivation to come is to get a ticket, then I know their motivations are wrong. So I'm talking about a word that I haven't found. I've tried for so long and I keep going back to volunteers because it's the closest one we can find. What I'm really talking about is people who are giving because they are called to give, because they are passionate about what something is, because they find that they are better people or happier with their lives, or feel like they have more meaning because they're participating in something. That's what we call volunteers, so I think even when someone is paid to do something in the world I'm living in, often times there's still that spirit that's alive in them.

David: That's interesting. This term volunteer and this issue of money, and we'll get into the lack of money or the different currency you have at Burning Man, in a gift economy. But I'm even finding ... Like this podcast show, this has nothing to do with money. This is passion. This is, I wanted to meet you, I want to learn about Burning Man, I want to extract it for my listeners. But also, I want to transform earth, and I think Burning Man and you have solutions for us. But it's in a different spirit of non-commerce.

Harley: Right.

David: So, do you see these volunteers, you don't give them the free ticket the first time. Are they different than when people get paid? Are they more open to helping, more passionate?

Harley: Yes. Yes, money gets in the way. With a transaction, whether it's money, whether it's a ticket, whether it's a water bottle or a T-shirt, that gets in the way. That dumbs it down. That dumbs down ... You want to give me a gift, you want to give me something because you want to, and then I give you a water bottle, or I give you a ticket, or I give you five bucks. 15/500/5000 bucks, it just ... The transaction is inappropriate, it's a slap in the face really. If you really care, if you're really giving because you want to give, the receiving isn't the important part, it's the giving.

And then when you receive anyway, and somebody's giving to you because they really want to give to you, that's the good stuff. That's when it really gets good. That's what we're all about really.

David: You're giving me chills. So what's ... What happens in this process of giving? Are we healing ourselves, are we reconnecting with the divine or the Garden of Eden? What's happening?

Harley: Gosh, I wish I had an answer to that question, but my guess is, it's probably categories for people to fit themselves into. But I'd like to believe that maybe it's just different for everybody, that everyone's paths are their own, and whatever that they feel inside that's so good, is their own too. And that's what they share. So I don't know, that's a tough question for me to answer.

David: Why are these volunteers signing up? What is their hope? Why do they want to give away their time? What are they hoping to gain?

Harley: I think what Burning Man, and when I say Burning Man, I don't mean a specific event. We have over 80 events around the world, and we have representatives around the world and all of that. So, I mean Burning Man the concept. I think when people want to give to Burning Man ... Can you repeat the question for me?

David: Why are they volunteering? Why are they trying to connect with what you've created?

Harley: I think people have a need for us right now, particularly. I think we would have been successful any time, because I think whatever we're tapping into with Burning Man is just true to humanity, it's core to who we are. People like to look at fires, people like to give, people feel good when they give. People want to clean up and make a place better than they found it and they want to be nice to the neighbors, and they want to be inclusive.

When they're their best selves, they want all those things, and those are our values. And think that right now, our world is moving so fast, it's so layered, we're so removed from food sources, from our environment, from our religions, our religions are falling apart. Even our ... Getting an education is hard to do these days. The money, the game of money, the game of money plays such a heavy role in the world we're working in today, that people are in such relief, in just going to a place where people want to be nice and they want to share and they want to contribute what's meaningful and passionate to them with somebody else. I think it's pretty simple when you get down to it.

David: So, Burning Man has reinvented or brought back a pure form of community. Talk to us about the community of Burning Man, and why, what's the glue? Why all these people go year after year, and what's the essence of that open, artistic, creative giving community? What is that?

Harley: Okay, so let's step back into what we call the default world, or the everyday world that we all live in, we've lived in our entire lives. We know ourselves, because people tell us, our grocer tells us, our mother tells us, our friends tell us who we are. We go "Yes, that's right," or, "No, that's not right." But you figure out who you are based on the world around you, how much money you have, what kind of job you have, what kind of success you have.

When you have all of that stripped away, and now you have a chance to see yourself differently, or be different, and you ... it's just up to you, that's it. And then you see how people respond to you, you have a totally different vantage point to find out who you are yourself. And for some people that's frightening, and Burning Man might not be right for them, but most people, that's not the case. Most people find it really empowering and really exciting and really exhilarating.

And it's not just a one-time thing, it's really path they get put on. Because they no longer are the person they were before, they're the person they want to be. Well, why do I have to be the person that my barber, my mother or my neighbor told me I am? Why can't I be the person I want to be? Why don't I just actualize that? So that all this hope, it just comes into their lives, because they realize they can create their own lives. They're not whatever they said. You are what you want to be. You are who you choose to hang around. You are where you choose to put your time. You are who you ... What you do with yourself is you. And so, it just gives people an opportunity to see themselves through a totally different lens.

David: The word that radiates when I hear you say that, is freedom.

Harley: Yes. Isn't that wonderful? It's sort of pivotal. I mean, wonderful that that's there, that this opportunity-

David: Let's breathe. Let's breathe ...

Harley: Yes.

David: Look at what you're even doing to me. You're like ... Wow. And I'm well on the way. I'm sitting in a bright red shirt, not my suit and tie that I wore in my first career as a real estate developer.

Harley: Oh yes, that's a little different. The thing I love about Burning Man for me personally, is I have an opportunity to meet somebody like you. We're on the same path, you're doing it your own way and I'm doing it my way. We're creating, I think, things that are very similar. So, what a wonderful place to be and that we can meet each other.

David: Now, maybe we're all meant to be on that path, and what is the path that we're on, or that we've returned to for the barber, or the hair dresser, your parent told you you're going to be the doctor, the engineer or the entrepreneur?

Harley: I often talk about this and what I call the game of money, and it's got three parts. There's power, there's money, and there's status. So, if you get some money, let's say a lot of money. All of a sudden you get some status. And if you're smart, you get power with that as well. And that's really seductive, and it can get you really far in the game that we all participate in, right? We all use money. It's the world we're in, that is the game.

But it can be so vacuous of any content or any meaning or any passion or any real spiritual reality. It can just be as superficial as money, power and status, which at the end of the day is not very satisfying. So, when you get a taste of having an opportunity to actually have meaningful content, things that challenge you, things that make you think about things differently, maybe challenge your own belief system and make you be more compassionate to other people, more respectful of other people. It just changes the game.

So I think getting outside of the game of money that we're all in. We obviously have to stay in it and we have to have money, we have to ... We all want status, we want to rise, we don't want to be the flunky in the corporate infrastructure forever. We all want to become the boss. These things are all fine, but without the spiritual side of it, or without the passion or the realization of the self, it's meaningless.

David: Well, it's interesting, you talk about money and certainly that's the root of capitalism. And then power and there's greed, we need that. Embedded in all that, is ego. So, maybe ego is not invited to Burning Man? What do you think?

Harley: I spent so much time about leaving the ego behind. I spent so much time saying, "I don't have room for your ego, not me. We don't have room for your ego in here." It's just a waste of everybody's time. I know healthy ego means that you love yourself and that you have confidence, and all that stuff is good. But I'm talking about the kind that wants to come in and wants to say, "Hey, look at how much I've got. Now come and help me." "No, I don't need to come and help you because of what you've got. What do you have to give?" We don't have much patience for it.

David: When you say, "What do you have to give," is that, help define who are you really? Is it about who are you, but we try first, "Well, I'm president of this, I'm millionaire, I'm triathlete, I'm girl scouts." At Burning Man, it sounds like you don't have those titles?

Harley: Right.

David: And no one cares about your money, or you can't see what car you have, or what house, or what zip code, or your degree.

Harley: Exactly.

David: So then, what are you?

Harley: Well, "Who are you and what do you value?" When you know who you are, and when you know what you value, that you are. People can respond to that in a ... however they want to. Unmediated, forthright, honest, laid back. Maybe they don't like you, maybe they don't care about what you value, that's fine. There's other people, but just the boldness and the ability to be clear about something fundamental as who you are and what you value is attractive, and it's honest, and it opens doors.

David: So, truth, honesty, integrity are more raw there instead of hidden in our other world that's money based?

Harley: Absolutely. To be honest, everything's more raw there. On top of that, there are events all over the world, right? And the events sometimes happen in lush forests or at oceans and beaches and that sort of thing now. But where this started, is in the high desert, on a dry, alkaline, lake bed, where it is a very harsh environment. I mean literally, probably, a person dies on a Black Rock Desert every other year because they walk too far out without water and they can't be found.

It's a very harsh environment. 80 mile an hour winds, 115 degree heat in the day, maybe down to 40 in the summertime in the winter. So you are pushed to your brink. I think one thing that's important to get people to understand perhaps better who they are, perhaps understand better what they value, is being pushed to your edge. Taken out of your comfort zone. You don't have your walls that protect you from it all, "I've had enough now, I think I'll go inside my room and close the door."

David: And hide.

Harley: And hide. You might have a chance, which might ... Well, you still can hear everybody right? It's a super overload of stimulus on many, many levels and you're being pushed physically to extremes. So, everybody basically gets taken outside their comfort zone, and then you start to really understand what matters to you. And when you start facing, say, your own fears and you come out the other side, you're victorious, it's so empowering and it's so infectious, and you want to share it.

So, a lot of people are afraid of getting stuck in a dust storm, and when the dust storm blows over and they survived it, and then they actually too care ... The next time a dust storm comes they take care of somebody else, they start to learn about themselves. They start to learn where their own boundaries are, where they can give or where they need take. Like, sometimes somebody else needs to help you, and that's okay too. So, I think a lot of failing, making mistakes and learning about yourself is very much a part of process. Or being pushed to a boundary and then being allowed to fail, to learn, is really a transformational formula.

David: So, have we just become too protected in our normal lives? So, failure, is it front and center, we can turn on the air conditioner, we can shut the front door, we can have fresh water without working to get it, go to the market ...

Harley: I think there's two things in that question. One is, failure has a lot of value on it. Value judgment of being negative for a lot of people. It isn't seen as a stepping stone to success, which is ... Any scientist knows, failures means you're just closer to success, right? But everyone doesn't think like that.

Often times in a corporation, if you fail, you might lose your job, right? There's a lot of ramifications, a lot of negative ramifications on failure. So that exists, and I honestly believe that our world, for us here, obviously this is not true in other parts of the world, but where we're living right now, we have so much comfort that we're soft. We've just gotten soft and expect things to be spoon fed to us, we expect the police to come and take care of us, we expect electricity to be there and the lights to be on and to have nice neighbors.

And if you don't like your neighbors then you can put up more video cameras and maybe keep people out, you can scream. We live in such a protected world now that we don't even know how to take care of ourselves.

David: Is Burning Man taking us back to the Garden of Eden?

Harley: Maybe if you believe in the Garden of Eden.

David: Or just before civilization or pre [crosstalk 00:24:11].

Harley: No. I just think we got ourselves caught in a little blip here. We've just started valuing that game of money a little bit too much. We're just out of balance, that's what I think it is and I think-

David: I'm sorry.

Harley: I think capitalism too, if you start putting health care and trying to make it prosperous, that's probably the wrong way to look at health care. It probably won't ever make a lot of money. It's going to be hard to make that happen in a healthy balanced way, right? So I think it's just finding balance.

David: So, what's at essence, in the virality of Burning Man? It spread all over the country, it's grown to what? 70/80,000 people coming to a main event, but you have events all over the world, you have Burning Man local events and groups and voluntarism, a nonprofit and arts foundation. What's the essence here in this spreading of it?

Harley: I think it's a relief. I think it takes the pressure off of the average person. It's a relieve valve, it's a reset. Like restarting a computer, it's an opportunity to reset your life. I think it's a fresh look, so that you can have a healthier, happier, unmired perspective on yourself and the world around you. So, I really think it's that ability to, as you said, freedom. Ability to start, in your own mind start fresh and create what you want.

David: If you go to Burning Man, and you engage and perhaps it changes you, and you take off those false facades and layers, but then you go back home and maybe you're a lawyer,



you're a litigator. How do you keep that spirit, that new reset from Burning Man, how do you sustain it in the regular world that's money driven?

Harley: We found that a lot of people come back from Burning Man and quit their jobs. Maybe in search of more meaningful work, or get divorced or maybe finally getting married, or add something to the world. So, you really want to hang on to that nice job that you actually really do enjoy, that does give you all the things you need. But maybe you haven't given enough back to your community, maybe you're not spending enough time with your family, maybe you want to adopt a child. Maybe you want to start a garden. Whatever it is, and it's going to be different for everybody. So, maybe it just creates more space, but a lot of people come back from Burning Man to find themselves really evaluating what they have and making changes.

David: So, with that experience, that clarity, how many days is it?

Harley: It's eight days.

David: So, an eight day cathartic, unplugging reset, you get clarity, and that causes you, I guess to question maybe everything in your life.

Harley: Yes, I've seen it do wonders for people who are stuck. The person who's just freshly divorced, the person who maybe suffered a loss, lost somebody very meaningful in their lives. Yes, people who are at certain junctures in their life, find it ... they get it quicker, and they get it deeper, and they get it harder. Not everybody. Some people, it goes right over their head, they miss the whole thing. But for a lot of people, that's the case.

David: So, there's a clarity, but it's more congruent with true self?

Harley: Yes. That's what I would say.

David: And finding and hearing the voice of true self is harder in the world that we created with everyday job and paying the rent and the mortgage.

Harley: I would argue that, not only is it harder, it's also, the odds are stacked against us. I think that the commodified world we live in, all of those corporations out there would like us, not really to think about where our passions are. They really want us to just maybe feel better by buying that nicer dress that costs more.

David: Well, we see it. I've got young kids and they want to go to the mall. Despite who we are as parents. I want to go hiking, walk the dog outside, get on a river and fly-fish or ride my bike up steep things. They want-

Harley: You're a fairly evolved person. For the person who maybe hasn't thought so much about this, hasn't thought about it much at all, they might find themselves going, "Wow, I can't wait to watch that TV show tonight, right?" It's just a different place to be.

David: I guess this is the freedom at Burning Man, to unplug. It's the freedom ... One of your ... I love your 10 principals and I'm staring at them on my computer screen. It's got, after de-commodification, which we spoke about a little bit, is radical self-reliance, radical self-expression.

Harley: Right.

David: Go ahead, please.

Harley: Radical self-expression, is one that, to me, that's like the gateway principal. It's the easiest one to kind of go, "Sure, I've always wanted to wear that costume." Or, "Sure, how come I never paint my face?" And so, at first it seems superficial, right? Like, "Look at that person, must be their first time at Burning Man. They're naked and blue."

I've done that. I've gotten judgmental after 30 years of doing this, 28 for me. "There's a naked blue person, must be their first time." But you can't underestimate that first time. The beauty of that first time, and that radical self-expression is the gateway. That's the first time you get to go, "Wow, I don't have to buy into all that stuff I thought was me. I can be anything I want to." And maybe the first time you do want to be naked and blue, but then next time, you might want to go and build the temple. So, it's a wonderful, for me, starter first principal.

David: Want to have that right, that you can have radical self-expression. That right is taken away, and I don't know why. You can't do it at most jobs. My first 10 years they wanted me to wear a tie to work. I've learned I hate ties. I can't even breathe. Maybe you want to wear shorts and flip-flops, and maybe you want to laugh loudly and be bold and work told to turn it down. I think most of our lives, "Fit in."

I talk a lot about, they want to get us in line. They pitch us that, "In the front of the line you get the gold. I hate ... If anyone's in line, I will get in line and I will inspect, is it really gold or fool's gold?"

Harley: Smart guy.

David: And your version of gold may not be mine.

Harley: Yes. Or maybe you don't want gold.

David: And who cares? Why is gold, gold?

Harley: Right.

David: I think Trout are pretty great. Trout are the new gold. Just, do these 10 principals guide Burning Man? Do they guide the global community, or is it just a website?

Harley: I'll tell you now, no. They are very much embedded in everything we do. But I'll tell you how we got them. We have very much let this whole thing grow itself. We've protected

it from ... I think of it as like a garden. So, we protected it from things we know are bad for the garden. Like commodification. If we have allowed-

David: I told you it was a garden. I'm sorry, go ahead.

Harley: If we had allowed sponsorship, a corporation to come in and give us money so we can put their name, that would just destroy that intimate space of self-expression that you need to feel totally safe and secure in. Or if we had allowed money to be exchanged, you'd all of a sudden be in the game of money. You wouldn't have the freedom to just be anything right?

So, we protected this little thing that we just ... We didn't know what it was, what it was going to turn out to be. But we knew it was important, because everyone felt it, everyone just went, "Yes, I want to go back," and, "That's pretty cool and I want to bring a friend." So we protected against things we thought were not good for them and we just let it go, and it developed. And before we knew it, we had people ... we had about 30 different states in the United States, representatives who were doing things that were associated with us.

They might be throwing a party, they might be doing beach clean ups, they might be starting a non-profit and getting involved with the schools. One guy even started a charter school. Everyone just doing their own thing, but we knew that we were aligned. Well, how do we know we're aligned? At some point, we have to be able to say, what's the cheat sheet, or what can we check and what can we balance against. How can I make sure that you're in alignment with me and you're not just saying things and I don't talk to you long enough. I miss this really important thing, like you're actually making money off of this.

So we came up with the 10 principals, and this was in 2003. So, this pretty far into our lifespan at this point. We made it for those satellites who are further away from us, and before we knew it, yes, it's not rules, by any stretch of imagination. And listen, "Leave no trace," plays out very differently ... It's one of the 10 principals, "Leave no trace." Plays out very differently in South Africa, where people make their money by cleaning up your garbage. You're taking someone's job away from somebody if you clean up your own garbage, than it does here in the United States.

But when you judge all together, when it all hangs together like a good piece of artwork, right, all of it becomes more important together than it does separated apart. So, it's not dogma, it's not rules. But it's a way to just test, to make sure that we're still in alignment.

David: Well, even that principal, leaving no trace, doesn't say, "Leave no waste." There's a different between trace and waste.

Harley: Yes.

David: And that gives it actually expansiveness. Like you're saying, in a different country, a different culture.

Harley: And just to be fair to those words, that there is a, "Leave no trace" organization. You might be aware of this, it's an environmental group from the Knowles foundation, and we have a relationship with them. So we feel comfortable using those words, but there is a whole organization that teaches ... We are actually the largest users of "Leave no trace," and we believe, the only city in the world.

David: The last one is participation. A lot of us are afraid to participate. Where we become quiet, afraid to speak out. Certainly not speak boldly and loudly. How do you get a non-participant type, who's been just trained to ... I don't think they were that way maybe when they were born. But how do you make them into a participant and bring them out of their shell?

Harley: Participation takes many different forms. It might be that you can participate fully and never say a word. And it depends on what it is you're bringing to the table. So, really what it says is, "Don't sit back and take from this moment. Be present and be open to giving to this moment." But it doesn't force you to behave in any particular way at any particular time.

David: Why the word immediacy and how does that play out.

Harley: That's my favorite one.

David: I didn't know.

Harley: Yes. That one's so cool. It's so hard these days. You have kids, I have a 13 year old and they're on their phones, we can't get them off. And they're not here right now, they're not in the moment. You miss so much when you don't look in someone's eyes. You miss so much when you can't smell the snow when the door opens. You are so much more able to give, receive, enjoy, understand, articulate your own feelings when you are in the moment fully, 100%, without the distractions of all this stuff around us.

And again, this can take many, many different forms. You and I are, I think, relatively immediate and we have more [inaudible 00:37:16] on computers together. So, it's not like we're saying we're anti-anything really. But it's just what's the spirit of who you are right now. You're bringing your false self to the table, are you in this moment together, is what that's all about.

David: Well, the phone just isolates us. The kids want to do texting and Snapchat at dinner.

Harley: Yes.

David: I even find they won't say hello to another kid you're driving by. But then they get on Snapchat or Instagram to see if the kid posted about that shared experience that they refused to connect.

Harley: Right. What kind of. I mean, this is a whole new age, right? We don't know what the impacts of this are going to be. We're experimenting with our ... Well, our kids are experimenting with themselves right now. Yes, my guess is that immediacy is going to have even more relevance moving forward. But these principles that say, "Let's be inclusive, let's be community minded together," are going to be even more important. A really nice check in balance to that kind of rapid on take of technology.

David: Well, in the community of giving, of building together, we used to do that, because we had to depend more on each other. For food, for basket weaving, for fire, for safety, to shield us from the 80 mile an hour wind. We really are losing that, it's sad that we don't even say hello to the person who walks by us, out of fear, or out of conditioning, or out of arrogance or ...

Harley: Well, and on top of that, there's all the things we don't realize were missing beyond those things. Like that sense of belonging. Or just, you know it feels good in your body when you make somebody smile. If you forget what that feels like, that's a sorry thing to lose.

David: So, how do we take these principals, how do we learn from Burning Man and apply it more to our everyday. I know you said people are changing their lives, they're getting married, they're getting divorced, they're becoming artists, or quitting their jobs. But for-

Harley: They're writing that book, they're starting that nonprofit, they're volunteering.

David: But for our listeners, maybe you're listening and you're tired of being whatever it is you're having to put on each day, the false robe. We're here to empower you to be radically creative and loud, and ask inside, "Who is that real person that you could find at Burning Man." And live, I guess, a Burning Man life. What do you say to that, listener? Maybe isn't that contented and tired of playing by the rules of that old money game.

Harley: Yes, and it's hard to do a little bit, on your own, I think. I think it's a support network, it's helpful. So, that's why our events are so successful, because if everyone's in it together, then it makes it easier for you to explore, right? Because everyone's playing the same game, where everyone's in the same framework.

And something else I think is really true, is well, I think that a lot of statistics on it these, that a lot of our work force, they don't really enjoy the work that they're doing. They don't really feel fulfilled by the work they're doing. So, every day, they're finding themselves in this environment that's not really who they are. And it's really hard to break out of that. So I guess what I would say was, try something new. Start small, start small and try something new.

I think one of the things that's really easy to start with is leaving no trace. When you see garbage on the ground, pick it up and throw it away. It's just so easy to do, but once you start doing it, you start noticing more garbage and you want to pick up more garbage. And you know what, people around you go like, "I'm sort of ashamed of myself. I should

pick up some garbage too." I guess, a little infectious. And before you know it, you're composting, and before you know it you're neighbor's composting. And it's a very easy thing to do, and everyone understands it. You don't have to explain it. It's pretty self-evident. So, start small with something that you can do and build on it.

David: [inaudible 00:42:03] I'll go into the men's room at the airport and around the trash can are 10 different pieces of paper that people couldn't go the extra two more inches. And often I'll take a clean one and pick up the other eight and throw them away.

I actually am a little self-conscious of doing it when others are around. I do it quietly. I should do it with everyone around. But I'm not trying to be righteous. I just ... It bothers me. It bothers me.

Harley: Yes. There is that line. You don't want to come off as righteous. It's ... Yes.

David: But if someone sees you do it, maybe they do that and I actually feel like, when I do it, one of my mentors, I hear him from above. It was David Brower. And he says, "Good job David."

Harley: Well I hear that David Sedaris, when he's not on a book tour or writing a book, cleans up garbage, and he got invited to meet the queen because he cleans up garbage. That's how he spends his time. And another man who is a very successful business man, said that he's a burner. That's what we call people who've been to Burning Man. Even though he's never been to Burning Man, because his grandchild came back from Burning Man, and started picking up all the garbage on the street and he went, "You know, I could pick up garbage too." And he started feeling this ethos and started going, "Wow." And now, all of a sudden, he's having conversations with his neighbors he wouldn't have had otherwise if he hadn't bent down to pick up the garbage. And so, he considers himself a burner by being on that small little trip.

David: I once did it with my kids. We got a big bag each and we walked maybe a mile of the neighborhood and started doing that. And at first they're like, "Gross, I'm not touching that," and then it became fun. It's fun. And you see your progress of things filling up, everything looks clean. Soon you realize you're part of the community.

Harley: This is what I'm talking about.

David: Maybe others get involved and then you can connect and participate.

Harley: Someone who I work with here at Burning Man office, is going this weekend to her favorite park, and she's going to have a little stand, her friends are going to come by, and her favorite park's getting really ... It's very popular, so it's getting trashed. So she's going to have a sign that says, I don't know, something like, "A bag for a treat or something." And she's going to give away rewards to someone who picks up five pieces of garbage and brings it to her. She's going to give them a temporary tattoo.

She collects temporary tattoos. And so, she's going to give them all tattoos. And she's going to be there all day. Just to encourage other people to actually clean up the park that she loves so much. What a great way to spend your Saturday.

David: Does that constitute her as a burner?

Harley: She's already a burner. That's just her expressing herself.

David: Awesome. Some of our listeners might think, "Well, that's radical. I'm not going naked and blue. I don't know anyone who will go." Can you just show up alone and try to find other people to connect with?

Harley: Absolutely. Absolutely, and I'll just get rid of the myth. There's so few people new to Burning Man. It's not like everyone's naked. And usually the people that are naked are the people who shouldn't be naked.

David: No judgment.

Harley: No judgment. No judgment, but absolutely. It's a city like any city. You'll find ... Anything you can find in a regular city, you're going to find in our city, with the exception of garbage cans. And people are very welcoming. It's a very welcoming place to be. I ran the city for ten years, so I know all the statistics on medicals and how many people are Medevac'd out and how many people stub their toes and how many people get dehydrated. And it's a really very, very safe city.

David: So, what do I need to show up with? Because there are ... Are there places I could rent, do I need a tent? Do I need a mobile home?

Harley: [crosstalk 00:46:11] show up with whatever way you feel comfortable [inaudible 00:46:15] camping is. But you have to bring everything you need yourself. And we don't have any things to rent or we don't recommend companies to rent from. So, you really have to self-reliance. Obviously a Burning Man trip starts when you decide to come. So, if you radical self-rely, it starts with you figuring out what it is you need and packing it all, and bringing it all.

Now, just be aware that people are very kind and so, I don't bring one pair of goggles, I bring three pairs of goggles. I don't bring one chapstick, I bring five chapsticks. So, people will share. Because you're in the middle of nowhere, and you're going to forget something, and somebody else is going to take care of you. It's nice of you to help them too.

But first timers, everybody's always very forgiving with-

David: What about water and food?

Harley: All your water, all your food. There's nothing ... There's nothing to purchase there, everything you have to bring yourself.

David: No electricity?

Harley: Nope, no electricity.

David: Can I bring solar panels for my tent?

Harley: Absolutely. You will see so much prototyping and so much creativity out there. People are trying their new home-made solar panels. Or we make makers, we inspire people to want to create. That's what we do. We say, "You think you can do that? Yes [inaudible 00:47:28]. Yes, you can do that. Go ahead and do it." You see people coming up with the wildest stuff and making it happen.

From rock engines to new solar panels, to just a hat that's amazing. It's a very creative space, full of new ideas, failing, and being tested and then coming back next year, being beautiful. Yes, you'll find everything.

David: How do I know where to pitch my tent?

Harley: About half of our city is placed, [inaudible 00:48:00] part of a group that's organized and you filled out a questionnaire, and you reserve ... You get a piece of ground reserved for your camp, and the rest of it is open camping. And as you come ... Once you get through the portion of the entry where somebody takes your money and tears your ticket and we got all that commodification and all that money stuff out of the way, you drive a half a mile down a dirt road and you're greeted.

And I always say, if somebody has the balls to bust through the gate without a ticket and make it to the greeters to be greeted, you greet them anyway. You'd greet them just like anybody else. At the greeter station, they say, "Hi, welcome to Burning Man, Welcome home. Can I answer your questions for you?"

Then they're going to pull out the map, they're going to spend time with you, they're going to talk ... Our city has districts, just like any other city. So, "If you got a family, you might want to come to this area. If you want to rage all night, you might want to go that area. If you want quiet, you need to go over here. If you want loud you need to go over there." So, they'll help you find your spot.

David: So you have a family area and families and kids are welcome?

Harley: Yes, my daughter is 13 and she's been to Burning Man 14 times, and she missed a year.

David: What about my dog? Can Juno come?

Harley: No, dogs are not happy there. The best dogs ... It just doesn't serve them to go. It's really hard, the alkaline is really hard on their paws and the fireworks freak them out, the flames freak them out. It's just too harsh.

David: Well, what a great conversation Harley. And you've welcomed all of us home.



Harley: Thank you.

David: And invited us to bring out the creative, the self-expression, participation community, and you've brought us inside the city of Burning Man, and hopefully we all got a taste of being a burner through this initial conversation.

Harley: Well, thank you so much for the opportunity to talk. I just love what you're doing.

David: Okay. Well, we'll see you soon at Burning Man, and look for the newbie Blue, named David.

Harley: I look forward to it.

David: Okay, thank you.