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Tony Shawcross: Radical honesty is a lot less about coming up with those compromises. It is a lot more with dealing in the moment with what comes up for us moment to moment and being honest with each other.

Sam Fuqua: That's Tony Shawcross, and this is, Well, That Went Sideways! A podcast that serves as a resource to help people have healthy, respectful communication. We present ideas, tools, and techniques to help you transform conflict in relationships of all kinds. On this episode, we explore a practice called Radical Honesty. It was developed by psychotherapist and author, Brad Blanton in his 1994 book, *Radical Honesty: How to Transform Your Life by Telling the Truth*. It's grown into an organization that provides workshops and hosts meetups around the world. We thought it would be interesting to learn more about it in part as one way of thinking about and handling conflict. We spoke with two radical honesty trainers, Tony Shawcross and Firdous Gangat.

I'm Sam Fuqua, co-host of the program with Jes Rau. Hi Jes.

Jes Rau: Hey Sam.

Sam Fuqua: Firdous and Tony, thank you for joining us. Let's start with a basic explanation. What is Radical Honesty? Capital R, capital H.

Tony Shawcross: It's a community, you know, we sometimes call it just like a self-help cult, but uh, it's a community, uh, of people interested in kind of getting out of our heads more into our bodies and senses. We usually set for three kind of real goals. So one is to free ourselves from the suffering and stress that's caused by lying or other forms of lying, like hiding or withholding or pretending. Uh, it's also aimed at helping us connect with others more deeply and more authentically, more vulnerably. Um, and then third, it's about shifting from being kind of a reactive, subconsciously driven product of past experiences into a more consciously motivated, proactive creator of, of our lives. So that's a lot to say, but for me that's what Radical Honesty is about.

Firdous Gangat: Yeah, no, I concur with uh, Tony. It's, uh, it's actually, it seems counterintuitive, but it's actually quite compassionate when we speak honestly, and it actually saves a lot of time, stress, uh, all the suffering that is generally caused by people not understanding each other.

Tony Shawcross: Yeah, a lot of people think of Radical Honesty as like brutal honesty, but, uh, but it's very different. And if we get into this conversation about conflict resolution, you'll see we also have a pretty unique approach to, to conflict resolution, uh, that was developed by Brad Blanton, the psychologist that founded and wrote the original best-selling book, *Radical Honesty*. Um, and it, it's all just aligned with what we were just, just kind of explaining it. Fully experiencing any kind of like resentment or anger that we have, being able to freely and fully express it, um, in a way that lets that emotion come and go.

Sam Fuqua: Tony, you and I have been friends and non-profit media colleagues for many years, and when you first told me about Radical Honesty, it sounded like just being blunt. And I know bluntness is sometimes necessary, but rather than be blunt, I am often more inclined to listen, to be empathetic, to not say everything that's on my mind. Can I be that way and still be somehow practicing Radical Honesty?

Tony Shawcross: Well, it kind of depends. So, I mean, my experience of you, Sam, is that you're a pretty peaceful guy, and I think if you really are, you know, at peace, um, that I think, you know, your, your way of being really works well. But I think what, what the trap a lot of us fall into is that what we're really feeling in our bodies is angst or frustration or anger, and we try and pretend to just, you know, listen and, and be curious. Um, you know, the, the position of Radical Honesty is that that doesn't work, and that what you resist persists, and that when you try and with, you know, withhold or, or you know, subvert your own kind of anger and resentment, it actually builds and, and gets expressed in ways that are a lot more damaging than if you just, just say what's going on for you. Uh, for us, it's not that big of a deal to get angry. We all get angry all the time. And so you can just express it in a way, um, that, that has it kind of come and go. That's, that's, that's, that's our experience and it's not for everyone.

Jes Rau: That sounds so interesting and definitely not what first came to mind when I heard, when Sam brought this idea of Radical Honesty to us. So I'm just wondering what does it look like? How does it play out then?

Tony Shawcross: Well, the best example is if we actually do it. Are you mad at me about anything, Firdous?

Firdous Gangat: Not that I can think of at the moment. So I guess it's more around when, when we have, um, as humans, we, it's part of say an awareness continuum. We are interacting with each other on a day to day basis. And generally people will say something or do something to us that we don't really resonate with or don't like. And a lot of times we pretend that, uh, for example, if uh, someone is speaking to me and I'm not really fully engaged with that person and I really wanna do something else, uh, I would sometimes withhold that and just app, appease the person and just stay there and listen to him for not wanting to be rude or insulting. It could be someone important like a boss or a partner or a lover. And uh, I think when we notice that we pretending, we then say it out loud, "Hey, you know what? I really want to listen to you, but I want to do X, Y, Z, or I wanna go and do X, Y, Z." And I think, uh, that's more kinder and we then re, lead a life that is more honest and, you know, uh, I'm doing what I want to do and I'm, I'm negotiating with someone else. A lot of times, sometimes these things trigger the other person. So it's, it's a, it triggers me when my partner does X or Y and rather than me withholding that, I would say, "Okay, I resent you for parking the car incorrectly." Uh, or parking the car, um, uh, on the left driveway or something. Something as that, which is more specific rather than "You always do, you always park the car there. Hey, you always park the car there". This is me taking responsibility, "I resent you for parking the car in the, on the driveway." So in that way, it's also allowing the other person to receive that, and that person will notice what's going on in their body. Both parties notice what's going on in their body.

Tony Shawcross: Yeah. So I'll, I'll, I'll take a step back and just kind of reiterate some of what Firdous said. Um, yeah, so in a Radical Honesty, um, completion conversation or resentment exercise, uh, we usually have two people actually face each other. Uh, it's best when you have someone actually facilitating that conversation. And when one person is angry at the other, um, we encourage them to say it. So it's not like really like non-violent communication where you shouldn't, you know, blame people or shouldn't use harsh words or shouldn't use profanities, for example. Um, we encourage you to fully embody, you know, Radical Honesty is in large part based on gestalt therapy. And so gestalt therapy for those who aren't familiar comes from this German word *gestalt*, which kind of roughly means “form.” And the aim with gestalt therapy is to express yourself with unified gestalt, where the, the words that you're saying, the, the intonation, the strength of your voice, the volume of your voice, your position, your posture, everything is expressing what's going on for you. That can be the unified gestalt, you know, expressing love. It can be expressing excitement. It can be expressing anger. And again, the idea behind that, that school of thought, is that when you hold some of that back, you know like, oh, I'm not supposed to raise my voice, or oh, I'm not supposed to, whatever, that that suppression of that emotion has that emotion even, even grow. Uh, what you resist persists.

And so, uh, so we have two people kind of sit and face each other. And if, let's say Firdous is angry at me, uh, Firdous would be encouraged and coached to say, "Tony, I resent you for..." and then fill in the blank. And, and like Firdous said, we discourage people from speaking in generalizations. We try and ground them in something specific that the person said or did. We feel like people can spin forever in their heads about stories that they have and meaning that they make up. But when you ground yourself in what actually happened, when you kind of get in relationship with, with reality as it is, it's really hard to stay angry at people for just an objective fact of what happened. You know, here's an example that you guys might not love us using for this podcast, but, uh, when I reached out to Firdous to do this podcast, I mentioned that, um, that the, that, that we wanted a, a person of color to, to be a guest on the, on the podcast. And so he wrote in, in his, uh, in his email response that he had a sensation in his stomach and felt a little nervous when, when I told him that. Um, and so he might say like, "Tony, rather than being angry at me for all these stories..." He would just say, "Tony, I'm angry at you for saying..." or "Tony, I resent you for saying that you want to do this podcast with a person of color." And then he would feel the sensations in his body when he expresses that, and he would often report those sensations while he's expressing it. So Firdous, would you just, just do it even if you don't really feel it?

Firdous Gangat: Okay. Yeah. So Tony, I resent to you for writing you want to do this podcast with a person of color. I notice some sensations in my belly tighten up. I notice my heart beating really faster. Uh, I think there's tension in my throat, uh, like my airways are, or my throat is dry.

Tony Shawcross: Would you do it again?

Firdous Gangat: So, Tony, I resent you for saying you want to do this podcast with a person of color.

Sam Fuqua: So when you say that for the second time, Firdous, the idea is that you've released something so you don't feel the physical manifestations of the discomfort.

Firdous Gangat: Yeah, correct. So I think if I was really angry at Tony, uh, then I'm saying something that has triggered me in some form, and when I say it to the person that is affecting me, in this case Tony, if I do it in front of him, in contact with him, he is, they're receiving my honesty and supporting me to be honest. Whereas, and then I am actually then allowed to be honest and then feel the sensations in my body, and that gives me a release of that anger or resentment. And then in, naturally compassion builds up. And I just realize this is just my own, uh, trigger and my own stuff and my own insecurities, and it's nothing to do with Tony. And then in that way then, I can appreciate him for being present, for supporting me with his face, with his eyes. For not yelling at me. You know about that, then that's a not, but you get the, you get the idea.

Tony Shawcross: It doesn't make for good radio, but we would also pause and just let him sit with that. Let me sit with that. Actually sit with the discomfort of being angry at someone and sit with the discomfort of someone being angry at you and just stew in the way that that feels in your body, in your stomach, in your throat, in your chest. 'Cause again, the, the, the idea is that when you resist those sensations, when you resist that experience of being angry at someone, that that actually makes that persist. And so, yeah, Firdous and I wouldn't have just done that twice, we would've done that several times, uh, until he just can say it without feeling much. And then he might say, "Tony, I appreciate you for saying you want to do this podcast with a person of color." And then he'd do the exact same thing. He'd report what comes up in his body and he'd like say, "No, I don't think that's true. You know, I've got some tightness in my throat. No, I'm still mad at you. I resent you for saying you wanna do this podcast with a person of color." And we just keep doing it. And it's my job to just sit there and, and, and listen. And sometimes I get some useful, valuable feedback in how I might wanna alter my behavior. And sometimes I'm just sitting there and being a support for him dealing with his stuff.

Sam Fuqua: How do you decide when to use it? It sounds to me like you have to pick your spots because always using Radical Honesty could lead to more conflict or unnecessary conflict. Like that parking spot example you gave. Okay, so you parked in the wrong place. That's annoying to me, but there's a difference between annoyance and anger, and I'm not gonna make a big deal about you parking wrong because honesty can hurt another person, unnecessarily sometimes.

Firdous Gangat: Yeah. Um, so what I can say to that is in a, in a way, it's actually compassionate by actually saying it because what ends up happening is if we don't say it, it, it festers inside us and we are being the nice guy or the people pleaser. And it's, it goes down to like the four, there's four F's. Like, you know, you, you'll either *Fight* with someone or you'll either uh, *Freeze* and have a nervous reaction every time that person does that, you, you get annoyed and you just bottle it in and it creates tension in your body or it, you'll end up, um, *Fleeing* and say, oh, I don't like this person. I start judging this person. Every little thing they do, you start stacking it on that person, and then it becomes even bigger and then you decide, okay, I wanna break up with this person, or I don't wanna be with this person. And the fourth one is *Fawn*, where you'll try and please this person and try and, you know, cater to them. And so the idea is that if you actually say it, it actually helps you to understand yourself and see what is behind that. And then make a request, "Hey honey, would you park here because I, I need to rush out and it kind of blocks me." And in that way, you negotiate with the person and you come to some sort of, uh, agreement. It, it actually works when you actually express it, and in a way it actually builds deeper intimacy

because you know, your partner then starts to want to support you and help you, and the other person is actually supporting you in and cheer, cheerleading you on. And it may not necessarily work all the time though.

Tony Shawcross: And Sam, I think for us too, we're, we're trying on the idea that it's not that big a deal that I get annoyed with you that you parked. It may not be, be that big a deal that you parked where you parked, and it might not be that big a deal that I'm annoyed with you about it. And I also think if you know yourself well enough and if you are like, you know, Sam, again, he's a pretty nice guy. He's a pretty Zen dude. And so if you really aren't that annoyed by it, yeah, then fine. It's not gonna bubble up in the way Firdous just said. It's not gonna keep coming back. It's not gonna be building up, and you're keeping a subconscious list of all the things that your partner did wrong. If you're not gonna be doing any of that and you really can just brush it off, then yeah, go ahead, brush it off. We're not, we're not suggesting that you, this is different than like catharsis therapy or focusing on the anger. This is just looking for when you are actually hiding and resisting that anger. And the truth is, sometimes you don't know.

Brad Blanton would argue that your brain isn't the best determinant of whether or not you're angry. We were all taught from a very young age not to show our anger, that that's like one of the least access, I mean, least acceptable, uh, emotions that we can feel. And so our brain is trained to suppress that anger. And so what Brad says is it's better to do what Firdous just did to me. I mean, like, if I had asked Firdous, "Are you mad at me still about, about saying that I want to do this podcast with a person of color?" His brain might say no. But then when he says to me, "Tony, I resent you for saying you want to do this podcast with a person of color," and I'm sorry if that's ruining anything through the podcast, it's just the best example we've got. But when he actually says that his body knows better whether or not he was mad at me than his brain does. And same with when he appreciates me for it. If he says, "Tony, I appreciate you for saying you wanna do this podcast with a person of color," his body will respond in a way that Brad Blanton and the radical honesty practitioners believe is a lot more honest than his brain.

Firdous Gangat: And, and what I'd like to add, just one last point is, uh, uh, with time these triggers become easier and a lot of them dissipate. Like initially, when I first started this work, I used to get triggered by a lot of things. And as I started practicing it, a lot of it is me. It's me doing my own shadow work in a sense where I'm actually then realizing what the trigger is because radical means, it's Latin for roots, root honesty. So it's getting to my own root. And now things don't bug me as much, uh, that used to in the past. So it, in a way it's growth for me and, uh, learning to lead a more freer lifestyle, where before little things would bug me and I'd just pile it on in my head.

Jes Rau: In some of the research that I was doing, um, it came up several times that potentially one of the critiques of Radical Honesty could be that, um, it doesn't always take account power or privilege or those types of things, and I'd be curious to know what you all think about that, but it's just one of the pieces that we noticed as well.

Firdous Gangat: I think they, Radical Honesty, uh, does acknowledge that. And, uh, that's what we are trying to, I'm trying to do with Radical Honesty is to work to bringing in this diversity. And, um, a lot of this is, I, I guess just economic for people of color not being able to afford these type

of modalities. And for me, uh, I've just taken on, on this, and we want to sort of bring in more people and, you know, spread the word and it, it's something that we are aware of.

Tony Shawcross: You know, the founder of Radical Honesty, Brad Blanton, grew up in the Civil Rights Movement, was always very active in the Civil Rights Movement. I do think it's, I do think it, you know, grew out of some of the Civil Rights Movement. Uh, but I also think it's not an inaccurate criticism to say that, that Radical Honesty in some ways, some of the work and some of the practitioners and in some ways even the founder, uh, might be unaware of some power dynamics and, and, uh, some of those other issues that come into play not only with race, but with gender and uh, and with money and with, with a lot of other factors. So I think it's a valid, uh, criticism.

Firdous Gangat: We have the anti-, uh, radical, anti-racist, uh, committee. So we're basically trying to, uh, educate ourselves. Uh, we started off basically doing it with, uh, as a book club, how to be anti-racist, the book. Uh, and it evolved into, uh, a committee to sort of broaden our understanding of racism. And I grew up in South Africa, in segregation, with the different race groups. Very heavily segregated between a, uh, blacks, Asians, coloreds and whites. And I experienced a lot of racism growing up. And so part of it is me educating my own racism and understanding my own prejudices, my own, uh, forms of racial prejudice or what I've been brought up to understand. Like for example, and this is a really bad one, but in South Africa, you know, blacks are really undermined, and I kind of brought on, that kind of mindset, and it was only after doing this work that realized I actually had this, and I actually have changed my perception that, you know, uh, uh, this is actually something that has been given to me through society and my upbringing. So again, uh, I'm doing a lot of the work for myself and trying to increase awareness within, uh, Radical Honesty enterprises and the, the organization as a whole. And it's, and it's a battle within myself as well because there's of, often the, where, am I playing the victim or am I the persecutor when I persecute someone of say, white, white privilege. And it's again me learning when I'm being a victim or when I'm being a persecutor, and to try and balance that because I don't want to come across as a victim and, you know, blame white people or white South Africans for their privilege and their wealth and et cetera, and vice versa. You know, I don't want to, uh, not speak out about it and call it out when someone is not being aware that they are racist or being not anti-racist is, is, is uh, what I wanna do and have this as a dialogue with, we are starting to now have the conversation and talk about it in a way that is, uh, open and not confrontational.

Sam Fuqua: So you get it all out there, you're honest, you express what you're feeling, and that's part of resolving a conflict, but it's not all that's needed, right? Often compromise is necessary. Is there a role for that in Radical Honesty?

Tony Shawcross: Um, I think Radical Honesty is mostly about, you know, Firdous gives me that information, this information that in this example that he's, resents me, that he's upset at me for something I said or did. And then for us, the real next step isn't like, okay, now how do I change my behavior? How do I stop from triggering those, those upsets? And Firdous, for us, the next step is then me saying back, okay, this is what that brought up in me for me to hear you express your anger at me. And then I have that same opportunity to just say, Firdous, I, I'm mad at you for saying you resent me. Firdous, I'm mad at you for whatever. And then I say the same thing. I feel

tightness in my chest. I feel a deep breath. I feel, you know, my butt on the chair. Firdous, I'm mad at you for saying whatever. And then maybe I try, Firdous, I appreciate you for saying that you resent me for, for asking for a person of color to join me for this podcast. And I feel looseness in my shoulders. I feel movement in my stomach. Whatever comes up for me. Um, so I mean, honestly, we are a lot, I find that that compromise and plans of how to like avoid confrontation and avoid tension, especially when they, when they're part of an avoidance of experiencing this anger that we feel, they, they aren't the best plans.

And so yeah, Radical Honesty is a lot less about coming up with those compromises. It is a lot more with dealing in the moment with what comes up for us moment to moment, uh, and being honest with each other. And like I said, a lot of times when people resent me for something, I get some really valuable feedback and I'm like, oh, I didn't really intend that for, for that to be my impact. I didn't realize that would be my impact. Now that I know it was, maybe I want to change something. But that's not, not, and I'd say never the point of a Radical Honesty resentment exercise, which again is probably something that makes it different from a lot of other forms of, of conflict resolution. And we generally don't aim for, then compromises that'll keep that from coming up again. We just let it keep coming up. Firdous is Firdous and Firdous does Firdous. And I'm Tony, and I do Tony. And when we come together and when that works out well then that's beautiful. And uh, when that's not, uh, when that's not as compatible, then that's not as beautiful. One of the other underlying thoughts of Radical Honesty is this idea of the paradox of change, and for us total acceptance, even if you were trying to change, giving up on the idea of change and giving up on and just accepting ourselves as we are is actually the best path to change. So, uh, yeah, that's what we aim for. We aim for real total acceptance. Um, and then often it's surprising that paradox is that that is, uh, a, a good path for, for change.

Jes Rau: Earlier on in the conversation, I heard you say, um, something about this being facilitated. It seems like what you're describing kind of requires both people to have the skill set or the training or the knowledge. Is that the case or is it something that a person can practice internally, um, even if the person they're interacting with doesn't really have, uh, the skill set or the knowledge?

Firdous Gangat: For, for me, Radical Honesty in, in the community and in doing this in meetups where we practice this or in workshops, it's a safe environment where I, I get to practice it in the, in the methodology. Uh, in certain situations when I do it in real life, I would change it in a slightly different way. For example, I can give an example where I'm a consultant in a corporate environment and I had this, I, I, I do project work where they're like six month, nine month projects, and then at some point I hand over. And so I was sitting next to my colleague who was part of this company, and I was handing over information and every time I, I would just get really angry at him and not really feel comfortable around him. And I was like, what's going on? Uh, and then as I was pondering over this, I was ruminating at my house, uh, in the evenings, what's going on with this relationship because it's just, he's just annoying me. And then I, I actually discovered that we were handing over, and in the meeting he kept on interrupting me. He asked me a question and he kept interrupting me before I answered. And then he'd ask me another question and a follow up question, and I couldn't keep my train of thought.

So then I thought, ah, this is what's happening and that's what I'm upset about. So I then built up the courage. This was like something new to me, to actually go and have my honesty in front of someone that's not radical, doing Radical Honesty, and it's also my job or my career. So I go up in between his manager and myself and I say, hey, you know what, I just wanna say something. I feel really nervous sharing this, but I noticed that whenever we, I get really tense whenever we're in meetings and you ask me a question and then you ask me another question, follow up question, and then straight away he said, "Oh, I didn't realize that." And his manager turned around and said, "No, don't worry, he's just an American." He was American living in London. And straight away after I mentioned that, they kind of just acknowledged that, and it stopped. When we were in meetings, he'd let me finish. Uh, I'd be able to have less stress. I was more confident around him and all my anxieties just sort of faded away. And for me, that has been, you know, a real example where I've done it, but I did it in a way that was more, um, not directly using the words, but in a way asking for what I want and trying to understand what was going on. So that, and it, it helped, it helped me immensely. My anxiety around him, sitting next to him just dissipated. My confidence rose. I started being, you know, the handover, and I ended the project. And it's petty. We as humans go through this, even though I might be a, you know, consultant and I'm doing this work, but you know, some, something someone does, it just triggers me and I go into fight-flight-freeze response and get nervous around someone because they're doing something in a way that doesn't resonate with me.

Tony Shawcross: Uh, there's some Radical Honesty bumper stickers that say *Radical Honesty, it works pretty good most of the time*, and, uh, I think that's, that's pretty accurate. I do think Radical Honesty works best when both people are committed to it, when both people also understand the context of it. Um, I've had the experience, especially in dealing with people who have some history of trauma, um, and a kind of hyperactive HPA axis or kind of easily go into those fight-flight-freeze-fawn, um, states that Firdous has mentioned, uh, where Radical Honesty, I would probably say might not even be the best choice, um, uh, compared to some other, some other conflict resolution approaches. Um, and I think in, in a lot of instances, it does really help to have a coach and there's meetups all around the country, um, all around the world actually. Uh, free meetups and free resources around Radical Honesty. We have one here in Denver, where I live. Firdous, where do you live? Are there meetups there?

Firdous Gangat: In London. I do meetups in London.

Tony Shawcross: Yeah. So, um, those are great places to get some support in, in trying out Radical Honesty if you think it's a good fit for you. Uh, but yeah, I do think it's, it's, it's probably valid to suggest that other modalities sometimes might work better without, uh, both people being invested in, in that modality.

Firdous Gangat: I just wanna add from, from my side, I think it just, it takes a lot of courage to do this work and it takes time to get the nuance of it, and it's like learning a language or learning something new. In fact, this is unlearning how behavioral patterns that we grew up with of hiding and pretending and withholding.

Tony Shawcross: And one of the biggest aims of Radical Honesty is giving up, manipulating and controlling the world and controlling the future. It's just like letting reality exist as it exists, and

part of reality sometimes is I'm angry. Part of reality sometimes is I'm upset. And we do so much calculating in our brains to say, but if I tell people that what'll happen, what will this outcome be? You know, I need to control them and, and protect them from my own anger. I need to protect the world from all this. It's, it's crazy making, it's neurotic and it actually, for me is a lot more peaceful to just say, this is the reality. I'm upset right now. I'm upset at you and I'm gonna tell you about it. And sometimes that maybe, like you said, Sam kind of inflates, uh, the, the problem. Um, sometimes it doesn't. But, uh, our goal is just not trying to control that. The world is a complex place and, and I think the less you're trying to manipulate others and control others, and the more you're just accepting yourself as you are and accepting the world as it is, the more at peace we are.

Sam Fuqua: I just want you to clarify something. There are many things about the world that I do not accept, and I do not want to just say, oh, that's how the world is, you know, and we can tick them off. Racism and a host of other social injustices, economic inequality, the destruction of the planet. Are you saying that part of this work is accepting those things?

Tony Shawcross: In a way I'm saying it is. First, because of this idea of the paradox of change, that change actually opens up when you accept things as they are. And I think it's also important to acknowledge the difference between how things are and how you want things to be. And for me, you're more effective at dealing with the problems that exist in the world when you acknowledge them as they are. And when you separate how you want them to be, when you, when you're just like, I cannot accept that sexism exists in this world, in my opinion, you're less effective at addressing sexism. And the more you accept it and understand, like Firdous said, this is the soup we swim in, this is what we were born into. This is, I can't accept that this exists in myself and others, and it's not how I want my future to be. It's not how I want my children to be raised. I wanna work towards resolving it. You're also more effective at resolving it when you kind of come to peace at it. You know, we all know people who are activists and are just spending their life kind of railing against, uh, these things that they were, you know, triggered by as a youth or at different parts of their life, and they use that as their motivation. For me, I feel more effective and, and, and more, uh, magnetic and more able to inspire others to work alongside me when I've come to grips with these issues and my own inter-tensions and my own shadows, and I'm accepting myself in the world around me and still saying, yeah, this is the direction I'm marching and I want as many people as I can find to march with me.

Firdous Gangat: Yeah, I mean, I, I give an example with racism. For me personally, this is a personal thing and having grown up with it and really experienced it, I was really an angry person with regards to it. And for me now this work has allowed me to really get in touch with my, that anger and to just be more calm about it, and to make a difference to create the world that I wanna see. And by creating this honesty movement in communicating about right honesty about, uh, racism, sorry, and in a way that allows healing to take place. 'Cause I, I, I imagine, like I wanna take this work to South Africa, in Africa, and I imagine there's a lot of, uh, underlining dishonesty and tension within the race groups in South Africa. Like I go down to South Africa and I feel it, and I just wouldn't, two, three weeks and I just can't stand it and I just wanna leave. So there is potential for me to now make a difference.

Tony Shawcross: And I'll add that. For me, when I relate to problems that I see in society as something I have to address, it just doesn't feel as good, and I'm not as effective as when I say like, no, I don't have to. I can go sit on a beach in Tulum, like Firdous is, but when I'm refreshed and when I'm taking care of myself, that's what I want to do with my life. That's how I have devoted almost the entirety of my life is to addressing social ills that I see. But it's not 'cause I have to. It's 'cause I choose to.

Sam Fuqua: Tony and Firdous, thanks for taking some time to explain Radical Honesty to Jes and I, and to our listeners. We appreciate it.

Tony Shawcross: We're glad to share it.

Firdous Gangat: Yeah, same here, glad to share this work. It's made a difference in my life.

Sam Fuqua: Firdous Gangat and Tony Shawcross both help train people in Radical Honesty. You can find out more at the website, radicalhonesty.com.

Our podcast is called, Well, That Went Sideways! We produce new episodes about twice a month. You can find them wherever you get your podcasts, and on our website, sidewayspod.org. We also have information on our guests and links to more conflict resolution resources at the website. Again, that's sidewayspod.org. Our program is produced by Mary Zinn, Jes Rau, and me, Sam Fuqua. Our theme is by Mike Stewart. And this podcast is a partnership with the Conflict Center, a Denver-based nonprofit that provides practical skills and training for addressing everyday conflicts. Find out more at conflictcenter.org.