



Dan Diamond, MD, author of *Beyond Resilience*, on the movement to purpose

[Transcript](#)

Mike Kearney:

Today is such a cool day for me. I've been doing this podcast since April and I've been getting a lot more engagement on social media—LinkedIn, Twitter—I guess it's just LinkedIn and Twitter. A few months ago, Dr. Dan Diamond reached out to me. He had been listening to the podcast and he really enjoyed my conversation with Mark Riley. Remember Mark Riley, several episodes ago? He was a deputy director of disaster recovery in the state of Louisiana. Dan shared that he was there. He was there when Katrina happened. He was there helping triage all of the people who needed medical help. He was with a team of physicians.

He also wrote the book on resilience. Literally, he wrote the book on resilience, it's called *Beyond Resilience*. So here I am, after Dr. Dan reached out to me via LinkedIn. We connected, I loved his stories, and now I'm sitting here with Dr. Dan in Bremerton, Washington. What an unbelievable experience. Talk about the power of social media and connecting the story of resilience and all these great episodes to somebody that's out there that's actually lived it. And he wants to share his story with our listeners.

Dan Diamond:

If somebody wants to say, "I want to become the most valuable person in my organization," it's not going to be the guy who says, "Somebody has to look out for number one." If you do that a lot, the other people will let you step out in front of a bus. If you're the guy who becomes the conduit, you become so valuable that people will fight to keep you on the team, even when there are budgetary cutbacks. They will figure out a way to keep you on the team.

Mike Kearney:

Welcome to [Resilient](#), where we hear stories from leaders on risk, crisis, and disruption. We get those stories by meeting our guests on their home turf. And, literally, we meet them on their home turf. As I've talked about before, my name is Mike Kearney, and I lead Deloitte's Strategic Risk practice. You know what the cool thing is? I have the unbelievably good fortune, kind of a little side

job—I'm kind of moonlighting—where I get to sit down and I get to hear the stories of some iconic leaders who have gone through some of the most hairy natural disasters, crises, disruption events. We get to hear the stories firsthand.

This morning, I woke up and I opened the drapes to my hotel and we were literally right on the water. I looked out and I started to think, "What are some things that I want to talk to Dr. Dan about?" There's so many things that we could cover, I want to hear about the stories of the disasters that he was in. I want to hear about why Dan got into this work and what compelled him to write the darn book on resilience! I cannot wait to hear this. I also just want to hear, does he have any experiences that will relate to senior executives? Remember, we created this podcast for leaders, senior executives, board members, and others. How can we use Dan's experiences and translate them to really helpful lessons learned for those senior executives? Without further ado, let's jump into our conversation with Dr. Dan Diamond. Let's get into it.

Mike Kearney:

I love the "how we came together." I actually shared that on my intro a little bit, the power of social media today. The fact that I always say, "Hey, connect with me on LinkedIn and Twitter" and I've been getting a lot more engagement. But you reached out to me and you said, "Hey Mike, we've got to talk because I actually wrote the damn book on Resilience" and I was like, that's pretty damn cool.

Well yeah, it was after listening to the story about Katrina, I thought, you need to see the other side. You need to hear what happened boots on the ground in the middle of the storm because it was wild.

Mike Kearney:

I cannot wait. One of the things I always ask, if you listen to my podcast, the last question I always ask is, "So tell me, what do you think a resilient leader is?" Or, "What's somebody that's resilient? What are the attributes?" I'm starting out there. When you hear that word, a resilient person, what jumps to mind? I know this entire conversation is going to be about that, but I just want to get it out on the table right away. What is a resilient person?

Dan Diamond:

That is the question. I came back from Hurricane Katrina wanting to understand what is it about some people that they become unstoppable? We knew there were going to be a lot of victims. In fact, we had 50,000 body bags on palettes right there at the convention center. I wasn't surprised that we saw a lot of victims. What surprised me was that a lot of people did not become victims—they were unstoppable and it had nothing to do with resources. All of us lost resources. Even the teams that responded, like ours, were street people. We were all sleeping on the street. When we got tired we just kind of laid down in the parking lot and went to sleep. We'd wake up in the morning with cockroaches flattened that you rolled over on in the middle of the night. We were all just street people, so it wasn't just resources.

It took me awhile. I came back, did a bunch of reading, pondering, interviewing people to try to understand what it is about some people that they become resilient. I think it comes down to two dimensions. One has to do with this idea that Julian Rotter came up with back in the '50s of locus of control. He said that victims have an external locus of control. All the power is external to them so they look at it like somebody else has all the power. So you hear them saying things like, and I did hear this in an interview, the person being interviewed started yelling at the reporter saying, "When is George Bush going to bring me my food?" And I'm thinking, yeah, yeah, yeah, he's not.

Mike Kearney: He's going to be delivering that tomorrow.

Dan Diamond: I'm sure he's working on that right now. So the victims have this external locus of control. What I call the "thrivers" have this internal locus of control. And they look at it like, no matter what happens, I can still choose how I'm going to respond. That's the first dimension. The second dimension has to do with purpose. You can divide the world into two types of mindsets—not two types of people, but two mindsets. One is a giver and the other is a taker.

The victims are takers. They're looking at it like, "The resources are scarce, there's not enough stuff to go around so I have to rally all my supplies because if I don't look out for number one, who's going to?" The thrivers are looking at it like, "There's plenty to go around, we can make it work." They look at it like, "I can always choose how I'm going to respond and it's not about me." They're the givers. They are the powerful givers. The opposite of that are the powerless takers. The victims versus thrivers. It's an interesting perspective. When you're in the middle of a disaster it is so raw—

Mike Kearney: Because everything is just stripped away from everybody.

Dan Diamond: Yeah, nobody's hiding behind their houses, their cars, their clothes, or anything. You just see people as it is and you can see very clearly who the victims are and who the thrivers are. It was fascinating to see.

Mike Kearney: I want to get into that. We're going to jump into your book in a little bit. The question I have is, is there a story or somebody that represented the unexpected resilient person? My guess is that you can't just look at somebody and say, "Yeah, that's somebody that's going to be resilient," because it comes from within. In Katrina or any of the other disasters you've been in, is there somebody that jumps to your mind when you say, that was the unexpected resilient person?

Dan Diamond: Yeah, I think that one of my most favorite stories from Katrina was about a guy named Auggie.

Mike Kearney: Oh okay, I love your story about Auggie.

Dan Diamond: I talk about Auggie in my TED Talk. But he was the one who I think caught me by surprise. Here's a guy that I suspect did not have a lot of money. He might have, but I don't think that he did. It's kind of hard to tell—like I said, nobody had anything. I don't think he had a lot of money. When I met him he came wheeling into our area with a shopping cart with a couple of garbage bags in it and blankets all rolled up. He had six little blankets. He was there right away, parked his shopping cart to the side, and he started jumping in and helping. And he was helping us clean wounds and put dressings on. When new people would come, he would jump up and go get water for them. I'm looking at this going, wait a minute, you just lost everything except three garbage bags and a couple of blankets and you're not sitting there thinking, oh my gosh. I put my own self in the situation many times, ask myself the question, "So, if I lost my MacBook Pro and my iPhone"—

Mike Kearney: Or your beautiful house, right? Where we're sitting right now.

Dan Diamond: Yeah. Would I say, "I wonder what I can do to help these people out?" Or would I take on this mindset of, "My life is horrible, it's over, I'm never going to survive this? What am I going to do?" and just sit in the corner and weep. Here's a guy that lost everything and he's just part of the solution to the whole thing. He came up to me that night—and it's like ten o'clock at night, it's a Tuesday night—and he says, "Doctor, I was wondering if I could have that cardboard over there against the wall." I hadn't even noticed it, this thing's the size of a mattress. As I look at it, I'm thinking, "Well, I'm not too sure I want to give you that piece of cardboard that I just discovered."

Mike Kearney: Is this the first time you engaged with him?

Dan Diamond: Well yeah, I talked to him a little bit during the day so we knew who each other were, but I'm thinking, I don't know that I want to give you my cardboard. You just pointed it out to me but I might need it for something. I said, "What do you want with the cardboard?" And he said, "Well, you see doctor, I had six blankets and I went around and I covered up all of the elderly people but there was a seventh man and I was wondering if I could have that cardboard and cover him up with that." I'm thinking, "Oh my gosh, yeah, you can have the cardboard, you can have my kids, you can have my money, you can have my clothes, anything you want." He just schooled me.

Mike Kearney: You're like, here I am thinking about myself and he just wants to take care of somebody else.

Dan Diamond: I'm thinking, I might need that cardboard for something, I don't want to give it to you. And he's in a completely different frame. He was the beginning of me asking the question of, "What does it take to be resilient?"

Mike Kearney: Let's move to, who is Dan Diamond? There is the TED Talk, actually we just referenced it so go out and watch it, it's the Mount Rainier TEDx event from a

few years ago—awesome TED talk. It was very different too. I don't know if that was on purpose, but it's a very black background so it's very artsy how they did it so I liked that. Then you've obviously written a book as well. For those of you who don't know Dan, tell us who you are and what makes you tick.

Dan Diamond: I come from a little bit of a different background. I used to be a street mime in Seattle.

Mike Kearney: Damn! I was going to ask that question, you're getting ahead of me. I'm teasing. And that was when you were in medical school, right?

Dan Diamond: Yeah, that's how I made my spending money going through school. It's amazing, if times get tough with your company or whatever, you can always put your hat out, put some makeup on, you can make about 25 bucks an hour if you're good. You get to work whenever you want, the hours are good.

Mike Kearney: It's like being an Uber driver.

Dan Diamond: It's exactly the same—only different. So, I had that whole side of me and then I've been practicing medicine. I wanted to be a doctor since I was in sixth grade.

Mike Kearney: Did you grow up in this area? So, we're right now in the state of Washington.

Dan Diamond: Yeah, I grew up in Tacoma and then went to Washington State University for undergraduate—go Cougs. Then went to the University of Washington for medical school, which I don't claim. You can't claim the Huskies. I've been on their faculty for 30 years, I still don't—

Mike Kearney: So, you grew up here. You wanted to be a doctor since you were a little kid. Any early influencers? We're going to get into your story—and it's a very interesting story—but anything that influenced you when you were younger growing up that almost foreshadowed who you were going to become?

Dan Diamond: One thing that happened was my mom died when I was ten months old. She died from a rare type of cancer, so I had an interest in medicine from early on. I have a second mom, not a step-mom, that my dad remarried when I was 18 months old. So she's always been there for me, but I've always had this interest in medicine. My dad was a pharmacist. He told me, "Don't be a pharmacist, you should go be a doctor."

Mike Kearney: Was it your mom passing early, do you think that was the inspiration behind going into the medical field?

Dan Diamond: I think that was part of it, the fascination with medicine and thinking I really want to be able to help people and use my brain to help people.

Mike Kearney: My mime question was going to be—it's certainly a fun fact. You've already brought it up. Was there anything that you learned from being a mime that contributed to the way you think, the way you act, the way you problem solve? Is there any linkage there? And maybe not.

Dan Diamond:

Oh, there's a huge link. First of all, I want to clarify, I was not an obnoxious street mime that followed people and harassed them. I was more like Shields and Yarnell. You know, those guys—that's San Francisco, your group, your people out there. We had some fun times. I told stories when I did mime. But what I learned was some stuff about improv. When you're working on the street and doing street theater with people, you never know what somebody's going to do. I could take a banana and stick up a business man walking down the street and get his wallet if I do it right because he's going to be terribly afraid of this banana that has now become a gun in his mind. And then I flip it around the other way and have the phone ring and hand it off to him and then turn around and walk away. And then he's walking down the street all by himself talking into a banana and it's really fabulous looking for people to experience that.

The improv piece becomes an interesting part of the problem-solving side of what I do when I go into disasters. In improv, there's this underlying rule of "yes, and." When you're going through difficult times, you don't have any electricity, so you say, "Okay, we don't have any electricity. Yes, we don't have electricity, and here's what we're going to do to overcome it." Versus, "What are we going to do?" The problem, "We don't have any electricity, none of our equipment is going to work, this is terrible, our world has come to an end." And the whole scene just comes to a screeching halt when you start looking at it like, "Oh man" as opposed to "Yeah, and we're going to do this."

Mike Kearney:

It's fascinating how that plays off. You were a doctor, how did you get involved in your first disaster? I want to go back to the very first one. Because I would imagine, not to put words in your mouth, you have a nice little life. You are a physician, things are great, but then you choose to go off to some of the most iconic natural disasters.

Dan Diamond:

You've got to go back further. I was in medical school and decided that I wanted to do some sort of an international medical experience. So, five days after I got married, my wife and I packed our bags and up and went to Thailand to work in a refugee camp with Mong refugees for three months. That was, I would say, the most significant part of medical school for me. I learned some really interesting things about medicine, about how tough people are—it was quite a bit different than working in Seattle at the University of Washington, taking care of people when you have all this fancy equipment. We would show up, we had x-rays on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Because that was the day the generator worked.

Mike Kearney:

So, if something happened on a Saturday—

Dan Diamond:

Yes, if you come in on Tuesday and say, "This guy is sick as a dog, I need to get a chest x-ray on him," they will say, "Oh so sorry, cannot be, no electricity today." Okay, great. We lived about an hour away by van. We'd get in the next morning—we'd get in about 8:00 in the morning, get off the van and say to the guy, "All right, now I need a chest x-ray." And he would say, "Oh, so sorry,

cannot be. The generator's not working today." That stuff happened a lot! You have to learn how to diagnose without having all the fancy equipment and the lab and all that stuff. My interview skills and my exam skills got much better working in that situation than I think they would have been if I had stayed in the United States the whole time. Once you go do international stuff like that, it just—

Mike Kearney: It becomes part of your DNA?

Dan Diamond: Yeah, you start looking at the world differently.

Mike Kearney: How did your wife react? Did you say ten days after you got married?

Dan Diamond: Five days.

Mike Kearney: Five days. That is like—you win the award for a great honeymoon.

Dan Diamond: No. In fact, I don't recommend doing that. I think it was a lousy plan, but it was the only time we could do it during my training to make it fit into the schedule. She was a trauma nurse at Harborview in Seattle so it didn't take too much nudging to get her to come.

Mike Kearney: So, you do that, how do you then connect that to getting into some of these disasters that you've been involved with? Was it, you said, part of who you were so that was now going to be part of the rhythm of your life, going to do this periodically?

Dan Diamond: Back in 1991, Youth for Christ was putting on these events that were at Washington DC and in LA. They called the conference series DCLA, it happened every three years. My buddy was in charge of security for the event in DC. They had 20,000 junior high and high school kids there. And most of it was in the Washington Convention Center, but they did a big event on the grassy mall in front of the Capital. It was 104 degrees, they had 400 kids pass out, the fire department came in, they hosed the crowd down, the police shut the event down and they said, "You guys weren't prepared, so next time you have to have your own medical team." He called me and said, "Here's what just happened. You're on the next one, I do this again in three years, and you're in charge of the medical."

I'm going, yeah, great, I don't have any idea how to do big crowd medicine. So I asked around and found out who are the best big crowd medicine guys in the country, and it was Glenn Raswick at Rock Medicine out of the Haight Ashbury free clinic. I called him up and I said, "Hey, we've got a bunch of Christian guys that need to take care of these kids out in Washington DC, can we come and do a concert with you?" He said, "Oh yeah, sure."

He told me later he thought that we would wear little white shirts and ties and lean up against the walls and go, "ooh, ooh" but we're both trauma people so we jumped in and helped clean people up and didn't care if they threw up on us

and all that kind of stuff. He said afterwards, “Hey, you guys are actually pretty cool. We’re getting ready to do the Grateful Dead shows in Seattle, do you want to do them with us?” Because we flew down to Oakland Stadium and did the Pink Floyd concert with them.

Mike Kearney: I think I was at that one. What year was that, like the early 90s?

Dan Diamond: 1993.

Mike Kearney: I think I was probably there, at least I didn’t come to your medical tent, thank god.

Dan Diamond: Not that you remember, anyways.

Mike Kearney: Not that I remember.

Dan Diamond: We had a special part of the tent called the space station. We did the Grateful Dead shows with them and then we ended up doing Smashing Pumpkins and Metallica. And then we went on to Seattle’s Bumbershoot Festival, their big music festival, we were the lead medical team for that. And then we started thinking, you know, we could probably do disaster stuff.

We contacted Medical Teams International and started partnering with them and then getting deployed to Hurricane Pauline and Hurricane Mitch. Then I also did a couple of trips over to India to work in an orphanage hospital. Then was one of the founding board members for an organization called Children of the Nations. I did one trip over to Sierra Leone, which was a fabulous experience.

Mike Kearney: Can you just explain for the layperson, if you’re providing medical care for large scale events, other than the scale of it, how is that different from providing medical care in, say, an emergency room? Just trying to understand because you said you were asked to do something new—you hadn’t done it before.

Dan Diamond: It’s a completely different thing. For one thing, you don’t have the lab, you don’t have all the equipment, you don’t have x-ray. It’s not a nice quiet environment where you can say, “Everybody be quiet, I need to listen to this person’s lungs.”

Mike Kearney: Is there a different type of skill that you need in order to be able to do that? Can all medical doctors be transported in large-scale medical treatment, or no?

Dan Diamond: Most would run away.

Mike Kearney: I’m asking the question because I am not a doctor and I’m trying to understand the mindset of being in an emergency room versus being out at a Grateful Dead concert, for example.

Dan Diamond: Emergency rooms, you never know what’s going to come in. When you’re in the Grateful Dead concert, you’re smack dab in the middle of it and all sorts of crazy stuff is happening all around you and it’s noisy. You become a very astute

observer and you can't depend on the usual tools that you can in the emergency room.

Mike Kearney: You get deployed through Medical Teams International? Can you share a little bit about them? I've done my research, but maybe for the audience, what is Medical Teams International, what's their purpose, what's their cause? Maybe share a little bit about that.

Dan Diamond: It's an amazing organization. Doing disaster work is really difficult to do—to do it well. I would define doing it well as being in the right place at the right time to get the right work done.

Mike Kearney: The logistics of it.

Dan Diamond: It's so hard because when disaster happens, a lot of people will say, "Oh man, I've got to do something." They jump on a plane and they show up. We were down in Haiti in this hospital, Kings Hospital, that we got back online and got it up and running. We had some orthopedic surgeons on our team, they're working, have surgeries going on all day long. We couldn't work at night because it was too dangerous at night. A group shows up and says, "Hey, we're a bunch of orthopedic surgeons, we've got a nurse anesthetist with us, we would love to come in and help."

I said, "I don't have any space for you. I only have two operating rooms. I only have two anesthesia machines." They said, "Do you know where we could work?" I said, "Nah, you need to go back to the command center and find out where they want to deploy you to." "Ohhh. Well, where do you guys stay? ... Oh, you don't have a place to stay. We're at a safe house about a ten-minute drive." They said, "Where do you get your water?" I said, "Oh, you don't have water."

Mike Kearney: It's all the basic necessities that you don't take into consideration.

Dan Diamond: And then, "Where do you get your food? ... Oh, you guys don't have food." Because when we come in, we're completely self-sufficient for the first two weeks. We have our own water, we have water filtration, we bring in all of our own food, we'd eat the MREs, the meals ready to eat that the military has. We bring in all our own tents. We don't end up using all that stuff if we can find resources, but a lot of people just show up and then they become part of the problem because it's more people that need housing.

Medical Teams International has a great international network of people, so when we show up, we usually have a pretty good idea about where we're going to work and what our objectives are. It's hard to do. It's a great organization. The other thing I really like about the folks that are running Medical Teams International is that they don't care who gets the credit. There are some other organizations that are well-known worldwide that are very—

Mike Kearney: When you say get the credit, I get what that means, but who's looking for credit in these other organizations you're talking about? Is it the people running the organizations?

Dan Diamond: Yeah, you get egos. People show up and they're like, "We're here now, we've got it; we don't need your help; don't ask to borrow any of our stuff; we don't need any of your help because we're cool, we've got it." Which is different than showing up and saying, "Anything that we have is yours if you need it; it's not about our team, it's about you guys; we're here to serve; it's not about us, it's about helping the people here."

When we go to the cluster meetings that are run by the United Nations, the World Health Organization, we go with the attitude, "Here's what our resources are, we're happy to help. You're welcome to your resources." It's one of my primary goals when I first get boots on the ground to build relationships with the other people that are there so I can help them be successful and they can help me be successful.

Mike Kearney: How often do you actually get deployed to a crisis situation? Is it when a crisis happens? Do you budget a certain amount of—it sounds silly, but hey, I'll do this once a year? What's the cadence of that?

Dan Diamond: There's really not a cadence to it. People ask me, "So when's the next disaster going on?"

Mike Kearney: Obvious we don't know that, but is it something that if we had three or four hurricanes in one year you could potentially be deployed three or four times?

Dan Diamond: Usually it's once a year or so, maybe every other year. My most recent deployment was to the Philippines, which was three years ago.

Mike Kearney: You talked a little bit about this, it sounds like Medical Teams International is very well organized. Do you have a plan going in? Or are you like the Navy Seals where you just kind of go in and you understand what's going on and you adapt to the situation? Or is it somewhere in between?

Dan Diamond: We actually have an objective of what we're trying to do, but how that happens is flexible once we get there—and things rapidly shift. We don't let people go on the first-in teams unless they've proven themselves in later-phase response because they show up and get really cranky, "I thought you told me I was going to have a bed. I thought you said we were going to have mosquito nets on the outside of the windows. This is not working for me, I didn't sign up for this." I've been deployed to a disaster where I spent the first three days in an office building sleeping on the carpet at Hurricane Mitch because the logistics didn't work and they couldn't get us deployed to the place where they needed us to be. So, we just had to sit there, which makes you go nuts when you're—I just hit the eject button on my life. I've got people covering my shifts and everything

and I'm just sitting down here sleeping on the floor, having a nice day, waiting for them to figure out how to get my team where we're going to go.

Mike Kearney: In moments like that, do you ever reflect and say, "Why am I doing this?" Or is the cause so big that I get why I'm doing this and I have to go through sleeping on the floor, or whatever it may be.

Dan Diamond: I don't think the question of why am I doing this hit me as much as, why am I not where I need to be? That's a bigger deal.

Mike Kearney: I'm here and I want to do it but I'm not being used in the right way.

Dan Diamond: I know I have lots to offer but I can't from where I am.

Mike Kearney: Which goes back to the organization comment that you made earlier.

Dan Diamond: Yeah, it's a tough thing. That deployment was not with Medical Teams International, it was with a different organization, but you never really know. We spent, in that deployment, they finally sent us to a town called Mora Leeka. And it took us more than three days to get there on some of the scariest four-wheel driving that I have ever done. You're doing this 30-degree lean in this four-wheel-drive truck looking out the window and right there, staring at my face is the root stalk of a big tree.

I'm thinking, if this truck rolls, I'm going to be shish kebobs in about 50 places. At one point I said, "Stop the truck, I'm getting out of the truck and I'm going to walk across this. No, I'm not doing this." We spent a couple of days getting there, only to find that the Mexican government had air lifted their teams in and they already treated all the patients and all the work was done. Then we grabbed a helicopter and flew back to the base. We found one sick guy that needed to have his appendix out, we said, "We need a helicopter!" I don't know if it was so much that he needed a helicopter or I just didn't want to go back on that road again. But anyway, we stole someone else's helicopter and got back to base.

Mike Kearney: Let's go to Katrina because you were at the epicenter of it. I don't know if this was from your TED Talk or your book, but you said, "It was post-apocalyptic, no rules." Can you describe what it was like when you came in? I think there was a story you talked about where, was it search and rescue? Even they were lost. What the hell, where are we? Can you share what it's like coming into—

Dan Diamond: You need to cue in the eerie music. We got initially deployed to Lafayette. There were ten of us.

Mike Kearney: For those who aren't familiar with Louisiana, how far is Lafayette from New Orleans?

Dan Diamond: I don't remember now because we got lost but it was a couple of hours away.

Mike Kearney: It's not five miles down the road.

Dan Diamond: We're up there and they had all these people in the gymnasium that they were taking care of in the shelter and it was a going concern. It was really busy, but I got a call from the vice president of Medical Teams International, a friend of mine named Bill Asick. Bill says, "Can you split the team in half, we need you down here in New Orleans." I said, "Of course we can split the team in half, yeah sure, we're coming right now." I reloaded, put all of our stuff in the SUV and headed out of town.

You had to go through two police barricades. These are high-quality police barricades where the police have sawed-off shotguns where it's just like, you're not going to mess with them. We had to prove to them, they had to radio to all these people to make sure we were legit. Once you got past the second police barricade, it was like kind of a time travel bizarre experience. There were no street lights. There were no signs, all the signs were knocked down. You could drive as fast as you wanted to down either side of the freeway.

Mike Kearney: It's like the Audubon. It's probably not a time that you wanted to take advantage of that.

Dan Diamond: Oh, yes we did. We were going 100 miles an hour down the freeway, just screaming down this. And then we thought, we really don't know where we are, we should be at the convention center by now. I took an exit and there was another SUV and I go up there and knock on the window and I said, "Hey, my name is Dan Diamond with Medical Teams International and we're lost. We're trying to find the convention center." They said, "Well, we're search and rescue and we're lost too." I thought oh man. You can't even explain what that's like because it was just so weird and so wrong. Then we finally found our way. We got back on the freeway and kept driving like maniacs and in the middle of the night got there and begin to set up shop.

Mike Kearney: Got to the Superdome?

Dan Diamond: No, we went to the convention center. Superdome had already been shut down at that point and the convention center was the only functioning medical facility in the whole city of New Orleans.

Mike Kearney: Where is the convention center in relation to downtown New Orleans? Was it under water, or—?

Dan Diamond: No, it's close to the water though. In fact, part of the time we slept in the warehouse along the Mississippi River for the Mississippi Delta Queen. That's what the cops were sleeping in. We went and stayed with the cops because they had food. They had good steaks and good jambalaya.

Mike Kearney: You referenced this earlier but I want to unpack this. You said, and tell me if I'm right or wrong, but I think you had been quoted as saying that Katrina was a wakeup call for you. You just talked about the fact that you've been in other

natural disasters—you've been all over the world What was different about Katrina?

Dan Diamond:

In your other podcasts you've talked about when people get to that point where they have this ah-ha kind of pivotal moment where everything shifts. For me, Katrina was that. It was realizing that it was about mindset. I mentioned that I could always choose how I was going to respond. Victor Frankel talked a lot about that in *Man's Search for Meaning*, that nobody can take away your right to choose how you're going to respond to any given situation. It's the last of human freedoms, he called it.

That became very real to me—that and seeing that even though people lost everything, they could still choose to give the little that they have. They seemed to be coming up ahead of the people that were not doing that, the people that looked like victims that said, "It's all about me and nobody's meeting my needs. When's George Bush going to bring me my—?" Those people didn't do so well. It's the people that looked at it like I'll jump up and I'll do whatever I can to help the people around me, they really did well.

Mike Kearney:

What I'm interested in is, what was it about Katrina? Was it more just the aggregation of all of these experiences over many, many years where you finally just said, "Wow, I think I've come to this realization that people can choose their own response in many respects, in the worst of circumstances, and now I'm shining a bright light on it." Was it kind of the aggregation of—

Dan Diamond:

I think it was a lot of things that just came together for me. There was also a shift that happened after Katrina where I went from looking at disasters and thinking this is how we manage disasters and this is how we do what I call disaster improv where we get in and we start problem solving and all that stuff. One day I kind of went, wow, the rest of the world needs to know this.

When you look at what business are going through right now and they're trying to figure out how do they engage and get great work done when resources are scarce, they've got budgetary cutbacks that are happening, how do they keep their head in the game? Do they go to victim mindset and say, "Oh, it's over and I gotta look out for number one and there's so many regulations, what can a guy do? You just kind of gotta throw your hands up in the air and say my life sucks and it's over." Or do you look at it and say, "The world's changing, I always have the right to choose how I'm going to respond, it's not about me, I will do anything I can to make the other people successful around me."

Making that shift from "this is a disaster" thing to I can help people that are in other worlds other than the disaster world, the business world, the healthcare world. In fact, I'm going to quit practicing medicine full-time at the end of December to speak full-time and lead workshops and mentoring and facilitating to help organizations be able to move from this victim mindset into engaging.

Mike Kearney:

I don't know if this is a proper parallel, but we've done some studies at Deloitte, and I don't even think it's a Deloitte thing I think most people would recognize it, but some of the best innovations in the world is where you starve the investment. Where people are so focused on what the underlying purpose or cause of it because they believe in it. They'll work all night long, they'll figure out a way. In some respects, I almost think that's a better way to innovate because when you get all of the resources thrown at you then you've got more excuses. I don't know if that's a proper parallel, but it's interesting me because what you're saying is people can thrive when you suck all of the support and resources out and it truly is about mindset.

Dan Diamond:

Yeah, but I'm not saying you should starve your people.

Mike Kearney:

No, no. But, I'll give you examples from our firm. A lot of times we're looking to build the next big thing and there's always so much conversation of, what's the budget? How many hours are you going to give me? I think one of things that we find is that the innovations that are most successful is when you've got a little skunk works team that has no money, no time, and every constraint imaginable, and they still do a better job. I think that's what you're, to a certain extent, getting at.

Dan Diamond:

It's amazing what people can do when they decide to become fully engaged and they start thinking with this mindset of a thriver. Some of the stuff I've been doing recently looks at the junctions between teams. This is fascinating to me. The levies failed in over a thousand places in New Orleans after Katrina. But in some of the key places where it failed were in the junctions between two different jurisdictions.

You know how that goes, one team's going, "That's not our job, that's their job" and the other guy's going, "That's not our job, that's their job." There were some places where the wall was two feet taller than the section next to it. Then when you have overtopping that happens, all that stuff that's on the high side comes around that corner, spills over the wall in a huge way, and that huge spot causes massive erosion, the wall starts to moved forward just a little bit at the beginning and then it starts to go a little bit more and then, boom, it breaks.

There was some places where the gap was a thousand feet. There was a whole barge that came through there and squeegeed houses off the ground. And I was thinking, what would it be like if the teams would have said, "It's not about us, we want to do anything we can to make the other team look like heroes." Even if just one team would say that, "If they don't want to change the height, let's just do a gradual, we'll come up and meet them, but we'll do it over a quarter of a mile." Then you have a stronger wall. In an organization, I think about in healthcare. One day when I was pondering this I thought, "I gotta go down and talk to the guys in the lab." I went down there and I said, "Hey. Is there two or three things I could do differently to make your life better?" It was as if they didn't need to think about it.

Mike Kearney: They're like, "How about two hundred?"

Dan Diamond: It was as if they'd already had meetings and had been talking about it for years. They said, "Yeah, just do these three things differently." I went back upstairs and made some changes, it didn't take very long before they started to come back upstairs and say, "Hey, is there anything we could do differently?" I said, "Oh yeah, I've got a couple things you guys could do."

Now that junction is a strong spot in our organization because one of us went down to say, "What can I do differently, how can I make you guys successful. I don't care if I get the credit, I want you guys to look good." That starts changing this dynamic. When I think about problem-solving and disaster improv, it will be interesting to see what you think as a Deloitte consultant because you guys have such a great reputation. When you're looking at it in the business world, you do a gap analysis. You're at point A, you've got to get to point B. In my world, in a disaster world, that will get you killed.

Mike Kearney: You don't have the time.

Dan Diamond: Or you don't see the risk. If you and I are on the way to dinner and we see a car accident and it's a car versus a truck. And the car's on fire, so we run over there and get the fire extinguisher. Point A, car's on fire, point B, car should not be on fire anymore. Very simple. We're getting our fire extinguishers and we're pulling people out of the car trying to get the fire out. And then we hear a funny noise and we look and there's a big white truck and it says Suburban Propane on the outside of it. That's the last thing we know, and then it blows up and that's the end of the story.

That's the problem with this gap analysis; it doesn't think about or consider risk. Then smart people came up with, we should do a SWOT analysis. The SWOT analysis is beautiful, in my opinion, if you want to generate committees, if you want to have more committee meetings, because people are looking at strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. I just kind of simplify that down to, there's risks and resources. The gap analysis is a one-dimensional line; the SWOT analysis is a 360-degree view.

If you overlay those, now you have movement, you're going from A to B and now you've got risks and resources. That's a two-dimensional view. It occurred to me one day that you could look at this from a three-dimensional perspective. This gets fascinating, this is where you look at the interfaces between teams. If you think about your sphere of influence is made up of a bunch of slices, you're on one slice, your slice has a point A, it has a point B, it has risks and resources; it's a nice round slice. But the slice above you also has a point A and a point B and risks and resources.

In fact, I learned in physics that a sphere is just a bunch of slices all stacked on top of each other. The most valuable people in any organization are the ones

that will say, "It's not about me. I want to figure out what's going on in this organization and how I can become a conduit." So you start looking at, the guys in the lab say they're really struggling with this, and the guys in billing say that they're really struggling with this, but the guys in the lab have already solved this problem. Then I can plug them together and say, "Hey, you guys need to meet because you could solve each other's problems. You guys know what you're doing, you just don't know that each other are doing this." It's a different way of looking at it.

If you start asking questions, and I do this in disasters, if you start asking questions like, "What keeps you up at night?" When I'm meeting the other team, so if I'm working with the Israelis or the Brazilians or the Japanese, it's "How you are you guys doing?" Or the Air Force. When we were down in Haiti, "What's keeping your guys up at night?" "Oh man, we don't have any place to put body parts." "Oh, that's a bummer, I'll take your body parts." "Really?" "Yeah, I could take care of that because we've got a place to deal with them. We've got an incineration thing going on. We can solve that problem."

It's like the most incredible weight had just been lifted off that person. But, if I would have just been looking at my slice and my point A and point B, I would have missed the opportunity to strengthen that interface. I think the organizations that are going to do really well are the ones that are going to look at the whole sphere rather than looking at one slice.

If somebody wants to say, "I want to become the most valuable person in my organization," it's not going to be the guy that says, "Somebody has to look out for number one." If you do that a lot, the other people will let you step out in front of a bus. But, if you're the guy that becomes the conduit, you become so valuable that people will fight to keep you on the team, even when there's budgetary cutbacks. They will figure out a way to keep you on the team.

Mike Kearney:

As you're going through this many things are coming to mind. One is, it's more than collaboration. Trying to apply this just to corporate America, there is this need to work across the silos. Whenever we go into organizations, that's one of the things that most people talk about, especially from a risk perspective. All of those damn silos and the fact that they don't understand what the other silos are doing or there's risks over there that potentially have pervasive impact across an entire organization. I think there's this notion across collaboration working across silos.

You also brought up probably the most important point is; I wrote down ego. It's about not having an ego and putting the needs of others above your own. The more that you work across the organization, or the disaster, or whatever it may be, you check your ego at the door and you look about having empathy for them and trying to help them. That's when organizations thrive. I don't know if I got that right, but I'm trying to put it into the way I look at the world.

Dan Diamond:

It comes down to economy. You either look at a disaster or a difficult situation as there being a scarcity economy or an abundance economy. If you looked at it from a scarcity economy, you have got to get all the supplies you can, pull them into your zone so that you can survive and you'll be okay. If you have an abundance economy, you look at it and say, "It's not about me, I've got plenty of stuff and I'm sure I can replace this stuff. It will work."

Then you start giving to other people, you start making them successful, then they start flipping around. Like when I went down to talk to the lab, they were shocked that I went down there and talked to them. It didn't take very long before they came back up and the law of reciprocity, if I do it for them, pretty soon they're coming back up and saying, "Oh, what can we do for you?"

Mike Kearney:

You move to purpose. I love this, I would tell everybody. I think the model is on your website, it's definitely in your book. I tell everybody to go look at it because I think it's powerful because it is about mindset. I also would say it's also about choice to a certain degree. The reason why I was asking about the role that you have, I think sometimes people limit themselves. I'll give you an example, a new consultant at Deloitte, "Oh, I can't really make that big of an impact on a client." I say, "Oh my gosh, you don't understand. When you juxtapose your experiences versus mine, you are so much more in the world of technology, social media. There's so many things that you can bring." To me it's about making a choice of taking that power. It's not just about level, role, or responsibility. Which for me, I don't know if I'm on to something or if that's the way you look at it, but to me the choice is a big component of being powerful or having the power.

Dan Diamond:

I think you can boil down our whole conversation to three words—choose to serve. You always have that choice. It's much more comfortable to be able to sit back and say someone else should do something. In fact, I would say, and here's an interesting twist, we can spend some time kicking this around, we have gone from being, when I was a kid, a hero-centric society to being a victim-centric society. When I was a kid we used to say, "When I grow up, I want to be like that." Most of my buddies and I wanted to be astronauts, oh man! That would be awesome, can you imagine walking on the moon? We looked at that and we thought when we grow up we want to be like those guys!

Now we've shifted. We've shifted to become a victim-centric society. There's some good reasons why we've done this. One of them has to do with the fact that it's a lot easier to be a victim. If I'm thinking, I need to clean my garage, all I need to do is watch an episode of Hoarders and then I can go, "Well, at least my life's not that bad." It's like the student when you say how are your grades and they say, "Well, I'm not getting any Fs." Which direction are you facing? Are you facing the, "At least I'm not a hoarder..." versus, "Man, have you seen some of these guys with the garages, they've got a place for everything! I need to get my act together."

If we look at the heroes then we're challenged to move up. If we look at the victims then we say, "At least I'm okay, I think I'll stay on my couch. My garage can wait." That shift is subtle but is impacting us globally in the United States as we shift into this victim-centric society. There are other societies in the world that are going to pass us by because they are looking at it like, "We're not staying here. We're shooting for this. We're going to go for the gusto."

Mike Kearney:

I think we probably talked a lot about this, but why did you write the book? Maybe talk about after you came back after Katrina, you started to really search about what makes people resilient. What was the timing from that, I think the book came out just a year ago, 2015? It was a ten-year gap, how did you get to the book, what inspired you to write *Beyond Resilience*?

Dan Diamond:

I came back from that realizing that this just can't be about me. I had these great experiences, I'm just going to put them on the shelf and say, "Oh, that was awesome, I got to be involved in Katrina, and Typhoon Yolanda, and Hurricane Mitch, and Haiti." You can't just put that on a shelf, that's a waste. The experiences that I've had have given me insight that I want to take into organizations to help them to make an impact.

At the core, I want to move our society, bump us back into becoming hero-centric and not victim-centric. That's going to happen with people in the organizations saying, "I don't care who gets credit. I don't care if anybody even knows that I did this. I'm going to do this because I want the other team in my organization to look great." Or, take it outside the organization and say, "Our company will do whatever we can to make the other company that's working on this project look like heroes and we honestly, truly don't care who get the credit." The other company will know and that's going to totally change that dynamic. Then you become a valuable partner, your company becomes the one on the next project where they're saying, "Hey, we're not going to do it if they're not involved."

Mike Kearney:

Gratitude—I am fired up to talk to you about this. I think you wrote in your blog that people who regularly practice gratitude have been shown to experience happiness, longevity, optimism, alertness, enthusiasm, determination, attentiveness, and higher energy levels. Talk about higher gratitude in the context of this resilience conversation.

Dan Diamond:

Gratitude—and now we're kind of on the cutting edge of what I'm learning personally. I'm going to kind of invite you backstage and you can see how my brain is changing, literally, and how I'm understanding. This has been an interesting year for me. My wife has been very sick, in and out of the hospital this year, and it's been a challenging time. I've had opportunity to apply this firsthand. The research on gratitude is so rock solid. But if I came in and said to you, "Hey Mike, I got something for you here, it's a little pill and it's going to make you live longer, you're going to feel better, you're going to have more

energy.” You’re going to go, “It either doesn’t exist, or it’s illegal.” You’re not going to believe me on this because it’s just too good to be true.

This data is rock solid data and it’s really easy to do. One of the studies looked at keeping a gratitude journal. You write down in this gratitude journal three new things that you’re thankful for on a daily basis. It can’t be repeats. It can’t be, “I’m thankful that I have a warm shower, or I’m thankful that I have a car and a house.” You can’t use those over and over again. Eventually you run out of all the easy stuff and you start looking at other things. The one that I always laugh at now is, “I’m thankful that oranges come in slices,” because I can eat a couple of slices of an orange, come back and it still looks like an orange. An apple, on the other hand, looks like a science project when you’re coming back.

It’s a silly little thing but when I eat oranges, I smile. My brain goes, “Those oranges are pretty cool, aren’t they?” It makes me laugh a little bit, which releases serotonin and dopamine in my brain and causes all kinds of cool chemical changes that makes my brain go, “Yeah, life is good. Life is good.” One of the studies show, if you write down three new things every day, and you need to pause and look at them and feel it. You can’t just write them down brain-dead. You have to look at it and go, “Oh yeah, that is good. I’m glad that I have a hot shower, that’s a good thing because I lived in Thailand where I didn’t have a hot shower and it was not fun to start the day out with a cold bucket of water over my head. This is good, yeah.” You feel it.

They found that if you do that, every day for a week, and then stop – they had the control group six months later, the study group was happier than the control group. Six months after just one week of work. What if you just did it on an ongoing basis? One of the apps that I use is the Five-Minute Journal. It’s an iOS; Droid people, I’m sorry you don’t have it, but it’s an Apple app. I just write down three things that I’m thankful for every day, three things that I’m going to do to make today great. At the end of the day, I write down three things that went well during the day.

Mike Kearney: You do it during the beginning of the day? And then at the end of the day?

Dan Diamond: It takes me five minutes; it makes a profound difference in how my noggin works.

Mike Kearney: Was it the research that drove you into that or was it just your personal situation where you just started to do it organically and then you found out there’s research that supports how I feel now?

Dan Diamond: I went through a dark time. It was really, really a tough year. I knew that I needed to get out of this hole and I was aware of the research on it and I thought, “Well, I’m going to try it. How hard can it be to write down three things that you’re thankful for everyday?” It’s amazingly effective, it really is.

That I would call gratitude 1.0, and there is gratitude 2.0. Gratitude 2.0 I learned about a year ago when I spoke at the TEDx Rainier meeting. There was a friend of mine there named Dr. Tanmeet Sethi. She spoke and she talked about the difference between being thankful during, which is what we're talking about now, gratitude 1.0, versus being thankful for. The difference between those two is phenomenally important.

Mike Kearney: Say that again? Thankful during versus thankful for. Can you unpack that a bit?

Dan Diamond: If you broke your ankle walking out of my house—please don't—but if you break your ankle you could be thankful during that. You could say, "Well, I'm thankful I'm going to get some ice cream out of this deal because my mom always gives me ice cream when I get hurt. And I'm thankful that I'll probably get upgraded to first class when I fly back." You can find things that will be good. Versus being thankful for the fact that you broke your ankle. Oh yeah! That look that you just gave me is the one that my brain did when I heard her talk.

Mike Kearney: Why would I be happy that I broke my ankle?

Dan Diamond: Yeah, really. She said that suffering equals pain times resistance. You get a bad ankle that hurts, it's painful. If you fight that and you say, "My life is miserable. This is horrible. I'm going to have crutches. It's going to cause chafing. I'm not going to be able to do anything. I'm not going to be able to go to a football game because I'm not going to be able to get down the stands. I'm not going to be able to drive. What am I going to do?! I've got to travel. I've got to do my podcast. I've got to travel all over the place with my team and record people. I've got to do that in person because it's my passion, but now I've got a broken ankle. Podcasts are all going to be derailed. What are we going to do? This is horrible!"

Now you have a broken ankle and a whole bucket of misery to go with it, versus, "I've got a busted ankle. Probably going to learn some cool stuff from this one. This is going to be all right. I'm going to get through this. I'm thankful I've got a busted ankle. It's going to be all right because I'm going to learn some stuff through this. It's going to be okay."

Mike Kearney: Meaning, "I'm not going to be able to travel, I can spend more time with my family." Is that what you're getting at, or is it literally, "I'm thankful that this happened to me because something good is going to come out of it?"

Dan Diamond: "It's going to change who I am. I'm going to learn some different stuff about gratitude that I didn't know before. I'm going to be a different person because of this whole experience and I'm going to come out the other end of it happy."

Mike Kearney: So, did you see this manifest itself in some of the folks you called the resilient people in a time of natural disaster when you're like now looking back, I could see. We keep going back to Auggie, but Auggie may have just been grateful for

the fact that this allowed him to give back and connect to the city of New Orleans?

Dan Diamond:

Yeah.

Mike Kearney:

This has been a fantastic conversation, I think we're going to have to do this at some point in time, but you talked earlier about that you want more heroes in this country. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I think American Red Cross named you their real hero. If you want to share on that a little, that's great, but I'm curious, who's your hero?

Dan Diamond:

The ultimate hero for me would be Jesus because he put other people first and laid it down and paid the ultimate price. That's my ultimate example of, you talk about impacting the world, He had a phenomenal impact. But a couple of the guys that I look up to, one would be one of my best buddies, Chris Clark, the guy that started the Children of the Nations. He grew up in Africa and then he moved here. He's kind of different; he's not really an African, he's not really an American, he's not African American because he's a white guy.

He wanted to take his wife to explain to her why he's different. He took her to Africa, to Liberia. When he came back, he sat in my living room, this is 1991, weeping and saying, "I gotta quit my day job. I've got to do something to take care of these orphan kids in Africa. Are you in?" I said, "Of course I'm in! I'm your best buddy, of course I'll help! Sure!" So, that's 27 years ago and we're now taking care of over 20,000 kids worldwide.

Mike Kearney:

If he grew up there, what compelled him during that trip to say I need to change my entire life?

Dan Diamond:

I think he saw it from a different perspective. He lived it.

Mike Kearney:

Right, that's why I asked.

Dan Diamond:

Then he came back and went, "Oh wow." Sometimes you don't see something until you leave and you come back and you see it for the first time and it made such a huge impression on him. We sat around the living room thinking about, "What would the mission statement be?" It's not just taking care of the kids to feed the kids, but the mission statement that we came up with was raising these orphans and destitute kids to transform their nations. We're raising kids to think it's not about them and what they can get, it's about how they can invest in their own nations and transform their own nations.

Mike Kearney:

That goes back to your definition of purpose, giving back to others.

Dan Diamond:

Teaching them that mindset of they have the right to choose they're going to respond and they need to be givers and they need to transform the nations. I would say Chris is one of my biggest heroes.

Mike Kearney:

Thank you, this was one of my favorite podcasts, so thanks.

Dan Diamond:

Thank you, I appreciate it, it's been great spending time with you my friend.

Mike Kearney:

Wow, what an incredible conversation. Thank you everybody for listening to [Resilient](#). As I've talked about before, although we don't talk about it a lot, this is a Deloitte podcast and it is produced by our friends at Rivet Radio, you can hear us by going to [Deloitte.com](#), or go where I go. Go to your podcatchers, places like iTunes and Stitcher and SoundCloud and all those cool places.

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