TSS-S2E2-JENN-ADAM-EDITS-2-15

**Tracey:** [00:00:00] Being an entrepreneur can be a lonely experience.

**Jenn:** I don't think we're meant to go through this life alone and going through these issues and problems and challenges alone either.

**Tracey:** That kind of pressure can be isolating, which in turn can impact your mental health. And if you're not looking out for yourself, You can't look out for your clients.

**Adam:** The idea was to be able to create a safe place, a judgment free place for agents and affiliates to share about the things that are going on in both their personal and their business lives.

**Tracey:** I'm Tracey Hawkins. And if you've experienced the mental, emotional challenges that sometimes comes with being a business owner.

You're not alone. I am a former agent and a solopreneur now, so I understand. Real estate professionals need community, a safe place to express themselves and work through difficult feelings. Let's talk to two entrepreneurs who have created those spaces in the real estate industry. Adam Rodell is a top producing agent with [00:01:00] Remax Select One in Huntington Beach, California.

We help form the Realtor and Affiliate Wellness Group by Orange County Realtors, known as the R. A. W. Group. It's a place for fellowship and support among real estate professionals. Adam, thank you for being here.

**Adam:** Good morning, Tracy. I'm super excited to be here with

**Tracey:** everybody. And Jen Cassetta is a safety and wellness keynote speaker.

She's a high performance coach and author whose book, The Art of Badassery, I love saying that, is a go to resource for agents who want to build confidence and take control of their business. Hi, Jen. Hi, Tracy.

**Jenn:** You know, I'm such a big fan of yours and your work. Excited to be here.

**Tracey:** Thank you. And likewise.

Now, both of you are entrepreneurs and I know that you've dealt with some of the mental health challenges that come along with being a business owner. So Adam, let's get personal. Can you share either your experience or the experience of other agents around you that let you know? That you needed to do something [00:02:00] to help solve this mental wellness issue in the real estate community.

**Adam:** I've been a real estate agent now for nearly 26 years. And in this 26 years, I've seen an awful lot of struggle and a lot of success with my colleagues in this business. My personal journey of sobriety and clean time began in. February on Valentine's Day in 1998. And during this time, again, I've just had an opportunity to see what this industry can do to our colleagues, both emotionally and physically.

The Realtor and Affiliate Wellness Group by Orange County Realtors is a concept that I created initially in 2018. Although it had been rolling around in my head again, with a 25 year journey of 12 step groups and helping others to recover from their various addictions. I saw what was going on in our industry, and I knew that there could be something that could also help folks within our industry.

So the [00:03:00] RAW group by Orange County Realtors was something that I brought forward to our association. The idea was to be able to create a safe place, a judgment free place for agents and affiliates to share about the things that are going on in both their personal and their business lives. And most importantly, like you said, right at the beginning of this broadcast, Tracey.

Agents and affiliates never have to be alone. None of us have to be alone. And what I've tried to do is create a place for agents and affiliates to, to be able to connect with one another and discuss those challenges in a confidential environment where they can feel

**Tracey:** safe. And one thing that I really appreciate that you did is you included the affiliates and I, I'm not an agent any longer, but I'm considered an affiliate.

So the fact that you included us and Jen as well, that you included us in this is wonderful. Tell me who can access the raw meetings or the program, where exactly is it located? Tell us about that.

**Adam:** The [00:04:00] original genesis of this concept was here at the Orange County Realtors in Orange County, California.

And this is a. a meeting that's available and open to the members of the Orange County Realtors. When I designed this program, I created a blueprint and a roadmap that would allow other associations across the country to be able to literally mimic or copy, if you will, the program that we have now launched.

And so we're in our sixth year. We now have other associations here in California that have launched their own chapters, and we are now getting interest in beginning to build out chapters throughout the country. So this is something that, uh, the National Association of Realtors can play a very big role in.

Uh, helping to get this message out so that associations can launch their own raw group chapter. And the beautiful part about this is it costs absolutely

**Tracey:** nothing. Now Jen, you have a personal story and I've heard you tell it several times through the years. I'd want you to talk about your experience, your firsthand [00:05:00] experience on 9

**Jenn:** 1 1.

Absolutely. Tracy, I was living in New York city at the time of September 11th, so 23 years ago. And I showed up to work that morning. I worked three blocks south of the World Trade Center at the time, and when the first tower fell, I was pushed into this closet on the ground floor of a building where everyone else was, you know, now rushing into the building for safety.

And for the first time in my life, I felt frozen with fear, absolute paralysis. A woman came over to me, her and I, we evacuated the building. You saw the pictures, we were the ones covered in ash and soot. And I finally had the idea to take this woman and I to the dojo, the martial arts studio that I had been training at for the previous year.

And for the first time that day, I felt safe and that became the metaphor for. the next weeks, months, years, and even decade of my life. When you feel safe physically, mentally, [00:06:00] emotionally, spiritually, even financially, right, you walk through the world differently than when you feel unsafe. Your body is being pumped with stress hormones every time you feel stress and fear and anxiety.

These stress hormones can wreak havoc on the body, on your well being over time. There's parts of our brains that shut down. Those parts of the brain are in charge of logical thinking and creativity. The two things we need most when we're most stressed out. I really saw that in my own healing journey from being on the mat and stepping onto the mat for years.

And like I said, months and weeks and years after September 11th and really worked out my PTSD that way by showing up to the mat. And I think we can all do that through these. challenging times by having different self care practices as well,

**Tracey:** and that ties in perfectly. Um, there's an article on the NAR dot realtor website called the mental impact of a commission based career, and it was [00:07:00] published in 2021.

What it talks about is the focus on sleep. Exercise and nutrition. It talks about the practice of mindfulness and meditation and seeking support. So Jean, you spoke to the first two. What is a way the real estate agents could practice mindfulness and the meditation part, because that's something most entrepreneurs don't do.

We don't stop. and pause. How can we physically practice that mindfulness and meditation? I

**Jenn:** love this subject so much, Tracy. I have six pillars of my burnout to badass program. And like you said, first mindset, then mindfulness, meditation, movement, nutrition, and sleep. I like to think of mindfulness as discernment, choosing in each moment, how you want to.

think how you want to act and how you want to feel when most of us just run on autopilot all day when we, you know, react to every stressor in our life without thinking about it without giving that space between a stimulus and your reaction, right? That's where mindfulness can come in. [00:08:00] Meditation is a practice that can help you be more mindful.

It's about widening that gap that I just

**Tracey:** mentioned. Right. Okay. And the first. Pillar of that article did say sleep. So focus on sleep, exercise, and nutrition. And those are all areas that I have to work on. And I'm sure others who are busy, we all have to focus on that as well. Now, Adam, let's talk a little bit about resiliency right now.

I don't have to tell you all you're an agent that this is a tough market between agents having trouble finding clients, the inventory issues, the interest rate up and down, high prices, borrowing costs. So much is going on. What do you advise your fellow real estate agents to do when they face adversity, when they're trying to deal with this market?

And I guess we have to say it when they're dealing with possible failure. We've heard the numbers of how many agents aren't going to make it. What is your advice and what do you do?

**Adam:** We're all going to run through various cycles in our business. Some of us will. Get [00:09:00] in and out of these cycles a little quicker.

And some of them may be a little bit more protracted. So you have to have the ability and the tenacity to continue to go forward, but you need healthy habits to be able to deal with the emotional stress that we're challenged with in this business. It's a very unique business. We wake up unemployed every day.

And so we have to be able to, to meet this challenge. And, and some of the things that Jennifer just discussed, proper sleep, nutrition. Personally, I've gone plant based now for about the last 27 months. I've seen an incredible increase in both my energy and my focus. I am also a, an acknowledged gym rat. So I love to work out at the gym.

So I'm a big proponent on exercise. We need to do things to take care of ourselves so that we could be. Of maximum benefit to our clients and to our families,

**Tracey:** you hit the nail on the head. You have to take care of yourself before you can teach your fellow agents or your clients, even how to be safe. You said tenacity.

And I say that sounds like resiliency to me. I want [00:10:00] to know what your workshop looks like when someone says, Hey. I need the support. I need the help. And they walked into a workshop. What is the structure? Who is there?

**Adam:** We meet once per month and there's two functions at the raw group by Orange County realtors.

First is we do a little bit of networking so that we can just sort of get that vibe, that chill, that camaraderie going. Each meeting has a different facilitator. So we have volunteers that will facilitate each of our meetings. We play a short three to five minute video that's used as a prompt, uh, maybe an icebreaker, and then the open sharing begins.

So we have very much like a 12 step program where if you feel compelled to share about what's happening in your life, you, you know, you have ample time to be able to speak. We don't crosstalk. We're not doctors. We don't give medical advice. We're here to support each other from a different perspective.

We understand each other in the trials and tribulations of being in this real estate business, being an affiliate in this industry [00:11:00] better than most times our spouses and our best friends who are not in this industry. The other component to the raw group though, I think is super important. This is that we provide information, resource information for free to anybody that attends the meeting.

This literature contains directories to outside meetings, everything from Alcoholics Anonymous to Overeaters Anonymous to PTSD workshops, grief, loss, counseling, suicide hotlines, meditation books. All of this information is provided for free to the attendees. So maybe they come into the group, then they can maybe find a specific support group through this information that allows them to go find, you know, somebody maybe more in their tribe.

On the outside.

**Tracey:** I love that. Adam, you are truly a resource in more than one way. Speaking of programs, Jen, you have a community. And when we talk about resiliency, we talk about community. We talk about surviving the [00:12:00] pandemic. I want to say two or three years. I, my mind goes blank, how long we went through that.

And people are still trying to come back from it. Talk about how that is helping us be resilient as we still. Come through this whole pandemic.

**Jenn:** I just love Adam's group so much and the concept because community is so important and it really is another pillar of wellbeing, right? We need each other. I don't think we're meant to go through this life alone and going through these issues and problems and challenges alone either.

So for many, many years, I was a coach one on one and I started doing keynotes and traveling around the country and meeting so many. Awesome. People in the real estate industry. Finally, I said, I want more. I want more connection. I want to be able to support in a deeper way. So I started building out these eight week programs called burnout to badass, where we dive into these six pillars of the mindset, meditation, mindfulness, movement, nutrition, and [00:13:00] sleep to help build these habits over time.

You know, going to the gym every day is going to make you stronger over time. Not if you just do a one time So it's really about building these habits over time and in a group setting so you can cheer each other on, so you can get to know each other. And like Adam said, just know that you're not out there struggling alone.

**Tracey:** Talk a little bit about your self defense training. Like I said, I've been in the room and that is powerful. Why do agents need that and who needs

**Jenn:** that? Look, I'm pretty biased. I think everybody could use that. But for more than just the physical safety aspect, and I know, you know, we've, we've tied this already, the aspect of well being and feeling safe in your body, but truly martial arts training or just self defense training in general, even the basics, sure, it could help save your life, but hopefully no one out there listening will ever need to use those [00:14:00] skills.

It's really about Feeling more confident, feeling more resilient, and feeling like you can take care of yourself and really protect yourself if ever necessary. There's a mental component about it that makes you feel stronger, no matter your size, your background, your shape, your physical ability, any of it, right?

It really makes you feel better. Safe in your

**Tracey:** soul now, Adam. Our mindset is so important. There's a big article about loneliness in the real estate industry That's recently been published. So I know that's a big deal your community solves that problem Um after they leave a meeting, how do you address loneliness?

Is there a resource available or how does that part work?

**Adam:** I can give you an example. Um, people can look at me and say, you know, he looks like a pretty confident guy, but I've walked into a room full of people who know me and still been alone. If that makes any sense, all of us will be challenged with various emotions at different times.

And it's how we [00:15:00] react to those emotions. And you know, how well prepared are we to deal with some of the challenges that we're going to face? And all I can tell you is. I found that my life has been a lot better when I've had people that I can turn to and talk to versus the previous life that I lived, where I felt that I had to come up with all the answers on my own, because a lot of those answers, a lot of those decisions weren't necessarily the best ones.

I actually have a diagnosed eating disorder as well. And so again, this is one of those things where people may look at you and just say, you look absolutely perfect. But inside my head, I may have struggles with what I eat, how much I eat, controlling what I eat. So I don't know that I'm qualified other than to say that I do believe.

Very much in moderation. Uh, I struggle with that personally. I know that if I'm overeating, I'm, I'm feeling a bit ashamed of myself and if I'm restricting my, my intake of food, then that usually will lead to another binge eating session. And so, [00:16:00] you know, at some point I have to learn how to have peace with what I'm eating.

**Jenn:** I just wanna say that is such a great share. Adam, I worked with. Teenagers in a mental health home for 10 years, and so many kids had eating disorders. And we rarely hear about the parents. A lot of times when I dug in a little bit more, it was also coming from parents. So we got to remember that adults struggle

**Adam:** with this too.

Well, and, and it is something that I know that, uh, That the young ladies tend to maybe catch more attention. And it's a little bit interesting when you walk into a room. You know, I'm that one guy that walks in there and they're looking at me like, what are you doing here? You look like you don't need any, you have no problems.

And. They don't understand it's, it's, it's what's between our ears that creates the, the demon. So thank you for acknowledging that Jennifer.

**Tracey:** Before we wrap up, I want to throw a little question in. I wrote an article back in 2019 for Realtor magazine. Entitled mentally [00:17:00] ill clients and your safety. I talked to real estate agents, how to deal with clients who may have a mental illness in a respectful way.

Do either of you have anything that you can add to that?

**Adam:** From the day I got into this business, I realized that, you know, this was a bit therapy and a bit finance and a lot of personal emotion, and so. Buying and selling homes is very stressful. All I can tell you is, is that, that you have to be able to adjust and listen, be compassionate, yet be constructive in, in helping your clients to achieve what their goal is.

So yeah, there's a, a quite a wide variety of. Clientele that we have the opportunity and the privilege to work for, though. You're

**Jenn:** right. Obviously I'm not a real estate agent. However, I think just what Adam said, like always knowing that people are just doing the best they can from where they're at with what they have, including ourselves is one way that at least I [00:18:00] try to work with people.

Who may be dealing with, you know, different mental health issues, whether I'm coaching them or even back when I was training people on the mat, loads of folks would come in through that door with all kinds of stuff going on in their lives. And we just always have to remember that there's always something else going on in there.

So having empathy, meeting them where they're at. And working from there.

**Tracey:** Agree. And thank you both for weighing in on that. And one thing that I say, and you both hit up on it is to treat the client with respect. We don't know where they're coming from, where they are, and you also have to have a plan if you're working with a client that has a mental.

Illness or mental wellness issue is to talk to their caregiver or talk to who they're with to get an idea of what they're dealing with, or if there are things that you should or should not do with to talk directly to the client and don't dismiss them and learn what the boundaries are so that you don't put yourself in danger.

Okay. So let's do this. Let's wrap up with some action words for this industry. Knowing that my [00:19:00] perspective is that agents need to teach consumers how to move through the real estate process in a safe and secure manner. That's what I train them to do. What you both do is you focus on the agent getting their mindset ready.

So let's talk about action steps going forward. Jen, what do you tell real estate agents who are concerned about mental wellness and building their business at the same time? How do they balance that in a safe manner?

**Jenn:** I think especially going through You know, walking into this year, a year of uncertainty, market volatility, all of that.

We don't, we can't see what's going to happen. I think the most important thing to do is have a practice that's going to help you build that, that grit, that inner strength, and that resilience that we all need as entrepreneurs so badly. For me, I'm going to double down and say, meditation, meditation, meditation, meditation has changed my life.

And I can't talk enough about the benefits. So even if it's that one minute meditation a day, something that you can do [00:20:00] consistently just to quiet the thoughts, to stop them in their tracks. And you know, the thoughts I'm talking about, the negative ones, the ones that are not supporting our wellbeing. Put something else.

Positive, like an affirmation, like a journaling practice, like a positive podcast, something to drown out the negativity. I

**Tracey:** love that. Adam, what do you say to yourself and to your fellow agents every day about that mental wellness mindset, as well as building your business while working

**Adam:** through it all? We need balance.

For me, that is a very, very difficult process. Um, I tend to be a workaholic. I am extremely committed to trying to do anything and everything I can for my clients. And at many times I will leave myself out of the equation. And, um, whether we're top producers or we're brand new in this business, we all have our, our, our fears.

Some of those fears can be healthy. I just feel that it's important for Us to do what Jennifer just said. And that [00:21:00] is to have some type of a healthy outlet for me. It's exercise, some type of physical activity, whether it be hiking or for me, the gym, when I'm there, I find my peace. I find my sanctuary. And it does allow me to be more productive.

**Tracey:** Both of you all are speaking directly to me. I need to work on my mental wellness and like so many real estate agents and solopreneurs, entrepreneurs, we think we're so tough and we can do this on our own. None of this is going to work well. If you don't reach out for help, I say that to the agents and everyone listening, you can't say you don't know better.

You've met two at the best of the best in this real estate industry who are saying we are here. To help you, we have support and we understand your industry. So for those of us who think we're super, super tough and super strong, there's help available. No need to be lonely in this industry. I want to thank you both so much for coming, sharing your personal stories, as well as your expert advice and the resources that you have [00:22:00] created to help keep this a safe and a secure community and the mind.

Set and the mental wellness that you offer the support that you offer to our agents all to thank everyone for listening and everyone They say thank you for joining us on Drive with NAR the safety series New episodes of the Drive with NAR podcast drop twice a month at magazine dot realtor slash drive Or wherever you get your podcast NAR does not endorse any product and does not take a stance on any specific safety tool Members are encouraged to use only those safety tools in which they're properly trained.

Find more safety resources at nar. realtor. com