

Wynne Leon (00:02)

Welcome to How to Share, a podcast about collaboration in our families, friendships, at work, and in the world.

Wynne Leon (00:13)

In this episode, Vicki Atkinson and I are with psychologist, educator, talent agent, and author, Dr. Albert Bramante. In my role as a technology professional to implement collaborative software, I spend a lot of time seeing how people use technology. Most are experts at something other than technology, which makes it fascinating to witness the two approaches when a technical problem

occurs. Those who try to troubleshoot it on their own and those who don't. So I love this episode with Dr. Bramante because he speaks to some of the factors that contribute to how we approach life. He's written a book called Rise Above the Script to help actors and performers break free of self-limiting patterns. His book reads like a toolkit for self-evaluation.

Taking a look at self-esteem, self-efficacy, and the big five personality traits. Agreeableness, conscientiousness, extroversion, neuroticism, and openness.

Albert points out the many ways we self-sabotage. Once we see our patterns, it's much easier to address them. To quote Albert, his book and this episode is for anyone feeling the friction between their ambition and their achievement. It is a fascinating dive into the ways we can bring our best selves to our work and to the world. We know you'll love it.

Albert Bramante (01:52)

you

you

Hey! ~

Wynne Leon (02:07)

Vicki and I are so excited to talk to you.

Albert Bramante (02:11)

And I'm grateful to be here. I want to thank you both so much for having me on here and inviting me to be a guest.

Wynne Leon (02:17)

Well, I mean, you have such rich topics to talk about, about how to bring our best selves forward that we just are delighted to spend the time with you.

Albert Bramante (02:26)

Thank you. Thank you very much.

Wynne Leon (02:28)

So you're a talent agent and a psychologist. Can you tell us how you came to combine those two paths?

Albert Bramante (02:36)

Well, I was always interested in the arts and creative arts I was in the drama club in high school and then I majored in psychology, of course, in college because in high school I was an avid reader. I was a book nerd. I loved to read and I liked the human brain. I liked learning about behavior and learning about people. I was always a people person.

I took some acting classes in college as electives and I really enjoyed it, know, the creative side of things. But I kind of put that to rest a little bit. then when I received my master's degree, break my last semester. I don't know how I did it by sheer luck, but I landed an internship at a talk show in New York. Cool.

It was the Sally Jessy Raphael Show.

Wynne Leon (03:28)

Wow, I remember. ~

Vicki Atkinson (03:29)

Red shoes,

right? Red shoes.

Albert Bramante (03:31)

She

was red glasses. She was like a real staple in the nineties, you know, the nineties and early, really early 2000s. so I naturally, I did that for, for a semester. My duties was more on the crisis intervention, the counseling side of things, what they call aftercare, which was the care for

the guests afterwards so that they're not, you know, going to kill each other when they go off stage or hurt themselves or anything like that. that experience was like my first professional show business experience. And it was both, was definitely eye opening for me. And to a point where it was one of those experiences, which I'll never do again. wasn't

There was a lot of ethical issues I was facing, dilemmas.

Vicki Atkinson (04:24)

Like related to privacy and disclosure, I'm wondering.

Albert Bramante (04:28)

privacy disclosure, also the goal wasn't even though it was set out to the viewers like, know, Sally Jessy Raphael and the show wants to really help people. That's not really the goal. The goal was to get ratings. The goal was to get, you know, the goal for every segment was to get someone to throw a chair, cry or storm off stage. It didn't matter how we got there, but we get there. And that was like something that really

Vicki Atkinson (04:51)

~ yeah.

Albert Bramante (04:57)

~ didn't sit well with me and also the situation, the stories were real, but the way that they were set up was manufactured. It was very manufactured.

Vicki Atkinson (05:09)

It opportunistic, it sounds like.

Albert Bramante (05:12)

Opportunistic.

So now fast forward after that, this is also the same year of 9-11. Now I wasn't, of course, thankfully directly affected because I was in Jersey, but that day, but I, the person who I was working with at Sally called me about a week later.

saying we're doing all this work on the ground, we can use your help. You know, from a counseling perspective. So that's what I did. And I a lot of volunteer work in the beginning. I also worked for different social service organizations, which led to like me being hired by like Mental Health Council of New York. I did that for a year and a half and doing rest intervention around 9-11. So.

But during this time, I started working with actors and meeting actors again, rekindling my college and high school. So I tried to give it a go as a professional actor myself. It wasn't for me. I'm more behind the scenes.

But I didn't want to give up that world completely because I love being around actors and just creative people in general. So I did some odds and ends jobs. I would help out at film festivals in New York. would help with casting a little bit, casting a couple of short projects or films. And each time I was meeting some of the actors that I really liked. the biggest joy for me in general in life is connecting people. I really consider myself a connector.

And so that started with me bringing people together for projects. And I was like, well, let me think about doing this. You we try to match actors for jobs. So I started my first company in 2004. And during this time, I guess to kind of make myself happy, I made a promise to my grandmother was going to be a doctor. And I was already halfway through. was already having my master's degree. I might as well go the whole route.

I wasn't sure if the talent representation was going to be successful. And in order to be really a successful psychologist, a working psychologist, you need a PhD. So I went to school at an online, it was an online PhD program. So I enrolled at Walden in 2005.

Vicki Atkinson (07:26)

Walden.

Albert Bramante (07:31)

We did our first like meet, brainstorm, recess and verb dissertation. And the advice that we received was pick a problem that you want to solve or like a burning question.

And at this time I was just starting my talent business and I was noticing a lot of actors just shooting themselves in the foot, getting in the own way and self sabotaging.

Wynne Leon (07:55)

That's great. What a way to combine the two.

Albert Bramante (08:01)

And so now both of my thoughts are there. It's like, okay, I'm gonna combine both the psychology and the talent side of things. And so my dissertation was in self-defeating behavior and performing arts.

Vicki Atkinson (08:14)

Yeah, and talk about like really bringing home, you know, your interest in solutions focused therapy. You've kind of done that in your book by looking at the challenges and bringing forth very practical advice, very affirming.

Wynne Leon (08:30)

Right. Well, and your is sort of like a toolkit for self-assessment. mean, you have self-esteem, the big five personality traits, self-efficacy. What do you think is the biggest factor as to whether somebody can and will change?

Albert Bramante (08:49)

personality factors. was a big factor. mean, the one thing that, cause for my doctoral research, what I did was I gave out several, tools, instruments that I had. My initial study had about 135 actors. They completed a, you know, the five factor scale. had them do a fear success scale, self advocacy scale. and then a general question, like, you know, like an audition tracker.

how many auditions you turned down, how many auditions you really messed up on. And I did what we call, and this is gonna, I'm gonna geek out here, but it was a correlation relationship thing. at the, biggest finding that kept coming up, and of course I did multiple statistical analysis, which I'm not gonna get into, but it was one thing that kept coming up was there was a high relationship.

between neuroticism in five traits and conscientiousness. high conscientiousness, mean, high neuroticism combined with low conscientiousness equaled self-sabotage.

Vicki Atkinson (09:53)

Yeah, vulnerability for someone who's, you know, intending to put themselves in a, you know, a place professionally where being judged is the day in the day out, right?

Albert Bramante (10:05)

Well, that and then also they were very low in like business system and discipline. So you add the high neuroticism which is prone to anxiety and depression and high emotional reactivity combined with low conscientiousness that kept popping up there. Probably more so than any other thing, significantly at least. So, and that just kept coming up like at least four or five times in my analysis with the strongest

correlation. So that was where I kind of went with. was like, what we need to do developing, you know, something with short term solutions is to lower the head temperature on the emotional reactivity side, but also develop systems to increase the conscientiousness of business side of things, which makes perfect sense because it's called show business for a reason.

Wynne Leon (10:54)

That's right. Right. And you need that.

Albert Bramante (11:00)

So that's how that started, know, and that was probably the most interesting thing that I was like, wow, I didn't see it that way. I'm glad that my one of my advisors, my chair had suggested to go down the rabbit hole, the big five. Because I didn't even think about without makes perfect sense. And it's one of my favorite models of personality to date is

the big five because it makes it so practical and so right. You every day related.

Vicki Atkinson (11:29)

Right. And applicable, think, you know, not just for performers. I think it's fairly well recognized. But, you know, as Wynne said, what you've done is you've created a toolkit. But when you mentioned, you know, show business, you know, developing the business acumen is important. And I think one of the things I really appreciate it is that you have a whole chapter dedicated to lifelong learning.

and really pushing people to build confidence by being educated, reduce vulnerability by being aware and read and also the encouragement that you offer about being prepared to do the work because it is work.

Increasingly, it seems like that's a message that needs to be heard.

Albert Bramante (12:12)

Yeah, absolutely.

Wynne Leon (12:14)

Yeah, interestingly enough, there's a reporter from the Atlantic that just wrote a book about the big five and whether you can change those characteristics. ~ Yeah, I think her name is Olga Khazan and the book is Me But Better. Science of... Yeah, maybe you've heard of it. and that's what you do so well is that you provide those hot tips.

Albert Bramante (12:23)

Check that out.

Vicki Atkinson (12:36)

Yeah.

Wynne Leon (12:36)

Yeah,

you point out ways that we self sabotage beliefs around money im poster syndrome, fear of success is recognizing things like that like calling them out the monster in the closet. Is it easier to stop once we've seen it?

Albert Bramante (12:50)

Yes. the half the battle of seeing that is the biggest thing with self sabotage, especially like that. If you want to that demon that monster is hidden, it's not it direct our behavior, but we don't we're not recognizing it. So one of the things I think that's really important to understand is or to work for start to recognize is if someone starts to take on the victim mentality.

Vicki Atkinson (13:01)

Right.

Albert Bramante (13:16)

you know, can't do anything right. You know, everyone's against me. You know, the world is a ~ bad place or, you know, just, or even just that learned helplessness mode. It's like, okay, I can't do this anymore. And that's when it's like, okay, how are you contributing to this? And there's accountability and responsibility. I don't mean blame, I mean responsibility. And so it's, about

taking responsibility, it's a first step. Once you know it, it's easy. Like, okay, wow, I really am my own worst enemy. I really am, person in the mirror or not, anybody else. Because people will blame, that's another thing a lot of people will blame game. I'm blaming on this, I'm blaming on this person, that person, or my mom or my dad, you know, and.

Vicki Atkinson (14:05)

What you do a really nice job of, throughout the book, it is very empowering and affirming. And as you're offering those reminders and those cautionary notes, you're not doing it in a way where you're offering a condemnation. The tone throughout is very supportive and encouraging. I think that's

It requires a delicate touch to do that, but you did that really well.

Albert Bramante (14:35)

Yeah, thank you. I mean, that's what I try, you know, my aim to do is make this, you know, very practical and very, you know, really easy to grasp. And that's why I think I'm more geared myself towards solution focused counseling. Even when I teach now, I mean, you know, I definitely teach theory and all that, but I'm all about what can you get out of the class that can benefit your life?

Wynne Leon (15:01)

Yeah.

Albert Bramante (15:02)

How

can you understand your personality or your own childhood so you know what's going on and why you do things you do? Yeah, and that's big factor too because the learning, you know, the whole idea is to learn and if you can make more personal connections through material, that's gonna be better.

Wynne Leon (15:22)

Yeah,

right.

Vicki Atkinson (15:24)

You had

me on page one when you talked about Carl Rogers and worthiness. was like, ~ my people.

Wynne Leon (15:31)

And all the way to the end when you talked about being a lifelong learner. Yeah. So you just brought that one home as well. You talk in the book a lot about physical care of our nutrition, exercise, sleeping well. Those are sort of a lot of solutions that are maybe the underpinnings of that.

mental healthiness and change. Can you talk about that body mind connection?

Albert Bramante (15:59)

Well, I want the biggest I think one of the biggest culprits physical things that can really affect our Mental health is sleep is lack of sleep. Yeah, and you'll hear a lot of it they can say well, know I'll sleep till I'm dead and when I'm dead I'm like, you know that is misguided because it as we know there's a high link between lack of sleep and mood disorders and and

even just depression.

Wynne Leon (16:28)

Right.

Vicki Atkinson (16:29)

Dysfunction generally, yeah. ~

Albert Bramante (16:31)

in general and it's any step on you because most people we're not recognizing it first it's it's more of a thing that's recognized by other people in the person's circle like you know you're not functioning well so sleep is important just self-care in general because how we take care

of ourselves is gonna really impact our mental health and that's why you know there's even there's a lot of document studies that

you know, our psychological health impacts our immune system and impacts our general health. So that's important too. And that's why it's important like to just look after yourself. mean, self-care is everything, you know, and that's so important.

Wynne Leon (17:20)

And it's being shown to support so many other things like aging well and our health span, our ability to stave off dementia.

Albert Bramante (17:30)

Well, and that's the biggest biggest factor was setting up dementia is is memory, you know, keeping involved in a memory. So doing a lot of reading and learning

Now, of course, we know that there's genetic factors with Alzheimer's, but we can even delay that a lot if we keep in mind that, or at least diminishes a variety of it.

Vicki Atkinson (17:53)

Well, and what I like about what you've done in your book, I won't find the page number right off the bat here, but I believe, well, it's very research-based and you offer all the citations that I think are really helpful for people if they wanna dig in more, but you also cited one of my favorite researchers, Dr. Melanie Greenberg about stress.

and what you and Wynne are talking about, just the debilitating effects. You can be super aspirational, but if you're not taking care of home base and if you're lying to yourself about how you're really feeling, but I love that you referenced so many important people in the field, but shout out to Dr. Greenberg.

Albert Bramante (18:34)

Yeah, yeah, that was good. I wanted to really, like I said, ground this into the experts kind of like really back up for what I'm talking about to add that social proof credibility and all that.

Vicki Atkinson (18:50)

Yeah, well done.

Wynne Leon (18:52)

And you you talked, you meant to that, you know, aphorism, you know, or added to I'll sleep but I'm dead, which, know, and we're talking about people who want to achieve better, who want to, you know, find their voice and, and, you know, land the role, whether it is as an actor or as a job, right? Or as a parent, you know, there's all sorts of roles where we can do better if we got out of our way. And I think the quote,

that I love from you is the phrase that you say anyone feeling the friction between their ambition and their achievement. Can you say more about how you see people using your book to reduce that friction?

Albert Bramante (19:31)

Well, the main thing, a lot of people underestimate their achievement. They underestimate what they've accomplished. Or they'll downplay it. Or even forget. Especially when they're in of self-doubt, like, I really didn't accomplish much. And then you have to break it down and say, look at all you've done. And you start listening to things.

And then you'll hear a lot of times people say, I didn't really think of that. I don't remember that. Now it makes sense. Now you think about it. Now they mentioned it. Yes. Because we have filters in our perception. When we're in a spiraling mood or a depressive mood, we tend to only look at the limitations that we have or the disadvantage that we face. Rather than all of the good things we've done, we delete them in a sense. We delete all the

you know, the good things that happened to us and all that, only focus on we only filter the bad, so, or the negative.

Vicki Atkinson (20:34)

Yeah, that deflecting and the discounting, think, oof.

Wynne Leon (20:38)

It brings up one of my favorite suggestions from you, which is the happy file. know, to keep that something, know, journal, the file, evidence of the things that have gone right.

Vicki Atkinson (20:42)

Yeah.

Albert Bramante (20:50)

Well, 100 % and that's the whole thing is like taking stock in what you have. So it's kind of like keeping a journal. So it's like every little thing that you've done that you've got praise on or that went well, you document that. then when situations come up where you start to spiral into that self doubt cycle, which we all do at times, but if you follow you pull out that file, your happy file,

And it'll remind you of like why you are set out to do what you do in the south.

Wynne Leon (21:25)

Yeah. Well, you what I love about this book is that, you know, really you're talking about how to get show up better. How to, how far we can all show up better because we're working from that place of healthy self-esteem and, you know, not from the spiral of self-doubt. when we're thinking about, our big five, you know, are we being agreeable? we, you know, bringing being open?

conscientious. I mean, those are just such ways for us to show up better and deliver our gifts to the world.

Albert Bramante (21:59)

Yeah, well then that's the whole thing about showing up and really embracing our fullest potential because we really hold us back, know, and when I say we, ourselves, hold us back, we realize.

Wynne Leon (22:12)

Right? Yeah. Right. Great points. Is there anything about the book that or and about the work that you've done that we haven't covered that you wanted to?

Vicki Atkinson (22:15)

Thanks.

Albert Bramante (22:23)

Yeah, I just briefly mentioned with regarding with self-sabotage all that is the idea of money and I talked about this in the chapter in the book our relationship with money because a lot of times for some reason were we may have been taught that money is bad or money is evil or that money is a toxic thing to have and

Wynne Leon (22:49)

Right.

Albert Bramante (22:51)

you know, you'll hear sometimes you'll say, which is misquoted actually, that money is the root of all evil. And that was not how it was really meant to come out. was a love of money is the root of all evil. wasn't money. Money is neutral. And a lot of times we are conditioned and sometimes with society, culture or family will sometimes send the message down that money is bad.

You know, like, old bad people, they came in a little money and now they're bad. And so subconsciously we don't want to be bad. We don't want to be evil. So subconsciously we tell the instructor or itself, don't make money. And so therefore that's subconscious, whenever we're doing it. therefore we just hold anytime we get enough from an opportunity to make money, we throw it away. And that's why some people can't really hold onto money very well or spent, you know, a budget very well.

And or even people who, you know, do major windfalls, whether it's winning the lottery or, you know, make an athlete or celebrity and an actor, you know, landing a multi-million dollar contract. then three years later, they're in more debt than they were when they started. Yeah.

Wynne Leon (24:01)

You know, just to expand on that point, I've seen so many, especially young women who will turn down money for a job because they enjoy doing it. They're like, you know, no, I enjoy doing this. Don't pay me. And it's like, wait a minute. You can enjoy doing something and get paid for it. doesn't. It does not.

Albert Bramante (24:22)

Yeah, and you know, even if you were to say like, okay, you don't want to agree, okay, well, you the more money you make, the more people you can help. So what about that? You know, we get all the help by by the

charity, donate to the more money you make, because money itself is neutral. How wouldn't you know it's not? It's just it's just a concept. And so but I think we'll see that like, you have to pay. What? You know, no, we

Or or I'll see people complaining of what coaches and all this or therapists. they charge so much money that that's bad. No. Why is that bad? You know, that they're charging what their work, you know, and that's or even like a lot of young entrepreneurs who want to charge that they don't because they're like, I'm afraid if I asked for a large amount of money, people are not going to pay.

Vicki Atkinson (25:15)

But don't you think, don't you both think that that speaks to sort of those foundational values and those, you know, the sense of shame or worthiness, you know, at all, you know, what you're both saying, it all gets jumbled together and really kind of peeling those hearts, you know, apart, right? You can maybe help and invoke a little bit more aspirational, right? That it's okay to push and be successful. Yeah.

Albert Bramante (25:43)

Yeah, no, and that's absolutely correct. And that's where it comes down to the self worth thing. Like, well, why is it an issue? ~ Whether yourself or you're protecting under somebody else? Because they like, you know, they like money. There's that's that's a self image. And until you correct that, you know, your relationship with money is always going to be chaotic.

Vicki Atkinson (26:06)

And you know what else, listening to both of you talk about this, it reminds me that there are several places in the book where you talk about the importance of building your financial awareness, your business sense, and it's not just to make money, but it's also to protect yourself, to not offload that because you're uncomfortable in some way to someone else, but bootstrap it yourself, do the work, right?

Albert Bramante (26:33)

Yeah, well that's whole thing. You have to do the work. this is why there's nothing wrong with taking financial literacy classes or getting self-educated and money management. So that, again, it's not foreign. It's not, you you know what to do. I mean, and that's why some people are very smart with money because they're educated.

And they're okay with their relationship with it too. Once you've done a little more about it, I think that also improve your relationship with money.

Wynne Leon (27:06)

Yeah. So good.

Vicki Atkinson (27:08)

applicable to all professions, we would say.

Wynne Leon (27:11)

All right. right. Well, Dr. Bramante, thank you so much. It's such a pleasure.

Albert Bramante (27:17)

Thank you to you both for having me. I'm really happy to be here and I appreciate.

Vicki Atkinson (27:22)

Pleasure.

Wynne Leon (27:24)

Absolutely. Thank you, Albert.

Thank you for listening. Our music was written for us by the incredible duo of Jack Canfora and Rob Koenig. For show notes and more great inspiration see avitiva.com

you