

MERYL: Welcome back everybody to the Rebel Nutritionist Podcast Today I am. So humbled and honored to be talking with **Rick Carson, author of Taming Your Gremlin** which has been published in several language languages and has been out.

Since 1984. Amazing. Amazing. And also that there is a sequel, which is a masterclass in Gremlin Taming, which is his second book in this series, and has been out since 2008. And never, never Goes outta style, Rick, right? This stuff is tried and true. . Yeah. And welcome, welcome. So excited to,

RICK: well, thank you. I want you to know how excited I am to be here. I've really been looking forward to just having a conversation with you, Merrill. I admire your work very much and it's, it's an honor. Oh, you know. Wow. Wow. Well, thank you. I mean, even just. From your website to see just how it's obviously very important to you, you deliver something worthwhile to your constituents,

And that one of the things that I noticed was you were talking about how you like to integrate. With overall wellness, you know? , a lot of people say that, but you really do it and, and one of the reasons I know that is you're having me on. You know, you and I are healers and we kinda have different areas of expertise but. Definitely overlap. Anybody I work with, any group I train of therapists or coaches, any clients I have, if they're not taking care of their bodies, their nutrition, and working out. They're, they're not getting the most bang for their buck. So I'm very into integrating good approaches, but I'm also very picky and I intend to make a lot of use of what you're offering a lot.

MERYL: Good, good. This is gonna be a great conversation then. Which I knew it would be when, when after the first time we spoke. So I read through the book. I thought it was it, it really, it's just amazing. Talk about the overlap. You know, we talk, I always say the **food part of what I do is the easy part, the mental and the psychological part of understanding you, what makes us human. And how we, and how we move through taking care of our health is really the most challenging part.** And so, and getting out of

our own way in our heads Yeah. Is, is so integral to this process because otherwise it's, you're on that same hamster wheel, you know?

And so I guess, I mean, obviously people should go read the book. What, was the jumping off point for you to create this why did you create Taming Your Gremlin?

RICK: I just really became aware, actually I wrote it in 83. It was published in 84. By, I mean, it's Harper Collins now, but it was Harper and Roe back then.

I had just, I really wanted to simplify. I was reading a lot of Eastern stuff and, you know it just all seemed like it could be made very accessible. and I get letters about that a lot from you know, from, from people who call themselves from Buddhist priest and You know, just instructors yoga instructors who've been at it for years are really the real McCoy, not just health club yoga instructors.

You know, not that they're, not that that's bad, but No, I get you **people saying thank you for making meditation such, a simple, accessible thing**, you know?. So anyway, what inspired, that's part of what inspired me, and also I just was going through a real growth spur personally.

I don't know how in the hell it was happening. Exactly. . **I had been doing what I thought was meditation, but I was mostly just becoming really aware of what was going on around me and in my body and how it was all connected.** I started to have just amazing experiences and I wanted to write about it.

So the term I came up with, which is a key in the whole Gremlin taming method, is simply noticing, That was , that was before the whole Buddhist, beautiful Buddhist thing had come to the west in a big way. **So the term mindfulness was not around**, you know? Yeah. I thought, well, when the hell am I gonna call this?

It's awareness, but, People had so many concepts about that. Yeah. It's just simply noticing. It's just paying attention.

and that's not the whole enchilada by any means, but that's a piece of the gremlin timing method that's very important.

MERYL: Yes. So, what would you say before someone right, picks up the book?

Like, I love the way you write **a surprisingly simple method of getting out of your own way**. Because gosh, we really all do need to do that. Right? But what is that right? If before someone picks up the book, what does that mean? Because I feel like people often do need to get out of their own ways, but like, I don't even know that they realize it sometimes.

RICK: Well, most people don't, right? Because we're, **we're trapped in our own little concepts of who we are and of how the world works**. You gotta figure from the time you pop out onto the planet. In the midst of whatever unique drama you pop out into, you get bombarded with experiences, right? just all sorts of stuff happens.

Well, from those experiences, we form all sorts of little ideas about who we are. And about, basically about emotions, about how lovable we are, about how likable we are, how creative we are, how we stack up in relation to our peers. that stuff in there. Oh yeah. And. that becomes a veil of concepts.

Well, it's one thing to know that on a scale of zero to 10 is worth about a three to even have insight into how you got those ideas, and they're not all bad, right? **Any opinion you have about yourself, any concept is limiting because you're not a concept , you're a constantly evolving thing.**

And those concepts serve as a sealer. I mean, I'd rather somebody have a positive self-concept than a negative one. But a concept is a concept. It's a, it's a belief. and all

the belief is, is an opinion. That you develop loyalty to, so in the gremlin taming method with a lot of practice, people learn how to simply notice those opinions.

mostly about themselves in the very moment that they're flying through their heads. But it doesn't always start, this'll interest. Merrill. It doesn't. It doesn't always start by hearing a voice or an intellectual insight. **It'll start with a simple awareness of a lot of times you're breathing.**

when there's a glitch, your breathing gets shallow. It may start with an external force , but it gets shallow. and right in the center of your chest. So that's one clue that's followed by tension in your trapezius and discomfort or pain, wherever your most vulnerable area is. One of the things I liked about, just as I was learning more and more about you is that.

Just that you actually help people with pain. and with illness. Overall wellness for sure. But you do both and I just think that's admirable.

MERYL: Well, yeah. Unfortunately there's a lot of people walking around with pain, but you know, oftentimes I go back to that concept, **that pain really does come. It starts up in the mind.** So you talk about the experiences of, of how we're thrown into the world and, and these traumas. And I will tell you it is shocking. You, when, when we start and we take a deep dive into people's stories, the amount of trauma that people experience is, is just mind-blowing to me.

RICK: Yeah. There's no, yeah. And there, as you know, the body holds onto all that. Yep. Yep. . So does the psyche. Yes. So the idea in the Gremlin taming method is to help people actually not just know about that. It's one thing to know, well, I went through an explosion, or I was in Afghanistan and that's really screwed me up.

It's another thing to, in the moment, get a sliver of light between that tension and it starts with external circumstances many times. Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Some kinda flaring

horn, you know. We don't have control over that. **what we have control over is how long we hang on to that poison.** And it's poison.

And it comes several different forms, which we can discuss, but every one of those poisons is unique. They feel differently. **You can start noticing them in the moment that they occur, and the idea is to learn, in some cases, to accentuate them for a moment. And then how to release that poison.** And this sounded, it's simple, but it's not easy.

I pray that it's simple. I've done my best to make it as simple as possible. What I wish I'd emphasized more Merrill in both my books, I say it, but I really **wish I would had emphasized practice.** You gotta practice, you gotta practice reading the book and. Oh it's nice. I'm glad, but you gotta practice.

MERYL: Absolutely. Look, and I always say with whatever you do, there has to be consistency. Yeah. And, and, and, right. And it's no difference. And, and I just, this work is so important and I think it does get you know, we, we don't practice it enough. Because people are just trying, it's like they're trying to do it without practicing it.

Right. Does that make sense? Right. It's like, yeah, I just wanna get there. I just wanna get to the end. Well, in order to get the end, you gotta do it every day. .

RICK: Yeah. But there's not an end. But there, and yeah, you don't get that stuff out of the way. Well, I don't know.

I was gonna say, your gremlin is the one that issues forth. trauma or fears about the future. All of that jazz. Okay. Some people will say to me yeah I have gremlins about this and gremlins about that. The way I think of it is there's one gremlin. **Gremlin is your gremlin by virtue of its intention. And its intention is to squelch the vibrant soul that you actually are.** and it works full-time. **once you get good at taming it on the spot, it becomes pretty inconsequential. But you gotta get good at it. And that takes practice. It's not, it's not a philosophy, it's a physical experience.**

MERYL: Yes. And so one thing I think of that's really kind of come up, I, I'd say more often than not, especially with my female clients, although I, I see it in the, in the men as well you know, is **the idea of boundary setting and and people not wanting to say no and letting other people walk all over them.**

I mean, I think that's a form of Right. That's definitely a form of a gremlin. But how do you I'm curious your, your take on that. I mean, what, it is part of a gremlin, but it just kind of popped in my head because I have so many women who are just trying to. Achieve their health goals.

And when we talk about everybody comes in thinking, oh, I gotta be on the perfect diet. And we start talking and I'm like, **it's really not about the diet as much as it is about setting yourself up for self-care. And part of taking care of yourself is setting boundaries so that other people don't walk all over you.** So in that context, how do, how can you respond?

RICK: No, I think it's the hardest word in the English language to pronounce. Actually. People have a really difficult time with I, I tell folks, **if you wanna really go through a personal growth experience, I give them an assignment to say no and don't explain why.**

Yeah. Yes, and, and then I had him some slack. I say, okay, I'll give you a break. It's okay to say no. But in just a few instances, don't explain and stay with the experience that comes up for you. Yeah. Okay. **Be willing to stay with it. Notice what happens with your breathing.** Yeah. And remember, every experience we have in this life, every one of them occurs from our skin in.

events occur around us. whether we want 'em to or not, they may have they involve us, right? Okay. But **our experience that every one of those events occurs in the boundary defined by your skin. So if you've got a method for keeping this thing feeling cool, calm, collected, and relatively content, let's say relatively, cuz it's easier in some**

**circumstances than others, and when you get knocked off center, you have a way to return there rather swift. It's just more efficient than trying to straighten out circumstances.** Right? I mean, I'm all you, you're successful. I'm successful because we, if we don't like our circumstances, we are pretty good at changing them. and a lot of people are great at that, but what a lot of folks aren't really good at is, this is Tim Galway's term, not mine, but I really like the term inner game.

People are not really. A lot of folks are not really good at, and I wanna make very clear, I'm no master of the process. I mean, I've been at it for, this is my 50th year in practice, so I've been, so I'm better at it than I was. Well, I'm better at it. And I was a couple weeks ago, I mean the benefits just keep unfolding. That's one of the reasons I'm so gungho and I appreciate the opportunities like this to be with you and let people know it's okay. You can, you can, what you are looking for is inside you. One of the teachers I really admire is Prim. Mm-hmm. , and he's a beautiful way.

He talks a lot about the experience inside as a beautiful way of guiding people there, you know?

MERYL: Yeah, it is. It's, it's **it's hard to have people get out of their own way.**

RICK: Well, the, **the taming your gremlin method is a way to do that. It's very precise. It's not a bunch of platitudes,** right. It's Yes. Big methods so, I can elaborate on it if you'd like me to.

MERYL: Yeah. Yeah, please do. Cuz I'm sure the audience would love to hear that. I mean, I've read, I know what you do, but they haven't read the book yet, so so absolutely elaborate away. I'm, I'm all ears.

RICK: So they're various kind, there are various poisons. Let's pick a few that people tend to do to themselves. And again, all of us some of the time. one is just scaring the hell

out of, scaring the hell out of yourself either based on a past experience, typically based on a past experience that relates to something in the future.

Okay, so **fear is always based on worry**. Worry is a racket. Okay, so when you catch yourself creating a horror movie frequently when I have people accentuate the horror movie, make it really, really bad. **Not just mentally, that part's pretty easy really accentuate that movie, but accentuate what it feels like as you're doing that in your body. Notice the key points of tension and accentuate those** when you start seeing. really feeling the observer in you starts to notice what you're doing to your body. there's an actual correction that starts to occur in the very same way, Meryl, that you and I learned to walk and talk. we didn't know any physiology.

Physiology. We just noticed if we lean too far to the left we bumped our head, so we learned. It's the same way with this. When you become aware of how you're jabbing your own thumb in your own eye, in the very moment that you're jabbing your own thumb in your own eye, not some insight about it, **but you catch yourself doing it, there's a natural correction that begins to occur.**

Worry, that happens with people who mire themselves in regret to the point of guilt. It happens with folks who just beat the hell outta themselves. Sometimes people do all of these things and we all probably do some of 'em at sometimes. People who cling to resentments. I'm not opposed to anger at all.

I like it. I think handled properly. It changes things for the better a lot of times, **but clinging to a resentment . It's like acid in a container.** Yeah. Okay. So when people start to notice themselves doing that in the moment they're doing it in the granddaddy of 'em, all we've already talked about, which is **people trapping themselves in a concept of who they are.**

in the belief, in an opinion that was probably in place by the time they were six. So you can have insight into that, and that's valuable, but awareness, it's simply noticing in the

moment. is, is that's worth a 10. That's an a plus. So anyway, that's a little bit of how the method works, is **you notice that and you accentuate what you're doing.**

One of the things that **a lot of coaches and therapists tend to do is they tend to jump to the second stage, which is have somebody start playing with options.** What can I do differently? You know, that's important. **But it's more important to accentuate what they're doing to get in their own way.** See what I'm doing with my hands?

It is. And you know this part for all of this probably, but **it's all about energy. People energy, they turn it in on themselves. Well, energy's meant to go out toward the world** to love to create, even to fight. Krishna was a warrior, you know. When you're in the zone, I'm in the zone.

Everything's flowing freely. One direction. So you ask, so I'm, I'm aware I'm not giving you a chance to say anything .

MERYL: No, it's fascinating. I'm just thinking about that, like, okay, so, right, you, you, I mean, I will just from my own experience, like. I, I don't wanna lean into that, that feeling, right? It's like, oh, **I don't like that feeling. And so you know, I'm trying to get away from that feeling.** I don't want more of that, but I, I understand well,

RICK: and if you're trying too hard to get away, of course you created a duality because **one part of just smashing against another part of you** that manifests right here.

Okay. In the center of your chest, then in your trapezius. Yeah. Then wherever your most vulnerable area is, that's what will happen. So the idea, what I tell people **when we go with the accentuating part is, 30 seconds is a long time. A minute is a really long time.** Yeah. So how long I want you to do it. Right.

And for some people it's like, I only want to taste it or I don't even wanna do that. It's like, okay, I just want you to taste it. But you gotta become aware, even if you're not causing

it. So sometimes things are caused externally or we get a certain illness, they, we didn't start.

But you gotta ask yourself how am I. Contributing to this or holding onto this in the moment I'm contributing to it or holding onto it. How am I doing that? How not why?

MERYL: Right. So that was, I was just gonna ask you. Right, so we say how, right, so they feel how but isn't the natural. Next question. Why or why and what do I do about it?

RICK: Yeah. If what happens is people start to start to explore the how. How they're scaring themselves or how they're putting themselves down in the very moment they're doing it. You know that I, oh, that's how I'm doing this to myself. I'm scaring the hell outta myself that it's interesting, but the reasons why tend to come up.

I mean, it can, **when people start accentuating it and it's so easy to ask themselves, where the hell did I get that idea? , , where's that coming from?** And that kind of insight is valuable. It's, it's interesting, it's valuable. But again, insight is. to me, it doesn't get the final work done.

**What gets the final work done is awareness.** I had to come up with a term though. Anyway. **I called it the Zen Theory of Change. I free myself from all this stuff, not by trying to free myself.** I can't get outta my own way. **You don't free yourself by bending the bars of the cage. You free yourself by catching yourself in the act of building the cage.**

Ah, so I free myself by simply noticing how. How, not why. I'm getting in my own way. This is the key in the very moment that I'm getting in my own way. Yeah.