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Chris Velardi: It's a timely Cuse Conversation with author, counselor, life, coach, and motivational speaker, David Essel, a 1979 Syracuse University graduate.

David Essel: We're telling people don't wait for the pandemic to end. It may never end. Instead, look at this as the new normal now. Let's take care of ourselves.

Chris Velardi: I'm Chris Velardi c.

once a month or once every six months. But when you start to see whether it's with your partner, your children, coworkers, someone at the gym, oh my God, I got a story at the gym that will blow your mind of people trying to convince me, even though I'm very not into this whole scene of saying who's right and who's wrong, people will come up and try to convince you anyway.

[00:03:30] Well with the adrenaline addiction cycle, when you start to argue and that release of adrenaline is every couple days, all of a sudden we face what many people don't realize Chris is adrenaline withdrawal. So the body gets used to adrenaline three days a week and it wants it. And so then all of a sudden your partner rolls their eyes or someone at work makes an offhand comment where two years ago, you just would've let it fly. Now you have to react because the body is craving that resurge [00:04:00] of adrenaline. So that's just one of the many things we're facing that I've never seen in 42 years of work before.

Chris Velardi: I know something else that you're really turning some attention to is mental health. And that's something that certainly we have talked more and more about. And I think for the better in the last couple of years, but how are you shifting and really putting some attention towards dealing with mental health and then helping others help others deal with mental health?

David Essel: Yeah, well, we saw [00:04:30] a couple years ago, the extreme decline in the world of mental health, just because of anxiety alone. And that's the first thing that we started seeing. 80% of the clients that come into me for whatever reason it is, are also dealing with some pretty serious anxiety. So a couple months ago, the governor in the state of Florida, Governor DeSantis put aside \$12 million for mental health care, starting with first responders and then trickling down. So we're watching the trend of my practice, seeing anxiety, [00:05:00] addiction, arguing, breakups, PTSD, insomnia, everything you can think about. And then we see Governor DeSantis say, Hey, this is serious. The physical is serious, but we're missing the boat. And we agreed. So we created a brand new mental health and master life coach certification, Chris. And what we do is we teach people the origin of anxiety, depression, insomnia, suicidal ideation.

In 1990, I had a failed suicide attempt. I [00:05:30] know suicide very well. I know deep depression, clinical depression, anxiety very well. And so we started to help people years ago, who were having those moments of suicidal thoughts or suicidal ideation. So we look at all of this and we said, let's put together a 30 hour certification. They will be spending 10 hours on a Saturday and 10 hours on a Sunday with me as the only instructor. We'll do it via Zoom and in person. And then they have 10 hours afterwards to complete the assignments. [00:06:00] When they are done, this is what we're looking for Chris, we are looking for an army of certified mental health coaches. They don't have to have the answers to everything because that's not the world of coaching. We need to be able to give people assignments, exercises, accountability drills to hold their feet to the fire

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first to know how to take care of themselves, which they learn in the 30 hour program. Then they feel more secure, right? Like, oh my gosh. As an example, Chris, when we talk about anxiety, one of the most important parts of the body when it comes to anxiety is something called the vagus nerve. The vagus nerve runs the entire length of the body. What science has found is the only way to calm the vagus nerve during an anxiety experience is [00:10:00] deep breathing.

So now first you think, wait a minute, I'm feeling anxious. How am I going to deep breathe? We teach you how to do that. Right. So someone who joins the course that says, well, I don't have any addictions. My relationship is fine. I'm okay financially. But I do get anxious because I don't know what's happening with my mom in the nursing home or my husband struggling with work and where's his next career. So we want people to feel the experience of what they're going through. See that they [00:10:30] can actually heal themselves or help heal themselves before they go on to helping others.

Chris Velardi: It's like that thing on the airplane. Right. You have to put your own mask on before you can put on somebody else's mask.

David Essel: 100% correct. Chris, you got it.

Chris Velardi: So let's back up with you. First of all, how did you get to Syracuse University? What put SU on your map?

David Essel: I was born in Utica, New York, a tiny little city, an hour away. Right. And my dad got a job opportunity at Syracuse University. So [00:11:00] we moved up from Utica when I was very young. So I was in Syracuse. Chris, when I was six years of age, I'll never forget. It's the only memory I have of six, but I was going to be a National Basketball Association Player. That was my only goal. I slept with a basketball every night. Back, now we're talking about back in the 60s. Right. And

David Essel: His wife, DeBorah and Floyd brought me into the chancellor's office to do a presentation for a group of individuals there. So Floyd and DeBorah and I got along great. And then the next day Floyd said, Hey, do you want to say hi to coach [00:12:30] Jim? So this was about two months before I was going to do the keynote. So we went to a practice and coach Jim Boeheim was there and he's got his parka on. It was February and he's starting out the door and I go, Hey, coached. Now here's the thing, Chris, that's so beautiful about Jim Boeheim. I played for Syracuse University 43 years ago or whatever it was, 44 years ago. And Roy Danforth was the coach back then. Jim was the assistant. Jim

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about David's work and his books from the counseling to the hbi en