

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

Shohreh Davoodi: You are listening to episode #111 of Conjuring Up Courage. As a reminder, the show has moved to an every other week release schedule. That said, weeks when there's no new episode are a great time to get caught up on the show's back catalog. Every past episode is available to listen to through all of the major podcast hosting services as well as my website.

Turning to today's episode, I am honored to get to introduce you to Ty Deran. Ty is a non-binary actor, singer, and content creator who's committed to creating entertaining, educational, and queer-affirming content. We discussed the power of confidence, Ty's journey on social media, the freedom that comes from staying true to yourself, and more.

To access the show notes and a full transcript of this episode, head to shohrehdavoodi.com/111. That's shohrehdavoodi.com/111.

[Music plays]

This is Conjuring Up Courage, and I'm your host, Shohreh Davoodi. As a self-trust coach, I help people come home to themselves so they can be more of who they are and less haunted by who they think they're supposed to be.

I created this podcast to celebrate what's possible when you commit to being brave. You'll hear from diverse guests who are refusing to let fear and self-doubt stop them from building fulfilling lives and creating a better world for everyone. I'll also teach you my favorite tools, strategies, and mindset shifts so you can do the same.

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

Consider this your invitation to stop living according to “shoulds” and to step into your motherfucking magic instead. Stay open, get curious, and let’s grow together.

[Music fades]

Hi Ty! Oh my gosh, I am so excited to have you here because you are a fellow professional unicorn.

Ty Deran: Yay!

Shohreh: And there aren’t a lot of us out there, so I feel like we’re already on the same wavelength.

Ty: Yes! Hi [laughs lightly], I’m so happy to be here. Yes, no, all the unicorn vibes, all the rainbows, the glitter, it’s real. It’s a powerful quality and spirit. So I’m happy to be with a fellow unicorn, thank you.

Shohreh: Yes, yes, it is. And you know, some people are like, that’s too much. And I’m like, well, you just can’t handle it. You can just go away.

Ty: Absolutely. Like, I feel like so much of the happy things, like, the colorful things are saved for childhood. But I’m like—

Shohreh: Yes!

Ty: —it’s time to claim that now because we deserve to feel happy [laughs]. You know?

Shohreh: Exactly! Like, why do we say that these things are childish when they are for any age, at any time? Like, when I did this big rebrand last year, I was like, it needs to be rainbow, it needs to be glitter, it needs to be

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

fun, and like, anything else is not going to cut it. And this is not what most people would do for their professional adult branding, but I was like, it's what I'm gonna fucking do.

Ty: Right, I know. I feel like the idea of what is professional is the idea that it has to be, like, dull [laughs lightly]. Like, what if joy was professional too?

Shohreh: Exactly! What if joy was professional? Excellent question.

Ty: [Laughs] Yes.

Shohreh: [Laughs] So for those who have yet to be graced by your rainbow, glittery self, can you start by just telling me a little bit more about you and what lights you up?

Ty: Oh, I love that question. So my name is Ty [laughs lightly]. I am an actor, singer, and content creator. That last one is a new title as of this year, which has been kind of a wild, exciting journey. But honestly, what has been lighting me up recently is connecting with people who are aligned with themselves. I feel like recently I've spent so much time with people who have confronted themselves in similar ways, and it really just gives me and other people around them, like, the space to be in their power as well.

So that, honestly, is community that has been lighting me up recently. And online community, in-person community. It's a little weird these days, that in-person level. Because I think we all are sort of craving that, like, tangible [laughs lightly], like, community. That's what's been

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

lighting me up, is other people who are on this same journey back to the self and have made that choice—are making that choice, every day.

Shohreh:

Mm, I love the way you said that about being able to connect with those people. Because I feel very similarly in that my work is literally helping people to do that. So in my professional space, I'm working with a lot of people who desire that but aren't there yet, and I'm kinda helping to guide them along in that journey.

And what that means for me is that outside of my professional space, I do need people who are a little bit further along. Who are... already done a lot of that work to be people that I am connecting with and able to bounce ideas off of and things like that. Because the journey is hard. We both know that—

Ty:

Yes.

Shohreh:

—especially as starting out, there's just a lot there. And the further along that you get, the better that you feel. And being around those people, again, talking about joy, it's very joyful when people are their authentic selves and they're stepping into that and they're taking up space as who they are. Like they're fun to be around.

Ty:

Mm, yes. I feel like we have sort of trained ourselves to settle for less sometimes with the people that we allow into our sphere. Like, I am all about being incredibly picky about who you allow in because I think there was a time in my life where I felt small. And I felt like I didn't have enough space to express myself. And I didn't have enough space to

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

express my joy or to be heard or seen. And for so long, I blamed myself for that feeling.

And so I didn't always realize that perhaps you're feeling this way because you are not in the right space. It's not one or the other, it's a little bit of both. You know, I definitely fed into making myself feel small and not allowing myself to take up space. But nowadays, I realize, like, I've been surrounded by so many people where it's just easy to be myself. It just is easy to be around them. It doesn't require any energy to be around these people if they actually feed me and lift me up. And I realize now that I have that feeling, I don't want to settle for less.

Shohreh:

Exactly. It makes such a difference when your main circle are all people who wanna support you, who wanna see you out in the world doing cool shit and affirm you and lift you up. And you'd think that would just be an obvious thing, that, like, all relationships and friendships have. But unfortunately, because of the world that we live in, that is not always the case. And like you said, there's this piece of it where we kind of accept what we think we deserve sometimes.

Or, you know, sometimes it's just that we don't know it can be better, honestly. Like, I think about so many of the years that I was in community with people who were not a good fit for me. And it was just because, you know, they were around, they were nice enough. I didn't know that there were other options and, like, that friendship could be something else.

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

Ty: Absolutely. And queer people learn at a very young age to adapt themselves based on how people around them are responding. So we become these, like, chameleons who can enter any space and form into whatever shape [laughs lightly] we need to in order to fit in and to thrive in that space. And for so long, I did that so well. And I loved that about myself. I thought that was good for me. Because it came from my empathy. I thought, I am just such an empathetic person that I can get along with anyone. And I realized that it got to a point where I was like, who am I?

Shohreh: Yes.

Ty: Who am I when no one is in the room? That has been my question in the last year and a half that has changed my life. Because I realized I wasn't aware of my perspective. I knew I had one, but I wasn't allowing myself to listen to it. I was just surviving. I was just existing however I needed to cause as little turmoil and chaos around me as possible. And that's something that queer people learn to do at a very young age.

That minute you are told no when you are expressing yourself authentically, that's when you learn, okay, well, I cannot trust myself then. So I'm gonna trust everyone around me first. I'm gonna prioritize what they want from me. And then I will do whatever I need to do [laughs lightly] to exist without conflict.

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

And I think I've been really, really trying to prioritize my voice these days. And since I have, my world has changed completely [laughs lightly]. It's been honestly a miracle.

Shohreh:

I think the other piece of that is how we are taught, especially women, especially marginalized folks, that ego is a bad thing. And that, like, any semblance of confidence is ego. And I've definitely told this story before on the podcast, but I have this distinct memory of someone when I was growing up—a high school boy, of course—who said to me that my ego could fill a room. And he said this, you know, as an insult. And I joke about it now and I'm like, but he wasn't thinking big enough. Like, my ego could fill a stadium. My ego could fill the fucking solar system. And that is not a bad thing.

And I found myself so often, growing up, having this push-pull of like, I was, like, confident. And I loved so much of what I was about. But the world kept telling me, like, no, no, no, you can't be that. You can't do that. You can't say that. And so it was such an internal conflict for me at that time. And being like, oh, well, you know, I'm supposed to be, like, demure and, like, a good little girl.

And coming into adulthood, especially in queerness, and being like, no. Like, I am allowed to feel myself. I am allowed to show up and know what I'm worth and what I have to offer. And if that is scary for people, well, again, they can go away. I don't need you in my life.

Ty:

Yes! And that is exactly it, what you just said. It's knowing your worth. You know, people will see someone who knows their worth and they

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

will label that as ego or narcissism. But me knowing my worth, I'm not saying that I think I am better than you—

Shohreh: Yes!

Ty: —I'm just saying I know I am worthy. That is the difference. Narcissists think [laughs lightly]—well, narcissists also, they don't really, like, feel much empathy. But there's a lot of levels to that. I think that narrative, that knowing that you are amazing is a bad thing is a way to keep people from their power. From stepping into their power. And we have all been trained to fear our own power.

All of these structures of society are literally built to keep people from their power. To keep us small. To keep us tamed. To keep us in our lanes. Because society thinks that's how we will function better is if we are tamed. And nuh-uh. No, no more of that. 'Cause it's causing unnecessary suffering. And, like, those folks who have taken bold action to claim their power, to claim their truth, to break free from these oppressive structures, we have learned that that is rewarded. Maybe not on a structural level, but on a universal level.

The world will respond. The world will truly bring you gifts when you act from that place of power. And there will be people [laughs lightly] who will be afraid of it. And there will be people who will try to shut that down. And that is a projection of their own fear of their own power. It's hard to remember that in those moments because it triggers that little kid who is told no. But I always remind myself, when there's someone online who is, like, you know, making a nasty comment, I'm like, this is a

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

reflection of how they are speaking to themselves. And that is sad. They need my love just as much as everyone else.

Shohreh: Oh, yes. And with the worth piece as well, what's so interesting to me is that for marginalized folks especially, for those of us who have gone through the hell that was required to be confident in a world that tells us that we shouldn't be and we're not allowed to be, like, there has been a lot of self-trust that has to be part of that—a lot of self-awareness. And so I never see, like, for the most part, marginalized folks being confident about things they have no business being confident about. Versus, you look at, like, cishet white men who are overly confident about fucking everything.

Ty: [Laughs lightly] Yes!

Shohreh: And nobody tells them to be less confident, when in reality, maybe they could be less confident about things they have no business being confident about.

Ty: Right! It is because, like, we are used to seeing those people in power. So whether or not they're expressing themselves from a place of power, or if they are claiming power that isn't necessarily theirs, we don't question it. Because we are used to seeing that.

Shohreh: Yes.

Ty: We, you know, of course we're questioning it [laughs lightly]. We're like, wait, [light laughter] maybe not that—I don't know if you did that [laughs lightly].

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

Shohreh: Yeah, we're used to seeing it, but that doesn't mean that we want that to be the reality going forward.

Ty: Exactly.

Shohreh: Actively trying to change that so it's not the reality anymore.

Ty: Right.

Shohreh: And this is actually a good segue into your content because I was doing a refresher of all your delightful videos when I was preparing for this interview., and the one that's currently stuck in my head that I sent to a few friends is the one where you are in that [laughs lightly]—you're in that, like, amazing, like, black bunny stockings, and you're, like, "Nicole Scherzinger, who?" That's what I'm thinking of in this moment. Because I'm just like, in that you are just, like, feeling yourself. And, like, that energy is palpable. And I just—I love that.

I love that you are bringing that to the internet. And so much else to the internet. I mean, there's so much variety in your content in terms of being educational and being affirming and giving pep talks, both as yourself and as various characters.

Ty: Yes.

Shohreh: You're just such a bright light of the internet. And I'm wondering what it has been like for you, like, being a known person on the internet and developing these platforms.

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

Ty: Aw, thanks for saying all that [laughs lightly]. You know, it honestly has been so remarkable. And of course, under that, it's not all so clean and feel good [Shohreh laughs lightly] because there's a lot of mess online.

And, ultimately, it has been truly just so special to—you know, I started making content out of craving validation and community. I was making videos because I needed to hear the things that I was saying. That's exactly the place that I come from with all of my content.

And you know, that gender euphoria moment [laughs lightly], you know, the "When I grow up I wanna be me, bitch! I wanna be me," it is just me sharing this new gift of gender euphoria that I have been kept from my entire life. And to have a direction for it, it helps me lean into it more. You know, for me to be able to put my phone down, and even though it's literally me alone, there is an entire community of people who resonate with my joy. Who resonate with my love and my worth. And it is the greatest gift.

The first video I ever made was me reenacting a conversation that I have had many times at various drive-thrus in the pandemic [Shohreh laughs lightly] where, you know, it's those people who have good intentions and still cause harm with microaggressions.

Shohreh: Oh yes.

Ty: And just are trying so hard to get it right but get it so wrong. And I was like, in those moments when I'm misgendered—it was also very new for me because I came out during the pandemic. Or right before the pandemic. So it was like, oh wow, I'm non-binary, and then I was locked

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

in my room for, like, [Shohreh laughs lightly] five weeks. I literally didn't leave my room. It was very much a cocoon moment.

So when I was starting to, you know, brave it and go to the drive-thru, I was like, oh! I was experiencing getting misgendered for the first time. And I was like, wow, in those moments, I freeze. I cower. I don't know what to say. Because it's so confronting for me, and I feel alone because no one else is aware of it. I was like, okay, let me go home and recreate this conversation and say exactly what I wish I had the courage to say in that moment.

And so I completely recreated the conversation, and it went exactly how I dreamed it went in my mind, and people loved it. I found catharsis through making that video, and other folks were able to share that same catharsis. And that's what I think is so beautiful about social media and so beautiful about what parts of myself have been validated and supported and successful on social media. Is that it is my moments of catharsis that people can resonate with and they can share that same catharsis.

It's beautiful. It's magic. Because that is what community is, I believe. It is sharing common ground. Feeling together. Loving together. And the fact that I have been able to find that through a social media platform was very unexpected. I'm so grateful, truly.

Shohreh:

So, over the course of the pandemic for me, two things happened. One, I discovered TikTok. Two, I came out as gay at 31 years old. And those two things are related. Because TikTok, with its incredible algorithm,

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

like, immediately pinned me as gay [laughter], and like, started showing me, like, all of this late bloomer lesbian content. And I was like, wow, this resonates. [Shouting] Oh god! What does that mean? This is kind of terrifying!

But I saw other people who were going through the same things and other people who were further along than me. You know, I had to go through a whole-ass divorce and uproot my entire life to be able to live my truth in this moment now, today. And at the time, that was, like, the most terrifying thing that I could think of. And these random strangers on the internet are something that helped me through it with their content.

Ty: Right. That is so true and beautiful. And it's really a gift. Like, social media has given us the opportunity to choose who is visible, and that is power, you know, that we do not realize how much space we can take up until we see someone else claiming it.

Shohreh: Yes!

Ty: And we don't see parts in ourselves until we see it reflected back to us. This is why representation is so important. And you know, I went through a very similar experience. I learned that I was non-binary by seeing people who I resonated with, who I saw myself in, who claimed this label. Who found liberation in this label. And once I claimed it, it freed me. And I wouldn't have found that part of myself until I saw it reflected back to me in another human.

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

I feel like the theme is very much community. That is the gift of true community, is that when we claim our power, and we step in our light, and we explore and acknowledge all the many colors of our spirit, of our identity, and we express ourselves from that place, we pay that forward. We allow people the ability to see themselves in us.

And that is the greatest gift because it's a gift I received and one that I want to give and one I hope that person will give and give and give and give. And it's just—it's just a full circle of gift giving [laughs]. It's Christmas!

Shohreh: It is Christmas! Oh my gosh.

Ty: Every day!

Shohreh: Every day it is Christmas. For all of the shittiness of being a content creator and being on the internet and all of that stuff—'cause like you said, it is not all sunshine and rainbows; unfortunately, there is definitely a dark underbelly there—but the reason that I keep showing up is exactly what you said, is that I know that I am playing that role for other people that there were people who played that role for me. And I know because people tell me. And because it is just this incredible thing to be able to give people.

Because sometimes I'm like, it would be really cool if I could just, like, get off the internet and go live under a rock and nobody knew who I was anymore.

Ty: [Laughs lightly] Yes.

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

Shohreh: Especially, like, I was like going out and starting dating and stuff like that, and I was like, this is so weird 'cause someone can Google me and oh my god, they can find out, like, way too much about my life, which is terrifying.

Ty: [Laughs lightly] Yeah, the nooks and crannies!

Shohreh: Exactly. But I'm like, but, the reason I do this is because the gift that I'm able to give is just so beautiful and powerful to others. And in a similar vein, I was thinking about how you were saying, like, those moments of gender euphoria that you've shared with other people because it resonates with them, like, I wear a lot of queer clothes, whether that's, you know, like, t-shirts—I'm literally wearing a t-shirt right now that says Queer AF in rainbow letters.

Ty: Love.

Shohreh: And you know, some people kind of make fun of it. Or they do the whole, you know, you're making your whole personality gay thing, which is a whole other conversation. But for me, it's similar. It's like, it took me so long to get here. It took me so long to, like, truly discover and step into my queerness that, like, of course I am going to, like, euphorically share it with the whole fucking world in whatever fashion feels good for me. I don't care if you think I wear too many gay shirts. I'm gonna keep doin' it!

Ty: Yes! Of course, I feel that so hard. Like, the minute that I discovered the truth that I had been kept from about myself, my identity, my spirit, I was like, okay, I gotta catch up [laughs]. So I'm going to leap into pride.

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

I'm going to wear my identity on my sleeve. Because I am just so happy to have found myself.

You know, it is why pride month is called Pride Month. Because it is the antidote to our internalized shame—is excessive pride. It's necessary. Because we have been taught and shown to feel shame about who we are. About the truth of how we love and who and the quality of our love.

And, you know, I believe one antidote to shame is love. Is pure love for ourselves. And if that looks like wearing a Queer AF shirt—I literally have a queer hat that is right next to me that I wear very often—then so be it. [Laughs lightly] You know, we deserve merch at the very least.

Shohreh: Damn right we do! [Laughter] And it should be free!

Ty: It should be! Honestly, who's having that conversation?

Shohreh: My favorite TikToks during Pride Month were, there were several of these that I saw where people were like, pretending to go into stores and, like, taking items. And the sales clerk is, like, excuse me, ma'am, why are you taking that? [Ty laughs lightly] And they're like, oh, well, it's Pride Month. And they're like, and? So it's free. So I'm gonna take this [laughs lightly].

Ty: Right.

Shohreh: And I'm like, that's exactly what it should be. I was like, for everything we've all been through, I was like, everything should just be fuckin' free during Pride Month.

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

Ty: [Laughs] Agreed. Like, if you're gonna capitalize on my identity, the least you can do is give me a free t-shirt, like.

Shohreh: Exactly, exactly. [Laughter] Well, you talked about too, like, that in claiming your truth, that that set you free. And I feel very similarly to you in that. And you also talk about, and I love this, that it is never too late to claim your truth. Because I think that is so important to reiterate to people.

Because so often folks are like, I'm too old, I'm married, it doesn't matter—like all these different things that they're just like, what is the point? Like, what is the point? And I'm like, there is always a point to digging deeper into yourself. Whether you're queer or not, right? Like, I think you also talk about how this work isn't just for queer and trans folks. Like, everybody can benefit from doing this deep soul searching and learning more about who they are.

Ty: Absolutely. Like, it is so true. It is never too late to come back to yourself. The thing is, you can't keep running away from yourself. That's the alternative, you know? People think that the only time we can discover ourselves is, like, in our youth or in our twenties, and then it gets to a point where it's like, this is who I am and this is who I will always be. But that is not true. That will never happen. Who I am today will not be who I am in, honestly, an hour [laughs].

Shohreh: Seriously.

Ty: Or like, ten years. I want to give myself the grace to expand and to understand who I am in every moment. Because that's all that exists is

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

who we are right now. And so many people have been taught to ignore their voice of intuition. And that—and I believe our voice of intuition is where we hold our power. And that’s the voice behind our thoughts.

You know, earlier we were talking about ego. And you know, the way I understand ego is not in, you know, a conflated sense of, like, confidence, but it’s in this identification with your thoughts. And that’s some Eckhart Tolle. I’ve read a lot of Eckhart Tolle.

Shohreh: Love it.

Ty: Yes. It’s this prioritization of the superficial. I believe the thoughts exist on the same plane as physical things. But when you dis-identify with your thoughts, realize you are not your thoughts—"I am the being behind my thoughts"—there is this deeper knowing that doesn’t exist in the form of thoughts, but it exists in the form of deep, deep guttural feeling of just knowing. And that is where I found my identity. That’s where I found myself.

And everyone has that voice. Everyone has that identity. The thing is queer people exist in a world and are forced to create a shell of ourselves that mutes that voice of intuition. And everyone learns to mute it in some way. And our queerness, the fact that it is identity, our love, that breaks us free from those things that kept us from our voice of intuition.

And that’s why I think, you know, this—queer people, the reason why people are so confronted by my existence is because I am proof of what they have been avoiding. I am proof that there is freedom from the

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

structures that they don't even realize are oppressing them because they just accept that this is just the way things are.

But queer people learned that the way things are is not true for me, so I'm going to question everything [laughs lightly]. I'm going to follow what is right for me. The whole world is at my disposal. I walk into a store and I am not told where to go, I go where I want to go, you know? I go where what colors resonate with me. Honestly, I spend a lot of time in the kids' section at Target buying jewelry [laughs lightly].

Shohreh: Oh yeah.

Ty: Yeah, because it's so colorful. It's me. But people, you know, the experience of the gender binary in our society is a traumatic experience, and people don't realize because it is not, like, a car crash, or like an unexpected loss. It is a series of tiny, tiny traumas growing up. Of being told no. Of when you are feeling free and expressive of being told, you should not be free.

And we internalize that. We say, okay, okay, okay, and we make ourselves smaller, and smaller, and smaller. And we create an identity, a shell of ourselves, that functions—that we've been told will function and thrive and survive within the structures of society. But that keeps us from our truth. From that deeper knowing that brings us the gifts.

When we act upon that deeper knowing, we get gifts. I'm tellin' ya, I get gifts [laughs lightly]. It is magical. Even if it is a butterfly that flies across the window, I'm able to actually feel it because I'm connected to more than just my mind. I'm connected to my body, my spirit, my love.

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

And I want that for everyone because everyone has it. It's there. And you can avoid it for years. Everyone hears the voice. It's whispering to them at every moment of every day. And ignoring the voice is where suffering comes from. So this liberation, this movement [laughs lightly], you know, it's about the end of suffering. It is.

Shohreh:

And like you said, it's—we all have this power. And like, we are being sent gifts constantly. But when you're so deep into what other people want you to be and what other people think of you and you're not tuned into yourself, you just don't see them. You don't notice that butterfly that flies across in your path because you're too consumed thinking about, like, oh, how do I look in this outfit? And is someone gonna say something mean to me? And all these other pieces because we live in an oppressive culture with all these different systems that are putting us down.

Ty:

Yes.

Shohreh:

And I wanna be clear, like, it is no one's fault that they are struggling to not be able to hear their own voice. I mean, it's literally why I do the work that I do, and I connect it to these systems of oppression of, like, none of us chooses to not know ourselves, at least not initially. Like, we're taught that. We're taught that there is only one way. And we have to stay in that way.

And this is where that fear comes up for people like you were saying. Like, the reason people who can step into their power scare other

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

people is because what it says to them is that, hey, I used to be locked up like you, and I actually freed myself. And that means that you could free yourself too. And that is so terrifying for people that they get mean, right?

Ty: Yes.

Shohreh: Or they ignore you, they don't wanna see you. Because that truth, it's like, too raw and painful for people of, like, wait, I could set myself free too? But what would that mean? And what does that mean about the fact that I've stayed here when I could've let myself go.

Ty: Right. Absolutely. It's a very confronting thing for folks. And I remember what that feels like. Because I remember seeing gender non-conforming people and having a visceral negative reaction. It wasn't that I thought they were less worthy or, I don't know, but I remember thinking that feminine men were unattractive. I remember feeling that way. And I realized that it was a projection of my learned self-hatred.

And everyone in some way is taught that something about them is wrong. Something about them is outside of the norm. When we are perfect. We are! So we are supposed to be. And this idea, this feeling of lack, that one thing—and I know everyone listening will think about that one thing that makes them feel like they are less than—that is your power. To, tapping into that is what will connect you to wholeness.

What the world tells you is wrong about you is the thing that will help you step into your power. That's why they're telling you it's wrong.

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

Because if everyone claims their power, they think, oh, there won't be room for us people at the top. Us people who created these structures.

But the truth is, there's infinite space for us to claim our power. The universe doesn't work like that. Space is infinite. [Laughs lightly] There's room for us all to take up space. And this idea that if one person takes up space that it takes away space for me, that's capitalism speaking [laughs].

Shohreh: Yes. Scarcity mindset. 100%.

Ty: Yes.

Shohreh: That's really what it is. I mean, it's the same reason that people hold power in general, right? Is because there's this idea that there's just only so much to go around and if I let other people be successful, or if I help other people, or if other people are allowed to be their authentic selves, then there's less for me. And that is a mindset we all—we have to get away from.

And some of the great work of my adult life has been being more generous with other people. Giving people the benefit of the doubt and not going into what I've been taught, which is to judge other people. To judge them harshly, to doubt them, to assume that they have, you know, my worst possible interests at heart. Or that people are naturally gonna come for me. Or, like, take things from me.

Which is not to say there aren't people out there like that. But it just changes the way that you see the world and that you interact with

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

people. And then it changes the way that you see yourself. Because when you can be generous with others, it is easier to be generous with yourself. When you can give other people the benefit of the doubt, you can give your own body the benefit of the doubt. And that is something that we are not taught to do.

Ty: So true. And even, like, you know, celebrating another person's success as your own. That is something that we have access to doing even though we've been taught to think otherwise. And imagine, though. Think about how many parties we would be having [laughs lightly]. Life would be a huge party! [Laughs lightly] If we just celebrated success. And I see that so hard.

I love what you said about the more grace we show other people the more grace we can show ourselves. Because even now, you know, like, I talk a lot about stepping into your power and claiming your truth, I think that is a forever journey. It's not, like, a landing spot.

Shohreh: Correct.

Ty: Like, I haven't found it and I have been here forever. Like, there is still so much more that, like, I'm de-webbing. Once you peel back one layer, there's another layer there. And that goes on forever. You know, the destination is the choice to keep peeling back the layers.

And at the same time, you know, I've been hearing this narrative that's been very helpful for me, realizing that sometimes that journey of constantly trying to better ourselves can create this idea that there is always something wrong. But we are right as we are right now. We

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

won't grow and heal by hating the parts of ourselves that are unfavorable. Actually, we will grow and heal by showing love and compassion to those parts of ourselves. By asking, hm, like, why do you feel that way?

Or, you know, no one is, like, 100% clean and perfect and love and joy, you know? Like, we wouldn't know love and joy and happiness if we didn't know sadness and anger and jealousy. These things exist because the other exists. Because those unfavorable things exist. So how could we show ourselves more love in those moments?

Shohreh: Right. Because even though we are in this constant state of becoming and going deeper with ourselves as humans, a big piece of this is also about seeing ourselves in our wholeness.

Ty: Yes.

Shohreh: And there is no perfect human, right?

Ty: [Laughs lightly] Yes.

Shohreh: I think we all have this idea in our minds of, I wish I was this, and I wish I was that, and I wish I was this. And it's like, then you wouldn't be you. And sure, there are things you might wanna work on and improve on 'cause it makes your life better, it makes your relationships better, and that's wonderful. But at the same time, don't lose sight of who you are and all the different contradictions and nuances to who you are as a person.

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

And I also like to frame this as, we can't constantly be bettering ourselves, like, in every moment, because when we do that, we can't integrate what we've already learned. We don't actually give ourselves time to, like, let that stuff soak up into our brains if we keep piling on new information and new information. And so it is good sometimes to step back and give yourself time with these things. And it's okay, you don't have to, like, always be readin' the book, doin' the thing, going to the therapy. Like, sometimes we need intentional breaks.

Ty:

Yes. I don't need to be anywhere else other than where I am at right now. And actually, like, that freedom, that surrender, will open us up to what we are looking for. I really believe that. And I see this healer who is amazing and she gave me this perspective the other week where she was talking about when she was a kid and there was this toy, and you know, where you, like, put the square block in the square hole. And you know, like, she said she was trying to put the square block in the circle hole and her dad said, don't force it, it'll break. And she said she carried that with her always.

And also, the addition to that is you still need slight pressure.

Shohreh:

Yes.

Ty:

You still need slight pressure to get it in there. And I've been carrying that with me for so long because I tend to muscle my way through everything [laughter]—through my content creation, through even my

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

healing. What if I just put slight pressure? It does not need to feel like crazy work. It just has to be consistent.

Shohreh: Yeah, there's something to be said for allowing ourselves ease and spaciousness, and it's something I've really struggled with, especially as someone who runs my own business, who does make content and all these other things, where it's really easy to fall into that forcing. And to feel like I've gotta do it and I've gotta do it this way and this time.

And I've found that the less that I do that and the more that I just kind of try to create space, like, the more creative that I am, the easier that things feel, the more I can get into some kind of natural flow. And it's hard because it feels like the exact opposite of what you should be doing.

Ty: Definitely.

Shohreh: Like, we really have convinced ourselves, it's like no, the solution is always to just, like, work harder and pound yourself into the ground and you can rest once you've done that. And really, we have to flip that. Like, the rest needs to happen in order for us to show up the way we want to show up in these various spaces.

Ty: So true. I hear that so hard. It's hard, especially when you're working for yourself.

Shohreh: 'Cause it never ends [laughs lightly].

Ty: I feel that. Yeah, exactly. Like, I so often will just be in a constant state of, like, half working. Where I will just, you know, like [laughs lightly] be

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

in and out, in and out, in and out, instead of—and recently I’ve been trying to, like, set time for myself where I’m like, I’m going to work here, I’m going to commit myself to working this much, get this much done, and also show myself grace if I don’t get that much done or get more done, so that way I can then put it away and rest. I can release it and come back to, like, all of the other parts of life [laughs lightly] outside of work.

Shohreh: And that’s something I’ve struggled with for years, for like, you know, the four and a half years that I’ve started running my business. And it’s really been this year, and even in the last few months, that I’ve started to very seriously be like, nope, we can’t do this anymore. Being a workaholic’s not working for me. This is not what I want for my life, and now I need to change it.

And I think that it’s hard because sometimes, you just have to wait until you get to that point where you’re ready to do something about it.

Ty: Yeah.

Shohreh: And you can look at something and be like, I don’t like it, I’m not sure about it, and want to change, but until you get to that point where you’re like, okay, I feel that I am actually ready to do this, or something happens that kind of nudges you in that direction, then you struggle. Because I’m thinking too about people who are listening right now who are like, well, I’m so glad for you, Ty and Shohreh, that you’ve been able to, you know, set yourselves free and have this truth, but, like, what about me? I’m terrified to do that. What do I do?

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

Ty: Right. I think there's this fear that some of us hold that we are inherently lazy. Or that we aren't good enough. That we need to manipulate ourselves in order to accomplish what we have been told is worthy of celebration or worthy of the title of success. And I think what's been helping me is realizing that just being is a form of success [laughs lightly]. We are not just what we do. We are who we are, what we are.

Like, if we think about other ways that we are successful. I have so many successful friendships in my life. I have so many, like, successful, like, creative skills. Instead of quantifying our worthiness by our work, allowing us to work from that home base of already being enough, of already being a success. And I think sometimes it is that pressure of creating something successful that keeps us from just surrendering into what already is. which is that we are whole. We are a success.

Shohreh: And I think the surrendering is terrifying. I want to name that for people because if you're out there and you're like, I think I know what my truth is, and, like, I want to go into that, but, like, this, this, this and this thing will happen if I do that, like, I get that. Again, I blew up my entire life in the last two years and it was terrifying in every way possible, and, like, a lot of the things I was worried about did happen and a lot of things I was worried about didn't happen. And at the end of the day for me, it's what you said—it was about me being like, you know what? If this is who I am, if this is me as a whole person, then I owe it to myself to step into a life that supports that person instead of staying in a life that supports the person that I thought I was supposed to be.

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

Ty: Mm, absolutely. I've also had a lot of conversations with folks who are not out to certain people in their lives. Mostly it's family, usually. People online will say to me: I don't know how to come out to my family. And I think there is this glorification, too—and I'm also guilty of it sometimes because I just have seen how claiming my truth has brought me so much joy and power—and there is this glorification of it that sort of can erase all of the complexities of the truth of how that actually exists in real life.

And I try to remind people that I really do believe that we are always—everyone is doing the best they can. Even if it isn't the best you could, it's the best you can. And that is enough.

And not coming out to certain people in your life if you feel like it's going to bring you harm, protecting yourself in that way, is an act of self-love which should be celebrated as well. It is a boundary that is so valid. And everyone is worthy and deserving of setting healthy boundaries that will allow them to just baseline get through the day.

Of course there is this higher self that we are chasing. And we also deserve to show ourselves grace if we aren't quite there yet. Because like we said, like, it's that shadow work. It's realizing that I am complete. I am whole. I am deserving of stepping into my power. And, at the same time, I am whole as I am right now.

Shohreh: And there's no one right truth as well.

Ty: [Laughs lightly] True, yes.

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

Shohreh: For some people, being out to everybody and making TikToks about it and everything else that we do, like, that's the dream. This is the, like, I'm living it. This is what I want. But that is not what everybody wants or needs to feel like they are living their authentic life and what feels good for them.

Ty: Right.

Shohreh: And like you said, for some people, like, coming out to certain people in their lives is gonna cause them more harm. And yes, there's a sadness and a grief that comes with that, but at the end of the day, it's about making the choices that are best for you and most affirming for you and not doing necessarily what someone else would do.

And this is in pieces, too. Like, I had many, many, many steps along the journey to get to the Shohreh that I am today, including that I originally came out as bisexual several years back before I continued my exploration, figured out that, no, actually, I'm gay, and went down that path. So, like we were talking about, the change is always happening, and it's okay—you can take some steps in the direction you wanna go, and if you just keep feeling into your body and what feels good and what's the next step, that's how we do it. You just keep tuning in. Because as we tune out, that's where we get off the path that we wanna go on.

But you don't have to do it all at once. You don't have to, like, freakin' pole vault yourself to the place you wanna go. 'Cause that could just be, like, too much, and could destroy everything.

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

Ty: Yeah, that's not healthy either, you know [laughs lightly]. Like, I think, like, it's just really showing ourselves that grace. And it's that positive self-talk, too. You know, it's easy to, like, beat ourselves up when we didn't do what we know would be great for us. But I choose to believe that if it's the choice I made, then it's what was supposed to happen. And only we can know what is right for us in each moment. And even if we are not acting from that place of truth at every moment, I believe that there was a reason there.

Shohreh: Yeah, the vast majority of humans don't do things for no reason, completely irrationally. When we make choices, it's because it is what we need or want in some way in that moment. And in hindsight, sometimes we can be really hard on ourselves 'cause we're like, why didn't you get this sooner?

Ty: Yeah.

Shohreh: Why couldn't you figure this out? Like, I totally was that way with myself with even coming out. Like, how could I not know this about myself, right? And beating myself up about it. And the reality is that, like, there's a billion reasons that I didn't know this about myself. Most of them have nothing to do with me and everything to do with society and the family that I grew up in and all these other pieces. And so I can't fault for myself for the fact that I didn't know what I didn't know.

Ty: Right.

Shohreh: I had nothing to compare it to. And that's my journey and that's just how it went. And there's this piece of, like, lamenting, like, what could

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

have been, sure. But at the end of the day, like you were saying, like, I made the best choices that I could make at the time with the information I had and what was available to me. And I'm gonna keep doing that.

So for people who are looking back and thinking, like, ugh, god, why didn't I do this sooner? Like, I get it. And also, you did it as soon as you could.

Ty: Yes. And I am here now. And really, that's all that exists. The rest is that we are making up in our heads. You know, it happened, and it's not happening right now. The reason why it feels like it is is because we are actively thinking about it. And I think a good thing to do is to question—like, to see where you are right now. And ask yourself, am I content with where I am right now? What is it that I would like to change? And then ask yourself, is that something that I can control?

If the answer is no, how could you switch to a gratitude mindset? If the answer is yes, ask yourself, what could I do to change what I am not happy with right now? And then slight pressure.

Shohreh: Slight pressure. One baby step at a time.

Ty: It doesn't have to be a giant—yes! It doesn't have to be this, like, you know—and sometimes though, like, a giant declaration or a leap is rewarded and is a positive thing, and I believe we do not have to force those. Those usually come out of necessity.

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

Like, me, like, coming out and changing my name and changing my pronouns and claiming my truth loud and proud, it felt like a giant leap, and I had no other choice.

Shohreh: And people couldn't see the baby steps behind the scenes that got you there. People could only see that big moment. And that's the thing, is it's like, even though yes, it was a big thing, you did it all at once, you had years and years of work and figuring yourself out and all of these things you had to do to get to that point.

Ty: So true. Like, I'd been climbing up that mountain for a long time for me to be able to take that leap. That is so true.

Shohreh: Oh my goodness. Ty, it is so good talking to you. This has just been such a lovely conversation. There's so much good stuff in here. There's, like, so many quotes I can just pull out of this. [Ty laughs lightly] You're so profound. Like, I cannot wait to share this with folks.

Thank you, again, for being here. How can people find you on the interwebs? And is there anything in particular my listeners can do to best support you at this time?

Ty: So, um, yeah. You can find me on TikTok and Instagram @mx.deran. Follow me! Join the fam! And to support me, I think doing what you can to support yourself, that's truly what I want for everyone listening. Because when one of us thrives, we all do. I really do believe that.

Conjuring Up Courage

#111

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Ty Deran

Shohreh: Yes, and your content will definitely help people get there. 'Cause I want everyone to go follow you on all platforms because it's just a delight. It's a delight everyone. Do it.

Ty: This has been such a healing conversation. Thanks so much, Shohreh.

Shohreh: Thank you.

[Music plays]

And that's our show for today. If you're enjoying Conjuring Up Courage, don't forget to subscribe through your podcast provider of choice so you never miss an episode. Additionally, if you haven't left a rating and review in the Apple Podcasts app yet, you can do so from any Apple device to help more people find and benefit from the show. I also love hearing from listeners, so feel free to take a screenshot from your podcast player, post on social media, and tag me. My username is @ShohrehDavoodi on all platforms. Finally, you can sign up for my email newsletter, The Sunday Share, and get more details about how to work with me by going to ShohrehDavoodi.com. Thank you so much for listening, and I hope you'll join me for the next episode.

[Music fades]