

# Hummingbird Humanity

an LGBTQ+ owned business

## Conversations of Hope, Heart, and the Human Spirit with Eduardo Placer

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**Brian McComak:** So, hi everyone. Welcome. Thank you Angelo and Eduardo for keeping me on track. Hi everyone. Thanks for being here today for our first live event of "Hope, Heart and the Human Spirit." I'm so excited for that you are able to be here and I'm really grateful for the enthusiasm. Hopefully, you'll have a great session with us this afternoon. I am delighted to be joined by two of my dear friends. They both happen to be gay men. I promise in future sessions we'll have other representation from around the room. So I wanna just mention Angelo first, who will be behind the scenes. You wanna say hi, Angelo?

**Angelo Cilia:** Hi, everyone. Happy to be here.

**Brian McComak:** Angelo and I used to sing in the New York City Gay Men's Chorus together. And so, he's going to be our radio podcast, producer host. So he's going to monitor the chat, so Eduardo and I can really focus on the conversation and he may interrupt us to share themes that are coming up in the chat thread or questions that you have. So feel free to use the chat thread as much as you want and Angelo will be helping to keep Eduardo and I on track. So I just wanted to say just a couple words about why I started Hummingbird Humanity. I have spent 20 years in human resources and in diversity and inclusion, and I have this belief that companies should put their people first and that putting people first is really the core of success for any business. I also think that to do that, we have to start with the stories of those humans and those people that are part of those companies and organizations. So that's what this series is all about, is the hope, heart and human spirit of those people that work in corporate America, work in the organizations around the world and to hear their stories and see how that might influence how we architect our new normal and what the workplace will look like as we move out of the pandemic. So, that's why I've invited my dear friend, Eduardo, who's been a wonderful champion for me and an amazing human. So Eduardo, do you wanna share a little bit about yourself?

**Eduardo Placer:** Yas! There were so many things to yas about in your sharing, Brian, before just acknowledging you for the courage like I did offline, but will do so online. I just love already the ways in which people have been responding to your own humanity. You were just being vulnerable and it's just being real. We're just trying to be people on the planet. So I can already see that in the people who've been joining us and how they are loving you through this launch and just the courage to be someone on the planet with an idea and giving birth to it right now. So it's just so powerful. So thank you for channeling your own hope, heart and human spirit in a context that allows other people to find their own connection to that in these times.

**Brian McComak:** Thanks, Eduardo.

**Eduardo Placer:** So my name is Eduardo Placer.

**Brian McComak:** I have to say before you go into that. So the reason today is happening is because Eduardo and I, two weeks ago had a conversation. He's been my mentor as I've been getting ready to make this launch and he said, "Brian, you're ready. Go, go do it." So I just wanna say thank you, Eduardo.

**Eduardo Placer:** You're welcome.

**Brian McComak:** So please, please introduce yourself.

**Eduardo Placer:** So, my name is Eduardo Placer. I have the privilege of being the founder of Fearless Communicators. We are an inclusive, diverse, public-speaking coaching business and we work with thought leaders on what they say and how they say it. And the root of my passion and commitment to that is in relationship to my own silencing and my own relationship with myself and with my voice. And that comes from the trauma of being a gay kid growing up in Miami, Florida. And I grew up, I was born in 1977, grew up in the '80s, went to high school in the late '80s, early '90s, and knew inherently from a very early age, that the only way that I could survive was about lying about who I was. And I didn't really get the impact of that until recently, but to reflect on what does it mean to be a liar for the first 18 years of my life? When everything around you, I went to Jesuit Prep School. I went to Catholic education, it's like one of the 10 Commandments, do not tell a lie. I feel like every teacher, be honest, tell the truth, that when you tell the truth, it's very powerful to tell the truth. And yet, there was this inner knowing survival mechanism that said your community, your family, the people around you can't handle the truth. The truth would shatter everything. And I held it. I held onto that belief and I came out at 18. I was in college. I had the privilege of going to the University of Pennsylvania and then started my journey to kind of realigning and reassessing, like, who is this person? That's always been inside, but now that I've given voice to the truth right now, how do I start learning how to manage and be with that truth? And that trauma is still with me. I am a gay man who's been out for over 20 years. And the homophobia of the world around me is completely internalized. And there is probably no greater homophobe to myself than me and that is something that I am like navigating and in relationship with, as I continue to develop in my own life. And what I discovered, the statistic is that 75% of people suffer from speech anxiety. And I believe that everybody else lies. And I think there is some root trauma or some fear or some shame that we are all navigating. Some lies, some covering up that we fear the truth. An audience sees right through us and we feel like we have to perform something other than who we are in order to show up. And that's what I'm out to dispel. I am committed that people show up as they are in whatever body they have, in whatever voice that they have to communicate in service of the people who they're speaking to. And I feel so much of public speaking training is about knowing your thing and then looking good. Who the hell cares? Do you know what I mean? I just want someone who's a person who is up there, committed that I get something out of it. That's what I want. And I think that there are ways in which the ways we teach performance, the ways we teach speaking, the way we teach leadership are inherently patriarchal and colonial. And we're taught to perform professionalism, which is not necessarily in alignment with our authentic expression. And I'm really curious, and I'm really interested in how diverse voices and diverse bodies show up as they are to speak their truth.

**Brian McComak:** I have so-

**Eduardo Placer:** That was a lot.

**Brian McComak:** That was a lot and I have so many things I wanna respond to. Well, first of all, I know I saw a couple of the comments pop up on my screen. And one I read said thank you for being so vulnerable. So I would like to say that and express that as well. I'm a big believer as I know you are in that vulnerability, that authenticity, that honesty and openness is so essential in the work that we do today. And there's so much I relate to there. I went back into the closet when I started my first job in H.R., because I didn't think I could be successful and be me. And one of the jobs that I had, I went every day and I tried to be the person they wanted me to be. And I would go to therapy every week and I would talk to my therapist and say, they want me to assimilate. I'm not who they want me to be. And I struggled so much every day of trying to be the person and the definition of what they wanted me to be. And it was damaging to my spirit and I wanna live in a place where we can be ourselves when we go to work. And I'm sure that there are a lot of people in this call who resonate with that feeling and that desire. And I'm curious, as you've taken your journey and you've switched careers and of your life journey to say, to find your voice and your way of being of service. How did that transpire for you so you can be yourself and do work you love and make a difference in the world?

**Eduardo Placer:** What's so funny because of course, for someone who, for the first 18 years of his life lied and tried to perform a version of myself that was lovable and accepted, what I aspired to be more than anything in my life was an actor, where I would get paid to put on costumes and live in a world where men sing and dance, which was my aspiration. And I think that Angelo, you and, I hear there are gay men's chorus. People that are probably on this would probably suffer from an acute condition that I call show tinnitus, which is the, the show tune is strong in this young pedal one. I'm an identical twin and my brother's straight. And when we were twins playing with toys, my brother played war with the G.I. Joes, and I played ♪ Whoa, ♪ the musical and my characters had monologues. So as you were talking about going to see your therapist, I was thinking on a clear day, you can sing forever. Like I was totally in like show tune land. But to ground you back into that moment, for me, the discovery, like I became an actor because that's what I wanted to be more than anything in my entire life. That was not something that my community and the ecosystem that I was in I felt supported me in. So went to college, played by the rules and then when I finished college, moved to New York and I said, I played by everybody's rules, and now I'm gonna do what I wanna do. I wanna be an actor. And I think what is inherent in that has always been a curiosity in human beings. And I think because there was a part of me and I'm gonna speak from my experience, and I don't believe, I'm not gonna say that this is true, you know, sitting ex cathedra, as the Catholic or lapsed Catholic, and very lapsed is I think that as a survival mechanism, I had to look and see and observe to see if a space or a person was safe. So there was this an ECU, like a tuning that I think just always had me vibrate at in the key of human being. Right? So I was constantly assessing, is this or? So, because of that, I just think I was, my mom used to call me orejitas, right, so I'm Cuban American and orejitas means little ears and that's cause I would always listen to all the conversations that were happening around me. So my ears were always attuned to like, if we were at a restaurant, what were they talking about in the table next to us? What about the people behind us? And my mother would be like, "Eduardo, para orejitas." "Eduardo, stop it! Little ears, stop eavesdropping on other people's conversations, that's rude." And I just think I just had an inherent curiosity in other people and other people's stories. I also studied English, so I was always a student of literature and because I loved theater and I loved musical theater, I just always was interested in the architecture of stories and the architecture of storytelling. Right? And I think one of the beautiful things of being an actor is that an actor is given words and that we're part of a narrative. Like we're a tool in the expression of a story and understanding what is my story in relationship to the greater story that's being told, right? And I think I've always been fascinated in people and I've always been fascinated in people's stories. So as an actor, that was very present when I went to... Initially, I was very interested in politics as a kid. I grew up in Miami, Florida like I said, my parents are the too few Cuban Democrats, thank God. And in 10th grade, I was holding up signs that said pro-choice, pro-Clinton, and I interned on Capitol Hill. I thought I was gonna go into politics. And I think there was always a part of me that was also framed about being in service. Ended up on Capitol Hill and I hated it. I was like, this sucks. I was like, there's no way I'm ever coming back, this is a total joke. And then when I became an actor, I had the privilege of attending one of the top conservatories in

the U.S. in La Jolla. So I went to U.C. San Diego in La Jolla and all the actors teach public speaking. And what was really cool was understanding and seeing how we're taught to speak as an intellectual exercise, but not taught to speak as a physical, spiritual and emotional exercise. So people are for the most part, a bunch of talking heads and completely and totally divorced from what's happening in their body, like completely cut off from their body. And that's not even the people who have shame about their body, which is probably, everybody. Most people can look at themselves in the mirror and be like I really look like that?

**Brian McComak:** We could raise hands, and should all raise our hands.

**Eduardo Placer:** Yeah. Not to mention that I have a lot of shame around my voice. The thing about the human voice is the human voice is like a fingerprint. There's no other sound that is like the sound of your voice. And as a kid, it was always a dead giveaway that there was something about my voice that was feminine. There was something about my voice that was like girlish, which is the words that they had prior to fourth grade or fifth grade, when then it became, it sounds gay or you're gay. And then as it got older, it was faggot, right? So it's like the ways in which that, that, and the ways in which I felt like I had to cover my voice or mask my voice or deepen my voice. I was so grateful that puberty hit right before I went to an all-male Jesuit prep school. So there were all these ways in which there's all this trauma in the ways that I tried to kind of cover the mask of this. Right? And of course I wanted to be an actor where I could play other roles, when in reality, the biggest fear that I have, the biggest fear that I have the most primal fear, And I'm gonna say something, Angelo, Brian, and everybody else was on this. I'm gonna be responsible for what I'm gonna say in advance, but this is what it is. My biggest fear and this is my biggest fear for the people who are out here texting, who I can't even see is you're gonna think that I'm a faggot. And that's what the bully inside of my brain, which is the voice of the bully in the world and my father and the people around me, like that bully is alive and has me feel like I have to shift who I am and cover and hide. And unless, and that's mine. Everyone has their own version of that, I believe. And I think that that's what stops us from actually really showing up authentically, not as a buzzword, pardon my F bomb, but as the truth.

**Brian McComak:** You have one of my favorite phrases, "Just be a person."

**Eduardo Placer:** Just be a person. Can we please just be a person? That's all I want.

**Brian McComak:** And I resonate with what you're saying in that, I was sharing this story with someone last night of one of my favorite TED Talks is called "All the little things." It's from a drag queen in Ireland and she tells the story, but it's really the story of the gay man who's behind that character. And it's about the choices we make as gay men who walk into the world and can we hold the hands of our significant other and is it safe? And so rather than that, being a beautiful moment, it's a moment of defiance, it's a moment of courage, it's a moment of a political statement. And we always have to make that conscious choice as we go along and through the world. But I remember back when I first started training, I remember feeling the same way. I was afraid people were gonna figure out that I was a gay man when I was in front of the room. And I learned that I had to embrace me to be effective.

**Eduardo Placer:** And I also wanna add that because I'm speaking from my experience as a gay man and you also identify as a gay man, Brian, Angelo, who's on this call, I assume also identifies as a gay man. I think that there's something really interesting about male homophobia, right, which is, for me, it is misogyny. It is the hatred of the feminine. There is no greater assault on the masculine than a feminized man. Like the biggest insult you could tell a

little boy is that he's like a girl, "You're so girly." Like that's so weak. And one of the things that I've had to navigate is I've always had this fear or this belief that I'm weak, that I'm not strong because of that. Right? And even when I was a kid and kids would make fun of me and I would cry and I would get upset, and I would tell my parents, my father used to say, punch the kid in the mouth. And I never punched him. I never punched a bully. I was never violent because my biggest fear was that the moment that I would punch them, it wouldn't hurt them. Like my biggest fear's I would go for the reach and it would hit them and they would laugh. So I internalized that. Right? And then last year was my 20-year college reunion. And when I was an undergrad, I was in a '70s acapella group called The Pensions. And it was a '70s like and we all wore costumes. And my costume was a two-piece pink and white leisure suit with five-inch platform heels. It wasn't drag. I was a boy in a, it was like, it's too "Wong Foo". I was not a drag queen. I was a boy in a dress, do you know what I mean? But it was like a little pre-postmodern. It was pre-postmodern, where I was like, I could have facial hair and I could still wear the freaky, it was like gender bending, whatever in 1997, right? And I thought, how courageous, how strong to at 20-yearsold before "Will and Grace", before Ellen, donned a two-piece pink and white leisure suit, do one-handed cartwheels and sing "Fame" to a chair dance, you know, like that's courage. The courage 18 to stand in front of my family and my parents and say, I'm gay. Like that strength, like to risk oblivion to risk the loss of everything that I knew. That courage is powerful and strong. And it was like this real awakening at 43 of like, that was powerful. And yas!

**Brian McComak:** Absolutely.

**Eduardo Placer:** I have the yas pin on my, on my thing to remind myself.

**Brian McComak:** Absolutely.

**Eduardo Placer:** Yeah.

**Brian McComak:** And of course, as I've gotten to know you, you have so much love and support and such amazing people in the world around you. And I can only make an assumption cause it's only been six months, I think, since we've known each other. That part about it is because you're living your authentic self. One of the things though that I love about what you've chosen to do is you've taken that courage of being your authentic self and your ability to, I love this, the key of being human, tune into the key of being human. That might be the name that we put on this as we-

**Eduardo Placer:** That's the new one. That one just dropped out of my mouth a couple of days ago, I'm excited, I'm vibrating, I'm vibrating in the key of human being.

**Brian McComak:** I love it. We're gonna use it. We're going to make you famous for that quote. I love that. But I love that you have chosen to be a champion for women in your work. And that's one of the stories when I'm telling other people about this wonderful man, I met Eduardo, I talk about you have this amazing, community, fearless force. I had a chance to join your, was it for your anniversary yesterday? For your anniversary, I'll let you tell about it, but I'm in this, I was in this room with 60 other women who are telling these raw, vulnerable stories and some really amazing poetry and songs.

**Eduardo Placer:** Yes, all about the vagina.

**Brian McComak:** Yes.

**Eduardo Placer:** Yas!

**Brian McComak:** Yes.

**Eduardo Placer:** Okay, I've never even gone down there, but we were like yas!

**Brian McComak:** It was incredible and I just loved the realness and I also love that in the rooms, when I had a chance to hear some of those women tell their stories, how much I resonate with their stories, but how powerful they are and all ages and races, and just it's a beautiful community and they've embraced me, which is beautiful. So tell us about Fearless Force because you've taken your voice and your power and your confidence and helped others to find that in themselves.

**Eduardo Placer:** Yeah, well, I think it's so interesting. I think what I am a champion of is the feminine. And I think that it is an ongoing relationship that I have with the way in which I've been at war with my own. That feels really raw to say that, but I just feel like that's the truth, right? And for me in this moment and the ways in which I can also see that we're all at war with it and it's in how we treat women, it's how men treat the feminine inside of them, how they beat it out of little boys, how they beat it out of little girls, and I think we create what we need. I didn't know that I needed that. I didn't know that was the medicine that I needed, but I knew when I trusted in the moment that I had an amazing ability to create safety with women. And I identify as a Kinsey Six gay man, I have absolutely zero sexual interest in women, whatsoever. I am a gold star gay. And I think women feel really safe in my presence because they're in the presence of a man. And it's actually really beautiful because I feel like I have access to and permission to be in both spaces, spaces that are both homo social male and also homo social female, right? So it's kind of fascinating to be able to dance in both of those spaces and have beautiful intimate relationships in spaces that are only with men, straight men and gay men, and then also men who identify as men, however they identify as men and then same with women. And knowing that within that, in the work that I do, there was a way in which the women who I worked with as a public speaking coach would continue to call me the secret weapon, that I could continue to source them as powerful through their physical and mental journey, to show up, to speak the truth that they had to communicate. So that was something that I was just tracking and just really curious. And I do work with men. I worked very well with men and I also worked with women. And then I got political, because I am. It's a privilege of being a queer Latin men in this country.

**Brian McComak:** Are we allowed to talk politics in these-

**Eduardo Placer:** I'm not saying I'm not gonna talk about. I'm not going to give any, but I mean, you probably know exactly where you think I would fit on the political spectrum is where I fit on the political spectrum. I've been marching, I've been doing a lot of marching and I've been doing a lot of singing with the marching as well. Anyway now, but what happened is I was noticing specifically, and I started my entrepreneurial journey. I mean I think being an actor's being

an entrepreneur, like an actor is someone who faces up living in all the time and the vision of a dream with very little promise that anything is like, I'm gonna show up to a city with a dance belt and a diet Coke and a dream, and live my best life as I sing 16 bars from audition to audition to audition, ♪ To be in a show ♪ You know? And so the entrepreneurial journey was not new. However, when I started as a business owner for my public speaking coaching business, I was tracking that I served women, I'm working with women who are founders, women who were entrepreneurs, women who are starting businesses. There's a process that they're finding really powerful in relationship to me. And I was getting notifications about events and panels and all this other stuff and it was all men, maybe few women.

**Brian McComak:** Yeah.

**Eduardo Placer:** And specifically white men and white women, and maybe like two or three people of color that I could see in the way that I could identify diversity. And as someone who I pass, I identify as Latin X, but depending on where I am and where other people are, do you know what I mean? I also don't speak with a defined accent. So unless I start sharing or speaking in Spanish or talking about my upbringing, people don't necessarily place me in any space, which is something that I always do, which is I assert my identity, who I am, where I'm from my culture, my heritage, et cetera. So what was interesting is I was not present to diversity when I was watching that and I was like, that doesn't work. So what I thought is what would happen if I could consolidate my one-on-one journey with a private client, into a group experience just for women? And that was the experiment. And that was a first Fearless Force program, which we did May 5th, it's finished. It was May 5th, 2016, and it's six days. And what happens is you show up on Saturday and then you speak on Thursday, that's what happens. And what the women are after over the course of two days is the creation of some type of thought leadership. So a signature speech, like a TED Talk, 12, 15 minutes, and then four days later, they delivered in front of a live audience. Now what emerged was something completely different. What emerged and was created, I'm gonna acknowledge Jessica Robinson, one of our entrepreneurs who talks about cybersecurity is love. She talks about creating containers of safety and love. What we create as a container of safety and love, that can hold the truth that is looking to emerge. So this is not brain-centered, idea-centered speaking. I don't care about your big idea if it's about you.

**Brian McComak:** Right, it's human. What's your story?

**Eduardo Placer:** What is, how does that idea ultimately, how does that resonate in the key of human being? Right, I don't need another PowerPoint presentation, I need another slide deck, I don't need a lecture on chemistry, I don't need anyone sitting up on a stage telling me what to think or how to think, right? I want a human being up there to share, not to lecture, not to dominate, but to just be a person and communicate. And there's a very specific process that we go to and I call it the story doula process. That's also something that's been born, like I'm a story doula. And the thing about the term in Spanish to give birth is to dar a luz, which means to bring to light, which is really beautiful. And then I love languages. And I love, I'm always very interested in languages. And I believe religion, like language are all multiple prisms with which to understand the human experience. And there are certain ways, there are certain terms like birth doesn't sound. I'm very curious to see actually what the origin of the word birth is, I'm interested in etymology. But the term dar a luz to bring to light is literally what that act is. And what we do in this process is we create the circumstances and the context and the container that can hold the truth that is looking to emerge from you. There's a great saying, and we do work in Australia and it's Aboriginal in origin, which is, "The story is hunting its storyteller."

**Brian McComak:** I love that.

**Eduardo Placer:** So there are stories like, there's nothing new, Brian. It's all like, you know. I don't think I'm saying anything new. Like I'm not, this is, you know. And there's a certain story that has hunted me in this moment to be the vessel of. And because it's vibrating in my pitch, in my key, through my body, through my personal experience, it can and may occur as new. And yet I'm not the first person on the planet who has come out to his family. I'm not the first person on this planet who's had self-loathing, I'm not the first person on the planet who has internalized homophobia. I'm not the first person on the planet to wanna be of service to other people. And there is a fundamental truth that this moment is looking to allow to come out. So we create the container for that truth. So that's why I say you show up on Saturday because people come up thinking that they know what they wanna talk about. And there's some other truth that is there. And that's what we, and it's not a force, it's not a push. Like literally, the women who show up in there are like, I'm just gonna surrender. I have no idea what I'm gonna talk about. Some women do, someone I know exactly me to talk about, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And some do and some are like, I know exactly what I'm gonna talk about. And they're like, that's not what I wanna talk about, this is what I wanna talk about I'm like, okay, let's talk about that. Right? So we do that. And that process, the story to the process. I say, we begin always grounded in body, present in mind, lead from the heart and speak into the spirit of our shared humanity.

**Brian McComak:** Do you wanna say that again? Cause I'm sure that everyone, because I know we're all like, can we, can you repeat those?

**Eduardo Placer:** I'm gonna repeat that again. So we are grounded in body, present in mind, lead from the heart and then speak into the spirit of our shared humanity. And what I mean by that is first thing we have to do is connect to our body. There's a great saying from Papua New Guinea, from an indigenous tribe in Papua New Guinea, which is "Knowledge, it's only rumor until it lives in the muscle." There is knowledge in your, every muscle of your body, right? And we wanna uncover is what is there? What is the knowledge that is there, that is not here, but here? What is that? The lived experience, the layers of experience that you are holding, right? So we wanna release that, like channel it, get it moving, right? Understanding our voice, how our voice shows up to the events of speaking, right? And then identifying what are the limiting beliefs that we have about ourselves, right? That we project into our creation and into our speaking, thinking that the audience for me thinks that I'm gay or that I'm fat or I'm unattractive, or I'm not smart enough, or I'm not an expert, or they should have hired somebody else, or why didn't they get that person who has more Instagram followers than I do. Like all the bullshit that gets in our head that has this like, ah, like all the nasty, ugly things. Like let's actually give voice to that so we can actually get it out of the way and not get rid of it because it's not going to go away. It's a fallacy to think that it's gonna disappear through some magic trick, right? This isn't Harry Potter, although I wish I am a Gryffindor. But I think that it's about distinguishing that it's there so you can start building a relationship with it. I surrender my fear, every time I walk on stage, I'm doing it moment by moment when I'm on here, sharing on this thing.

**Brian McComak:** Yeah, absolutely-

**Eduardo Placer:** Well, I just had a call. I just had a call with a potential client for a sports team to work with this organization. And I said, just to clarify, I am a gay man and I'm not gonna hide that. So if that is an issue, right, then I just wanna name that upfront so that we all know what we're dealing with. Then there may be somebody else who you would want in this place, but I am not gonna hide who I am for a job, even in a pandemic and in a recession where my sales have dropped 96%. Right? Like I'm still not willing to compromise who I am. Right? And so anyway, so grounded

in body, present in mind, distilling that so that we can get out of the way, get the hell out of the way so that your heart can communicate what there is for your heart to communicate to people, to other people. And when you speak from there, when you lean in from there, when your storytelling comes from that space of true connection, right, there's nothing like it, specifically if you're telling the truth, because when you tell the truth, what you do is you take the air out of the room and then it flushes back in and that air is deeper and richer and everyone is just like leaning in. I see Angelo breathing in, I think Angelo's feeling it. Yas! There's nothing like it, and what there is is release. And it's like there's tension. And then all of a sudden I was like, Oh my God, there it is. And I think that that's what happens. I think that's why the events are moving. That's why audience members, when they're in the audience have that experience because what they're witnessing is the truth as it emanates from a human being, who's standing in front of them, not to show off, not to seal the deal, not to nail it, not to crush it, not to get more Instagram followers, not to be an expert, but because they're up there in service of you, because ultimately it is through the sharing of their story, that there's an opportunity for you to see what resonates for you that has you have an opportunity to connect and shift and acknowledge and recognize and breathe and release. And that space becomes transformative for the speaker and for the audience at the same time. And the last piece of it, the spirit piece, I mean, I was raised Catholic, but I don't have any specific spiritual practice or religious practice. And I'm in full belief of everything. Do you know what I mean? So by all means, if there are angels and guides, then I receive them, I accept them, I love them. I don't think too much about them and receive whatever there is. There's something going on. However, the root word of the word spirit, and I go back to etymology and words is the same root word as the word to inspire or to expire or to aspire. And it comes from the Latin inspirare which means to breathe. Just like in Spanish, respirar is to breathe. Inspirar is to inhale. Espirar is to exhale. So to inspire is yes, to get someone to feel and be moved, but it's also to inhale, to inhale, to breathe in just like to expirar, to expire is to breathe out. And to aspire with breath, right? And when we speak, when we expire, on our breath is our voice. So when you speak, what you're sharing is spirit and what happens is the receiver, even though we're in a virtual platform, I'm speaking, I can see you, Angelo, I can see you, Brian. I don't know who else is listening, I don't see you, but I'm seeing the names rolling down the stream. My commitment is in my speaking, in my exhale, in my parents' apartment in Miami beach, where I've been quarantining and socially distancing by myself, is that something that I am saying will vibrate in the key of human being and move you and have you feel something and experience something in the sharing of my spirit with you. And if something that I said moved you, and had you feel something, and you then go off and share that to someone else, then my spirit lives on in that. Whether I'm here tomorrow or not, that the experience that we have, what was shared that had you feel something, and again Mia Angelou said, "We don't remember what people say, we remember how people make us feel," that when you feel something, that spirit has moved you and now you are moved by the spirit and will now communicate, share, speak, and honor that and cherish that in whatever way there is for you to do in the world. And in this moment, for that, I'm extremely grateful.

**Brian McComak:** I love it, I love it. And I think I've heard you share that probably four or five times, and I love it every single time. It's so moving. And I wanna sidebar for a moment. Angelo, I'm gonna come to you in a second, just to see if there are any questions or comments or things that Eduardo or I should talk about from the group. But before that, I wanna make, some of you were, all of you may have seen the dog in my lap a minute ago. And he's here watching me. His name is Bosco.

**Eduardo Placer:** We love Bosco.

**Brian McComak:** Bosco's the best. I didn't realize when I planned for this, this is going to be one of those human moments. Like the muting earlier when I was talking and welcoming everyone on mute or this morning when I messed up trimming my beard and it's white, which is why it's ridiculously short right now. So these are very human moments. I

also planned the sessions right before Bosco's dinner time. So this is when he likes to remind me that dinner's coming. So he will probably appear on every episode of "Hope, Heart and Human Spirit."

**Eduardo Placer:** I love it. Bosco's welcome. Yes.

**Brian McComak:** And he is the chief happiness officer of Hummingbird Humanity, so he's here to bring us joy and love and light. So with that, Angelo, anything from the audience or just things you wanna share that you're seeing on chats?

**Angelo Cilia:** There's just so much great chat and kind of happening right now. And just folks are really just supportive of all the stuff that you're saying and just being inspired and aspiring to do great things. No questions. If there are questions, feel free to submit them here. I know we have a Q&A button, but don't look at that Q&A button, just put it in the chat box. And then I can let Brian and Eduardo know that there may be some questions to answer. But there's just lots of fun things. One thing I'll share what somebody said they added their Gryffindor to their, she, her, I don't know if you all saw that.

**Angelo Cilia:** That's cool. She, her, hers, Gryffindor, I loved that, Bernadette.

**Eduardo Placer:** Oh, I saw that too.

**Brian McComak:** I love that. I love that.

**Brian McComak:** And we're inclusive of all houses. So Ravenclaws, Slytherins and Hufflepuffs-

**Brian McComak:** They are all open.

**Eduardo Placer:** All of us. There's room for all of us.

**Brian McComak:** And Republicans are actually welcome as well. I know that we might lean Democrat, but everyone's welcome. One thing I just wanted to say there is that Eduardo and I are both here because of all of you on microphone. So at the end, I'll also ask if you have suggestions for future calls or people you wanna hear from, because we're doing this, I think we're both here and the reason I'm doing this is to in service of the community. So I'm glad you're resonating and that makes me super happy 'cause that's why we're here to share these stories, And Eduardo, one of the questions I wanted to ask you and something that I've-

**Eduardo Placer:** Before you go ahead, that Justin, just posted in the chat, can I go over the four pieces again? And I'll say it again for you, Justin. It's grounded in body, present in mind, lead from the heart and speak into the spirit of our shared humanity.

**Brian McComak:** Awesome, thank you.

**Eduardo Placer:** And Serbi just posted something. Yas. Love you, Serbi.

**Brian McComak:** We love Serbi.

**Eduardo Placer:** Yeah.

**Brian McComak:** I love it. So, Eduardo, I know you, neither one of us, we're both New Yorkers. We're both not in New York.

**Eduardo Placer:** Exiled.

**Brian McComak:** We're exiled, we're sheltering in place somewhere else. And you know, so I wanna acknowledge, and I'm actually kind of glad that we're not centering our conversation around the pandemic, which is the center of every conversation these days. But I wanna ask you a question of, and I've even reflected on, 'cause I've done okay in this pandemic. And I've been finding my way and actually in some ways, I'm thriving and I know a lot of people who are really significantly impacted and I feel for those individuals in those communities. I'm curious, what in your life journey has helped you prepare for this or how has this been unsettling for you or how are you finding your way through it? Because you do this in other ways in your life. And I'm just wondering what you sort of key into, to connect with to keep you going?

**Eduardo Placer:** I think it's a beautiful question and I'll share a story. So there, I have some dear, dear friends of mine that I met when I was an actor in Idaho at the Idaho Shakespeare Festival. And it is a married couple that are patrons of the theater. And they became dear friends and they suffered a huge loss. They lost their middle child in a skiing accident. And I met them like maybe five or six years after that loss and had just been so moved by how they had channeled, what they chose to do was love through the grief and love each other through the grief. And a loss like that, like there's no manual like people deal with it with however they deal with that. Right? And there was a choice that they made together like for their relationship for their family to love each other through that grief. And they channeled that grief into the creation of a summer camp in memory of their son. And when they were presented with an award for that contribution to the community, he was asked the question, what do you do when you're faced with an event or something that shatters your life, where everything that you hold dear is completely shattered and you wake up and the world looks completely different than the way that it did the day before? And he said that he was a back country skier. So he's a back country skier and has always been in the back mountains where he grew up in Idaho. And there his mountains, and he was back there with his wife and they were on a trip back in the back country. Not a place where myself would ever, I'm a sea level person, I am not a back mountain kind of person. And they lost their way. And she got concerned and turned to him and said, "Are you lost, are we lost?" And he said, "I'm not lost. I just don't know where I am right now." I'm not lost, I just don't know where I am right now. And I feel like that's my truth in this moment. Like all of us, I woke up one day and the world looked completely different from anything that I had ever imagined was possible. I was doing work in San Francisco. I then ended up in Boulder, Colorado, and now in Miami

Beach. I've been exiled from my home for over two months. And I had no idea what I'm gonna go home again. Unbelievable privilege in that my parents have an apartment in Miami Beach. It's where they live and they are exiled from their home in Miami, in Boston with my sister. So their apartment was open, so I had a place to go to. So I had unbelievable privilege in that I was able to go somewhere, right? And found myself on a Monday where the prospects of everything that I had booked and created were gone. And I had a day with nothing in it. I'd applied for the loans. I'd done all the things that there were for me to do. I'd been positive and powerful and grateful and thinking about my and my namaste and just staying optimistic and upbeat. And then that Monday morning, I was like, what the fuck is happening? And was faced with the reality of the new world that we were in, where I have to wear a mask when I leave out my apartment, where I'm in a line to go into a grocery store, right, where I haven't touched anyone in weeks? You know what I mean? I don't know when that'll happen again like all of these realities that are part of this world that just haven't kind of settled in. And in that moment, the words came to me, "You're not lost, you just don't know where you are right now." And I found such comfort in that because I said, unbelievable privilege. I have shelter, I have food, I have not much of a savings, but I have a little bit of a savings. Right? I have an extended family network like that. I could go sleep in someone's house if I had to. Right? My Maslow's hierarchy of needs are taken care of, and fully acknowledging that there are ton of people who are not in that predicament. Right? So recognizing, still making space for my feelings about it. Right. And acknowledging that even within, like, I can still be grateful and pissed at the same time. That's the beauty of our humanity and the beauty of Stephen Sondheim who teaches us through musical theater about ambivalence. But like, I can be excited and scared. I can be sorry, and I can be grateful. You know? I love that all the show queens are like yas.

**Brian McComak:** Yas.

**Eduardo Placer:** he'll remember this. And what I do know in this moment, knowing that I have shelter and I have food is that this is not the first time in my life that I found myself facing nothing. That's what you do as an actor, the contract ends, and you show up back to New York City with nothing, and you start from scratch. It's not the privilege of like, oh, I was a manager and I'm a senior manager and I'm a senior vice president of managers. And now, there's not the acting there's no. And to be honest, all of that is fake. The only thing that is sure is that it's unsure like certainty is a fallacy. It is not true. And I had to mourn like how killing it, 2020 was gonna be and all my witchy women were like, you're a Capricorn, Jupiter's in Capricorn and Saturn's in Capricorn. All your planets are in Capricorn. It's gonna be a amazing year. You know, I was like that looked a certain way. And then all of a sudden, the promise of what that year was gonna be was completely and totally lost. Facing nothing. Acknowledging what I do have in this moment, I also know that I have feet that I can plant on planet earth. Like I'm still on planet earth, I'm still here, I'm waking up, I'm a person on this planet. I am here. I have my wit, my intelligence, I have my skills, I have aptitude, I was an entrepreneur. I started from scratch before, like, this is not the first time I've found myself in a space that is unfamiliar, trying to chart a path. And it's not a time for a sprint for the finish line. It's a marathon. And in this moment, I can look around me and start ascertaining, what is here? What is emerging? What is true? How am I listening? Hyper sensitively, right? What's present, what's emerging, what feels true, what feels authentic, what feels right? And starting to shift my internal compass to allow what is emerging to emerge, right? For me, that's been about community and generosity. That's what's been resonating for me. That's where I've focused all of my energy in my work, around my business is around creating a safe space for people to be in the conversations that I believe matter at this moment and doing so generously and also showcasing all the brilliant thought leaders that are in my community. Right? I've also channeled my anxiety into lyrics to show tunes. I have a song. ♪ When my mask tears ♪ ♪ When my gloves rip and I'm stuck in line ♪ ♪ I simply remember the feel of a touch ♪ ♪ And crawl back to quarantine ♪ You know or, ♪ Quarantining is the patriotic thing to do ♪ ♪ Without the deep state set ♪ ♪ Or trying to get us all to work and catch the flu ♪ ♪ The doctors have told us what to do ♪ ♪ To cover your face in case achoo. ♪ ♪ And wash your hands, yas ♪ ♪ Don't drink chlorine brands, right ♪ ♪ They're always saying, don't ♪ So there's this creativity that's bursting up that I'm just like allowing to

channel and I'm also creating time too. I'm singing again, and I've been doing so from a space of connection to intimacy and exploration and not performance although that was. But like, what is this moment? What is this moment in a Shakespearean moment, in a musical theater moment where the context is so fucking out of whack, but it's a moment for poetry and it's a moment for song? What is the song that's emanating from me that's looking to be expressed in this moment and just being really curious to see what's emerging. Right?

**Brian McComak:** Wow.

**Eduardo Placer:** That's kind of, what's percolating in this moment, right? And assessing moment by moment, what feels true and authentic in this moment, in my business, as I'm serving people, continuing to deliver and innovate moment by moment. And three weeks ago, I was like, I'm not lost, I don't know where I am right now. And I feel like I'm gaining footing. And three weeks from that point, I feel like I'm finding that the path is emerging. Not with a machete, dude, I mean, but like, I'm finding my way through the shrubbery and through the bush and I feel like I'm getting closer and closer to the path that is emerging. My North star remains the same, my commitment remains the same, but I've just been like helicoptered to another mountain. Do you know what I mean? And I'm just like trying to find my way back.

**Brian McComak:** Yeah. Yeah, well, I think we're all going to be navigating to whatever this new normal is going to be and I suspect it's gonna take time for all of us and it will be an evolution. There's not a light switch. It's just gonna be an evolution so.

**Eduardo Placer:** Yeah.

**Brian McComak:** So I wanna share just a quick few words with the group and then I want you to be able to share Eduardo as well as far as what you're doing right now. So we can share that with the group in email. So at the bottom here, you'll see there's a website there, [HummingbirdHumanity.com/live](https://HummingbirdHumanity.com/live). I'd love to hear your thoughts. This is the first time out. Next time, I'll try not to unmute myself when I'm doing the opening words, but Eduardo, and I would certainly love to hear your comments and I would love to hear your suggestions for how we can make sure that this serves your needs. And next week, my dear friend, Lydia Fenet, who is the author of "The Most Powerful Woman in the Room Is You" is going to be joining me. So I hope you'll come back and tell someone else, invite someone, bring friends, everyone is welcome. So Eduardo, I know you're doing some fun things too. Do you wanna just wrap this up with your final comments and share what you're doing to give back to the world?

**Eduardo Placer:** Yeah, absolutely. So, if you text the following number, which is 66866 and then text "Fearless Now", capital F, capital N. So 66866 and then "Fearless Now", I have this little pocket guide that I call "10 Simple Backstage Tips to Go from a Speaker to a Star". So I get to be Jiminy Cricket on your shoulder ♪ When you wish upon a star ♪ That's like your biggest champion to just be a fucking person the next time that you have to speak. And there's no such thing as private speaking, all speaking is public speaking. If you're speaking, someone can hear you. So there's that. So that's my gift for all of you. And you can find me at [www.fearlesscommunicators.com](http://www.fearlesscommunicators.com), which is the website for my business. And then we also have, you can follow me on Instagram @EduardoPlacer E-D-U-A-R-D-O-P-L-A-C-E-R And that way you'll find out about all of our programs. We have our "Fearless Chat" series, which we're doing every Tuesday and Thursday, and we're about to start a new series, it's called "Spark, Shift, Shit, Shine." And it's four parts. It's four of our fearless women that are leading this. The first one is about that spark, that idea that you've been

wrestling with, it's kind of maybe in the back of your mind or a new project or a new pivot or something that you're thinking about. It's really aligning with what the moment is sparking for, that feels authentic to you. The shift is then how you pivot. So that's the next one? It's like pivoting. How do you pivot, when do you pivot, when's the right time to pivot? Then shit is called, "Get shit done." And we have an amazing woman who actually breaks that down. It's an acronym. It stands for something which is really awesome. And the last piece is how you bring shine to it. And those are totally free. So we would love to have you join. And by texting me that, we'll make sure that you can. The 66866 will make sure that you will get access to all of our communications around that.

**Brian McComak:** Awesome. And I've had a chance to join his "Fearless Chat" series, and they're amazing. I've benefited from your generosity, so I wanna say, thank you. It's 66866, is that what it is, Eduardo?

**Eduardo Placer:** 66866, correct.

**Brian McComak:** And you type "Fearless Now"?

**Eduardo Placer:** Fearless Now!

**Brian McComak:** Important to put the emphasis, emphasis on this right syllable.

**Eduardo Placer:** On the syllable, yas.

**Brian McComak:** Eduardo, thank you so much for being here. Thank you for sharing your stories. To everyone that's watching, thank you so much for joining us as we kick off this new series. I'm so grateful. And Angelo, thank you for being in the background.

**Eduardo Placer:** Thank you, Angelo.

**Brian McComak:** Anything, any final words? Any final words from you, Eduardo, before we say goodbye?

**Eduardo Placer:** Wherever you are, may you be healthy, may your loved ones be healthy and just be a fucking person.

**Brian McComak:** Absolutely. I wish you all positive vibes, and invite those positive vibes your way. And I wish you all good health in this time. Let's take care of each other. We'll see you again soon. Bye-bye.

**Eduardo Placer:** Bye.