

## **Unconditional Surrender, Restraint in Foreign Policy, Relationships and Breaking up? What Happens Next – 9.12.2021**

My name is Larry Bernstein.

What Happens Next is a podcast where experts are given just SIX minutes to make their presentation. This is followed by a Q&A period for deeper engagement.

This week's topics include Unconditional Surrender, Restraint in American Foreign Policy and Removing the Blind Spots in your Personal Relationships.

Our first speaker will be Kenneth Pyle who is a Professor Emeritus in History at the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington. Ken is the author of Japan in the American Century. Today, Ken will discuss FDR's catastrophic decision demanding Japan's Unconditional Surrender instead of allowing for a negotiated peace.

Our second speaker will be Barry Posen who is the Ford International Professor of Political Science at MIT. Barry is the author of the book Restraint: A New Foundation for US Grand Strategy. Barry will explain why he wants to reduce America's military footprint and focus on defending the commons. He will also explain why the consensus grand strategy of Liberal Hegemony is misplaced because it leads us into unnecessary entanglements and wars.

Our final speaker is Gary Lewandowski who is a Professor of Psychology at Monmouth University will discuss his book Stronger than You Think: The 10 Blind Spots that Undermine Your Relationship...and How to See Past Them. Gary will discuss ways to improve your marriage, your relationships, choosing a partner, and when to break-up.

During the live call, please feel free to email me questions at [larrybernstein1@gmail.com](mailto:larrybernstein1@gmail.com)

Let's begin today's program with our first speaker Kenneth Pyle.

Ken Pyle:

My book is about the impact that we Americans have had on Japan. In my judgment, no country has been more impacted by America's rise to world power than Japan. So, I would like to highlight three controversial points about the war in the Pacific, and all three are related.

First, the main reason for the huge impact we had on Japan is the way we mistakenly chose to fight the war in the Pacific. Franklin Roosevelt declared that the war against the fascists, Germany, Italy, and Japan, would be fought to unconditional surrender. It's the only war in American history fought to unconditional surrender. All other wars, we've had a lot of them, were fought to a negotiated peace. Our diplomats were told not to negotiate, not to discuss conditions for ending the conflict, so compromise and diplomacy were ruled out from the beginning.

Instead, Roosevelt announced that our war goals were to demand from Japan surrender of its sovereignty; to occupy Japan; dissolve its empire; permanently disarm it; carry out war crimes trials; democratize its political, economic, and social institutions; and reeducate its people. Well not surprisingly, such sweeping goals did not result in unconditional surrender on the part of the Japanese who feared the execution of their emperor, the abolition of the Imperial institution, and the end of their way of life as they had always known it.

The mistake in my judgment was to rule out diplomacy. The possibility of a negotiated peace with Japan existed, which might well have avoided the protracted war and also Stalin's last-minute entry into the war, which gave Russia a foothold in the Far East. Hitler and Nazism defied compromise solutions, but with Japan compromises were possible. We know that because once the war was over and we occupied Japan, we began to make a succession of major compromises right away with our wartime goals. It was ironic that after insisting on unconditional surrender, the Americans decided to keep the emperor, keep the conservative bureaucracy, leave high levels of concentration of capital, that is *zaibatsu*, and restore the pre-war conservative elite, and then most ironic of all, prod the Japanese to rearm.

Second key point in the book is that this totally unprecedented unconditional surrender policy made the use of the atomic bomb almost inevitable. Since we wouldn't negotiate, that meant our military was given charge of war strategy, and American strategy became maximum force with maximum speed. When the B-29s came within range of Japan in 1944, we then fire bombed 60 Japanese cities, deliberately targeting civilians to break Japanese morale. There were upwards of half-a-million civilian casualties. Just in one night bombing Tokyo, 100,000 people died. In his memoir, General Curtis LeMay, who commanded the bombing campaigns summed up the strategy in stark terms, "Bomb and burn them until they quit."

Japan refused to surrender, mobilized the entire nation for a last stand, which meant invasion of Japan would be necessary at a huge cost of casualties to us. When the atomic bomb became available, there was no doubt that we would use it. Unconditional surrender policy had made the use of the atomic bomb almost inevitable.

The third and final key point that I want to make about the book is that we have mistakenly convinced ourselves that the occupation of Japan under General MacArthur was such a great success, that it became the model for subsequent interventions in other countries and nation-building. The seven-year occupation of Japan turned out to be the most extensive reconstruction of a nation in modern history.

The problem is that we denied the Japanese the right to reform themselves according to their own culture and traditions and history. Instead, we imposed our institutions and values on Japanese politics, education, economics, and society. We wrote their constitution and imposed it, along with our education system, along with equal rights for women.

If democracy is to work. It must be in the lifeblood, the experience, the history of a people, but we believed our institutions and values were universal, good for every people, regardless of their history and culture. Our occupation of Japan, unfortunately, became the model and inspiration for all subsequent American interventions and nation-building efforts. For example, President George W. Bush often cited success in democratizing Japan as demonstrating our ability to do the same when we invaded Iraq. He said that many, many times.

By some estimates, we have conducted as many as 30 major interventions. In the last century, we believed we could nation-build. Our values were universal. Never mind the history and culture of other countries, we could remake them.

In the wake of the unhappy outcomes of recent quixotic interventions, including Iraq, and most recently, Afghanistan, Americans are beginning to become disillusioned with such nation-building and efforts to remake other countries in our own image.

Larry Bernstein:

Ken, thank you. That was terrific. I want to start our conversation just before the war. What were the Japanese thinking when they attacked Pearl Harbor? Was this instigated by Roosevelt's policies, specifically, the embargo on oil and other critical commodities? What provoked the Japanese attack?

Ken Pyle:

Well, we had been in negotiation with the Japanese for about half-a-year before Pearl Harbor, and, what we were trying to achieve was a Japanese withdrawal from the continent. And in the last phase of the negotiations, Secretary of State Hull sent a message, we won't end the embargo on all these critical materials, including oil, unless you withdraw from China.

Tojo who had become prime minister turned to Admiral Yamamoto, who had this scheme of a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. One interesting development that's become clear recently is that Harry Dexter White, who was undersecretary of Treasury and a Soviet sympathizer and spy, actually, had written an early draft of what became the Hull note. And there was a basic miscalculation by both the Japanese and the Americans, and that led to the war.

Larry Bernstein:

How do you explain the Japanese behavior of fighting to the last man in its battles with the Americans and the decision to use suicidal kamikaze pilots to destroy American warships?

Ken Pyle:

From way back in the Meiji period in the late 19th century, the Japanese military had been taught that that surrender was a lack of loyalty to the emperor. And then during the war, Japan was faced with fighting against a country that was 10 times its power. And they always believed that what their last card was Japanese spirit, as opposed to the Yankee's technology. Japanese spirit would overcome the invader.

Larry Bernstein:

After the bombings of Tokyo and Hiroshima, was the Japanese public enraged, and did they think that the Americans had gone too far with their incendiary and atomic bombings of civilians? Did the Japanese view these bombings as an illegitimate form of warfare? Or, did the Japanese consider the fact that they drew first blood at Pearl Harbor as an appropriate justification for the American response?

Ken Pyle:

The Japanese were outraged, but a lot of the details of the atomic bomb were kept from the Japanese population by the occupation.

It did not really demonize the Americans for the use of the atomic bomb, but they became convinced that they had been unique victims of a new weapon. But the American occupation and the new relationship with Americans after surrender helped to diffuse some of the hatred that people felt for the use of the bomb.

Larry Bernstein:

I did a book club with Reverend Wilson Miscamble of Notre Dame; he wrote a book defending the American decision to drop the bomb at Hiroshima. Miscamble reviewed Truman's decision-making process. No one in Truman's circle thought that we shouldn't drop the bomb, and there was a strong belief that a million American soldiers would likely die to invade the Japanese Islands. Do you agree with Reverend Miscamble's historical interpretation?

Ken Pyle:

I know the book well, and that's the common view of Americans that defend the atomic bomb decision, that it saved a million American lives. Historians that have studied this carefully can find no confirmation of how that number makes any sense. The truth is we don't know how many casualties, because we don't know how long the war would have gone on. In my opinion, the unconditional surrender policy of Roosevelt created the conditions in which when we were faced with a massive buildup for the invasion, and the Japanese sent 3 million men in the army down to Kyushu to handle the invasion. Truman, as a result of unconditional surrender, was faced with a terrible dilemma. And just at that point, the Manhattan Project came to a conclusion.

We had an atomic bomb, and so we used it. But in my judgment, we could have undertaken diplomacy to negotiate a peaceful end to the war. How that would have worked out we can't be sure, because it's a counterfactual. But in my judgment, it was the unconditional surrender policy which made that decision inevitable.

Larry Bernstein:

Core to your thesis was the foolishness of the unconditional surrender proclamation by FDR. I want to ask questions first on the US side, and then on the Japanese. In America we have a Congress, there's a state department, and public intellectuals who could have said the unconditional surrender demand was a bad idea. Why didn't these people come to the fore? Roosevelt died in 1944. Why doesn't Truman, and other members of the US State Department or other foreign policy experts challenge the unconditional surrender proclamation?

Why didn't Japan publicly announce a willingness to negotiate? This would have reopened the issue for Allied public debate?

How do you explain both the American and Japanese policies relating to this bungled unconditional demand for surrender?

Ken Pyle:

The State Department was exceedingly weak during the Second World War. Roosevelt neglected them, often didn't even bring them along to major conferences. And then Truman came in, weak and inexperienced, and with the weight of the world on his shoulders, and pledged to follow Roosevelt's legacy. And in his first speech to Congress, he announced right away, "Our policy will continue to be unconditional surrender," and at that, the entire chamber, joint meeting of Congress, they all rose to their feet. So public opinion by the time of Truman was overwhelmingly in favor of unconditional surrender. A Gallup poll in the early summer of 1945 found 9 to 1 in favor of unconditional surrender, even if it meant an invasion.

There were realists within Truman's advisors who said, "We're going to be crazy to invade Japan. We should try to negotiate." But the new Secretary of State James Byrnes, persuaded Truman that changing unconditional surrender, he would be politically crucified if he did that. And Byrnes had great influence over the president.

On the Japanese side, why didn't the Japanese just come out and say, "Let's negotiate?" Well, that was their strategy from early in the war, was if we can win one big battle, make it so bloody and costly to the Americans, we can bring them to negotiate. And they had the precedent in their most previous war, which was the Russo-Japanese war, of winning a great sea battle in the Japan Sea against the Russian fleet, and that had led the Russians then to negotiate.

They were taken back when Roosevelt's sweeping war goals were made to them, and fearful that their whole way of life was going to be changed by any kind of surrender policy. And in the last year of the war with the emperor's approval, they set out to have one great decisive battle. And they believed that that would force the Americans to negotiate. And in the pre-atomic era, that strategy might well have worked, because Truman was faced with this terrible dilemma of the casualties that an invasion would cost, and whether the American people would be willing to continue a protracted war.

Larry Bernstein:

In your opening remarks, you highlighted that force feeding a constitution to a people is not the way to create institutions or democracy. Yet, the Japanese seem to have adopted and willingly accepted these institutions. Why do you believe that the American methods for creating democracy in Japan was flawed?

Ken Pyle:

Democracy is something that has to be achieved. Democracy has to be in the lifeblood of a people, on its history. And we have polls now that show that while MacArthur was having the Americans draft a constitution in the space of six days, there were polls taken that show that Japanese people wanted to have a constitutional convention. They wanted to revise the Meiji Constitution of 1889. And we took that opportunity for the Japanese to reform themselves away from them.

Why did Japan succeed? Well, Japan became a democracy, in my judgment, not because MacArthur imposed it, but over the next decades, Japanese people, through civic activism, held

the conservative elite, which we put back in power, to accountability in all kinds of ways. There were massive demonstrations in the 1950s against the Alliance and American bases. In the 1970s, when I first went to Japan, there were massive public demonstrations and civic activism against pollution that the high growth was causing, and the health problems. In the 1990s, there was civic activism that held the Japanese government for its failure to deal with the Kobe earthquake, and then most dramatically, the triple disaster of the earthquake, and the tsunami, and the explosion of the nuclear reactor has led to another massive civic activist pushback against the conservative elite.

Over the period of decades, Japan has forced the conservative elite, the ruling liberal democratic party, to accountability. And they have become very sensitive to public opinion. That's one reason why the Prime Minister has just announced his resignation, because of pushback against his handling of the pandemic.

Larry Bernstein:

Let's talk about Article Nine of the Japanese Constitution. Why have the Japanese people embraced Article Nine?

Ken Pyle:

Article Nine says that the Japanese people renounce war as a sovereign right, and that they will not have land, sea, and air forces. And that was MacArthur's instruction to the Americans who drafted the constitution, but it can also be traced back to Franklin Roosevelt's policy of disarming Japan.

The Japanese people love Article Nine. Particularly in the 1950s, it gave them a reason not to have to participate in the Cold War. Vice President Nixon said, "We made a big mistake with Article Nine. Now we want you to rearm and be our ally in the Cold War." The Japanese very cleverly and cynically used Article Nine to say, "I'm sorry. We have this wonderful article in our constitution. And by the way, you Americans wrote it for us. And we can't rearm. We have this constitution, which doesn't allow us to do that."

With the rise of China, Japan has begun belatedly to take greater responsibility for its own security. But the unconditional surrender policy, we so weakened Japan that the remnants of that policy are with us today. Under Prime Minister Abe, they began participating in collective defense.

And just most recently, in the last few months, quite an important development, the Japanese have said that it's really tied the future of Taiwan to Japan's own security. So that neglect of their own self-defense is beginning to change, but Article Nine remains on the books, and a large proportion of the Japanese population favors the continuation of that policy.

Larry Bernstein:

As you just mentioned, China has been seeking greater ambitions in the South China Sea. This has encouraged Japan to create a military coalition known as the quad, which include India, Australia, Japan, and the United States. The primary objective of the Quad is to limit Chinese military power and to defend Taiwan. What do you make of Japan's role in the quad?

Ken Pyle:

The quad was an idea of Prime Minister Abe during his first term. It was no accident that Biden invited Prime Minister Suga as his first foreign guest, because the alliance with Japan is now critical to our defense of China, and also for pushing back against the Chinese encroachment in the South China Sea, and the pressure they're putting on Taiwan now, and their almost daily flights over and around the islands.

Larry Bernstein:

US-Japanese relations appear to be very strong and continue to get stronger. Is there anything to be concerned about?

Ken Pyle:

Well, we have to maintain the credibility of the alliance. For example, the Japanese have worried about in a nuclear war, would we trade Los Angeles for a Japanese City? And when Trump talked about, "Why are we defending Japan?" That made the Japanese very nervous. And the Japanese have the option any time to go nuclear if they lose faith in the American alliance and its willingness to defend Japan. Of course, as long as we have 50,000 troops on bases in Japan, that serves as a tripwire to assure our commitment to Japan.

If we pulled back, the Japanese would almost certainly go nuclear and would probably cut some kind of a deal with China.

Larry Bernstein:

Let's move to North Korea as our next topic. When I was living in Japan in 1998, North Korea fired an unarmed missile over the Sea of Japan, and it self-destructed not far from Japanese territory. This really upset the Japanese public and it led to front page news stories seemingly for years. Another hot topic in Japan was the discovery that North Korea had used small submarines to kidnap lovers on Japanese beaches in the 1950s and 1960s. The purported purpose was to learn from the kidnapping victims about Japanese culture to assist them if and when there was a war between North Korea and Japan. The negotiation with the kidnapped victims returning to Japan was complicated when the North Koreans would not allow the Japanese victims to return to Japan with their children for fear that they would not return to Korea afterwards. This negotiation created a firestorm.

Are Japanese-North Korean relations particularly hostile now and do you expect these relations to continue to be hostile indefinitely?

Ken Pyle:

You raise the two important points that the Japanese have, the belief that there are still Japanese citizens who were kidnapped and brought back to North Korea, that they're still there, and that issue has to be solved to Japan's satisfaction before they can really open any kind of relations with the north and of course the nuclear threat and the missiles. And the commitment to the alliance with the US is of critical importance.

Larry Bernstein:

You mentioned the role of having American troops at bases in Japan and in Okinawa. But there are cost and consequences of having troops on Japanese soil. How do you think about whether or not we should maintain those bases from both the Japanese and the American perspective?

Ken Pyle:

The bases in Okinawa in particular are absolutely critical to the future of the balance of power in East Asia. And there can be no question about giving up those bases. And the very sad thing is that the people of Okinawa bear this tremendous burden of having the bases, 75% of the American military personnel on their island, largely because other parts of Japan have said not in my backyard.

Larry Bernstein:

On a previous episode of What Happens Next, Angela Stent a Georgetown Professor in Government, spoke about Russia's relations with its neighbors. And one of our discussions related to the Kuril Islands, which are Japanese islands that were annexed by Russia at the end of World War II. Over time, the Russians have discussed with the Japanese the potential to return the Kuril Islands to Japan, but they never seem to get around to it. And Putin doesn't appear to have any inclination to do so. How do you explain the Russian reticence to end this dispute with Japan?

Ken Pyle:

Japan and Russia have never signed a peace treaty ending World War II. The Japanese will never forget that Stalin came into the war at the very last minute, two days after Hiroshima. The Japanese believed the Southern Kurils are their own islands, but Putin is not going to ever give up those islands in my judgment.

Larry Bernstein:

You're considered one of the great historians of US-Japanese relations. Why is there so little academic interest in Japan here in America?

Ken Pyle:

The focus is overwhelmingly now on our relations with China.

China has a more open universal kind of outlook on the world, which appeals to Americans. Whereas Japan is a very tightly knit country. There are a lot of younger scholars studying Japan today, but the vogue is more Japanese study of gender relations and society and so on. I'm somewhat worried about the younger generation not going into the field of international history and diplomatic and military history.

Larry Bernstein:

I end each session with a note of optimism, what are you optimistic about as it relates to US-Japanese relations?



Ken Pyle:

I'm cautiously optimistic that after our misadventures in Iraq and Afghanistan, that we may finally have learned the lesson that history and culture count. Japan, the occupation mistakenly came to be a model for interventions in other countries, but I'm cautiously optimistic now that we've learned our lesson. And I like to quote an address that John Quincy Adams gave an Independence Day address in 1821. And he said that, "America has abstained from interference and the concerns of others, even when conflict has been for principles to which she clings." And then the famous phrase of his, "She goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy." In other words, the US would not use military force to intervene abroad.

In the 19th century, we believed that we should be a model. We were going to be as the Puritan ideal, the city on a hill. I'm cautiously optimistic that we will make our nation a model for the world and encourage other nations to follow us, but not intervene militarily as we have done so often in the past century.

I think we need to focus on nation building here at home.

Larry Bernstein:

Ken, thank you very much.

Larry Bernstein:

I would like to bring Barry Posen into the conversation. Barry, what were your thoughts on some of the arguments that Ken gave?

Barry Posen:

Well, it's hard, especially given the arguments that I make, to disagree with his invocation of the need of the United States to understand better the history and cultures of others and to be much more modest about its ability to impose a liberal democracy on others who have not found their way to it themselves. And it's particularly difficult to be the bearer of democracy at the point of a bayonet without arousing those nationalistic impulses that will cause the people we come to visit to reject it. So I'm sympathetic to all that and I'm also sympathetic, as I've heard it many times, to the observation that American Presidents like to invoke the example of the Japanese occupation or the German occupation as an indicator that if we work hard enough and stay long enough, we can somehow create the country we want.

They get away with this in part because Americans don't know much history and the success in these two countries was conditioned on many, many different variables. I wonder maybe if Ken might like to talk a little bit more about the variables that effected the U.S. occupation that may have assisted success, variables that are very, very hard to recreate. I wonder if he has any view on that.

Kenneth Pyle:

Perhaps most important was that pre-war Japan, especially pre-1930s Japan, had a great deal of experience with constitutional government. It didn't have popular sovereignty in the Meiji Constitution of 1889, but it did have a two party system. And in the 1920s, the leader of the majority party in the lower house of the parliament became Prime Minister. So the roots of a Japanese form of democracy were quite strong in the pre-war period and Japan had that to draw on if they had been given an opportunity to reform themselves. And the fact that the military by the end of the war had been totally discredited, if you think of the firebombing and all of the civilian suffering, the military had been totally discredited and would have been inevitably pushed aside in a Japanese form of reform.

And I think we could have compelled Japan to reform quite easily because by the last year of the war the Japanese Navy was totally defeated, and we could have sanctioned Japan without reforming it ourselves. We could have sanctioned Japan because they were in desperate need of trade and aid and investment and technology. And Japan's great weakness, of course, is that it has no resources of its own. So with a negotiated peace, we could have made sure that Japan carried out reforms by itself.

Larry Bernstein:

Ken and I discussed whether or not we should remove our troops from Okinawa and substantially reduce the U.S. military presence in Japan. Ken thought that if we did that, Japan might go nuclear or cut a deal with China. First, do you think Japan would go nuclear? And if so, is that a big problem? And second, do you think that, that would result in Japan making a side deal with China? Or do you think it will result in a more effective containment of Chinese military ambitions as we work together as two partners instead of one subordinate to the other?

Barry Posen:

It's a great question. I don't think many people doubt the material capacity of Japan to become a nuclear weapon state in short order and I don't think many political analysts doubt that there is a sizeable strain of the Japanese foreign policy elite opinion that would support such a policy. So I think that were the United States to disconnect itself militarily from Japan entirely, I think it's quite likely that Japan would become a nuclear weapon state. That said, if the United States were to disconnect itself from Japan militarily entirely, capitulation to China is another possibility. And we don't know what the outlines of such a capitulation would be. People often use the model of Finland, which was a rather small country on Russia's border that had fought the Russians nearly to a standstill in two wars before succumbing to superior numbers, the Finns made a deal with Russia after the war, and that was not to get in the way of Russia's foreign and security policy so long as they were left to have their own liberal democracy internally.

We cannot know what kinds of arrangements Japan could make with China, or what kinds of arrangements China would accept. But it's true, when you live next door to a great power, if you're not prepared to defend yourself and you don't have a strong ally, you're likely to appease. So we can't really know in advance which of these Japanese strategies is the most

likely. I consider nuclearization to be most likely, but I can't tell you that that's what's going to happen.

Larry Bernstein:

Yet in your book Barry you recommended that we remove our troops from Japan and try to encourage them to defend themselves as an equal partner in the Quad to limit Chinese aggression in the South China Sea.

Barry Posen:

I think that the present security relationship with Japan is just awful. I think the Japanese under invest in defense, and what they do invest, they invest poorly. And I think this puts an enormous onus on us to provide not only conventional fighting power, but to be willing to reach for the nuclear weapon early in a conflict or at least to do things that would raise the nuclear risk. So I don't like the way the alliance currently works. The way I interpret this is that the U.S. agrees to defend Japan and Japan agrees to help. That's not an alliance that I believe is sustainable, especially given the growing Chinese power.

We need an alliance where Japan and the United States each for their own national security reasons contribute meaningful amounts of military power to the problem of securing the Pacific, and there are a number of ways to get there. One is for the Americans to be very forthright and activist in bringing about a change and in part to make that change credible. I think the Americans should put some limits on what they do. I don't think the Americans should be afraid to withdraw some troops from some parts of Japan. Personally, I'm surprised at Ken's attitude towards Okinawa, not because Okinawa is not an important and useful military base, but because every American military person on Okinawa is not essential to Okinawa's utility. And this is especially true of the Marines, especially true of the Marine Air Base and the Futenma replacement facility in Okinawa. These are mistakes. I mean, this is a way of poisoning U.S.-Japan relationship, it poisons the alliance, and it achieves nothing militarily. The Marines just don't have a particularly important role in the defense of the first island chain. That role is an air and naval role.

So this is a freebie and I think it might both make the Okinawans a little happier and make the Japanese understand that American forces could come and American forces could go and that we expect to see more cooperation. That's what I would do inside the present grand strategy of the United States of America. Even if we want to maintain this commitment, I think we need to change the way it works. Now, beyond that, I would like to move to a world where other countries are responsible for their own defense, but this is a much bigger conversation about how we arrange what I would think would be the inevitable nuclearization of Japan under those circumstances. And how do you manage that without also causing the Chinese to make big bold moves? So, in the first instance, I believe that we have to reform the present situation and then we can think about something bigger, if that makes sense.

Larry Bernstein:

Barry, do you want to go with your original six-minute presentation and then we'll go for more questions about you?

Barry Posen:

So thanks for the introduction. I'm speaking for my book, *Restraint*, and *Restraint* is not just a book title. It's what people call the grand strategy that I recommend. And the title tells all, to achieve American national security, the United States should be moderate in its ends and choose moderate means to achieve those ends. Now, to do this, I think you have to define security rather narrowly, spin out a plan to achieve a limited set of goals, then see how you feel about it. Particularly, do you feel safe and do you still see lots of inexpensive ways to make yourself safer? Now, one reason I developed the grand strategy of restraint, and I stand on the shoulders of people who were ahead of me on this, is to give critics and doubters of the post-Cold War U.S. course of action, a grand strategy, a place to sit, a perch, to critique the grand strategy that I think we've had, which Larry mentioned is some have called liberal hegemony.

Barry Posen:

Now, I define security as "safety, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and a power position sufficient to comfortably defend all these three

Grand strategy is the outline of a plan to achieve security, a political military means-ends chain, and a set of real political and military priorities, arrayed to achieve those objectives. It's not a cookbook. It's a set of guidelines. Now, restraint as a grand strategy, at least for me, focuses on a limited set of security goals. Three are of concern to me. One is a classical goal, which is the US, as it did in World War II and during the Cold War, should oppose the creation of empires at either end of Europe, which might assemble enough power to conceivably threaten the US. This is a very hard thing to do, but it's not inconceivable. Now, in Europe, Russia is presently too weak, and the Europeans are in my view too strong for hegemony to be a risk. So I don't think there's much the United States really needs to keep doing there. And that's where I've devoted a lot of my attention recently.

At the other end of the world, China is stronger and getting even stronger. So US help in Asia is probably needed. The question, as we were discussing earlier, is how much and what kind? And restraint advocates, and as I said, there's, many of us, are working through the question of what a restraint policy in Asia looks like, but we are not there yet. We don't have a fully worked out way to approach this problem.

Second interest is to be vigilant against unusually ambitious non-state actors who choose violent means. We've just had the 9/11 20 year anniversary. And it's a good reminder of this problem. The devil here is in the details of exercising this vigilance. Occupying other countries militarily is probably not the best way. Then third, we have to think about the risks of nuclear weapons and the risks they pose. And I'm particularly interested in the problem of nuclear weapons falling into the hands of non-state actors. States have a return address. You can deter states. You may not be able to deter non-state actors.

Barry Posen:

Now, the US has the luxury of focusing on a limited set of threats as well as a few goals, because it is inherently a very secure country for economic, geographical, and even technological reasons. Now, in contrast, the US should abandon the grand strategy of the last

30 years, which I call liberal hegemony. And there, the title also tells all. The premise of that strategy is the US should be the strongest state in the world by a considerable margin, and the US should aim to transform other states so they look more like us. This strategy is encompassed in the famous Washington phrase, the US led liberal world order.

My view is that liberal hegemony has more or less failed and it has failed for fundamental reasons that cannot be overcome by more military power or more foreign aid or cleverer diplomacy. There's a bunch of reasons. One, other powers also want security and they compete to get it. Russia and China are the noteworthy great powers. Iran, a middle power. The very old international relations theory called realism predicts that other states want security as well. They don't just trust other great powers, even ones as nice as the United States.

Second, US allies are also self-interested actors. Because the US offers them extravagant security guarantees, they under-contribute to the common defense, which raises US costs and risks. I call this cheap riding. Some also act with more boldness or carelessness than is reasonable because they trust in the US insurance policy. This I call reckless driving. Another problem, as Ken talked about, is that nationalism is a strong force in the world. Even a benevolent liberal US offering good advice will often have its advice rejected if we bring that advice at the point of a gun. Iraq and Afghanistan are object lessons.

Another problem is that there has been a diffusion of military power in the world associated with the processes of globalization and modernization. And this translates into more military capability for more actors. And this has simply made the waging of war more difficult and costly than it was, and it has made sustained military competition with other great powers, even more demanding. It's not easy to compete with a country that has a GDP that's more or less the same as yours, which is where we are with China.

War itself, which has been a choice instrument for the United States in the last 30 years, is a blunt and costly instrument. It's not a scalpel. But members of the foreign policy establishment seem to believe that threats of war are often effective and if we have to make good on our threats, it will be easy to win. I think the record shows otherwise. There's a long list of potential wars implied by the commitments that the current US foreign policy establishment would like to make, commitments regarding Iran, commitments regarding North Korea, Syria, Ukraine, Taiwan. These all involve the possibility of war. And by comparison, Iraq and Afghanistan, which were relatively limited counterinsurgencies in sum cost at least \$2 trillion to achieve not much actual success and in these other wars that are presently in the mix, could cost a great deal more. And several of these potential wars would risk nuclear escalation.

Now, at this point, I see only two paths to change. One is, the United States can continue this liberal hegemony strategy until we finally run into a crisis that really hurts and forces sudden retrenchment, something much worse than Afghanistan or Iraq. Now this could be ugly in part because many states may not be ready to look after themselves if they haven't been warned. And other states, challengers, may see sudden windows of opportunity. I'm a small C conservative when it comes to diplomacy. I don't like sudden movements in international politics.

The other way the Americans could proceed, which I think is more reasonable is to embark on serious reforms, the grand strategy restraint would secure key US interests and lower costs and

risks by limiting our aims and being careful with our means, especially military means. Finally, I should note that restraint does not preclude cooperation with others to deal with problems of inherent common concern, which no nation state can truly address on its own, such as climate change or pandemics. Indeed, it might make such cooperation easier by lowering the temperature, lowering the number of competitive international security relationships, which have a habit of becoming all-consuming and zero sum, which right now, sadly, is the direction of our relation with China.

World politics is entering a new phase because the US is no longer the sole great power in the world. It may also be true that economic resources within the United States available for national security will become scarcer because there's more claimants for those resources. Certainly, the resource of public political support is becoming scarcer. In my view, US political leaders must choose their foreign policy objectives more carefully, manage resources more scrupulously, and threaten and employ military force less frequently. And the grand strategy of restraint points the way.

Larry Bernstein:

Thanks, Barry. Let's start out with liberal hegemony. Why did it come to dominate diplomatic circles for so long? And why are its leaders still defending it as the appropriate US strategy given the record?

Barry Posen:

Well, I wish I had an answer that satisfied me to your question but I don't. I think it's a confluence of three things at the end of the Cold War. One is, given the way the Soviet Union came apart, we did have a sudden movement in international politics, and what we had long thought was a bipolar world, basically dominated by two great powers, to what was essentially a unipolar world, where if you ordered powers, the United States was not just number one. There were missing slots for powers, two, three, and four. And the rest of the countries in the world were just not very capable then. And that kind of power advantage is a really heady why. Second is, where and how the Cold War ended, which is, the Cold War ended with the Americans out there in the world. It ended with a frontier. And that frontier was well extended. And on the frontiers of empires, especially with those power vacuums, there's a tendency to keep trying to pacify the frontier. Third is, the ideological elements to the Cold War is basically the liberals against whatever you want to call it, reactionaries, totalitarians, autocrats, whatever term you want to use and the cold war seemed to vindicate the superiority of our system.

So we took it as a moment to basically do something that has had a long tradition in American thought about international politics, which has transformed international politics once and for all. And this is why the American elite moved from trying to take what was a successful, largely, but not entirely liberal, capitalist, anti-Soviet coalition, and grow that into a liberal, capitalist, US-led world order. But just because I can say those things and spell out the history and talk about the big causes, doesn't mean I'm really that confident in my assessment of why it turned out the way it did.

Kenneth Pyle:

Barry, this is Ken. I've just finished reading a book that's getting a lot of attention among China scholars. It's written by Rush Doshi who is Biden's advisor on China on the NSC, National Security Council.

Barry Posen:

I saw the review. I didn't read the book.

Kenneth Pyle:

It's called *The Long Game* and its subtitle is, *China's Grand Strategy to Displace American Order*. And as I was reading it, and knowing that I had this session coming up with you, I was surprised to find he refers to you as someone who might favor an accommodation with China of some sort. He says something to the effect that even Barry Posen doesn't favor a maximalist grand bargain with China as though you might support some other kind of accommodation. So I'm wondering how you feel about a policy of restraint applying to China today. You've just said that you see the control of the Eurasian continent as critical to our security. And so I'm wondering how you feel about China today.

Barry Posen:

Well, as a card-carrying realist, I can't help but notice the vast increase in Chinese economic power and the concomitant increase in its military power in the last 20 years. And that makes China a candidate for regional hegemony in Asia. I have not read Rush's book. I've seen a review. The Chinese might, in their more excited moments, imagine Chinese world hegemony, but if they do, it means they haven't looked at a map and they haven't done their sums. So I don't think that's in the cards.

Now, the question of what the relationship between China and the United States and the other Asian powers would be, I think that is in the cards. I think that is up for competition, but also up for negotiation. Now, unlike Rush, I'm not confident I understand exactly what China wants in Asia. I think that, like most great powers in the first instance, it would like a world where American military power is not entirely at its throat. And there's an old cartoon from the '60s that features a bemedaled American general pointing at a map saying, "Mr. President, our defense problems would be much easier if people stopped building their countries near our bases." And that's because our bases are everywhere.

Now, the United States needs some basis in Asia to be able to assist countries there in defending themselves, and to be able to defend whatever interests we have. But at the same time, I think the United States should think very carefully about military deployments that have the dual effect of making the Chinese think we're getting ready to come after them. And this is a very hard line to walk, but I think it's a walk. It's a line that we need to think about. And if we look at the way the US military tends to do its military planning, the way they think about war is to go for the throat. It's not so different than the strategy you describe against the Japanese in World War II. So these are things that we have to work with.

And as far as shared leadership of global politics, again, I'm not even really sure I know what this means, but I think on some issues it's kind of inevitable that we have to cooperate with China. So if we accept the inevitability of cooperation with them on some issues, maybe we better accept that we're going to be cooperating with them.

I mean, as far as I can tell, everyone's crisis of the moment is climate change, and it's a tough problem to solve. And it can't be solved unless the most advanced industrial states in the world cooperate. United States and China have to cooperate to address this problem. And it seems to me we're going the other way, which is we're taking one issue after another, whether it's military, whether it's economic, or technological, and we are turning them into zero-sum issues. So, as I said earlier, I'm a little bit humble about my ability to prescribe a grand strategy for Asia. But I think the direction in which we're going is quite disturbing and I think requires a lot more thought before we embark upon it.

Kenneth Pyle:

The issue that is really drawing critical attention, and I've heard the last three PACOM commanders talk about this just recently is Taiwan. In your book, you say events are moving China's way, and this may not be the place to make a stand. So Taiwan is the critical issue at the moment, I think. And I wonder how you feel about that.

Barry Posen:

Well, in a perfect world, the United States would have gotten out of its commitment we have with Taiwan. It is a weird one because, for all the historical reasons that you know, it doesn't have that NATO quality to it. There were no American forces on Taiwan, because we agreed with the Chinese a long time ago that we weren't going to organize things that way. And we did it for a reason. So if it were up to me, we'd just shake and lose the commitment 10, 15 years ago when we were strong. We would have basically said, Taiwan has to stand on its own two feet, and we would have made the point that both Taiwan and China agree that there was one China and it's time for the Taiwanese to start working that out with the Chinese.

Unfortunately it's kind of too late for that. So the question is, what's the next best thing? And I think we need to get, and I'm quite critical of the American military, because it's really willing to kind of ring the warning klaxon without talking about the possible military solutions. On the one hand, I think Taiwan is an island that's easy to defend. I think China would find it very, very hard to conquer Taiwan. And there's many things that the Taiwanese can do to make itself hard to conquer. And there's many things that the Americans could do that aren't particularly offensive. I mean that in a tactical military sense, to help the Taiwanese defend themselves.

But here is the problem. We do not have the military capability to end a China-Taiwan-US war on our terms. For all the arguments that have to do with the power of Chinese nationalism and the sheer size of the Chinese state and its military power, the United States is not going to get China to unconditionally surrender Taiwan to be an independent state militarily. And if we try, it's going to be a military horror show that's going to run serious risk of nuclear escalation.

So I think that a war over Taiwan where Taiwan and the United States could initially be successful tactically still cannot end without a negotiated solution. In other words, just as you



recommended negotiation for the past war with Japan, I believe that we will have to consider negotiation with China about Taiwan. And I think if we get through the initial stages of a war without major escalation to the use of nuclear weapons or something else, a lot of voices are going to suddenly start asking about negotiation.

I don't think Taiwan wants an endless war in the region. I don't think Japan will want an endless war in the region. I don't really think the US will want an endless war in the region.

So we're going to end up with a negotiated solution. And then that negotiated solution, it's not going to be the Chinese who give more. It's going to end up being Taiwan. Now, if we can see that far ahead, then we probably better start considering that negotiation now, not later, because maybe we could avoid the war altogether.

Larry Bernstein:

You describe this war as just being between Taiwan, China, and the US, but there's also India, Japan, and Australia, and what they want, and what their fears of greater Chinese ambitions are. But when you have allies and you're not running the show entirely, it's more complicated and more nuanced with these additional players. What do these other players want and how will that change the dynamics of this dispute?

Barry Posen:

Well, it's pretty clear what the countries in Asia actually want. What they want to do is be able to trade with China and make a ton of money out of that trade and simultaneously feel militarily secure. And if there's a war, the trade goes away. And because of the risk associated with combat throughout Asia, feeling secure also goes away. And I presume what they would like is the war to be ended in a way that restores the possibilities of trade and also makes them feel more secure.

If you don't end the war early, it's going to be very hard to restore trade. And if you don't end the war before it becomes really, really ferocious, I think it's going to be pretty hard to restore a sense of security. So I'm recommending a kind of warfare here that people haven't waged in a long time. It's the kind of war that used to be waged in the 18th century, sometimes in the 19th century, but certainly not the 20th. It's limited war. And I'd prefer not have the war altogether.

Now, what role would Japan play in this war? I think Japan would certainly try and defend itself if the Chinese chose to expand the field of battle. Would the Japanese be enthusiastic participants if the Chinese had left them alone? I'm actually quite doubtful that they would be. There's nothing in the US-Japan security treaty that requires them to be in that war. And they certainly don't have a security treaty with Taiwan that requires them to be in that war. They can talk a good game now, but that's easy. The real question is, what are you going to bring to the table?

I think the Australians will certainly defend the sea lanes in the Pacific if the Chinese want to come out and try and harass them. But are the Australians really going to want to be in the war? Hard to say. They've been quite willing cooperators in the War in Afghanistan. They fought in Vietnam. Maybe they would.

I think you're right to bring up the possibility that different countries have different interests. India also. India would prefer that China not successfully expand by the sword. But is India willing to have the war spread to its entire land boundary with China over the question of whether Taiwan becomes independent or not? I think we shouldn't assume these things. Assuming that all these countries are going to line up and see their interests and having a war to the knife with China, I don't think that's going to be in their interest.

And I think if the Americans are going to end up leading this coalition, which they probably would, because they're going to be the greatest power, they have to consider war aims in a way that keeps everybody on side. And I don't think in contrast to World War II, unconditional surrender was a way to keep everyone on side, especially the Soviets. I'm not sure it's going to be a good way to keep everyone on side if tragically we end up having this war with China over Taiwan.

Larry Bernstein:

John Lewis Gaddis wrote his book *Strategies of Containment*. And one of the important aspects was this concept of asymmetric response. The way you kind of described a Chinese aggression against Taiwan, which suggested the whole essence of the battle be referenced around securing and defending Taiwan. But it's a big world. You mentioned the Indian-Chinese border, and China has a lot to defend. It needs raw materials just like the Japanese did before World War II. China can't defend its sea lanes, particularly outside of the South China Sea. It has a lot to lose.

Barry Posen:

That's absolutely true. It does have a lot to lose.

Larry Bernstein:

If you were recommending a military action against the Chinese, assuming that China and Taiwan came to battle, would you recommend that the action be taken in the South China Sea to limit the war? Or would you take on China somewhere else?

Barry Posen:

It's hard to fix the pattern of the war in a conversation this brief. But my view is that if the United States is going to fight this war, it should try and fight it carefully. The Chinese have many debilities going into a war of this kind, and those debilities can put a lot of pressure on China. I don't think they can cause China to give up its objectives in Taiwan, but I think they can impose costs in a way that gives us a little bit of control over escalation.

So I think the observation you made is the right one. And that is that should this war occur and should the Americans be in this war, the Americans are going to make it pretty much impossible for China to import or export by sea. Command of the sea is something that I would say the United States, at least in the open oceans, still enjoys. In my book, I recommend the United States continue to invest heavily in maintaining that command. And because of the way the geography around China works, they are highly constrained in their access to the sea. So I don't

believe the United States has to go into the South China Sea to exert this pressure on China, we just have to control the exits, and I think we can do that. And once we control the exits in the entrance, no Chinese ships are sailing in or out, and there's going to be no exports and there's going to be no imports. And this has the effect of forcing China back on dependency on trade with its land partners. And it really in a weird way puts them in the hands of the Russians. And the Chinese and the Russians are quite friendly right now. I don't think this is a friendship born of love.

It's born of interest and detestation of the United States and the fact that we're usually pushing both of them all the time. So I'm not sure this is a happy and comfortable situation. I don't think the Russians in any sense are perfect substitutes for the massive import-export trade that China currently sustains. So I think this is a very high cost and I think this is an economical way to put military pressure on China. Any military pressure could be escalated, there was no way to fight a war without a risk of escalation, but I think this is a much more sensible way to apply pressure than some of the earlier ideas of the American military, which was to launch air raids deep into China, to try and attack China's nuclear forces with conventional bombs in the hopes of changing the nuclear balance, putting the Chinese nuclear deterrent at risk, trying to chase ... they never said this, but in the event, I'm sure they would try and chase Chinese regime leaders put their lives at risk.

This was the way the United States military used to like to think about fighting. I think they're starting to think better of it, because I think the Chinese are getting too strong, but there is this tendency in American strategy to operate this way. This is the way we plan to operate against the Soviet Union. And I don't think it's necessary in the first instance against China, because I think they do have the vulnerability that you described.

Kenneth Pyle:

Barry. This is Ken again. As I read you, the essence of the opposite of liberal hegemony is a kind of balance of power system.

Barry Posen:

That's correct.

Kenneth Pyle:

Yeah. One of the obstacles democracies have is appreciating diplomacy. And I saw that in the case of Japan in the Second World War as I mentioned. So the balance of power basically works only through accommodation. And the job of diplomats is to reach accommodation through persuasion and compromise, and that's very hard to do in a democracy. And when you say we should negotiate with China over a solution to Taiwan, I guess I'm very skeptical reading American public opinion today that any political leader could undertake that in the face of the kind of public opinion that exists today.

Barry Posen:

I think that's right, but one thing's for sure they won't do it if no one tells them to. In other words, as I said, I wrote this book not because I thought policymakers were going to have a Eureka moment and say, "Oh yes, we'll do what Posen says or his friends say." I wrote it so that critics of the present course of action would have a place to stand in a place to start. And one element of that place to stand to and place to start is to acknowledge that there are other great powers in the world and that when there are other great powers in the world, there are only so many choices. And to lay out what those choices are, so that Americans know that when they eschew diplomacy, when they eschew compromise, when they insist that the purpose of negotiation is for us to tell other people how things are going to be, and then for them to sign on the dotted line, that that plan has costs.

And if the American people in their wisdom are willing to pay those costs, then who am I to stop them? But they need to understand what those costs are and they need to understand there's another way to proceed. And then they can ask themselves how they feel about that. I don't make Asia my principal bailiwick, I concentrate mostly in Europe. But in Asia, the US detente with China involved a hard bitten realist named Richard Nixon, who at one time had been a very severe cold warrior and an ideologue, making a deal with China, because we wanted China's help in addressing the Soviet Union at a time when we thought our power was not up to the task.

And when we cut that deal, that's when the Americans agreed along with Taiwan and along with China, that there's one China, that Taiwan is not an independent country. We don't have that agreement with China. And every time we do something that challenges that agreement with China, we are going back on an arrangement we made. Taylor Freeville whose work I'm sure you know, is a colleague of mine. And I read his first book to say, one thing the Chinese are really neuralgic about is when people sit in any place where they have a disagreement with other countries about real estate. They may live with that disagreement for quite a long time, but they won't let it go backwards in the other side's favor. They may not insist that it moves forward in their favor, although lately they have been, but they sure get neuralgic when it starts moving the other way.

And probably because of Taiwan's adventurous diplomacy, and partly because of the encouragement of various actions in the United States, it starting to look to China like we're going backwards. And that's not to say that the Chinese are angels, they're not. They are also getting restless. So we're entering a very touchy period and it would be really good if people stopped to think. So, yes, I'm a realist. I would like to return to a world where people thought in terms of balance of power, where diplomacy, which is not only about talk, but also about mutual understanding, so the risk of war in the background, led to some sort of compromise or accommodation. But right now neither we nor the Chinese are in that kind of a mood. And I'm not going to just say, "Well, if they're not in the mood, then I give up, let's have the war." I want to remind people that that war is not pretty.

Larry Bernstein:

Maybe this is a good time to end on a note of optimism. Barry, what are you optimistic about, specifically about restraint as a policy?

Barry Posen:

Well, I'm not by nature, a wildly optimistic person.

One thing I am optimistic about is that this strategy, and again, I basically switched my former views on strategy to these views because I was persuaded by colleagues. I'm not the first person to make this argument. But when I first made this argument 10 or 15 years ago, I was the petulant child that was invited to the party because you couldn't leave him out. So I'd go to meetings with all my liberal hegemony friends, and they would give me five minutes to state my point and then they'd move on. Well, the debate has moved on now. Restraint is getting entrenched in Washington debate. And a pluralist liberal democracy can't have an honest discussion of foreign policy if it's controlled, basically by one elite and one idea.

And that's the way things were up until about 10 or 15 years ago. So that's changed and that's good. Second, on a particular issue in which core sense and reason needed to be applied, President Joe Biden made a courageous decision to abandon a losing proposition in Afghanistan. He did it for his own reasons, not because he was pushed domestically, but 60 or 70% of the American people have believed in this policy. They believed in it before he launched the disengagement and they believed in it during the disengagement. They may be unhappy about the video that accompanied the disengagement. They may wish that it was prettier and perhaps had Biden had even more wisdom and more cooperation from the American military, it could have been prettier, it wasn't pretty. But even given it some prettiness, the American people in their wisdom still support the action of their president. This tells me that the American people are ready for restraint. So this is what gives me optimism.

Larry Bernstein:

Barry, thank you. Ken, thank you as well.

Larry Bernstein:

I'd like to introduce our next guest, Dr. Gary Lewandowski, who is a professor of psychology at Monmouth University. He's also the author of *Stronger Than You Think: The 10 Blind Spots That Undermine Your Relationship and How to See Past Them*. Gary, why don't you begin.

Gary Lewandowski:

Thank you. Everyone deserves a great relationship. Have you found yours? Though that may seem like an easy question, it's deceptively difficult to know for sure if your relationship is truly great. But that's the nature of relationships, isn't it? There's always a bit of uncertainty. Early on, we all have our doubts. Does this person like me? Am I really in love? Then we can second guess ourselves later on. Are they really the one? Is this relationship right for me? Eventually we wonder, am I settling? Can my relationship be better? Even, what am I doing wrong? Tough questions to answer but all fair to ask. Though we may know what we want it's surprisingly difficult to be sure about what we have. When thinking about whether to stay with your current partner or whether to break up, what factors might you consider?

Well, when researchers asked participants this question, participants gave 27 reasons to stay as well as 23 reasons to leave. Now here's the really confusing part though. Most of those same participants were inclined to stay. Inertia is a powerful thing. But those exact same people who were going to stay also reported that they have an above average inclination to leave. They're conflicted. Although it's clear from this research that doubts are common it doesn't mean that they're harmless. A different study of 464 recently married spouses revealed that in two thirds of couples, at least one person had doubts about the relationship before they got married. When women were the ones that had more doubts, it was linked to a higher divorce rate down the road. That was even after controlling for a bunch of other really important factors, like their current satisfaction, whether the parents were divorced and personality factors. Clearly doubts can be a relationship killer.

On one hand, we all rightfully want the great relationship we deserve and don't want to settle. On the other hand, we don't want to be overly critical of our partner and lose something truly great. It's hard to sort out. If you truly want to make your relationship decisions better you need better data. I opened my book with this quote from Anais Nin, "Love never dies a natural death. It dies because we don't know how to replenish its source. It dies of blindness and errors." Many of those errors are self-inflicted. Resulting blindness makes it hard to see our relationship clearly. We don't know how to replenish our love because we're guilty of leading too much of our relationships fate to chance. It's odd because this isn't how we approach most other things.

Most of us have taken classes to become a better parent, to be better at yoga, to be better at golf. We seek expertise to handle our finances, to decorate our home, or to select the best college for our kids. We also do lots of research. But for a relationship, what do we typically do? Nothing. How often do we consult with experts? Never. Do we read up on the science of relationships? Not even a little bit. Yet we all intuitively know that relationships are important and yet we're still negligent. I mean, can you think of any other area of your life where you have so much riding on one decision, on one person, more than your relationship? We need to do better. Your future happiness depends on it.

Here are a few blind spots you likely don't realize that you have. First were overly romantic. Yes, love isn't really even enough for relationship success and when we focus on love, we focus on the wrong kind. Soul mates are more mythical than magical and believing in them does more harm than good. We give commitment way too much credit. Again, we're also not selfish enough. There's more room for I and me in the we and us of our relationship. We often give our partner too much support, which can backfire. And the support we give is often misguided. Ending a relationship also isn't as bad as we think and it can actually be quite beneficial.

You need to be smarter about your relationships because relationships are important, time is short, and mistakes are costly. Everyone deserves a great relationship. What is one hour, one day, one week, one month, or one lifetime of your fulfillment worth? As you seek greater fulfillment, follow your heart but again, take some science with you. When you do you may just find that your relationship is stronger than you think.

Larry Bernstein:

I want to start with a conversation about divorce. What do you think causes it? It seems like in your book, you suggest that many breakups are for the better. How should one evaluate that decision? And how do you think about kids as part of that process?

Gary Lewandowski:

The research shows that when people consider divorce, they consider that decision for many, many years. What eventually causes divorce were problems that were there from the very beginning. And so it's important for people early in their relationship to really take stock of the issues that they face and make sure that those aren't going to come back to bite them later in the future. Kids are certainly one of those big relationship investments. Investments are those things you put in a relationship that you can't easily get out of or get back if you lose the relationship.

If the parents deal with divorce well, and it's mutual, it's respectful, they willingly embrace co-parenting, there's not a lot of arguing and strife, divorce isn't as problematic for children. Because you can use that experience to model having high standards, looking for the best for yourself. I mean, there's some positives that can come out of that too. But certainly, most often the cases that divorces aren't as amicable as we would like them to be and so when kids see that from their parents, that can be very problematic.

Larry Bernstein:

I have a 19- and 21-year-old kids. What advice would you give me to give them as they begin their relationships?

Gary Lewandowski:

The best piece of advice I give to college age students is make sure your partner is your best friend. We expect them to be kind and respectful and always there for us and to treat us well. And we need to make sure that we're holding our romantic partners to those same standards. The other really useful part of using this lens is it helps you emphasize the right kind of love. Typically, we spend too much time focusing on passionate love. Passionate love is your heart going pitter-patter, and that nervousness. It's the attraction, the heat of a relationship. But the other kind of love is that kind of best friend love. It's that I really enjoy being with you as a person. I like you; I like spending time with you. I find you funny. You're a great person to talk to.

That passion, as much as it's exciting to fall in love, that passion eventually fades. If we place too much of an emphasis on the passion, we're constantly going to feel like we're falling out of love, whereas if you put the emphasis on companionate love, your love is only going to grow and improve over time.

Larry Bernstein:

I got married in my early thirties, but plenty of people get married in their mid-twenties, and my parents got married when they were 20. If you're 20, you're still developing. People do

grow, people do change. How should we think about change and individual growth in terms of relationships, and what are the extra risks you take when you get married young?

Gary Lewandowski:

I think the risk is at 20, you're less sure about who you are as a person than you would be when you're 30. Similarly, if you're a 20-year-old marrying another 20-year-old, your partners in the same boat, that they don't know themselves as well as they're going to in another 10 years. So, if you have two people who don't know themselves as well, you're just heightening the degree of difficulty for the likelihood that you're both going to grow in similar, and desirable, mutually beneficial ways over the next 10, 20, 30 years. It becomes a little bit easier once you're in your 30s and 40s. You're more of a fully formed certain person. You're not trying to figure it all out. You need to choose wisely, and that probably is a much more precarious choice when you're making that choice at 20 than 30. By 30, you've done a lot of that development on your own, and probably your partner's influence isn't nearly as great. But the earlier you get married, and it's not as much early as less you understand about who you are, the more you're going to necessarily rely on your partner.

Larry Bernstein:

We had the Princeton Mom, Susan Patton, on our show a couple of months ago. She wrote a book called *Marry Smart: Advice for Finding the One*. What she recommended, to women in particular, was marrying young men that they'd meet in college or soon thereafter. That women are at their top of their game in terms of attractiveness, and can choose a better mate, one that's smart and successful. How do you feel about recommendations to encourage women to marry younger, and also to try to find their partner in college or among a very bright cohort at work?

Gary Lewandowski:

I could get on board with is finding a partner in college is helpful because it's like a big dating pool that where everyone there has been preselected to be similar to you on lots of different traits. So, I say this to students a lot, where you never in your life are you going to be around so many other people that are similar in age, similar in interests, similar in life's stage and those types of things. So, it's helpful in that regard.

The problem goes back to something we just mentioned a few minutes ago is how well is yourself developed when you're in college? Particularly, if you're meeting first year versus your senior year. I mean, those are vast differences. How much students figure out who they are during college is profound. So, insisting that you find your partner in college and saying that's going to be superior to other ways, I think that's a pretty risky bet.

I also think that the one aspect of something you mentioned in there was this idea that women are at their physical peak, and that's going to help them attract a better partner. No one should want to attract their partner based entirely on their physical looks. Because if you're relying on your partner to like you for how you look, you're asking them to like you, based on something that inevitably over time is likely to decline. You want your partner to love you and respect you



for who you are, and the kind of person you are, and how you treat other people, and all those types of qualities and characteristics that are only going to age with grace and to get better over time, and not be so superficial about it.

Larry Bernstein:

In your opening remarks, you mentioned that we do a lot of work to improve our golf game, but we don't work on relationships nearly as much. Another comment that Susan Patton had on our program was that a lot of women really focus on their career development, but they don't spend as much effort on seeking a partner or maintaining and improving their relationships. What sort of emphasis should we place on finding our spouse? How much time should we place on working on our relationships, and how do we compare that with working on our education and career development in comparison?

Gary Lewandowski:

You want to think of some of the key areas of your life going forward, and where your happiness and wellbeing and fulfillment are going to come from. That's a big reason why people choose, wisely in many cases, to focus a lot on our careers. But you can make all the same arguments for your relationship, and so it's certainly an area that you have to pay attention to.

I think you're going to find better relationships when you're not necessarily looking for them, because you might be trying too hard. I think the best thing for people to do in terms of finding a relationship is really foster that sense of self-understanding. Become comfortable with who you are as a person, really focus on your self-development. Be comfortable being alone, so that when you're in a relationship, it's because you want it, not because you need it.

Be really confident and comfortable with who you are, and the good relationships will find you. It doesn't mean you can't go looking for relationships, but to the extent that you're clear and confident about who you are as a person, you're going to be less willing to tolerate bad partners. . Too often, people are willing to stay in bad relationships because they think any relationship is better than no relationship, and that certainly isn't the case.

Larry Bernstein:

We had a special episode on internet dating. The opportunities are unbelievable. How do you think about choice, internet dating, and how it affects short-term and long-term relationships?

Gary Lewandowski:

One of the really big positives if people use them well, is you have a lot more information about people upfront. So, if you go back to my earlier advice or suggestion about making your partner your best friend, your best friend is somebody who shares a lot of the same interests. So, if you use a dating app wisely, you have so much information that you can really tailor your potential partner to be much more like you. The choice and the number of choices can also lead to some really bad behavior. You can start adopting this relationship shopping kind of mentality where, "Hey, I found you. You're really great. You're an eight out of 10, but there's someone over there

who might be an 8.1 out of 10, so I'm going to ditch you and try this next thing." And you can get spoiled by the number of options and think that there's always going to be a better choice.

Larry Bernstein:

In your opening remarks, you mentioned being selfish in relationships. What do you mean by that and how to both preserve and achieve personal growth within a relationship?

Gary Lewandowski:

We have this overly romantic notion that the key to relationship success is to be completely selfless and give ourselves completely up to our partner and just step back and let our partner take hold. The problem is that the research doesn't show that that's the case. The research actually shows that when we engage in self-sacrifice, it's worse for our relationship. Our partner doesn't necessarily appreciate it, and the relationship outcomes aren't that great. And so we need to use our relationships as a way to become a better person. And so, if we're constantly stepping back and not looking for things to foster and grow our sense of self, we're missing out on a key source of self-growth that we need to sustain ourselves.

Sacrifice is kind of an interesting thing in relationships because the research shows that when we make sacrifices for our partner, we become more committed. And that sounds good. We have a stronger bond. The problem is we're not necessarily happier and we're not necessarily closer. We have this stronger bond to someone that we're not necessarily happier with.

Larry Bernstein:

In your book, you talk about relationships where one of the partners goes out of town during the week and so there's a significant distance between the two partners. And in those relationships, you mentioned that sometimes it makes the heart grow dearer and the relationship works out even better. One of the interesting aspects about this COVID situation is that many people are now working from home and they've quadrupled down on the amount time they spend with their partner or in close proximity. How should we think about this change in behavior as it affects relationships?

Gary Lewandowski:

Yeah, it's been one of the big predictions about the pandemic that has ended up to be completely wrong. And that is March of 2020, the big prediction was, "Oh my gosh, we're going to be quarantining with our spouses so the divorce rate is going to skyrocket." The reason why long-distance relationships are strong is because those relationships have to focus on good communication, and it's not as much about the physical, passionate love kinds of aspects.

One of the things that the pandemic did for us, for those of us in good relationships, is it gave us more of an opportunity to spend time with someone who's likely our best friend. And what could be better than spending time with your best friend? Now you might argue a little bit more, but arguing in and of itself isn't necessarily bad for relationships, that's communication, right? You're helping to advocate for your own point of view and better understand your partner's point of view, and so you're going to have those little points of friction. But the

research also shows that those little points of friction are much better than ignoring them, which is much easier to do when you don't see your partner all the time, and then allowing them to accumulate and eventually blow up.

Larry Bernstein:

Obviously in life, in any relationship there's going to be trouble and it's important how we deal with it. And I think the more similar we are in our backgrounds the better, because when we see that curve ball, we can say, "Oh, what are we going to need to do here? At least we agree on a common understanding?" How should we work together to face the troubles of life?

Gary Lewandowski:

I think that last point, you nailed it. Any time you and your partner have a problem or there's some point of conflict, you need to think of it as not me versus you. Arguments shouldn't be about confrontations and who's the winner. Instead, it needs to be you and me versus the problem. And the problem might be a misunderstanding and it might be some sort of difference of opinions. And if it's you and I versus the problem, every time we have an argument or some sort of conflict, we have an opportunity to grow closer as a couple. Because once we travel over that ground and go along that journey and puzzle it out together, our relationships should be stronger as a result.

Now that isn't how most people think about conflict, right? The number of times that people mention to me something along the lines of, "Hey, I know I have a good relationship because my partner and I we never fight." It's a bad sign. Because if you're not having conflict with your partner, it means somebody is actively trying to avoid it. And a lot of times what the research shows is that the couples who believe conflict is a bad sign, they actually have worse relationships. And the people that believe arguing shouldn't be tolerated, they're less satisfied and more aggressive with their partner.

And so as much as you're trying to save the relationship by not fighting, you're actually creating a much more dangerous situation because you're allowing these 10 little things, which if you had dealt with each of them as they came up and you kept the small problems small wouldn't be any threat to your relationship, but if you let those 10 things accumulate over time, they create this potential for a major fight that could threaten your relationship.

Larry Bernstein:

In the book, you mentioned that Barack and Michelle Obama went to marriage counseling, that they have a great marriage, but like all great marriages, there's friction, and sometimes you need a third party to come in and help. What do you think the role is of counseling to improve marriages? And why do you think that the Obama's going to marriage counseling is a sign of strength, not a sign of weakness?

Gary Lewandowski:

They seem to be very supportive of each other and enjoy each other's company. And the fact that they made it known that they went to counseling, I think is one of the ultimate signs of

strength because it just shows that relationships aren't perfect. And to learn that relationships take work, is a really important message to get out to people because, it's like I said in my opening, people spend very little time learning about relationships. We learn a lot of things kind of accidentally by the relationships we see.

I think counseling, or any third-party objective opinion from somebody who's not immediately involved in your relationship, helps give you some new insight and see things a little bit more clearly.

Larry Bernstein:

In your opening remarks, you mentioned that there's inertia in relationships, especially as it relates to break ups, you have so much invested in it. You're going to be alone, at least for a period of time. How do you evaluate inertia, the uncertainty of the future, that another relationship will be better or worse?

Gary Lewandowski:

Wow. That's probably the million-dollar question, right? It's really, really hard. People when they're thinking about breakups, spend a lot of time deliberating over it. A lot of it is, the simplest way is basically, look at how many good things are in your relationship and look how many bad things there are, and you should have a preponderance of good and very few bad, right? And if you have a lot of bad things in your relationship, that's a problem.

You can start looking at other people's relationships. One of the best ways to get some insight into your relationship is to ask a friend, particularly females. If you ask your female best friends, females' best friends have the most insight into what's really going on in a relationship. And when it comes to making predictions about the future, our friends are much better than we are at knowing what's actually going to happen. And in fact, the research shows even our mom, has a better sense of what's going to happen. Spend more time learning about what makes for good relationships. When you learn about what makes for good, strong, healthy relationships and what makes for problematic, unhealthy, abusive relationships, where do you see your relationship?

I think people need to be a little bit quicker to break up than they are, because we tend to think that our relationship breakups are going to be worse than they actually are, there's research to support that as well.

Larry Bernstein:

We end each session on a note of optimism. What are you optimistic about as it relates to your subject, how to improve and have great relationships?

Gary Lewandowski:

I am optimistic because I think the pandemic really showed just how important relationships are, those really deep, meaningful, romantic relationships with a partner who is our best friend, that when you're quarantined or you need somebody to rely on, having that person there to be your rock, someone to rely on, someone to help out, someone to spend time with, someone to

enjoy that. I think that this experience over the last 18 plus months, has really opened our eyes to seeing just how important those relationships are. I think it's going to help people see relationships as less disposable, a little bit less of that relationship shopping mentality on online dating. And I'm really hoping that this sort of helps usher us into somewhat of a golden age of relationships, where we really start focusing on what it takes to have those good, strong relationships that we all deserve.

Larry Bernstein:

Gary, thank you so much.

Our first speaker on September 19th will be Jonathan Zimmerman who is the Judy and Howard Berkowitz Professor in Education at UPenn and the author of *Amateur Hour: A History of College Teaching in America*. Jonathan will tell us about the failure in Universities since the beginning and the failure of various teaching reforms.

Our second speaker is Patrick Allitt who is a Professor of US History at Emory. He is also the author of *I'm the Teacher, You're the Student: A Semester in the University Classroom*. He will discuss what our best university professors do right and what we can all learn from their successes.

Our final speaker will be Kenny Xu who is the President of Color Us United and the author of *An Inconvenient Minority: The Attack on Asian American Excellence and the Fight for Meritocracy*. Kenny opposes racial discrimination of all kinds and encourages that admissions to universities be race blind. Kenny will explain how the current admissions process discriminates against Asian Americans.

If you are interested in listening to a replay of today's What Happens Next program or any of our previous episodes or wish to read a transcript, you can find them on our website [Whathappensnextin6minutes.com](http://Whathappensnextin6minutes.com). Replays are also available on Apple Podcasts, Podbean and Spotify.

I would like to thank today's speakers for their insights. I would also like to thank our listeners for their time and for engaging with these complex issues. Please stay tuned next Sunday to find out What Happens Next.