

Corey Andrew Powell: (00:03)

Gossip guru. Rob Shuter has been the publicist for some of the biggest names in show business, including J-Lo Jessica Simpson, Bon Jovi and P Diddy. In addition to his many international TV appearances as a Royal Family expert, Shuter has also penned his first book entitled, The Four Word Answer that challenges all of us to describe who we are in just four words. Rob joins me today to discuss his new book. I'm Corey Andrew Powell, your host. This is Motivational Mondays.

Corey Andrew Powell: (00:34)

I am so excited to be joined today by Rob Shuter. And you are a gossip columnist, but you do a lot more than that—a former publicist to so many big famous names. So first and foremost, welcome to motivational Mondays.

Rob Shuter: (00:48)

Hello. Thank you for having me. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Corey Andrew Powell: (00:52)

Yes. And my pleasure now I have to have full disclosure here of course. I do have the privilege of co-hosting on Fridays with your wonderful podcast Naughty But Nice. Which is a top podcast presented by iHeart radio. So I'm your Friday cohost. So.. Full disclosure.

Rob Shuter: (01:08)

Full disclosure. Get it out, yea. No shadiness. full disclosure.

Corey Andrew Powell: (01:11)

Right. Absolutely. However, this is a different thing for us because why I've asked you to be a guest on Motivational Mondays is because you have an upcoming book called The Four Word Answer. And I guess it's classified as a self-help book, but it was derived from a segment really on your show called A Moment of Rob. And it's like these little anecdotes for life that you would give. But tell me a little bit about why you wrote The Four Word Answer and what you hope people get out of it.

Rob Shuter: (01:39)

It's a really good question. So we've been doing our podcast for iHeart for over a year now. So I've been in radio for a long time on the Elvis Duran show and different TV shows. And so iHeart approached me about, uh, doing a daily celebrity gossip buzz podcast. And I said, absolutely yes, but I wanted to end every show with something that wasn't really about gossip at all. It was about the listener, it's about us. It wasn't about celebrities. So I decided to end every show with just like two sentences of self-help I guess is the term for it. But I think it's really just humanity and just being kind.

Rob Shuter: (02:15)

And so after 20 minutes of celebrity dish, I wanted something that was just a nice breath of fresh air. And you can carry on your day thinking about something where you could help yourself or

somebody else. And so that's how it started. The podcast became wildly successful and top 10 on Apple charts. And so our publisher Anthony Ziccardi. Hello darling. He contacted me through LinkedIn or something like some, some, some, he didn't have by email, he did it by phone number, but he contacted me and he was a fan of the podcast. And he said, I couldn't care less about the celebrity gossip, but I do enjoy the end of the show. Have you ever thought of writing a self help book? And I said, no, but now I am, give me a month. I don't rush things. Give me a month to figure this out.

Rob Shuter: (03:04)

What would it be? What have I got to say? And so I started to map out all these amazing celebrity stories I have. I've worked for J-Lo for Diddy, for Naomi Campbell, for Alicia keys for Jessica Simpson, Bon Jovi, a ton of celebrities I've worked with. So what I did is I started to write down really memorable stories of working with these stars. And I figured out they all had something in common and it was not talented. I'm not being shady. There. They are talented, they are talented, but that isn't what made them superstars. What made them stars is every one of them knew who they were in just four words. And I thought, wow, what would happen if we applied that to our lives? Do you know who you are in four words? Do I know who I am in four words? And I started to think about that and that's how the book started.

Corey Andrew Powell: (03:55)

Wow, that's amazing. And I think that's a really great lesson because so many times people look at celebrities and they think that celebrities are special. They've got something that none of us will ever have and oh, I can never aspire to that or achieve that. And what you're saying with your book is that whatever your level of success may be, or whatever your aspirations may be, you have a better chance at attaining them. If you can identify who you are.

Rob Shuter: (04:20)

Right, right. It's not just the better chance. I believe it's the only chance. I've really worked with these people for over a decade. They're not born stars. Stars are not born. Stars are created, stars are nurtured. And they might've been really lucky to have parents that taught them things that our parents didn't teach us, but it's never too late to learn. And so one of the four words without giving too much away is kindness.

Rob Shuter: (04:45)

And you don't think of that when you think of celebrities, you don't think of Jennifer Lopez necessarily as the kindest person or Diddy. You're wrong. But this is what makes them special. They're kind to themselves, Jennifer, doesn't put herself down. Jennifer can get rid of the self doubt. The kindest thing you can do in life is to accept yourself. And so I have a whole chapter about accepting yourself, how you learn to do it, why you don't do it, what we can change in our lives to accept ourselves more. And I think that this will change people's lives. When I really started being kind to myself, Corey, my life changed. There was things I would say to myself that I'd never say to you, a friend, someone I loved. And yet I would say the nastiest nastiest things to myself. I put myself down. And when I stopped doing that, what I started to be as kind to myself, as I am to others, things changed opportunities opened up.

Rob Shuter: (05:43)

I started to believe in myself. I stopped self-sabotaging because I am worth it. I really am. And that was a trick I learned from celebrities.

Corey Andrew Powell: (05:52)

What's interesting too about part of your story is that you do bring to the table a history self-doubt, as you mentioned, because you have an injury you suffered as a child, right? I don't even know what it's called today. I hate the term physical disability, because you are far, far from that, obviously. But I mean, you have a physical issue with your arm? And you also have a hearing impairment. And so you have these things that made you feel self-conscious, especially in an environment like entertainment and Hollywood, where everything is so based on physical appearance and being overly confident. So there you are thriving in that world. So you really actually, don't just say this as an anecdote, you have lived this.

Rob Shuter: (06:35)

I say to everybody that wants to work with me around me, do the work. I don't want anybody around me in my life who's not willing to do the work. And I say to people all the time, if you knew it was going to take you five years or a decade to achieve your dreams, would you still want them? And for me, the answer is yes. And so from the day I was born, I was damaged at birth. It was a really difficult delivery that ended up really messing up my right arm, for the rest of my life. It's a disability that I've had since day one, but I lean into it too. I got to know who I am and I stopped lying to myself. So for many years, I pretended that there was nothing different about me. And in photographs, I'd hide my arm behind the person next to me.

Rob Shuter: (07:24)

Or I looked at pictures of me as a little boy before selfies or camera phones and my right arm always in my pocket or it's hidden behind my back. Now my right arm is swinging there and it is different. And I've learned through The Four Word Answer but that's a word that defines me. I'm different and you've got to accept it. And once again, this goes back to being kind, once you're kind you can accept. And so I think stop walking away from the things you don't like about yourself. And I would go to so far as to actually say the things that make you different are the things that are going to make you successful. Carson Kressley from Queer Eye. I know Carson. He was not out of the closet. When he signed up to do eye, he was in the closet for most of his, what we would think of as adult life.

Rob Shuter: (08:17)

But he came out relatively late and he hid it his whole life. And now he makes a living from the thing about himself that he kept a secret. So whenever you lean in to what makes you different, you can only lean into it. If you're kind to yourself and you accept it. So you gotta be really honest. And it's a brutal conversation to have being honest with yourself about the things you don't like, your celiacs, your damaged arm, whatever it is, once you accept it, it takes away everybody else's power because no one can make fun of it anymore because you're there first.

Corey Andrew Powell: (08:55)

Yes, it's so true because you own who you are to a degree that when we actually met, I didn't even notice the arm because you know, it was like, I didn't even, and then you were like, oh, well look, I have one arm that's shorter than the other. And I was like, what, when did that happen? Because you don't let that control who you are.

Rob Shuter: (09:13)

It's part of me. It's not all I am. It's not all I am, but it's part of me, but you have to accept it too. Too many times, people spend so many hours hiding from the truth, get rid of it, face it. And then you save all these hours to focus on other things. Instead of me hiding my right arm behind my back or in a pocket. Now I'm the first to point it out, get it out of the way. And then we can shatter away and gossip about all those stars and Meghan Markle,

Corey Andrew Powell: (09:40)

Even as a gossip columnist, your individuality also in your personality is something that you let shine because this is an industry that can be very vitriolic, very nasty. We've talked before about how some people in this profession have chosen a different path. Like for example, not to bash him, but Perez Hilton is someone who took a very different approach and made a lot of enemies as a gossip columnist not being very kind to celebrities. And then there's some that are sort of ultra nice that are almost like robotic - like a Mary Hart from Entertainment Tonight she's like a Stepford host. And you know, that's almost too far the other way, but you're in the middle where you're like, look, I'm going to report a naughty story if it happened to a celebrity, but with some integrity, not for meanness. And that also is a conscious decision.

Rob Shuter: (10:28)

It was a conscious decision, but it wasn't a decision I made for profit or to distinguish myself. It's who I am. Be who you are. I think growing up life is high school with money. What made you happy when you were a young kid?

Rob Shuter: (10:43)

What, what made you smile? And I know those young girls can be really tough and people can be cruel. I was the happiest when I was in the playground, gossiping. I knew everyone's secrets. I was hired in by the bicycle rack, talking away, knowing who was dating who. I figured out to make a living out of what I'm good at. I've never met anybody who is miserable, who makes a living out of what they're good at. Find out what you're good at. And this is the part of The Four Word Answer and getting to know yourself when you're honest with what you're good at and what you're bad at, what you like, what you dislike, really make a little list and figure out what do you enjoy? What makes you happy? And yes, there are days when I don't want to write about Kim Kardashian's bottom anymore, but what makes me happy is talking. I'm a very nosy person. I like to know everyone's business.

Rob Shuter: (11:35)

And so I figured out a way to make that into my living. And I think if you do the same too, if you, if you lean into again, what makes you happy and figure out a way to make a living out of it, you

can have a really good life. That's what celebrities did. They figured out what they were good at. And they figured out how to make a living of it.

Corey Andrew Powell: ([11:53](#))

There's a clip going around the internet now of judge Judy. And she's saying something exactly the same. She's like, you know, I'm a judge. That's what I began my life as. I had no idea — this other stuff. And you know, I mean, she's like worth half a billion dollars now because she says, I don't feel like I'm going to work because I do something that I love.

Corey Andrew Powell: ([12:12](#))

I love the law. I love being a judge. And I found a way to even expand beyond that, but still doing something I love. And she says, instead of going to work every day, it feels like she's going to the playground — to use another playground reference. But Rob, you do make a great point though, about self-acceptance, because I know you and I have spoken before. And I shared with you that forever I was self-conscious about this gap in my teeth and I had gone to the dentist office and I was going to close it. I literally was all set to close it. I'm in the dental chair and the dentist was late. So they had Michael and Kelly, Michael Strahan was on. And he comes on the TV and I'm looking at him. I'm like, well, that gap didn't stop him. And it's bigger than mine! And I literally was like, no way, I'm not changing it.

Rob Shuter: ([12:57](#))

I love that story. And in this day and age, we can create our own worlds. We can curate our own media. And so stop following people that don't make you feel good. Make sure there are people on your Instagram accounts that you follow, who look like you or find representation. And if you can't find it, get out there yourself and represent. This process of getting to know yourself. And that really is all the book is about. It's getting to know yourself, but it's also to being able to tell me who you are. Who are you? In four words, you don't have to answer now everybody. But think about it. I asked my mum a couple of days ago. I said, we're talking about a book and she's terribly proud of me. She's not so proud of the gossip column but very proud of the author part.

Rob Shuter: ([13:41](#))

And I asked her, she's 85 years old. Who are you in four words? She couldn't answer. And it broke my heart that you can get to 85 and not know who you are. A week later, she called me back. We speak every Sunday, she'd gotten the words. She'd been thinking about them. And now she says those four words every single day to remind herself who she is. And she said, you know, 85, it's a revelation. And, um, maybe even a little bit happier because now she knows who she is. I know who I am. I know who, I'm not. I know what I'm good at. I know what I'm bad at. I play the trumpet. I'm a terrible trumpet player, but I thoroughly enjoy it. But knowing the truth about that means that I can stop wasting time trying to audition for the New York Philharmonic. It's not going to happen.

Rob Shuter: ([14:26](#))

Now. I can just have it as a hobby and I can focus on other stuff like gossiping and reporting and being a journalist to make a living. So it's all about getting to know yourself. And if you know, in a little way, if I can help people think about themselves for a couple of hours, when they sit down with a cup of coffee and read a book, then my job is done.

Corey Andrew Powell: (14:45)

Yeah. And I'm a little like shocked. I had no idea about the trumpet. So there was all these little nuances, people that you never know, I've known you for a few years now. And I had no idea. So, you know, you also have this really great quote. I want to make sure I have it right, because I have my notes here. Um, you have this great quote that you said once about instead of being jealous of a person, identifying the person that you're most competitive with may tell you all you need to know about yourself. So that's a bit of a provocative spin on jealousy. So tell me what you mean by that.

Rob Shuter: (15:18)

Well, I learned it because whenever I met with a new client, whether it be Diddy, Jessica Simpson, J-Lo one of the questions I'd always ask because it's sort of like an interview, but you want to see that you're going to get on together. You talk the same language. So a potential new client. I always wanted to know who they were jealous of. Because once I knew that I knew everything about themselves. Jealousy is a compass. Next time you get jealous, it is a compass pointing you towards what you want. You're only jealous of people that you want, what they have. So then instead of wasting your time being jealous, figure out a way to get it. I love it. Now when I get jealous, oh, those feelings bubble up in your tummy and you think about it.

Rob Shuter: (16:00)

But now instead of getting angry, I'm like, what's this telling me? It's never about them. It's about you. What is it telling me about myself? Oh, I want what they have. So whoever you're jealous of tells you more about you than the other person. Then the trick and what we do in The Four Word Answer is we figure out a way how to turn that into a reality. It's literally a lighthouse. It's a compass. It's almost your north star. So the next time you get jealous, you're watching something on TV or on Instagram or on Facebook. When you get jealous, stop and think, why is this making me jealous? And I guarantee you, you will be because what they have you want. So for instance, Bon Jovi was a bit jealous of Bruce Springsteen, Naomi Campbell, and Tyra banks. We all know J-Lo and Mariah Carey, you know, it's so interesting because what it tells you is what they have. You want.

Rob Shuter: (16:52)

It's easy to use their success as an excuse. No, no, no. Don't use it as an excuse. Be inspired by it because if they can do it, you can too. And 9 times out of 10, the person you're jealous of, isn't more talented than you. They might be a little bit more lucky. They might even dare I say, I've worked a little harder and that's some of the truth too. They deserve to be successful because they've done stuff that I was not willing to do. When I think of singers, I'm not willing to play every terrible piano bar on the lower east side at one o'clock in the morning, standup

comedians. I'm not willing to do an open mic where my name might get pulled out of a hat at 3:00 AM. It's not, it's not my life, but they did that. They really did do it.

Rob Shuter: (17:33)

And I think one of the big takeaways I came to this conclusion in the book is if you do the work you deserve it. There's no shortcuts. Occasionally there are people that seem to have achieved everything without doing any work, but it always falls apart. The ones that do the work are the ones that succeed. You can't give up too. I told you that quote, Joan Rivers was really helpful to me and my career and my life. We became friends, rest in peace. And she told me that there's people funnier than she is. There's people that are whittier, but Joan would stand in the rain longer than anyone else. When you go home wet, cold, Joan is still standing there. I stand in the rain until I get what I want.

Corey Andrew Powell: (18:21)

That is amazing because often we also give up quickly. And as you mentioned, how we sometimes think that people who are lucky that they've just got it made, but you're right. It's not sustainable. If you haven't put the work in, but the universe will give you an opportunity, but how will you be able to sustain it?

Rob Shuter: (18:38)

Do the work and do the unglamorous work. There was nothing fun about writing this book. It took me a year, but I got an hour every day when everybody was going that plague, I felt like I was at home doing homework. It was felt like I was back at school, but I did it. And the only reason this book is coming out is not because I'm more talented than anybody. That's not true. I did the work. I did the work, I got the experiences. And then I had to sit down and write it. It's really, really hard because I'm a social animal. There is nothing more solitary than writing a book, maybe swimming cause you're by yourself.

Rob Shuter: (19:13)

But there's really no. You're really by yourself. And to sit there with your laptop and your thoughts and to gather them and to write and to rewrite. I deserve this success because I did the work. I did the work. And now is the exciting part. Talking to you. I'm booked on some TV shows to plug the book. All that stuff is glamorous and I can go and buy a new jacket and a new shirt to get my hair done. That is glamorous. What isn't glamorous is sitting in your living room, in your underwear with your computer for like a year, doing the work, do the work. Everybody. There are no shortcuts. If Madonna, Madonna, I love her. Madonna still does a sound check. Every performance that Madonna does, she does a sound check. If Madonna can do a rehearsal. So can you exactly at 62 years old, she's still doing sound checks. She doesn't phone it in every concert. She gets there four or five in the afternoon. When I worked for Bon Jovi, he was playing stadiums 60, 70,000 people before they opened the doors. The plane arrived early. They got in a van, they got the band to the stadium. He did a sound check.

Rob Shuter: (20:20)

He did The work, what? 40 years into his Korea. He was still doing the work. There are no shortcuts, everybody. And honestly, if you're looking for that, if you're looking for a silver bullet, a magic wand, don't buy this book and don't buy any book. There isn't anyone that even tells you they can fix you. It's just not true. You've got to do it yourself.

Corey Andrew Powell: ([20:41](#))

Thank you for listening to motivational Mondays presented by the National Society of Leadership and Success and available wherever you listen to your favorite podcasts. I'm Corey Andrew Powell, and I'll see you again here next week.