


APRENDICES 4 - TRADUCCIÓN AL INGLÉS

Fernando Montero

 Fernando "Monti" Montero | Aprendices | La Red | 2024

INTRO

It's much easier to win the lottery five times in a row than for something like this to happen to you. Planned especially for you.

There I realized that I had to save someone whose death I had wished many times.

You can use an illness or a deficit as a tool.

As I always say, these cards were given to you, what matters is how you use them.

PREVIA

Do you still work at the Coronel Alegre clinic?

Yes, I work there all day.

I see, very good. Your sister too?

Yes. Do you know her?

I know her, yes. I know you too, but you don't remember.

I don't remember anything.

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I cut your hair a couple of times many years ago.

You saved me more than once, plus I went to you at the worst times. I was the enemy.

It's true, you'd arrive very late. I'm going to get revenge now.

Of course. Take revenge.

That is drifting, controlled drifting.

When you see it, it seems like they are going to die, but it is very safe.

Actually, Kingdom of Drift is the documentary that we are going to make for Netflix now. That documentary was by my friend Alejandro Curcio.

We start in Japan, showing that drifting was illegal. They escaped from the police through the mountains.

Later, in the United States they began to compete and when I arrived, 12 years ago, I thought: "Look, burning tires, breaking cars, spending money, everything... at least we'll do something good for the people".

That's when I started Solidary Gearheads with several friends, and we don't burn tires unless it's for a good cause.

Like it or not, there is a whole environmental aspect and everything, so the idea is to try to balance that.

Thanks for coming!

Thank you. Thank you so much.

I went through 5th and 6th grade alone, and she was the one who coordinated my classes with great love. It was very complicated. What a complicated student. How did you manage?

I loved you.

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Fernando was one of those people who had difficulty concentrating, but once concentrated, he could change your world in an instant.

Because you had these stories, these ideas, these questions that make you click.

We thank you for the courtesy of joining us but, in truth, we are the lucky ones who get to share a story that can help a lot of people.

Sure.

It is very difficult to talk about bullying in a constructive way.

High school was very nice because I was very contained, you know? I mean, like I told you, I was with Emi, I was...

I had four or five teachers. There were few of them, so obviously we became very close.

As I always say, and as Steve Jobs said, when you look back you realize everything that happened, you connect the dots.

And I realized that everything that happened to me helped me, everything.

Do you have children, Fernando?

Two girls.

Two little girls?

Yes, 5 and 2 years old.

Oh, little ones. You go there.

Hello, everything okay? How complicated. I never had so many cameras on me.

So, Apprentices, Season 4, Monti, take 1. Second clap.

ENTREVISTA

How do I define myself? As a father, and as I told you, I chose at one point in my life to let go of a life of success for one of purpose, and we have the purpose of helping people.

So, I define myself as a tool for others.

What was your dream as a child?

At one point, my dream was to be like my dad: a doctor. A typical child's dream. Heal people, help people. Then, life took me somewhere else. I got involved in things other than medicine.

That is, both in sports and in life itself.

In childhood you started to show symptoms of Tourette's syndrome.

Actually, I had Tourette syndrome since I was very young. I jump when I'm nervous, so they called me "kangaroo" or "elastic band".

In reality, the symptoms started when I was 8 years old. Between the ages of 8 and 12, I suffered some very aggressive bullying, and that was when Tourette's syndrome started manifesting.

At the age of 13 or 12, at the age of 12, I think it was, I diagnosed myself reading a magazine, "Know More", with a friend of mine, Luis de Bellis. His father was a doctor. First, we read magazines, and then we looked up books on syndromes, and there was Gilles de Tourette.

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It wasn't a very well-known disease here. I was mistreated and badly medicated.

When I consulted a professional psychologist about Tourette's syndrome, here in Uruguay, he told me: "Nonsense; these are nervous tics", and also: "Kid, put your hands like this". I can perform neurosurgery operations for hours and I will not move a hand or make a nervous tic. After the surgery, the movements come back to me, it is what is called "debt", but at the moment of the surgery I am in total control. That's why I always do things like martial arts or drifting or acupuncture, because my work as a surgeon requires perfect control.

I think that I choose the things that I do seeking control. As a result of being given the wrong medication, I grew a nipple, I underwent gynecomastia surgery, I grew a mummy gland. It was horrible.

Another side effect I had as a child was an infundibular block that occurs when you are given antipsychotics. Afterwards, I studied pharmacology to understand what was happening to me. I remember falling asleep in class or playing Nintendo, drooling. I mean, I had a very bad time with the medication.

I studied pharmacology. I studied at Harvard University, in the United States, which offers the best degree for a pharmacologist. I also work a lot in the medical acupuncture field, as a way of tackling the issue, and Tourette syndrome is a fairly common disease in Uruguay.

There is a Tourette's foundation too, and more cases appear every day. Today's children are not going to go through what I went through. I was considered a freak, nobody knew what I had. A misunderstood child with no tools to defend himself suffers a lot.

And a big part of the suffering is the bullying. Bullying made the tics even worse. When children with nervous tics suffer a lot of anguish or anxiety, their symptoms worsen.

And that was my childhood, my strongest memories of it. I remember beautiful things, but also very sad times.

You said that you suffered violence and bullying. Was that also the moment when Tourette's syndrome manifested? Does this have to do with the bullying you suffered, that is, is it cause-and-effect or did they happen at the same time?

In medicine there are two things, which are genetics and epigenetics. Genetics is what brings, as they say, the cards they give you to play. And epigenetics is how to play those cards.

There are emotional triggers. Sometimes deaths or other very hard things for children can generate a great feeling of helplessness, which causes you to trigger the disease. More than 95% of diseases have a psychosomatic basis. It starts in the head and the disease translates to the body.

It's worth discussing, but I go back to the question.

A boy once told me that my mother had an illness, that she was going to die of cancer, that they were treating her, and that she would tell me if she made it to her birthday. But if he found out I disclosed the information, he would hit me, because he had heard it from a friend of his mother's and he didn't want to fail his mother.

He made me swear on my mother's life that I wouldn't tell. He played with the most complicated feelings, a child's fear and guilt, and I always try to tell children... Many times, children who suffered abuse spend their whole lives without telling anyone, out of shame and guilt.

I've seen women with fibromyalgia, for example, who suffered abuse and don't tell anyone out of fear and shame.

When I spent a year crying every night for my mother and they asked me what was wrong, they sent me to a psychologist. I cried and cried and at one point, not being able to say why I was crying, I remember that for the first time I emitted a phonic tic: "Pip, pip, pip, pip!" It was the first time.

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I don't want to say it too much, otherwise it'll stay with me all day.

Let's get it under control. There.

That was the first nervous tic that I had, I barked like a dog. It lasted a long time. That's when I realized that the disease was triggered. And that was the start of many things.

Like the anecdote I just talked about, where I stained Emi with ink. And this movement, which caused my friends to call me "the motorcycle" and "the flytrap". I mean, children with Tourette's are constantly changing nervous tics.

So, that was the emotional trigger at the start of the disease.

Were you able to discuss this with your family afterwards? At what point in life were you able to put your feelings into words?

We had a very big family loss. My uncle drowned in Durazno in a canoe two years ago.

While we returned from his wake, sorry, from Mass, my sister and I were talking, and I don't know why, the topic came up about people who have suffered various things and...

Do you remember the 12-year-old boy who took his life in the United States due to bullying, which caused a lot of commotion, do you remember? Well, we were talking about him, and my sister asked: "Did you suffer too?" And I began to tell my story. She said: "But how come you never told me this?", and I said: "I just never did", and she said: "But why don't you...?" Many people follow me on social media. At that time, I had about 500,000 followers.

She told me: "If you tell this on social media, you could help a lot of people. It's not content that's going to go viral, because it's not marketable, but it's going to help someone". And that was where I made the video where I tell

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how I saved the life of the person who ruined my childhood, which has more than a million views.

It's a 9-minute video where I tell it all myself. The video ended up causing people to write their entire life stories, the things that had happened to them. I felt the sheer mass of humanity. As I always say, one of us throws a stone and everyone follows, you know?

When someone starts talking about something that happened to them, other people begin telling their own stories of bullying, people who had never told anyone until now. They sent me messages like: "Monti, I know you're not going to read this".

Actually, even though I may get almost a thousand messages a day, sometimes I don't sleep in order to read everything. Many times, you can prevent suicide attempts. This year, we were able to prevent 50 attempts. I made a video about it afterwards.

Well, I stopped feeling alone as I read and understood these people. I realized that my suffering was minimal compared to what other people had gone through.

Bullying aside, what was your childhood like? Did you have the support of your family? How did you experience primary school and high school?

You also talk about feeling like a freak and the side effects of that. How did that affect your adolescence, which is a very complicated and difficult time for young people?

As I always say, what all this we are talking about teaches you is that a person who is healthy, without any wounds, will never seek to hurt someone else. Because you're OK. So, the people that you often see hurting other people, do it because they are in pain themselves.

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And at one point I was in pain. I... it really was unbearable in high school, and Emi knows it.

I didn't have the best adolescence. That's why in order to improve my discipline, I took up martial arts. I started competing when I was 12 and it helped me a lot, but it was really...

I had, how do I put it, very antisocial behaviors. Then I began to empathize in a different way. Many times, Tourette's doesn't give you much emotional intelligence and you have to generate it from scratch. That helped me empathize with people in a different way, from deep down, and from pain.

And I think that over time, as you develop, you can feel very alone. Luckily, I always had the support of my family. I feel very supported by them. And now I am married to a woman, to Florencia, my wife, who also helped me. I mean, I always felt very contained.

If I hadn't felt contained, it would probably have been very difficult. I mean, I probably wouldn't even be here. It's very difficult.

So the family plays a key role in all of this.

Yes, that's what I always emphasize to people.

You know when you have kids, that moment where you realize for the first time in your life that you are afraid? It is fear itself. Are you a mom?

Yes. Recently.

So you felt it.

Now I realize that my parents must have suffered more than I suffered at that moment, because they saw me in pain, and that caused them a lot of pain. So when I became a father, the first thing I did was to call my father

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to talk to him and apologize. Luckily, he is a little deaf and had forgotten his hearing aid. He didn't hear me, but I apologized. I remember he hugged me and everything. Maybe he didn't hear all I said, but I opened my heart out. So if he's listening...

I imagine all this influences how you are today as a father. Do you talk about it with your daughters? It has only been two years since you were able to discuss it with your family...

My daughters were not aware of all those stories. I mean, they are very young, only 5 and 2 years old. They didn't have much contact with it.

But sometimes I realize that I am on the defensive, that if I see someone treating my daughter a certain way, I am always on the defensive. One day, I found out that my daughter had spoken badly to a classmate and it killed me. It was awful.

Because I realized how awful it would be if my daughter did something similar to what they did to me.

Of course, the commitment of being a father, of how to educate.

It is very difficult to be a father, as you know. It is difficult, but do you know what the real issue is? That over time you realize that the person who attacks or bullies is a person in pain, and is reflecting what happens at home, and taking it out on someone else.

He doesn't know it, he doesn't have the tools, so he takes it out on the girls and the boys he plays with, in a very immature way and sometimes...

The boy I told you about went through this. He suffered a lot of violence in his life and he unloaded it that way.

Of course. But sometimes it's hard for a child to see the other point of view, right?

To think about the other person who is having a rough time. Especially if there's physical violence involved.

It's impossible, yes, clearly.

Yes. It must be difficult, no doubt.

You were telling me that you then met that person again later in your life. Life conspired to make it happen. So how did it come to pass?

I was at a wedding a few years ago. At one point I greeted him and he came over, gave me a kiss, a hug. "Monti, how wonderful to see you", very good vibes. And my wife said: "Wasn't this the guy who made your life impossible?" "Yeah". "So what's going on? Did he forget?"

Then it dawned on me that when you are the bully, you might grab someone and say: "What's up, fatty?" Just by saying that to someone every day, you can plant a seed that will surely ruin their self-esteem one day, even if the bully isn't conscious of his actions. He did hurt me. He wasn't conscious of it, evidently.

And so after a while, a friend of mine came and told me: "Monti, we need a doctor, someone is very sick". And I saw that the person was this guy. He was on the floor in very bad shape, unconscious and vomiting, overdosing on several drugs at the same time. He had been homeless a while and addicted to drugs.

When I saw him like that, the first thing I did was put him in a safe position and ask if they had called an ambulance. I remember then when the doctor came over, a nurse said to me: "What's up, Monti?". I never found out who he was, so if he's watching, thank you.

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And the doctor said: "I'm a pediatrician, I have no idea what to do, but this guy has to be intubated or else he'll die". And I said: "I have no idea how to intubate someone".

That was when I realized God does not play dice, and the meaning of causality.

I was actually about to become a doctor without knowing how to intubate. I thought intubating was useless to me because I was going to do sports medicine and acupuncture.

I remember Dr. Cubas, in Minas, teaching us how to intubate and he said to me: "Monti, are you going to learn?" I told him: "No, no, this won't be of any use to me". He said: "Sure, but you can save someone's life with this". I said: "Yeah, yeah, but no...". He replied: "You know what it's like to feel suffocated and asking for help..."

And I remembered the time they suffocated me because it was the only time I confronted them. You know the saying: "If they hit you, defend yourself". The only time I wanted to confront this boy was on a sports field at the Military Center. I remember that after I confronted him, he laughed and started to strangle me. I lost consciousness, later I realized that I'd had a vasovagal crisis. I fell to the floor and then I woke up. That's when I experienced suffocation and fainting for the first time.

Later, thanks to jiu jitsu, martial arts, I understood why I had fainted. I knew what it was like to suffocate. I remembered it at that moment. I don't know why.

He told me: "You were never out of breath". And I remembered. So I said: "You know what, I'm going to learn to intubate". So I learned to intubate to save this guy. In the end, I can see that it was for him that I learned to intubate.

You may not believe in God or what have you, but it is much easier to win the lottery 5 times in a row than for something like that to happen to you, planned especially for you. And there I realized that I had to save someone whose death I had wished many times.

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As a child, without any tools, the first thing you want is... Sometimes I would hide in the bathroom during school break so I wouldn't see him. So, in a childish way, I often wished that he would die.

What you say is amazing. It really does seem as if the world conspired to bring you together.

Life gave you certain tools and skills and you developed them, but everything formed the person that you are today and the way you give back to people.

More than giving back, I think that part of the story is not about me, but about him. After I intubated him and saved his life, I had minimal contact with him. But, a while after this, he contacted me again.

He told me: "Monti, I want to have a talk with you. The truth is that I want to explain to you everything that happened". He told me his version of his life and I realized he's a hero, you know?

First of all, he's someone I love very much. There are people who say I have Stockholm syndrome, like people who are kidnapped. But I actually do really love him. Like it or not, he made me who I am. So I thanked him.

And we had a talk. At one point he was in the intensive care unit watching other people die, then he returned to life. And there came a time where instead of asking "Why?" he asked "What for?", "What for?", he asked himself. "To be a better son, to be a father, to rehabilitate myself, to work".

And that's when he really broke through. He had a daughter, he overcame his drug addiction, he got off the streets, he found a job. He's a wonderful guy. If you speak to him today you'll see he's a very special person, and I had great talks with him afterwards.

I realized that he had suffered a lot as a child, which is why he is the hero of the film.

There are people say: "Wow, Monti, you are a hero for saving him". A doctor is not a hero for saving a person's life. I did what I had to do. There is a Hippocratic oath for this. I didn't do anything. I just didn't let myself be guided by the dark side, as they say. That's all.

Having so many people who follow you, what would you say to the people on social media who share their experiences with you since you told them your story? I imagine that you try to read them all and respond to them, so what is your recommendation to them?

I'm thinking especially of the hundreds, thousands of children and teenagers who are suffering from bullying and violence as we speak. What do you recommend to them, from your experience and your role as a father? To whom must they turn to? What to do?

It is always important to try not to feel ashamed, not to feel guilt for the things that happen to you, and try to talk about it, to communicate with your parents and the people around you. If not, the scars that a complicated childhood can inflict on you are considerable.

I always say I have very, very low self-esteem, even though people tell me I couldn't possibly have low self-esteem. Yes, I have very low self-esteem, and that is precisely the driving force of my work. It has helped me to put the ego in its proper place. You help people not because you are good and saintlike but because it is good for you. It's always like that.

It's a matter of utilizing your ego for the greater good. But when you have a low self-esteem issue, you are always having to reinforce that ego, and that means that you have no limits in the things you do.

It is then that you realize how an illness or a deficiency can be used as a tool.

As I always say, the cards were given to you. What matters is how you use them. You can lie in bed, be depressed, or use your skills to do something

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for someone. Unconsciously, when you do something for someone, you are doing it for yourself.

Everyone is a human being inside.

What would you say to 8-year-old Monti, who was given the news of his mother's illness by his bully, and started having tics?

I would tell him to try to live his life in such a way that anyone who approaches him and is close to him comes out a little happier, even if they come to hurt him.

And that everything will be alright. Yes.