

[Transcript] My First Million / Doomer Optimism, The Economics of Book Publishing, and More

All right.

Quick break to tell you about another podcast that we're interested in right now.

HubSpot just launched a Shark Tank rewatch podcast called Another Bite.

Every week, the hosts relive the latest and greatest pitches from Shark Tank, from Squatty Potty to the Mench on a Bench to Ring Doorbell.

And they break down why these pitches were winners or losers.

And each company's go-to-market strategy, branding, pricing, valuation, everything.

Basically all the things you want to know about how to survive the tank and scale your company on your own.

If you want to give it a listen, you can find Another Bite on whatever podcast app you listen to, like Apple or Spotify or whatever you're using right now.

All right.

Back to the show.

My brain hurt for 24 hours, but then I feel great for that.

Okay.

Well, you're all right now.

Well, we'll see.

We'll see actually.

At the end of this episode, I'll give you a grade on your CTE status.

Thank you.

Yeah.

I feel like I can rule the world.

I know I could be what I want to put my all in it like the days are on the road.

Let's travel never looking back.

But let's just remember to say something about you can review on Spotify now.

Haha.

We're here.

You can leave reviews on Spotify now.

Go do that.

I have.

I have done.

What was asked of me?

All right.

Let's start.

All right.

We're supposed to tell people to give us a review on Spotify, but you can only leave stars.

You can't leave comments.

I read all of our comments to understand like what we're doing.

I read our stars.

So between the two of us, we got it covered.

Okay.

Well, then we're good.

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Um, dude, we have a lot to go over today.

I I because you're like a pain in the ass to get ahold of I wanted to ask for your advice today, but you've got some interest.

Yeah.

You've got some interesting stuff.

Wait.

You want to ask if I got knocked out?

Well, first of all, yeah, you're going to be able to do this pot or you like post concussion syndrome right now.

What happened?

And how did it?

How did it feel?

Yeah.

It was like a flash.

I was like, I was.

You were sparring.

You were practicing boxing, so you were sparring with somebody.

Is that a amateur, a coach?

Is that just a dude?

He was, uh, the kid was probably 20 years old.

He's a young guy.

I'm going to get all these young guys and like for the most part, they kick my ass and

I was doing great.

I was doing really good.

And then he just caught me on the chin and did you saw the video?

I got knocked out.

I saw the video.

You just look like he had wobbly legs for a second.

You didn't look.

No, I was falling over.

Fall over.

Like you, you didn't fall down though.

So, no, I was out.

It went black and I started tipping over and then I caught myself and I woke up.

Yeah.

I was just for about two seconds.

I was out.

And what does that make you feel?

Do you, are you questioning your chin?

Do you feel like a new man?

Like what's going on?

It didn't.

Like it.

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Okay.
So here's how I feel right now about boxing.
I love it.
It's awesome.
I think we should all do it.
I am scared about the long-term pain.
Like I think that is not good to do long-term.
I'll probably do it for six more months.
Right.
And then I'll probably chill.
I think that Jake Paul has said that like he has like memory loss already and like people like mocked him.
They're like, Oh yeah.
Okay.
Sure, Jake.
I totally believe that dude.
Like when I got hit, I was, I was in pain for 24 hours.
Oh, you were in pain.
Okay.
What, what was the pain?
Just like the concussion type pain?
I just had a headache.
Yeah.
I had to go home and go to sleep.
My head hurt.
Did you have a concussion before or is that the first concussion?
I've had concussions before from falling and playing ice hockey.
Yeah.
It hurt.
I was in pain for 24 hours.
My brain hurt for 24 hours, but then I feel great for that.
Okay.
You're all right now.
And then we'll see.
We'll see.
We'll see.
At the end of this episode, I'll give you a grade on your CTE status.
Thank you.
That night I was at a bar or a restaurant sitting outside and three or at first three and then like 12 police pull up with their lights on like a screeching stop just like a movie.
They go, they pop out of their car.
They grab their ARs.

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They cock it.

Everyone run inside and it was, I was shocked and we like ran inside and they, it got word to us that there was like, they said an active shooter.

And I guess the story of what really happened was that I think they think someone shot a gun in AR because they said there's someone walking around with a rifle.

And so we got locked in this restaurant for like an hour, just waiting.

And then they just left.

I have no idea how it ended.

I've got no idea.

I don't know what happened.

I have no idea if it was a real person.

I've got no idea.

But they locked us in the podcast.

We just leave.

Yeah.

That's what just happened.

They just left and they go, we're looking for them.

They go, we're looking for the guy.

You got to stay in there.

But there's a man that's shooting a gun around here and we don't know where they are.

And so that's what happened to me this week.

Were you okay?

Two questions.

I find this fascinating because I lately, whenever I play with my daughter, like kids, they just fall all the time.

They get hurt super easily.

They don't know anything about anything.

So there's always getting in harm's way.

And you don't want to just constantly be telling them, stop, but that means you got to kind of be reactive if, you know, if the fun play actually turns somewhat dangerous.

And I a few times, three times in a row, something was happening and my reaction was so slow and she would get hurt.

And then I was like, why didn't I just like, I saw it coming and I'd be like, Hey, watch out.

But like, that's not going to do anything for a kid.

They don't know what that means.

I was like, I need to dive and grab her and like, you know, barrel roll away from the situation.

Like there's a rattlesnake in my backyard and my daughter was like six inches away from it.

A four foot rattlesnake.

And I like pulled her away, but I wasn't that quick.

You know, we were at the playground and someone was swinging on the swings like crazy and

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she just like walked in front of the swings and got like basically hit in the head by this girl swinging.

And I saw it and I was like, Hey, like as if I could, as if anybody cared.

And so I'm like, okay, I'm been working on my emergency reactions.

I'm like, dude, I'm going to be, I'm my dad muscle.

Exactly.

I'm going to be quick with that dad muscle now.

And my wife is the opposite.

Like I think moms have this where if she senses like from peripheral vision, something, you know, the bookcase is falling.

She turns into like a literal bat and flies across the room and like swoops in and saves it before anything even happened.

And so it's like, she's amazing with it.

So my question to you is when it was, Hey, everybody get inside now, were you like quick on the draw?

Like the first one in the room or were you like, Hey, what's going on?

No, I, I'm very alert.

So like I've been places where like we've been, I've been walking.

I was walking in San Francisco and I was with Sarah and I go, that guy's getting mugged right in front of us.

The guy's holding a gun at that other guy.

And it was like a block away.

I'm like, we got to turn around.

We got to walk away.

And she was like, how'd you see that?

So I've always been very aware.

I have a strong protective instinct, I think.

So right when it happened, I was like, all right, let's be aware of us around these weeks.

Yeah.

So I'm good at that stuff.

There's a personality trait.

I think because you are so calm and relaxed, you don't get, you don't get rattled very easily.

Remember you were telling Ben, Ben Levy that when he meets me, don't be angry if Sam yells at you cause Sam is known for like get losing his temper.

I like, I, I, I lose my temper sometimes.

I think I get rattled easily.

You don't get rattled easily at all.

Yeah.

But it has this downside, which is, you know, chill, like my trainer says this thing.

He's like, look, most people live in fight or flight, but there's no, there's no threat around them.

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That's just anxiety about the future.

He goes, but if there's a lion in front of you, don't start meditating, like go run when there's a lion.

And like that's the part that I actually don't do very well.

Yeah.

When there's an actual threat, I don't really react very much and that's when you need to. You don't have a sense of urgency about anything.

Yeah.

I'm pretty chill.

But I would argue that you're happier than most people and that's the major personality component.

But I might die in a certain situation.

All right.

So that's where that's at.

Okay.

I wanted to ask you about the knockout and the shooter.

That's crazy.

All right.

Here's a quick message from our sponsor.

You know, I was thinking about the shortest day of the year earlier and while we technically had the same amount of time as every other day of the year, the lack of daylight makes it feel so much shorter, which is exactly the same kind of feeling as working with disconnected tools.

Our work days, the same length as always.

But before you know it, we spent three hours just fixing something that was supposed to be automated.

Thankfully hub spots all in one CRM platform can serve as a single source of truth for managing your customer relationships across marketing, sales, service operations with multiple hubs and over a thousand integrations and easy to use interface hub spot lets you spend less time managing your software and more time connecting with your customers.

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That's kind of actually related.

So you, you set this Tucker Max thing, explain what he's talking about and your reaction to it.

Cause I thought it was pretty interesting.

Okay.

So there's this guy named Tucker Max for the people who are at least 30 years old.

You'll remember Tucker Max as the author of a book called I hope they serve beer in hell, which is basically a frat book about having sex and kind of being an asshole and all things that like the dream 19 year old boy would act like stories of drunk and hookups and stuff like that.

And like kind of being a douchebag, but in a funny way, Tucker is now in his mid 40s, I would think and he's grown and he's way different.

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And he recently posted an article saying that the pandemic changed his opinion a little bit and he is what's called a doom optimist, which he means, which means he thinks that there's a small chance, although no, with his, I think he thinks there's a large chance that the world is going to go to shit in the next two to four years.

But he hopes that it doesn't, but he's going to plan for it to go to shit.

And he wrote this huge article that was incredibly well written and my problem with Tucker is that he's just like Malcolm Gladwell, which is like, I have no idea if what he's saying is true, but he's such a good writer that I tend to believe it.

And so he wrote this amazing article saying why he thinks the world is going to go to shit and what will happen in two to four years and how he's preparing by buying a ranch and basically prepping for like 10 plus years of like living without power with his people trying to come and attack him.

It's pretty wild.

And he talks about physical fitness, learning how to fight building a ranch with community members on there.

So you can each take like a watch during the night.

It was pretty crazy.

My after reading it, I felt afraid.

Right.

Is that what you felt like?

Well, I got to, I've only read two thirds of it, but the, from what I'm with you that he's such a good writer, such a, almost like a likable writer, because I got charisma through writing.

Yes.

Very hard to do, but he's very good at it.

And that, it makes it really fucking hard to assess like, am I convinced by the argument or am I just charmed by this dude as he writes?

And I don't, I, and I didn't even agree with, I don't think I agreed with much of anything that he said about the vaccine, about like political stuff, but he was such a good writer that I was like, well, okay, maybe you're right.

Right.

You know, like what I would say is this last two years, if it's done anything, it really kind of makes you question a lot of stuff.

So I think a bunch of people question like, oh shit, I thought I needed to go to the office every day.

It turns out I could work from home or you know what, like I don't need this job or if the world's going to end, you know, how should I be spending my time in my life?

Or can I trust the news?

Can I trust science?

Can I trust this Dr. Fauci?

Can I, you know, who do I trust for information about things?

Cause you know, one minute they say that masks don't work and then the next minute they say that masks do work and like, you know, what, which one is it?

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You know, they, people called, you know, when people said it was a lab leak early on, it was like, you're a racist and we need to shut down the wet markets and you know, that's where this case came from.

You know, it's like a 80% plus probability that this was from a lab and oh yeah, sorry about, sorry about locking up for racism.

I'm not bad.

Here you go.

You're out now.

I just fill this paperwork out before you go.

It's like, should we open up the wet markets again?

Like, can my brothers go eat some bat soup because that was totally wrong.

You know, like you basically had to question a lot of things.

So when I first read this and he's talking about tumor optimism, I was intrigued because

I never heard of this, this is the type of guy that I think is early on to trends.

I think he's early into certain movements.

So I'm, I'm, I'm curious about it from that way.

I didn't fully buy or believe everything that he was saying about like, he was basically saying like, my buddy's told me this is a PsyOps mission.

You know, this is like PsyOps, which is basically like, I don't even know what's happening.

It's basically like you go into a country and you create, you shift the like the mind state of people in that country by running these like sort of like mind control campaigns.

You do, but that's true.

That's true.

We had a guy in the podcast and he said, my job was to get dropped off into a country and convince people to commit espionage and get them to buy into the American cause versus, let's say the Iranian cause and get them like to change their opinion.

And like, I believe that that exists.

I guess what I'm saying is he was saying that that's that's what COVID is or something like that.

Oh yeah.

Yeah.

Riots and shit.

Yeah.

That's what the, you know, the riots for black lives matter.

You know, he was like trying to tie all these things together and he was like, you know, this is the same playbook that my, my buddies were talking about, but he didn't say the playbook and that was just became very unconvincing to me.

But I will say I found this interesting and I found it worth, worth, you know, we talked about steel manning the other day, which is that when you feel really strong point of view, one of the best ways to actually understand if you're correct and convince somebody else is to look at the opposite side and say, here's what the opposite side would say and they're not crazy people.

They're not dumb.

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They're smart and they believe these things, but I think their conclusion is wrong because here's what I believe.

And then you laid out both arguments as strong as you could side by side and you picked a better argument.

And so I actually, when I saw this and I was immediately like, ah, whatever, you know, paranoid, you know, paranoid crazy guy.

Now I've learned to not write off paranoid crazy guy totally actually steel man the argument.

And so that's what I think is worth doing with some, I think if you read this, it's worth reading for both the writing style is good.

And then the second thing was to practice steel manning and that's kind of what I'm going to do from this.

I agree.

And I did the same thing.

And you know what I told myself?

So like, I'm like, well, Tucker's crazy.

No one acts like this.

And he talked about like being persecuted, whatever.

And I started realizing like, you remember the Rwanda first of all, I was like, well, like, you know, World War II wasn't that long ago where like, you know, a group of people were collectively murdered.

And then I was like, well, you know, Rwanda was like in 1997.

And the same thing happened where a group of people were like systematically hunted down.

And, you know, do you know about the Rwanda?

No, I'm nodding my head, but I have no idea what you're talking about.

Rwanda is a country in Africa.

It's in.

I got that part.

Yeah.

And there is Hutus and Tutsis.

I think is how you say it's too different.

I don't know the right terminology, but I believe they're just different ethnicities of some type of like African ethnicities, two different ethnicities.

I believe it was the people are going to shit on me.

One of them, I forget the Tutsis, I think, were the ones that got killed.

And it was like three or two million of them were killed in like three months or something like crazy like that.

It was tragic.

And that was in and Bill Clinton was president.

So that was in the nineties.

And I'm like, well, that wasn't that long ago that like crazy bad stuff happened.

And then I was like, well, fuck, September 11th.

I mean, I remember that like, like, and I've got friends that, you know, I now live in

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New York.

Like, of course, something bad can happen.

And then the pandemic, I felt scared.

It wasn't the same.

But I felt scared.

I remember being in San Francisco when writing was happening, was happening.

And I was like, man, like something bad could happen.

I mean, so anyway, I, it was close enough that all these things have happened that I do sense like, man, maybe I should question like not, I'm not safe all the time.

And so my prediction actually is that the thing that's going to happen that we should, that I should be looking out for is a hacking attempt.

I think it's like, I think that like in five years, we're going to look back in 10 years when I look back and be like, I cannot believe that we used passwords in the way that we did.

Like one person would use the same password into everything and you pretty much could guess it because most everyone uses the password 1234567 or like something like that.

And or like, you just had a post-it note at home that had a password.

And basically if you just got that post-it note, you had access to someone's entire financial and personal information.

Yeah.

It's wild.

There's two things on that one, one password or no, last pass, one of the two came out the other day and was like, Hey, master passwords have been breached.

It's like, basically this is the thing you're supposed to do to stay secure.

And the main thing is that you're bad, but they, it was wrong.

They came back and said, no, actually it hasn't.

Sorry.

That was incorrect.

Bad on their part for, for that.

But, but it just kind of shows you, you know, just in general, even the, even the, the attempts at security are, are difficult and challenging.

Second thing is Elon Musk went on hardcore history podcast recently and it was like, I didn't listen to it cause I don't listen to that, but I figured you or Ben would like that sort of thing.

But I know one summary of like one thing that he took away from it, which is they were talking about like the history of like rockets, like rocket war for, you know, like of different types of weaponry back in the day and how that led to like success or failure and the war and like how the Germans had amazing technology, but they had horrible materials. Their oil was like not refined or whatever, like their oil was not a consistent mix.

And so it was like ruining their, their, their weaponry.

And like one of the major reasons that the Germans lost war was that their weaponry did not function very well because they didn't have access to these like core commodities underneath that the Americans had much better weaponry.

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And he's just talking about like, you know, in great wars escalate into engineering wars and that just sort of makes you think like, yeah, okay.

So before if it was like, you know, what guns do my soldiers carry that it was like, what tanks do my soldiers sit in and what planes do they have?

What boats do they have?

And now it's going to be like drones and robots, literally just like Boston dynamics robots going into places and stuff like that.

And then it's just like going to go into just like cyber warfare, which is like, you know, what people think, you know, the Russians did to Americans, you know, like basically brainwashing through social media as well as hacking and getting access to government secrets and intelligence.

And like, dude, this is just going to be an insane frontier of cyber warfare that's already happening and it's going to just like escalate over time because if all wars come turn into engineering wars, then the engineering wars that matter are artificial intelligence and cybersecurity now and drones, maybe drones and robotics.

So that's pretty, pretty crazy thing to think about.

So I want to tell you something about Elon and, and Lex Friedman, and I think you have it on here.

But basically, Neville Madora is a good friend of mine and he tweeted out this wonderful video where Lex Friedman interviewed Elon Musk and Lex Friedman, he did it a couple of times, but this one particular example, he asked Elon, when will we go to Mars?

And he basically asked, asked in such a way that I think everyone should learn from and I'm going to explain to you why you should learn from this.

But he said, when do you think we're going to go to Mars?

He didn't say a word and Elon sat there for, I think 23 seconds and just sat there and he thought and Lex didn't say a word in silence.

He just let Elon think and then Elon replied with a very direct answer.

He said, as soon as five as late as 10 years, like he gave an answer.

And the reason why that's brilliant is I have got a friend who actually works with a bunch of CIA folks and my friend is like a nervous guy.

He's kind of like me a little bit and he goes, dude, whenever I'm around my CIA friends, my coworkers, I find myself talking all the time because they talk very little and they talk very little.

When I've sat down, when I've just got to meet them and we're trying to get to know each other over a business relationship, I would sit down with them and they would talk so little because they knew that I was going to fill space because I was uncomfortable with the silence and I ended up just spilling the beans and all types of stuff and I appeared weak and told them everything and I asked him about that and they said, yeah, we purposely don't talk a lot because we know that if we don't talk a lot, you're going to talk yourself into like telling us what we want to know.

And Lex Friedman did the opposite.

He shut up and he got the perfect answer out of Elon.

And I think that's a wonderful way to interview people for a job, for a negotiation.

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I watched this funny show about this, it's called like dating on the spectrum or love on the spectrum and it's about kids or grownups who have autism and are dating and I've noticed they do this too and they'll say something like, so what do you think about how this date is going?

Do you like me?

And they'll just silently and I'm like, that is such a brilliant question.

I wish I had the courage to ask that when I was dating and they had the courage to ask that because they're just, you know, maybe not a tune always with social cues.

I wish I had the courage to ask that.

That's a beautiful question to ask and giving that silence and that space and that for that question to breathe, you force the other person to come to a really cool answer for it.

And so anyway, that was a really neat clip.

Dude, I love that point.

So many, so many things to say about that.

First have you noticed that the people you get along with best are the only people that you can comfortably be quiet with when you are just living life?

Yeah, absolutely.

And the fact that you could be quiet with each other almost builds a silent trust between people because it's like, oh, we don't have to.

Yeah, you don't have to.

Okay.

Wow.

I'm at ease.

I can just be myself.

I can just do whatever.

I can just be pure.

I don't have to be constantly measuring how this is going.

So that's one observation.

Second observation.

Great interviewer, great interviewers do this.

And like you said, the CIA folks, great negotiators do this.

I worked with my dad for about nine months to a year in his company when I was young.

I was like 22 or something like that.

And I had always, you know, you don't really know how your dad is at work because this is like a different scenario.

It's like, it's a different context, you know, they come home and they're in dad mode.

They're not in like work mode.

So I got to see my dad at work for the first time.

And I always knew my dad was smart, but my dad was not great with like politics in the office.

So he, you know, he never really got ahead.

I seem like, you know, the sort of the good looking tall white guy would always get ahead and my dad would sort of be there, you know, giving the right ideas and the right analysis.

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But, you know, great.

Thanks.

You know, pat on the head and, you know, move on.

You know, he would be at the, he'd be in the meeting when the decisions happen.

And then whenever he goes for a beer afterwards, he wouldn't really be the guy who, who connects with everybody afterwards.

I think that held him back.

But the one thing he was great at was negotiating.

And I got to see him negotiate.

And I used to be like, tell him, I'm like, dude, you got, like, I would be like kind of like trying to give my opinion and be like, you need to say something that's awkward.

And he's like, and afterwards he would teach me, but during the time I'm like, you got to say something so awkward just to do it like that, you know, you want to make them feel, you want to build rapport or he's like, no, in negotiation, you don't want to build rapport necessarily.

And he goes, in negotiation, there's, there's two types of person who can win.

There's the person with the leverage, but we don't have the leverage and the second type of person that I can win is the madman.

The madman has leverage and he would do this intentionally.

He would go into situations and he would be the most stubborn guy in the room.

He would not be realistic.

He would not be cooperative.

He would not be practical or pragmatic with them.

He would just say, you know, like, I, like, I won't do it or he'll just be basically, he would get to this state where he would just say, look, you know, before I would have agreed to this, but now seeing how this is gone, like, I will die before we do a deal like this is just saying stuff like he would just get to a point and it wasn't all verbal.

It was just, he would keep repeating the same thing.

So they would say, you know, uh, seems like it's really important to you that this happens.

And when most people say, yeah, you got it, you, uh, you have heard me fantastic.

You know, correct.

My dad would say it is really important that we, you know, we have distribution rights.

They'd be like, all right, you see, you guys want distribution rights, but, you know, we have to consider all these other factors.

We need distribution rights.

I look, I know that you want distribution rights, but we have to take into account these factors.

We need distribution rights.

And I would be like, dude, why do you keep saying the same thing?

And he's like, I am just going to get my way because I'm going to be more stubborn than they're willing to be.

They want everybody to be happy and get along and they want to be well liked.

And I don't care.

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This is such an immigrant, this is such an immigrant, uh, mentality.
And it's, he would do the same thing at the market where he would say, I don't have any, I only have \$6.
They're like, sir, you just drove up and at BMW, I only have \$6.
It's like, you know, I remember once literally these are made up examples.
This is a real example.
We got to an airport and we had been telling my dad, my dad classic, like an immigrant is just packing so much shit into this suitcase and I just kept telling him, like, dude, these are not like, this is like more than the quota allows, right?
So he's like, no, no, don't worry.
We're going to check this one out.
We're going to carry this one on.
I was like, carry this on.
This is a huge bag.
Like this is, this is not even close to a car.
And he went to the counter and the lady was like, he puts one of the bags on the counter and especially 50 pound limit, it's like 65 or whatever.
And she's like, oh, sir, this is too heavy.
He goes, no, this is too light.
And she's like, no, no, sir, the limit's 50.
He goes, he goes, no, this, this is wrong.
This is this bag is light.
I have checked this light enough.
Does your dad have an accent or does he like this mode where he just like shakes his head like an immigrant?
He's just like, this bag is too light actually.
This bag is light enough.
And she was like, ah, and she was, she knew what to do.
And this little Asian woman, I'll never forget.
And she was just like, um, okay, we'll just put it through and she just picked it up and put it on the back thing and like sent it through.
And I was like, he just alphaed his way to do the head, the bag as it was being weighed was too heavy.
He just told her it was not even, it's okay.
It's fine.
Make an exception.
He told her it's too light, which makes zero sense in any, in any conditions.
And he's just done this so many times.
And it was like, oh, we're, we're trying to go to the four seasons and they, they check your ID at the front to make sure you're a hotel guest.
And he would get to the front and he would just be like, uh, he would just be like, so you need to see some ID or something.
And the guys was like, he's like, do you need some ID or we're fine?

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And he's like, oh, you're fine.

We just get through it.

Right.

He just had this immigrant confidence of like, I can be more certain, even though I'm wrong than they can be.

I will make them question their being right.

And I just saw him do this in so many negotiations.

So it reminded me of this like ability to be comfortable in the discomfort.

In this case, not with silence, but with something else.

These are great stories.

This is a good, this is a good story episode.

I'm digging this.

By the way, did you watch the actual Lex Elon interview?

The clips, Lex Friedman clips on YouTube.

Dude, there's one amazing clip.

I don't know if you saw it.

It's probably the most viral clip it has to be.

When I was watching, I took notes as I wrote this.

I sent it to my team because I was like, uh, hey, here's some cool stuff that Elon was saying.

Cause I was like, you're probably not going to watch this three hour podcast, but there's one section where it was like,

I don't watch the three hour ones.

They're too long.

They're too long.

Exactly.

Lex asked this question.

He goes like, you're doing these things in engineering that are considered hard or impossible, self driving cars, electric cars, reusable rockets, these engineering problems that literally nobody has solved in the history of humanity.

And experts, even some of your heroes will say that it won't work or your method won't work.

You know, how do you overcome those that that and these engineering problems?

And he goes, where do you take, where do you get your strength from and your inspiration?

You know, what gives you strength to continue on amongst that?

And Elon's quiet, but he's quiet and this is quiet.

Like when you're learning a new language, he was like, in my head, in his head, it just looked at me like he's saying, like, what's the mother fucker talking about?

Get strength.

Like, I, like, I don't even do that, but let me just entertain this thought.

Like what is, what is he trying to ask me?

Yeah, it's like, it's like asking Elon, like, uh, or a normal person.

It's like, where do you get the urge to be hungry for dinner?

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Yeah, exactly.

Exactly.

Like, how do you remember?

What do you mean?

I just am.

Yeah.

And so he goes, um, so he goes, he said something and he goes, like, I think that you should just decide if it's worth doing and then try your hardest to do it or die trying.

And he's like, he's like, and it's Alexis, Alexis, like, so you don't, you don't consider quitting, you know, you say you don't give up when things get hard is that he goes, quitting is not in my nature.

I thought that was so tight.

There's this great 60 minutes where he said the same thing and someone was like, um, you know, like no car company has ever launched in the last like 70 or whatever long it's been.

You are teetering on bankruptcy.

I think it's time to give up.

What do you think?

And he just looks, it was Scott Pellick.

He looks at him.

He goes, Oh, I don't, I don't give up.

And that's, that's all he said.

And it looked like he's about to cry actually in that, in that interview.

You remember that?

Yeah.

And, but he just looked at it.

He goes, I don't give up.

Yeah.

Exactly.

I thought that was really good.

Exactly what he likes to go.

So, you know, so you don't, quitting, quitting is not, you know, quitting is not an option.

He goes, it is not in my nature.

I thought that was so tight.

And then, and then he goes, you know, we just, we just carry on and he paused and he just goes, fuck it.

Like we'll get it done.

And like when he's talking about like the hard engineering challenges, like, you know, and I was his attitude, I thought, you know, he long kind of annoys me sometimes that just stuff he does, like, you know, he's just like, whatever on Twitter, he's like, trying really hard to be like a mean, cool guy.

When he made the joke about like the guy looking like he just came or like calling him a penis head or something.

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I forget what he said.

I thought that was whack.

I was like, that's just, that's whack.

I don't find that funny or interesting.

Yeah.

420.

Yeah.

69, bro.

Yeah.

I did not.

It's not like that.

It's just not funny to me.

Not like I'm offended, but just like literally it's just not funny.

So you're saying a joke that doesn't land, which makes you less cool in my books, you know, but when he says shit like this and he actually, you know, his story actually lines up with it, I think it's actually really fucking badass.

There was a bunch of things in this that I thought were really cool.

One, one.

So he talks about a couple of things.

Can I just rattle off a couple of the bits I thought were good.

Yeah.

He's like, I think you should learn physics because he goes, there's only the only real rules are physics.

Everything else was a recommendation.

Brilliant.

Like all public policy, social sciences, psychology, biology, chemistry, these are recommendations. Physics is the only rule.

So he's like, you know, when we go to do one of these hard things, I just first look at are we trying, are we defying the laws of physics?

If we are, then we need to change our plan.

If we're not, then we can get it done.

He said a couple of things.

What a baller mentality.

He goes, you know, physics teaches you not just about physics, it teaches you how to think.

So he goes, you know, he gave it, but again, the example people have heard about first principles thinking, which is like, you don't, you don't come to your conclusions by analogy like this worked.

So something similar might work in another vertical.

It's like first principles being like, okay, you know, for example, to get to, you know, can a rocket be cheaper?

Well, I can give you some opinions, but like, let's start with, what is the physical cost of the materials that go into the base minimal rocket that can get to Mars based on everything

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we know today?

I can get to get into orbit and then, you know, they come up with their cost assumption from that.

Well, it costs NASA this and we could do probably 25% better, you know, it starts at the bottom, not top down.

The other one he talks about is like thinking about things in the limit.

You know, he's talking about Bitcoin and he goes, people argue that money has value.

Money has power in and of itself.

It does not.

And the way to know this is to think about it in the limit.

If you're stranded on an island and you have no food, no water, no shelter, but your Bitcoin will not save you money itself has no value.

You know, it only is like money is a way that groups of people can allocate resources.

But if there are no people, then it has no value to you.

Even if there was one person there and you said, I'll give you all of my Bitcoin, trillion dollars of Bitcoin for that Apple, they would never give it to you if you're stranded on that island.

Another thing he's like, so here's how we use that, that idea of thinking about things in the limit in our business.

He's like, so he's like cars, everybody thought the cars would be too expensive and they were at first.

The first year was, you know, \$100,000 plus and then the model S was a bit cheaper and so on and so forth.

He goes, manufacturing things, if you think about in the limit, it's like, as you increase your volume, your cost goes down and it will approach asymptotically, which basically means the line will converge just to the cost of the raw materials plus the licensing cost of the intellectual property you're using.

So at enough scale, it might be billion cars or whatever, you know, at enough scale, that is what the costs are.

He's like, and you think about that, then you say, okay, so then will this work?

You know, then you can work backwards into reality.

He goes, because most people, the way they do things, which I think is wrong, is they, you know, they look at, okay, given my circumstances, so given the tools and the methods that we know, what can we do, he goes, that will never really yield like breakthroughs.

He goes, instead, you think, what is the actual ideal scenario?

What is the perfect arrangement of atoms that will yield the best product?

Now let's try to get the atoms into that shape because you actually want both.

You want to think in both directions.

You want to first think of the perfect product.

What is the perfect arrangement of atoms or pixels in a computer product?

That would be the absolute perfect ideal product.

Then you say, what tools, methods, and materials do we have today?

You want to think in both directions, and then you'll arrive at like, you know, a fantastic,

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you know, best in class product, and that's, you know, what we do for a test on things like that.

That's great.

So, you know, he was thinking about things like that, and he was describing things like that, which I thought was great.

He had a couple other funny ones.

He goes, yeah, when a website asks you if you'll accept the cookies, he's like, he's giving an example of like, when government regulation doesn't work.

He's like, the government's trying to regulate tracking, so then every website just asks you for cookies.

It just pops up every time you visit every single website, and every single person has to click accept on every single website now, and nobody reads it, nobody actually knows what they're doing.

But yay, the government regulated that, that the website has to pop that up.

And he said like, he's like, you know, every time that pops up, it feels weird, it feels like perhaps there's a very small chance that clicking this will open up a tiny portal to hell.

Dude, he's so funny and weird.

I love that.

It's, God, he's so interesting.

I feel inspired just listening to you tell us, retell the story.

You want to do one more?

Yeah.

I have two interesting ones.

So scroll down to the bottom, do you want to talk about my buddy's portfolio or the book thing?

Let's do the book thing.

I think that's faster.

All right.

All right.

So I got curious about something.

I saw this.

So there's this guy named Mark Manson.

Mark Manson has this book called the subtle art of not giving a fuck.

Then he created a couple spin-offs from it.

So I'll tell you a quick, a funny story.

So this book was the best selling book of 2020, I believe, or 19, either 19 or 20.

I forget the exact year and it, or maybe even prior before that actually, but it's sold like many, many millions copies of books.

I actually had a dinner at a conference with Tucker, who we were just talking about and Mark Manson sat next to me and I was talking to him and I was like, so what do your parents think about your job?

And he goes, well, they kind of make fun of me and ask me when I'm going to get a real

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job.

They don't really know what I do.

They just think I play on the computer all day and I play video games all day.

They don't truly understand like what I'm doing, but they kind of understood it this year when they released a report for New York Times saying I sold more books than Hillary Clinton.

So that's when they, that's when they kind of understood what I do.

And so that's a funny story about Mark, but I looked up, I was, I was curious about something about him and I Google and the first article came out that he had a condo in New York City that he recently sold for \$14 million.

And I got curious about that because I think that book, I was like, books can't make that much money, can they, and Atomic Habits this year sold, or so far has sold around 5 million books in total.

And this year, Atomic Habits was the best selling book on Amazon in 2020 or 2021.

And I was curious about how much authors make.

So I have a friend, I can't talk about his name, but he sold 30,000 copies of a book that was published on a major publisher.

And I want to explain to you how much money he made by the way, and that 30,000, that's a ton.

That's like in the top 1%ile, you know, yes.

This book is in bookstores and it's probably in the airport and things like that.

So they were given, they didn't have a book before, they were given a \$250,000 advance, which is basically just like a, here's 250, go spend a year and go write the book.

Off that 30,000 in books, they have not made a cent in royalty or licensing fees.

And he told me that when he was looking at the contract, he doesn't even entirely understand when he's going to get paid past that amount and he only gets paid like pennies on the dollar for every like \$14 book sold.

And he said, he's like, I, he goes, basically I get paid, they spent a certain amount of money to help me make this book and they get paid once it surpass, I get paid once it surpasses that amount, but I can't even understand in the paperwork how much they spent like including everyone's salaries on doing this and publishing and things like that.

But I have made, he said, an additional \$400,000 this year on selling other stuff like courses and coaching and consulting, which wouldn't have happened because of the book.

But basically on 30,000 copies sold, he has not made a cent other than the 250.

And he told me that his editor wasn't that good, that he had to spend a little bit of money getting there, his own editor and that their marketing people weren't that great.

And I found it to be very interesting.

So I looked up Dan Blazerian, Dan Blazerian, you know, who he is, the Instagram guy, he self published his book.

And so Dan Blazerian's book, it costs \$35 and he has a Shopify store that sells it.

You can't buy it on Amazon.

And it works for Dan Blazerian because he just posted a link on Instagram and he goes viral.

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But David Goggins did it as well.

And so anyway, this whole publishing kind of thing got me interested because these people do not, I guess Mark Manson, he must have crushed it somehow.

But for someone who sells 30,000 books, they don't make shit off their books.

And I found it to be incredibly fascinating.

I guess if you're like Ryan Holiday, I heard that he makes, he does good, but a lot of people, they just don't get paid.

Well, I think it's two things.

If you take in advance, and it's your first book, economics is going to be super skewed against you.

If you have multiple hits like a Ryan Holiday, then by the time you negotiate your third book deal, you're going to have much better economics in the thing.

Tim Ferriss probably made more off his last book than he did off the first book, which is the bestseller.

And then the last thing is self publishing, changing the game in a way.

So let's say a book sells for \$13.99 or whatever, \$14 bucks.

I think it's going to be like probably seven, eight bucks of just the cost of the book plus shipping to get it to a customer.

And so you're left with four or five bucks at the end to play with.

Now, whether that goes all in your pocket or your publisher's pocket, I think that depends on how you negotiate.

But even if you just take four bucks per copy, you know, five million copies sold for atomic habits, you know, I would believe that he's grossed, you know, 20 million, 30 million in sales.

I'm sorry.

Like gross profit off that.

Now, I don't know what his deal was.

If he said, I don't know if he's self published and what?

Well, five million books times \$14 is 70,000, 70 million.

So the revenue on that I would have bet is in the 50 to 100 million range.

Yeah.

That huge ballpark.

But I don't know what a guy like him would make, but I bet you he could get paid like many thousands an hour to come and talk.

I mean, I bet you even cost him \$50,000 to show up at a at a boardroom in New York to give a discussion.

Yeah.

I just got paid \$8,000 to do a zoom call for one hour to give a talk.

And so that means that somebody who's, you know, the author of atomic habits is definitely commanding, you know, twenty five fifty K per, per.

That's crazy.

And now maybe a digital.

That's crazy.

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So anyway, I thought, I thought this was interesting and it's, it shocked me writing a book because you're going through this.

I know you're, I know you're, or you're thinking about going through it.

I don't know how far, how far I basically paid to write the book and now I got to write the book this year.

So that'll happen.

And so I would predict that you don't make money directly off of it, but I imagine there will be money made in some ways.

Yeah.

I think a book is a pretty horrible way to make money.

So I'm just doing it for fun.

That's it.

All right.

Well, that's that.

This wasn't an interesting episode.

I think this is actually going to be a favorite.

Really?

I feel like Ben, you tell us, but I feel like because we were all over the place.

It's just like random stories.

I don't know if people, I don't know what people think, what'd you, what'd you grade it?

First of all, I should say I'm, I'm changing my grading system in 2022 because like the reason that I, you know, I came and did this because I love my first million.

So I was giving out A's left and right because like every episode is an A to me, but I need to adjust it so that C is the normal episode from now on instead of A. Okay.

So C is just like an average, my first million, which is an A really, but we're going to see that just, just say, just say average normal average like that.

Yeah.

See, it's me.

Okay.

Okay.

So then we will call this an average plus.

Is it a new phone?

Like it's just like a C plus B minus.

It was, um, it was a better than normal episode.

I actually like the topics were super different and random, but they were all super interesting to me.

What was the most interesting?

Well, you know, I'm into the doomer optimism stuff.

So like I loved that discussion.

That was probably my favorite.

Dude, that shit freaked me out.

I was upset for like two days.

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I've still a little rattled by it.

It made me nervous.

That's when you're talking about building, um, these Airbnb's as like, no, no, Sam, you need to go out and start building like compounds, you know, I feel like that's going to be a thing in the future.

Sean, do you know that Mormons prep?

What?

Like Mormons prep?

Oh, that's like a thing.

That's part of it.

Yeah.

What did you do, Ben?

Like you believe like part of the actual religion or it's just like, it's like, you know, shall do this or it just happens to be that Mormons like to prep.

Yeah.

So it's been de-emphasized a little bit just because the, you know, more than 50% of the members of the church now are outside the United States.

So a lot of them don't have the financial means to do like emergency preparedness, but every member of the church is supposed to have a month of like food and water.

I thought it was even higher.

I thought it was like six.

It used to be more like a month is kind of the bottom line is the, is sort of the, yeah, yeah, yeah, the minimum.

And then a lot of people do three or six.

We have a somewhere between three and six.

To me doing that is like the same thing of freezing your sperm.

So like there's a small chance that something's going to happen to you where you get a car accident and your sperm goes away and you can't reproduce.

And for many people, myself included, that would be like the worst thing ever.

Like I can't, oh man, I can't have a kid.

So it's like, it costs \$100 a year in order to do it.

I'm going to do that.

Prepping is the same exact thing.

There's a small chance, but I'll be thankful if there's one in a million that it ever happened.

No.

So what I would say though is like having a food store or just stuff like that is not just good for like the end of the world, but also like, if you're in Hurricane Katrina and you can't get out for whatever reason and you just need to be able to like eat for a week, it's good for like emergencies that do happen all the time to people like every day, you know, all the Mormon mommy bloggers that I follow, which I do follow a lot.

They all do a really good job, but they do, I don't remember a lot of their names.

I found on Instagram and I, and I go to their blog sometimes, but they basically have these

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like, you know how like at the grocery store, there's like coffee beans and you just pour coffee on top.

Like at the very bottom, you can like, or like they have like granola, coffee, sugar and you can just like, you know, open the spigot at the very bottom and it just empties out.

It seems like what they have those in their homes.

And so whenever it's not, it's always topped off though.

So the oldest stuff gets you eat that, but then like you are always, you're constantly topping it off.

So you always have a constant supply of that stuff.

You know, like those containers.

Anyway, all right, that's the episode.