

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E237: Chris Williamson: The Shocking New Research On Why Men And Women Are No Longer Compatible!

78% of women want to date a man who is as educated or as employed as they are.

This is just a straight-up imbalance, and this is what I've called the tall-girl problem.

So, Chris Williamson, he is an entrepreneur, former club promoter, turned podcaster with more than 70 million downloads. How did I get here?

Chris, are you aware of the dark side that's driving you?

You really want to go here? I've been chronically unpopular throughout all of school.

Badly Bully didn't have a group of friends, so I'd compromised an awful lot of who I truly was to try and just be as popular and successful in that world as possible.

But there was an ambient sense that something is broken with me in a journal.

I've got a couple of different entries and it just put, I think I'm lonely.

15% of men say that they have zero close friends.

Where did we go wrong?

The world of social connection has been made less and less social.

The single biggest predictor of your health outcomes in life are the number of close connections that you have. It's more than going to the gym, it's more than stopping drinking.

People that are in relationships have better health outcomes.

But one in three men between the ages of 18 and 30 hasn't had sex in the last year.

80% of men report not approaching a woman because they are scared of being seen as creepy.

And by 20, 40, 45% of 25 to 45 year old women will be single and childless.

You can start to see how this imbalance could cause a problem. This is a very difficult conversation.

The first thing that we need to do is...

Chris, you do a lot of things and you do a lot of things very, very well.

One of the struggles I had when thinking about how to direct this conversation was really like understanding, because you're so diverse in your thinking and your ideas and the subject matter that you're curious about, how to try and encapsulate exactly who you are.

So I guess the question I wanted to start with is, in your own words, what is your mission?

I'm a very curious person. I always have been. And I now have the opportunity with my podcast, Modern Wisdom, to commercialize, utilize, weaponize that so that I can bring people in that I'm interested in. So a good example, I did a master's and a bachelor's degree at uni in business.

And I always regretted not going and doing philosophy or psychology. And in retrospect, it always made me resentful of uni a little bit because I'd spent all of this time learning stuff that didn't teach me anything about the business world. But then upon starting the podcast, what I realized was that I've been able to design my perfect university degree with the top lecturers on the planet. And I get to do it three times a week at the cadence that I want. And not only do I get the lecturers that I want, but I get to ask them about the specific area of their work that I want as well. So it's curiosity. The thing that drives me is curiosity. The reason that I do this is because I want to know, I want to know about everything. I want to know about why the guy that was sat next to us at dinner last night decided to wear a suit with like converse. Like I want to know what is it about that? So curiosity.

That answer is focused on what you get from it, right? Is there an external mission, something that it gives to the world that you're particularly and something that provides you meaning by delivering it to the world? Is there an answer there too?

Yeah. So toward the end of my twenties, I had a lot of the trappings of success that maybe

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society would tell you that you should have. So running this big nightlife events business, which I was very proud of and still am. But there was something missing, despite the fact that I had the blue tick on Twitter and the free charcoal toothpaste, and I'd been on Love Island and take me out and people knew my name and I had, you know, monetary success and status and stuff. But there was something missing. And I didn't really understand myself particularly well. And I think that that's a problem that a lot of people get to, especially guys toward the end of their twenties, they think all of the values that I have absorbed that are supposed to be the things that make me happy, maybe don't fulfill me in the way that they were promised. And that required me

to do some reflection. And I realized I actually didn't have very many opinions. What I'd been doing was I'd been playing a role as this big name on campus party boy, club promoter, big dick around town guy. And I'd compromised an awful lot of who I truly was to try and just be as popular and successful in that world as possible. Right. What that meant was I didn't really understand myself. I didn't really understand my mission or my purpose. And now looking back, I realized that all of the steps that I took to get from where I was to where I am now, which is still like an adult infant, but slightly less so. All of that, there are lessons that I can gift to other people that will help them to expedite success, avoid the pitfalls, do it in less time with less loneliness, with less pain and suffering than I had to go through to achieve the same thing. And hopefully by speaking to people that changed my life, that gave me lessons, I can then pass those on to other people and get them from where I was to somewhere that's even better than where I am now. Okay. So take me back. What are the dominoes that fell all the connecting dots that took you to that point where you were the party boy on campus that was on take me out on TV and running club nights?

Take me back to the start. What are the most important things I need to know about that early experience that took you to that moment? I arrive at university in Newcastle and I've been chronically

unpopular throughout all of school, pretty badly bullied, pretty alone, I'm an only child and just didn't have a squad, didn't have a group of friends really, was successful in sports and had a team, but didn't really have a tight group of friends, got to college and that was a little bit better, started to come out of my shell a little bit, but still not much. And then you get to uni and the same as every school kid, you know, you'd go home for summer and be like, I'm going to reinvent myself and I'm going to be the cool kid. So I arrive at university and that was a good intersection of a new opportunity to be a new person and also maybe a little bit more social ability.

Start running a nightlife events business with the guy that I sit next to in my first ever seminar. After that, we get to the stage where that's very successful very quickly. I immediately tied a lot of my identity to the first thing I've ever been super successful in in life, which is running nightlife. I can get renowned, I can have people that need me, which is not really the same as wanting me, but they need me, which is close enough. So I think, right, well, if I just throw all of myself into this business, then I'm going to be accepted by the world at large and over the space of the next 10 years or so. That meant that I fully dedicated myself to that mission. And we were very, very good at it. We expanded from Newcastle to Manchester multiple nights per week across multiple cities. And then I did whatever it took to get more clout as well. So take me out, then first season of Love Island, first person through the doors on Love Island. And I spend all of this

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time. Love Island was an interesting reflection period because there was nowhere for me to hide. No distractions, no TV, no phone, no laptop, no friends, no books, no nothing, right? There's just you and this group of people. And the group of people that were in the Love Island villa were genuine versions of the person that I thought I was. I thought that I was this big name on Campus Party Boy. And then I get deposited into this inescapable weapons grade bunker of those party boys and party girls. And I look around and go, ah, I'm not supposed to be here. Something's off. Something's discordant. It's not working. And then I get out and it wasn't like, and then the skies opened and I realized that my path was not to wear small swim shorts on TV. However, it did make me think it was a very, I call it a fatal dose of contrast that I was no longer able to hide that there is something a little bit off here. And that was a good time. Your Jordan Peterson's, your Alanda Boton from the School of Life's, your Sam Harris's, your Joe Rogan's all coming to the front. I start consuming their stuff. And it makes me think, wow, I actually, this speaks to me. It helps to educate me to be better and to understand myself.

And that's kind of how I phased out, I suppose.

When you talk about struggling in school socially, what was the reason for that? Have you ever sort of diagnosed why you didn't quote unquote fit in in school? Yeah, so quite, I think any only child struggles to be socialized to the level that they need to in order to have the same set of social skills that anyone with a brother or sister does, right? Like think about how much time you with a sibling spend arguing, hitting each other, going to sleep, them knocking on your door when you're trying to get ready, arguing for the bathroom, all of these tiny little interactions.

I had none of that, right? And even if you spent every waking moment of free time in clubs and sports and whatnot that I did, it's going to be hard. And then I think that there is some inherent introversion in me. And it kind of combined for me to not really understand other kids.

So I used to obsess over things like the kind of hairstyle that other kids had or the way that they tied their tie in school or the type of shoes that they wore, the way that they carried their bag, which shoulder their bag was on, because I was adamant I would fixate on that. And that would be the reason that they had friends and I didn't. Because I couldn't understand why I didn't have friends. What it was was that I couldn't socially relate to kids particularly well because I didn't have a wide variety of social skills. So I struggled. But I was taking this super attentive, like, what is it? What's going on? It's trying to assess. Is it because Stephen wears his watch on his right wrist instead of his left wrist? Is it because of whatever, whatever? Because I was trying to diagnose what was going on. Do you know what's driving you from, you know, the good and the bad, the light and the dark? I'm more specifically interested to start with the dark. Do you ever have conversations with yourself about the, when I say dark, it's a subjective term, but the dark side that's driving you? Absolutely. Yeah, chronically, of course. I think anybody that believes that they're driven by a pure love and positive reinforcement is usually confused. I think that there was a study done that looked at the three most common traits of highly successful people, hyper successful people. We're talking top level CEOs. The first one was a crippling sense of insufficiency. The second one was a superiority complex. And the third one was an ability to have maniacal focus. So what you have, and it's this Peterson story, which you may be familiar with, they starve rats and put them into a tube. They attach a spring to the tail of the rat so that they can tell how much force they're pulling with. And that gives a proxy for desire,

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right? That's how much they want it. They waft the smell of cheese in from the front and the rat pulls toward the cheese. And you think these rats are starving. They're going to be pulling very hard. Then they take the rats out and they do another iteration of the study. This time they waft the smell of cheese in from the front and they waft the smell of a cat in from behind. The rats pull harder. What's the lesson? In life, not only do you need to run towards something that you want, but you need to run away from something that you fear. And I've spoken to 600 high performers on my show, right? I would say that on average, most of the people that are unbelievably good at anything that they do are driven by a fear of insufficiency, not by a perfectly balanced desire for success. And this tension between success and happiness, I think, is something that both me and you are quite interested in. So the reason it's interesting is a lot of the time we sacrifice the thing we want for the thing which is supposed to get it, right? So if in service of becoming happy, we sacrifice happiness to achieve success in the hopes that success will make us happy, if you created an equation of what's going on and you just remove success from both sides, what are you left with? Just happiness. Now, I'm not saying that you can recant all of your desires for status and accolade and striving and stuff. You need to go out and do things. But I do think that a lot of the time we overcomplicate the world. And a lot of it is because when we're kids, our parents will reinforce our successes by praising us and will criticize us when we fail, which can metastasize as we grow up into being, I am only worthy of love and acceptance and admiration and praise if I win. It causes you to fear being a loser more than want to be a winner and winning salves. It's like an aesthetic that papers over fears of insufficiency. So yeah, I mean, when I was a club promoter, I knew that if I stood on the front door of a nightclub that people would need me. They want the VIP bands. They want to be in the place where the pretty girls are. They want to get in for cheaper or a free bottle of vodka or they want to skip the queue or whatever. So they need me. And then when you roll it forward to the podcast, I have to be very careful that I don't just transmute that same energy into instead of gifting people entry into nightclubs, now I'm gifting them insights that I've learned, concepts from some interesting person that's going to improve their life as we sit around a dinner table or as we go out for a lunch or whatever. I have to be careful that that's not the case. And for the people that maybe resonate with this fear of insufficiency and this requirement to offer the world something in order for the world to feel like they're worthy, it is possible to deprogram it. It is possible to tune that volume down. But one of the things that you're going to pay a price with is your drive because the rat that is running away from something that it fears will pull harder than the rat that's just running towards something that it wants. The traits of super competitive people don't just include the superiority complex, but the crippling anxiety about being a failure. So this tension between success and failure is it is a driver, but it's an incredibly toxic fuel, right? To be propelled by fear of insufficiency can work super well, but it's very dangerous. There's a final example, Eddie Hall, world's strongest man, and he retires on the podium. He's holding this trophy in the air and he's saying, this is for you, Nana. And his grandmas passed away recently and he's crying and he's 200 kilos at six foot four. And you know, he's worked his entire life. And he said in an interview shortly afterward that if he hadn't won the world's strongest man, he would be dead single with no relationship to his kid because he was pushing his body so hard with the lifting and presumably the

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drugs that he was taking. He was training so much that his relationship with his wife was breaking down and he was out of the house so much he had no relationship to his kid. Jason Pagin says, except that all of your heroes are full of shit. Your heroes aren't gods. They're just regular people who got particularly good at one thing by sacrificing literally everything else. That's the price that you pay for success. And most people wouldn't pay it.

That point about reprogramming the toxic drive that you have. I often ponder with myself. I'm like, when I think about status games and how status games that, you know, we often think that we're over a certain status game. So, you know, I had a guy on my podcast who talked a lot about the evolutionary basis of status and how if you go to an estate in the UK where there's not a lot of money, they'll have bigger logos on their track suits. It will stall. It will stall. Great game. And then as people get richer and richer, the logos get smaller and obviously they play a different type of game. It's about boats and other things. And that really hit me like a ton of bricks because I thought dressed in all black, I really don't have any, I have one material possession. You saw it last night, which is the bag I had on, which I'm waiting for it to break. Nice bag. It's a nice bag. Yeah. But outside, I thought I'm over status games. And I realized that I'm just playing a different set of status games. It's just a counter signal. Yeah. It's the red sneaker effect. It's the reason that the CEO that's worth a billion can turn up in a hoodie, but the CEO that's worth half a million still wears a three piece suit. There's another idea called the barber pole of status. So, you can imagine that people who are at the absolute top in terms of status, they need to make sure that the people below them can't be confused for them. But they can counter signal by having the... So, you look at the vagabond style of flares and hoodie, even essentials, Yeezy, Yeezy stuff. It's almost like hobo chic. Why? Well, it's because I am so cool and so trendy that I can counter signal off the top. So, everyone is playing a status game. Everybody is at all times. It's just a case of what game are you playing.

And that toxic drive, the big shift I've had in my life is I'm now focusing on something which is also driving me to a more fulfilling place. Whereas before I was focusing on like a monetary game where I was like, how much money can I acquire? How big can I build a business? Now I'm focusing it more on things that are more intrinsically aligned with that which that makes me happy. So, this, for example, or writing or DJing, for example, but it's still there. So, my question to you, there's kind of two questions there is, what's your journey been like with reprogramming that toxic driving force or that dark driving force or those feelings of insufficiency? And secondly, you said that we can reprogram it. We can dilute it, but it comes at the cost of drive. How does one do such a thing? So, what I was missing for me personally was I didn't feel competent in things. I needed to feel like I was competent and I was proving something to the world each time that I succeeded. Why did you need to feel competent? Because that would solve my feelings of insufficiency. For every time that I won, we had a good club night, the business was good, we broke a record with entries at a different event or whatever, that would make me feel, yeah, wow, I'm like less of a piece of shit. Was there a time where you were made to feel incompetent? I think just chronically through my childhood of not being super accepted, there was an ambient sense that something is broken with me, something is wrong, because if there wasn't something wrong, I would have friends. People would want me, right? I think that was just a relatively logical, if this then that statement that came out of it. And when it comes to changing that, Alex Homozy, who you had on the show recently, has this great quote where

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he says, you don't become confident by shouting affirmations in the mirror, but by having a stack of undeniable proof that you are who you say you are, outwork yourself doubt. And it wasn't until I had a project where I could no longer deny that my efforts were bearing fruits and that I was becoming competent at something, it was a crushing amount of volume and incontrovertible evidence that smashed my imposter syndrome into the ground. Did it? Yeah, yeah. Do the games, do the games you, because now you're in a different category, right? Yeah, but I feel like I'm supposed to be here. I feel like I deserve to be here. You know, often my guests talk about like that voice in their head, which whispers to them, you know, words of self doubt. And it seems to me like, I'd say 95% of them haven't managed to shake that in some form. It still shows up at some time, in some place. It's still there, but it's a lot quieter, a lot quieter. And you have to accept after a while that if you continue to disprove your imposter syndrome in the real world, every single time that you're faced with a challenge, you succeed, despite the fact that you were adamant that you were going to fail or you had fears of insufficiency or all the rest of it. After a while, you have to accept that it has nothing to do with your competence and everything to do with your addiction to feeling like an imposter. You are delusional about your competence in reverse. Every single time that you are faced with a challenge, you succeed. Every single time you are faced with a future challenge, you believe that you're going to fail. It's got nothing to do with your competence. So Rogan calls it building a mountain with layers of paint, right? Incredibly thin each time, but after 600 episodes, or however many million dollars of revenue or whatever, you go, maybe there's something to this, you know, maybe I don't, maybe I'm not a totally worthless piece of shit. On that point of how it diminishes one's drive, have you seen a diminishment in your drive then as your feelings of sufficiency have improved? No, because I have changed what is driving me to something which is much more aligned with who I am. So the curiosity for me is crippling and I want to know about everything, which my desire to learn things is so much stronger than any fear of insufficiency or desire for success was ever going to be, right? That I've just supplanted one toxic type of drive for one incredibly personal, very scalable, leverageable, beautiful kind of drive. That being said, there are times this is, I'm speaking from, you know, the perfect version of me, that voice, that negative voice comes in a few times a week. It reminds me that I maybe I'm not supposed to be here, I'm not who I pretend to be, but it's getting quieter and quieter and quieter and I think it's getting quieter because I have a stack of undeniable proof that I'm supposed to be here. Do you remember the last time that voice came in? Yeah, I think I told you about this last night. I was on a podcast and my blood sugar fell through the floor and what it showed me was that under times of extreme stress, we revert back to a voice from somewhere in our past. I don't know who it was, I don't know whether it was an angry parent or a teacher that was annoyed at me or whatever, but this voice came in and it said, you're not supposed to be here, you were never supposed to be here, you're boring, no one cares what you've got to say, you know that you're a fake, everyone's going to find out, everybody's laughing at you, nobody likes you. And I thought as I'm talking away on this show and my head is spinning with all of this stuff and I'm thinking, where the fuck has this voice come from? Who is that? I thought that I'd transcended this voice. However, in a high pressure situation, when I felt bad, something came back through. So I think what it does remind me is that there is always work to

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be done. There's always something there that's hiding behind and that becoming complacent about personal growth is something that is going to allow that to seep back in.

You talked about the paint, the layers of paint that build confidence. This is something that I've been particularly compelled by because so many people that listen to this podcast struggle with the idea of confidence and there's a big industry out there, as you've said, that says, you know, look in the mirror, tell yourself you're a millionaire, say it three times, write it in your journal. But then as I reflected in, as I've written in my book, the thing that, and it relates to what Alex Hamosy said, is the thing that I've learned is it's all evidence for better or for worse. Stack of undeniable proof. And it goes the other way, that evidence that you got at seven years old when you went up and tried to do a public speech and everyone laughed at you

is more, it's a thicker layer than one layer of evidence to say that you're capable. It's a harder layer to sort of strip. If there is someone listening now and they want to maybe orientate their drive to the fulfilling pursuits that you talk about, but also they want to build their confidence, what advice would you give them? I imagine that's 80% of the listener base here. Act first. Okay. You have to lead with action. Because if you are someone that deals with a crippling sense of insufficiency, your ability to discount any good thoughts you have in your mind is going to be so strong. If you try and lead with positivity first, I need to think it, wish it, believe it, and I will achieve it. Your set point of negativity is going to just crush that into the ground. I'm speaking from personal experience, right, as the guy that was chronically unconfident

and still has the imposter syndrome that does creep in. You have to start with action. It needs to be, okay, what would have had to have happened in a week's time for me to look back on that week

and find pride in myself? Pride is seen as something that you should be ashamed of. It's one of the seven deadly sins. But David Goggins, I did an episode with him a couple of months ago. We could put it in the show notes if people are interested. And he said pride is something that everybody misses, that having pride in your name, your performance, the way that you show up for other people is something that you can do. But you need to do something that is worthy of being prideful about, right? What would have had to have happened in a week for you to look back on that week with pride? Okay, maybe stop breaking promises to yourself. When you say, I'm going to wake up

tomorrow at 7am. And when the option comes to hit the snooze button, don't do it. There's one win that you've got for the day. That's action, right? And it is just, you know, it's tried to say the Peterson clean your room thing. But the reason that that works is that you start with the smallest step-a-step and you expand out from that. You want to become a writer. You want to leave your job and become a writer. Okay, can you commit to writing one blog post on substack per week for the next

three weeks? That would make you feel like less of a loser if you did that. Action has to come first if you're the sort of person who is chronically unconfident because you will drag your sense of identity behind you. Mark Manson says that identity lags behind our status by about one to two years. So for both me and you, in two years time, we'll go, I understand why I was in LA that day and look back. Start with action and make small promises to yourself that you don't

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break. If you had a friend and every single time that you and your friend decided that you're going to go out for dinner, that friend either showed up two hours late or didn't show up at all, you would stop trusting that person. That is the relationship that you have with yourself. You need to be able to trust your own word. And a lot of us don't because life is very convenient and it is easy for people to not stick to the promises that they set themselves because our ability to be idealistic is always going to outstrip reality's ability to deliver that to us. Soon as you posit an ideal, you then begin to compare yourself to that ideal. And true hell is when the person that you are meets the person that you could have been. Sometimes I ponder how

you've probably seen this in your own life, I'm sure you have, where you'll have a friend in your life. I've got a couple of friends back home who I've tried to help in some way, maybe give some advice when they're struggling in their hardest times and the advice has been ineffective. And then you've got another friend who will just need one idea. They'll be listening to your podcast and one idea will be the seed that changes their life. I often think that I overestimate the power of words because everything you've said there makes perfect sense. But we both know that 95% maybe more of people that have just received that it will not convert into any kind of behavior. Habits are hard to break, man. And the habit of not doing things is unbelievably difficult to get past. It's one of the problems with anyone that listens to your show or my show, you will love being cerebral, right? You will love the idea that I can use cognitive horsepower to just get myself out of problems. And there is a case of learning as masturbation, right? And believing that learning about something is the same as enacting it. And it's not. That's why it has to be action first. A quote from one of my friends that he uses when he's thinking about a concept is, does this grow corn? Basically, is it useful? Tell me how I can use this in my life. Does it grow fucking corn, right? It's this beautiful sounding concept, cognitive bias that helps me understand the way that my brain works and my relationship with everybody else. How do I use that in my life? Give me something to apply it to. And that's why with the confidence thing, choose promises that you will never break to yourself. I'm going to get up on time for the next month. I'm not going to hit the snooze button. If you do that, and you look back in a month and you go, oh my God, that's the first time I've done that in forever, maybe. That's a big win. And you can do the James Clear thing, we'll write it on a board, we'll track it, what gets measured, et cetera, et cetera. But the main thing is just keep promises to yourself. And that is a good way to go from here is an insight I learned about I want to do breathwork, cold plunge, go to the gym fast until 12 midday, get up on time, sunlight in the eyes and then whatever it is, right, that you want to do, turn it into a promise. Don't break the promise.

One of the really important things you said there was about the size of that first step. I was reflecting there on the way that video games are designed to make sure that every subsequent level is not too intimidating that you lose motivation, but it's not too small that you lose motivation as well. You can lose motivation on both ways. And so it's the same with crosswords and video games, they get incrementally more challenging to keep you engaged. The size of that first step is, I think, a central point there because when people listen to podcasts with people like me and you or Andrew Huberman and they hear that they've got to maybe get up at this time, go outside, gaze, earth, like put their feet on the ground, cold plunge, da, da, da, da. And I go, I'm going to do that. And I set that as my first step. I'm set up for failure. How important do you think the size

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and the subjective size of that small, that first step you take to build trust with yourself is and to start that discipline? The goal isn't to have the perfect daily routine tomorrow. The goal is to still be winning your daily routine in 50 years time. If you expand your time horizon sufficiently, you will realize that very, very tiny steps can compound. Look at the graph of mine or your followers on Spotify, especially mine, right? Because I was doing my show for so long. And it's just nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing, everything. Well, why? Well, it's because it's latent leverage. It takes so many layers of paint to get there. So yes, the first step has to be incredibly small. Do that, make it so small that you can't say no to it. And then what's next? And then what's next? So when I decided that I was going to try and become a more virtuous version of me, I was going to start telling the truth. I was going to have a morning routine. I was going to develop a meditation habit. I was going to read all of these things that I wanted to do, none of which I did, right? Well, the end of my 20s, none of which I did, all of which are now the foundation of my life. I don't know, 1500 meditation sessions and all of the authors on the podcast and et cetera, et cetera. I had to do that one step at a time. I didn't have a stable sleep and wake pattern until COVID ever in my adult life. I'd never gone to bed and woken up at the same time for seven days in a row until COVID because I was running nightlife events, right? So if no matter how difficult the setback is, even if you're a shift worker, you're a nurse, you're a parent, whatever your challenge is, just make the promise to yourself sufficiently small that even with that challenge in front of you, you can make it work. I hear that and I'm motivated as a lot of people will be because that's what happens. Like a shower as the cliché goes, motivation comes and then it slowly washes over us and slowly starts to fade. How do I prepare or how should I be preparing for the day where I've heard Chris Williams and Steve speaking about this and then in three and a half days time I wake up in the morning, life has happened, the kids screaming, my motivation seems to have escaped me. The distinction between discipline on that day and the motivation I got from the source and that came from the inspiration of this conversation. What do I do? Discipline eats motivation for breakfast. You don't need motivation. It's great if it arrives. It's some extra fuel on the fire, but discipline is the thing that you need. What would you tomorrow want you today to do? You tomorrow would want you to keep that promise to yourself and it's why discipline is so much more valuable. I remember this conversation between Joker Willink and Sam Harris six years ago and they're talking about how you can't fake bravery because if you do a thing in spite of being scared of doing the thing, that is bravery. There's no such thing as fake bravery. If you do the thing and you're scared, that's bravery. If you don't do the thing and you weren't scared, that's not bravery. The same thing goes for discipline. Doing the thing in spite of not wanting to do the thing is discipline. You don't need motivation to get yourself up to go and do a thing. Make the promise small. Build it up step by step. Know that you are going to have setbacks and this is my favorite rule from James Clear, which is a habit missed once is a mistake. A habit missed twice is the start of a new habit. A habit never missed two days in a row. Ideally, go for a month, build it up, but after that, if you ever miss one day, go, okay, mistakes are going to happen. Tomorrow, I double down. Tomorrow, I go on time. Absolutely perfect. I'm straight up out of bed or I go to the gym or I walk the dog or I do my meditation or whatever. That's a good heuristic.

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Stop errors, snowballing into new habits. What about if I get to day three? It's then in James Clear's definition, the start of a new habit. Do I not just apply the same thinking that I do when I missed it on day one? You just need to... Well, I mean, if you don't ever miss two days, you shouldn't be able to get to day three. What if I do though? I think about my own fitness journey. I've been working out for the last three years and there will be a week where motivation is gone and there'll be multiple weeks. So there'll be sometimes it'll be two weeks in a row where I'm like taking my ass to the gym, but then my workout is absolutely atrocious. I might as well have not gone and I do that because I'm trying to continue the behavior in spite of the motivation. Well, it doesn't change your worth as a person. You want to do this because you think that it's good for you because you believe that it's good for you because you care about yourself. You care about Stephen and his body and his mind. You want him to have a long and healthy life and the same for everybody else that's listening. They want to have good outcomes from the things that they do in life. You don't need to lambast yourself because you don't do a thing that is perfectly designed to make you feel good. Okay. You missed three days in a row. We get back on the horse. We go again. Discipline.

You talked a second ago about the fundamentals of your life and other things you wanted to put in place, your reference meditation and these kinds of things. When I think about the Chris Williams that was running those club nights, was on Love Island, Take Me Out and the guy that sat in front of me now. If there were a couple of key fundamental tools or devices that have taken you from there to the guy sat in front of me here. What are those things? I say this because when people give advice on this podcast sometimes when in books and stuff, they'll talk to things they think they're supposed to say, but you never really get the true stuff. They'll say, oh, meditation. I've never heard that before. I'm like, for Chris Williams, what took you from there to the Chris Williams and sat in front of me now? Getting up on time every day. Every day? Every day. And what's on time for you? Seven to 7.30, depending on what time I went to bed. So it'll change each night, but I'll set an alarm and I will get up on time. Go to bed and wake up at around about the same time each day. Makes a massive difference. Go for a morning walk, first thing. So sunlight before screen light was something that I was doing before Huberman talked about the down regulation of the MiGdala response and the lateral eye movement helps blah, blah, blah in the brain. I came upon this because I wanted to go for a walk more, in order to get as many steps in as I could. Get up and go for a walk because it just, so many people are stopped the second they wake up because they use their phone as their alarm. They roll over, they hit the alarm on their phone, and now their phone's in their hands. And now they're in bed for half an hour doing the cycle through all of their social media apps. Sleep with your phone outside of your bedroom. That was the number one change that I made. Phone is outside of the bedroom and I bought. How long have radio alarms been around? Million years, right? Like just get any kind of alarm clock. Wake up, go for a walk before you use your phone. That will change so many of the problems that people encounter because addiction to technology is primary, I think, to a lot of people's challenges in their day. Meditation has been interesting for me. It's definitely helped me to be calmer, to be more peaceful. It's not an insane performance enhancer. The breathwork as well. I really enjoy doing that. It's not an insane performance enhancer. Reading, I would say some form of content absorption that could come from reading articles,

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reading books, listening to podcasts, listening to audiobooks. Something that pushes your understanding is very important. And for me, that's moved. It was books a while ago. Now it's more sub-stack articles that I read on my Kindle. For a long time, it's always been podcasts. Sometimes it's audiobooks. Sometimes it's not.

What about content creation, the other side of that coin, and the obligation to create? What impact has that had on your life?

It's everything because by having to talk about the things that I learn, it forces me to learn them. Until you can explain something to somebody else, you don't really understand it.

So, okay, prove to me that you understand it by telling me about it. I can't. Okay, well, you don't understand it then. So, this is one of the reasons I suggest to people that they should do a fake podcast with a friend for 30 minutes every week. Phones are outside of the room, put one phone face down on the table, press the record button and just have a conversation and pretend that people are watching. Welcome back to the show. Stephen, today we're going to talk about the UFC or Tommy Fury and Jake Paul. Who do you think is going to win? And it forces you to be rigorous and precise and consistent with the things that you believe. And it is a forcing function that synthesizes the things that you're doing. Other people might prefer to write or draw. One of the advantages of doing it for an audience is that you actually feel like someone's keeping you accountable. If it's just, oh, I'm going to draw a drawing every week for my own pleasure, as opposed to I'm going to draw a drawing every week and post it on my Instagram, or I'm going to write a substack article. I mean, I have a posting cadence on the show Monday, Thursday, Saturday. And if it wasn't for the fact that I know if I don't post on those days, the audience is going to be like, hang on a second mate, it's Monday. Where's the podcast episode? It would be a lot less motivating for me to do it, driven by that. So I think that absolutely creating some kind of content, whether it be just for you or whether it be to put out into the world and to build a platform with is a good start.

The most important thing I think in hindsight that I've gained from content creation is in fact, like honing my skill of sales, because you're forced in this medium to make your ideas as concise as you possibly can, and save them in a way which is engaging. I've reflect over the last 10 years or so of making content and recording videos and go, man, the impact it's had on my business, my ability to pitch and sell. But even if you're a guy and you're looking to pick someone up in a bar, man or woman, it's profound to me the impact that the obligation to create content specifically on video in speaking form has had on all facets of my life.

And I just don't feel like there's enough of a charge to both introspect, but then the obligation to create, I think it's life changing. There's an interesting quote from Ludwig Wittgenstein and he says, the limits of my language mean the limits of my world. So you could see a richer vocabulary means a richer life. If you take the fact that you have ideas in your head, that these sort of wishy washy, ephemeral notion, it's like a smell, right? An idea is kind of like a smell. It's just a amorphous blob of a thing. And you go, yeah, I feel like this. I feel like this is an idea. Until you make it take form through spoken word, written word or drawing, it doesn't really exist. It's not tangible. You can't see it. You can't work out where the holes are in whatever this idea is. So what that means is that first off, the more words that you have in your arsenal, the more precisely you can describe the thing which is in your head, the more frictionlessly you can take ideas from your brain to your mouth, your fingertips,

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or the end of a pencil, the more accurately you're going to be able to put that out into the world, which means that when you need to turn it over and assess it and look at it, you go, oh my God, I thought that I knew this inside out and there's this big gaping hole here. I need to work out what's going on, which is why a loneliness epidemic, the massive falling rates of friendlessness in the world aren't particularly good because not only is it bad for the community and for social cohesion, but it's bad for the individual's personal growth as well. If you want to fully learn something, you want to spend time synthesizing your ideas and you can really only ever do that for somebody else. Again, you can write the journal to you for you, but it's never going to be as disciplined or as consistent as if you're writing it for an audience. Even if the audience is only five people or only your friends. And you spoke to something, which is because you were outside of the social circle when you were young, you were able to, I guess, vicariously see the impact that small things had, which made you kind of socially attuned, talking then about the loneliness epidemic.

Is it an epidemic? How bad is it? Is it something that you believe society should be paying more attention to? I sat here with Simon Sinek the other day and he disclosed to me that he was going through a real struggle with loneliness at the moment. And it was somewhat surprising. It was somewhat surprising because, again, in a very naive way, Simon Sinek is someone of great success. He's got a career most people would die for. That's greatly admired. He goes on stages and thousands of people raw his name. But then on a personal level, he's lonely. And one of the things he said to me was, there's a real difference between being alone and being lonely. Can you see the distinction between the two? Yeah. I mean, solitude is something that many of us enjoy. I know that me and you both enjoyed, right? Loneliness isn't. I used to write, I've got in a journal that I used to keep in my phone, a couple of different entries from my mid twenties. And it just put, I think I'm lonely. Yeah, because I just, I couldn't work out what was going on. I had a sense that it was maybe something that was a little bit wrong. I think I'm lonely. When it comes to the loneliness epidemic, in 1990, the number of men who said that they had six or more close friends was around about 55%. In 2020, that dropped to 21%. It's less than half. 21% of men say that they have less than six close friends. The number of men who say that they have zero close friends has increased by five fold from 1990. And it's now at 15%. 15% of men say that they have zero close friends. I don't know the stats for women. It seems like women are able to hold on to social groups a little bit more effectively than men are. The loneliness epidemic does seem to be hitting men a little bit more hard. I'm compelled by your diary entry. Before we get into the stats and the causation, you wrote in your diary in your mid twenties, I think I'm lonely. Yep. It's funny because I reflect on my early twenties, between 20 and 25. And I was definitely lonely, but had no idea until later. That was why I only thought that I was lonely. I was like, what is it? What were we just saying? It's a notion. It's a smell. Someone shouted it from the other room. What is that? I think I'm lonely. No one's described it. I didn't have a description of it. So I had this sort of innate feeling inside my being, but no one had put a word to it before or told me what the job description of someone that's lonely looks like. So it was a signal like something's not right, but I don't know what it is. And I only learned when I was not lonely, when I felt a real sense of connection, what I was missing. Oh, shit. That's not what life's supposed to be like. So tell me about what had caused that, what factors had come together to put you in a situation where you were lonely? I've met about a million people in my life.

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And I only had a handful of friends. That made me think my exposure to friend conversion seems to be off. There is something not right here. And this was largely due to the fact that I was playing a role as this big name on campus party boy. And quite rightly, who was I going to resonate with when I wasn't being me? They were going to at best become friends with a projection of what I thought they wanted me to be. So this was almost exclusively on myself. But also I was struggling a little bit in the industry to find the, I can't have a conversation about like the deeper sense of human nature or the existential pain of being alive or status from Will's stored his brand new book. When someone's desperately trying to get a VIP wristband off me so that they can go and see the hot girls downstairs, like it's, it's not quite the right environment for that. But again, largely this was due to the fact that I wasn't being sufficiently confident that other people would be interested in what I was interested in. And yeah, I mean, you can be have all of the success in the world. You can be surrounded by people and yet feel alone in a crowd and hollow in victory. Because if you're only playing a role, anything that you do, any love that people give to you, won't feel like it hits you existentially, you'll feel praise, but you won't feel love. Because they're not in love with you. They're just applauding the role that you're playing. Does that make sense? Makes perfect sense. Makes perfect sense. It's such an app description. It really brings in this idea of what the person is connecting to matters the most. If they're connecting to the image that I've created, which is inauthentic to myself, I'm never going to receive that connection. The only way to cure my loneliness is to show up as myself and to build connection on that basis, which is again, makes a ton of sense to me because I was a young CEO who had hundreds of employees. My relationship to them wasn't necessarily Steve, the true sense of Steve to them. So Steve the CEO. It was exactly, it was CEO to employee. And then in my personal life, in that early 20s phase, there was maybe one person, maybe two that were connected to Steve, but even maybe one actually, which is super interesting because we don't, it also talks to Simon Sinek's thing where I go, well, he's this guy's amazing, but how many people are connected to the true Simon, the guy behind the books, the guy behind the admiration. That study you referenced a second ago about men getting increasingly lonelier. I think I read the same thing. The thing I read was about the amount of people we have to turn to in a time of crisis and how that's decayed over the last couple of decades. Why is that happening? What is happening in culture and society that's causing us to become more and more disconnected in terms of proximity, but also in just a sense of psychological connection? What is going on? It's a good question. I don't think that there's a single answer to this. Social media probably has a lot to answer for. What's happened now is the world of social connection has been made less and less social. You're more connected than ever before, but more atomized than ever before as well. I think that there are some really worrying trends in rising rates of social anxiety that are mostly downstream from people not spending enough time being social. If you look at the average amount of hours that kids would have played outside versus the average amount of hours that kids are spending watching television on social media and playing video games, now you are basically creating an army of young crises that were socially uneducated in that regard. Downstream does turn into adults that similarly don't... They haven't got the habits of going out and being social, which means that they don't develop the skills to connect to people, to be able to make friends,

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and that causes loneliness. That's, I think, a large portion of what we're talking about. What about the optimization of our lives and the way that we've built cities and the way that we're... When I say optimization of our lives, I mean, if we order food. Convenience. It's a screen. I mean, this is just... If we date, it's a screen. If we connect to my mother or my sister in Australia, it's a screen. Well, the problem is that what is convenient or enjoyable is not always what's good for you. Ice cream for dinner every single night for the two-year-old is both convenient and enjoyable, but probably not good for it. The issue is that we are all our own parents when it comes to our social media and social interaction lives. The pain of rejection, whether that be from a potential friend, a potential partner, or a job offer, a business, whatever, is painful. And we have done incredible things to try and nerf the world, right? To wrap it in cotton wool so that the pain of rejection is removed as much as possible. This is why online dating is so successful, because the pain of rejection, you don't know the people that swiped left on you. You only know the people that swiped right. That's taken the pain of rejection of dating away, right? What do you think of dating apps? Do you think they're net positive or net negative for the world? I really want to go here. Of course I want to go. Okay. I think that dating apps are a perfect example of something which is both convenient and enjoyable, but not good for you. They have certainly opened up more opportunities for people to meet potential partners. And yet, we are in a world with the highest rates of sexlessness ever amongst young people. One in three men between the ages of 18 and 30 hasn't had sex in the last year. That tripled from 8% to 28% from 2008 to 2018. 50% of men say that they are not looking for a committed relationship. That's down from 61% of men saying that they were. Only half of men between the ages of 18 and 30 are looking for a relationship. You go, okay. Well, if the promises of easy access online dating were so true, how is it that we've ended up with a world where people are having less sex than ever? That sex, sexlessness has also increased for women too. But for men, it's increased more and they were starting at a higher baseline as well. 50.1% of women for the first time in history are mothers. There are more childless women at 30 than there are women with children, right? So for almost all of human history, more women had kids under the age of 30 than over and now it's switched. There's a study from Morgan Stanley that says by 2040, 45% of 25 to 45 year old women will be single and childless. If online dating was creating this perfect facilitation for relationships to start, how are we ending up with all of these outcomes? It's a question. What's wrong with the outcomes? What do you mean? Why should people care about being single? All the stats you just said, I could look at them and say they're just sort of objectively neutral. Like there's no adverse consequence to society or the world. It's fine that people aren't having kids. It's fine that people aren't having sex. I'm playing devil's advocate here, but what is the negative consequence of all of those outcomes that you've described in your view? There are people for whom a life without a partner is the right choice. That's absolutely something that I'm prepared to accept, but it's not most people. It's one of the biggest levers. In fact, the single biggest predictor of your health outcomes in life are the number of close connections that you have. It's the number of friends. It's more than quitting smoking. It's more than going to the gym. It's more than stopping drinking. It's the number of close friends that you've got. A relationship is a big close friend. Robin Dunbar says that in order to get into a relationship, you have to sacrifice two friendships because you can have around about

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five very close friends. If you want to get into a relationship, you need to get rid of two of them because there is a minimum time investment. People that are in relationships have better health outcomes. They have onset of dementia later. They have Alzheimer's problems later on in life. They are less lonely. That seems pretty uncontroversial. Yet, both sides of the aisle, both men and women, are retreating from relationships and finding ways that they can justify this. Boss-bitch culture and the lean-in women's mentality or men going their own way and in-cell culture and the black pill for guys are both ways that each sex is trying to deal with the challenges that are coming out of the mating market. Both sexes are saying, I don't want to be a part of this anymore. I'm finding it so painful and difficult to be in this world that I'm just going to cast off any of it altogether and then retroactively come up with a lot of explanations that can justify why they didn't need to be in a relationship in any case. For some people, that's true, but for most people, that's not.

Dating out apps are clearly not, as you say in your own words, and previously aren't the only causal factor. My question to you is, where did we go wrong and how do we go right?

Okay. I think challenges in the mating market are coming from many directions. One of the main ones that will be pertinent to the people that are listening is the increase in female achievement in education and employment. Now, about 50 years ago, when Title IX came in, there was a 13 percentage

point swing in favor of men to women in universities. There were significantly more men than women.

What's Title IX? It was an affirmative action policy that helped to get more women into higher education. 50 years later, 2023, it's a 15 percentage point swing between men and women in university in the other direction. There are two women for every one man at a four-year US college degree, around about by 2030. Women, on average, between the ages of 21 and 29, earn 1,111 pounds more than their male counterparts. Women are roughly twice as likely as men to say

that they will value financial prospects in a partner. About 78% of women say that a stable job is something that is important for a partner to have, whereas around about only 45% of men say the same thing. For a man to increase his rating on a 10-point scale by two points, he requires around about a 10-fold increase in his salary. For a woman to achieve the same two-point improvement on a 10-point scale, her salary would need to increase by 10,000 times.

My point being that women are concerned about a partner's socioeconomic status significantly more than men are. Now, you can start to see that if you have a world in which women are attending university at high rates, they are achieving more success in employment, at least in that 21 to 29 range, which is when most people are perhaps looking for potential partners. And yet the socioeconomic status of a partner to a woman is a big determinant of their level of attraction. You can start to see how this imbalance could cause a problem.

Similarly, when we talk about education, a man with a master's degree on Tinder gets 90% more right swipes than a man with a bachelor's degree. So for all of the guys that are considering going and getting a master's degree, even if you think it's going to be useless, at least except the fact that you get 90% more right swipes for the rest of your life, or just lie about your master's, I don't know. All of this rolled together describes something called hypergamy, which is the female tendency to date up and across on average women want to date a man who is as

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educated

or as employed as they are. Now, in a world in which quite rightly women have finally been able to achieve parity in education and employment and status and have independence and not be financially reliant on their partner, all the rest of it, that's great for them.

But it does cause some challenges for their dating. And this is what I've called the tall girl problem. So everybody knows what it's like to have a girlfriend who is six foot without heels. If you want to wear heels, you're looking at professional athletes because on average women want to date a man who is at least as tall or a little bit taller than they are. So as women rise up through their own competence hierarchy in education and employment, they further shorten down the potential pool of eligible men that are as educated or more educated and as employed or more employed than they are. This is a challenge. This is just a straight up imbalance, right?

What this causes is a very large group of men toward the bottom of this distribution to be essentially invisible to women. It causes a very large number of women in increasing cohort to compete for an increasingly small group of turbo chad super performers at the top. These guys, the super high value guys, have a wealth of options. So they are commitment averse. Why would they decide to sit down with one girl for the rest of time when they have this wealth of options, which can cause them to use and discard many of these women, which then causes most of these women

to resent men overall. And then the guys that were forgotten at the bottom that say, well, hang on a second, I didn't use and discard you. I haven't even been seen by you. No, no, all men are whatever it might be, right? That they are users and abusers that we don't need them to wear all of the good men out, etc, etc. It's a big group of men that feel like they are good men that are invisible. There's a big portion of women who have finally managed to achieve educational and employment and independence that are chasing after a smaller group of guys. These guys are commitment averse. I don't think it's necessarily good for them either. It's the child with the ice cream, right? Like guys being able to keep it in their pants when there's a lot of options on the table is going to be difficult for them, too. This is one of the main drivers. This tall girl problem is a massive change, I think, in the dating dynamics.

It obviously begs the question, Chris, which is if everything you've said is objectively correct and spot on and supported by the data, then how does if I make Chris Williamson the Prime Minister or President of the world and I say your first job is to fix this challenge, what do you do? The first thing that you don't do is roll back women's education and employment. And this is one of the problems with this discussion, right? The things that I've just said there are born out in pure research data, Morgan Stanley results, like these are incontrovertible facts, right? They are there. And any girl that is listening who earns more than 50,000 pounds a year and has got a master's or above level education and is toward their late 30s or in the, toward their late 20s or in their 30s knows this problem. You know the fact that you are struggling to find a man that you feel is eligible for you, right? That needs to be out there. The problem that happens around this discourse is that it posits men and women as adversaries and competitors of each other, right? There's enemies. This means that worthwhile compassion which is needed to both women and men. If you're a woman who has gone through your education, you've dedicated yourself to achieving a degree, you know your mother's generation wasn't able to achieve this and you're the first person that's maybe gone to uni or got a bachelor's or got a

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master's or got a PhD and then you spend some time in a career grinding away and you're now on 150

grand a year and you think, right, I'm 31. I'd love to settle down. This would be amazing for me. Where are all of the men at? Hang on a second. And what you realize is that not only now are you competing with all of the other increasing cohort of women that are high achievers with status, employment and education, but you're also competing with a 21 year old barista who still lives at home with her parents for this small cohort of guys. That requires sympathy for women, okay? That is not a good position for women to be in. At the same time, this huge cohort of sexless men, 30% of men haven't had sex in the last year, 50% of men say that they are not looking for a relationship. You are a man. You have been through your 20s. You know the power of the male sex drive between the ages of 18 and 30. Can you imagine getting yourself into a situation where you say, I'm not bothered about pursuing women? That is an unbelievably extreme statement for men

to make. And they're self identifying as this in pure research data. This isn't on incel forums.

This is pure research. 50% of men aren't looking for a relationship. When they say aren't looking for a relationship, do they mean I'm not looking for a woman or I'm not looking for commitment?

Not actively pursuing any kind of interaction with women. Casual included. 50%

Here's the point. You asked about solutions. The first thing that we need to do is turn down the volume of adversarial nature between these two. Anybody that listens to those two stories, the plight of men and the plight of women in the modern dating world and doesn't see it as wow, that's fucked. That really, really sucks for both sexes. Men have it worse in some ways. Women have it worse in different ways. This isn't a competition of let's wave the flag of who's actually accumulated more victimhood points. The first thing that needs to happen before anything is the volume of the conversation needs to be turned down. We need to see the challenges that are faced by both sexes. The second thing that needs to be put out front is that there needs to be a way to raise men up without bringing women down because it is very easy for you to say, okay, so women are out achieving men in education and employment. Let's just put the reins on them

and then everything's going to be brought back. Look, I am not trying to roll back any of the gains that have been made by women over the last 50 years. But you do want to have eligible male partners. If the thermodynamics of attraction include the fact that women tend to want to date across and up in terms of status, employment and education, you need to do something. Some of the things that you could look at doing in terms of solutions would be red-shirting boys, so starting boys in school one year later. This is something that was put forward by Richard Reeves. The reason for this is that boys tend to mature less quickly than girls. If you were to start boys one year later in school, it would mean that they would be more effective at their age. They would be more mature mentally. That's one start. Another one that I think is probably more controversial but would make a big impact would be to stop derogating motherhood, to start pedestalizing motherhood

again. There is a huge movement in certain corners of women's advice that any woman who decides to

become a mother is essentially a second-class citizen. I don't think that that's true. I don't think that a woman that chooses to become a mother is a second-class citizen. But women often

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fear becoming just a mother or just a wife or at worst a domestic prostitute and they flee from this specter of family life into the open arms of a corporate employer and laughably we call this process freedom. How can it be that the thing that most of us are grateful for a great mother in our life has now been derogated as some sort of...

It's like somebody's been rubbed into a role that the patriarchy always wanted them to do. There was an article a little while ago that said a maternal instinct is a myth.

Basically, the only reason that maternal instinct exists is because the patriarchy has convinced women that they're actually supposed to like kids. I can't even begin to explain how ridiculous that is if you look at all of the sex differences in terms of the way that humans work. Pedestalizing motherhood would make women fear being a mother less. It would make it an aspirational

goal for them to pursue. One of the scariest stats that I learned was from a guy called Stephen Shaw. He wrote a documentary called Birth Gap and in it he talks about this declining birth rate. A meta-analysis by Professor Rinske Kaiser says that 80 percent of women who aren't mothers after their fertility window closes didn't intend to not be mothers. It's involuntary childlessness. Around about 10 percent of women are physiologically incapable of having kids. Very unfortunate. Around about 10 percent of women intended to not have children, which leaves a whopping four out of five non-mother women who didn't intend to not be mothers. These women have support groups where they come together to grieve for families that they never had. It breaks the hearts that they weren't able to find the right partner in time before their fertility window closed. Professor Kaiser talks about the pain that these women feel. Stephen Shaw has been to these support groups that women who thought that they

had more time, that struggled to find a partner in time, they grieve for families that they never had. That sentence just makes me feel so upset. It's so painful to hear the prospect of a woman that wanted to have a family and couldn't. Very difficult.

So there's two solutions there that you've offered up as potential solutions to that.

Does that alone fix the other side of the coin, which is the huge quantity of men that are avoiding relationships, intimacy, women all together? Not particularly. Raising men up somehow would be great, but where we begin with that, I don't know. I think men are heavily checked out of education and employment. Men have been retreating from the US labor force market by 0.1% per year since 1950. It's 87% in 1950. It's about 67% now. By 2040 or 2050, it'll be 65%. Given that women want, on average, about 80% of women want a man with a stable job, this retreat is not good. Each step that men take, where they take themselves out of education and employment, not only isolates them and makes them economically less viable as contributors to society, it also makes them less eligible as mates. On average, men between 18 and 30 in the US spend 2,000 hours per year playing video games, stoned, or on prescription drugs. That's not the eligible partner. One other thing that you could look at doing is re-encouraging in-person dating. Online dating does worsen this issue, because it allows you to optimize for objective metrics of success. On a dating app, and this is for both men and women, on a dating app, particularly for men, you can have your education level, you can have the car that you're with, you can talk about your job. Women are very much encouraged

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by the platform itself to take an incredibly low resolution view of this person. All of the things that guys are able to work on, like vibe and humor, being pleasant, being kind, being caring, being charming, none of that can come across on a Tinder profile. This means that it further worsens the tall girl problem. You see how it would make the objective metrics even more and more worsened. Let's not forget that there are three men for every one woman on a dating app. Even if every man matched off with a woman, there would still be this huge number of men that didn't have a partner. Online dating hasn't delivered on the promises I think that anybody wanted for it. Women swipe right on around about 4.5% of profiles for men. Men swipe right on about 60% of profiles for women. This means that a lot of men see online dating as a waste of time. Time, we spoke about how it buffers rejection and it helps people to not feel rejection so much, but when you spend a lot of time on apps swiping right on 60% of people on average and you don't get very many matches or any matches or the few matches you do get never turn into dates, that would quite rightly make people feel disenchanting with the world of dating. Downstream from the problems of social media that we spoke about before are a lack of ability to flirt. I actually think that flirting is a lost art at the moment. It's a very complex thing to do. It's a push and pull. You have to understand a lot of intricacies about social dynamics and interaction. You need to be able to tease but not too much and the art of flirting is incredibly difficult to get right and it's even more difficult if you've never interacted with a woman in the real world, especially as guys and girls. Now let's touch another third rail, Stephen. Me too. Me too was a necessary requirement to call powerful men to account for misbehaving and using their power to gain sexual access to women. What it sought to do was to sanitize the toxic elements of certain male's behavior. What it's ended up doing is it's sterilized almost all of it. 84% of men report not approaching a woman because they are scared of being seen as creepy. 84% of women say that they want the man to make the first move. Women are terrified of being approached by men because of stories of sexual assault, of dangers within the workplace, of overreach by men that are both in power and out of power. Men are terrified of approaching women for fear of being accused of all of those things. So we have an epidemic of loneliness and sexlessness amongst the sexes for the first time in our four million year history. We have large cohorts of both men and women who want relationships and can't get into them. Men feel invisible on dating apps and are terrified of approaching women in the real world. Women yearn for men who they want to be in a relationship with but either are not spoken to by or are used and abused by. In person, both of them are terrified of talking to each other in any case for fear of either being accused of or becoming the victim of some sort of terrible interaction. I think that re-enabling in-person dating would make a massive difference. It would reduce down the tall girl problem because you would have the ability for guys to gain status in the eyes of, for instance, a guy that maybe not doesn't have a university degree but is unbelievably funny. It's still very statusful because humor and gender is a sense of status. It's called clown maxing in the black pill world. But that guy might not get a chance if he was just on online dating. So that would be another thing. And you can see as well how the incredibly righteous ideas of MeToo, when taken to an extreme, could end up causing some externalities that disadvantage women in the dating market. Do you see what I mean? Of course. As you were

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saying

that, I was thinking about that video that went viral of the young girl in the gym who was filming the guy that came over to ask if she needed help with the weights. Do you know the video I'm talking about? I do. So for anybody that doesn't have the context, a young lady on TikTok set up her camera while she was in the gym and she was filming a guy and she's sort of anticipating him coming over to help. And lo and behold, the guy walks over and says, do you want a hand with the weight and tries to give her a hand with the weight? And then as he walks off, she like, she cusses him out and says he's basically portrays him as this like predator slash monster. And the reaction online was the inverse. The reaction online was like, was siding with the man because he just came over and asked her if she wanted a hand. Of course, we both know that there are very predatory men in gyms. I've got female friends that have spoken to that. My girlfriend speaks to that all the time. She tells me how of her experiences in the gym. But there is another side to highlighting this issue, which causes perfectly reasonable polite men who are genuinely offering a hand in something or let's be honest, flirting to be totally fucking terrified. Absolutely. And this is the this is the difficult conversation that we don't have a lot, which is what's the net we can see the net positive of that we can see the positive side of that. But what is the downside everything in life has a cost is that now that we are scared to broker conversations with strangers through fear of being put on blast on TikTok. If you optimize for absolute safety, what you're going to end up with is nobody ever approaching a girl in the gym. Now, I don't know, maybe maybe there are girls that say, do you know what it is? It is worth it for no girl to ever be flirted with in the gym for no girl to ever be made to feel like they are being stared at in the gym, you know, like if the price that we have to pay is that no one ever gets a date, a gym date, then that's fine because the benefit that we get is that no one ever is made to feel uncomfortable, right? A few things to say on that. First off, almost all indiscretions from men that are where they do creepy behavior are a very, very small cohort of men that repeatedly do it. This is from David Busse's Men Behaving Badly. It is one man doing a thousand bad things to women, not a thousand men

doing one bad thing to women. Now, the problem is that that can still cause a massive, that's still a thousand bad interactions with women, right? But you have 999 men that are saying, well, I don't behave like that. I've been smeared with this, with this bad, this bad brush. And this is an incredibly difficult line for both of us to thread here. How is it that we can talk about some of the challenges that women face in the dating world when there are so many obvious benefits that have occurred to their safety as a byproduct of this? One of the interesting things that I learned about that gym, the toxic gym gaze video was it could have gone either way when it went on to TikTok, right? It was a knife edge. If you'd shown me that video and the comments were hidden and you said, what do you think the reaction is going to be? Are you going, Toss a coin? Toss a coin. And that will be this guy's either push, in my opinion, I don't think that he had overstepped, but I don't understand how the world is going to react to this. Now, the interesting thing there is that a lot of people take their cues about what is and is not acceptable social behavior from the way that other people view what is and is not acceptable social behavior. So those sorts of landmark episodes actually end up creating a trend of what people in the real world will consider to be acceptable behavior. So let's say we have a different version of the universe and in that universe, everybody decided that that actually

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was too much from a man. What you have then is all of the girls that watch that video go, seeing it and saying, oh my God, if a guy glances over at me more than three times in 90 seconds and tries to help me de-load a glute bridge, that constitutes worthy concern about abuse and the toxic male gaze, right? So we have now reset expectations down to a much tighter sensitivity level. Similarly for men, they think, okay, I know that three glances in 90 seconds plus assisting someone to de-load the plates from a bar is too much. Therefore, at most, I can have one glance during 90 seconds. Do you understand what I mean? Do you see how we would further nerf the world? We would wrap it in more and more and more cotton wool and then downstream from that, you concept creep this out to the stage where anything is toxically masculine. But there's a really interesting point of nuance as well on top of that, which is what if that guy was Channing Tatum? Do you see what I mean? Another third rail here. Because if I tell you what, if that video was Channing Tatum, actually Channing Tatum, and I'd watched that video with the sound off and I couldn't hear what she was saying, I would think she was bragging to her friends. Oh my God, I can't believe he's looking at me. Oh my God, he's looking at me again. Channing Tatum's come over and he's helping me. Yeah, yeah. Well, I mean, again, this is some of the manosphere advice online is the difference between a creep and a guy that you fancy is just how hard he is. That it's not to do with how the person approaches you, it's all to do with whether or not they're attractive. I do think that there's a little bit of truth in that. I think that a guy that comes up to you who is a one out of 10 or a guy that comes up to you that's a 10 out of 10, let's say that you're in a relationship, let's say that you're married, right? And you are at the front desk of a hotel just checking in and you're in a little queue and the guy behind you happens to be either Channing Tatum or one out of 10 guy. He says, sorry, I just thought to tell you, I think you look really, really nice today. I hope that you're having a great day. The difference in terms of experience there isn't nothing, right? And for certain girls and the expectations that they have around men and their relationship to men and their fear of men and their anxiety of it, it could be very different sorts of experiences. Let's give the other side of the coin. Men overstepping the mark and how men can be better. That's what I want to make sure we're balanced in this conversation because there are, as we both have spoken to, there are a huge amount of inappropriate behavior that happens throughout society through the corporate world throughout everyday lives. How as men do you think we can be better? And when I say better, really what I'm speaking to here is be, is know how to approach a woman in a way that is not going to make them feel uncomfortable, intimidated, fearful. And that's what women speak to all the time. They talk about how they have to walk home with their car keys in their hand because if they pretend they're on phone calls when they're walking down the street, these are all things that my sister, my female friends have spoken to. So how as men can we be better? The first thing I think is to actually spend some time sandboxing this, like practicing. Like you need the only way that you're going to learn how to, how to interact with a woman is by doing it. It's not the sort of thing that you're going to be able to work out on the internet. I mean, like basic stuff, like don't stand super close to her. Don't do it in a dark alleyway at night. Don't stare for ages without saying anything. These are very basic,

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like rudimentary objective metrics that we can give. But really what it comes down to is just have a bit of charm about you. Understand that if you go up and say something to a girl, hi, I just wanted to ask how your day is going. I just wanted to tell you that you looked really nice today. If there is a girl that has a problem with that, presuming that it's not in a cul-de-sac alleyway at the dead of night and you've got your hood up, right? Or your hair employer. Or your hair employer. Well, here's another interesting one, right?

Bill and Melinda Gates, right? Melinda Gates works for Microsoft. Bill is the founder and CEO. Bill sees Melinda around the office. This is in the 1980s and he thinks, wow, yeah, she's a bit of all right. So he decides to ring her and say, Melinda, it's Bill. I wondered if you wanted to go out with me one evening. And she said, when? When are you thinking? He says, how's three weeks tomorrow?

She said, Bill, I don't think that you're spontaneous enough for me. I don't think that this is going to work. Put the phone down. 30 minutes later, he rings back and says, how's this for spontaneous? You've got the rest of the day off. Let's go on a date.

2023. Founder CEO of large tech company, rings receptionist, asking her to date him. And after she says no, rings back again, pulls her out of work and takes her on a date. Game over, right? Done. Where is the line in between Bill Gates and Harvey Weinstein? Weinstein.

Well, it's precisely in the details, right? Everybody can say what Harvey Weinstein did was wrong. Some people would say that what Bill Gates did was wrong. But okay, is it wrong for two people,

a guy and a girl who spend every day, every single time that they go to the water cooler, one of them sees the other one gets up and like escapes from their chair so that they get the opportunity to go to the water cooler together. And they've been doing it for six months. And it's this super platonic thing, but the guy's terrified and the girls terrified. They go, okay, like should we nerf every relationship so that that interaction can never move to the next level? Given the fact that we've got high rates of loneliness, given the fact that we've got massive amounts of sexism, 20% of relationships begin on online dating. 20% of relationships begin in online media, social media, right? That's two out of five relationships begin online. And they're the most fragile. They're the ones that drop the quickest. They're the ones that stay together the least long workplace, better friends, even better church, even better than that, right?

But it is a it is we are in uncharted waters here, people with regards to the mating world, we are in uncharted waters. The Harvey Weinstein example is where I was like, that guy was a fucking monster. Well, of course. Yeah. But the Bill Gates one I get it's kind of the old fashioned, the old fashioned way of doing things, you know, when we used to when our worlds used to be a village and we would, you know, maybe write a letter or we'd take the girl out from

the church or whatever. But the Harvey Weinstein, this guy was a fucking monster. Like he was, I remember listening to some of the tapes and the victims and this guy was a fucking predator. He was like listen to any of the harrowing. It's it's it's just it's one of the most disgusting things I've ever heard where even like a journalist would come and interview him.

And he would just be like, you know, sexually assaulting and physically assaulting her during the interview. So this guy just had no boundaries. He is he is just a disgusting monster. Do you see what I mean that like quite rightly, there needed to be a reckoning around that. There had to be a

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reckoning around that kind of a man using that kind of a position to get that kind of access. Yeah. That needed sanitizing. That sort of behavior needed sanitizing. And there was going to be fallout from it downstream from that. How sanitized should behavior be up to the point at which it's been sterilized. And there is 84% of women say that they want the man to make the first move. Right. It is still on. I mean, for the girls that are listening, how many times have you been the one that's approached a guy? Like I've been in nightclubs for 15 years, right, met about a million people in there. Twice it's ever happened to me that girls have come up and been like forthright about chatting me up twice. And I've worked a thousand nights in my it's actually pretty good going out for like two out of a thousand. That could also be my fault. Right. But this is very difficult. And again, for the guys and girls that would say, well, what does it matter? You know, what does it matter that we are that people are going to be single, especially for women? If you're a high achieving woman who's got the PhD and I have a friend, PhD millionaire, self made millionaire in the fitness world, mid thirties, now going sperm donor route, she's really struggling to find a partner. So she is going to use her very vast resources to be able to support these kids to bring them into the world to have a fantastic life. But make no mistake, that's a single parent household. Right. That's a single parent household. The outcomes that you have from single parent households seem to be socially, socially, the daughters don't do particularly well. You have higher rates of sociosexuality, which is more casual sex, more complex complexes around sex from single parent households. But what we hear about a lot is that education and employment outcomes of single parent households on average tend to be worse for women for the girls in that situation doesn't really seem to impact them all that much. So however big you think that effect is, double it and put it just on boys. It's only boys that seem to have that kind of a problem. And quite rightly, you're not going to have a patriarch in the family that's maybe able to deal with a rambunctious, disagreeable boy. I don't think for the women that want to have kids and you have the resources, absolutely. But for anyone to say that that's the optimal approach, that this is what would be amazing. And again, I'm not saying women become domestic prostitutes, take yourself out of the boardroom and get yourself back in the kitchen. Like that's not what either of us are saying that we want women to do here. But most people, eight out of 10 women that are childless once they reach their forties and later didn't intend to not be. This is a very difficult conversation that we need to have to warn people about the impact of not thinking ahead in their relationships. You have less time than you think. You need to be aware of that. If I, on the other side of the coin, when we're talking about men again, if I delete the dating apps then, so you know, first thing we're doing, we're deleting all dating apps, that still leaves us in a world where there's this kind of pseudo sexual, fake digital relationship in porn. Pornography still exists. So I'm wondering about that 50% of men. I'm assuming, and I don't know this 50% of men, but I'm assuming pornography is probably quite a big part of their replacement therapy for the connection and sexual intimacy that they're missing. Correct. So I have a theory called the male sedation hypothesis, right? There is a phenomenon called young male syndrome. If you have a large number of non-partnered childless men in a society, that tends to be an unstable civilization. There's examples throughout history where men who don't have a reason to behave,

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who don't buy into the social contract of cohesing everything together, tend to cause problems. They revolt, they cause riots, they spray paint cars, and they push over granny, and they do domestic violence and sexual assault. There have been a number of incel killings of disaffected, disenfranchised young men that have gone out and done horrible things, but it is not increasing in line with the amount of sexlessness, right? It's tripled. 2008 to 2018 tripled 8% to 28%. The number of associated young male syndrome incidents hasn't increased in kind. So you think, okay, something going on here. Something is happening, which is causing men to not enact this very well-established, throughout all of history, response. When men get into a relationship, their testosterone drops. When they have kids, their testosterone drops again, and reduced testosterone reduces risk-taking behavior. If you've just had a kid or you're in a relationship, don't try and jump off that cliff because then maybe you've got a kid that doesn't have a father anymore. You can see why that would be adaptive. So the question is, why is it that we have greater rates of sexlessness amongst young men than ever, but we don't have this in kind amount of violence and disruption? And it's my belief that porn, video games, and social media are sedating men out of this status-seeking and reproductive-seeking behavior. So I think that you get a titrated dose, just an ever-so-slight, just a little bit of reproductive cues from porn that helps to sedate men's desire to go out and pursue women. I think that what video games do is they create a sense of camaraderie, of goal-seeking behavior status within the online world. It satisfies a lot of what men would have been trying to achieve with that young male syndrome revolution in the past. So my belief is that we have this male sedation occurring. Now, given the choice between a society of men who are dangerous and a society of men who are sedated, right now, the group of sedated men are ever so marginally better. But the only reason for that is that we're at a time of peace, right? If there was an alien civilization that came down to earth today, the best thing that we could do would be to switch off all porn, turn off all social media. You want men to be angry. You want men to be riled up when there is something that they can direct that anger at. Right now, there isn't. And if they did, it would just foment and it would cause problems and it would be bad, right? So yes, the sedating of this kind of reproductive-seeking behavior in a way has made the world calmer. But it's not particularly, you wouldn't say it's optimal, right? This isn't great. Oh no, absolutely not. I mean, the advent of the no-fap movement, men who identify as not masturbating, they self-identify as not masturbating, they have no-fap streaks. You heard of this? Stephen, you've not heard of no-fap. No, I'd hang around in the wrong circles. You're chronically online. How have you not heard of no-fap? How have you, Chris? Look, I know about my no-fap, okay? So there is a very big community of guys online that have recanted porn. This is what we were talking about before, right? For every movement, there is a counterculture. For every sex positive, there is someone that will decide to push it away. For every woman that struggles to find somebody in the dating market, there is the boss-bitch culture, which is the cope, then there is the lean-in, which is like the trad-wife thing. There is the guy that becomes the chad and has sex with all of the women. There is the guy that retreats from that and goes men going their own way and completely recants it as well, right? So you have the push and pull on both sides. No-fap is a group of men who have self-identified as people that don't masturbate, right? This is because they see the impact of

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porn on their psychological health, on their physical health, and they don't like what it does to them. So they have formed a community around this. For men who feel like they have a problem with porn, something that gives them a sense of pride about being able to defeat what they see as a vice is a place that quite rightly they're going to get, yes, I have control over this. Even if I don't have friends, even if I don't have a partner, at least I have control over this. And it gives them, what are we doing here? It is another goal for men to chase after, right? It just happens to be a goal of not touching a penis, which is actually quite a hard thing for a guy not to do. Speak for yourself, Chris. I can see where your hands are. But there's something I find really compelling about. We've talked a lot about people that are single, that are searching for love. But when you think about the context of relationship, we're both in relationships. And the role masturbation plays in the reduction of desire for our partner. Because some of my friends are struggling with something I've talked about before, with sex in their relationships. I've talked about my own struggles with sex and relationships. And one of the things we've kind of diagnosed is pornography has a reductive value on the desire we have for our partners. So do we abstain? It depends, man. I mean, people have varying degrees of sexual drive. What's your approach? What's my approach? I think that I certainly feel like the story that you tell yourself around porn and around masturbation seems to be the biggest determinant of how it makes you feel. And this has been backed up by a bunch of data from Dr. David Lay, who is a porn researcher coming out. I think he's a university of Arizona, perhaps, or New Mexico. And the story that you tell yourself has a massive impact on how you feel. If you feel like masturbating is a dirty, bad action that you shouldn't do, that you should feel ashamed about, downstream from that, you're going to feel ashamed. If you don't communicate it with your partner, that is a, if you're hiding porn use from your partner, that is a huge, huge red flag. Personally, partner is another concern. But for you, it's a big deal, because you're going to feel that sort of disgust, self-hatred, shame, guilt thing come through. But I do think that if you want to increase the sex drive in your relationship, just saying, okay, if we want to do anything sexual, we do it together. Try and tell me that that's not going to increase sex drive in a relationship. But, you know, almost all of the sex that happens, happens in relationships. If you look at how much sex, if you took a pie chart of sex, right, almost all of it is in relationships. Very, very small amount of sex is in casual relationships. As you might know, the show is now sponsored by Airbnb. Absolutely love Airbnb, always have, always been a, you know, saved my life on so many occasions. In my team, when we first got in touch with Airbnb, we're talking about how most people don't realize that their place where they currently live could become an Airbnb. And I guess the second question there is how much could your place be worth? And it turns out you could be sitting on an Airbnb gold mine without even knowing it. Some people Airbnb their entire homes when they're away. That's what I did in New York. Whenever I left New York, my place was on Airbnb and people rented it out. Sometimes for a day, sometimes for two days, sometimes for a week. And it's a great way to cover some of the bills while you're away. So whether you're looking to go on holiday or you just want some extra cash for bills, or you want to buy something nice for a Valentine that you love, whatever it might be, head over to [Airbnb.co.uk](https://www.airbnb.co.uk) slash host and you can find out how much your current property where you live can earn while you're not there. I suspect it might blow your

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mind because it's certainly blue mine. There was one point you said about motherhood and that kind of opened a doorway in my mind about the broader subject of regret in life. And if you look at sort of a meta analysis of where people at different ages and different genders are experiencing the highest levels of regret, where does that fall? But no, regret is something that I've been thinking about an awful lot. And it makes for considering regret, considering the things that we regret in life and trying to reframe it has been one of the most useful mental models that I've gained. So Douglas Murray, British writer, columnist, spectator, multiple New York Times bestseller. I was in Manhattan with him and he was telling me a story about Christopher Hitchens, the famous atheist, new atheist guy, one of the four horsemen of the atheist apocalypse. And Douglas earlier in his career was lamenting to Hitch about the fact that he had to choose a thing and by choosing a thing he couldn't do a different thing. So he had this opportunity cost and he's saying, I don't know whether I want to do this thing, I want to do that thing. And you could imagine they're probably in some British pub somewhere in Westminster or whatever and Hitch is probably smoking. He goes, Douglas, in life, we must choose our regrets. And he told me the story and I thought, that's really interesting. What do you mean choose our regrets? And I reflected on it so much and it made me think, well, what I'd always presumed was that in life, the only reason that I had a regret is because I made a suboptimal decision. If only I'd been able to make the perfect decision, I could have ameliorated the regret and the reason that it's there is because I didn't make the right decision. But when you accept the fact that opportunity cost is baked into the fabric of life, mean you can go to the gym or we can go to the theme park. By going to the gym, we don't go to the theme park. Even if the gym was the right decision to make, we're always going to have the open loop of, I wonder what the theme park was like that day. So I go, oh, that's interesting. Regrets aren't a bug. They're a feature. Regrets are a feature of life. They are a natural byproduct of us always being curious about what could have been. And given the fact that opportunity cost exists, they're always going to be there. So, okay, that's interesting. It's kind of liberating. It makes you feel less culpable for the suboptimal decision that you made. So what does it mean that you have to choose your regrets? What's that? What's the choose bit? Well, if you accept the fact that regrets are inevitable, that you're going to do things in your life, even if you choose the right thing, and you're going to consider in retrospect that you wonder what the other thing could have been. If you can't escape regrets, when it comes to making a decision between multiple choices, what you have to look at is not only what thing do I want, but which regret could I live with. If regrets are inescapable, you have to choose which one you want. Okay, so I have to choose which regret I want. So you're looking at a choice. You have things in front of you. Which of these two could I bear living with the regret of? And that makes decisions an awful lot easier, because it switches us from a place of scarcity and fear about the future, and it helps to project us forward and think, okay, which of these could I not bear myself to live without? So, for instance, with me moving to America last year, it was a big move. I was 33, 34 at the time. Not exactly the archetype. I always felt like I should have had my shit together and my life sorted by the age of 34. So moving to a new country at this time is a bit, well, really. But if I had the opportunity to do this podcast, to become one of the best in the world at what I do, to pursue my passion, my curiosity,

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and I didn't do it, I couldn't have lived with that regret.

But in that case, hindsight's a wonderful thing, right? Because you could have come here and it could have just fucking bombed. It could have done. And you would have then looked back on that decision as... But at least I don't have the open loop anymore, right? I can live with the regret of selling an events business in the UK and trying to make it work in America and then going back to the UK with my tail between my legs and going, I gave it a shot, it didn't work. I couldn't live with the regret of wondering what if I'd had the conviction to follow my passions and go out to America and see if I could make it work. When people are at that fork in the road, the problem as they look off into the two directions that are in front of them is both directions are completely shrouded in darkness. So we go down one of the routes and then based on the outcome in hindsight, we then attach regret or... You can post-soc rationalize pretty much anything. I do agree. But a few things here, people... I've got one particular example in my mind where I was going to buy... It's going to require a business and we've been acquiring a few businesses recently at Flight Story. It's going to require a business and I didn't in the end and it turned out to be a really, really fantastic business. And so in hindsight, I'm going, I fucked up. That's a regret. And I think about it sometimes. I'm like, damn, should have bought that business. But it could have gone another way. And my perspective of the regret now be entirely different. I'd be like, I'm amazing. I made a fantastic decision. But the answer, and my regret didn't come until the game had been played out. And that's what I'm thinking about with the nature of regret. It's like... Well, it's difficult, right? Because you are correct. If you take a chance and that chance doesn't work out, then maybe you regret the other thing. But you can believe in advance, okay, even if I take the chance and it doesn't work out, at least I know that it didn't work out. For business decisions, ones that are a little bit more easily replaceable, as opposed to big life decisions. I remember when I was much younger, 21, I think, 22, and I needed to decide about whether or not I was going to go into the season in Ibiza, or I was going to stay at home and earn and save money and stuff. I was 21, like 22, I think. It doesn't matter. You know what I mean? And I realized, even though I didn't have this model in my mind at the time, I was like, this might be the last time that I get the opportunity to do this. I'm going to go and do a Masters next year, and then I'm going to go straight into running this nightlife business. I probably should do this. I probably should. And it was just something that compelled me to go and do it. I went and spent... And there's seven weeks that I spent in Ibiza, although I don't remember all of it. My memories of it are quite fond. And I think, yeah, I did the thing. And it just helps, I think, people to get past the fear of failure and of regret, especially in retrospect. Regret isn't necessarily a bad thing. The reason that it exists is because you cared about something. You cared about something enough to actually be bothered by it.

C. And you know what? When you were describing the liberating first point of the reason why regret exists, it made me think of this thing I read about jugglers, which I read about a little bit in my first book, where they believe that no juggler can juggle more than 14 balls at once. They think there's just because of the laws of physics, the size of the human hand, it's impossible for a juggler to juggle more than 14 balls at once. And that speaks to the nature of limitation. There's only a certain amount of balls you can pick,

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and all the ones you don't pick. And it's kind of like the old analogy I used to sometimes talk about with like, I love waffles, but I love a six pack. I'd love to have like a six pack or an eight pack or whatever. I can't have both. The story that I can only have one is what makes either special. Waffles, you know, like the six pack is only great because it's a story of the waffles I didn't have. And so I might regret, but it's because of the scarcity and the nature of us having to make like a finite set of choices in life. That's why six packs are having a six pack is so admirable. And it's the same, like you can't have a world where things are special, where you don't have regret. Precisely. So there's another, another rule that I absolutely love, which is you can have anything you want, but you can't have everything you want. Yeah. Right. You have to sacrifice most things in the medium term in order to be able to facilitate progress toward one thing. Right. This is a really great insight from Oliver Bergman's 4,000 weeks. Is he being on? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Great guy. Did you, when you were going through that, do you remember the choose in advance what you're going to suck at mindset? I can't remember that. Really good. Really cool. Very interesting mental model to use. So you have a plan for the next six months or the next year. By doing a thing, other things are going to have to be sacrificed. I want to grow my business. Okay. Maybe your social life is going to take a little bit of a hit. Maybe your fitness is going to take a bit of a hit or I want to become, I want to get into a relationship. Okay. Well, you're probably not going to be able to get as much sleep. Maybe you're going to have to, your business is going to get less of your attention, whatever it might be. By focusing on one thing, you inevitably end up having to sacrifice, focus on other things. Now, the problem that you and me and maybe a lot of the people listening to this that are type A go getters that want to be able to have it all will feel is as soon as they start to feel something slip. They go, fuck, fuck, fuck. I'm supposed to stay lean. I'm supposed to stay healthy and fit and whatever, whatever. And you go, by choosing in advance the things that you're going to suck at, the price that you're going to pay in order for success within whichever domain it is, it allows you to feel ease and acceptance when that particular domain does start to drop away. So for instance, this year, writing a book, going to do some live shows toward the end of the year, going to continue doing the podcast. And I'm doing some other bits and pieces as well. My fitness is going to have to take a hit. The start of this year, I accept the fact that I'm probably going to get a combination of smaller, fatter and slower throughout this year. But that's fine. That's the price that I'm prepared to pay. And I made that deal with myself in advance. Okay, I'm conditioned. Fitness is going to take a little bit of a hit. I'll hold onto it as best I can. This isn't me being complacent about it. I'm going to let it, let it slip. And it is such a powerful insight that you can have anything you want, but not everything you want. And I think that's liberating. It's all the things you couldn't have. And like I said, a second ago with a six pack, I often think about a six pack because I look, I think, what makes that socially valuable? There's a social currency to it. And all it is is lines on your stomach. It's a story though. Oh yeah. I mean, this is the thing about people that go to the gym. The physique that you build is attractive. Feels good when you're naked and the other person's got their arms wrapped around you or whatever, right? Like that's, that's a big part of it. Don't get me wrong. But what it's also a part of is it shows the kind of person that you are to be

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able to achieve that kind of physique. Someone who is self disciplined, who is self motivated, who can do hard things, who can deal with pain, which is like kind of sexy, they're conscientious, they're reliable, they're disciplined. Delay gratification. Delay gratification.

All of these things, that is the story which is told by the way that you look, right? By your physique. And I really, really like that, that a six pack is a story of all of the waffles I didn't eat is great. And the same thing goes for whatever pursuit you choose, you know, the podcasting thing, right? And the differences that you've noticed in your ability to go from brain to mouth over the last three years or so since you've been doing the podcast and mine as well. Definitely. That is a story of all of the hours that I didn't spend watching Netflix or scrolling TikTok or doing whatever, you know, it's the days and days and days of research and listening back to myself and time with my speech coach, working on diction, sitting in front of a microphone with a guest, doing all of these things. And that's the layers of pain to gain, you know, to look at one of the best communicators in the world or artists in the world, dancers or musicians or sports people or whatever it is. It is a story of all of the things that they sacrifice in order to get themselves there. Okay, do you want that?

Don't look at the things that they've got, look at the things that they've sacrificed, because that's the price that you have to pay to be in that position.

When you're alone at night and you're mulling, contemplating, when you're in the gym, lifting weights, you think about the work you still have to do to become the optimal version of Chris Williamson. What is that? What is the work you have left to do on a personal level?

Be mindful, pay attention,

be focused, be disciplined, keep promises to myself, tell the truth.

Those are the principles. Those are most of the principles. And the reason is we spoke about this last night. The number of paths that your life can go down in the future are so varied and so difficult to predict that any hard and fast plan will be completely destroyed by six months of intense growth. Two years ago, I couldn't have predicted that I would be living in America doing this thing. Two years ago, you wouldn't have predicted that the show is where you are and you're on British Airways and etc. So having any rigid plan isn't going to work. Having a bunch of principles is. The things that I still need to work on in terms of deficiencies are I need to be more disciplined with my use around my phone. I know that that's a huge crux for me. I need to continue to work on being emotionally open and vulnerable, specifically, publicly, as someone that was very ashamed about being made to feel weak in school. That is a large hurdle for me to get over because I only recently opened up about bullying with David Goggins, of all people, because I felt like this guy's been through so much. What is it for me to say I was a bit lonely in school and people picked on me and stuff? Why does that matter? What? Solving the vulnerability hurdle? I think that anything that you are not fully prepared to open up about, and this doesn't mean that we're supposed to be transparent to the world around us, but even to yourself, to be able to take the idea, the smell, the notion in your head and form it into words, suggests that you haven't internalized it, understood it, transcended it, done the work on it. Also, when you asked at the very beginning, what is it that you're trying to serve people through the podcast and through the work that I do? It's very difficult for people to find a role model that they can genuinely feel an affinity with because most of the people that you look up to are talented or successful in some way, and by design, that means that you don't have that much in common if you're just

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starting out on your journey. The differences and the beauty of this kind of a platform, people can scroll back five years on my podcast on the Chris Williamson YouTube channel, and they can see episode one in my old office in Newcastle, Ponten, with a single blue yeti on a 16-pound mic stand with my friend that was rowing the Atlantic solo and hear me bumble my way through an episode, as I say every other second, with a different accent, with different lighting and cameras and skills and everything. So you can track that journey over time, and you go, if you have even a modicum of admiration or appreciation for many people, if you can see them from the very beginning and think, wow, that's even shitter than I am, that gives people hope that they can go through it. And I think that being able to be more open and vulnerable about the challenges that I've faced in my past should help other people to feel less alone. Now, I've opened up a lot. I've opened up about depression throughout my 20s, about the bullying, about all these sorts of things, but it's like, okay, so where's the deeper lesson? Where's the deeper lesson? What else can I take from this? And I think that would be, that would be good. That would be a good thing for me to learn. And one final thing would maybe be getting out of my head a little bit. We, both of us, are monetizing cerebral horsepower, right? Like the primary resource that we have are our thoughts, and then our ability to communicate them. But the problem with that is that it means that you live a lot of your life up in your head, and the people that are listening may feel the same. You love listening to Steve's podcast or my podcast or whatever. Okay. How do we go from thought to action? That's what we were talking about earlier on. How do you avoid being so cerebral that you don't ever get into this sort of embodied state? So it's really great guy called Ian McGillchrist. He wrote a book called The Master and His Emissary, Neuroscientist, but also a philosopher. And he looked at the Isle of Man TT riders. So for the people that don't know, Isle of Man is a small island off the coast of the UK and these super bikes race around it, but it's potholes and drystone walls and b-roads and grass verges and every single year people die. And they looked at the speed of the decisions that the riders were making. And what they realized was that it was so quick that it couldn't be conscious that there wasn't time for the prefrontal cortex to get the decision through. It had to be more limbic. It had to be more ease and grace. So the goal is for them to get out of their own way, right? It's for them to be embodied. And I think that, you know, if you were to say, what's the price that you pay to be me? One of them would be very, very much in my head. Very much thinking, assessing, over-assessing, analyzing. And it's beautiful. I love the takeaways that I get. I love the insights that I have around the world, around theories, around mental models, around, oh my God. So if we look at the fact that women want to be approached, but men are scared of approaching because of this creepiness, oh my God, there's two theories. And we bring them together and we go, wow, that's how downstream from me too, there can be challenges that are both created for men and women in this dating world. I'm like, fuck, that's cool. But the only way that you can do that is if you think and think and think and think. You're 35. You referenced how ideas generally are like a smell that appears and gradually we try and figure out where that smells coming from. We also talked about regret. So bringing those concepts together, as a 35 year old man now, if you were to forecast off into the future, what your regrets are, what smells of regret, would you forecast now that you're going to experience, when we sit here when you're 14, you go, do you know what, the mistake I made at

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35 was X. Well, I mean, the embarrassing thing about this is if you look back at what you regret from 10 years ago, it's probably still the same shit that you regret now. I think that our regrets stay with us because we're the same. You are the common denominator between all of the experiences

in your life. All of my partners, all of the breakups that I go through are bitter and my X ends up being a dick. Okay, well, what do all of your X's have in common? You. You're the common denominator between all of them. So I think if someone is asking themselves this question and goes, what am I going to regret in 10 years time? What do you regret from 10 years ago? It's a good place to start. So for me, um, fearing less. So I fear making big changes. I move very slowly with decisions, whether this be with life, whether this be with the business, bringing in team members, delegating control and responsibilities, taking risks, doing new things, new projects. It's served me very well because I make very few errors in business, but I leave an awful lot on the table because I don't take risk. So, and the reason that I don't take risk is because of scarcity mindset, fear, concern of the future. Um, self doubt. You talked about impostor syndrome, the voice, self doubt, self doubt to a degree, but it is more fear than that. It's just, it's more ambient than it being self doubt.

It's just there. It's just this cloud that lurks and I go, but he have uncertainty.

What about the uncertainty? Right. And this is another thing from Peterson, uh, where he says, you have to consider the price you pay for inaction. People presume that inaction has no cost. You don't get to not make a choice. Not making a choice is still making a choice.

Every minute that goes by that this decision is undone

is a choice. I teach you about one of my favorite bro science concepts that I came up with.

So it's called anxiety cost, right? You know about opportunity cost by doing a thing you don't do another thing. I believe that the longer that you wait before you do a thing that needs doing, all of those minutes that you spend thinking about the thing that needs to be done could have been gotten rid of had you've just done the thing. So for an example, your daily routine resets every morning when you wake up. You have to walk the dog and meditate and do your breath work and read a new journal and do whatever. If you do those things earlier in the

day, you get to spend the rest of the day in just this bliss, right? This self congratulatory noble high horse bliss about all of these things you did. Whereas if you leave them until the end of the day, you have to spend all of those minutes thinking, I got to do the meditation when I get home and can't forget to write in the journal. That's anxiety cost. And that's a really good, compelling reason why you should make decisions as soon as you're ready to make them because you

will get rid of these wasted minutes, which you'll never get back. You're never going to get those back your brief time on this planet, 4,000 weeks. And you're going to minimize the anxiety cost by doing things sooner. So for me, definitely fearing less would be one of them.

Chris, this conversation has been immense, diverse, honest, vulnerable. Everything I love about this show, you're an incredibly talented, wise speaker. And within that, what I see is I see repetitions. I don't see someone that came out of the womb with your insight, but I also see a really genuine curiosity, which you just can't fake. I will never be able to fake that. We were talking at dinner last night about the guy sat next to us with the shoes on and you're saying,

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why is he wearing those shoes? And why is the waitress got that belt on? That is your natural disposition to curiosity. And it is of tremendous value for the world, because I can take so much from it without having to do the hard work. And I think the secondary piece there is your ability to distill the complex into the simple. That is incredibly powerful. And that's exactly what you do on modern wisdom over and over again. And I've watched and observed that show evolve and continue

to evolve into something which is, I mean, if I could invest, I would invest, I would back that train where that train is going. So I think it's incredibly important for people to go and check out your show in modern wisdom if they haven't already. I'm sure a lot of people have, but it is just such an unbelievably rich source of inspiration, education, and humanity as well. And I think that's a lot of what we lean towards here is the human side of these things. And you provide that in abundance. So thank you for this conversation. I feel like we could talk for fucking hours. This is the problem where these things actually have to end at some point, because I'm sure there'll be a part two in the future, I hope. We do have a closing tradition on this podcast where the last guest leaves a question for the next guest, as you know. And there's a question been left for you. This is maybe the longest paragraph I've seen in this book so far. Okay, so the question left for you is go back to the most painful or emotionally challenging moment or period you had as a boy. What would you say to that boy now speaking directly to him to help him through that experience?

Differences. I know who wrote that question. You do. Yeah. It's the problem of having too many friends in Austin that fly out here. So thanks for that, mate. And I have to say, we might as well let the cat out of the bag. He also knew that you were coming on next. So he wrote that question for you. I also bumped him for coffee yesterday, so he might have written a particularly different book. Oh really? Sorry.

So, both of us have taken an interest in psychedelics recently. And on a small dose of mushrooms a long while ago, I saw a version of me in the corner. And what I realized was that that boy was worthy of love and acceptance. And if I could see him struggling through loneliness at school and a lack of support from friends, a sense of solitude that was pathological, like just straight up loneliness, right? I would have told him that I was proud of him for getting through the things that he's got through. I would have said, you're working hard. You're worthy of acceptance and love. You don't need to offer the world anything

in order for it to love you back. You don't need to offer people gifts or VIP entries or insights from a podcast. It's hard to be someone that thinks about things deeply because there is a in-kind association of suffering that comes along with it. Like it's both a blessing and a curse to fill things so very deeply. But I think that the price is worth it. I think that the depth of enjoyment that you get out of life is worth it. And for that young boy that I saw that was sat on the ground, it was alone. I had picked him up and cuddled him and said, you're doing great. Chris, thank you. Thank you, mate. Thank you so much. That's honestly beautiful. And I think I speak for many when I say that that's the message a lot of people in their own lives will need to hear right now. So thank you so much. I appreciate it. I've really enjoyed coming on. It's been great that both of us are following this little path, parallel train tracks going forward. Cheers. Let's see where it takes us.

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Over the last couple of how long, maybe four months, I've been changing my diet, shall I say. Many of you who have really been paying attention to this podcast will know why. I've sat here with some incredible health experts. And one of the things that's really come through for me, which has caused a big change in my life, is the need for us to have these superfoods, these green foods, these vegetables, and then a company I love so much and a company I'm an investor in and a company

that's sponsored this podcast and that I'm on the board of recently announced a new product, which absolutely spoke to exactly where I was in my life. And that is Huell. And they announced Daily Greens. Daily Greens is a product that contains 91 superfoods, nutrients and plant-based ingredients, which helps me meet that dietary requirement with the convenience that Huell always offers. Unfortunately, it's only currently available in the US, but I hope, I pray, that it'll be with you guys in the UK too. So if you're in the US, check it out. It's an incredible product. I've been having it here in LA for the last couple of weeks, and it's a game changer. Ladies and gentlemen,

I am so delighted to finally be able to announce that one of my all-time favorite brands are now sponsoring this podcast. And that is Woop. All of you know that I've been on a bit of a journey in terms of health, performance, cognitive performance, sleep and all those kinds of things. That's kind of been reflected in the guests we've had on this podcast. And Woop has been a huge part of my life for many, many, many years. That's part of the reason I also had the founder come on the podcast. After having Will on the podcast, I love the brand even more. Hearing about his vision, his passion for the project, where it came from, his own obsession was solving a problem which turned into the product that is Woop. Woop is a wearable health and fitness coach that provides you with the feedback and real actionable insights into sleep, into recovery, into how you're training, into your stress levels, and your overall health. And for me, it's empowered me to be the best version of myself across all of those aspects of my life. The Woop team have very kindly offered to give all of you a free month. So just head to join.woop.com slash CEO to claim your device and your first free month on us.