

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

Maybe this world's not for me,
because I don't know what I'm doing here anymore.
I feel nothing.
I think that that's the hardest part.
I haven't really spoke about this.
It's, yeah, I'll just say it.
I mean...
Back the mark!
The man behind our favorite hit.
Music superstar.
Grammy Award winner.
We're just getting started.
You have no idea.
Where does the desire to be on stage come from?
Michael Jackson.
I wanted to make music art with melody.
It was where I felt an escape from my head.
14-year-old taking 12 shots of vodka,
you know, on a school night, by myself.
Running from the police and doing drugs that never stopped.
I've read your wife had taken a pregnancy test.
Yeah, we were in our home and I'm there.
I'm high.
Her period was late.
Went and got her the pregnancy test and I'm just like...
Praying.
Let this be a negative pregnancy test.
I'm not ready to give up the drugs.
And then I heard the tears.
I remember walking outside and I just started bawling
because I couldn't feel any sort of happiness.
And I knew what that meant.
If you were to go back and be able to have a conversation now
with young Ben at 14 years old before that first drink,
what would you say?
It's a great question.
It's gonna cause way more pain than good,
but at the same time...
When I think about people's lives and I think from doing this podcast,
this has become more sort of clear to me.
I see their lives as like a series of dots, you know,
like or a series of dominoes that fell to lead them to where they are today.
And if you go back to the very start of that series of dots,

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

to understand what they're doing and what they're doing and what they're doing, and what they're doing and what they're doing and what they're doing, and if you go back to the very start of that series of dots, to understand the most influential moments or things that inspired you to become the person you are today, in every sense of the word, what are those first dots, those first experiences that I need to know in order to understand you?

My first dots, my first dots, I think,

would be listening to the radio outside, summertime, next door neighbor's yard, and being introduced to music and loving music, falling in love that summer.

I believe I was six years old and, you know, I had an older neighbor who was maybe four or five years older than me and he had a bunch of, you know, my best friend was next door.

He was five years older than us.

It was like a collection of kids in the neighborhood.

And I remember that summer being this magical introduction to art, to music, to listening to the radio and falling in love with melody, with sound.

That was my first, that was my first dot.

And then my next dot, shortly after that, was falling in love with hip hop music at the age of seven.

And those were the first two dots that really set me on a path, a trajectory, and this desire to be on a stage.

People can listen to music, have that summertime experience.

They can listen to rap music, but not have the desire to be on stage.

Where does the desire to be on stage come from?

Michael Jackson.

I think it was, I think it was MJ.

I think that, you know, like everyone else that grew up in the, in the 80s, there was something about watching Michael Jackson command the stage and what he did with his body, what he did with his feet, the moonwalk, obviously, but everything about it, the perfection, the timing, the, the nuanced moves that he had, the way that he commanded the crowd.

There was a curiosity around, what is that?

I'm not sure, but I want to try.

And an inner performer was born in my household at the age of seven.

And everyone that came into my house was subjected to whatever show I was putting on that day.

And I just wanted to, you know, get on the kitchen counter and show people that like, you know, I have a show for you guys, come watch.

Parents home life.

Parents, um, yeah, they were, they were super encouraging.

You know, my mom was my biggest cheerleader, my biggest advocate, someone that was always in my corner that was like, you can do it.

You got this.

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

And I just believed her, even when I shouldn't have.

And, um, those years were very,

were very crucial in my development of gaining confidence in, in who I was as a person and as an artist.

School, you, you got kicked out of school, dropped out of school around 14, 15.

Yeah, no, I didn't get kicked out.

I was close to getting kicked out.

Um, probably should have got kicked out.

I wasn't going to school much, but I went to a small school and up until high school and it was very communal.

Um, you know, parents volunteered.

It was this alternative creative school and then ninth grade hit.

And that is when drugs and alcohol hit as well.

And I had freedom.

It was like, you know, the school was like 1600 kids or 2000 kids or something.

And for the first time I wasn't being watched.

I could skip class.

Um, the teachers didn't notice if I was there or not, or they didn't call my parents and, um, there was this level of freedom.

So there was that period of, of a year, year and a half where, um, I went from kind of a B student to, uh, damn near getting kicked out for, for failing.

So didn't last long.

I got back on track and, um, you know, completed high school with, I think I closed out with a 3.8 or a 4.0 my last year of high school.

Um, and what did you want to do when you're an adult?

Like if I'd asked 14, 15 year old you know, what are you going to be when you grow up?

What would you have told me?

I wanted to rap.

You believe that you could get there?

You know, I didn't know if I could or not, but it wasn't, if 14 or 15, I don't think I would have necessarily had the confidence like this is going to be the path.

But by the time that I hit around 20 years old, it was like, this is, this is possible.

22 was like, this is even more possible.

23.

But the problem was that I kept having, um, you know, it was just, it was always like, I could make this a reality.

If I can just get sober and I couldn't get sober.

So it was this like, I need to get sober.

I need to get clean so I can make music that's meaningful.

That's impactful because once I got high, it was like the veil was over my eyes.

I had no connection anymore to the music and, um, it was kind of always that balance.

But I felt in my heart, if I can get clean, I can make enough music that will resonate with people that might be able to pay some of these bills.

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

When people think about, I built a business with my business partner for many, many years. And throughout that process, he was, and he's been on the show before he was addicted to alcohol. And I didn't know what it was. So we were living in the same house together. I'd go downstairs at 3am in the morning and I'd find him in the laundry room drinking from a bottle. And I'd put him back in bed and then, you know, 5am, I hear a sound. He's managed to get another bottle of alcohol and his bed sheets are covered in this red wine. And I just thought, you know, in my naivety, this is someone that just likes alcohol, right? No one had taught me this concept of addiction, the disease of addiction. I had no idea what it was. So it wasn't until things escalated even further that there was almost an intervention moment where we literally met one evening because there'd been an incident, caused a lot of damage. And it was basically like an ultimatum moment. Then I went on the journey of understanding what addiction was and the disease of addiction as you describe it. When Jay spoke to you on Jay's podcast, I could see he was doing a similar thing to what I was doing when I was researching your story, which was like trying to understand the cause of it. And I'm not even sure if that's the right question. Do you know what I mean? Yeah. Like we're all searching for a cause. Yeah. And so I wanted to ask the question to you. Like what is, in your view, how did that relationship with drugs and alcohol come to be? You know, I think that for me, it was the first time in my life where I felt an escape from my head. What was going on in your head? I don't even know. But I just felt a reprieve. I felt this elation, this moment of like all of these thoughts in my head are gone. And I am here with this bottle and no one's around. And I get to be a secret and I get to hide this and I feel free. I feel free from whatever it was in that, you know, 14-year-old puberty, hormonal teenager that was going on in my life. It was like quiet. And I had the allergy from the very beginning. It was, you know, one shot, two shot, what does four feel like? What does eight feel like? And all of a sudden I'm taking 12 shots of vodka, you know, on a school night by myself. Hopping on the bus and, you know, running from the police. And it was a crazy first time drinking alcohol that never stopped for me. Every time, pretty much, that I drank turned into a crazy event like that. But I don't know, I don't know exactly at the time what I was, what I wanted to escape from. I think that there was just that changing reality.

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

There was that, oh, I like to be able to skew what's in front of me and to silence the mind. From going through the process of recovery and rehab and all of those things, you've met a lot of other people that have struggled with the disease of addiction. Has any of that process taught you anything about your own relationship or the causal factors of your own relationship with substances and alcohol?

You know, I think that there's through lines, absolutely. And I think that for a lot of us that have the disease of addiction, there's trauma, a childhood trauma. There's, you know, if the disease kicks in later in life, maybe that trauma came into play later. But I think that there is a through line in what I have seen in others. And that's, you know, some sort of thing that we're holding on to or a secret or, you know, something that happened to us in life, that drugs and alcohol kind of numbs and takes away, quells that inner guilt, that inner shame, whatever it might be. I think that there's a through line between us addicts and in our past. And then I think also there's people that just had the allergy and maybe it's not related to trauma at all. Maybe we're not predisposed or maybe we are predisposed. It's a combination. I don't know, but I do see that a lot of people are trying to escape. It's a difficult thing, especially for the people around that individual. Because, you know, going back to my own example with my best friend and business partner, I didn't have the tools to know how to be there. You know, and I also didn't have the information to understand what I was dealing with. Like if you'd asked me when I was 25, like what was going on with my friend, I just loves to get drunk.

Right. It's part of the culture.

Yeah. And then when you made what we do is 25.

Yeah.

If you were to give advice on like how those around the individual who is struggling with the disease of addiction can be there or what their role is supposed to be, what would you say? What advice would you have given me at 25 years old?

You know, I think that there's resources that we have. There's Alan on where if you have someone that it's a 12 step program for people that have loved ones or friends or whatever that are going through the disease of addiction and how to show up. And you literally they're in the basements of churches all over the world or, you know, community centers or wherever they're free. And there's people that are going through the same common struggle of how do we show up in an authentic way and help save this person's life that we love because we don't have the information. You know, for so many of us, I think that there's this notion of just stop. Why don't they just stop? Why are they hurting themselves? How could they do this to me? We make it about us, right? Like how could they do this to me? How could they lie to me? How could they go out and say that they were going to quit and then keep going? Why don't they see who they turn into? Just stop. Just stopping doesn't work.

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

There needs to be a support system. There needs for the addict. We need 12 step meetings. We need therapy. We need, you know, to evaluate our mental health. We need to work the steps. We need a sponsor. We need a community of people that share our very same struggle so we can see ourselves and experience the therapeutic value of one addict helping another. That is our piece. But until we get there, just stopping is almost impossible. And sometimes it takes, you know, hitting those really low points of getting arrested or getting court mandated to go to, you know, 12 step meetings. But on the other side of it, here you are with your friend and you have no idea how to show up authentically in that moment and actually really come from a place of love. I was so angry. And you were so angry, right? You're pissed. You don't know how to deal with that emotion. And you realize that once you go to this meeting, these meetings, that just like the addict, we're powerless over drugs and alcohol, you're powerless over your friend. And there are things that you can do to help. There's probably things that you can do to maybe hurt. But overall, they have to be in enough pain that they want to change. And you're not going to be the catalyst. And you can put them in. I've watched it time and time again of people with the best intentions that end up enabling that end up, you know, fueling the fire that end up trying to help but not having the tools themselves. And I think that Al-Anon is the best, easiest freeway to even if you want to go to a meeting or two to get some skill set, some language, and to realize that at the end of it, come from your heart and leave the expectations aside because this is their journey at the end of the day. The moment that I described this moment where we had kind of like an intervention me and my best friend, and it was really a day we met on a Sunday in an office after the Saturday before he'd got very, very drunk and caused a lot of problems with team members. He's talked about this like doing things in public, going on someone's table next to the restaurant, the table next to his at the restaurant, he was at with our team, grabbing their alcohol off the table and doing all these crazy things and getting kicked out of the restaurant. It was a surrendering the day after and you use that word before. Yeah. We met in the office and it was the first time I came with anger and it was the first time he told me how he felt. Yeah. And he cried in front of me. Yeah. And that was, and then my anger immediately evaporates because it's the first time I've heard that this individual is suffering with something. Right. And then that was the day, that was the day he became sober, went to therapy, went on that journey and he's been sober for eight years since then. Amazing. But it was that surrendering moment. It was that like him reaching out and saying like, I need help and me actually like listening.

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

Yes.

You see him for what he is in that moment, which is hurting, which is an immense pain.

He doesn't want to be like that.

He feels the guilt and shame of his actions.

He's tried to start and stop and go back and forth and thinks that, okay, maybe it's just hard alcohol or dark alcohol or maybe it's beer, maybe it's the combination of this.

He's tried everything and he's hurting and he doesn't know how to stop.

He doesn't have the tools.

And I think that that surrender that you talk about is one of the most beautiful moments for an addict or an alcoholic is like waving the white flag.

We think about surrender as a weakness.

You don't surrender.

You keep fighting.

You keep going.

No.

With this disease, the greatest thing that we can do is surrender is to snitch on ourselves, is to wave that white flag, is to let other people know that we are struggling on our own internally, that this is something is broken and I have no idea how to get out of this.

And what did that do when he was able to be human to you?

You were like, okay, now I can come from a place of love because I'm pissed off about what you did last night.

And I'm pissed off that you've done X, Y and Z and that we've had this conversation or whatever the situation is.

And you ask what can you do as a 25 year old friend of coming from a place of love and I think compassion.

And even if it's not, you know, empathy is impossible because that's not what you're going through.

I think that that compassion is what makes people feel, you know what, they actually care about me.

It's not just like I'm pissing them off, but they actually care.

And, you know, just kind of like letting go of our own expectations of people and meeting them where they're at is always, you know, the best place to show up from.

When was your moment of surrender?

God, I've had many.

I think my biggest moment of surrender, I was 25 or 26 years old, 25, I think.

And I had been on OxyCotin for, you know, I don't know, a couple of weeks, a couple of months and it caught up really quickly in terms of my addiction.

To the point that, you know, I lost a ton of weight.

I'm, you know, I'm scratching.

I just was like I was dope sick and I had never really experienced that before.

All the happiness, any serotonin was gone.

It was one of those moments of I remember like walking outside and it was summertime in Seattle, which is like most beautiful place in the world in the summer.

And I remember walking outside on a tank top and I'm like, you know, I just started bawling being outside because I couldn't feel any sort of happiness.

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

It was gone.

It was like it had evaporated and I didn't really want to be here anymore.

Like there was that moment.

It was like there was no real suicidal ideation or plan.

But it was just this like maybe this world's not for me because I don't know what I'm doing here anymore.

I feel nothing, feel nothing except deep, deep grief and the obsession to get more.

And it was shortly after that my, you know, I went to a family function and I'm trying to, you know, piece it together and just be presentable and just get through it.

And my dad pulled me aside and, you know, I think my mom had asked him to talk to me.

You know, we didn't grow up having too many heart to heart.

It was mostly with my mom, but my mom, I think urged him to do it.

He pulled me aside and just asked me, are you happy?

And that was my surrender moment.

I couldn't lie to him.

I couldn't lie to myself.

It was a very clear answer of absolutely not.

I am so broken.

I am, I don't even know what happy is anymore.

And he asked me to go to rehab.

Said that he would pay for it.

And immediately I wasn't ready for that surrender though, you know, in that moment.

I'm like, no, no, no, I've heard about these 12 step meetings.

I'll go to those.

I know someone that goes and he came back and was like, I think that it would be really good for you to have these 28 days to just focus on yourself.

And of course there's always the like, well, I can't go because of this is happening.

And this is how, you know, we're not worried about those things happening when we're risking our lives doing drugs or copious amounts of drinking.

We're just worried about it when it's like, now we need to go take care of ourselves.

And it's like the addict anthem is like, well, let me just get my life together and then I can go to rehab.

It's not really how it works.

It's more like, you know, we come in very, you know, we're the worst.

No one goes to rehab and they're like, you know, life's okay, but I think I need some rehab.

No, people come in when they are at their bottom.

And I was at, I was at mine and just saying yes to him that day on the porch saying that I would go was my surrender moment.

It was my white flag and it was the best decision I ever made in my life. Hands down.

Have you ever reflected on that crossroads moment and if you'd chosen to go the other way and you'd said to your dad,

maybe yes, I am happy when he asked at that family get together or when he said go to rehab, you'd said no.

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

I think there's a good chance I could be dead.

Really?

Absolutely.

And I was close at that time.

And, you know, this disease, we think of, we think we're so far away from death, you know, that we're immortal and that it won't happen to us.

And I think I'm probably in my 30s in terms of how many people I know that have died from the disease of addiction.

You know, when I wrote my first song about the disease of addiction called Other Side when I got out of rehab,

maybe in 2009, I had known three people.

So we've gone up by probably around 25, 30 people since then.

I'm not naive to how quickly it can happen and taking into account fentanyl as well right now and what's going on with street drugs.

It's rampant.

We are facing an epidemic right now around the world, but particularly in America.

I don't know how it is over here, but I think this fentanyl is no joke. It's killing people.

They think they're getting one drug. They're getting another drug.

And the nature of the disease, it is out to kill us.

That is its sole purpose.

And you had to be dead.

I think so.

You've been so successful throughout your career with your music and it's an interesting hearing those stories of the struggle and the ups and the downs and the battle with that.

And then looking at your catalogue in terms of music and I was crazy.

I was going through all your songs, going back through the years and I'm looking at the numbers on these fucking records.

And I'm thinking 1.4 billion views, 500 million views, 200 million views and huge, huge numbers.

The records are, they feel timeless when I listen to them.

There's a real, real, real talent there, which, you know, when I think about the struggle you've been through,

then I look at the back catalogue of the work you've produced from an artistic standpoint.

I'm asking myself, what's the relationship here?

Like, has your struggles played into the music or has your struggles sort of taken away from the music and your potential?

Like, what is the relationship and what has music been throughout that struggle to you?

It's a great question and it's honestly a question that I think about too.

Like, I've kind of asked myself that same question in the last 48 hours.

I don't know if I have an answer.

I believe that it's all panned out the way that it's supposed to be.

Has drugs and alcohol affected me being prolific? Absolutely.

It's taken away work ethic in moments.

It's taken away seasons, years of time where I could have been focused, where I could have been

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

building momentum,
but instead I chose the path of instant gratification.
And we were talking about this last night.
There's one of my mentors and OGs in my 12-step program, or one of them.
You know, her name was Rita and she had this business card that she used to give out to people.
And it said that her greatest regret in life is trading in what she wanted in the bigger picture for what she wanted in that moment.
And I always think about my life in that way of, is this what I want for the greater good, for my story to be,
or am I acting out a place of desire?
Am I acting out a place of wanting to change the way that I feel right now, knowing that that will hinder me?
That's not really what I want.
What place am I coming from?
And weighing those.
And I think for a lot of my life, it was, no, I want this right now.
And that oftentimes is a destructive pattern, whether it was sex or with drugs or whatever.
Of trading in what I truly wanted, what I truly believed to be the truth.
Because my truth is that I am the best version of myself when I am clear.
When I am silent enough to be able to be a conduit to something that is outside of my understanding.
I couldn't even put it into words.
It's that magic that happens in the studio where all of a sudden you're almost removed from the pen that's writing the song.
And I choose to call it God, but that God presence, that being is absolutely moving through me.
I've never been able to feel that without a spiritual practice.
Music has always been a spiritual practice for me.
But I think that it's made me who I am.
I've made tons of mistakes.
And since I've been famous, I made tons of mistakes that were influenced by the drugs that I was doing or the positions that I got myself in.
But those also turn into learning moments.
They turn into maybe a song or maybe a conversation or maybe the thing that I needed to share about in a 12 step meeting that saved someone's life.
I don't know.
I don't know.
But I know that I'm here.
I know that I'm here for a reason.
I know that my catalog is something that I'm super proud of.
And beyond the numbers, it's like last night driving from Birmingham into London, I listened to Ben, my new album.
I hadn't had that moment for a while of listening to my album in its entirety because you're working so hard on it.

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

There's so many nuance things.

It's like you can't even just enjoy it.

And I sat in the car and I listened to it all the way through.

And it's the best feeling to be like, you know what, I worked really hard on something.

And in all of these little moments, all of these mistakes, all of this pain eventually finds its way into purpose.

And I think that that's an artist's highest form is to be able to take pain and repurpose it into purpose.

What is giving you that?

You described that moment in the studio where you're clear and you're almost channeling something.

You're higher creativity, whatever that is.

Have you been able to figure out what it is that causes those moments of clarity and focus and stability?

And then on the other side of the coin, what causes the chaos in our lives, the instability?

Is there any causal factors?

Yes.

For me, it is exercise, getting outside.

It's like actually cardio.

It is being of service to other people.

It is a spiritual practice.

It is coming from faith rather than fear.

It is thinking about ourselves less and others more.

It is being still in the studio, not thinking about what is this going to do for the world, but just actually being present and removing the ego,

which is what all of those things help facilitate, right?

When we're of service, when we work out, when we show up, when we're at peace, when we think about ourselves less, we're removing the ego.

I'm stripping it away.

It's a process of excavation.

And the opposite is when I'm thinking about, okay, what if this song doesn't work at radio?

What if TikTok doesn't do the challenge?

Whatever it is when I'm future surfing, thinking about the outcome rather than enjoying the process.

The process is where the magic happens.

The rest of it, I've never, for all of the records that I've ever put out, there has never been a moment of any calculation that has worked.

It doesn't work.

The records that I've been like, oh yeah, this is going to be the one.

Those are the ones with like two million views on YouTube.

And the ones that I'm like, who knows?

Those are the ones that really affected culture, that really got out there.

And the world knows these songs 10, 11 years later or five years later or whatever it is.

I think the intention in the studio is so important because even if I put out a new album that doesn't

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

stream as well as the last one or whatever it is, that's not my metric.

If I am basing my identity around those numbers and those metrics, I will always be disappointed.

My bucket will always be half full.

And if I'm basing it on what was the intention, what am I actually trying to get at?

The music is going to hit who it hits.

It was already written.

I just have to get out of the way.

When I try to control, hang on, when I try to play puppet master, that's when I become miserable.

And I'm not effective at my job.

So two questions here then on that basis.

You know, I'm sure people ask you what your favorite record is or whatever.

I'm not really interested in that.

I know it's like choosing your favorite children or whatever, and they're all different for various reasons.

But in terms of the most important record you think you've ever recorded, the one that you believe has benefited

others, the world, the most, irrespective of performance metrics.

What is that record and why?

It's two records.

It's same love and other side.

And I think same love is the obvious answer because it came out at a time where we as, I'll speak for America,

it kind of, you know, even more.

It came out at a time in America where we were having this conversation around legalizing gay marriage where there was a shift.

There's a cultural shift and that song became something bigger than me.

It became a moment for a movement towards equality.

And as a songwriter, as an artist, as someone that, you know, prides himself on the pen and the ways that it can move spirit.

That's the, that's up there.

That has to be one or number two.

The other one is other side and other side is a record that not as many people know.

But it is one that was kind of the first, you know, it was the first record I wrote when I got out of treatment.

And it was that I am literally not even here right now.

I'm just trying to be silent enough in my own head to just let this magic happen.

But it talked about the disease of addiction for the first time.

And I kind of was like, yeah, I just need to get this out.

I don't know I am an addict and I don't want to like hide this shit.

And I know it's not cool.

I know it's not going to sell more records.

I know it's not what anyone, anyone else is talking about.

I know it's not what my favorite rappers are talking about, but I am an addict and I have to be sober.

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

And I need to let whoever was listening to me at the time, the 2000 fans that I had, I needed to let them know that this is who I was.
And, you know, it said that we're only as sick as our secrets.
I didn't want to be sick anymore.
I just wanted to tell my truth.
And that was the record to do it.
And what I watched happen after that.
I'll never forget people coming to the shows, you know, six people, 12 people, 14 people in recovery coming because they heard other side and it changed their life.
And I know what that feels like as someone on the other end of it whose life was changed so many times by the music that I was listening to.
And yeah, it's those two.
Those are the ones.
I listened to a drug dealer earlier.
And I listened to it, but then I looked at the comment section and it is like, it's profound. It's profound that the second comment on that video is from recovering heroin addicts who's crying while they're watching that video because it's making them feel heard, seen and understood in a really profound way and every comment was like that.
Every comment was speaking to like the liberating and therapeutic impact that song was having on, you know, thousands and thousands of people.
It's a really profound thing.
It's almost, you know, it's a lot, isn't it?
In terms of, you know, you talked about those people coming to your show, the seven, the 10, the 12. Has that ever felt like, and this is a strange word to use, but has that ever felt like an emotional weight at all?
Because you're hearing these stories.
I sat with Jordan Peterson, in fact, and he talked about how people coming up to him and telling them about their own journeys and their own emotional path to recovery or healing can sometimes feel like an emotional weight. It's a lot to carry.
I feel the opposite.
I feel connection.
It connects me to the art because I'm not in the same place that I was in 2009 when I wrote that song.
My life looks very different.
I think when I hear people say that they were moved or they were transformed or that they felt some inspiration or, you know, whatever it is.
For one, it's an opportunity and I think that maybe this is where Jordan and I differ is that I'm an addict.
This person coming up to me is an addict and there's an immediate connection there that I can't

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

describe.

I don't know what it is, but it's just like, oh, you got the same.

Oh my God, we had the same thing.

How are you doing with your journey?

How are you doing with yours?

And it's not a weight.

It's more like, oh, thank you for, you know, the meet and greet of thank you so much.

Appreciate it.

Thank you so much.

That's a weight.

That's just going through the motions, the actual moments of people telling me those things when I'm like, okay, let's pause.

Like we don't need to get through the line so fast.

Let's, you know, we'll get to the hotel when we get to the hotel.

Let me be present with this person because this conversation is changing my life.

I'm reminded why I wrote that record in the first place.

I'm reminded of the beauty that happens when we share honestly.

Like those are those moments where I'm like, thank you.

That's where I feel like I am the recipient of the recipient of a gift.

That's coming full circle because they're reminding me of how important it is to share honestly, regardless of how it looks, regardless of how it's perceived.

And I think that so much of the time there's this, you know, well, if I tell my truth, will I be an outcast?

Will I be accepted?

Will I be kicked out of the tribe?

Will I still be a part of, we want to be a part of.

And there's this thing that happens.

Like what happened with your friend when you saw him finally, when you saw him, not as the alcoholic that was fucking shit up in the house or messing up your life or like, why doesn't he just stop?

But you saw him and his raw estate.

That's his, that's raw humanity right there.

And when we demonstrate that, when we can show others that we can be raw.

It just inspires because other people are like, oh, I can tell my truth too and I'm not going to get kicked out.

Wow.

Let me show up as my authentic self.

And they have a new feature called BlueJeans Basic, which I wanted to tell you about.

BlueJeans Basic is essentially a free version of their top quality video conferencing.

And that means that you get immersive video experiences.

You get that super high quality, super easy and zero fuss experience.

And apart from zero time limits on meetings and calls, it also comes with high fidelity audio and video, including Dolby Voice.

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

They also have expertise grade security so you can collaborate with confidence.

It's so smooth that it's quite literally changed the game for myself and my team without compromising quality at all.

So if you'd like to check them out, search BlueJeans.com and let me know how you get on.

DM me, tweet me, whatever works for you.

Let me know how you find it.

Over the last couple of how long, maybe four months, I've been changing my diet, shall I say.

Many of you who've 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 then 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.

Social media, you don't really do social media, do you?

You don't really, in terms of like engaging, I heard that you're not the biggest fan of social media.

Well, that hurts my feelings, because I try pretty hard.

No, I'm just kidding.

Yeah, that's good to say.

No, I do.

But you're not out there making it, you're not out there every day,

talking about your life and showing behind the scenes.

Yeah, social media for me is part of my job.

Sometimes I'm great at it.

I mean, I'm just this guy.

I'm like, okay, what are we doing on social media now?

And then it's like, zoop, but outside of work.

Outside of work?

No, I mean, I want to be present.

I want to be like, you know, it's like my kids show up today,

and my videographer is like, yo, if you can get a little bit of iPhone footage with the kids walking around,

that'd be awesome.

And I'm like, you know, asking my wife five minutes into our walk,

like, hey, do you mind getting some footage of us walking?

And I'm just like, never mind, never mind, never mind.

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

It doesn't matter.

Like, it doesn't matter.

What matters is that I'm with my kids, and then I'm being present, and then I'm happy.

And I'm off my phone, because I've experienced both ways, and it's a balance, right?

There are times where I need to be on my phone, and I need to be on social media, and I need to be handling whatever needs to get handled.

But I think it's about the relationship that an individual has with social media.

And again, it comes back to intention, is the intention for the most likes, for the most engagement, for the most...

Like, if that's what it is, then there's always going to be a void there that's looking to be filled.

And it can be really toxic.

And I was talking to, you know, a couple guys on tour with us.

And I, you know, 20-year-old, 21, and just talking...

You know, they're just constantly analyzing TikTok and trying to figure out why did this post-perform and this one didn't, and maybe it's because we're over in Europe and the geo-targeting and all of this.

And I'm like, you guys are 20.

Like, you're on tour in Europe.

Like, go out and have fun.

Explore. Like, live outside of TikTok.

And when this is all that they've known, and that this platform is the reason why I know he exists and why his songs have gotten out there, it can be really challenging.

And I feel for the younger generation.

And I feel for the older generation that's like, yo, the label's telling me that I have to do this and I really don't want to be here at all, but here I am post.

There's a spiritual sickness that can be easily, insidiously infiltrate our psyche if we're just here nonstop.

And I just don't want to be.

On that point of, you know, those 20-year-olds that are with you and you're giving them that advice, if you could, you know, you've had this immense career and, you know, a lot of people have great careers,

but yours has had so many twists and turns and twists and turns

that the wisdom you've gained from every twist and turn I believe is pretty profound.

That's why I really loved your conversation with Jay.

If you were to go back and be able to have a conversation now with that young Ben at 14 years old, let's say right before that first drink.

What advice would you impart on him?

About life.

It's tough to say and you picked an interesting time period because you picked before.

And I don't think that I would have...

I don't think that I would have warned that 14-year-old.

Maybe I would have.

I think that...

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

But I don't think it would have done anything.
You know what I mean?
Like, maybe that conversation would have looked like,
bro, you're an addict.
You're never going to be able to shut this off.
It's going to cause way more pain than good.
But at the same time, I can't discredit the experiences that I've had
that have led me to this table right here in this moment.
And if it wasn't for those mistakes, you know, I have a different story.
I have a different arsenal to pick from in terms of what moves me creatively.
And again, repurposing that pain.
But a lot of that pain has hurt others, has hurt close family members
or my wife or best friends.
And those moments are hard to deal with.
I think if I could tell my 14-year-old self anything it'd be like,
bro, you're going to do what you're going to do.
Enjoy it.
Find gratitude.
A spiritual practice.
Get outside of your own head.
Get into the act of loving and being there for others.
And just don't stop.
I think that when I have stopped in my life, when I have let up on the gas,
not just like, not stop in terms of the work ethic,
but stop the spiritual practice.
That's the thing that's always brought me back.
It's not the work.
It's not the amount of engagement.
It's not the algorithm.
It's not the YouTube streams.
It's none of that.
What actually makes you happy and fulfilled,
find that thing and push into it as hard as you can.
That's where the magic lives.
Use the term spiritual practice to describe what that is.
And in detail, what do you mean by spiritual practice for you?
Well, it's looked like many different things throughout my time here.
In moments, it's been a meditation practice.
In moments, it's been a yoga practice.
In moments, it's been many 12-step meetings throughout the week
or step work or working with others.
But I think it's the art of just getting outside of oneself
and getting grounded in the moment and serving others.

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

That has been my consistent point of reference.

You know what?

When you feel spiritually sick, reach out to someone else.

Whether it's picking up the phone or call that person that you've been avoiding or whatever, just get outside of your own self.

Do the thing that makes you uncomfortable.

Push into that because that's when life all of a sudden becomes vibrant.

Colors come back.

It becomes alive of like, oh, yes, I turned this off.

I stopped thinking about me and what I wanted in the moment and I just showed up for someone else.

And I found that connection.

I found God in those moments.

I found that little piece that reminded me of who I am just by showing up for another.

Second ago, you talked about, when you're talking about other people,

you said that one of the hardest things is knowing that you would go on to hurt other people.

Yeah.

Who did you hurt?

I hurt my parents.

I hurt my wife probably the most.

I think anyone that...

I was being dishonest to, you know.

There's this double...

It's almost this double life that needs to be lived.

You know, when I would go off and I'd relapse and I'd, you know, I'd lie about it.

I wouldn't, you know, relapsing is...

You know, for me, it's always been a sneaky thing.

It's not like I'm like all of a sudden like, hey, guys, just so everyone knows, I'm high again.

No, this is like quiet hush.

I'm trying not to get caught.

And in those seasons, protecting that and people are probably like, yo, what's going on with them?

Like, you know, and I'm lying about that.

And it's just a really toxic spot.

You know, I'm gaslighting my wife and, you know, making her feel crazy.

I think that that's probably if she was here, asked what's the hardest part of being, you know, in a partnership with an addict.

It's like those moments where he made me feel crazy.

It's not that I went back to the drugs necessarily.

It's that I made her feel like she was, she was crazy and that she was off because she was even questioning me.

And again, turning into someone that I'm like, that's the worst version of myself.

That's the shittiest version of myself.

That's something that in my, in my heart, I know to be not the way that I want to treat anybody much

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

less.

My significant other or my best friends or my team.

But here I am again, putting everything to the wayside just so I can continue to use.

And it's a pretty dark place.

Was there a point where you thought you might lose her?

Yeah. Yeah.

I mean, relapsing COVID, you know, the beginning of COVID.

Definitely was, you know, she kicked me out of the house and I went to stay in my parents' condo and I remember just driving around aimlessly.

Like I'm going to lose my kids.

I'm going to lose this marriage.

And I think the thing that, I think that's the thing that scares me the most is,

I'm being honest, is not being in my kids' lives and the devastation that that would potentially and that impact that it would, a divorce would have on them.

And the other flip side of it is, I believe that kids are resilient and that that pain can be repurposed and that, you know, half of the world is divorced and, you know, beauty can come out of it and does all the time and people end up in much better situations out of divorce.

So I'm not against divorce, but for me and my kids, that was the thing that I was holding on to was just this, like, I want our family to stay together.

And the fact that I can, it would be because of me.

It would be because of my self-centered, instant gratification, need to escape, not actually working my 12-step program ass.

Like that, I would be the reason that this family broke up and I would have to hold that and that weight, the idea of that weight still seems too much to live with.

I know I could do it, but in that moment of that, that last relapse, I was definitely a, yeah, it was, it was a real scare into, um, look what you're about to lose.

For what?

For this?

This doesn't even make you happy.

It stopped working right away.

It never worked.

It never worked for you.

It never worked.

It never worked in the long run.

Even if you had a good night or two in the big picture, um, you have an allergy and that allergy is trying to kill you every time you pick it up.

I've read, um, about a story when you were in a, I think you were in a hotel room or something and your wife had taken a pregnancy test and you had, you had just relapsed and she was in the toilet and you heard her crying through the door.

Yeah.

And you knew that, you knew that those weren't happy tears.

Yeah.

Because she was pregnant.

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

Yeah.

Can you take me back to that moment and just tell me exactly what happened?

You were in, it was a hotel.

I was in our house.

You were at a house, okay.

Yeah.

We were in our home and, um, yeah, it's, it's, it's kind of a, I mean, it's the truth, but it's, um, yeah, I'll just say it.

I mean, I'm there.

I'm high.

She doesn't know it, but she knows it.

But, you know, she hasn't caught me yet.

And I just keep denying it.

And, um, you know, her period was late, went and got her the pregnancy test.

And I'm just like begging to a God that I had no connection with.

Please, please let this be a negative pregnancy test.

Um, I'm not ready yet.

I'm not ready to be a dad.

I'm not ready to give up the drugs.

I'm not ready to give up the drugs.

And I remember just like on the carpet, literally like praying.

And then I heard the tears and I knew what that meant that she was pregnant.

And I knew that that meant that I needed to get clean.

And it was that moment of like that pull.

And I think that that's the hardest part.

I haven't really spoke about this.

I think that's the hardest part about the disease of addiction is this pull is the compulsion and the obsession for more, yet knowing that more is the thing that is leading to depression, the rock bottom, the not wanting to be here anymore. But it's this just that at odds.

And I, I felt that inner turmoil of just I'm not ready to be a dad because I still want to get high.

And I know I need to stop, but I am just not ready yet.

And sure enough, she was pregnant and I got clean.

And she was pregnant with our first daughter Sloan.

So, you know, I think my, my reservation is just like Sloan watching this some day and being like, Oh, tight.

So dad was super high on the carpet and didn't really want me.

That's not true at all either.

I mean, I was high and at the time I didn't want her, but when I got clean, it was like, okay, let's have this baby.

Like I want to be a dad.

I want to be a dad who my kids never see loaded that they don't even know

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

that part of me, that they don't have to be like, Oh, dad's dad's high again or dad's hiding or mom kicked dad out of the house that they don't even know that part of my, my story.

That's what I wanted.

What have you come to learn about the journey of life and, and as it relates to like, and I said a second ago that the ups and the downs and the ups and the downs, but you persevere and that's really all the choice we have is to persevere and to find something meaningful to aim at today.

And then we'll get another chance again tomorrow and we kind of like right off yesterday and the day before because that's out of our control now.

And it's about what, what can I aim at today as you sit here today?

What are you aiming at?

Like the past is the past.

Like we can't go back and change things.

It is what it is.

It's, I think it's important to be aware of it and to admit it to ourselves to at least to learn some wisdom from it.

But as you sit here today, you're a, you know, as you woke up this morning, this is today is in play.

Yeah.

What are you aiming at today?

And as we look off into the next sort of two decades of your life, what?

I maybe to a fault don't think about the future.

What I'm thinking about is here.

And then I'm like, okay, well, let's zoom out from here.

I have a show tonight.

I want to put on a great show.

We're in London.

It's like 6,000 people sold out.

Like I want to put on a great show.

What is it going to take for me to put on a great show tonight?

My family's in town in London.

Like I just don't think like that.

Yeah.

And I watched my wife who does and other people who do.

And it's like, I have an inability to think a big picture.

I have an exceptional ability at focusing on the thing that is in front of me.

And I believe that it probably has to do with ADD and the way that my brain works in the chemistry, but it's what it has created a work ethic and a focus that, you know, I can just be in the studio for 14 hours or I can be doing a music video and editing it and just keep going.

And that's how I got good at my craft was putting in those long, long hours where other people be like, all right, let's go outside.

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

And I'm like, no, it's not done yet.

Let's keep working.

But in terms of the next 20 years, I don't know.

I don't know.

I'm excited to, to pivot.

You know, I don't think that, you know, in a decade, I'm going to be like, you know,

I can't wait to play this show tonight.

I don't know, you know, we'll see what happens.

But what I have realized and, and part of this comes from, you know, working on my golf clothing company, bulgy boys, which has been so fun, such a labor of, of love and to be able to design clothes and watch people wear them.

And, you know, the creative process that that has been particularly in COVID.

That's not going to be my only pivot.

It's just not, it doesn't fulfill me in the same way.

What does fulfill me with actual meaning is, is our youth program called the residency in Seattle and thinking about actually, you know, getting a permanent spot year long with staffing where we have a home for the residency.

That actually is inspiring to me.

That has meaning.

That has a lasting potential that's deeper than like, what color polo is this going to be?

And I think that they can coexist because I do enjoy this as well.

I love bulgy boys.

I love golf.

But for the bigger picture, what do you want your legacy to be?

And not for the purpose of ego, but like, how do you want to leave the greatest impacts to make the greatest impact with our precious time on this earth?

We don't have much.

We don't know how much we have left.

It's finite.

It could be, you know, gone tomorrow.

What can you hang your hat on and be like, you know what, I took a risk.

I got uncomfortable.

I sacrificed.

I showed up.

I worked really hard.

I celebrated the wins.

I took the losses on the chin and I kept going.

That's the kind of life I want.

And it's kind of life I wanted today.

And it's the same life I want in 20 years, regardless of where that leads me.

All those years ago, your dad asked you a question at that family get together.

He said, are you happy?

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

All these years later, you're sat in this table in London.
Are you happy?
I think happiness is fleeting.
And happiness comes and goes.
I think that what is sustainable is meaning is purpose.
I'm not going to be happy every day.
It's going to go like this.
In this moment, yes, I am happy.
But in general, in my life right now, am I happy?
I would say absolutely yes.
But there's trials and tribulations through it all.
And what I have found is that those moments of being tested,
of sorrow, of betrayal, of growth,
all of those turn into progress if we can use them as medicine,
if we can accept them as blessings rather than this idea.
This is one thing I've been thinking about a lot lately,
is this idea of like victimhood, of mentally going to a place of,
oh, they wronged me or I'm a victim.
No, this is an opportunity.
This is a blessing that has been put in front of me
and how I get to handle it now and show up.
And it becomes toxic in my mind if I'm thinking of it about,
what are they doing to me?
How could they do this?
Just like we were talking about earlier,
it becomes medicine when I can show up from a place of,
I might not know why this is happening,
but I have faith that I am absolutely at the right place right now.
And I'm going to show up clean.
I'm not going to escape.
I am going to be my true self,
tell the truth even when I don't want to,
and keep it pushing.
That's what creates meaning and fulfillment.
And that is what I'm after, not momentary happiness.
There seems to be a real authenticity to your new album, Ben.
And I think, I mean, maybe that's even evidenced in the choice of the name,
to some degree, because you've called it after yourself,
after the name that your parents gave to you.
And throughout the album, I felt a certain sense of,
I was going to say, I don't give a fuck about like what I'm supposed to be,
to some degree, because it feels like all of you,
as opposed to just a narrow part of you, if that makes sense.

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

Absolutely.

So like, and I say that in part because I listened to the first record, and then I got like six or seven records down, and it was just like, you hadn't, the first record didn't sound like the sixth record.

It was like a completely different kind of expression.

So I was thinking it's kind of someone that has kind of just doesn't really give a fuck about what they're supposed to make, and they're making what they care about.

Maybe that's my assessment of it.

How accurate was that?

What was your thinking going into this?

And how is this project different to all of the other projects you've...

I think that you summed it up beautifully.

And I love to be able to do all of that.

And just like walking in the studio and be like, what is speaking to me today?

You know, maybe it's a dance song from 1984.

Maybe it's a, you know, I'm going through something.

Maybe it's a pop song.

Maybe it's like I want to rap, you know, with Primo scratching, and it sounds like it's from the 90s.

Like it's whatever direction I want to go is like,

I don't want to feel limited.

Like, oh, but that's not what you do.

No, I could do whatever I want to do.

And you're right in that it's all me.

Like those are all bits and pieces of me.

And I think for a long time, and that's what I've always done kind of.

So how does it differ?

I don't know.

I feel like all, maybe there's been a little bit more cohesion on other albums.

But for the most part, that's what I've always done is those are all, those are all facets of my expression.

And, um, and I think it's confused people, you know, because like it, you know, I'll have homies that are like, yo, you dropped heroes.

And then you came out with this like, you know, pop song with the music video directed by your daughter.

Like what is going on?

And I'm like, yep, that's what I did.

But doesn't authenticity confuse people anyway?

Because conformity doesn't confuse people.

No, you're right.

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

Conformity fits.

Yes, conformity fits.

Authenticity doesn't.

No.

And they want me to be this version.

Yeah.

And, you know, radio wants me to be this version.

And, you know, this, it's like.

You're right.

I mean, authenticity confuses people.

And once people can box, put it in a box, package it, be able to point to it that this is this, this is that.

It makes it a lot easier as an artist to, or as a, you know, observer to judge.

I don't like it because it's this.

Yeah.

Oh, shit.

He did that.

But then he did that.

And I liked that, but I would never listen, you know, whatever.

People are trying to figure it out.

I'm like, I'm just going to keep making the music that I've always made.

And again, I have a faith now that it lands where it's supposed to land.

And that process has been therapeutic for me of just.

Detaching.

Detaching from the outcome, regardless of what it is, just like, just make it because you love it, dude.

That's all.

I think that's a super powerful lesson and important one that I think everyone without maybe realizing it can actually really relate to.

I even have that a lot on this show where I will have such a diverse range of guests that on every conversation I have, there's a comment saying like, get back to interviewing CEOs.

Or why, like, why is this person on a, why are you interviewing sports people?

And there was maybe a point where I thought it crossed my mind.

Maybe they're right.

Maybe I should just like stay in my lane.

But the authentic me goes, I care about so many fucking things.

I love sports.

I love businesses.

I love music.

I love psychology.

So can I just run the experiment of being myself?

And I refer to it as an experiment because there's a perceived cost to running that experiment.

You don't know the outcome.

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

Are people just going to stop listening?

Running that experiment has been most importantly, okay, it's worked, but it's been great for me as in like, I can show up every day and like my life regardless of whether people want it or not.

And I can really enjoy this.

And that's how I can run this as a marathon opposed to as a sprint, right?

Right.

Like when we conform, it's like, I've never seen it be sustainable for my guests when they're like wearing a mask for too long.

I could do this for the rest of my life because I'm being myself.

Do you see what I mean?

Absolutely.

We have a closing tradition on this podcast where the last guest asks a question for the next guest, not knowing who they're leaving it for.

And the question that's been left for you by our previous guest is, is there someone from your past that you should have a conversation with that you haven't had?

If so, why haven't you had it?

And what is that conversation?

That's a great question.

As my parents get older, that there's probably some conversations there, particularly with my dad, that I go back and forth on having and, you know, a relationship that I might want with him that I think that there's some fear around maybe he doesn't desire with me.

And it's a tricky one with parents.

It's a tricky one with family, like having deep conversations around what our relationship looks like or what it looked like growing up or whatever.

You know, I'm from a family where, you know, you kind of, you smile through it.

I think there's a reason why I never heard my parents fight.

I think that there is a just be happy.

Don't talk about it.

Just be happy.

And that hasn't been my experience on this earth.

And I think that at times it's challenged them.

And then at a certain point you're like, yo, dude, your dad's 75 years old, like, you know, he is who he is.

And, but I think if my dad, if my dad passed tomorrow, I would probably feel like there was just, did I really make an effort to connect on the level that, that I intuitively wanted to outside of his reaction to my words.

I completely relate to that with my own dad.

I completely relate.

And I don't know why I've never had the conversation.

I don't know what it is.

Is it, I don't think he's got the tools.

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

I've not got the tools.

We've not got the tools.

Right.

All three.

Yeah.

All three.

But you probably do have the tools.

I think it's interesting because you can have, I can have the tools with my girlfriend.

That's what I'm saying.

Well, we've like learned together how to do the tools.

But then I look over at my dad and I go, we've not figured out how to, how to do this together.

Because there's like, there, you know, we go through different, there's like a changing of the guard almost.

It's like our parents, you know, my parents were byproducts of, of their parents.

And these are very different times in civilization and where we have gotten to in terms of talking about our emotions and mental health and being able to process masculinity or ego or these things, you know, going to therapy or going to a 12 step meeting or, you know, really working on ourselves.

Like my dad's never done any of that internal work because that's not what men did in his generation.

And, you know, sure, there's exceptions.

But as a whole, my dad's generation was different.

And I watched the younger generation from, from me and the way that they're fluid and love each other and gender is a social construct and these walls are getting torn down and I'm like, I'm trying to keep up with it.

And, you know, I'm having my own moments of just like, wait, how does this fit and what, what is this?

And I feel old all of a sudden and they're just like, don't you get it?

This is all fake.

And I'm, and I'm trying to, you know, so I think that going to, to my dad, there is a certain level of just communication about emotions that I'm really used to that he's not because he probably never had those conversations with his dad.

His dad was like in the war and had five kids and like just getting a meal on, you know, a meal to each one of those five boys in the house was a struggle alone, much less trying to talk about how you felt.

That wasn't part of the day.

But if he wasn't going to respond then and you had a chance to say those last words, what would those words be?

Irrespective of response or impact or feedback.

You know what I've come to the conclusion of is that we're all doing the best that we can do.

My dad's doing the best that he could do and instead of me, because I have a lot of friends that didn't have a dad at all.

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

Their dad pieced out, you know, and I think it's easy to particularly when you have kids, you have this idea of what your parents are going to be like as grandparents. And my grandparents or my parents are great grandparents.

I want them around more, not even for the childcare, just because I think that family is so important.

I think that nuclear family is so important.

I think that we have, you know, we come from like communities where we helped raise children together and, you know, this porch looked out over to this porch and we had actual tangible human connection.

And I think that I've desired something in having kids and reflecting on my own childhood and what that was like with my parents now that I'm a dad.

And I'm like, oh, I didn't do any of this with my dad.

I didn't do, damn, what was my life like?

Oh, you know, but instead of looking at it like in any way, I am a victim because my dad worked so much or, you know, whatever it was, it's like my dad was amazing.

He worked so much and he provided and he sent my eyes to rehab and he sent me to college and he showed up with love.

And instead of like the opposite of all of that, like he's not doing this, this, this, this, I want him to be this, this, this.

It's like my dad is who he is and it's made me who I am.

And sure, I desire a closeness that I don't know if we'll ever get to, you know, an open level of just hanging out, being okay with that, telling him how I really feel.

I don't know if that's important.

But what's preventing me from having that conversation is that it's a hard, it's a hard conversation to have.

Family is so layered.

We're not talking about like a friend I met six years ago.

We're talking about this person that brought me into this world, our DNA, the very fabric, the, our identity.

This, it's a lot there.

It's a lot there.

And I think sometimes I question if, how much do you push other people to get outside of their comfort zone?

I know it's not comfortable.

It's not comfortable for me.

I definitely want to be comfortable for him.

How much do you put, I mean, what's preventing you from talking with your dad at whatever level it is?

I think it's probably just, to be honest, I think it's like, I'm going to say things, but I've just not tried in the way that I should have.

It's just feeling like the bridge to doing that is not there.

As in, what I mean by is like, I don't think he's got the tools and I don't think I've got the tools with him.

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

Yes, I would say, I would say exactly the same thing.

That's what I mean.

You know, because with my go, it's funny in generations, we all seem to be able to do that sideways and down, as you said.

So like, we could, you could probably have those conversations with your kids.

Absolutely.

And with your peers.

We do all the time.

Yeah.

But as you said, when we look up at our parents, the generation they came from, they didn't do podcasts like this where they talked about their feelings and emotions and stuff and mental health.

And so they didn't learn the tools.

And it's like, can you teach an old dog new tools?

But it's probably an excuse on my part because that's what I asked you the question about regardless of how they respond.

Yes.

If it, because they might, both of our dads aren't going to live forever.

And what's going to live on after they've gone is the regret.

Right.

And I don't want the regret.

I don't want the regret either.

So I just want to, I'm, I need to write a letter and just send the fucking letter.

Yeah.

You know what I mean?

Um, I guess this is a conversation for another time because you've got a show tonight at Wembley.

So, um, I'm going to let you go.

But, um, thank you so much for so many things.

Thank you first and foremost for creating great music.

That's brought joy to our lives.

But I think even more important than that music, that has helped people in such a profound way, not everybody does that beyond the views.

Like, I think you've clearly come to learn that views are one thing and then impact is a completely different thing.

And the impact that I just saw in that one video drug dealer is would be profound enough life work for any one individual just in the comment section from what I saw beyond that you've repeated that over and over again.

And even on your new album, Ben, within the first paragraph of the first song, you're taking me back to your own struggles, which I think is as we've described that vulnerability you demonstrate in these conversations and your interviews and your music is the doorway to connection.

And I don't think you'll ever even see the extent to which you've allowed

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E244: Macklemore: How I Destroyed My Addiction & Overcame My Darkest Times

people to feel that connection through your music, through your art and through these conversations.

So that's what I want to thank you for.

And it's an honor to meet you and to get to do this because I'm a fan of your work and I'm a fan of the man and I'm a fan of everything you've touched.

So thank you so much.

Thank you so much.

You're amazing.

This is incredible.

And I really appreciate you having me.

You just you have a light to you that it's very impressive and I get it.

Thank you, Ben.

Yeah.