

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / Frank Lampard Finally Speaks Out About What REALLY Happened At Chelsea (E264)

When you get that call, had you known the context, the behind-the-scenes, that unhealthy culture? Honestly, do you think you would have made a different decision?

I think I can say this.

Frank Lampard! Lampard! Lampard has found an egg!

Premier League icon, Chelsea Legends!

Herod, your dad was the biggest influence on your career, and then I read a separate quote saying that sometimes I hated him.

You know, my dad was a tough man, pushed me very hard on the football front, and it got probably a bit too much.

The fear of failure was a huge driving force, that made me what I was, and gave me the career I got in the end.

Chelsea fans will be listening to this because they want to get your opinion on what's just happened, because since you've left, we've not really heard from you.

I came back here because this was an opportunity to come to Chelsea, a club close to my heart, but I could see in training that the level wasn't enough.

The size of the squad with players that will test you and question you.

Questioning you.

And then Chelsea spends more money than anyone's ever spent in a window.

It seemed like chaos.

I could see that the players were ready for the season to finish.

But low standards are a symptom of something further upstream that's happened.

You know, we didn't get the results I wanted, and I know a lot of the reasons why.

Like what?

So, one moment occurred in your life that really tested you at a much deeper level, the passing of your mother, and while you were playing at the very, very highest level.

I was a mummy's boy.

I lost the closest person to me, you know, everything to me.

The emotional support.

I want to say something more, you know, and I couldn't.

What would you want to say?

Frank is a legend.

There's absolutely no denying that.

But so much has happened in recent times in his life as a manager that unanswered questions remain.

And I wanted to have a conversation with Frank, an honest, open conversation, to see if we could get to the bottom of some of those unanswered questions.

What was happening behind the scenes?

How did it actually feel for Frank?

Is anyone to blame?

What does Frank want to do next?

In how and what caused Frank to be the man that he is?

And that's maybe the most fascinating question of all, because there's some things that Frank has just never talked about before.

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But he's made the decision to talk about them today.
And if you have unanswered questions, I don't think you will answer them.
At the end of this episode.
Frank, how are you doing?
Really well.
Thank you.
There's always a there's always a short and a long answer to that, isn't there?
I was waiting for your second drink.
What's the what's the long version of that?
No, I'm doing really well.
I'm currently on a break, I suppose, from working.
Which is a pleasure in ways.
Because I'm obviously the work of the manager.
I was going to say Premier League manager,
but any manager in football is intense.
So at the moment, I'm on a break.
It's sort of holiday time for me a little bit.
Family time.
And probably when I'm out of work,
I learned this when I left Chelsea, actually.
It was I had a year out after that.
And I really learned to try to improve my appreciation of when you're out of work.
You're fortunate enough to be able to be out of work,
whether that circumstance is to try and enjoy your family and be very, very present.
So at the minute, I'm pretty present at home,
which is a good thing, hopefully for my children and wife.
And I'm in a pretty good place.
I remember my brain would often drift off when I had my time out of work.
And I would think about things professionally.
So I think about things that I could be doing or you think back to the past.
When you're having those moments where your kids are running around
and you have a moment where your brain drifts off to work,
what are the subjects that your brain starts thinking about professionally?
You think a lot in management about people.
So if I reflect on situations like leaving Chelsea or leaving Everton and those things,
there are a lot of things that are out of your control.
You get to a point where you can get probably 70% of them and lock them away
and kind of go, I'm right with that.
Results you can't control, but 70% you're okay with.
And it's 30% that you kind of niggles at you.
That's how I am.
And a lot of those things when you become manager are maybe sort of like people things.
I think there's sort of tactics and all these things are huge in a modern game.

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I'm certainly a coach. I'm not a manager.

But when it comes to managing 25, 30 players managing and building, because you are the figure head of a building when you're the head coach or manager, I think sometimes when you're reflecting, you can reflect on things that did I have.

Was that interaction right?

Would I have dealt with that right?

Could I have dealt with it differently?

And hindsight is like the best, best thing.

You know, it's so simple to sit there with hindsight and think, you know, I should have done that.

So I suppose I have moments where I go over things like that,

but they're all with a yearning to sort of be a bit better or learn that you might have done something wrong or actually you come to a conclusion that I maybe did it right.

So, you know, I dip in and out of that stuff.

And that probably is, you know, as I say, I wouldn't say I'm the only one,

but I certainly am someone that is, you know, I can never control when those moments come.

I can be now pushing the swing, you know, and then my mind goes back to something or things ahead to something.

And, you know, that probably means that I'm absolutely invested in what I do.

Yeah, I can relate to all of that.

I think anybody can.

And I also really liked your analogy of once you get to like 70% piece with something, it's kind of resolved as much as you know.

And then there's other things which feel kind of unresolved, I guess.

Or like there's more wisdom to garner from those experiences.

Well, I think if you don't get to piece with a 70%,

I think you can get yourself in a bit of a mess.

You know, I think you can go over everything can correct yourself.

And then what is the answer going forward?

So I think kind of understanding what you are and then go, no, no, that was fine.

Whatever the result for a win or for a loss.

I've had games as a coach and as a player where we've won a game.

And I know I got something wrong in the game, but you take the plaudits afterwards.

But inside, I know I got it wrong.

I've had games that we've lost and you get criticism from the outside.

And I know my prep was right, you know, in my head.

So I think those sort of things you can kind of stack up and go, no, well, that's fine.

But then there's always the 30% and we'll always strive for, and it might be less.

I don't know, 30% sounds a big number when I say it.

Sometimes it's 10% to try and make you as good as you can be.

So I kind of go over that stuff because when you're out of work, when you're not working and you don't know in foot, we don't know what your next gig is, you know,

it's very hard to jump too far into the future because everything looks different there.

So how can you stack yourself up as good as you can now?

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I want to get into all of that, but I want to take a step back because I think I feel like there's more in you to understand about who you are as a person and your characters and your character and really the like, the foundations you're built upon to understand all of these things, the things we're going to talk about.

So what do I need to know about Frank Lampard in terms of the influences and the experiences that shaped your character, the character of the man that sat in front of me?

Because, you know, I've spoken to a lot of people about you in preparation for this conversation. Oh, no.

No, but they all seem to sing from the exact same hymn sheet.

They all say everyone says you're just a wonderful man, like a really good, solid gentleman.

And it's people don't know this, but we were meant to have this conversation before, but you've just been a total class act in even not being able to come last time because of, you know, reasons outside of your control.

The way you conduct yourself, you just conduct yourself as a real gentleman.

And then in terms of your mentality, when I was reading through your early years, it's clear that there was this real obsession to be better.

I mean, Harry said, Harry Redknapp said that you were the hardest training, hardest working person he's ever worked with when you're a young man.

Tell me, why is Frank Lampard the way he is?

I grew up in Romford in Essex.

So I would call it probably a middle class upbringing in terms of my dad had been a professional footballer.

And so I went through a pretty comfortable upbringing where I was down to school every day, aspiring to do pretty well at school,

training pretty much every day and playing at the weekend.

So after school, we're going to train Tottenham and Arsenal in West Ham.

At one point, I was training all three, you could in those days.

Now it's different.

I was playing cricket, I was playing for Essex as a child.

So that was on Monday night, having nets at Chelmsford.

And then on Sunday, I went to school because I was going to school on Saturday, so I was devastated with it at the time as a real word.

But that was how the school works.

And on Sundays, I played.

So my one more week was so busy, but it was content, very content.

In terms of relationship with my family, I had a dad who was pushing me very hard on the football front, very, very hard.

He was quite a hard taskmaster.

What does that mean in reality?

That means that probably when I was, I probably started kicking the ball when I was up four, or maybe as soon as I could walk.

But you know, I remember in my early days would be four or five.

And then so that was me in terms of I loved the football.

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But probably better term, I was eight or nine.

I was probably getting like coached or pushed in what a 15 or 16 year old might be when they're sort of going into an academy at West Hamside where I ended up.

As in work on your weaknesses, go over the park.

You need to have more stamina.

Your left foot is not good enough.

Your agility is not good enough.

So I was like, I used to put down the cushions in the front room and had me doing reaction for a ball against the one reacting jump.

I'm a kid.

I loved it.

Don't get me wrong.

But there were times when I didn't love it.

And it got probably a bit too much.

I'm not going to cry about it because it made me what I was and gave me the career I got in the end.

And then on the other flip of that, so I had that pushy kind of thing.

And so after a game on a Sunday, we would lose and I would get,

he would give me some criticism on the way home and I would be a bit emotional.

And fortunately for me, when I think about sort of fate and how things work together to maybe get you to where you got, you end up being, my mother was the flip, the emotional support, the, you know, arm around you, the quiet word.

I was a mummy's boy and that was completely my upbringing.

So as I say, it was pretty comfortable.

And in the end, it led to me leaving school with my GCSEs, getting decent grades, and then going to sign on as a YTS at the time, an apprentice at West Ham.

I read that quote about your father.

I think it was in the independent that your dad was the biggest influence on your career.

And then I read a separate quote saying that,

I have an awful lot to thank him for, but sometimes I hated him.

Yeah. I stick by that quote.

It's, I think you'll probably find it a lot in stories similar to mine.

And in the modern day, I think it's changed because I think parents now, the thing with my story then in a different era was it felt pretty organic.

My dad had played.

He saw probably a bit of talent in me and pushed and drove in an old school way.

I wanted you to be a player son, you know, and it was like,

he, I think he found a new sense of pride in pushing me there.

Now I think some parents get excited about the bright lights that may be, and they push their children.

And I think that's another story, but I think mine was real.

You know, my dad was a tough man, is a tough man, and he pushed me.

And I remember being over a park and it was raining.

And it was crossing balls for me to head.

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Headings never been a strength of mine then and now.
So I never, throughout my career.
And I couldn't, you know, I couldn't connect.
I was missing them and he was shouting at me.
And I remember sort of stomping off and being emotional about it.
And those things stick in my head.
And again, they were the building blocks of myself as a person.
So, you know, this isn't a sub-story.
It's just a reality of what I went through.
As I said, I had a lot of other comforts.
So, you know, other people don't have it as good.
And it was, without that, who knows in a football sense,
if I'd have got to where I got.
And how does that, what relationship does that make you have with your work
and progress and self-improvement at that very young age?
Because you sign at West Ham when you're, what, 14 years old-ish?
15, maybe.
Yeah, 15.
And I, I mean, as I said, I had read that,
Harry Redknapp quote that you outworked everybody else.
Yeah.
What, what, what is your relationship with your work from that very young age?
Well, I'm sort of really interested in this kind of nature versus nurture thing.
What was in me already was ingrained in me maybe to be this kind of very
work-ethic-y kind of person.
I think I had, you know, physical capacity.
I was a chubby kid, to be fair.
I was quite chubby.
I'd do cheeks, curtains, as you had in those days.
And I remember like, I know I needed to get fitter and, and get stronger.
So, and then being pushed by my dad particularly and encouraged by my mom
probably gave me this real desire to, and an understanding that if you don't work,
you're not going to get there.
And that, you know, that's what I would try and pass on to my children now.
But it really stuck and it became me.
So by the time of being, you know, 16, as I remember it,
probably been at West End my early years, I'd probably been forced into a bit by my dad,
but I took it on board.
So, you know, I wanted to get faster.
So he put me in running spikes and I had to run after training,
go and run over the back.
And I used to hide my spikes, go out the backs.
I didn't want the other players to see me because I felt embarrassed.

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I'd go in on days off.
I would practice extra shooting.
I would do everything I could to, to improve.
And it probably was looking back a desire to be the best.
And I was never the best.
I was probably like the second or third best kid in pretty much every team that I played in, in whatever I did, cricket or football.
But I had a real desire to, and I also had a fear of failure.
And as much as that doesn't sound like a nice driving force, it can be a really strong driving force, I think.
Where did that fear or failure come from?
I don't know.
I don't know.
I think it's in my makeup.
Maybe I don't know.
It's probably just how I am.
I probably have it still these days.
I think it can be really positive.
It was in my footballing career.
And it carried on throughout, probably still in my management career.
It can probably be the flip of that in my life because if I fear of failing something, I won't approach it.
And that's me.
I don't want that.
My wife will always, Christine, jokes with me when we go on holiday and you want a paddleboard or something.
I'm not going near that because I know I'm going to fall off a lot.
And so she will laugh at me.
So I'm like, you paddleboard.
I'll lay on the beach or I'll lay on the Lila or something like that.
I actually used a paddleboard as a Lila.
That's the joke.
But in the biggest sense in my life, that fear of failure is.
It can probably maybe make me not try things I should do.
But in terms of my footballing career, the fear of failure was a huge driving force.
And I don't think it's a bad thing because I think there's a certain humility to it.
And my mum would certainly have been a driver of me as a young person to say, stay humble, son.
Stay humble.
Never get too high.
Stay there and you'll be fine in your own head.

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So I think I had a real understanding of my weaknesses.
And I thought, well, if I can work on these constantly,
and then I started to see results really step by step,
sometimes you go back, you go forward a few.
But I can certainly say, looking back at my career
from start to finish, I didn't leave anything on the table
in terms of work ethic and training.
You know, and I don't want to sound like an absolute machine.
There'll be days when you get older, where you come off it a bit
or you start to find life affection different ways.
But when I look at my peers in football,
I certainly had a training ethic,
but at least right at the top,
where the others can say the same, maybe, but I felt that.
I mean, that's the Harry Redknapp quote.
He says that during his career,
he never met anyone that trained as hard as Frank.
He would be out there on a winter's day,
practicing shooting for hours,
left foot, right foot, et cetera, et cetera.
That fear of failure, though,
I can see how it becomes a driving force.
It makes you stay out there on a winter's day,
left foot, right foot, and leaving no stone unturned.
But with all these things, there comes a cost
on the other side of the coin, right?
And I mean, you talked about the paddle board thing,
which is that like, kind of,
if I don't do it, then I won't fail.
But one of the things that I was assuming
is it would also make you quite a chronic overthinker.
Because I think people that have that fear of failure,
they try and think their way through a situation
before it happens, typically.
What is the cost of having that fear of failure?
Well, the other thinking thing is maybe a cost.
And I think that can be a positive too.
But I think it can be quite taxing on yourself,
for anyone who thinks like that.
And sometimes I've tried to make myself not an overthinker.
However you do that, I don't know,
because I've not found a solution to that one.
Because I think that's when you are that, it's in you.

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So probably the negative or downsides
have been probably a bit taxing on myself.
But I think you learn to live with that too.
And I think you understand it.
I think it's something that I'll never master.
And it can probably cause you into
over-complicating situations, like you're saying about,
I don't want to get into that.
But if you do get into something
and you're really over thinking,
you have to get into something,
I now try and step back and simplify it.
And so stop overthinking it, simplify it.
Because for me, anything in life,
if you can simplify the basics,
you probably get quicker to the solution.
So that one's just a struggle that I put up with.
But as I say, I think it's just part of my makeup.
If I wasn't an over-thinker,
if I didn't have that sort of obsessive,
sort of perfectionist training drive,
I wouldn't have got to where I got to,
because I was not Lionel Messi,
who has got this God-given talent that's there.
Wherever my talent was on the spectrum,
I needed to push it.
And I constantly tried to.
How do you enjoy the process if you're overthinking?
I weirdly like, I've really grown to like the stress
of what it brings.
And that's, you might start thinking I'm a strange person.
I don't know, but I loved stressful training.
To put it on a physical side, for instance,
I loved that feeling of almost feeling sick
on a pre-season run or really intense training sessions.
I really enjoyed that.
Maybe not always in the moment,
but when you get to the end of it and you go,
I got through that and it was so intense and hard.
And maybe in life, sometimes I set myself challenges
and maybe I make it more complicated than I should.
But I don't mind that stuff.
And that's probably when I started off talking about

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that relax when you with your children.
I think I'm still juggling that one.
And I think probably a lot of people are.
I don't know.
I think being overthink is not something unique to me.
It's completely everywhere.
But I don't know what else to say.
And that's what I am.
That enjoying the pain, like the pre-season run,
if you feel sick, then you feel good about yourself.
Yeah.
Why?
I don't know.
I mean, I went to the gym this morning
and I really didn't want to go and I'd bought the dog
and the time limits getting shorter.
And I'm going to go in.
I don't want to go.
I'm going to go in because I know the buzz
that I'll get off afterwards.
And that's kind of my drug.
And it always has been.
And it probably starts from all those early days of,
you know, you must work hard.
You must push yourself.
You must be as fit as you can be.
And it probably just stuck.
And it's probably a bit of a lie for me.
But I do, thankfully, I enjoy the stress of hard work
and physical hard work less now I've finished you.
Now it's more to not get too unhealthy and I'm fit.
Whereas when I was training and playing,
even when I finished playing for a couple of years,
if I went for a 5k, I need to beat my 5k PB.
I have to try and beat it.
Now, when I do a 5k, I'm just going to complete it.
Do you know what I'm completing in like 20 or 30 seconds less?
So I've dropped that one slightly
and maybe I'd transfer it into other parts of my life, I guess.
Quick one before we get back to this episode.
Just give me 30 seconds of your time.
Two things I wanted to say.
The first thing is a huge thank you for listening

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and tuning into the show week after week.
It means the world to all of us
and this really is a dream that we absolutely never had
and couldn't have imagined getting to this place.
But secondly, it's a dream where we feel like
we're only just getting started.
And if you enjoy what we do here,
please join the 24% of people that listen to this podcast
regularly and follow us on this app.
Here's a promise I'm going to make to you.
I'm going to do everything in my power to make this show
as good as I can now and into the future.
We're going to deliver the guests that you want me to speak to
and we're going to continue to keep doing
all of the things you love about this show.
Thank you.
Thank you so much.
Back to the episode.
When you finished your footballing career,
there's many options you had.
Pundit tree.
I'm just talking about the typical paths that football is.
Sometimes they just go into business.
Few of them go into coaching and stay in football,
but you made the decision to stay in football.
Why?
And was there anything else that was tempting you?
Well, I did pundit tree for a year.
So I spent a year working mainly on BT
and doing some different things.
BBC, I did a few bits and I really enjoyed it.
It was great.
I was working a lot with Ray Fernand, Steven Gerrard,
Jake Humphrey.
He had them recently and just really good people.
And it was like a step in the game
and a step of retire so I can do other stuff.
The life of a pundit is much easier than a manager.
We all know that.
So I kind of put my eggs in both baskets at that point.
I did that and I did my coaching badges.
And I wanted to kind of see how I felt a little bit.
And I didn't want to be a manager in my 20s.

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When I got to my 30s, I was like,
that's interesting.
People, managers, what are they dealing with?
I just thought about myself in my 20s more.
And then when I finished, I did my coaching badges.
I started to quite like it.
And then I got an offer out of the blue to go and manage Derby.
Derby County.
The owner, Mel Morris, kind of went out on a bit of a limb.
He was speaking to Harry Redknapp, who's my uncle.
Harry said, speak to Frank.
We sat for two hours in Chelsea in a hotel
and he offered me the job.
And it was like,
Christian has a saying, and it's like jump and the net will appear.
And we sat in my front room and I was like,
I'm doing my coaching badges, but this is a proper job.
We're going to Derby.
They've got some problems and it's going to be a difficult job
or whatever, as all jobs are.
And I jumped.
Why?
That inner probably drive that I have, that inner desire.
It wasn't something that I, I am an overthinker.
So that probably made that process of those couple of days
where I had to make a decision really intense.
But at the same time, I like a challenge.
I love a challenge.
And as much as I enjoy punditry, it was, you know, it's, it's
challenging.
You want to do it well.
You want to do it like, you know, the top boys do it.
You have to put everything into it and do it really well.
But I, I was, I wanted more.
I wanted to, to get on the grass.
I wanted to work with players.
I wanted to try and improve players.
I wanted to see if I could do it.
It's probably more if I'm one.
It's probably, can I do it?
And can I, you know, do something?
And I was probably naive at the time because the minute I
walked into Derby, I was like, wow, this is different.

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You know, I've got to hold them.

I am now holding the meeting rather than one of the 25 players sitting, listening.

And as much as you can think, hey, I'll do that.

The minute you walk in and you see those 25 faces and then you walk to, to say, hello to Jeanette, who's your secretary and this one and the player liaison.

I'm like, oh shit, have I got, have I got to manage all this as well?

And you do, you have to sort of, you know, the building is yours to kind of set the tone.

So that first year, some of it was good.

You know what, I think sometimes in management, a great manager said to me this, he said, and he was, he's old.

He was old.

And he said to me, I think I was a better manager when I was young in many, many ways.

He said, because when I, as I got older, I started to really sort of overthink things and become a little bit more cynical.

And, you know, you kind of go over these things.

When I was young, I just make decisions and I was kind of free to do it.

Now, I think there's a balance to that.

Experiences obviously are clear and clearly help as you go along.

You learn from mistakes.

But I understood, I understood his point when he said that because I walked into Derby Fresh and I made a lot of mistakes because you always will.

But I also had a freshness and a bounce and a feeling inside me that was kind of like, I want to take this on.

And even though there's moments of fear, you know, that kind of, when you feel like a bit of imposter syndrome, should I be doing this?

And you've got to hide it.

Like, I remember having a whistle for the first day on front of, in the training pitch going, I'm going to blow this at the end of training.

And I've been used to hearing about, this sounds so stupid.

I've been used to hearing coaches go, end of the session, stop.

I was like, what kind of whistle am I?

I didn't want to do like a little, I remember going, let alone

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like I've got a picking team and set the tactics and set the tone.

I was about all those little things.

And I think every, if they're honest, I think, you know, people in business yourself have all had those most simple things where you're sitting there going, wow, that little basic thing that I didn't consider is now in my head.

So I had a lot of those.

And it was, you know, we got to the playoff final.

We got to Wembley.

We lost a final against Aston Villa to get to the Premier League.

And I was so disappointed for the club at Derby and the owner had given me, you know, put everything into me.

And we'd had a really good year and got there and we lost it.

But in terms of that first year of management, yeah, my drive took me into it.

And it was just a huge learning curve.

And it was a really enjoyable year.

Imposter syndrome, that, I mean, that's somewhat linked to, I guess, your fear of failure.

Have you, how does, we talk a lot about imposter syndrome on this podcast because it's, it's a two, it's a double-sided thing.

On one hand, you have that feeling of, which I can recall when I became a Jack-on-Jack instead and I'm sat next to Peter Jones and Deborah Meadon.

Peter Jones has been there for 21 seasons since the beginning. Deborah Meadon's been there for 17 and I feel like I've just walked into the TV.

Like your little whistle thing was me like, how do I say I'm out? Exactly.

But being at peace with that, like how, how have you dealt with that in your career?

Because you went from being a pundit to managing a club that was trying to get promotion to then Chelsea.

These are huge leaps forward.

Yeah.

Huge leaps forward.

I think I probably managed to get coping mechanisms along the way that have put that to the side.

And in, in simple sense, I've become much more confident in myself, away from work, away from work actually, at home,

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much more content in myself.

Again, it probably comes back to being really settled in a relationship.

I am 45 now, just turned.

But in the workplace as well, I've, that first year I remember feeling it a lot.

And when I moved to Chelsea, like it should be a huge move.

It's a huge jump to the Champions League club.

Even though I knew the club very well, it was a huge jump to deal with players of a different stature, et cetera.

But I found that imposter syndrome thing much less.

And I had just had coping mechanisms where I could kind of just go, okay, you're nervous taking this meeting because you're a bit out of your comfort zone.

You've got to be critical of a player.

So you're going to go in on someone.

You're going to show a video of the game the other day.

And it's like, that's not a comfortable thing to do always.

And I just probably have found mechanisms to be able to go right.

You almost go into the character.

And I don't want to sound like an actor too much, but you go, no, I'm just going to go into it.

And the more I think you do that, the better you can be at coping with that thing.

And then you just kind of also have to get a realization that, you know, you can feel a bit like that.

You can feel a little bit like, I'm out of my comfort zone.

No, you can make mistakes.

I think showing that you can make a mistake in front of a group of players is not the worst thing.

You know, they're there to, players will get it.

You make the smallest mistake.

One of those 25 at least is going to go, what about when he said that, you know, but I think you've got to come to peace with that.

And you can even joke about it after the event because you'll keep making them.

So I'll probably come, come to terms with being able to deal with that side of it.

I think I am, I was thinking then as you're speaking actually about my experience being a dragon and when one of the things I've always wondered about players when they go

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from being a player to a manager and especially when they've been managed under a legend of a manager.

So like I was thinking about Oli, Oli Gona-Sosha and Silex Ferguson, how hard is it to like be yourself versus be the successful manager that you saw win?

Like because even when I became a dragon, I think for the first two years for sure, I was trying to be a dragon.

Yeah.

Not being Steve.

Yeah.

Yeah.

And that's a, that's a journey, but do you understand the question I'm asking?

I completely get it.

I get asked it a lot and I'm not in, not in exactly the way you get asked, but I get asked it by football journalists and say, so what did you take out of all your managers you play and all this stuff?

And you know, just to jump to one would be Jose Mourinho.

It's a good one to jump to because he had a huge effect on my career, as many did, but he came and probably elevated me in my playing career to a different level.

And what I learned from Jose and as I then went on to managers after that was the thing that impressed me about Jose, there was a real authentic nature to him.

Like when he was self-confident, overconfident, kind of brash Jose, that's him.

You know, that was him.

And you know, maybe he's playing up a bit now and again, but I saw him behind the scenes.

And then when I've worked with other managers that maybe were probably striving to be something like that.

And I think after Jose, there was a, there were a generation of managers that were a bit like, okay, I'm going to wear this, I'm going to wear this scarf and I'm going to tie it, you know, or act a bit kind of, you know, say those things he used to say, I does say.

And I didn't, I didn't buy it as such.

And even from outside when you watch him manage, you know, you have that impression.

So I think probably you go, okay, can I take things from all these managers for my journalist question?

Yeah, I did from Sam and not from others, blah, blah, blah.

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But when you come to it, you have to be yourself because you get found out.
And you're probably right in my early days.
I also did that.
I did my first meeting at Derby again was like, right, I'm an ex-player.
So anyone who wants to knock on my door, come and see me and I'll, you know, I'll tell you the truth and we'll have it out or, you know, I'll give you the answer that you want.
And I remember like the first three weeks, they kept knocking on the door.
I was like, I was like, I had to do another meeting.
So lads, if you're going to knock on my door, come to me with like facts of why you should play, you know, how's your training, you know, come with something.
I don't want you just like, I didn't play on Saturday, Monday morning, there's like five on the door knocking.
And, you know, open policy in a door is good.
But at the same time, it was like, those are like learning curves for me.
Like I probably said that, that phrase because I think I needed to say it.
Right.
You know what I mean?
Because there's a place really, really cool things apply.
I want the managers to be able to speak to me all the time.
And when I said it, I was like, Sam, what I thought I should say.
And then, you know, you learn a little lesson, you know, my door hopefully still open now.
But at the same time that I was probably playing the part of a manager.
And then you kind of go, what's real to me here?
You know, like, do I have to say that?
Is there another way of saying it or whatever?
And that kind of brings me to a question, which is, wouldn't it therefore have been great for you to go and learn those lessons when the stakes weren't so high?
Because even the stakes are super high at Derby, because you're figuring out Frank, the manager there.
Yeah.
And sometimes you don't want to be at the poker table

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playing with real money.

Yeah.

And so you've learned.

But that's my life.

You know, I know what you're saying.

And I think as a, as a, I think, I think I can say this.

I think as an English ex-player, Steven Gerrard, others that have played at a high level, you know, played 100 times for our country, et cetera.

I think the culture in this country is to sort of say, right, now you're a manager going on your stripes there because being a player of that level doesn't mean you're going to be a manager.

So I think that could have been a route where you can kind of get a lot of fair play.

He went down to, you know, Division 2 and he's showing what he's doing and there's a process.

The reality is that path wasn't for me, you know.

And Mel Morris asked me to take the Derby job.

It was a question, yeah, challenge.

Yes, please, I'll take the challenge.

You know, when I had one year there and Chelsea came to me, it was a difficult time.

I had a transfer ban, you know,

Eden Hazard was leaving.

It was a real transition.

Young players, what's going to be there next year?

I think probably some big managers have turned it down.

I know that.

So it was like, yeah, you know what?

Challenge, I'll take it.

So, you know, I don't want to try and recreate the past.

I think why didn't I do that?

Because, you know, I've managed in four years of management,

I've had some experience and for all the, you know,

you'll always get criticism, you know,

you leave Chelsea, people will criticize you.

You go to Everton, you stay up, you get relegated, people will criticize you.

But at the same time, I am resilient enough to deal with all that stuff now.

That's been probably the beauty of having a long career in football.

And so my thing is I can manage Derby,

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I can go and manage Chelsea and do it to a good level as well, because I've had successes as well as when it hasn't gone so well. I mean, that's the modern day manager. So I think I probably crammed in a lot of work in four years and working at a high end level with players that will test you and question you, because Champions League players question you. So it's just my path. The, I mean, that's it. So Champions League players questioning you, you don't ever assume that happens. I mean, I don't know a ton about what goes on in the foot in the room, but... Yeah, no, I think what, when I say that, I think in the modern day player particularly, I think in previous years, it probably would have been more vocal. But now the modern day player have a good understanding of the game. A lot of them have been coached in academies very, very well to a high level. When they get to the top, they also, when you are setting out tactics, they will have questions for you. And you have to buy into that, because the reality is what you want is them to understand what you want, or sometimes they say something, you go, okay, we might change that, or whatever it might be. And I think when you get to the top level in football, you have to understand that that's there. Now, they have to understand you're the boss, and you have to make that very clear. But at the same time, there will be lots of players that will challenge you. What do you mean by that, boss? But what about if that happens? And you get a lot more of that. And I remember reading Pep Guardiola once said that, even if you don't know the answer, pretend that you know the answer. I was going to say that. And so there is a version of that, because when you're getting things thrown at you, sometimes it's like football is an active game. And I think sometimes in the modern day, we look at, you know, on Monday night football, you see after the event, you know, they should have done this, or people are imagining what Pep Guardiola or Jürgen Klopp or fantastic coaches are doing. And it must be this amazing, complicated thing.

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For sure, they're amazing coaches.
But it's an active game.
So if you can give a good message,
then the rest is down to the players at the same time.
So you just have to prep them as well as you can,
but they will challenge you.
Got me thinking about when I sat with Jamie Carragher,
and he was telling me about all the managers
he had had above him when he was playing at Liverpool.
And then hearing from all the, you know,
I had players Nanny and Ever and Gary and Rio
about what Sir Alex was like,
and then reading through all of the managers
that you've worked under.
I mean, there's so many of them from Jose to Angelotti.
So many of them.
I mean, there was one period where, I mean,
the managers were being sacked every six months,
it feels like at Chelsea.
And the thing I garnered from all of them
is that there is actually not a successful blueprint
to being a successful manager.
There's not like a blueprint.
There's not a way to be a successful manager.
Some of them are tacticians,
some of them are man managers.
Is that accurate?
It's very accurate.
I agree with that.
And Chelsea is a bit of a unique example,
because in my time there,
they changed manager a lot, as you say.
And I don't think that's the most productive way
to run a business in an ideal way in terms of football.
Because in an ideal way,
you kind of go, we trust in this manager,
let's work with it, here's the idea,
we're going to go with it.
And of course, it's the prerogative of the honest
to change that.
What we did have at the time was a fantastic unit
within the dressing room of high talent,
high personality that led the dressing room.

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So we had a great team and a great squad.
And when I say that,
we had a spine of players of John Terry, myself,
Peter Cech, Didier Drubber, Ashley Cole,
I could go on.
And there were personalities that sometimes would clash.
But we knew our place.
We knew we could rely on him.
I knew that I would run for him and he would run for me.
And we also had high talent of a player
that Didier Drubber would score in every final pretty much.
So I think we kind of like bridge that gap of changing managers.
And so I think when you come back to the question of,
you know, great managers,
I think sometimes it's the case of compromising
with what you're working with.
You have to get the people skills right.
And that's the first thing I learned as a manager
of the difference from playing,
is that you have to deal with people.
You've got to try and inspire every player
within that group and inspire the collective.
So every player will have a different motivation.
It might be money for one.
It might be, I want to be the best striker in the world.
It might be, I want to be in front of him
because I don't like him.
Whatever that is, you try and tap into.
And I think the greatest of managers, my opinion,
and I played under, as you say, a lot,
and I'm trying to be one,
is that they give you something that you believe in
that you can strive for and you will buy into.
And sometimes it's a messy process.
You know, you watch Man City lift that treble just now
and you look at the Champions League.
There will be so many things that we don't know behind the scenes.
This player is unhappy, Pep had to do this,
all these things that come together
and give you that amazing moment.
And I had that as Chelsea's a player.
And so for you to say,
go on, tell me what are great managers and me to go.

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Here's an answer for you in one minute.

It's like impossible to say.

Man management, that's what all the United players said about Sir Alex.

It's the only thing that they all completely agree on.

They would say he was the best man manager.

And an inconsistent leader, which is an interesting concept.

And what I mean by inconsistent leader

is he would treat Gary in a different way, to Nani, to Evra.

And they all told me this story.

And Rio as well told me about when Sir Alex

brought that bottle of whiskey to his ill grandfather's bedside.

And Rio doesn't know how he knew the favourite brand of whiskey

and how he knew his grandad was ill.

Gary told me he used to tap him on the shoulder

and say, think about your grandfather's shrapnel

which is still in his shoulder when you go out there today.

That kind of bespoke tailored approach to leadership,

which seems to be Sir Alex Ferguson's highest accolade.

Sure.

And I think that runs into the modern day

that we get very caught up in tactics

and rightly so, the games moved on from those days tactically.

But those people, and you'll know yourself, inspiring people.

And as you say, to be bespoke and kind of individualize it

and look within the group and have moments.

Because if you ask me about my career, you go like,

Frank, what do you remember out of those 20 years?

Like, do you remember the meeting where Jose

played you a bit higher up?

I wouldn't.

You say, do you remember the time that Jose said

those words to you that inspired you?

And it could be like one sentence.

I go, yeah, I remember that.

Do you know what I mean?

Like things that stick with me that I remember

that made me go, I'm going to run for this man.

He's going to make me better.

You know, and I had that.

And I think so.

What you just said there about Sir Alex Ferguson,

I think the great managers have you look at

and they have it in different styles,

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Pep Guardiola, Jürgen Klopp.
Everyone will have a different style of that.
And that's a huge part to their success, I think.
What do you like as a manager?
If you had to do like a self assessment?
I think you've got to ask somebody else that.
I don't know.
I know, I try and be close to the players,
as I say, my open door thing.
But at the same time, I think I try and find a balance.
So I think the important thing for me was
when I became a manager was to not expect
anybody, any player to see how I saw it
or train how I trained or whatever,
you know, for good or for bad.
And you have, that's I think a bit of a skill
which, you know, Sir Alex probably had perfectly.
So I try and be as close to the players.
I try and learn all the time.
I'm a coach.
I want to coach on the pitch.
I think my biggest pleasure is coaching
and improving players.
And particularly young players.
And I've had the, you know, the fortune to work
with some really good young players at Derby.
I had Mason Mount, Harry Wilson, Fikaira Tamori,
and then at Chelsea, obviously tummy Abraham,
extra ones and Anthony Gordon, et cetera.
So I think they are the real sponges
that are a real pleasure to work with.
And I love that part of it, being able to speak to them.
And you do find, and it's a reality.
And I remember being an older player,
you're a bit more cynical.
When you're younger player, you're like,
like a blank canvas.
And you can, you know, push them and try and push them and that.
So I'm probably quite intense with the younger players.
I try and be, as I say, inclusive.
And I'm always trying to learn.
And I'm trying, just trying to be me.
It's a hard answer, that one.

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I think you'd have to ask, you know,
maybe a member of staff or a player,
I picked the right player
because you probably get different answers.
Because when you work with,
I worked at Chelsea recently with 30 players.
I picked, you pick 11 for a game and like eight subs.
And the subs, eight outfields.
The subs don't really like you
because they're not starting,
let alone the other 10, you know.
So it's a really hard balance for the modern squad to get there.
But you have to try and make it inclusive
because if you're going to get anywhere,
you've got to go all together.
And that was one of the problems
probably in Chelsea this season.
30 players, it's not possible to manage that.
On the other, this isn't,
maybe this is even more difficult question.
What are you trying to work on then?
What are the areas of, as a leader,
as a manager, you're trying to work on?
Because I can think for myself,
I can think of a number of areas where I go,
do you know what, that is still somewhere
where I have a recurring, when I reflect in hindsight,
I go, fuck, I need to get better here.
What is that for you?
Quite a few things I would say
because the overthinker thing comes in again
and I'm a bit of a perfectionist.
So I always want to try and improve my tactical
and the personal touch and those things.
But I think when I came away from Chelsea,
I realized that I needed to delegate time better.
That was something I was certainly not great at.
I've got, you have your staff for a reason.
They're there to support you
and at times they'll be better than you at certain things.
So give them it and give them that.
You obviously oversee that thing
and I probably spent a lot of time

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trying to be across everything
whereas really I probably could have come back
from that and saved my own energy.
So I think I certainly try and improve that side.
I did between Chelsea and Everton for sure
to try and save that.
I can be pretty over reactive sometimes
if I see things I don't like in terms of,
and when I said it, it's always effort or standards.
And I think that's one of the things I'm biggest on
is that if you are going to make a mistake in a game,
I've got no problem with that.
If you are going to not run for your team mate,
if you're not going to train through the week
with an idea that when I train on Monday,
that's got a direct relation
to what Saturday is going to look like.
If that feeling isn't there,
then I probably can either get upset with a player
or maybe kind of distance the player.
And I think when you're working with a group,
you have to be careful of that one
because not every player has your mentality.
So you have to either try and bring them up to the party
or if not, then they're going to have to not be there
if you're going to have success as far as I see it.
And that sounds really harsh,
but it's one of those things where you go,
if you can work in a team
and you're going to take it to exactly where you want it to be,
out of that squad of 25, if you've got that kind of,
I remember manager would say this,
there's your six or seven,
you know we're going to get every day.
They're going to train, they're going to come in,
they're going to be so active every day.
You're going to have the middle group
or somewhere in the middle,
you're going to have the ones that may be,
oh, I'm just coming to training.
Or I'm a bit sore today.
That sounds simplistic to say,
but you have to try and work,

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if you want to work in a full direction and go,
okay, those six are with me,
right, you try and go out of them.
Those are the ones that can kind of pass the message.
Those ones in the middle, okay,
can we keep pushing and working between me
and the staff to try and improve them?
And then the ones that are there, come on,
can we help them?
Can they come with us?
If not, you have to speak to the club
and that's where a club has to be aligned to go,
okay, if you want to go in that direction
and we're with you, okay, we'll work that out.
And that becomes a recruitment or players leaving the club.
I mean, that's a reality that has to be.
And that's the reality of business as well.
I've just finished writing this book
and it talks about these three lines
and basically says, if everybody,
think about a person in your team
and if everybody in the team
represented their cultural values, right?
Which is what you're talking about
with your six disciples there.
If everybody represented the cultural values
with the overall bar be raised or lowered.
And you'll have some people who would,
if imagine if everyone was like them,
like a Frank Lampard or a John Terry,
how high that the cultural values would be raised.
And then you have other people
where if everyone was like them, you'd be relegated.
And what to do with those three cohorts
of barraisers, maintainers and bar lowerers.
So that's kind of what I...
That's a good way of putting it.
I mean, and I think the bar raisers
can take some time to raise the bar.
But the bar lowerers can get you very quickly.
Yeah, yeah, yeah.
That's kind of my experience
because that kind of, when that kind of consistency

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or whatever it is, you know, like this,
why are we doing this training?
Why do we have to do or whatever that kind of negativity
which can slip in can be really contagious.
And then in a winning sport,
and as much as we're talking here about great managers,
winning is everything.
You know, and that's obviously relative
to if you're a man city or an Everton,
Everton will win kind of 35, 40% of games
at best at the moment.
And you know that.
So you know that they're going to be 65 or so percent
of weeks, whereas not that great.
The bar lowerers can go and they lower it quickly.
Whereas, you know, if you can get the raisers to take control,
then I think generally you can kind of get there.
So it's a really important thing.
That's probably one of the interesting things that,
as I say, the transition from player to manager
trying to get that.
Because whether you were one of the bar raisers
or you're in the middle group or the lower group,
when you become a manager, it doesn't matter what you were.
You've got to kind of get there,
get the script of what it is and kind of just push.
So that's something that I think we're like,
trying to improve on everything all the time
and coming away sometimes gives you nice time to have perspective
and just kind of put it in line a little bit.
And it looks a bit different to what I thought before that experience.
This is, I mean, I guess this is why some of the greatest managers of all time,
they hold on to their Gary Neville's and their, you know, their disciples.
Yeah.
And I spoke to Gary about this.
Gary said to me, in fact, when we're filming
Dragonstone recently, he said, for those last two years,
Sir Alex kept me there because of my impact on the dressing room.
Not my impact on the pitch, but on the dressing room.
I could keep the standard high.
In the modern world, I was reading the stats,
managers are getting fired quicker than ever.
Sure.

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And it almost, it must be so difficult to establish authority when the players are aware that the manager is going to be the one to be taken out if things don't go well.

In business, it's not like that as a CEO because I own the company and I am the manager.

So if there's, if there's behavior underneath me, that's toxic and contagious, I can act the center of authorities with me.

Whereas it seems like in a club, the center of authorities really like the chairman, the owner.

Sometimes the manager manages to get there, but in the modern world, we don't let managers last long enough to build that authority.

No.

And that's the tough world of it is.

And I think, you know, you probably have to earn the right as a manager to get to a club.

Maybe when you look at the perfect models right at the top, you know, Manchester City is a good one to talk about.

Now I work with a city group, I have one year playing there.

And I could see when I was there, they hadn't arrived at that point,

but I could see with the stability from above

and how it run and the vision, it was like,

we're going to get, they were going to get somewhere

because they had a great structure.

And it wasn't like it was going to get pulled and pushed and pulled for, you know, a small period of time is what we're going to get there.

And then they hired Pep.

You know, they had not a difficult first year,

but the first year was kind of him finding his way,

I need this, I need this.

And then he's a fantastic coach and they have great players.

But if you don't have that aligned thing where, as you said,

the most important person at the club in the modern day,

in my opinion, is the owner.

And it is the structure at the top because they really,

they set the tone, maybe it's financially,

maybe it's with the sporting directors and recruitment

because you will be as good as the players you recruit.

A great manager, again, I'm going to sit here and drop names.

It said to me, it was when we finished my first season at Everton,

we just stayed up, skin of our teeth.

And he was like, rang me to say congratulations.

He went, Frank, don't rest.

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80% of your work for next season will be done in the next month.
So it was recruitment.
So like 20% will be what you do next year.
And now the 80% is like bringing the right players.
So I think that alignment, as I keep saying there,
is something that if you can get an owner,
I know there are great owners and there are great sporting directors
and recruitment and the manager.
And the manager is so critical to it.
But when you look at last season,
13 managers left their club, I think it's 13, out of 20 clubs.
And you're talking about, you know, Antonio Conte,
and you're talking about Thomas Tuca,
managers had huge successes.
It shows you that the landscape's changed
to the point where the manager will be culpable.
And I think you have to be at peace with that.
But you have to try and get to the point very quickly
where you have success.
And that's tough because winning is,
and the modern world of social media and reaction is like,
get him out, you know, get the next one in.
You know, sometimes maybe they're right,
maybe the manager is culpable,
but other times there are many things.
And to come back to your original point about players
and those Stolts and the Gary Nebels
and James Milner at Liverpool in the last whatever years,
you know, people on the outside,
I think it's very easy to look at the superstars
and most sellers in there.
I can guarantee you,
and I know this firsthand from speaking to people,
people like James Milner and Jordan Henderson
have absolutely set the tone of that club
for the last whatever years during great success.
And if you don't have that kind of those drivers
within that top six or eight,
I think it's very hard to sustain its success
or get success.
And again, back to my Chelsea days,
we had that naturally.
And we were actually quite diverse.

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So it was like, John Terry was like the real captain
like heart on his sleeve.
You could see it in every day.
I was probably like more quiet,
but like a trainer and standards of myself
and trying to hope that that would bring people with us.
Didier was this sort of charismatic from the Ivory Coast
and kind of brought in, you know,
that section of the dressing room.
And he took Peter Czech spoke five languages.
Ashley Cole was such a nice lad.
And this thing, you know, best left back the country
probably ever seen.
So we had this amazing group.
And like, if others aren't going to follow that,
then very quickly it was like,
you're not going to make it.
Regardless of the manager change,
it's like you won't survive the dressing room.
And that's kind of how it was.
It reminded me of a quote that I've said on this podcast before,
which is when the culture is strong,
the new people become the culture.
And when the culture is weak,
the culture becomes the new people.
Right.
Because when you have that core of disciples,
someone coming in,
they'll stand out so much.
If they don't fit in with you, Didier, Frank, etc.
That they'll instantly be expelled.
But when the culture is weak,
someone will come in and they'll actually influence
the dynamics.
And that's when you really,
from my experience in business,
is when you're really, really screwed.
No, that's interesting.
Because I think in football as well,
because it's so topical,
there's so much conversation around it.
You know, I managed Chelsea for seven weeks,
I think I did.

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And I spoke a lot about standards.
And I was a bit, I'm not saying standards too much.
I saw you say it in every post match.
Yeah, I know.
And it wasn't like trying to be clever and go,
I'm just going, this is my line now standards.
But it was like, it was very evident to me
when I walked in.
Because, you know, having worked at Chelsea
as a coach before and as a player,
I do know the standards.
I do know that.
And this is not a direct criticism of the players either,
because when I look at the player situations
where they were and understood how it'd been a long year,
I walked in on the 10 games to go,
they'd been there for the whole season.
And a lot of players were not playing,
they were probably going to leave,
which we're seeing now,
whether they were going to leave
or the club wanted to leave or they
or hadn't been playing with the previous managers.
And I could see in training that it wasn't,
the level wasn't enough.
It wasn't enough to go and get a result,
you know, whoever you might want to say,
Brentford at home, or let alone Real Madrid,
it wasn't enough.
And I can say this now, because I said this to the players.
And again, it's not an individual criticism of the players,
because I also, when you're trying to say
you want to be a manager,
you have to have a personal understanding
of like human nature.
If I'm a player that's not been playing
for the last seven months,
and I think I'm leaving in four weeks' time,
I'm probably going to struggle to motivate that player.
You know, I'm not,
I haven't got a magic wand to motivate that player.
So I think it was that probably the,
my biggest learning out of Chelsea

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was when you talk about standards and culture.
I think people go, he talks about his standards.
You know, he talks about his culture.
And I, you know, maybe I had to catch myself on
and not say every interview.
But at the same time, it was,
if you don't have a building block of standards,
then that winning culture that everyone goes,
what's winning culture?
You go, well, let me, I'll try and explain it to you,
but it has to start with a basic standard.
And which for me is always like,
train to a level where you're going to push your teammate,
he's going to push you,
and then we're going to be as competitive as it can be.
We don't have to win.
Not every team can win.
You know, this Manchester City
pretty much win the league every year at the minute.
So what's success for everybody else?
For Brighton, it's coming sixth or whatever.
For Newcastle, it's like, wow, champions league.
That's huge success.
So everyone has a version,
but my guess is those teams that have over performed,
out performed, they've got something there
which is a basic standard that they just build on.
And, you know, to be fair to Chelsea,
they're in a position now where
that needs to be worked on again.
It's a transitional time.
That brings me to the quote you said
after your Newcastle game,
which was the standards collectively have dropped.
I can be honest now, because it's your last game.
I might not see them for some time anymore,
but low standards are a symptom
of something further upstream that's happened.
And we saw this at Manchester United.
I'm a big Man United fan.
I've seen a decade, five years of just like chaos
where we've got these amazing players,
but one plus one equals 1.5.

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We call it Disconomies of Scale.
In great culture, one plus one equals three.
You know, where you can make great average players
together play the football of their lives.
The furthest upstream thing,
where did the standards start to slip?
What is the thing that happens in a club like Chelsea
in your experience when you went back there
that had caused that dropping of standards,
which we now saw on the pitch
with your sort of 10 games there?
Well, I think when I was tongue-in-cheek,
by the way, when I said I'm not going to see them again,
because it was a bit like, as I say,
I wouldn't say I've hadn't said it to them.
And I've said it a few times.
But the position of it was the,
and I think the biggest thing about the standards thing was
the size of the squad.
It was the motivation of players
that you're going to not play
or you're out of the Champions League squad
or these things like.
It's like asking, you know, one of you,
I don't know, you maybe love doing this.
This is like one of your great moments.
You know, I want to sit and you want to speak
to all these fantastic people that you speak to.
Go, thanks for your prep, Steve.
And now, Peter Jones is going to do it.
You know what I mean?
You're like, cheers, you know what I mean?
How long are you going to go with that?
So, and I think in football,
that's a challenge with 20 or so players,
which is the modern squad.
But with Chelsea, it's got very big to the point
where this is how I felt where I can say, you know,
I'm not criticising that player for a dropping standards.
I want to try and get something out of him
because I had a short period.
I want to try and get something out of him.
So I would try, but then when you actually look at it,

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you kind of go, yeah, but he's had this for a long time where he's not playing.
So he's not now being competitive with that player who is playing.
So that player is pretty comfortable too, because he's not pushing him.
So you kind of get these things where you're like, you know, we probably took it for granted in some of my better days at Chelsea when we were successful of like this kind of thing that works.
You know, it wasn't even a thing you said, you know, you didn't have to sort of have a meeting every day and go, you know, when I stand as culture, you know, nice pie chart and that's what that is.
It was almost like, this is what we do.
And at the minute, sometimes for whatever reason, there's a transition of maybe new ownership, you know, not everything was perfect before the new ownership.
I was there before the new ownership as well.
Like to find consistency as Chelsea would really want of winning Premier League titles and challenging has been a good few years now.
So I think that getting the squad right, being able, probably a fresh voice as a manager coming in now, who's obviously a fantastic manager with a great record to come in and go, no, this is the way.
And now the squad looks compact.
You're going to compete with each other and try and create a great environment.
Everyone needs a great environment to have success.
You know, you cannot have a success with that team spirit and togetherness.
So when I got there, I could just see that the spirit and the togetherness was not there.
And it was nothing bad.
You know, like it was not bad to go through the week.
I could just see like, you have to train elite to be elite.
You have to.
And that's not, you know, in the modern day players play every few days sometimes when I say that, it's not like show me how many sprints you can do every day.
It's like, okay, if we're doing prep tomorrow, give me that intensity of thought about what this is for you.

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And let me see it in your face.
But in the Chelsea, when you did that, you had to go right.
If I want to really focus on the 10 or 11 for tomorrow,
that means I've got to have 18 players over there.
And you kind of saw the body language
as they walked off some of them.
They were like, again,
because they've been having it all season, some of them.
So on a human level, I completely understood.
And in the end, it was like, I came back here
because obviously this was an opportunity to come to my club,
you know, Chelsea, a club close to my heart.
But as soon as I got in, I realized that probably I thought,
you know what, 30 players, I can motivate in six, seven weeks
because it's not like a long-term thing.
I can come in and be fresh.
But in terms of what, when I came in,
I know it's very quickly that some players
are probably thinking about the season is going to peter out.
And what's the future going to look like?
And that was a difficult situation, to be fair.
It never crossed my mind that the size of the squad
has such a big impact, but it makes perfect sense
because you need that sort of healthy competition.
And I believe your first team was, was it 32 players?
Yeah.
Which is more than you're allowed to register
for the Premier League or Champions League.
So you had this kind of surplus of...
A lot of players.
A few are always injured, probably, you know,
so that comes down a bit, but it's a surplus.
And it's a surplus of the make-up of the squad
is international players, generally.
Because if there were a couple of young players,
but when you try and build a squad, it would be like,
this is, you know, this is my core, kind of 15 or 16.
And then you go and maybe these, these two experienced players
that might not need to play every way.
And then we've got these kids that are waiting
and they're like, just happy to be there.
They want to play.
They're going to be training.

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And if you give them an opportunity, they'll be like, but when you have like international players in a big number, then of course, you know, you're telling internationals, you've got to stay at home. It's not, it's not easy.

And, you know, to have the conversation every Friday with them and get them lined up coming in is also not easy for your own energy.

You know what I mean?

So that's not easy.

I don't care how, what kind of a man manager you are.

Like, it's like, next, you're not playing.

Okay.

Next, you're not playing.

You know, like, whatever you try and box that up to a player, eventually they'll probably go, I know I'm not playing.

You know, like, stop telling me this shit.

Do you know what I mean?

So I think, you know, that, that was an interesting learning curve for me.

Like an interim job is, is what it is.

And I kept getting asked, you know, people, it was kind of frustrating that sometimes I was like, are you finding this so hard?

And you find this so hard?

I was like, you know what?

I'm back home in a club that I love, you know, a fantastic training ground.

I'm doing everything I can in this job to try and improve it.

But there were, I knew behind the scenes are a lot of things, you know, myself and my staff, we want to improve, we want to coach, you want to sort of, when you, when you lack those basics.

And as I say, I think there's an understanding in the club that it has to change now.

I think it has to, it has to change.

Then if you lack those basics, then it's really hard to get where you want to get to.

Well, how does that happen though?

So there's these 32 players and then Chelsea, it spends more money than I think anyone's ever spent in a, in a window, in that sort of January window.

You bring in all of these players on these long contracts,

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which I've never heard before.

I think it was like eight year contracts.

And they're all like class amazing individual players.

Is that a, is that because the, the new owner doesn't understand those dynamics of football?

Because that's what it has seemed like for me.

I thought either this is a genius or an idiot.

Yeah.

You know, I don't, I don't want to criticise anyone like on a personal level, but as a fan looking and I go, signing these players on eight year contracts, they're great players spending all this money, the impact on culture when you just throw stars in at such quantity, it looked, it looked like an experience and naivety.

I think that's, that's understood now in terms of what it's meant with those 30 players.

And I think you've seen that now in that already,

I think six, seven, eight players have left.

So I think, but the intentions are certainly good.

I know that because I work, the owners gave me an opportunity to go in there and I had a good relationship with them.

Their intentions to do a good job at Chelsea are amazing.

They want to take the club and be the best, you know, they have great intentions.

So now I think those younger players now with a new voice, a new manager, the squad come inside.

So I think they'll have a greater chance to show what they've got anyway.

And they're talented players.

And you know, I remember being in Chelsea when Ed and Hazard arrived at pre-season, it was like, is this kid, maybe a bit lazy looking, you know, and he was a bit kind of strolling around.

Is this kid definitely, or, and then that first season, it was like, I know he's really good.

And then on the second and third season, like, no, this kid's one of the best players of Premier League's scene or whatever.

See, everyone read, Didio Drogba, like you can go for all these players who are, who are like absolute legends.

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Now, if you're asking, you know, those five, six, seven players to come in and hit the ground running in a difficult moment for the club, it's understandable.

So I think as a Chelsea fan, you know, you look at it and kind of go, right, okay, that is positive.

There's talent there.

Okay, it needs to be worked with.

Now I'm sure that you can see the squad's getting trimmed.

And as I can say, you know, hand on heart, the intentions of the owners is absolutely, you know, they've spent that money because they want to do well.

Now, if they're going to address the situation a bit, that's their strategy going forward.

But I do think, you know, you'll see players like Enzo Fernandez, Mudrick, and these players, Maduiki, young players, they're going to develop and they're going to be big players for the club.

You have to get the structure right and the strategy right going forward.

Well, what's the, my thing is that adding like, I don't know, six or seven of these players all at once, pretty much halfway through the season, in a squad that's already struggling to figure out who it is under Graham Potter.

It begs the question like, who's doing the recruitment here? Because at other clubs, it's a much more strategic, it seems like a much more strategic and intentional and football driven approach to recruitment.

Whereas from what I saw at Chelsea, and I have actually spoken to some people at Chelsea who are involved in recruitment, it seemed like chaos.

Yeah. I mean, I wasn't there for that period.

Right. So that was in, I got there in April and like, so January was the last window and obviously they spent last summer.

But I think the change of ownership and then obviously there's some people moved on who were in the hierarchy of the club and so there was a big change of structure.

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So I think you have to give some time
and some leeway for the process.
And they certainly now are sporting directors
and recruitment people in there,
having worked with them who are very talented,
very hungry, good to go.
And I think now it will be up to them
to take the club forward.
They haven't signed bad players.
I think maybe the strategy of bringing them all in at that time
looks a bit excitable at the minute
as in terms of there's a lot of players for success.
But I think probably there's a long game
and I think there's a plan.
And I think probably most huge clubs like Chelsea
have had a version of what this period is Manchester United.
You mentioned there Arsenal for quite a long time,
Liverpool for periods.
So I think we have to give definitely,
I think to over judge now,
when I think they have signed some good players
would be to be over critical.
I think at the moment, I think the proof will be now
how these players develop once now.
It feels a bit more settled going forward.
I think that's all true.
I think what's the optimal way for player recruitment
to happen in your opinion?
Because you often hear about these stories of where
an owner will take charge of a club
and then they'll just decide who they want,
which is probably what I'd be like if I was an owner.
I think I would, like football manager,
I think I'd just buy who I want to buy,
who I think looks good.
Manchester United suffered with that.
It felt like our decisions were commercial decisions
as opposed to footballing decisions.
Then when Eric Tenhugs come in,
it feels a bit more like it's football decisions.
And then I did speak to some people at Chelsea
because I actually went to,
I was invited to sit with Richard Arnold

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and a couple of the Manchester United executives.
And when we played Chelsea at Old Trafford,
I was in the director's box.
So I sat with the new sporting director at Chelsea.
And he said there's now two sporting directors, I believe.
So it was interesting to talk to them.
But what is the, about the optimal way
for recruitment to happen in your opinion?
Well, I think with a,
you have to understand what you want the philosophy
and the identity of the club to be.
So for instance, I think Manchester City
are quite firm in their, the idea when they,
the Pep Guardiola's come in and the sporting directors
have worked at Barcelona previously with him,
that this is how we want to play.
This is a manager that's going to deliver that style.
So here's how we recruit for that style.
Chelsea has always been a bit different for me.
The beautiful game that the tick attack,
as you call it, Manchester City,
has not been Chelsea style.
It's been more of a winning machine
in a different kind of way, you know that.
And in my day, it was more of a powerful team.
It was probably good on the eye,
but we were not that kind of, you know,
pass, pass, pass.
We were like powerful and effective.
So I think you have to understand what you want to be.
And once you get to that point,
you probably the first thing is to recruit a coach
that, you know, works within that.
And, you know, that's the kind of coach you want
because this is want to be those conversations
through an interview process.
And then once you get to that point,
I think the recruitment has to be joined up,
depending on how active the owner wants to be.
And I respect and appreciate active owners.
It's their clubs, their prerogative.
And then the sporting directors and the manager.
And then obviously recruitment,

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which brings all the data analysis into the picture.
And it has to be joined up.
And you have to be all very confident
by the time you want to bring in a player that you're going,
yeah, this is the player you want to bring in.
And there are always one or two or three options
because you may not get target number one.
But I think you have to be able to recruit
for the style that you want to be.
So the coach really has to have a big buy into that as well.
But as a coach in the Monday, you understand the process.
I appreciate being aligned and having other people,
not just responsible for who you're bringing in,
but also like giving me something that I don't know.
I'm not there siphon through the data.
You know, they have to show you that data.
And here's the reasons why the videos,
people that have watched them,
and also the personality of the player.
Because not to say you're going to sign 10 James Milner's
because their character is amazing and their professionalism.
But you need to know that they're going to come in
and the dressing room is going to,
they're going to be good for the dressing room.
And they're going to help in terms of how you drive forward,
in terms of their personality.
One of the key questions I want to answer,
and I wanted to ask you today is like,
how would you have, what would have had to happen
to avoid the situation where you had that unhealthy culture
at Chelsea behind the scenes?
And those, when you came back in as the interim,
what would have, what could you have done
to avoid that happening?
Say you're in the, you know, if you were,
you could in hindsight have a wand
and correct things that were done.
I get the first point, which was about smaller squad size.
What else, what else avoids that?
Mate, from my first day in there.
No, you're a genie.
And you can, knowing what you know about
what you inherited there,

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what would have had to be done previously to avoid you inheriting that.
The smaller squad is the first thing that I got.
Yeah, smaller squad.
I mean, some things are just a bit, you know, like there are phases, you know, and I think Chelsea, they won the Champions League, I left, they won the Champions League like three or four months after I left.
And at that point, you kind of go, okay, where's the next move?
And you kind of go, how was recruitment then?
How, what things worked then?
And maybe some players left during that period, maybe in terms of recruitment, you wanted to bring in maybe some people would be like the future in terms of, I, when I was at Chelsea before, I wanted to bring in Declan Rice.
I was like, this kid's going to be the captain of Chelsea for the next, you know, 10 years. It didn't happen.
But anyway, but I think in terms of those things, it's hard for me to sit here and kind of dissect, you know, other people's work in that period in between, you know, like I would have maybe had an idea. It wasn't my idea because I'd already left the club.
So maybe like when I came in, it's not, it's really hard for me to kind of dissect all those moves, you know, I came into what I came into. So, you know, that's, I think I'd probably be a little bit casual for me to kind of go, they should have done this, you know, like in high, it's a high anxiety one.
Yeah, it's kind of me wondering just because I've been a Man United fan and I've seen that happen and I saw obviously Sir Alex Ferguson leave and then we just had these 10 years of what I describe as like confused chaos.
And I'm trying to figure out almost like how in a Sir Alex Ferguson situation, how he, we could have avoided that if at all possible.
Yeah.
I mean, it's such a big figure.

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That's difficult, isn't it?

I don't know enough about Manchester United, but I do, I can understand why after Sir Alex leaving and also the pivotal players will probably come into the end of their time at the same time as him leaving to replace that and keep moving forward.

I mean, you can, there might have been mistakes, it's not my thing, but I can understand why.

It feels like a long period for a club the size of Manchester United, but it just shows you that I think that how cutthroat and fast moving is Premier League is because if you come off the gas, gas in terms of recruitment or whatever, or you have a bad time, climbing back up there, people think, oh yeah, you know, you're Chelsea, you'll be in the Champions League again next year, or Arsenal, you'll be there like, Arsenal had to work a long time to come back and challenge for the league last year with a lot of work.

And you know, people were criticising Michael Arteta in the beginning and now, you know, they've worked together and stuck together and recruited really well and now they're ready to go. So I mean, it's not, I don't think we should expect even you being a Manchester United fan or me having a Chelsea head on that next year, it's going to be great.

Like it's, everyone else is moving forward too, you know? So when you get that call, the interim call, you've just left Everton, you're out of work, Grandpot has been released from his responsibilities. What's going through your head when they say, we want you to come back in and take an interim manager role? If I was a fly on the wall and when that phone call happens, you nearly were.

Yeah, I know. Yeah, I mean,

I wasn't going to tell the story, but no, I could tell it for you.

I was coming to meet you and I rang you to say, sorry, I'm going to become Chelsea manager.

That meeting, you know, people arrived at my house that afternoon.

So, well, just to be clear, you didn't tell me that exactly.

You said, I can't come and I can't tell you why.

Then I told you.

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I'm not an idiot.

So I kind of inferred maybe that.

Okay. So anyway, I mean, no, I think probably that it's normal that I consider everything.

And you know, I probably considered it as in, firstly, it's a club very close to my heart, as I said before, a challenge of working.

And it was like, we had two games against Real Madrid and we had the seasons to pan out, difficult running.

So I was fully aware of that.

And I know maybe like, you know, I do love a challenge.

If that challenge had been probably any other club other than Chelsea, I probably would have said no.

I was very happy to be at home as such in that period.

I wasn't fighting to get a job at that period.

So it was probably a bit of head and heart.

I'm not sure what probably,

the heart probably was a bit more substantial in this one than the head because I suppose if you look back again, we're in that hindsight position,

but you know, what were my, what were my positive outcomes?

What were my negative ones?

The minute we didn't get through against Real Madrid, which probably a lot of people would have bet on, you're kind of into that zone of end of season and what are you playing for as a club like Chelsea?

And that's not the normal Chelsea.

Should be playing for something.

And in the end, we played for not so much.

And of course, another reason why motivation come down.

So I probably could have been a bit more ahead of the game in that, whether that would have changed my mind.

I don't have a regret about doing it.

I went back there.

If people from the outside want to, you know, criticize or have a view on it from the outside for six or seven weeks work, I've got no problem with that.

I worked at Chelsea before.

I worked at other clubs and, you know, it's another experience.

It wasn't my most favorite experience in my footballing career.

I won't lie, but it's an experience and I have learned out of it.

Not so much, but I've mentioned a few of the things.

Not your favorite experience.

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Did you enjoy it, to be honest?

I enjoyed the first few weeks.

I felt like I was back at Cobham.

I know so many people there.

I was like into the challenge.

In the middle bit, I probably started to understand more that there's a lack of, you know, what we've spoken about.

And then in the last week, we had Manchester United away, Newcastle at home as I run in.

And I was like, okay, let's get through this week,

because I could see that the players were ready for the season to finish.

You know, again, some of it I've got on a human level.

Does that hurt you to some degree?

Like, because you love this club so much and you're a winner.

And if you see these players have checked out, you know,

it's not just they're checking out on you as a manager,

but they're checking out on the club that you love.

Yeah, as a general, as a general, it didn't hurt me because

having worked in football for a period,

having been a player a long time, I've seen a lot of these instances

and I'm not holding the players to my standard as such.

And a lot of them, I did know the back story and the side stories.

I could get that they were moving on.

So, you know, if a player's moving on, they might just not,

you know, they might not be ready for those last few games.

They might have a bit of an issue or something.

And, you know...

But there's no way that you can accept that.

There's no way that...

But is it like, well, put it this way.

I don't want to come here and shout too much,

because in a short period, it's hard for me to make too many statements.

What I will say is that I think I understood the role of being interim

and I understood that probably there was not much...

There's certainly not much to gain from me saying that was so bad or that was so bad now,

because when I look back, I'll probably just try and take my own thing out of it.

And I don't want to go there.

I didn't work long enough with the players to be there the one game.

And I can't believe that happened at the end of the season.

You know, I walked into position with some of them a bit disenchanted or whatever.

I'm not going to tell that player that you shouldn't feel like this.

I'll try and drive them and drive them amongst the group.

But it's not for me to go because a couple of players sat with me and said,

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listen, I'm going to be leaving in the summer.

I'm finding it a bit difficult.

I'm like, okay, I get that.

I'm not going to change that in four weeks or whatever.

So what was the objective then in the four weeks when you're thinking about...

When you realise that what was the sort of behind the scenes context,

do your objective shifts slightly and go, okay,

success here now looks like this for me?

Yeah, in reality.

And I didn't get that because it would be results,

because everyone would judge me on results.

So in terms of me, it would be success here to have got better results in that period of time and come through there working at a high level club again.

You know, it's extreme pressures.

It's the media, it's the players.

It's everything is trying to get results in games.

And in some games we competed against Rio Madrid.

We competed against Manchester City.

We competed, but that wasn't to be, but that was my version of success.

But football is not that simple.

So many journalists asked you after if you regret taking the job

and your answer has always been like, no, because I've learned a lot.

It's your club, it's Chelsea.

However, had you known the context,

and this is only something we can know in hindsight,

we can't know it in foresight,

if there was some magic genie that could have shown you the context,

the behind the scenes, the dynamics, the 32 players, the culture,

honestly, do you think you would have made a different decision?

Because I think I would have.

Yeah.

But we don't have hindsight, obviously.

It's a magical thing that.

Yeah, but I think probably, and you might think I'm wrong for some of this,

but you would probably be taking some emotion out of it from my point.

And also just how I am about the challenge of going into that.

So if you say, all the context is here, Frank,

but you're not going to know what the results are yet.

But here's all the context.

You know, this player is disenchanted.

I kind of knew that.

This is how it's working.

I would be like, okay, this is what I've got to work with.

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Can I get results?
And whether I was misguided in my own thoughts,
I probably would have gone, yeah, I would do that.
If I've got to be on this, I thought,
it's too easy for me to say I wouldn't have done it for that.
And nobody gave me that, what you said.
I mean, if you had that in an ideal world,
I understand what you're saying.
And again, that's why people might look at it.
I don't, I generally don't have a problem with, you know,
someone how I would possibly have a view from the outside
and someone doing what I did.
I don't think it's like changed the world.
I think my, I played for 13 years at Chelsea.
I've coached them before in the Champions League
for two years on the truck.
Like, I don't think that,
whether people want to have a view on me,
I don't worry about that.
I went back for that challenge at that period.
And, you know, we didn't get the results I wanted.
I know a lot of the reasons why.
I'll take the responsibility for my reasons why.
And, and that was it.
You know, I don't have a big issue with it.
It's like, because it's Chelsea, it's so topical.
You manage Chelsea, one of the biggest clubs in the world.
And it's one of the clubs that takes so much,
especially in the Roman Abramovich,
it's so much interest because there's a turnover.
You know, lose one or two games.
And it's like, oh, what's happening here?
So, you know, it's, I'm big enough and strong enough
to handle that stuff.
So you would have, having seen the context,
you would have backed yourself regardless.
I don't know, regardless.
That sounds like I'm thinking I'm some superman
that turned out not to be superman.
You know what I mean?
I don't, I don't, I don't know.
You're asking me so hypothetical.
The season ends, eventually.

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Relief, relieved in any way.
How do you feel in the end?
The last, as I said, the last couple of weeks were quite tough because it was seeing out of season.
That's not, for someone like me and for a club like Chelsea, like it's not a nice place to be.
You know, I want to, I want to challenge the things.
And that's, that's not nice.
So relief probably, yeah.
Because I knew it would end and it ended and it wasn't back nicer time.
Time to have holidays that I'd planned before.
Yeah, for sure.
And time to reflect.
And I haven't got a huge amount of reflections on it.
You know, a lot of people have, but I haven't.
I've got more reflections on the year at Everton and the 18 months at Chelsea before and Derby.
This, this period was so abstract in a way for me.
That interim role was so different that I can't put it into a context of like, I wish I'd gone on a meeting on day one.
If I'd done a meeting about culture, I think it would have changed.
Like, I don't, it wouldn't have changed.
You know, if my tactics were slightly different in that game, I don't believe it would have changed.
And me overthink, I would definitely think that if it was there.
So, you know, I might be right or wrong, but so I don't.
So relief and a feeling of like, I wish that had gone better.
You know, like, that's human nature.
You know, I wanted it to be better because I'm Chelsea person, you know, the Chelsea fans are fantastic with me.
In this modern world, I'm not saying flick online, you'll find everyone fantastic.
But in terms of Stamford Bridge, I think there's an understanding at the moment.
The club's not where it wants to be.
And Chelsea fans are actually pretty good with that.
There's some other clubs that would be like, we lost at home to Brentford 2-0 and like, there'll be some clubs that would be fans

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that would be a bit more vocal.
They were actually pretty good.
I think, you know, they're waiting to see something better this year.
But they've also, Chelsea fans watch the team
in the second division in the 80s
and seen some struggles over the years,
you know, the older fan.
And so I do think that the success that they've enjoyed
as a club for these 20 years or so,
there's a real appreciation of it.
And, you know, they want it to go on forever.
But I do think they understand it's a difficult moment.
I certainly felt that at Stamford Bridge.
Yeah, they were super.
They were chanting your name even at Old Trafford
when I was there.
Even though the score line wasn't great.
And I actually do think that the Chelsea fans
have understood that the new ownership,
what you said, to their intentions are good.
And I think they can respect,
they've brought really good players.
There's a transitional moment,
but I think they will appreciate that.
All of that stuff, all of that noise online,
Christine, you, family, you mentioned scrolling online.
How does one keep those two worlds apart
so that you can focus on your job
without letting the outside world in too much?
Whereas have you got a strategy?
I don't scroll too much.
You don't scroll?
No.
Do you scroll at all?
Very, very occasionally.
Do you have the apps?
The social networking apps and stuff?
I have Instagram.
Right, okay.
Which I'm not, I have an Instagram page,
but I'm not very active on.
It's just not really me.
So I don't really scroll.

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I scroll for like noziness.
You know, what's everyone up to?
And then a few friends and stuff or whatever.
But I don't actively do it because,
I don't have the time to do it in terms of myself.
It's just not something I,
I appreciate anyone else wants to show themselves,
you know, sunbathing or in a gym.
Like that's their prerogative.
I've got no problem with that.
I just, it's for me, it's just not something I do.
And then to, that's a nice line.
I'm quite a boxer in my life.
When I say that, I mean, I box off things.
And when I want to box off,
I don't want to hear that, you know,
what some fan and son,
so he's going to say about me here
and flick on the comments from a Chelsea post.
I would just flick by that.
I try and stay aware of media
because I think it's,
I do press conferences every four days.
You have to understand what the tone is
of what maybe people are writing about you
or, you know, the journalists.
How do you, how do, how do you do that?
Have you got like a,
someone that comes and briefs you in the morning?
Yeah.
And they tell you what you need to know.
Yeah.
Okay.
Yeah.
Yes.
And I would, I would tap into a bit in the week
wherever I'm flicking on certain websites through the week.
And I wouldn't obviously go into the story,
into the comments.
I would kind of go into this
because you've got to be across things.
I would do that.
But I think it's very unhealthy to, to scroll back.

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I found that as a,
my playing career missed out the social media,
came in towards the end.
And I'm so thankful that we used to just have the newspapers
given us like three out of 10
when we played for England
and we got knocked out of the World Cup.
And that was hard looking at the paper
to see what they gave you.
And that was the version of that.
And then the social media.
So I don't envy the, the modern player as a manager.
I think it's a bit different.
I'm not in a place where I scroll.
So I don't envy these younger players,
men and women now that are coming through
and have sort of household names.
And it's getting so much attention
and so much of its negative.
I think it's incredible that we've got to that stage
that there's that amount of hate for,
but it's so easy to be hateful.
And my, my, my, I would try and say to the young players,
don't look at it, but the minute the game finishes,
they're flicking and it's, it's difficult.
In your professional career, what, what has been,
what do you kind of count down
as the hardest moment in terms of scrutiny?
In your professional and like your playing career
and your managerial career,
what, what has been the hardest moment for you?
Playing for England.
Really?
Yeah.
2006, the 2006 World Cup, I think I had
brought the record for shots at goal without scoring.
Wasn't it just a loud one that should have gone in?
That was in 2010.
Okay.
So 2006, I think I had like 32 shots or something.
I went in as England player of the year.
I'd had a good year or two playing for England.
So I'd got myself in there and was becoming, you know,

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you know, in a fixture in the team.
And then I went there having scored some goals
in the lead up, scoring at Chelsea
and just had a tournament and it wouldn't go in for me.
And then that played on my mind in games.
I was like second guessing myself a little bit in the game.
And probably off the back of that,
there's a lot of criticism.
For myself, for some others, I remember us,
Chelsea boys getting a lot of criticism
for the next six months every away game that we went to.
It was like, you let your country down.
It's the song.
How does that compare to being a manager
in terms of criticism?
I found it harder as a player.
I don't know whether it's just maturity
because as a player, I don't know.
Maybe in the 20s, I found it harder.
As a manager, I think it's a different version of criticism.
And I think as a player, I don't know why I found it harder.
If I'm a fly on the wall after a bad defeat, what do I see?
You probably see a bit of a face and a go in
over the situation kind of face.
And it's different.
I have certain games that it will affect you
and it might not be the one you'd expect.
The Manchester United, you talked about there,
we lost four-one, was it?
That one might be different
because I kind of know where we're at.
This season, Peter and I, we played some good stuff,
whatever.
And there might be another game that we'd lost
and it really affected me
because maybe I did or should have done a substitution.
So on those bad ones, you would see the face.
And I kind of go into my show.
I look like I'm sulking in my bedroom.
I'm a big boy.
But maybe have a glass of wine,
stew on it, don't get to bed till quite late.
And then you have to go again.

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Like it's a great sort of adage that people go,
you learn more from defeat.
You don't feel like that straight away,
but you have to be big enough to go over the game again.
What's the strategy now?
What's the solution to that?
What do we do wrong?
And that's what it is.
You can't get too down, but we're all human.
When you were 29 years old,
one such moment occurred in your life
that really, I think, from your own words,
tested you at a much deeper level.
You described yourself as being a zombie
for a year after the passing of your mother.
She died at 58 years old.
While you were playing
and while you were playing at the very, very highest level,
that, for me, struck,
when I was reading through the way you described that moment
in your life, struck me as a real sort of destabilizing moment
in terms of focus and all of those things.
The question that I had is,
how as a player, when you're playing at the highest level
and you have something like that happen,
how do you show up and maintain those standards
and be Frank Lampard?
That's probably what I meant when I said zombie
because it became autopilot.
And I think when you talk about mental health,
that's the one time that I've been challenged
to the extreme with it.
And a lot of people go through this.
And that was the really interesting thing I found
because I have some perspective now, these years later,
is that when it happens to you,
and it's unexpected, it's very sudden for me,
you've never thought about that kind of thing happening before.
The only thing I'll say is this.
I was a mummy's boy, as I've said before.
So I used to have these weird moments.
I don't know if you have them.
I have them sometimes when I think about death

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and I kind of go, oh God, when you die, there's nothing.
And I have those moments and it hits me in the stomach
for about like four seconds.
I'm driving along and I'm like, there's nothing.
I'm like, there's absolutely nothing.
And then you go, I don't know why you got to go to work.
And life carries on.
And I used to have that with my mum.
I don't know if it was probably reliance I had
on her, she was like, I was so like mummy's boy growing up.
But I remember as I got a little bit older,
like to my teens and I was like,
I imagine mum wasn't there for a moment.
And I was a panic for like 10 seconds.
I remember them.
And then because it was 29, as you say,
and it was very sudden.
I was in a hotel that we used to stay at pre-game.
We were playing Wigan in the evening at home.
I got a call from my sister telling me that she'd fell ill.
And then so I kind of went, okay, she's going to hospital.
Okay, that's a bit dangerous.
So I went to sleep.
I didn't sleep.
Supposedly would sleep.
I was kind of laying there a bit like tossing
and couldn't get off.
I'm like, I'm angsty, I've got another call.
And as we get on the bus to go to Stanford Bridge,
it's like two a mile.
I get the call that, no, no, she's getting much worse.
So I'm like, right, I mean, I'm in Frank.
I'm a sportsman.
Go and do your job mode.
And then I just kind of broke a bit on the coach.
Kind of, well, I felt myself go gray.
And someone said to me, you ain't gray,
but I felt myself go like, oof.
Anyway, got to the stadium, said to the manager,
manager, this is what's happening.
And he was like, go.
So I was like in the track suit,
drive over to East London, mum's in hospital.

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So when I get there, mum's now in the verge of going into intensive care.
So she's got the stuff on and stuff.
And I walk in, I'm in the track suit.
And my mum had the oxygen mask on.
And she hadn't been speaking,
so she's taken really ill in a day.
And she lifted a mask and said to me, what are you doing here?
I'm in my Chelsea track suit.
And I didn't know what to say,
because I didn't want to go, you know,
I'm here because this is a really bad situation.
I went, I'm just here to see you, mum, you know,
and then sort of put the mask back on.
And then she was really,
and then they kind of wheeled her in.
She held my hand, which I'll never forget.
And then she went in and was put into intensive care.
So that was a one week process
of my mum in intensive care.
So she started to get better.
And then a few of the family were kind of getting,
not excited about it, but it was like, it's progress.
You know, mum's out.
She'd been on every machine possible.
And I'm still having to think about going into work.
I can't remember if I trained in that period.
I can't remember that week.
That's like a blur.
I just remember being at home.
A lot, you know, really, you know, in a bad way.
And then we had Champions League games
coming up against Liverpool.
I played one away.
I came back, mum was getting a bit better.
And then we got the phone call that she passed away.
She had a brain hemorrhage.
But just as she was getting better,
everyone was excited.
She passed away there.
And then so it was like the biggest devastation.
I can't explain.
And as I say, years later,

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I realized that this happens to so many other people.
And when you're a young man who hadn't really lost anyone,
you don't have that real feeling of what that is.
And I lost the person that was the closest person to me,
you know, everything to me.
And I'll never forget the feeling in my stomach.
If I talk about it, I get it instantly again.
And I lost, you know, what was my best friend,
the person that had given me all that kind of emotion
stuff I'd spoken about, the warmth,
and the sudden feeling that someone's not going to be with you.
Like it doesn't compare to anything when you're that close.
And so, you know, in terms of work after that,
probably some of it, if I look back, I probably go,
maybe I should have just come out of it.
Like life is bigger than that.
But it was like my probably a tiny coping mechanism for me.
We played a game against Liverpool,
the second leg, and I scored a penalty.
We won the game.
Now we're getting sent to the Champions League final.
And I remember sitting and dressing afterwards,
and I had this almighty sense of fatigue and, you know,
body and mental fatigue.
And I went home and sort of opened a beer,
and I couldn't even drink it.
I went to bed, and it was like,
it's like everything came out of me then of like a week or two,
a full blast of this pain.
You know, it's this complete pain.
And then you lose your best friend and the person that,
you know, I've still got a number in my phone,
and I've still got a couple of voice note things.
We were never a big family for videos and stuff.
And I wish we were.
The only thing I have is that my mum's sister is Sandra,
Sandra Redknapp, Harry Redknapp's wife.
And every time I speak to Sandra, I hear my mum.
They look very similar.
They sound very similar.
And it's like in the first period,
it was painful.
Now it's kind of nice, you know,

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because that's a memory for me.
But the, you know, it's the feeling of grief,
you know, it catches up on me now.
And again, many years later,
I think I probably had a year I was single.
I was like probably drinking a little bit.
I was playing fantastic football.
A really good year of football was weird.
And then I met Christine.
And thank God, Christine came along around that time
because I was a little bit, you know,
not right in that period.
So it was a, it was a, it was a really,
obviously, you know, anybody who loses,
someone's so close to them,
but she was so big in my life
and was such a balance in my life.
And then, you know, that sudden thing is just terrible.
Did you process that?
Because it sounds like,
because you had football commitments back to back to back,
that there wasn't really an opportunity to like sit and...
Yeah, I don't know.
I mean, I've been through the experience
and that zombie thing I talk about
is like, I couldn't comprehend it.
I felt empty and weak,
but I had a job to do.
And the job was so second.
You know, I certainly wasn't trying to be a hero.
I just didn't know.
I think if I'd have laid around all day,
I would have really taken more of a hit.
It was almost like getting up and going to work
in that period and having something to aim for
was just almost like, that's what I should do.
And then I definitely took the hit later on for that.
I definitely took a kind of deferred moment of grief.
And I talk about, and I could say there,
it could be anything that would be a couple of glasses of wine
and something said at a dinner table.
A moment of someone else,
and I feel bad about this,

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talking about their mother or something,
you know, and they're talking glowingly about their mother.
And you kind of get hit, you know,
or another parent's birthday, like crazy things.
I've got no right to be upset about it, if you know what I mean,
but it just hits me.
And you kind of, and I, that sort of get on with it,
like hard nose, get on with it, son,
kind of feel, feel, which has stuck with me.
That was the one time I remember being absolutely broken
and tested on that because I had no,
and I got some anger as well.
I remember having road rage a couple of times,
literally the few days after I pulled out of my drive.
And it was a Chelsea game.
So I wasn't playing it because of what's happened.
But I was at home and I was driving to go and see my sister
or something.
Someone's drove across me and I got out of the car,
and I went for them.
And it was a Chelsea fan.
He went, Frank, calm down.
I was like, yeah, sorry.
And I had these moments of anger in a period afterwards,
which has come out of me out of nowhere.
And I wouldn't say that they've stuck with me from now,
but it definitely changed me as a person.
I don't know how to explain it,
but it definitely made me have a different take on things
and be a bit more, I don't know if baroufless is the word,
but more, you know, that thing about kind of like cutting out
some people that were in your life
that you maybe would have gotten with.
I just kind of took a little bit more
of a direct approach in my life after that,
amongst some serious moments of grief within it.
You know, it was a tough time.
The only benefit, it sounds really warped.
I said this to someone the other day.
The only benefit is that now, you know,
I don't have to go through that again.
That sounds really strange.
It was such a tough period for me

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that the only thing now when I see, you know,
Christine's family are there
and other people around me have friends and family.
And I miss my mom so much, like every day.
And as time goes by, of course, things balance out.
But I can't envisage ever going through that pain again
about what I did because my mom was the only person
being out now, Christine is obviously
that person in my life and my children, of course.
But in terms of what she meant to me at that time,
the only thing that is like, I can go, that is so painful.
I really couldn't go through that again now.
That's, it's a weird way of looking at it.
And I hope that doesn't sound strange.
It's just a process and it was too difficult.
And it's almost like, it was almost like a dream.
It was, my life was never supposed to be like that in my head.
You know, my mom was 58 and I felt like she was quite old.
And now I start doing the math, like I'm 44, you know,
like, and you kind of go, it wasn't old, you know,
like I was 29 and my mom felt a bit older at the point now.
It's like, she should be mid-70s now.
And, you know, as I said, the sudden nature of it
meant you couldn't speak to her as well, which was like,
as I've got older, I've realized that my mom would have
known exactly how I felt about her.
But at the time it was like, I want to say something more.
No, I couldn't.
You want to say something more?
Just like, thank you.
You know what I mean?
Like, thanks to, for being the balance, for being the one
who, you know, in those tough moments
when my dad was being harsh or something there,
for being the one that would,
when I was crying in the bath after a game
and coming and knocking on the door all slight
for making me food.
You know, things a great mother does, she just was that,
you know, my mom was there to sort of,
it might be sound old school now,
but she was a hairdresser by trade,
who then became a housewife and a mother.

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And, you know, for everything that was gone on in my family life and lots of things have, she was always the one that was like the real stand-up one. I look back now, I understand it even more that she had the ethics and everything about her. And then I would love to just be able to say that, you know, it's like those, you know, an emotional song can get you going. It's like, can I speak to her one more time to say, here's a monologue for you. You know, like just to hear it. But with time, I definitely have got more strength in the fact that she knew that. And that's it. And when everyone I speak to says that you are that class act, you are the, you're kind, you're empathetic, and all of that, now I know where that comes from. No, I don't know. Listen, I knew you were going to ask me this because I've seen you, you know, it wouldn't, you know, it's part of my story. And I didn't want to cry. I'm surprised I haven't. But because I've cried probably enough at different times. But it's, it's almost something like it is strangely therapeutic to speak about it. And this is very public. And that's not normally how I am. I'm very private. Our lives, Christian, are very private. It's how we like to live. And sometimes when those moments where I say the really grief-stricken moments over a glass of wine, kind of feel better after them because that's probably what I held in when I was like hitting that penalty and people giving you a huge plot. I remember when you scored that penalty, when your mum had just died, as if it was like a hero moment. It wasn't, it was me just kind of going, I've got to try and do this and do my job. And then these moments now sometimes

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are quite therapeutic, if I'm honest.
But it's, you know, especially for other people
that have gone through that and much worse,
you know, a lot of worse things can happen in different ways.
But until you feel that loss, you know,
I actually remember thinking when I lost mum,
it was like a couple of my friends
lost their parents when they were younger.
And I remember then thinking,
I've never really broached that subject with them.
You know, a couple of my friends are like 14 and lost,
I met at school at that age,
who had already lost their parent or were in the process.
And I never really kind of went,
and they were like 14, I was 29.
And I'd never even thought about it,
but you know, you kind of go, sorry, mate.
And then you move on and you go,
imagine what's, you know,
all the things that I had to process at 29,
it's slightly different.
But those things, so it, you know,
life kicks you sometimes.
And that was the biggest kick I think I'll,
I've had till this point, you know,
and hopefully for a long time.
Do you talk about your emotions with Christine?
Yeah, I do.
I do.
I think I'm quite good about that.
She will say to me, sometimes I'm quite closed
to that stuff.
And then that kind of kicks me into talking about it.
Cause it gets out there.
Yeah.
My girlfriend's really good at that.
Yeah.
Annoyingly good at that.
Yeah.
Not a really good.
And I don't mind,
she sees me going into the zone kind of thing sometimes.
And she was bothering you.

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I go, oh, well, it's this, you know,
it's probably something that's a bit irrelevant or something.
But is that the first answer you'll give?
Cause mine's usually nothing.
Yeah, I'll do that.
That's fine.
No, I definitely do.
That's it.
Yeah.
Cause no one opened the box.
No, no, it's true.
But it's good.
I think, cause I definitely want to don't come across as this,
you know, like I said, like this get on with it thing.
It's certainly not me.
I look at myself as being, you know,
the balance again of my mother was that one,
she gave me that kind of empathy.
I associate all the empathy with my mother that I had,
because that's how she was, was always with me.
So when I, you know, it's just, I also have a mechanism
that kind of keeps it there, but it's definitely inside.
And, you know, maybe children also help with that,
because when you see your child and their smiles
and their sort of innocent nature and how they are,
I think that also helps you become a little bit more emotional
because you start to care about that more than pretty much anything else,
which is, which has also been a beautiful thing.
Over the last few years,
I've realized that my first foundation is my health,
something you've heard me talk about a lot.
Nothing matters more than that first foundation.
So that is why I'm so excited to be involved with a company like Woop,
who are leading the charge when it comes to bettering your health.
All my friends have received free woops from me,
because once you've tried Woop,
I think it's like lights turning on to your health.
That's the only way I can describe it.
My sleep, my performance, my recovery, my stress,
it's like someone turned the lights on.
I'm sure you guys know, but for those that don't know what Woop is,
it's a wearable health and fitness coach
that provides you with the feedback and actionable insights

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into your sleep recovery, training stress, and overall health.
And I have become entirely, utterly obsessed with it.
If you know me well enough,
you know how obsessed I am with the smallest details.
I think the small things compounded together
produce the biggest gains in our life.
And that is exactly what Woop does in my health and fitness every single day.
Being able to see my 1% gains on Woop
has had a profound impact on my health journey.
I highly recommend you try it.
All you have to do is search [join.woop.com](https://www.join.woop.com)
slash CEO to get a three months Woop membership on me.
And if you do, send me a DM and let me know how you get on.
I'd love, I'd love, I'd love to know.
A quick word on Huell.
As you know, they're a sponsor of this podcast
and I'm an investor in the company.
One of the things I've never really explained is
how I came to have a relationship with Huell.
One day in the office, many years ago,
a guy walked past called Michael and he was wearing a Huell t-shirt.
And I was really compelled by the logo.
I just thought for a minute, a design aesthetic point of view.
It was really interesting.
And I asked him what that word meant
and why he was wearing that t-shirt.
And he said, it's this brand called Huell
and they make food that is nutritionally complete
and very, very convenient and has the planet in mind.
And he, the next day, dropped off a little bottle of Huell on my desk.
And from that day onwards, I completely got it
because I'm someone that cares tremendously
about having a nutritionally complete diet.
But sometimes, because of the way my life is,
that falls by the wayside.
So if there was a really convenient,
reliable, trustworthy way for me to be nutritionally complete
in an affordable way, I was all ears,
especially if it's a way that is conscious of the planet.
Give it a chance.
Give it a shot.
Let me know what you think.
What's the future like for you, Frank?

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What do you think?

I don't know.

I'm very, it's hard to know.

A lot of people can say to me,
oh, you know, get into punditry.

It's easy.

Put your feet up.

Do what you know that that's, and it's certainly,

I get my enjoyment.

I get my blood flow in his work and being a coach.

So that's what I want to do.

And I'm in no immediate rush to do it.

The reality is, off the back of Everton and Chelsea,
it's probably time for me to take my time anyway,
because of what opportunity there might be out there.

There may be no opportunity.

There may be something that comes up that I want to look at
and say, does that work for me on all purposes?

Because I get your point with the Chelsea one.

It's like, did you really need to take that?

And the jobs I've taken have been quite challenging.

And a lot are.

I'm not saying I'm going to be given this like,
here you go.

This is going to be great.

So I would try and choose well without sounding too picky,
because, you know, I will want to work.

And in the meantime, do the things that make me happy,
which is being around my family.

I like to travel.

It's like the one thing that I really like to spend my money on.

But you know, when I travel, I want to go better than home.

And if I don't go better than home, I'll stay at home.

I've got a nice house.

So, you know, so we love that.

So I'll, you know, use the time to travel a bit,
be with the family and my children, spend more time.

My elder daughters are doing A levels and GCSEs now.

And be around that.

And that's nice.

And sometimes, you know, I think that's good for me,
because I am so driven.

It's like, I feel like I should work.

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I should work.

And actually, sometimes you're going to say I'm 45 and I've done all right in my life.

Maybe I don't need to work.

And that's not a bad place to be.

I'm fortunate.

I don't, I have gratitude for that.

So at the moment, it's the gratitude of that.

Enjoy it.

And then try and work again.

And what will be, what will be your sort of decision making framework when people call and they say, what about this job or what about this?

What's the, how would you decide whether it's worth taking now?

Well, it's hard to say, but from my experience, I would want to make sure I would want to have conversations to find out what the job is.

And I can't, I can't sit here, feel this way and talk to you about being aligned.

And they need to feel the way that I'll be the coach and they're going to do this and work together.

And probably take another job where it doesn't feel aligned.

You know, I shouldn't do that.

So I'd want to have a conversation and be like, what, what can I do for you?

I have to sell myself clearly.

That's the point.

But what can, how will it work together and maybe get something that feels a bit like, and I don't mind all work, you know, in the UK anywhere, I would travel if an opportunity came up.

I would certainly prioritize a bit of family to make sure that it's something that works for my family.

Ideally, so I don't know.

I don't know about that one.

Everyone seems to be going there.

They do, they do.

I mean, I would prefer to stay in the UK for sure.

And I don't mind.

I went and lived in Everton for a year, lived in Derby for a year.

I miss my family a lot, but you have to, you know,

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make those big decisions.

We're fortunate in ways.

But we'll, I'll see, I'll see what comes up.

It's hard to call before it comes.

If we sit here in 10 years time in this chapter,

this next sort of 10 years, this next decade

has been a success.

What does that look like?

What would have had to have happened

for it to have been a success this next decade?

Well, 55 year old Frank and me.

55, well, I'm here.

So that's good at 55.

I think my, you know, obviously the family

to be well and healthy.

You understand that more when you hit,

for me, it was hitting probably 40 health

and understanding and maybe you check yourself

more on those things and lifestyle.

And then to be, hopefully, have managed

and had success coaching.

You know, that's, that's what I want to do.

I can't see what it looks like,

but I would love to be able to show myself consistently

in a job, what I can do.

I haven't had that opportunity yet,

for whether that was me or whether the circumstances

have been there to do that.

So I'm very determined to do it.

I'm good like that.

I'm determined and I like to work.

Like anyone who knows me will know that.

Like regardless of what my career has been,

if you put it in front of me, I'll tackle it head on.

And then, you know, I'm always trying to improve.

So hopefully in 10 years, I can show you that.

There's got to be a part of you

that wants to go back to Chelsea someday.

Knowing, if I know you hard way, I know you.

There's got to be a part of you inside of you

that's like, you know, one day I'll go back.

It's funny, you know, like you talk about

should you have taken that job?

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I reckon if you'd have asked me that before going back,
I might have said no, as in,
not like I don't want to go back to Chelsea,
but I would have certainly seen myself.
No, no, like that's chapters done as a coach.
But now I've been back, I would think about it even more.
And it's strange.
And I think, you know, the fact that the ownership
has changed at Chelsea and it's gone in a different direction,
I think it can be a really positive thing for the club.
I think people might not see that now,
but I think it really can.
But obviously I have a lot to do to be part of that ever.
But like I don't, you have to make a clear decision.
When we, I played 13 years with Chelsea,
I said I'll never play anywhere else.
I end up playing at Man City.
Some people criticised me for that.
It's fine.
I didn't expect it, but Man City was an amazing experience.
I went to New York City, it was an amazing experience.
When you become a manager,
you can't say I'm going to be Chelsea manager.
I'm going to be this.
You have to take the journey.
Because that's the, those are the rules for all of us.
You know, you can be, you know,
success for a moment at Everton and then we go,
well done, you stayed up and then you,
next job, what is it?
And I would, I, you know,
I respect for so many big clubs that, you know,
there are certain clubs I wouldn't manage.
I'm not going to declare them,
because that just sounds like cheap.
And, but I think it's important.
I respect my time at Chelsea as a player
and what the club means to me.
But I don't see it as the be one end or but,
as I say, having been back there,
it did really light a fire.
I left Chelsea in COVID as a manager.
I didn't have any fans my last period.

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So I kind of walked out like a little bit through the back door in a sense. And this time it felt different. And that wasn't a great period, but it is still a huge club for me. So maybe. I'm really excited to watch what happens next. Thank you. You did a great job at Derby. Obviously then you got Chelsea into the Champions League, I think finished fourth that season under a transfer ban. And then you kept Everton up on the last day of the season, which again, most people had kind of counted Everton out. So obviously there was that interim period. I look, it's funny, because I'm going to be honest. So I, when, when we were meant to have this podcast last time, then you called me and said, listen, I can't come, can't tell you why. And I kind of put two and two together and figured it was the job. I looked at that and thought, I don't know, Chelsea at 11th or 12th at the moment, like what's the worst that can happen really? What I didn't know is the back context. So if I was in your shoes, in hindsight, and we don't have hindsight in the moment, I would have probably, I would have not taken the job if I was in that situation, but in full sight, I definitely would have. 100% for all the reasons you said, if Manchester United called me now, I'd take the job. But I think what we're going to, I'm really excited to see what we see next from you and your sort of managerial career. Because I mean, what you, the experience you've had, warts and all, is worth a ton, you know, at all different levels, all different phases, transitional, relegation battles, all of that is worth more than a lot of successes are worth. And you've had that in a short window of time. So really, really excited about your next chapter, whenever it comes. Is there anything at all you would say to Chelsea fans that are watching this now that are, that would love to, you know, Chelsea fans will be listening to this

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because they want to get A, your opinion on what's just happened.

But they probably want to get your opinion on, like, what you think the future looks like, I guess.

And also, I think a lot of them do you want to, like, check in on you.

Because since you've left, we've not really heard from you in such context.

Yeah, and I've enjoyed that.

I've enjoyed not speaking, it's been nice.

No, I think for Chelsea fans, I would say that in terms of what do I think is next,

I listened to Posh's here, and I spoke yesterday was his first press conference.

And he spoke very well.

And he spoke about bringing a unity at the training ground and a family feel and then winning, which is Chelsea DNA.

So I think we've got a really good manager in charge.

And I think the players will definitely develop with their, you know, as they develop naturally, they're good players, young players.

There has to be some patience in putting that together.

Because I think that has to be clear.

And the owners have a big intention.

So I think as things settle, it may not be straight away, but I think that there's a really positive future for the club.

And I was in it, and it was tough.

But, you know, I know how quickly things can change if you get the strategy right.

In terms of me, I'm absolutely fine.

And I'd certainly appreciate the support I had from, as I say, a majority of fans that would contact me or be at Stamford Bridge.

And for anybody that was on the other side of that,

I was like, why is Frank back in the job?

I think maybe I've explained some of my part in it today and some of the challenges.

I'll always take responsibility.

I wouldn't walk back into that challenge without sort of saying, this might not go right and what's my responsibility.

So, but Chelsea is always a huge club.

And as I say, I never went back to Chelsea until three days before I went and took the interim job manager.

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And I went to the Liverpool game
and ended up having a conversation.
And it was a difficult period for me for some reason.
I left in COVID, as I say, and I moved on to Everton.
And it reignited that kind of feeling
being back at Stamford Bridge.
I have to say, not that I lost it.
It just reignited it.
And, you know, so to Chelsea fans, I'm fine.
I'm fine.
I appreciate their support in my playing career.
It's nice when you finish playing
because your playing career is there.
And I can look back on it with a lot of pleasure
for a lot of the good moments.
When you're in it, it's like, what's next?
And you're sort of like always challenging yourself.
When you finish, you kind of go, yeah, that was good.
That was all right.
There's a lot of good stuff.
So they were good times.
And I was very thankful to be part of a great club.
And we'll see.
You gave Mason Mount his start.
Yes.
I think he's a great signing for your...
Yeah.
That's what I was going to say.
Thank you for that.
He's fantastic.
Well, why is he leaving Chelsea?
He's born and bred, isn't he?
Yeah.
I think it's a complicated one.
And in the end, I think he's got a year left on his contract.
What I'll say about Mason is,
all the things I spoke about there,
you talk about modern players and how the game's changed,
he's a throwback to the attitude and the commitment
and the quality.
That was the beauty of working with Mason,
was that he gave you so much in terms of his effort every day.
Anything you'd ask him to do is like, yeah,

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and he kind of got it.

And I think any great player has to have that kind of intelligence and that desire about them.

What do you need me to do?

Yeah, I've got it and I'll do it.

I'll repeat it and also quality.

So in terms of what he'll bring to Manchester United,

it won't just be what Mason brings,

he will bring loads of talent,

but he's just going to go up and levels around.

Really, he's a bar raiser?

Yeah, I think so.

And don't get me wrong, the bar raiser's already there,

Bruno Fernandez, Raffer, but he will absolutely,

yeah, Casemiro, but he will absolutely fit in with it.

If you're trying to build, it's just saying,

you've got a group mentality of a team and players

that are just going to give everything and their talent,

which top team they need, he fits it.

So I've seen some sort of alternative reactions to that.

It's like, oh yeah, Mason Mount is a good buy-in.

Why would you pay that for him?

Mason Mount is going to be a fantastic player there, my opinion.

It's really nice to know,

because actually I was a bit on the fence in regards of,

don't really know the character of the man,

but I have heard from inside,

or Trafford that Eric Tenharg is really ultra-focused

on exactly what you said above everything else.

He's focused on that core values,

so Casemiro, Bruno, et cetera, et cetera.

And so it's nice to know that Mason is a bar raiser.

But why is he leaving, do you know?

Seeking a different challenge, or is it...?

No, I don't think so.

I think probably Mason would have envisaged

two years ago that he'd stayed at Chelsea

for a lot of his career.

I just think circumstances, his contract situation.

I know he's got a big love for Chelsea.

But also in the modern day,

I think more than even in my day, players do move.

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And I don't think, you know,
if the challenge of moving now it's come to that.
For Mason personally, it's a good challenge for him.
I would have liked to have seen him stay at Chelsea
because I think he would have been central to it,
but it didn't happen.

We have a closing tradition on this podcast
where the last guest leaves a question for the next guest,
and I have to say this is the longest question
that has ever been left for anyone else.
It's quite abstract as well,
so we're both going to have to kind of figure this one out.
But the question is, you're going to be surprised by this,
when broken down to its roots or origin,
the word enthusiasm begins with N, theos,
which means with God.

For people who have not identified something
which they are truly passionate about pursuing,
can you suggest a way to cultivate that enthusiasm?
That is a good question.

So I think the real question here is just in this line here,
which is for people who haven't identified something
which they are truly passionate about pursuing,
how do they go about that?
Wow.

Thanks for that one.
Yeah, it's a good point actually,
because my daughter's now,
my eldest daughter is getting her A-level results this summer.
It's talking about uni,
but she doesn't really know what she wants to do.
And I actually felt not bad.
I went to school obviously,
but my pathway looking back was like, fortunately, it was that.
I didn't have to think about my shells.
And so I haven't got any big answers for it.
And also from a modern woman, where is the pathway?
What does she want to know?
I asked that question and she's not sure
which is completely understandable.
So for me, I think for her, if we're flipping it there,
it's maybe whether it's a passion or not,
but my thing, and it probably goes back to my roots,

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is to, the work ethic thing is what I say to her,
is to get out there and get in the workplace and meet people.
Because I think in the modern world,
with my daughters are so engrossed in social media,
they have a lot of answers about life,
you know, a lot of answers.
And I'm like, okay, I don't agree with that one,
but I'll let that one go.
I don't agree with that.
And then I started for like a dinosaur.
But I do think that they kind of get caught up in that
and all the answers are there.
And I go, okay, what are you going to do then?
And they go, I don't know.
And you kind of go, okay, well, fine.
You've got all this information.
It's the modern world.
But what are you going to do?
Go out and get a weekend job.
If you're going to go to uni, go out and experience
what the real world is like,
rather than this alternative world
that you're slightly looking at.
And then I think something might ignite it.
So that was my, and again,
that's probably as deep as I could go.
Because I don't care where it is.
You could be in the coffee shops,
you could be in this shop or that shop or whatever.
But this is my daughter's story, obviously.
So it was more about getting out and meeting people.
And I guess probably, and to bring that question back to me,
myself going out on my comfort zone
and leaving Chelsea to go to Manchester City
and then live in New York for two years,
ignited a million things in me.
And none of them were like big hobbies or something like that.
It was just like, wow, there's a different world,
a different culture.
People who approach things with positivity
and energy that I've never seen in England.
And it changed my approach.
So maybe my answer will be,

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come out of your comfort zone
and do something which is different.
I was fortunate today, I worked there,
but I was living in probably what for me
is possibly the best city in the world.
And it changed me as a person.
So maybe to get the passion,
try something, take you to the comfort zone,
and it might just appear for you.
Makes perfect sense.
And I think, yeah, exactly what I heard there is that,
often when we're two within familiarity,
we're not going to get the inspiration
of what might be our passion if we're searching for it.
But going to a New York or just getting out into the world
and having experiences can lead us there.
Frank, thank you so much for your time today.
And thank you for doing this.
Because I want to say, you are a man of your word.
Because we were going to do this last time,
and you could have easily not done it,
but you messaged me and said,
I want to get that back on because I said I would.
And again, that's just another example of you
just being a class act.
The whole process of you canceling last time
because you've got the Chelsea job and then coming back.
You've just been an absolute class act.
You're a man where no one can question your integrity
and your principles.
And then on top of that, I see a man who is
incredibly keen to work and do well
in whatever he applies himself to.
And because of that, you've led this fantastic career,
both as a professional football player and as a manager,
which is, I think, you're just halfway through.
And there's this whole new season,
as you get up to 45 years time, you're going to be 90.
And I'm so excited to watch that story unfold
because of all the wisdom you've garnered in the last 45.
So thank you for being an inspiration to me
for giving me so many great memories in football
as an England player, less so as a Chelsea player

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because you guys were really fucking good.

Through that period.

So it's a real honor to get to know you.

And thank you for all your wisdom.

Thank you very much.

Thank you.

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over the last few months,

you'll know that we're sponsored and supported by Airbnb.

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they could actually be sitting on their very own Airbnb.

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it just makes sense to Airbnb my place at home,

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And you can find out how much it's worth

at [Airbnb.co.uk slash host](https://airbnb.co.uk/host).

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