

[Transcript] My First Million / Long-Lasting Companies, Pandemic Monitoring & Deepfake Businesses

Let's go outside of the tech world.
So two brands that I am looking at that have lasted a long time, Louis Vuitton.
Louis Vuitton has lasted maybe 250 years now.
And when you think of Louis Vuitton, you know what you're getting.
Same at New York Times.
New York Times has been around for 250 years.
Not everyone likes them, but you know what they're pursuing,
which is their version of the truth.
But then let's go to Raising Canes.
You've ever been to Raising Canes?
Of course, dude. Love Raising Canes.
I met the founder of Raising Canes once.
He is awesome.
We're live. What's going on?
What up?
How are you?
I'm thriving.
All right, good.
So I've been thinking about this conversation you and I had.
We talked about outsourcing, and I'm actually going to put a lot of words in your mouth.
I'm implying that you said a lot of stuff, which you didn't exactly say.
So you're kind of more of a representation.
But Rob Dierdek said something amazing a few pods ago.
He said two amazing things.
One, he goes, I was looking for these \$20, \$30 million wins, and I would do like 12 on me.
He said, instead, I'm actually only going to do one or two things.
And I'm going to hope that they're going to be big.
And then he also said he has this thing called forever estates.
Do you remember when he talked about forever estates?
Of course.
So afterwards, he sent me mock-ups of this, and I like Googled the architect and everything,
and there was this really cool article that they, Rob and the architect wrote together.
So forever estates.
Rob said, I want to build this home.
So basically, he said he had \$12 million liquid at the time, \$10 million.
He went and bought this plot of land.
And then he goes, to build the home I want, it's going to cost \$30 million.
At the time, I didn't have that.
And it sounds like maybe he has it now, but he was like, basically, I want to build this home where the Dierdek family for many generations can meet at this home to discuss family planning
and family issues and things like that.

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And so I'm going to build this home exactly how I want it.
And we're going to call it forever estates.
Because hopefully it lives forever.
I found that very inspiring.
Did you find that inspiring?
Loved it.
Loved it.
I love when people take an absurdly long view.
And more than anything, I love when people have a vision for their life and what they're doing.
When somebody's got a clear and compelling vision for their life, that is like one of the most attractive traits to me.
It doesn't even matter if I agree with that vision.
It's that they have that vision, and that they agree with that vision is what matters.
I thought it was awesome.
And he sent me mock-ups of the home.
And I was like, dude, this is so inspiring.
And so I got all up hot and bothered about this.
It was awesome to me.
And so I started thinking about companies that can last a long time.
I've been a little bit obsessed with this because with Hampton, things are going well.
We're not a success yet.
But it's very clear that I always tell our team physics will allow this to work.
There's demand.
I've got a good audience for this.
We've got a good team.
Physics allows this to exist.
There's nothing that gets in the way of this.
We're already somewhat successful.
The only question is how great will it become?
And I'm starting to think, how do you create something that lasts 50 or 100 years, whatever it is?
And the word brand is something that I've been thinking about a lot.
And I think you and I, as well as our audience, we get in these short-term thinking.
And we use the A-word, the arbitrage word.
Or we use these certain words that people actually don't think about branding.
They don't think about soul.
And I've been thinking a lot about that lately.
And there's this book that I'm reading where it's called Lessons from the Century, or Lessons from the Century Companies Club.
So it's like this one woman studied like companies that have lasted 100 years and she's like, what do they all have in common?
And I've been thinking a lot about that.

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And you brought up something.

You said you invested in this company, Shepherd, which I think is awesome.

I actually am starting to use them.

I'll give you a plug.

Is it Grow Shepherd or Support Shepherd?

Support Shepherd.com.

Yeah.

Support Shepherd.com.

Support Shepherd.com.

Yeah.

Support Shepherd.com.

You talked about that investment in the company and you're talking about outsourcing.

It's basically you hire people in the Philippines, I think also Latin America, and they do a bunch of odd jobs.

But you said something like, I want to hire tons of these people.

And I started thinking about that.

And I started thinking, should I do that?

And then I realized I shouldn't do that.

I actually should do that for some roles.

But the thing that, but I had this like offsite, this like Hampton retreat with like a bunch of our employees.

And I realized you have to build a real strong company culture.

And you have to figure out how you keep employees for a long time.

And that's one of the key keys to building a brand that can last a long time.

And I wanted to hear how are you, and this, by the way, this topic is not that exciting for anyone who's in survival mode.

This topic is more exciting for people who are in like thrive mode where it's like,

I got this thing working.

I think to be clear, the first phase of the company is just build something that people want and figure out if you can get it to them.

Right.

Don't worry about culture.

Don't worry about brand.

Don't worry about the forever plan.

Don't worry about the 25 year vision.

None of it's going to matter if you can't do the first thing.

Sam has done the first thing with Hampton.

He has proven that he can create something that people actually want and he can sell it to them.

So now he's thinking long, you know, and now you get what I call progressive ambition.

I want to do a whole video on progressive ambition.

I'm going to show people, if you go back and you watch Mark Zuckerberg's early interviews and people are like, where does this go from here?

You're on eight campuses now.

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Where are you going to open this up to everybody?

High schoolers, everything?

He's like 50 schools.

Our goal is to get to, you know, all the major colleges.

I'm not sure.

Everyone keeps saying, why, you know, expand, expand, expand.

Some things are cooler when you don't expand.

And I don't think we have to open up to everybody.

I'm not sure.

I mean, some things are really, we could build something really, really useful for college students.

Maybe we should just do that.

And then now the guys like created higher balloons that give internet to farmers in India so that they can use Facebook, right?

He got progressively more ambitious as he went along.

Which is a crazy story in itself, by the way.

Facebook, I think Sarah helped work on this or something at Facebook.

Facebook basically puts these planes over India, so any Indian can access internet because the issue with growth of Facebook is they literally have everyone on the internet, so they have to create more internet for people.

Yeah, they've got to create a bit more TAM.

We're TAMing it up right now.

Hold on.

Let's give people the internet so they can use our app.

But that's cool that it started where, that's a great phrase, progressive ambition.

Very common for different companies.

You can go back.

I'm a forensic, I'm an archeologist.

I go back to study the early origins of these companies and you find this very, very commonly that they start with a sort of humble ambition, then as things start to work, they snowball their ambition.

They become more and more ambitious as they go, realizing the opportunity is wider and bigger than they had initially planned for, and that one step of success earns the right to go for the next step of success, and that it is okay to ladder up.

Because what most people do is they look at them today and they say, well, now they're trying to do A, B, C, and D, so I, when I start, need to also plan for A, B, C, and D.

And it's actually like, no, you actually just start with A. You don't actually have to do anything else.

Of course, there are exceptions.

There's Elon Musk saying we're going to, you know, even Elon, for example.

Like one of the most ambitious companies in the world, SpaceX, right?

What's the goal?

What's the mission statement?

It's like, make the human species multi-planetary so we can survive when we ruin Earth, or Earth

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gets, you know, hit by an asteroid or whatever.

And so it's like, wow, what's more ambitious than creating a rock, literally rocket science, to create rockets that will eventually take us to live on Mars?

Wow, that's like the biggest vision ever.

When SpaceX started, his initial vision was to do a test demonstration, sending a plant in a rocket into a certain height, I don't remember exactly where it was, to have the first living thing, you know, go out of, you know, past the moon or whatever, wherever you're trying to take it.

And that's all you want to do is just take a plant out there.

And he's like, oh, I'll just fund this, you know, it'll take me \$20 million, but it'll inspire people towards science and, you know, hopefully NASA will then fund real Mars missions after that.

And then only, you know, along the way, he's like, you know what, screw this plant thing, I'm gonna, let's actually do it ourselves.

We don't need to inspire NASA, let's just do the whole thing ourselves.

He also got progressively more ambitious.

And also when he first started, he started, I think, I'll zip to, which I'm almost certain it's basically like putting the yellow pages on the internet, which I'm sure he had some cute way of submitting it where it was a grand plan, but he made \$20 million off of it, which is a lot of money.

But he was like, in his head, he's like, I got to get my nut, you know what I'm saying?

He's like, you see, every, every human has a number, a phone number, and you can reach them.

This is one of the most marvelous things in the world.

And you need a way to reach them.

It's information, you know, he'll make anything sound fancy.

But actually one of the interesting things is Elon is also credited as like he created PayPal.

He didn't actually create PayPal.

You know, PayPal, the product was created by, you know, first Max Levchin and Peter Teal.

But even then, when they merged with Elon's company, he had this big vision for x.com.

He's like, x.com is going to be everybody's full financial life.

It's going to be banking.

It's going to be mortgages.

It's going to be loans.

It's going to be sending money.

It's going to be savings accounts.

It's going to be all things to all people.

And that was the vision for x.com.

When they merged, Elon was the CEO of the merged company and the plan was to create x.com.

And so he had this big audacious, crazy vision, his forever plan about how he's just going to change the whole financial system.

And actually the only thing that worked was going back to the basics.

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Just make something that people actually want and see if we can get it to them.
And it was like, oh yeah, eBay sellers would love a way for people to pay the money when they send them the like Beanie Babies.
And so literally it was send money via email, small amounts, paying a pal.
Was the actual use case that people wanted and needed?
And it was only when they essentially booted him out and focused on that small use case, the smaller vision, did PayPal actually take off?
And so, you know, sometimes you almost have the reverse, right?
You start to audacious and actually you skip the step of finding that initial foothold.
And that's what PayPal actually did.
And here's the rub, which is very similar to that, that I'm experiencing that I'm trying to think about, which is, so in order to build a company that lasts a long time, you need a few things, which I could talk about, but it starts with having a brand.
It starts with having a very clear defined purpose.
You have to have employees you want to work with for a long time.
And there's a bunch of things.
But how do you balance paying the bills and taking customers and also like having this mission that might be polarizing to people?
And I'm trying to figure out when is that transition?
Do you always have it?
And that's something that I'm constantly thinking about now, which is I don't think it's a switch. I think you have to have it embedded in your culture early on.
But where do you make sacrifices?
Where do you make sacrifices?
I'm not sure.
I'm not sure I'm going from short term to long term thinking how that happens.
And that's something that I've been thinking a lot about lately.
So it's hard to kind of give advice without any specifics, but I'll do it anyways.
I'll be the advice guy for a second.
So when I was doing my very first company, it was a stupid company.
We were trying to do the, trying to make a restaurant chain, the Chipotle of Sushi.
And we had all these micro decisions to make like any business does on a day-to-day basis.
Should we use this packaging or this packaging for our thing?
Well, this one costs more and looks better, but this other one, you know, we would have better margins because it costs less.
And then there's this other one that's eco-friendly and blah, blah, blah.
And so one of our mentors at Duke, she sat us down and she's like, guys, you're having the wrong conversation.
And we were like, what do you mean?
And she's like, it's not about packaging.
So what do you mean?
She's like, let me ask you this.
What decision can you make upstream of this that would make your packaging decision obvious?

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I was like, well, we don't really get it.

She's like, you got to know what do you value?

Right.

Are you about ruthless efficiency and margins?

Because if so, then the choice is obvious.

There's no choice.

Right?

You choose the one with the cheap packaging with the best margins.

Are you about, are you, is your number one value the quality of the customer experience?

Because if it's the quality of the customer experience, you definitely not going to choose a cheap one, but you also won't choose the eco one that's going to kind of melt, you know, this old paper straws problem.

It's not actually the best product, but it is eco-friendly.

She's like, so if you're all about product quality, that's what you're going to go all in on.

That's your number one value.

Then the packaging decisions obvious.

Same thing with the other side.

About sustainability, if that's your number one value, then the decision is obvious.

She's like, you don't know which packaging to pick because you don't know what you stand for.

You don't know your values.

And she's like, what you want to do is figure out your values, number one.

So what are the things you value more than, more than other things because they're, and you only know what you value when you're choosing amongst good options.

It's obvious to value something when you have a good option and a bad option.

There's no, you didn't test your values there.

Your values only get tested when you have multiple good options, but they're good in different ways.

And that's when you need to know which one do we value.

The second thing that she said was Jeff Bezos has this great quote where he goes, they're like, oh, you know, Amazon has been around forever.

And you guys have just kept growing and growing and growing.

And you know, through every innovation cycle, you know, the internet, mobile phones, whatever, Amazon has been cloud, you know, Amazon has done great.

How do you stay on top of the curve?

And he goes, because we don't look for trends.

We ask ourselves the opposite question.

Instead of saying what's going to change, we say what's not going to change.

So basically he's like, we're customer obsessed.

That's the number one value for them.

And he's like, number two, we ask what's not going to change.

Are people ever going to want less selection?

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No.

Are they ever going to want higher prices?

No.

Are they ever going to want slower delivery?

No.

Okay, cool.

So now we know that those are the never changing things.

So all we got to do is how to figure out how to give them more selection, lower prices and faster delivery.

That's what they care about.

They're never going to not care about those things.

They're always going to care.

And all we got to do is just continually find a way to do that.

So I think that gives you a sort of long-term orientation.

Like for Hampton, what would you say are the never going to change things?

I've got to figure that out, frankly.

When I started, it was the same thing as Zuckerberg, which is I just want to like be around smart people.

Do you know what I mean?

Are people ever going to want to be around lower quality founders?

No.

They're always going to want that bar going up, that they look in their peer group and they're in awe.

How did I get in this room, right?

I think that's going to be the first feeling you want to create is, holy shit, all the other people in my group are awesome.

I can't wait to talk to these people, right?

That's going to be, I think always the number one, the quality of the other members in their group to them.

And then I think the thing I've been thinking about is they're always going to want their peers to be committed.

So we've been thinking about, well, what happens if you don't show up to a meeting?

It's like, well, we should just ban them.

Let's ban them.

You miss one meeting or two.

Both of those things we mentioned hurts revenue.

Because if you make the door, you want to increase revenue, widen the door, baby, let them all in.

Now let everybody who wants to pay the bill come in.

Okay, but now you've ruined the quality of member problem.

The long-term people will never want this to go in that direction.

You're screwing that up for a short-term profit.

Same thing on the people don't show up.

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You ban them or you also have to go ahead and remove that subscription revenue from the old Stripe account.

And so you're not going to want to do that either.

But it will only happen if you take this long-term orientation and say, no, no.

The thing we value the most is people want a product or it's high-quality people that show up and care about this community, about this group.

And if either of those two, every decision has to be first and foremost from that point of view.

Does this increase the quality of our members or decrease it?

Does this increase the commitment levels or decrease it?

And I also think that, so you were giving the example of Facebook and Amazon.

And I looked at those as examples as well.

But let's go outside of the tech world.

So two brands that I am looking at that have lasted a long time, Louis Vuitton.

Louis Vuitton has lasted maybe 250 years now.

And when you think of Louis Vuitton, you know what you're getting.

Same at New York Times.

New York Times has been around for 250 years.

Not everyone likes them.

But you know what they're pursuing, which is their version of the truth.

But then let's go to Raising Canes.

You've ever been to Raising Canes?

Of course.

I love Raising Canes.

I met the founder of Raising Canes once.

He is awesome.

You guys got to, I don't know his name, but Google Raising Canes founder and like watch talks with this guy.

He's like a Southern boy.

I think from Louisiana, he started a chicken finger place.

I think at LSU.

And if you go to Raising Canes now, here's what you're going to get.

They all, all they sell is chicken fingers.

You can basically get them deep breaded and deep fried or not breaded and deep fried.

And then I think they only sell fried or fried or obesity fried.

Which one do you want?

Yeah.

Like there's like, there's only, there's no options and you get it on a styrofoam, like a styrofoam, the school lunchbox type of thing.

And they're not fancy, but you know what you're going to get every time.

And he's like adamant.

He's like, we are going to perfect this.

We're going to get this.

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It's going to be fried the exact same time, every single time.
And it's not sophisticated, but you know what you're going to get.
Another brand that I like, fucking Dollar General.
You ever go to a Dollar General?
Yeah, of course.
Dude, it's, it's not sophisticated, it's not high-end, but you know, there's going to have a ton of stuff and it's going to be low quality and it's going to be affordable.
You know what you're going to get every time.
So I don't think you need this sophisticated, like it's day one here at Amazon.
And we're like, no, you don't need that.
You could have like, no, like we're Fashion Nova, like it's cheap apparel that, you know, you don't have to make a lot of money and you could buy it and we're always going to be on top of shit.
You don't need a lot of that stuff, that high-end, like sophisticated stuff, you can be anything, but it's just cool that like to see people who are adamant about what they are and they just deliver value every time or at least they're focused on the brand.
So anyway, that's my spiel about that.
And the reason I was thinking about it was because you were talking about outsourcing stuff and I'm like, oh, that definitely seems cheaper, but is it cheaper for every role in the long term because you have to build in order to build a brand that lasts a long time?
And let's be straight here.
This is all about like doing dope shit.
It's also about making more money.
I think you can make more money if you drag out your Excel sheet, we're like, oh, this grows 30%, 20% every year.
Yeah, drag that shit out for 50 years.
You know what I'm saying?
You can call them AC.
Let's see what's going on over there.
Yeah.
This is also rooted in adventure and fun, exciting and in greed.
So I don't want to get that twisted.
But anyway, you have people who want to work for you for 10, 20 years.
It gets really interesting.
And I think you can actually embed different things in the culture.
You know White Castle?
You ever heard of White Castle?
You know White.
That is right.
Dude, White Castle, I fucking love White Castle.
I went and looked at their LinkedIn.
Oh, shut up, figure out.

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Their executive team, all of them have worked there for like 30 years and I used to make fun of them.

Like, oh man, these fucking suits.

I'm like, no, no, no, no, no.

They know who their customers, they know what they're doing, and you get the same shit every time.

And it works because their people have worked there for fucking 30 years and they like know what the company's about.

So anyway, that's my rant, rant over, but it's something I'm thinking about it.

Something I'm thinking about.

I'm glad we just discussed this publicly.

I'm actually going to, I was taking notes.

Yeah.

Yeah, good.

I think that's cool.

I take the exact opposite point of view for the record.

I do not think about building things that are going to last 50 and 100 years.

I think that's really hard.

And I think it's unnecessary.

I want to be the thing that lasts 50 or 100 years, not an individual brand necessarily.

Well, you are the brand.

If that's the case.

Well, the way I think about it is this.

It depends on how you want your career to go.

Some people get really excited about building something and being a part of something and working on something for 30 years.

I get more excited about taking like sort of seven year chapter arcs of my life and be like, cool.

I want to have five, you know, I only get one life to live.

I want to experience all the things.

I want to ride all the rides.

And so I do a, you know, I did a tour of duty and I lived in Australia and Indonesia and all these other places.

That was fun.

That was where I had a great adventure.

I moved to Silicon Valley in the heart of San Francisco and I tried to do the billion dollar startup thing.

Now I'm doing this basically cash flowing business side of things and podcast and creating content.

I'm a content creator now.

That's interesting.

That's fun in a new way.

I'll shift at some point.

Seven years from now, I'm not going to be a content creator anymore or I'm going to shift

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the content.

I'm going to create TV shows or a stand up comedy set or something.

Yeah.

But you do realize that's all rooted.

I'm going to like do Jiu-Jitsu your ass.

You realize this is all rooted in the same shit, which is like, it is a consistent brand and you are changing the monetization.

I might not even put my name on, like my name is not always going to be front and center on everything when your content creator it is, but other times it's not.

For me, the more important thing is I'm not going to bank on people recognizing my brand in order to do something.

I do want to accumulate enough financial freedom and runway so that I can go pursue things that don't have to make money right away.

It's all about the vision for you that you have for yourself.

That's why I was talking about Rob Dyrdek has this vision for his house.

You have a vision for Hampton, what you're trying to create.

This is long-term, enduring thing.

I have a vision for my life, for my career that is chapters and episodic and I want to have that variety and new challenge where I have to go become uncomfortable and try to get good at something new and go learn the dark arts of a whole different industry and go become a beginner again.

That's something I get excited about.

More so than creating one thing that's going to last a long time or I'm going to be a part of for a long time.

Is that a phrase we're going to start using?

The dark arts?

That's patented.

I have to send a little text to him for saying that right now.

Where do you want to go?

Let's move on.

I got two quick ideas for you.

In general, I want to say this, by the way, in this pod, I think we're going to make a shift in how we create the content.

Right now, every episode is this mismatch of breaking down a business, talking about frameworks, business idea here or there.

I think what we're going to start to do is segment them better or chunk them better, theme the episodes better.

You know what you're going to get and we just go really hard at one thing.

We're going to do episodes where it's really hard on just ideas, business opportunities that we see.

We're going to go really hard on certain topics like one man businesses or businesses that have very few people, but just crush it.

It's going to be a lot harder for us to do the prep for that, but I think it'll make

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for much better episodes.

We've been talking a little bit about that.

I think we should put it out there that we want to start doing that.

But until then, let's mismatch a little bit.

I got an idea for you.

If you made a grid of customers that are easy to acquire or hard to acquire on one side, and then customers that are not that valuable and super valuable on the other axes, one box that interests me there is hard to acquire, super valuable.

The reason why is because those companies can become very, very defensible, very, very valuable, right?

Your value as a company or even as a person is just based on how easy are you to replace?

You want to be irreplaceable.

That's how you can actually make more money in the long term.

So what's in that quadrant, like a fucking plane manufacturer or something like that?

Something that sells to government.

So you go get government contracts.

Not easy.

Might be boring to do.

Long term, expensive government contracts.

It might take you years to get to the point where you can get one, but when you get one, it's very valuable and very defensible.

And so I was thinking about this because I invested in this drones company called Volante a long time ago.

I invested many years ago.

I have no idea how they're doing.

I was a small investor.

I don't even get the updates.

But at the time, they were doing pretty well.

I was like, okay, well, this valuation is a little bit rich for where you're at, but why is it, why do you think this is the right valuation?

And it was like, but they're about to get this government contract that's a hundred million dollar a year contract.

One customer will now become worth more than all their customers combined because...

And what's the term length of that contract?

I think it was like a, there was a couple that they were up for.

I think there were like sort of three and five year deals.

And once you get one government contract, you're sort of de-risked and you've done all the, you know, the clearance and all that stuff.

You basically get to get your company to a spot where you could get a government contract.

And once you have one, being able to get the next one becomes more likely because you're sort of in the trusted vendor circle.

So I was like, oh, that's pretty valuable.

I was just thinking about one the other day, you know, with this whole COVID pandemic, somebody

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out there has got to be selling some kind of pandemic modeling software or detection software to every government in every country of the world.

And this is also have like a network effect where as soon as you provide, you're the provider of this product to one government, it's actually something that all governments would then choose you for because, you know, the more governments you get, the more compelling your case becomes. And so I wonder who's building kind of the, what Palantir did for, I think, like national security type stuff.

Somebody's got to be doing for biosecurity.

So who is creating the pandemic monitoring, detection, modeling, awareness program that you can then go sell to every single government on earth as an indefinite ongoing contract.

Hey, these things happen once every 100 years.

We have the Spanish flu, we got COVID.

All right.

I'm just going to go, I'll be your provider because, hey, they're devastating when they happen.

And I can be this for you for the next 100 years.

I think that's a 100 year company that is probably quite defensive and quite valuable if you can do it.

I'll talk to some of my friends who work at Palantir.

I'm like, hey, what'd you guys do today?

And they're like, oh, I just like stopped a terrorist attack in France.

How about you?

I wrote a blog post, you know what I mean?

I sent out five tweets Tuesday today, where I have my five favorite tweets in my newsletter.

It's cool.

It's like those, have you ever worked at those, there's all these like net worth calculators where you're like, where will I be in 50 years?

And you're like, well, if you were to start in like 1884, this is where you'd be.

If you were starting like 1995, this is where you'd be.

And you can like see like, well, because this 50 year or this 30 years actually had slow growth.

This 10 years had fast growth.

And you can like see all the different scenarios like, so if we take the average, it's this.

But if this happens, this, so you're kind of like talking about like that, but with like potential illnesses, who have you researched out there?

I haven't researched any of this, but I'm sure it already exists.

These sort of like, you know, like people have been worried about these sort of like viral things, but obviously they were insufficient, right?

So like whatever existed, obviously sucked because we didn't detect it.

We didn't have any plan for it.

And we had no idea how fast the thing was spreading.

Like literally the best pandemic model I saw was made as a side project by Kevin Sistrom, the founder of Instagram for fun on the side, where he's like, oh, look, I can break down

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by state, they are not the viral coefficient basically of this and of this virus based off of this public data I'm getting about hospitals and hospitalizations. And I can use that to kind of show which states are flattening the curve versus which states are about to go exponential.

And you know, they should really consider doing something.

And it's like, somebody's got to be doing this at this got to be the easiest sales pitch of all time right now.

It's kind of what I guess what I really mean is like, if you're sitting at MIT or one of these places, just be like, wear a sign that says I went to MIT and then go walk into the government building, open up the fanciest like MATLAB, you know, like model you could find and be like, you need to pay for this and just see what happens.

I think I feel like they can get, you can get pretty far right now with this pitch of like, hey, we'll help you with the, we'll help you keep track of these viruses.

Do remember about two years ago, you and I were both interested in people who are trying to detect fires, forest fires.

Do you remember that?

Yeah, yeah, we did, we did this on the pond, right?

There was probably like one or two like kids like college kids fooling around with it.

But then there was like, I think two different companies that raised money, I think from founders front fund and actually they were ex-palantir guys, I forget the name of the company.

It's a four letter word.

It was like, gel or I forget what it was, but they were, I tried to invest in them and they were like, they weren't having it because they were getting big and they didn't need any money.

But do you know what happened to those guys?

I don't know the name of it.

It's really hard to remember.

Now, I also don't know what came of it, but yeah, there was, I remember when the California wildfires were happening, it felt like every three months, there was like a new fire and the entire like state of California was like covered in smoke.

Yeah, I remember when that, I remember when that was happening to find early detection of wildfires was like a, like a startup idea that a bunch of people got funded for.

Yeah, it was really interesting.

What we need to do, what I'll do not this week, but next week, because we have Jack on next biz, I'm going to actually do research and see how these guys are doing because it's very similar to what you're talking about.

And what was your other thing that you're looking at?

You're going to go from selling to governments to selling to Jessica Simpson.

Yeah, exactly.

Yeah, it's not the same IQ.

So basically this next idea is, so celebrities are having this like deep fake crisis, crisis and opportunity.

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So deep fakes are getting really, really good and celebrities now have a crisis plus opportunity. So the crisis is, you've seen this fake Tom Cruise, deep fake Tom Cruise, this guy's like amazing.

It looks just like Tom Cruise and it's like a video, you know, it's, this is getting really good.

You're not going to be able to tell.

Dude, did you see, did you see the ones where they put our podcasts in Spanish?

Yeah, those are awesome, by the way.

We should do that.

We should release our podcasts and everything.

They were amazing.

They were so good.

I mean, and I've heard of these new scams where they'll take people whose voice and video you get access to and they call your parents and be like, Hey dad, look, I'm trapped.

I need some money.

Can you please send it?

Like just don't ask questions.

Just send the money.

It's wild.

And so I think there's an opportunity here.

So I think celebrities who get paid for their name and face and, you know, oh, I got to go fly to, you know, Arizona and shoot this commercial for Gatorade right now.

And it's going to be three days, but I'm going to get paid all this money, blah, blah.

That's going to change into Gatorade would like to use your, your AI clone in their commercial.

You cool with that?

Yeah.

You get to sit at home and collect the check.

Maybe it's 50% less, you know, expensive for the brand.

Maybe it's the same cost for the brand.

I don't know, but celeb, you don't have to do the work anymore.

That's going to be a big deal.

So the more famous you get now, you're not going to have to actually do the appearance thing because you'll just send your, your AI stunt double to go do it.

So that's an opportunity, but there's also a risk there, which is what if somebody's just doing it without your consent?

And so I think somebody is going to need to create a sort of celebrity deep fake licensing company.

So it's a company that goes and says, look, we're going to create the legal entity that's going to house your name and likeness that other brands can come interact with when they want access to this.

And we're also going to do the detection to find out, is anybody doing the unauthorized use of your name and face somewhere, and we will handle all the takedowns for you.

So it's kind of like a reputation.com, but for this new deep fake thing.

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So you basically will go and I think you'll, you, you need to, it's almost like Angel List. You need to create the legal framework for how these work. You need to go sell this to every agency and say, Hey, you should, we've created one for, you know, you have one of these for all of your, your clients on your roster. And when a brand comes to you, use this to issue the license that has the rights and controls on it, that has the digital encrypted watermark on it, that has the tracking on it. And then we will also fight anybody who is trying to use it without paying you because that's going to become an issue as well. That's what I think is going to happen. I think somebody could build that company right now. I used to get all these emails when I first started the hustle, because what we would do is we eventually bought a Getty's license, which is like 50 grand a year. But before that we would use, I would just type in whatever picture I wanted and then I would go to Google and click, like allow for commercial use. And then I would, like I would use those pictures on our website. And then at once we got popular, we would get all these emails from these patent controls or not patent trolls. I mean, we were, we were using someone else's picture and they would say, send us three grand and we'll go away. Otherwise we're suing you. And I started looking into them and basically what they did was they've just built this technology so they could detect if someone's photo was being used and they would automatically like crawl, they would use like who is it, find out who the webmaster was and send you this email. And I wonder like how those folks turned out, like what's going, like how some of these people actually built those, those things. And if they were profitable, I imagine so. Like there was one time I used someone's picture, I think it was like the, it was like a thumbnail picture. It was the smallest picture. And I didn't even know we used it. And I think maybe someone at our company took a screenshot of it and like, try to alter it and then put it on our website in the smallest way. And they totally caught it. And within like a few hours, we had to send them like \$3,000. It was like, shit, they got us. I wonder like what that looks like in the world of AI when you are having a bunch of these fake celebrity videos. You know what I'm saying? Yeah, yeah, exactly. So I think somebody's going to need to create the good version of that. So one option has become the troll. The other option is become the official sort of like broker of these, of the

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usage of these digital deep fakes.

All right.

So that's my second one.

The company, by the way, it's called Felt, F-E-L-T dot com felt.

That's what we had talked about.

Good remembering.

You want to talk about how you flew Ben out to convince him to move with you?

Yeah, I think it's good actually, because remote work is, you know, obviously all the rage and remote work is great in a bunch of different ways.

But I'm of the opinion, which is remote is great when you have things figured out and you need people who are just operational to do things.

Anytime there's a lot of needs figuring out or creativity or just your brain trust, I think works best in person.

And so I told Ben the other day, I was like, man, I think we're on to something with what we're doing.

This is partner Ben.

This is partner Ben.

I was like, you know, he lives in Austin right now.

And I was like, you got to, I was like, you got to move out here.

And he's like, oh, like, you know, I live here now and wife, kid, we have family in Texas.

I was like, yeah, I know, but like you, we both believe the following, right?

Every time we get together, magic happens.

This can be pretty big.

Like what we're doing can become pretty big.

And so even like a 10 to 20% improvement on what we're doing is actually worth any tens of millions of dollars.

So it's like, you know, it could be worth it to move.

And California's a great place too.

So it's not like I'm saying, you know, let's go to a rural Ohio or something.

And so he was like, okay, why don't we do this?

So he moved out here for the month.

So he got an Airbnb in the Burbs or in the Burbs where I'm at.

And he's like, I got an Airbnb, brought his wife's kid came out here.

He's just been living here for the month.

And I also, I offered him.

I was like, dude, I'll pay you dollars if you move.

But I told him, I go, but the number drops by 20% every quarter that you don't move.

I was like, this is not like a standing offer forever.

It's a burning, it's an exploding offer.

I said, you should take your time.

You should think about it.

But you should also know every quarter that you don't move, that number goes down.

And so he should tell you, you come get your ass to Texas.

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Yeah.

No, he knows I'm not going anywhere.

He knows I'm not going anywhere.

That's not the, that's not the, I actually lived in Texas for a long time.

And, you know, the other thing is like here, you know, in San Francisco, there is kind of like, for, for example, for our rolling fund, there's so many companies, so many other investors, so many people in the startup world, like proximity is power.

You want to be near as many other people as you can that are doing the same sorts of things as you, as you are to the extent that your lifestyle will allow it.

And so, yeah, we'll see.

He told me, I think I got like a 10 to 20% chance of him coming out.

I was, I was with him a week or two weeks before he went out there.

And I was shocked when he told me that he thought that there was maybe a 20% chance that he could be convinced.

And by he, I mean, the, the Levy entity, the, the household.

And I was shocked that it was 20%.

Is it still 20%?

I don't know.

I think so, but we also work a lot when he's here.

So I'm sure his wife's like, dude, this is terrible.

Like you work more now?

Like, oh man, I don't want to do this.

And so that might be working against us.

The other thing though is the way we work is kind of goofy.

I don't think most people do this, but you know, for coding, they have pair programming.

It's not that popular, but some people do it.

And what pair programming is, what's the name of that agency that was in San Francisco?

That was like a really popular dev shop.

They were like, wait, public at one point, you know, you know the name.

Yeah.

Yeah, I don't remember it, but yeah, I know what you mean.

They popularized it at least.

I don't know if they invented or popularized it, but basically it's two programmers working on one computer, you know, right?

It's like the engineering two girls, one cup, basically.

It's like you sit together.

There's one keyboard and you would think, well, okay, you have half the efficiency, like only one guy is working, only one guy is coding.

But actually you get more than double the efficiency because it keeps you completely focused and you and your partner are basically both talking things through and figuring things out on the fly.

And literally me and Ben do that when he comes out here to work.

We I'm like, all right, put your laptop down, like just we buddy up side by side at

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this desk and we'll just work on the same thing at the same time.

And like, I can't just like open Twitter and start messing around over there.

He's like, what's happening?

What are you doing?

You can't just like open new tabs, you know, as you're figuring something out, one guy's pointing something out and you just sort of really stacking.

It's like, I call it like stacking focus.

It's like, whatever my level of focus is, plus his level of focus on the same thing.

So that's been good.

The other is the in between time.

So already when we work remote, we call each other all the time, you know, probably on the phone, two hours a day, three hours a day, maybe on calls, either with others or just ourselves.

But what's happening now is we'll work on something for a bit.

That's kind of like us being on a call together, working on something.

And then we're like, all right, let's go get food and we'll just hop on our bikes.

We'll go to this taco shop.

We go get the same taco shop every day.

We get the same same meal every day.

When you play wolf a ball afterwards, we hold hands and we skip home, basically.

But while we're doing it, it's sort of like the best ideas are coming out.

In all the in between time.

And that's the time where normally if we would be like, OK, you know, bye, close zoom, close Google Hangouts or whatever.

And then, you know, I put on a podcast and he does something else.

And, you know, it's the in between time where you get the serendipitous ideas.

So it's just kind of reminding me how valuable it is to work in person.

So here's the issue that you have or I've always had with you, which is whatever

I am around you, both of us are high ish energy people where you're the type of person that eggs people on and then I'll egg you back on.

Or I could see, like, and I'm not even that bad at that, but you do.

I'm sure there's a lot of other people like Suley where you guys just start egging each other on and it's like, wait a minute, we're totally off track here.

We should just do the same thing over and over again.

Does this having him around just distract you further?

Because I can see you guys just like you're sitting on two like love seats and you're throwing a football back and forth.

And you're like, why don't we do this?

Yeah, what if we did this?

It's like, well, fucking let's just do it right now.

It's definitely a part of every single day.

That's like that.

I crumple up a piece of paper.

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I throw it to him, he throws it back and we're playing catch talking about bullshit that like, you know, things we could do that are not like just the obvious things, but the beauty of it is, as I've gotten older and I've gotten wiser and I've been doing this podcast, two things have happened. One, I hang around you and you're very good at just doing the thing every day. Whether it's your workout or it's whatever, I'm just going to do the thing. And I don't want to get distracted by everything. I just want to do the thing. As I hang out with you, it helps. There was also a guy who came on the podcast long time ago, one of the earliest episodes and he designed, he's from Peak Design. They make these like camera bags. So he started his company off. Well, that was two years ago. Yeah. This was like one of the first 15 episodes, I think. And he, so he makes these camera bags, who knew? And they do like, I don't know, at the time, like 70 million a year in revenue off of camera bags. And I was in like clips for your DSLR camera. I was like, what the hell is that big of a market? And he had done it off of Kickstarter and he kind of inspiring guy. And as I was talking to him, I go, so what's your philosophy around business? He goes, everybody's got these like plans. They got these ideas, blah, blah, blah. He's like life and business is just the six inches in front of your face. It's just this, he's just held up his hand six inches away. He goes, I just look at this and I just do six inches in front of my face. It's all I'm focused on and I just do that every day. And that stuck with me. And so we have, you can't see it, but on the wall here, I wrote six inches in front of our face on a giant like post, like a giant sticky pad thing. These things are great, by the way, you should buy these. These are giant sticky pad things where you sort of tear the paper. It's like a huge post-it note that goes on your wall. Dude, at Monkey Inferno, your old office, you were like that guy. You always had whiteboards and like pads. That was your thing. I was at the one. You were always standing up like writing. Yeah, that was you. You always said that. You know, what would sesh real quick?

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So, yeah, I have it here and it says the six inches in front of our face.
And so the first thing we do every day when he comes over is we reprioritize the six inches in front of our face.
It's like, what are the small, no brainer steps forward that will make this like 1% better today?
And we, the first three hours of the day, we don't do anything else besides knock those out.
I think theoretically we could just do that for eight hours a day.
I would get bored out of my mind.
Also, I can kind of get eight hours of work done in three hours of focus when I put my mind to it.
And so that's what we do first.
And then for the rest of the day, we think, okay, what, what else could leapfrog something forward beyond those 1% obvious improvements?
So we knock out anything, anything we could think of that's a 1% obvious improvement, the six inches in front of our face first.
And so that's how we've been able to stay focused.
Dude, you shared something on Twitter about what's this football player's name, Russell?
Russell O'Conn, yeah.
Oh my God.
So I'm not a football, I'm not a sports guy at all.
So I didn't even know who this person was.
And you shared this thing.
That's basically, who is he?
He was, was he, was he good?
Yeah, he was awesome.
He was a former lineman.
So linemen are like the biggest guys on the football field.
So he's probably 300 pounds or something like that.
He's like six, five.
He's, he's six, five, 310 pounds when he played.
When he played, yeah.
And he was like a star.
Like he won, he like won a Super Bowl ring.
He was a pro bowlers.
Awesome, awesome player.
I remember, I think he was playing it on the Seahawks for a while.
That's, that's kind of what I remember him.
He's now on Twitter.
There's a couple of these athletes, like Endama, Consue, Russell O'Conn, that are like, they're kind of like on tech Twitter somehow.
And so Russell's.

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And you could DM him and he's been, he's been replying to my DMs.

Yeah.

Like Matthew Delvedova invited me to an event the other day.

I was like, this is so cool that they've crossed over and they've got their athlete camp.

They've also got kind of business tech interest.

And by the way, the best thing about it is they come in so humble, which is like, they don't come in with this, well, you know who I am, personality.

Like this Saturday, so we do, I started this basketball pick up game every Saturday for founders and investors out here in the East Bay.

And we rent this gym and then we, we all just play pick up for like three hours.

And Zaza Petrullia came and he's a, he's a former player on The Warriors.

And he tweeted like, oh yeah, I'll play.

And I didn't invite him to the first one because I thought he was joking when he replied and then he emailed me after the first one.

Like, bro, what happened?

I didn't get the invite.

No way.

And I was like, oh shit, you actually were going to show up.

And so he came this week and he was fucking awesome, dude.

Like not awesome, but basketball.

Obviously, he's awesome and basketball compared to us.

Zaza, is it like a big Russian looking guy?

Or I don't know where he's from.

Yeah. Where is he from?

I don't know.

Serbia or?

I think he's from, I think he's from Serbia.

I'm not, I don't know.

I just Google it.

Georgia, Georgian.

Yeah. He's like seven foot A's, he's a beast.

And so now he works for the Warriors.

He does like their business side, their operate, basketball operations and investing for them.

And he's a super personable, super funny guy.

Like, was totally humble.

And like, did he play?

Yeah, he played with us for three hours.

It was, it was amazing.

I was talking so much trash to him, and he was just such a good sport about it.

It was amazing.

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So I just, I gotta say, I was so, I've been so impressed with the way that kind of like the athletes I've seen that crossover into business and tech. They do it with, I don't know, so much finesse. It's really impressive. Wait, what did you learn about? I love seeing pro athletes in real life and just like seeing them joke around or like behind the scenes Instagram videos where they're like, Hey, watch this. I bet you I can jump over this thing. And they jump over this like huge thing. You're like, Oh my God, these people, like we're not the same type of person. Was there any athletic attributes that he had or was he just totally chilling? Well, yeah, for sure. I mean, if you see Zaza play in the NBA, Zaza was basically like a screen center. Like his number one skill was he could set a huge pick to get Steph Curry a shot. But when he played against us, he's Steph Curry. He's just draining shots from all over the court. You he didn't even take these shots in the NBA. You never saw him take these shots. And he's just made all of them. Fast break pulled up from the three point line. And he is. I was like, when's the last time you played? He's like, 2019. No way. He's like, no, no, I've shot around. He's like, I'm in the basketball facility, so I shoot around. But he's like, I don't even know. Last time I like played it like a kind of like a competitive game. So a couple of things. So his warmup was like a real warmup. Like he like he's talking, but he's doing these like hip flexor openers. And I'm like, oh, yeah. He's like, he's actually an athlete who's had to like get his body ready many, many, many times over. And so you see like a bunch of the dudes who come in and it's like, oh, here's this VC or here's this like tech founder. And we're like, I don't know, I guess I had to touch my toes. Is that what I do to warm up?

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Like we don't know.

We don't even know what to do to warm up.

Whereas he's like doing these like, you know, hip openers.

Then the second thing is when he played, obviously, his game is a lot better than you see on TV, because you got to be a star in your role in the NBA.

And he was a star in his role as this like paint protector, screen setter.

Here he could do a lot of other things that he never got to show there.

The other thing is like he was like a bear.

So he was mostly, you know, just playing point guards, passing the ball mostly.

Obviously, he could post any of us up.

He's got a foot on all of us, you know, in terms of height.

So he wasn't just abusing that, but like we beat him the first game and then they won like six straight.

You beat him. You beat his team.

Yeah, we won the first game.

They were just like, you know, whatever, we got to have to quick start.

But then the they went on a 6-0 run or something like that, just crushing everybody.

And then when we came back out to try to beat them, it was a very competitive game.

And then it's like we poked the bear.

It's like all of a sudden he started driving to the hoop and he started like playing like aggressive.

It's like, oh, yeah, don't forget the bear can kill you.

The bear might be nice right now,

but the bear will let you know that, like, I could kill you if I wanted to.

And he just shows which dial he was going to.

Yeah, he's like, let's let's just put it to a six now.

We were in a three.

Let's just put it out of six just for a few minutes.

All right, we'll go back to the three.

Don't get it twisted. This has been a three up till now.

I'm just going to show you that, then I'll go back down.

Wow, that's awesome.

That I love seeing those types of people like just like in normal settings.

And so talk about Russell.

So what Russell is doing, I saw him, you shared it.

He has this website and it's here's why it's interesting.

One, he's doing a 40 day water fast.

That alone is interesting.

But what's even more interesting is he's doing it in a very like,

I wouldn't have expected this like six foot five, 300 pound football player to be so introspective.

And if you go to his website, do you know the name of his website, actually?

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No, I don't have it in front of me.

If you just Google his name and then go to his Twitter and you can click off to the link.

He's got this website.

A, it's built on Ghost, which is like a pretty like in the know, nerdy web platform.

I think it's oakungfast.com is at least where the that's where he's hosting.

If you just Google it, you'll see it.

But it's like a yellow website and like he has email pop ups and like everything is set up really actually like exactly how it should be.

Like the email pop up is like thoughtful.

And then you go to a confirmation page that's thoughtful.

And he's blogging every single day and he's posting the same picture every day.

So as of now, I think he started this thing at two 60.

I have the nose here.

I think we buried so he's he's gone.

He's going on a 40 day water only fast.

He's lost a hundred pounds so far doing it.

And obviously it's not just about the weight loss.

It's about like sort of like the mental challenge and the mental clarity that he's getting as he's doing this like, you know, sort of this this really intense fast.

I think he's on day 21.

Well, he talks about how it's a spiritual thing.

And he basically like he he's just so much more thoughtful than I ever would have pegged this guy just because I'm stereotyping like an NFL player.

And like his writing is very good and very clear.

And there's a lesson that he's learning each day.

And he talks about that and everything's well written.

It's just wonderful.

It's a really, really cool to see the fourth day was the hardest.

He goes because this is where the body is transitioning into a new state.

So he's like, I had headaches, fatigue, my body was transitioning to using fat as the energy source rather than the input of new, you know, carbohydrates or whatever.

And he looks good.

So you could see even when he started it, you look at day one where he started, he still looked pretty lean.

Now you look at him at he's starting to get like skinnier and skinnier and skinnier.

And his writing is starting to change.

It's very fascinating.

And he's been tweeting about it every day as he goes and he did blogging about it.

I think it's awesome. I love seeing this.

Right. Yeah. And he's also like he's on day 21.

He's on day 21.

He's also like a Bitcoin max.

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He's an interesting guy.

By the way, there's a guy I met named Byron Jones, who retired this year.

He was like one of the best cornerbacks in the, in the, in the league.

And he retired, I think at 30.

So he came into the league probably 21 22 and he retired at 30, which is an early retirement.

And he got paid very well, probably made like, I don't know,

\$80 million playing the NFL.

But he had said something when he retired, which is that I can't run or jump anymore.

And which is shocking, because this is like one of the most athletic guys

that was in the NFL at the time when he was playing.

And I went to a dinner.

He had a 44 inch vert.

Wow. 44 inch vert.

And now he's going to run or jump.

Freak. My buddy, Romine, hosts this event called Game Time every year in LA.

And it's basically a mix of investors and athletes to get together.

And so I've gone the last couple of years and he hosts this dinner.

And at the dinner, there was a few NFL players on the table.

And they all mentioned like, I forgot what they're called, a Torb, Torbiddle.

And not Torbiddle, not the steroid.

It's like some shot that NFL players get.

But basically it's a pain tolerant shot, a pain reduction shot, painkiller.

And they were just like, dude, that shot is like magic and it's a curse.

Because it doesn't make you feel better, right?

It just makes you not feel pain.

No, no, no, you feel better.

But sorry, it doesn't cure an injury.

But it doesn't cure underlying issues.

It's like he's like, we would go from, you know, Sunday you play, Monday,

you feel bad, Tuesday, you feel like, man, I was in a car accident.

And their body feels like it was in a car accident.

You're like, there's no way I'm going to be able to practice on Thursday

and play next Sunday.

Like that's just like where my body's at on Tuesday versus Sunday.

Seems crazy.

And they said that like, man, you know, like the culture in the NFL is like,

you got to play, obviously.

And so these like a lot of guys get it in the habit of taking this one shot,

tea, something I forgot what it's called.

And they take the shot and they're like, it's like a miracle, dude.

Like within an hour, you're running again.

And they're like, you went from not, you know, like limping to like, you're just back to you.

But also every time you do it, it's like taking time, you know, it shortens your

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career because it's just so bad for your body, what you're actually doing to your body when you do that is you're not like, it's not like the underlying tissues have healed in the process.

It's kind of a crazy thing.

So I think one cool thing about Russell's doing is he's basically like trying to rewind the clock on, you know, when you're in, when you're alignment, they tell you to beef up and what he's doing is, is doing a sort of a rapid and drastic change in his physiology in order to get his weight down so that he can live a longer, healthier life as he goes.

Yeah, he said, I went through a pulmonary embolism.

I don't know what that is.

Is that a hard thing?

I had lacerated lungs.

No idea how you get lacerated lungs, but that's wild.

A series of, yeah.

A series of surgeries, ligament and tendon, ligament and tendon damage and getting up every day was just really hard.

I thought magically when I finished playing, it would get easier, but it got harder. I had completely depleted my testosterone.

So he basically just explains, he's like, I was left in shambles.

And so that's, I guess, one of the reasons why he has done this.

And I think it's really, really, really cool.

I don't think I'm going to do it.

Shout out to him.

I like, I like seeing him do it.

What else you got?

I like this question I got.

So a guy tweeted at me, I want to get your take on it.

So his name is Christian Vanoufel.

Great name.

The Christian says, question for you, Sean.

He goes, what work seems like small boy stuff, but actually packs a punch?

So we have this phrase we say on the pod all the time, no small boy stuff.

And we don't even like spend a ton of time defining it because honestly, small boy stuff is kind of obvious, but I would say the general buckets of small boy stuff would be, you know, overly worrying about things.

Small boy stuff would be thinking small rather than thinking big, thinking short-term rather than thinking long-term, you know, caring too much about what other people think of you, you know, there's a whole bunch of things that you classify as small boy stuff, like complaining when things get hard or things don't go your way, complaining in general, waiting in general.

These are all like small boy moves.

But I thought his question was great because the magic is in things that

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other people think are small, but actually pack a punch.

And I had an answer, but I'm curious what your answer would be.

I'll give you, you want me to go first?

You want to go first?

I'll give you a very quick example.

We had our, I keep talking about the offsite, my CEO, the company, he put all this effort into creating like little individual awards for people and like writing like appreciation notes and like being very thoughtful on the itinerary.

And I was like, dude, just like, who gives a shit?

Let's just get in the room and hang out.

He put all this work into it, spent hours and hours and hours, 100% worth it.

I was giving him a hard time.

And then afterwards I go, nope, you are right.

I was wrong.

That, that is an example of things that seem below your pay grade that you, you proved it was worth it.

Love it.

I would actually also give you credit because that would be one of my answers, which is admitting when you're wrong openly and quickly.

I remember hearing a story about one of the guys at Sequoia, who's awesome, like helped build Sequoia into like the most successful VC brand or one of the most in a long time.

Somebody asked like, what makes him great?

They go, all he cares about is getting it right.

He'll be in a meeting with you.

He'll say his opinion and somebody else will say their opinion.

And, you know, most people either start to debate or it's like, we're talking past each other.

It's like, I'm talking about one thing.

You're talking about another and I'm the boss.

So I'm going to get my way.

And he's like, he's the first guy and he has this phrase.

He always says, well, here we go.

Okay.

Nope.

I like your way better.

Let's go with that.

Like, nope, that's better.

Like, let's go with that is a awesome, small, but big thing you could do as a leader and in any company.

It sets the culture that it's not about who's right.

It's about getting it right, getting to right, you know, over time.

Here's what I wrote as some of my answers.

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I said, small things that seem like small boy stuff is actually big doing customer service yourself early on.

So being on the front lines, answering customer service.

Emails, questions, feedback, picking up the phone, all that stuff.

Manually on birding your first 10 or a hundred users.

So literally yourself sitting there with them, going to sit side by side with them and having them install your product or on board onto your product and answering their questions seems like an unscalable, small boy way of you spending your time.

Actually, no, it's a huge, huge thing and it'll teach you a lot about your product and your market, sending follow ups, follow ups, following up with somebody who didn't answer you always feels like, you know, like a little low status bitch move, but it packs a big punch.

Follow ups are where all the magic is.

And I think there's also a big piece of follow ups, which is a lot of people don't follow up because they don't hear back and they assume they say they're saying no, they don't like me.

They hate, they hate this idea.

I don't want to look stupid place.

They get in their head about it.

They start assuming the worst instead, assume the obvious people are busy and they forget people are busy and didn't get around to it.

And when you follow up with that mindset, that's the sort of no small boy mindset is like, I'm offering something of value to this person.

Of course they would want it.

Maybe they haven't yet seen the value in it.

Maybe I didn't convey it properly or they just haven't gotten around to it.

They're busy and that's okay.

I'm still here.

And the other one I wrote was finding things that recurred daily and making them 2% better because daily things that you do, things you do with high frequency compound, if you made them slightly better.

And so this is where I think a lot of people are like, why are you optimizing for your shoes or your mattress or your pillow or whatever?

Like I'm a stickler for how a meeting starts.

I'm always like, no, no, no.

At the start of every meeting, we say, all right, the purpose of this meeting is this and a good outcome of this meeting would be, you know, why?

If you can't say X and Y, like we're not doing the meeting.

I'll stop people and I'll say, no, no, do this.

Or when people talk, I'll be like, Hey, you know, you're talking a really low voice and you're not sitting up straight.

Like, can you just do it?

Like, say it with some energy, it'll make a difference.

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And like, but that's every meeting.
Then people know that's how we do meetings.
And so once you teach people how we do meetings, we're going to have a lot of meetings at this company.
So we're going to make them better.
We're not just going to have shitty meetings and let them, let them slide.
So finding recurring things and making them slightly better because it'll compound over time.
So that was my, what was your partner's name at Monkeen Furneau Furcon Furcon.
Furcon, I think was like, I don't know him well, but I could only, I could hang out with him for 30 seconds and I could just tell, he's the man at seeing redundancies, seeing things that you do over and over and over again.
And be like, yeah, we're going to get rid of that.
And we're going to fix it by doing this, this and this.
And it seems like you're like, dude, you're just slowing us down.
What are you doing?
He's like, no, no, no, you got to go fast to go slow or you got to go slow to go fast.
He seems like that type of personality.
Did he do that all the time?
He was definitely, he had, you know, the hacker's laziness, which was like, I'm not going to do something unless I'm, unless it's clear that it's going to, that it matters.
I'm just going to do shit, just to do shit.
That's the first thing.
Second thing, I'm not going to do the same thing every day.
If I, if I'm doing it, if I have to do it multiple times, I'm automating this.
And same thing, he would look around and be like, you know, what's Sean doing?
What's Jason doing?
Like are the non-technical people?
And he'd be like, Hey, Neil, you see Jason keeps, what he's doing is he's going and finding each person manually on Twitter.
You should just scrape this whole list, put it in a database and copy, paste this code snippet so that he could put that on his machine so that he could just have his leads ready so he can go faster.
And he would do a lot of stuff like that.
Like he told a story early at Apple oven.
So Apple oven was a mobile ad tech company that is now worth billions of dollars.
And he was the co-founder of it.
And what Furkan told me a story, he's like, yeah, Adam, the CEO, he's like, one thing he really cared about was his dashboard.
Like, what does our dashboard look like so that I have visibility?
And he's like, I kind of watched Adam to see like, is there really any value out

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of this or is he just, you know, sometimes CEOs just have pet projects.
They just want to look nice.
And he's like, is it that or is there value here?
So he shattered them.
He's like, all right, I'm not going to set up my computer.
I'm set at your computer.
He's showing me, what are you looking at with this dashboard?
What do you do with it?
And so he showed him and he's like, yeah, I look at this, I look at this.
And that tells me who we need to go after for these deals.
And I need to figure out how much to offer them so that I can get them faster.
Like, you know, instead of just saying you should work with us for these features,
if I just make a monetary offer that's better than their current ad network,
they'll switch.
And he's like, okay, so you need to figure out this list.
You need this data.
And then you need to know a projection of how much we can make with them.
So you can offer less than that, but still more than what they're probably
making for their current ad network.
And I should show you which, what the current ad network is in this dashboard.
I'll just figure that out by looking at their SDK, blah, blah, blah.
And he looked, he basically put together this like command center for the CEO.
And he's like, he basically built a sales tool rather than working on
features of the product.
He's like, I'm going to build you something.
And what, so what they did was they would go to a developer.
They say, you should use our ad network.
And they're like, I already have an ad network.
He's like, cool.
I'm guessing your ad network pays you \$9 CPM.
And they're like, yeah, something like that.
He's like, cool.
We'll pay you \$22.
He's like, how can you do that?
Don't, they aren't ad networks better.
I consider it a conventional ad networks better, but I'll just sign this paper
that says we're already going to pay you \$22 no matter what.
Like, I'm just confident it's going to perform because I know our ad networks
better.
And they're like, okay.
He's like, but here's the, you know, you got to switch and we have these two
engineers standing here next to me, they're going to help you switch today.
And then they would just, and they just rolled through the ad market because

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they were able to go to people and make them no brainer offers.

How did they make them no brainer offers?

They, because they had this command center internally, that was, how big is this app?

What are they currently using?

How much are they currently making?

How much do we think we can make off them?

And then how do we have a spread there that we can work with?

And so I thought that that was a great example of figuring out.

How to make the company successful in a way that most engineers would not do, because most engineers just want to work on product and not even product.

Like the under the hood parts of the product, which is like even worse than making the product better.

Dude, this is the most wholesome episode we've done in like two months.

We weren't talking about like CEOs fighting each other and shit.

No one's making, no one's getting made fun of or totally aligned.

Lots of take home value here.

This is, this is a, this is like the most wholesome thing we've done in the long time.

I actually am like, I feel like I'm learning.

This is, this episode was good because I'm sitting here in a notebook, taking notes.

I'm learning.

That's a good, I'm learning.

Yeah, love that.

Well, that's it.

That's the episode.

Good pod.