

[Transcript] My First Million / One Question Friday: How Do You Keep Your Imagination Alive?

All right.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

All right.

Back to the show.

Okay.

It's Sean and I'm here with One Question Friday where we take one listener question and we play the audio on air and then we try to answer.

We try to drop a knowledge bomb, right?

I'm already imagining you listening to this and your mind is blown, the brain is leaking out the air and that's how you're going to end this podcast.

Okay.

So let's go ahead and listen.

Ben has sent me three audios.

I can pick any one of the three.

Haven't heard it yet.

I'm going to pick door number one.

Let's go.

Hey guys.

My name is Matthew and I have a question for Sean.

So he talks about not wanting to be in the imagination graveyard.

What are some tips and tricks that you do to keep your imagination creativity alive, especially when you feel stuck or you don't know what to do?

Oh, okay.

Perfect.

This is right up my alley and let me break this down for you in three parts.

I'll first start by saying this.

I think this question touches on something, a tactic that is one of the most useful things that I do that I don't really hear anybody else talking about.

Okay.

So that's the, that's the teaser, which is what I'm about to talk about is one of the most useful things to me and I rarely hear people talking about it.

So let's break this into parts.

You out.

You're asking about imagination.

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You have this great little phrase.

Imagination graveyard.

I don't think I said that, but I'm stealing it from you.

So the first thing is if I said, all right, picture somebody who's got an amazing imagination, right?

Who in the world has an amazing imagination?

What people think about is a child, right?

So when we're kids, we get praise for our imagination and we're always making up games and stories and magical creatures and imaginary friends and all this good stuff.

So that's the first place we go.

We think kids imagination is for kids.

The other place we go is maybe like a, I don't know, like somebody who works at Pixar, like, oh, you're super creative.

You create these movies or stories.

So you need to be imaginative and the rest of us, we don't really need that.

And I think that's totally wrong.

So I actually will put this forward.

I think that everybody is using their imagination every day, but you just don't recognize it because when you're a kid, your imagination is about fun and possibilities and magical fantasy lands.

And when you're an adult, your imagination is actually manifest as stress, right?

Okay.

So what does that mean?

You wake up and you look through the alarm clock, you see the time and immediately you realize that, oh man, I'm going to be stuck in traffic, right?

So where's your brain gone?

Where's your brain has imagined a situation that hasn't happened, that is not necessarily a fact or proven, but you're imagining that the either the roads are going to be clogged or the airport's going to be busy or they're going to lose my bag or you imagine that, oh, I have this presentation and I'm going to, I'm going to eff it up, right?

I'm going to stumble on my words or I'm going to get nervous or people aren't going to get it or people are going to laugh at me, whatever.

We are constantly imagining negative scenarios happening.

This is very common in adults, right, and you know, how do you feel when you imagine these things, right?

You feel anxious, you feel stressed, you feel depressed.

These are all code words for the same thing, fear, and fear only takes place in the imagination.

And so the first thing to recognize that imagination is not just something that kids do, it's something that adults do all the time.

They just code name it stress.

And that's because they are imagining bad scenarios that haven't happened yet that might.

This happens as a parent.

You've got your kid and instead of being, you know, marveling at how they're playing,

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you are imagining, oh, they might hit their head on that thing, right?

Oh, they might stub their toe over here, right?

How often do we do things like that?

Okay.

So that's step one.

Now, the second thing is, okay, well, what's the big deal?

We're imagining this.

Well, what's the implication?

What is the result of this imagination?

Well, the first is how you feel because when you imagine something going poorly, you feel stressed, anxious, you know, depressed, sad, whatever, whatever these negative emotions are, emotions that we usually don't want to experience for an extended period of time.

So it changes our mood, but it also changes our decisions, right?

If you imagine that you're, you know, going to be stuck in traffic, maybe you'll leave earlier, it'll take a different route or maybe you won't go at all.

Same thing with, you imagine that the presentation is going to be, you're going to forget what you had to say and you're, the people are going to be looking at you like you don't know what you're talking about.

So maybe you'll actually just ask somebody else to do it or you'll, you'll avoid the situation altogether.

So imagination drives not just your mood, but your decisions.

So what, I mean, at the beginning of this, if I said, how important is your imagination?

You'd say, yeah, it's, you know, it's important to have an imagination, but your mood and your decisions are like the most, two most important things that you have in life.

What I'm telling you is that they're driven by your imagination about what you're imagining the future to be like.

And so all of a sudden imagination becomes this pretty important thing.

The problem is imagination is a muscle that we haven't used consciously since we were kids, right?

Like we're always doing it in the background, but how often are we actually intentionally trying to improve our imagination?

It is a muscle that's just been weakening and atrophying since we were like, you know, five years old.

And so here's how I do it.

Okay.

So that's the importance of it now.

Okay.

What do you actually do about that?

Well, the way that most people in my friend group, my peers, the way they think is extremely rational, analytical, logical, and they love lists.

Like nobody loves lists like a business person and a doer, an achiever, they love lists, right?

You know, write it down, knock it off.

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And those do work to a certain extent.

They actually work on getting a pretty good result, but they get there in the sort of like toughest, most stressful way possible.

And I'm not really interested in that, right?

Like I want to win and I want to enjoy it while I go.

To me, those are two non-negotiable things, not willing to lose and not willing to have this, you know, rough, tough it out experience.

No, I want to have an enjoyable, awesome experience while I'm doing it.

So that's just the way I've chosen to live my life.

Okay.

So now, all right, a quick message from our sponsor.

You know, I was thinking about the shortest day of the year earlier.

And while we technically have the same amount of time as every other day of the year, the lack of daylight makes it feel so much shorter, which is exactly the same kind of feeling as working with disconnected tools.

Our work days, the same length as always, but before you know it, we spent three hours just fixing something that was supposed to be automated.

Thankfully, HubSpot's all-in-one CRM platform can serve as a single source of truth for managing your customer relationships across marketing, sales, service operations with multiple hubs and over a thousand integrations and an easy-to-use interface, HubSpot lets you spend less time managing your software and more time connecting with your customers. Learn how HubSpot can help you grow your business at [HubSpot.com](https://www.hubspot.com).

What I do differently, instead of making a list, which is like a text format, I use the brain the way the brain actually works, which is a brain is more visual system.

And it's a visual auditory system.

And so I use my brain.

When I think about what I want to do, my tasks, my goals, stuff like that, I don't make lists.

I make scenes, like scenes in a movie.

So I'm imagining how I want something to go.

And I think I even started this podcast saying something like this.

I think I said, I'm imagining you listening to this with your mind blown and your brain leaking, right?

And I literally said that at the beginning of this podcast.

That is how I approach anything.

So people are like, you know, hey, you do a lot of public speaking, you know, what's a tip to get better?

And this is what I always say, I say, don't think about what you need to say.

First start by imagining the reaction at the end.

How are people going to feel and react at the end?

You imagine the standing ovation.

You imagine, I do this for example, I imagine when I teach my class on Zoom, this is like I teach a course, people pay \$1,000 per person to get into this course.

And they show up in a Zoom and I need to make this thing lit.

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It can't feel like a boring meeting.
I don't worry about what words I'm going to say.
I worry, I think about how do I want this to end?
How do I want this to feel at the end here?
And what I always do is I imagine the chat in a Zoom chat flooding with comments, people being like, this was a 12 out of 10, oh my God, so many nuggets of gold, dude, so glad I came.
I'm imagining these almost like congratulatory conversations that are happening at the end.
I imagine the volume of chat just flying through the screen of positive feedback.
That gets me in a certain type of mood.
That gives me that confidence that then I could just go and I can just operate naturally and who knows, the right words just happen to come out of my mouth then because I'm operating from the right state of mind.
So what I'll do is I'll make scenes for my goals.
So instead of saying I want to lose 10 pounds, I will imagine looking myself in the mirror and seeing what I see.
I'll imagine the scene of looking at my body or even better, forget the body.
I imagine that I just posted my before and after on Twitter and I'm seeing the replies flood in.
So I'm using my own psychology to my advantage.
My psychology wants to get a bunch of likes and comments on social media.
So I use that to my advantage.
I imagine that scene going the way I want.
If it happens to be with finances or success, I imagine a scene of that success.
So I don't have to worry about how I get there.
I just want to know what it feels like when I'm already there.
So here's some tips in doing this.
What I do is I have a scene for all the different things that matter to me in my life.
I have a scene for, let's say, my family, for example.
I don't really share this with most people, but family is super important to me.
So I imagine this scene of me walking into my house and, you know, like as a kid, you run up to your parent and you like cling onto their leg like a little koala.
So I already imagined one kid on one leg, another kid on the other leg, and then one kid koaling on my arm and then me leaning over to kiss my wife, right?
That's the scene that implies a house full of love, right?
So that is, I sort of imagine the happy ending at the end and that's my scene that I go to.
That puts me in a certain mood.
That gives me clarity of what I want.
And then once I have a great mood and great clarity of what I want, I tend to just make the right decisions along the way, right?
I'm operating from a place of abundance instead of a place of feeling like I'm lacking something and then I make shitty decisions because you never want to make decisions from panic or

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fear or feeling desperate or a lack because you're going to make a certain type of decision. I want to make decisions from feeling good, feeling confident, imagining all the possibilities and then I want to make decisions that will lead me into that outcome, okay? So I'll leave you with a couple of tips on if you actually want to go do this. Take your goal that you've written down, instead imagine it as a movie scene. Like a movie scene, it's not just what you see, it's what you hear, it's all your senses. Try to use as many of your senses as possible. So what do you hear? What do you see? How does it smell? How does it feel to be wearing those clothes, to be sitting in that car, to be sitting in that chair, to be sleeping in that bed, right? Try to engage all five senses, it makes it more vivid for you. The other thing is make it comical, right? So a movie can be a horror movie, a drama movie, I don't know. For me, I choose comedy. And so when I imagine something, I imagine almost the most extreme version of that because it makes me laugh. It takes a lot of the weight off my shoulders. Things feel really important and tight when you are kind of afraid of them. But once you play with the idea in your head, you play with that scene, it becomes lightweight and then I like to operate from a place of something being lightweight. And so that's how I do it. That's how I use my imagination on really a daily basis and it becomes a practice. And I want to practice my imagination more than I did as a kid when I used to make up little stories with my figurines and my toys or when I used to draw and sketch and do things like that. I used to work that muscle out a lot back then. What I realized is you got to do that as an adult too because your imagination is always running. And it's just, what is it? Is it running on autopilot? By default, it's kind of going to imagine stressful, possible negative outcomes. That tends to be where we go as adults and I don't want to fall into that path, right? That's common. I'd like to go uncommon. And so the uncommon path is to actually train that muscle, practice imagining things that you want. That puts you in the right mood and that lets you make decisions from a place of winning rather than fear of losing. All right. I hope that answers your question and I'll see you guys next Friday.