

## [Transcript] Huberman Lab / Tony Hawk: Harnessing Passion, Drive & Persistence for Lifelong Success

Welcome to the Huberman Lab Podcast,  
where we discuss science and science-based tools  
for everyday life.  
I'm Andrew Huberman,  
and I'm a professor of neurobiology and ophthalmology  
at Stanford School of Medicine.  
Today, my guest is Tony Hawk.  
Tony Hawk is one of the most celebrated  
and accomplished professional skateboarders of all time.  
For more than 40 years,  
he has been at the forefront of the sport.  
And I don't mean just doing a sport for more than 40 years.  
I truly mean he has been at the forefront of skateboarding,  
developing new maneuvers, AKA tricks,  
that include incredible feats like the 900  
and 900 degree spin in the air,  
as well as numerous other maneuvers  
that have really pushed the entire sport forward.  
He's also completely popularized the sport  
through his video game  
and through his ambassadorship for skateboarding.  
In fact, few, if any, names are as synonymous with skateboarding  
in the general public as Tony Hawk.  
And he is oh, so deserved of that title  
because for more than 40 years,  
he has shown up as the consummate professional.  
He is kind, he is respectful,  
and he is completely committed to his craft.  
And that shows up in every aspect of his life.  
He still, to this day,  
skateboards daily and as you'll soon learn,  
he recently suffered a major injury,  
a complete break of his femur.  
That is the bone in his upper leg.  
And this is what many people would consider  
a career-ending injury.  
Not only did Tony come back from that injury,  
but he went back to the very trick  
on which he broke his femur  
and recently completed that trick.  
That is a 540 or so-called McTwist.  
I mentioned this because at every level of his life,  
Tony has demonstrated himself to be somebody

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with incredible drive,  
incredible vision, and incredible persistence.  
And today we talk about that drive, vision, and persistence.  
And we talk about what it takes to set a goal  
and to continually evolve one's goal  
and to continually progress as a basically young preteen,  
as a teenager, as a young adult, as an adult,  
and well, let's face it, as a 55-year-old man,  
he is now heading a little bit past middle age,  
although we do hope that he lives forever.  
Tony Hawk, AKA the Birdman, really does seem  
to be superhuman.  
But as you'll learn today, he is oh so human  
in the way that he shares his own experience  
and shares with you the ways in which we can each  
and all look at what we do and think about  
what we want to achieve and put our minds  
and our bodies to those goals and achieve them.  
I confess that today's discussion with Tony Hawk  
was a particularly thrilling one for me to have.  
I grew up in the sport of skateboarding,  
so I had met Tony previously,  
although he doesn't remember it, that was many years ago.  
In fact, I met his parents.  
You'll learn more about that story during today's episode.  
But I was aware, of course, of Tony's accomplishments.  
I was also aware of his philanthropy,  
so he has a skate park foundation.  
I also listen to his podcast  
with another professional skateboarder, Jason Ellis,  
called Hawk versus Wolf.  
We provided a link to that podcast  
in the show note captions as well.  
But never before have I had the opportunity to sit down  
and talk to the Tony Hawk and learn from him.  
So I was absolutely delighted to have this conversation  
and it far exceeded my already lofty expectations.  
Before we begin, I'd like to emphasize that this podcast  
is separate from my teaching and research roles at Stanford.  
It is, however, part of my desire and effort  
to bring zero cost to consumer information  
about science and science related tools  
to the general public.

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In keeping with that theme,  
I'd like to thank the sponsors of today's podcast.  
Our first sponsor is Element.  
Element is an electrolyte drink  
that has everything you need and nothing you don't.  
That means plenty of electrolytes,  
sodium, magnesium and potassium, but no sugar.  
The electrolytes and hydration are absolutely key  
for mental health, physical health and performance.  
Even a slight degree of dehydration  
can impair our ability to think, our energy levels  
and our physical performance.  
Element makes it very easy to achieve proper hydration  
and it does so by including the three electrolytes  
in the exact ratios they need to be present.  
I drink Element first thing in the morning when I wake up,  
I usually mix it with about 16 to 32 ounces of water.  
If I'm exercising, I'll drink one while I'm exercising  
and I tend to drink one after exercising as well.  
Many people are scared off by the idea of ingesting sodium  
because obviously we don't want to consume sodium in excess.  
However, for people that have normal blood pressure  
and especially for people that are consuming  
very clean diets, that is consuming not so many processed  
foods or highly processed foods,  
oftentimes we are not getting enough sodium,  
magnesium and potassium and we can suffer as a consequence.  
And with Element, simply by mixing in water, it tastes  
delicious, it's very easy to get that proper hydration.  
If you'd like to try Element, you can go to drink Element,  
that's element.com slash Huberman to claim a free Element  
sample pack with your purchase.  
Again, that's drink element [lmnt.com](https://www.elementlmnt.com) slash Huberman.  
Today's episode is also brought to us by Roka.  
Roka makes eyeglasses and sunglasses  
that are the absolute highest quality.  
I've spent a lifetime working on the biology  
of the visual system and I can tell you  
that your visual system has to contend  
with an enormous number of challenges  
in order for you to be able to see clearly.  
Roka understands this and has developed their eyeglasses  
and sunglasses so that you always see with perfect clarity.

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In addition, they are extremely lightweight and they won't slip off your face if you get sweaty. Indeed, Roka eyeglasses and sunglasses were initially designed for performance in sports, but now they include aesthetics and styles that are really designed to be worn anytime. I, for instance, wear readers at night, I'll sometimes wear sunglasses during the day when I drive and of course I do not wear sunglasses when I do my morning sunlight viewing, which I highly recommend everyone do their morning sunlight viewing. If you'd like to try Roka eyeglasses or sunglasses, you can go to Roka, that's R-O-K-A.com and enter the code Huberman to save 20% off your first order. Again, that's Roka, R-O-K-A.com enter the code Huberman at checkout. And now for my discussion with Tony Hawk. Tony Hawk, welcome. Thanks. I'm particularly thrilled to have this conversation because I've tracked your career for a very long time, grew up in the skateboard thing. I know, had your poster on my wall. Oh, thank you. Your name is synonymous with skateboarding, as you know. I think a question that probably get asked from time to time, but let's just clarify the data from the outset. Tony Hawk is your real name, right? Yes, Anthony Frank Hawk, but I never went by Anthony. I mean, my parents call me Tony's and so I could remember. It's a fitting name given the sport and what you do. And we will get into this a little bit later when we talk about family and parenting and parents. But I'll allude to the story now that when I was 14 years old, your parents took me in. I slept in your bed in your home, not with you in it, but surrounded by your near infinite number of trophies. And it must have been right after I moved out. So this would be I was 14 years old. Maybe I'll just tell the story now very briefly. I was 14 years old. I was at a contest at Linda Vista Boys Club.

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Everyone left me and another kid named Billy Waldman.

We're still there.

Your dad said, where are you going?

It was clear that I didn't know where I was going.

My life was, I was a wayward youth at that time.

And so they took me in for a night,

maybe even two nights, your mom, Nancy and your dad, Frank,

were so gracious, brought me in, into your home,

took me to dinner.

I don't recall.

I mean, that tracks.

That would tell my dad and my mom together

would be doing that, yes.

Incredible people.

And we'll get back to that story later

because you and I actually met the next day

in Fallbrook at your ramp.

Oh, Fallbrook.

So it had been 88, 89.

That's right.

I'm going to say 89.

And it must have been one of the either NSA or CASEL contests that your dad was very active in.

Well, we'll get back to that.

But I have so many questions that relate to skateboarding,

to you, and really as a neuroscientist,

to the whole concept of a life of continual progression.

Because whether or not people listening to this

and watching this are skateboarders or not,

and I imagine that most of them are not,

it's absolutely clear that you've been in this game

a very long time and that you've somehow managed

to continue to progress over and over

to come back from very severe injuries

and somehow keep getting better and better.

So the first question I have is about the younger version of you.

Did you have any sort of self-concept?

Like, you know, I want to be a pro athlete

or I want to be a skateboarder

or I want to have a video game named after me.

Right?

Right, exactly.

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You know, but if you can think back to maybe even pre-skateboarding, do you remember what your self-concept was? You know, this notion of like I'm a self and I'm either similar or different to other kids in some way? When I was young, I was put in a lot of advanced classes and not that that felt like a badge of honor. It felt more like I was just classified as a nerd. But then I thought, okay, well, that's my strength. So I'll lean into that. And I thought that maybe I would be a teacher because I thought, well, I get all these concepts and I think I could relate them to kids or to my peers because I helped a lot of my classmates through some of the classes. So that's all I really had. I didn't know. And then when I would play sports, I would be okay. You know, I wasn't terrible, but I wasn't the VIP or the MVP. And so I was just kind of playing basketball, playing baseball. And then when I found skateboarding, I mean, it was pretty obvious that that was what I wanted to do. It was once I got on a skateboard and realized that I could maneuver it and do things that were unique. And now they're moving the needle or anyone cared, but they were unique in the sense of like, I've never seen one do this. And this feels awesome. And so I just want to do this. And so I didn't think that this is my career. I was 10. So I just thought, this is my hobby. This is my thing. And I don't want to play these other sports anymore. Did you stop playing all the other sports? Yes. I quit little league in the middle of the season when my dad had been appointed president

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of that chapter of little league.  
Because he was the coach.  
He was always very involved in all of his kids.  
I have three siblings.  
So he was always very supportive,  
whatever they were doing.  
And then when I was playing baseball,  
he became a coach because he had time  
and he was doing that.  
He was almost retired.  
And then he was such a prominent figure in the little league.  
They said, oh, you're president now.  
And so then someone else was coach.  
And then I was skating and I was over it.  
Did you immediately start skateboarding in the parks  
on transition, as we say?  
Or were you pushing around in the driveway like most kids?  
I was transportation.  
And skating was kind of a fad.  
So I started in 78 roughly, maybe 77 even.  
And it was kind of a fad.  
So kids just had skateboards  
and they would all cruise around.  
Like it was the 70s.  
So everyone had a bike, right?  
And you knew wherever all the kids were  
because the bikes were in the front lawn.  
And then at some point that kind of turned into skating.  
So everyone had skateboard.  
They were all like shitty,  
JC Penney or big boxed or skateboards.  
No one had really good one, not in my area.  
But then at some point,  
we were just looking at these magazines  
and people skating and everyone skating in pools  
because that was the dog town and Z-Boys era.  
And it was like, these guys are flying.  
I wouldn't like, where do we do that?  
And then the skate park opened up in San Diego.  
How's Delmar skate park?  
Skate park.  
Okay, Oasis skate park was the first one in our area.  
Actually, I take that back.

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Spring Valley was the first skate park.  
I tried to go there and I was nine and you had to be 10.  
And I remember like sitting in the parking lot  
looking over the fence.  
My dad didn't realize what the eight,  
cause my dad would have easily lied for me,  
but he didn't realize there was an age limit.  
They said, how old is he nine?  
Oh, sorry, he can't come.  
And then they closed not long after.  
So when I never got to Skate Spring Valley.  
Cause I think of you as synonymous with Delmar skate ranch.  
Sure. Well, that was that came later  
because Oasis skate park was open.  
So this was when I first one was like 78.  
A friend of mine was going and he said,  
I'm going to go to the skate park.  
So I had to go get, you know, this is such a hassle.  
Like I had to go get the authorization form.  
I had to get it notarized by the bank  
by my parents like to go there.  
And then I went and it was, that was my epiphany.  
When I first saw people flying around in person,  
I was like, this is what I'm doing  
for as long as I could possibly do it.  
Cause it looked, it looked like magic.  
It really did.  
It looked like they were flying on magic carpets.  
And it spoke to me in the sense of being a daredevil,  
but also doing it individually, not relying on my team,  
not getting, getting hassled by a coach.  
It was just like, oh, I can be part of the scene,  
but do it my own way.  
And then I skated Oasis as much as I could.  
Whenever I get your rides there,  
and then my parents moved to North County, San Diego,  
when I was in high school,  
mostly because they were just chasing kind of real estate  
deals.  
And so I got lucky that Delmar Skate Ranch was right there.  
Every other part closed,  
but Delmar Skate Ranch remained open.  
So I mean, there was a bit of luck to all that.



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And it was based on geography.  
Your dad's involvement is interesting  
because I got into skateboarding because, you know,  
my dad wasn't around that much at that time.  
A lot of kids get into skateboarding  
because it doesn't require parent involvement.  
Was it unusual to have parental involvement at that stage?  
I mean, I remember Frank,  
and by the way, I remember Frank and Nancy,  
your parents with such fondness,  
not just because they took me in,  
but I remember thinking like they were at times  
the only point of stability in a landscape of like 200 people  
where as you know,  
there could be like potential chaos of any kind.  
And your dad had this way of moving about,  
like he wasn't afraid,  
I recall that he wasn't afraid to say what he thought,  
like, hey, don't do that,  
like impose some regulation at this contest.  
And at the same time,  
it seemed me also understood  
that this was a sport unlike other sports.  
Like you're not gonna regulate kids like me at the time  
or you're not gonna try and control people.  
So what was it like to have your dad involved?  
And the reason I ask is that you're a parent,  
we'll talk more about parenting,  
but also it seems that he went from saying,  
okay, Little League, other sports,  
which is more typical to,  
okay, this kind of unusual sport, skateboarding,  
but your mere interest in it  
was enough to get him excited  
or motivated enough to take you around to these places.  
That's pretty special.  
I mean, that's pretty unique.  
It was, I mean, and in that respect,  
it was great to have his support  
and to rely on him for that.  
The fact that he was always around  
and that he was in charge of a lot of the events,  
that sucked because it just marked me

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as one being favorited and spoiled.  
And most of my friends,  
their parents didn't want them skating.  
So even though they were stoked that my dad  
was doing this kind of thing  
and giving that kind of support,  
they still were like, your dad's here.  
Like this is our thing, this is our scene,  
this is our getaway from our parents.  
I didn't really have a choice in the matter.  
I did at some point tell him my concerns  
and my frustrations with it,  
but he didn't really want to hear it.  
You know, he was very much steadfast.  
Like, well, I've been coming this far.  
Like you can, we can keep our distance at these events,  
but people are relying on me to organize them.  
And so I just had to suck it up for a while.  
Did it push you harder?  
Like, you know, if you could prove yourself  
with a skateboarding that you didn't have to worry about  
any claims of favoritism,  
because ultimately you can't fake skateboarding, right?  
I mean, there's no deep fake version of skateboarding.  
You either can do it or you can't do it.  
And it's shown in real time.  
So, and I suppose back then,  
I recall you were quite a bit skinny or skinnier.  
Oh yeah.  
I had all kinds of things going against me at the time.  
Yeah, I mean, I don't think people will realize this  
unless they've met you in person,  
but nowadays there are a few taller skateboarders out there  
cause the sport's grown so much, but you're pretty tall.  
You're like six, six, three, but I was not when I was grown.  
When I was that age, I was very small  
and kind of concerningly small  
because by the time I got to be 16, I was still,  
I looked like I was 13.  
I used to get pulled over.  
I literally like, I had a car that I bought with my earnings.  
I had a Honda Civic, 1977, CBCC, and I would get pulled over.  
And then the cops would be like, how old are you?

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I'm 16.

Like, well, you looked like you were 13 back there.

And then I shot up around age 17.

Okay, so that's interesting.

And we can get back to this when we talk about your almost remarkable levels of ability to recover from physical injuries.

Because, well, I'll just share a little bit of a biological theory here, which is that, you know, there are a lot of people that study longevity and perhaps the fastest rate of aging that we ever undergo is puberty, right?

If you think about a kid before puberty, a kid after puberty is like a different human being psychologically, often physically as well.

Some people have a longer arc of puberty than others and that does seem to correlate with a longer life.

And so it's kind of interesting, you know, some kids hit puberty and they go through all the markers of puberty in like one summer.

Other kids, it's very, very long.

And it sounds like we don't have to talk about when you hit puberty and the other markers, but it sounds like your growth spurt occurred late.

That's a terrific marker of a long life, by the way, because what it reflects is the onset of a big burst of growth hormone out of the pituitary and the brain.

And if you continue to grow for a long period of time, that indicates, you know, it gives you a little bit of the slope of the line.

Does that make sense?

So this may have important and fortunate consequences.

So at 17, you shot up.

Am I correct in remembering, maybe you said it, maybe somebody else did, that you were, forgive me, but so skinny when you were a kid that you actually wore elbow pads as knee pads.

Yeah, that's a true story.

Yeah, for sure.

And I took inspiration from others that I identified with, namely Steve Cavallaro, because he was already an established pro when I started to come up

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in the ranks or even get noticed at all.  
And he was wearing elbow pads on his knees  
in this full-page picture of him and Winchester  
doing a back sit error.  
And I was like, that, I want to do that.  
And he's small.  
And I feel like that's my goal.  
And Steve, if he can do that, I can do it.  
It was just more like, oh, I identify with that.  
And that gives me hope.  
And as I recall, Steve also has a pretty severe scoliosis.  
Right?  
At one point he was turned pretty tight  
to the right or left, I don't recall,  
which I mean, still an incredible skateboarder.  
Love, Stevie.  
He's a NorCal guy.  
So I grew up around him.  
I know whatever he had is from birth,  
but it was more that his size.  
And I didn't even know he was, not many,  
but he's like four years older than me.  
So I just was like, oh, there's small guys doing that.  
I can do it, maybe.  
But when I got tall, when I went through puberty,  
suddenly I had all these tricks.  
And then suddenly I had the strength  
and the heights that gave me confidence.  
And so all of a sudden it was like,  
oh, I can go way higher now.  
And I'm comfortable with these tricks,  
these intricate board maneuvers and stuff.  
So that was a huge advantage to me.  
The smaller stuff felt different after that,  
which was harder.  
But being able to blast eight feet in the air  
as opposed to four feet in the air was a huge advantage.  
Yeah, isn't that wild when the nervous system  
knows how to do something and then your body changes  
and you can do the same thing,  
but with so much more force?  
Even the bowls look smaller.  
When I would stand on top and was like,

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wait, this isn't that big?

It's wild.

Well, the reason I ask about this, I think people listening generally seem to assume that if you become a Stanford professor, you become a professional skateboarder or you professional soccer player that you were just fated to become that, right?

And it's clear that it's the confluence of so many different factors.

But one of the consistent factors for sure is a sense that you just really love doing it, right?

I mean, I can't imagine getting proficient or excellent at anything without loving doing it, right?

And so still at this time, when you were, let's say, 14, 15, did you have any concept of, you know, I'm a pro model, I'm gonna, none of that.

Well, there was none of that to be had.

So we didn't have these great aspirations because no one had really done that before.

There were, you could have some success.

Yes, you could have maybe a signature model, but even the top sales of skateboarding then wasn't a career.

The prize money was \$150 for first place, a hundred for second, 50 for third.

Couple tanks of gas, some food.

Yeah, so let's put it this way.

I turned pro when I was 14.

By the time I was 15 and a half and I had a learner's permit and I could drive a scooter, you know, I had \$600 in my bank account and I used that to buy a Honda Express moped.

For a year and a half, that was my earnings.

It was \$600.

So clearly money wasn't the dopamine hit.

It was the actual skateboarding.

Sure, and that's what I mean though.

There wasn't, there was no goal of that because it just didn't exist.

So I didn't care, like, are you kidding me?

I had my own vehicle at age 15, like I was living large.

I could get to the skateboard on my own, that was amazing.

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To be 14 and be a professional at anything must be a trip, so to speak.  
But what I'm wondering about, because I came up when your early cohort with Palpe Rolta, so for those that don't know, so-called Bones Brigade, right?  
I guess it was what, total what?  
Like six, seven guys, there were some of them that were a little more peripheral than others.  
There were about six, seven at core guys in the various videos.  
I mean, you guys were famous, right?  
You had posters on kids' walls who skateboarded.  
There was a second or maybe it was a third surge of popularity in skateboarding because it would sort of surge in general popularity then disappear and come back as it has over decades. It keeps coming and going to some extent.  
Did you have a conscious awareness of just how, how much attention was being placed on, photos of you, videos of you?  
And I'm just wondering about the younger version of you, whether or not you realize what was happening.  
And the reason I ask is because you've always seemed to me, somebody who through interviews, through videos, through our interactions, and for those that have known you much longer than I have, just very grounded, like not caught up in it.  
We've never seen headlines about you kind of just, blowing all your money or wrecking cars and destroying your life.  
I mean, I'm sure you've made mistakes like any of us, but you seem to have avoided a lot of the pitfalls of quote unquote famous people and celebrities.  
And yet you were a famous person from a very young age.  
Yeah, I, well, I think it was that I didn't never, I never, that was never a goal.  
And then when I had a sense of it, I was very uncomfortable.  
I mean, I was happy, I was happy to be successful.  
I was happy that people recognized me.  
That was amazing.  
Just because I was good at skateboarding.

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I never imagined something like that.  
And, but I was always very,  
I mean, some people thought that I was sort of almost like pompous  
or arrogant because I wasn't interacting  
because I was just, I was walled up.  
I was like, I don't know what to do.  
I don't know what to do.  
This is the last words I would ever use to describe you.  
I think it was just more that, that, that people would see me  
like I'd go to a ramp.  
I didn't know anybody and I would just start skating  
and I'd do all my stuff.  
And they were like, Oh, he doesn't even talk to anyone.  
And I was like, I don't know.  
I don't know what to do.  
I don't know how to act.  
Also you're a 14 years old.  
Correct.  
So Stacy broke me out of that.  
Cause I remember one time there was a kid that was just staring  
at me like, hold my skateboard.  
He had my signature model and he said, go say hi to that guy.  
What, are you sure?  
Like he wants, he wants to interact with you.  
You know, just go high five them or anything.  
And, and I learned to sort of break out of my comfort zone  
by doing that enough.  
But my first go around, I mean, that was, that was sort of  
my first wave of fame, I'd say the Bones Brigade years.  
And we were so young that we thought this is forever.  
And so we were definitely careless with our, our money, with our actions.  
And, and at some point my dad saw that he didn't think it was going to be long  
term cause no one had had a long-term career, right?  
So he, he encouraged me to, to invest, to get property, like to, to buy a house.  
That was the, that was my saving grace.  
Cause I definitely was spending on cars and things like that.  
Yeah.  
Car, like kind of a little bit beyond my means.  
I wasn't really considering all my money was, was 10, 99 income.  
So it wasn't, we weren't paying taxes on anything.  
And at the end of the year, it'd be like, oh, you owe this much.  
Like, wait, what are you talking about?  
So, um, for instance, Hey, do you want to go to Hawaii?

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Yeah.

Okay.

Invite everyone.

We're all going to Hawaii.

I got, well, let's rent a place.

Okay.

You know, and it was on me cause I had the means.

You mentioned Stacy.

We should probably clarify for people.

Um, Tony's referring to the great Stacy Peralta.

Yeah.

He was, he was the one who put me on the bones brigade when I was still considered sort of a circus act, like a, you know, my, my skating was not really established.

The stuff that I was doing was largely made fun of because people thought that what I was doing was just more like a free show.

Can you explain more?

So my, and let me just tell you that my recollection, first recollection of you, that I still have that image in my mind would, um, is the finger flip air, right?

You know, so for folks that aren't familiar with skateboarding, you know, people ride around on transition or in the street, handrail stairs, you know, people probably familiar with all those things.

But, um, skateboarders will ride up toward the top of the pool or the ramp and they'll do something on the so-called lip or the coping.

That's to ride at the edge of it or they'll go above it, like in the air.

But I recall seeing you do the finger flip air.

I'd never seen anyone flip a board in the air.

I'd seen people do varial.

So move it.

It's going to be complicated for people just listening, but just to flip it upside down and then catch it in and finger flip air.

Yeah.

That was, I remember that was jaw drop, right?

It was like, so if that was considered circus era or circus, uh, like, then I don't know, I don't know what it was being compared to because at the time we, we probably watched that it was in slow motion, as I recall, and we probably watched it 3000 times, you know, that summer.

There's a big group of us that all started skateboarding that summer.

Um, I would say kind of just before that in that window is when people were, were more, um, giving me flak for what I was doing because I was mostly doing board duration stuff, but I still didn't have the height, the height in terms of the height in terms of, in terms of getting in the air.

Yeah.

So I was doing all the stuff kind of right at coping level.



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And so people weren't taking it into consideration or giving it much merit because it was just like, Oh, he's doing a little board twist or a board turn.

And then when I started to get some height around the time you saw and started doing those tricks, like visibly way up high, that's when the, the, the shift happened in terms of more acceptance.

But I was still labeled as a, as like a trick skater, robot skater.

And then you had Christian, a soy who was all style, air is higher than anyone.

Anytime he did a trick, it was going to be so flashy and so amazing.

And rock star personality and rock star personality.

And so in that era, you, I mean, it was very divided.

It was like, no one liked us both.

You know what I mean?

It was just so strange to be of that age and of doing something that had never really been established.

And then something I'm pitted against another skater.

And we're just trying to make our way through teen years and, and skateboarding.

And, and, um, it got, it was, it was hard.

I mean, it was like, I got, I got bullied.

You know, yes, I was successful.

Yes, I was doing, but, but I would get, I would get a thrasher magazine would talk shit about my performance when I would win.

Yeah, I remember that because I was from Northern California and thrasher magazine was a skateboard magazine from Northern California.

I actually wrote for them for a while when I was a postdoc to make some extra money under a different name folks, but you can try and find those articles.

They're out there.

And then in Southern California, it was skateboarder mag, transworld, mostly transworld skateboarding.

Yeah, it was, it was a transworld, transworld skateboarding and thrasher magazine where the sort of the rivals.

Right. Yeah.

So yeah, I recall some of those things that were said, it just is amazing to me.

But it brings about a really important lesson, which is, you know,

that kid that gets made fun of, if they're determined and they love what they're doing, that's going to be the kid that blows everyone away later.

And I know this for sure, because I'll never forget there.

Do you remember the back to the city contests that were called in San Francisco?

So I went to those.

They were in the drain fountains in front of city hall.

I remember getting there one day and there was this guy with kind of like afro like hair pushing around and he was doing what are called daffies.

He had two skateboards.

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He was kind of like weaving around.  
And I remember thinking, you know, San Francisco's got its issues now, but back then it was rough also for different reasons.  
I remember thinking like, this guy's going to get beat up.  
I hung out with the Embarcadero crew.  
I was like, this guy's going to get beat down.  
Yeah. That guy was Mark Gonzalez.  
Oh, yeah.  
So one of the greatest, perhaps the greatest street skateboarder.  
If you can't really define these things greatest and whatnot in skateboarding.  
But, you know, I remember thinking this guy's just he's a kook.  
And then I realized who it was.  
Yeah.  
And then I realized he was just like any other kid there at some level.  
And then a lot of the kids that got teased early on, they stuck with it.  
Five years later, I'm seeing them in the magazines.  
And I think about this with podcasting, too.  
There've been some podcasters that have reached out early on and had questions and I look at their stuff and, you know, one's initial impression can be like, I mean, what are they like, what are they doing here?  
And then you just see them two years later, three years later, and they're doing amazingly well.  
And you're like, this guy or gal is here for good.  
They're going to, they're probably going to be top of the game in a few years.  
So you never count anybody out.  
When you would go to sleep at night in that era, where you like laying on the pillow going, oh, my God, people hate me.  
There's stuff in the magazines.  
I got to push harder.  
This is hard.  
Did you talk to your dad about it?  
I mean, again, it's a lot to bear, or even as an adult, I can only imagine what it's like to bear as a 15 year old kid.  
I didn't really have a support group, you know, or any resource to voice those concerns.  
Um, I just knew I wanted to keep getting better.  
That was it.  
And so if anything, if I was worried about those voices, or I was worried about the whatever take people had on me, I knew I was going to go back to the skate park and learn more tricks.  
Um, and at some point I had so much of that as a foundation that it was sort of undeniable that like, well, he can do all this stuff.  
And he doesn't, doesn't just do it at his home park.  
Um, and I think that's probably when the tide turned for me is when, when I

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started to do well at other events, um, namely up in pipeline, which was for the most part, the most frightening pool that we could ride.

The thing was big, but I also recall like the, the hips, as they're called, like the transitions, the way they match up, super tight lot of her giant coping, super rough.

Like if you fell in upland, you're getting shoot up.

It's pulling your knee pads down.

I didn't know that because from the photos, I wouldn't know that.

Oh, it was, it was treacherous.

It really was like it was, and, and I wanted to do well at the event and I would drive up there every weekend.

Like my friend, uh, Greg Smith was a freestyler, but he lived near upland.

And so I would go drive Friday after school straight to upland, skate at night, skate Saturday all day, skate Sunday, uh, early and then drive home.

Um, cause I have in San Diego and I just made it my mission to, to figure that thing out because that was the proving ground for me.

Um, and so if I could skate that, I could go skating.

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Again, if you go to [drink AG one dot com slash Huberman](https://drinkagone.com/slashhuberman), you can claim the special offer of 10 free travel packs plus a year supply of vitamin D three K two. So it's clear you had an enormous drive.

Let's talk a little bit about the process of trying tricks.

The anxiety associated with it.

Did you, did you and do you have a sort of systematic process?

Was it, you know, I'm going to learn the basics first.

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Like, did you say that?

Did you say, okay, I'm going to learn how to do stuff, you know, at coping level.

Then I'm going to do a little error.

Then I'm going to go bigger.

I'm going to do this or did you just sort of try what you wanted to try?

And you obviously weren't haphazard about it.

Like how it seems you're pretty systematic about exploring what's possible and then pushing forward a little by little.

But yeah, maybe you could talk a little bit about how you have conceptualized.

Okay, tomorrow I want to try this.

It comes in different forms, but for the most part, I think about how I could combine existing tricks and would this trick work going into this trick?

And could your body position shifts or would it all work in unison?

And when I approach a new trick, I'm saying, I'm saying more in the last 20 years.

My thought process is I have all the pieces to this.

I've done every bit of it.

I've done the, I've done the first part of the trick in another form.

I've done the second part or the grinding of it or whatever, usually in some other basic way, and then the landing is, well, the landing is from whatever that is.

And if you can throw all those things together and make the timing work, it's going to work.

And I never, I never went at something with some haphazard approach or throwing caution to the wind, like, hope this, see what happens.

It's always very much like, I know I have all these things.

And so I just have to put them together.

And I mean, now things are so technical that my same approach that I'm doing hundreds of times, one of them just works.

And it's not because I didn't, it's not because I committed to that one.

It's because of some tiny fractional adjustment that happened that I didn't even know happened and it just worked.

And I mean, that kind of is the curse of what tricks are now.

Cause there are plenty of moves that I've done over the last 10 years even that I only did once because it was too fucking hard to get to.

And I didn't learn from that one make.

And that, that is, that's hard to accept.

Cause in the past I was learning tricks to have them in my arsenal that I could just throw them down at a competition or a demo.

I've got that in my pocket.

These days, like that trick, for instance, I did a, I did a 360 shove it, five out of fakie.

All right, let's, let's break that down for real.

360 shove it.

So who's going to take this on?

## [Transcript] Huberman Lab / Tony Hawk: Harnessing Passion, Drive & Persistence for Lifelong Success

I'll let you take this on.

I can try it from my knowledge and perspective, but we'll, we'll try 360 shove it is pushing the board with your feet and letting it spin a full 360 rotation under your feet and then landing back on it.

It's, it's a trick that people do on, usually on flat ground.

I've learned, I've learned to do it up on the vert walls.

Like I can do 360 shove it's kind of in the air, but I'm doing that.

I'm doing a 360 shove it and then I'm landing on my truck.

Right.

Like the axle between the wheels.

One axle in a, what we call a five O position, which is basically a wheelie on the truck.

So everything is so precise.

I got to do 360 shove it at exactly a certain spot on the wall.

I've got to catch it so that my truck lands when my foot hits it.

I can't push it into the truck cause that, that screws up my balance.

So it has to land on the truck.

I have to land with my weight perfectly set back enough that I can come in backwards because I'm doing this trick and, and I'm, I'm going to come in fakie.

Right.

360 shove five O to coming in forward is, is a whole different beast.

That, that I could probably do that just in a few tries.

But the idea that I have to land on this thing, balance on it, like a teeter totter, and then reverse my energy and come in fakie.

Backward, it's so hard.

It's so hard to, to get into the right position.

So like any time I try it, there's like a one in 10 chance.

I'm even going to get into the position I need.

And that's the one I have to commit to.

So every time I do it, it's so intense and it takes so much, so much commitment and, and so much mind.

I don't even know how to explain it.

Like the, the, that you have shut everything else out, except this one moment and this one fractional piece that you have to make work.

And it, I've done it once.

And I'd like, I would love to do it again, but I know what it's going to, it's going to take the same amount of effort.

I didn't learn from that one that I made some trick that makes it happen every time.

It's all so technical.

And there's so many things that can go wrong that I'll accept that.

Okay, I did it once.

In thinking about the 360 show at 5 0 fakie.

Was that something that you thought of the night before you decide that day?

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Do you ever use visualization?

Have you ever had learning come to you in a dream or find that you try, try, tried something, went to sleep that night next day, made it anything like that?

Yes.

Sometimes I'll wake up in the middle of the night and I'll write down something because it was like, Oh, there's this trick.

Oh, I think I could do that.

Yeah.

Okay.

I'm going to write it down.

So you dream about skateboarding from time to time.

Yeah.

Well, yeah, that has shifted a bit after I got hurt.

But yeah, I used to dream that I can't skate.

Like I'm trying and it feels like the ramps made a carpet.

I can't get the speed.

I can't get the timing.

And then as I went through this traumatic injury, my dreams shifted to, Wow,

I can skate.

I can do all my tricks again.

Oh, interesting.

Yeah.

A little piece of science around the can't can't skate piece or when people feel like they're bolted down in a dream or they can't run away.

Yeah.

There's this one phase of sleep called rapid eye movement sleep where the brain is very active.

The dreams associated with it tend to be very vivid.

And at the same time, we are completely paralyzed.

And the idea is that no one really knows why, but that it's the case that we're paralyzed to prevent us from acting out our dreams.

It's also an interesting neurochemical phenomenon because during these rapid eye movement dreams, they tend to be very intense, but the body can't release adrenaline.

So it's almost like its own form of trauma therapy.

It's like you're experiencing this intense thing in your mind, but your body can't react.

And so oftentimes people have argued that that's why you feel like you want to move and you can't because you actually can't.

Some people have woken up while still a bit paralyzed in REM.

Have you ever had that happen?

We wake up, but actually a couple of my kids have struggled with that a couple of times.

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Yeah.

REM interference.

It's called it's not dangerous and usually people can jolt themselves out, but it's kind of terrifying.

So that's interesting.

So we'll get to a discussion about the recent injury and thankfully recovery from the injury, not miraculous because that makes it seem as if it's surprising.

Frankly, I'm not surprised that you've recovered, but it is spectacular the way you have, but you're saying that in your dreams, before the injury, you would think about skateboarding, but you felt like there was a kind of can't do it.

When I was doing it in my dream, there was always some roadblock that I just could like, why can't I get any speed?

Why can't I, why can't I snap or do this trick?

Um, it's more in the moments where it's twilight moments where I'm kind of awake and I'm thinking about tricks that everything else falls away and I can actually focus on what kind of new moves to come up with.

Um, uh, an example of that was, uh, recently I went to the X games in Japan a few weeks ago, uh, and I was thinking I was going to go more to show my support and cause they had a vert event.

There's not a lot of vert events anymore.

So if there's a vert event, it's kind of like, if you build it, I will come cause I want to show my support.

That's, that's kind of where my heart is.

And they had a best trick event.

And I thought, man, maybe I could get in the best trick because there anything new though, you know, and I'm still recovering from my leg.

And then at some point I was falling asleep and I thought, Oh, I could do that trick and come in 180.

I know I could do that with, with my current state and not getting that much speed.

So to explain what I was doing is, is, uh, half cab body, very old backside okay, we can walk through this half cab cab has come up backwards.

Go 360, right?

So half of that would go, as I, as I approach the top of the ramp, I body rail, that means I jump around and then I jump around on my board and then I make sure that it lands with my two trucks out and my tail on the coping, which is very precarious.

And I've done that and come in fakie.

That's the blunt piece.

That's the blunt.

So I've done that where I, where you, and then you have to, you have to use your beat to lift up the board, come in fakie, right?

I've done that.

I've done that twice.

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And I thought, well, I wonder if there's something I could do like that.  
And then I realized that if I just keep coming around and I come in backside direction, that keeps my body spinning.  
And that might actually be easier.  
It wasn't, but I figured it out.  
I think I saw a clip of this on it.  
I did it.  
Yeah.  
I did it.  
I did it.  
X games.  
And that was like, it was my last run.  
It was, it was, I mean, it didn't move the needle.  
I got seven place, but for me, it was a huge moment.  
It felt amazing.  
I bet.  
Oh yeah.  
For sure.  
I mean, I was, I mean, it was like weeks of preparation and trying to figure this thing out.  
I made it twice before the event on my own alone, on my ramp, but that's just an example of, you know, I was, I was literally falling asleep.  
And then all of a sudden it was like, I've got body.  
Well, back to blunt.  
I love it.  
That liminal state between wakefulness and sleep is such a beautiful state that if one is open to ideas showing up there, they almost always do.  
I try to start trying it the next morning.  
Do you ever find that when you're taking walks or in the shower or not thinking about skateboarding, it's usually in the, in the sort of mundane moments that, that I get inspiration.  
Do you have practices for pure relaxation aside from socialization?  
I know I was never, I think that's something I've been lacking.  
I never was good at warming up, stretching, post warmup, or, or, or relaxing.  
You know, meditation, nothing.  
I just, I, I go skate and it's on.  
Um, and as I've gotten older, I realized that's not the best technique, but it's worked so far.  
It has worked.  
Um, so for you, it's go, hopefully a little bit of warm up a few.  
I have more of a sort of OCD warm up run that I use to gauge how I'm feeling, but I kind of have to get through that.  
Like a surgeon, when a surgeon's about to do a surgery, um, they don't warm up.



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They just check off the various boxes of, you know, this is here, that's there.

Make sure that they're comfortable in their environment.

And then they do, they do the, the life saving work.

Yeah.

Yeah.

My, I'd say my warm up run is, is kind of basic tricks, but they give me a sense of how, how stiff or how I, what I need to adjust for for the rest of the day.

So I guess it's not so OCD, but it, but I definitely feel like I got a go through that routine.

What feels the best?

Like I, I know that making a new trick feels incredible, especially if you've been at it a long time, dialing it in so that you can do it again and again.

It's its own form of reward.

Yeah.

Um, but what is the, maybe list of two or three things that just feels so good.

Well, that for sure, learning new tricks, not even that, that it's something that I created, but just doing something that I've never done before.

When I first learned variables, backside variables, no one had done backside variables before.

They'd only done in front side.

Um, and a very old is where you, you reach down, grab your board, jump in the air and then turn it 180 under your feet.

It's, it's like a shove it, but you're guiding with your hand.

I learned that halfway up the pool, the, the main pool in a way, at Oasis with no one around and the feeling I got when I rode away was something that I had never experienced and it is, it was literally the buzz that I've been chasing ever since because it was like, I created something.

Variables below coping was that was the button.

That was it.

It really was.

And if you saw a video of it, you'd be like, that thing.

You're like, what can I say?

It was, it was the first time that I thought, I thought of it.

Um, I, I went through all the motions of it.

I did the work and I figured it out and you know, no one, no one cared, but at some point I was able to do it six feet in the air and do a full 360 aerial and so that was the building block, but, but that feeling was like no other.

Um, I'd say that.

And then just even to, to strip everything else away, like the most basic tricks, like a backside alley is, is an, and no handed aerial.

That used to be what it was called backside, no handed aerial.

It feels so good because even to this day, people, people say, how does it board stay on your feet?

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And I can't even tell you how the board stays on my feet.

I just know, I know how to maneuver it and I know how to keep the pressure on it and the friction going and backside always is like, I think it's like a marvel of physics and a clean backside.

All I do to me is feel as good as anything.

Yeah.

It's a beautiful thing to behold.

I confess I've never done a legitimate backside and only on vert on a mini ramp.

Sure.

But not on vert.

So I can't relate to the feeling, but I love, love, love the fact that you brought us back to that early, variable low coping feeling and that that marks the essence of what feels so good when you do something else.

Right.

It's sort of like a, it's a, as a neuroscientist, I see as a chemical stamp.

It's like a chemical fingerprint of progress.

Right.

Um, and I'm also delighted to hear that it still feels that good to do these things because I don't think anyone can have the kind of lifelong progression that you've had and it's still going, uh, without a, not just love of the thing, but love of the feeling that it brings when no one's around.

Cause you said skating your ramp by yourself.

So how often are you on your ramp with, you know, no one's filming for Instagram, no, nothing for a video, nothing for a video game, none of that.

Maybe there's, you know, maybe other guys are around gals around.

We'll talk about gals too.

Cause one of the big shifts in skateboarding since I started is that there's some amazing female skateboarders.

Now, um, there's a young lady in fact, that's been skateboarding at your ramp.

Forgive me.

I can't remember her name.

Is it Reese, Reese Nelson?

Goodness.

Goodness gracious.

She is so good.

So good.

So good.

Uh, so we'll get back to that.

But I think that, you know, people starting any kind of sport or academic career or business or anything, I think people assume that you go from zero to a hundred somehow and that there are these people that are just selected by genetics or by luck or by some combination of things to just like get it and be better than everybody else.

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But it's clear that you've spent a lot of time alone driving someplace to skate the next day or alone at the ramp or, um, so do you ever reflect on that kind of drive, um, and you know, what, what, what that's all about? Or is it just so intrinsic to who you are?

You're an aide.

I don't, I don't think about it.

I just know I have to do it.

It's like, I mean, I, we can get into it with my injury, but, um, uh, but, but to go back to what you're saying is you saying that, that people think that, oh, you were chosen for this or genetics or whatever.

Have you saw them talk after all, you saw me skate?

Yeah.

When I first started skating, there was no way you'd think that I was natural or that I had any future in it.

I was all gangly.

I was all over the players.

I was eating shit left and right.

Like it just, it wasn't, I wasn't good.

I wasn't.

I wasn't a natural.

Um, I've seen people that are naturals and I've seen that how they don't have that drive, they don't have the discipline and it's not wasted, but they just don't, they don't utilize, they don't take advantage of what they have naturally. And, and for whatever reason, I don't, I don't fault anyone for it.

Um, but I've seen both sides of it.

And I've also seen other skaters who are just driven and who are not really good, kind of sloppy and become the best Andrew Reynolds.

Oh yeah.

When we put him on our team, he was just like me, super gangly.

His boards bouncing around, but he's trying every single trick.

And every time he sent me a video, it's some new technique that he's figured out and he didn't really, by the untrained eye, he didn't have the skill set for.

And then he became the boss.

You know what I mean?

So I think it's just, you have to, you have to give that as much weight as natural to him, if not more, I'd say more.

Yeah, I would certainly say more for science and you know, that people are in the lab late at night and early in the morning and drilling away, not, not always the smartest, certainly not the, um, dumbest, but smart enough to show up when other people are leaving and continue.

And I think there has to be a little bit of friction internally.

I mean, you know, maybe, maybe externally also, but just some friction.

Some I'm going to show you.

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Okay.

I, my best example of that, and I haven't talked about this yet, um, cause I did it privately, but I, I broke my leg doing a McTwist, something that I've done thousands of times in five 40, five 40.

Yeah.

So it's a, it's a one and a half spin in the backside direction, but that particular grab that you do makes it a McTwist because it makes you kind of flip upside down.

So it's kind of a one and a half summer salt.

I, it's not my tricks.

Mike McGill's trick.

I learned it not long after he created it in 1984 been doing it ever since.

I mean, I'm talking about 40 years of McTwist, right?

I've gotten hurt once or twice, but not bad.

Anyway, I fucked around and found out, did one with no speed last year, thinking I could do it like I was still 20 and got tangled up and broke my femur.

I had a super long recovery.

I had a false start.

I had a non-union fracture, which means my bone never connected back to itself.

And it kept pushing itself further away.

Um, and that's all, uh, in the past I, I got a second surgery in November and all along in the back of my head is I got to get back to five 40s.

I have to.

And I can't explain why I have to.

I hate that it means that much to me, but it, it's in here.

You know what I mean?

It's not, it's not a sense of pride.

It's not like I have to prove this to anyone.

I just have to do it.

And last week I did it.

It was so scary.

And I prepped for it.

I, I mean, I even down to like my diet and I, I stopped drinking altogether.

And I was like, every time I go to the ramp, I'm just trying five 40s, like to get the spin to get the, to get the landing zone with no intention of making it just that I had to get there.

And then I had to have this heart to heart with my wife that, you know, she doesn't want to see me get hurt.

She doesn't see me risking myself at this age anymore.

She doesn't want to live through another traumatic injury with me.

And I had to tell her like, I have to do this.

She was gracious and accepting.

And that's all I could ask for.

## [Transcript] Huberman Lab / Tony Hawk: Harnessing Passion, Drive & Persistence for Lifelong Success

It wasn't like she was like, yeah, you've got to go do it.  
It was like, okay, that's who you are.  
And so she was there.  
She was my only spectator.  
So good.  
I confess I've seen a video of this and my first response was, um, F.  
Yes.  
Uh, and my second response was that was really high.  
Like this is no, you know, just above coping five 40.  
This isn't even, you know, this is a head high five 40.  
I'm not going to make the same mistake I did last time where I tried  
at low thinking I just get away with it anymore.  
So the going high was more of a safety measure, which is ironic.  
The, the, the bigger the ramps for me, the safer it is because I have a better  
landing zone.  
I have more time in the air to adjust.  
And even though it looks spectacular and six feet in the air,  
it's just like, no, I need that.  
I can't skate some eight foot pool.  
I have no landing zone.  
I'm too tall.  
I'm too, I move too slowly now to do that kind of stuff.  
So that's why you don't see me like in the park events and stuff like that.  
You know, you're going to see me on this 14 foot vert ramp because that's  
my happy place and that's where I'm safe.  
Um, but also having my wife there.  
I just knew I wasn't going to get hurt in front of her.  
Cause I would have been such trouble.  
The, the emotional support and pressure is, uh, is a real thing.  
And in the best ways, uh, not to focus on the bad aspects of the injury.  
Now, because there are plenty.  
Yeah.  
That I recall you and I communicated not long after the, let's say,  
let's call it what it was, the first break.  
And I remember you said to me over text, you said, how long before I'm  
skateboarding again?  
And I said, um, skateboarding as in pushing or skateboarding as in, um,  
what you do on vert, you know, and you said, uh, what I do on vert.  
And I said, well, it seems you are doing a lot of things.  
You were doing deliberate cold delivery, heat pressure.  
You do a number of things.  
I mean, you're not haphazard about your career and your body and your health.  
And we'll get into that a little bit later.

## [Transcript] Huberman Lab / Tony Hawk: Harnessing Passion, Drive & Persistence for Lifelong Success

Some of the things that you've enjoyed as beneficial for you.  
But, um, you said, I'm calling it at two months.  
And I said, okay, um, I believe it.  
And then I recall that you, was it the Oscars or some other award event where you came out about a week later, you came out there, uh, you walked out.  
This broken femur and you weren't using any support to walk out.  
So you clearly ditched whatever support you might have been using, uh, which I think is awesome, by the way.  
Um, and then pretty soon I was seeing videos of you dropping in.  
I'm seeing videos of you doing kick turns, blow coping.  
I'm seeing videos of you at coping.  
And, you know, we have a friend in common, the skate, skateboard, and generally photographer, Mike Blaback.  
And I remember texting Mike, I was like, Tony's back already.  
This is, this is super human rates of healing.  
And I think it is super human rates of healing.  
Then you mentioned that you damaged, broke, broke the femur again.  
So did you allow more rest the second time?  
What was driving you to get back in it so quickly?  
But first go around, I just didn't listen to any of the professional advice because I thought, well, I've done, I've come this far and I've always been able to push through broken pelvis, broken elbow, um, knee surgeries.  
And I've always been, the timeline is always very shortened for me because I just get back out there and I, and I get the healing started.  
But I also am comfortable with what people think is extremely risky.  
But in this instance, I want to get back out there right away.  
And not long after the Academy Awards, I was actually walking with a cane at that time and I ditched the cane just to walk out on stage to present the award.  
So that was my big, my big coming out moment, but it was kind of forced.  
And as soon as I walked out to say to grab my cane, I was hobbling in the back stage.  
Um, but I was, I was skating kind of a mini ramp.  
And, and I was already struggling because I couldn't put my weight on my front foot because my bones still had not connected to itself.  
So there's a gap in the bone, but there's a, there's a nail, what they call a nail or, you know, big piece of metal that's holding them in place.  
But I didn't realize how careful I needed to be with that because it was so precarious.  
And I decided I'm going to drop in on the mini ramp.  
Like, I think I'm ready.  
And, and it wasn't the drop in on the mini ramp.  
It was me getting to the top of the mini ramp and stepping off my board.  
It's always that kind of stuff.  
But, but I just stepped off my board like I would do any other day.  
But I didn't think I led with my front foot and I felt the bone move in that moment.

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I really, I felt it, I felt it either twist or get out of place.  
And I was in total denial for months.  
Cause I just said, Oh, I just, it just hurts now.  
Like I, you know, I, I got a minor setback and then I finally eight months into my recovery, seven months into my recovery, I was always in pain.  
My skating wasn't progressing.  
I couldn't get speed.  
And by all measures, I should be back.  
At least I'd be back to a level that I feel good about.  
And I went and got x-rays and they said, your bone never connected.  
You have a non-union fracture.  
And, and, and every time I skated, so my bones like this, every time I skated, I was pushing it further away.  
And so my bone was like this on the last x-ray and, and that was the hard truth.  
So for those listening, just laterally displaced, think about a pipe that's broken in the middle and just one's offset to the other.  
And, and as I keep skating and I, I could force my skit, like I kind of learned this hack where I can put 75% of my weight on my back foot and 25% of my front foot and do what I wanted to do, but it wasn't where I thought I'd be.  
And it just hurt all the time.  
I mean, it really was like, that was my trigger because I have a pretty high tolerance to pain and it was always hurt.  
Like I, I would dread going to the airport knowing I had to walk to a gate.  
So I knew something was wrong there.  
I went to a specialist that deals in non-union fractures and he had a very pragmatic factual approach and it was like, Oh, I would do this.  
I'm taking that nail out.  
I'm taking the other hardware out and put it together and you cannot move for two months.  
Did you obey that?  
I did really.  
Yeah.  
So what, I was chilling.  
I was not going to risk that again.  
Did you, um, and do you prioritize things like sleep, um, nutrition, um, just, you know, generally, and did you emphasize those things while you were recovering from the injury?  
Yeah, I, I, I was very disciplined in my diet, in my schedule, in my sleep.  
Um, surprisingly, I, I was very busy because, um, I do speaking engagements and suddenly my speaking engagements were getting booked left and right.  
I mean, to the point where I did a tour through Europe last summer of speaking engagements.  
So that was, that was a silver lining, I guess, to my, my idle time.

## [Transcript] Huberman Lab / Tony Hawk: Harnessing Passion, Drive & Persistence for Lifelong Success

Um, and I leaned into it, you know, I made myself available and, and, uh, it, you know, it's good money and it's fun to, to interact and, um, but all through, all through that, of course, in the back of my head is like, when, when can I skate, when can I skate?

And then when I finally started skating, it was night and day with my leg. I felt like I could lean forward.

Suddenly I was learning tricks every, every session, relearning tricks.

Um, so I just, I'm just lucky that I got to live in this time of modern medicine. Was that two months, the longest you've ever gone without skateboarding or vert?

Yeah.

Yeah.

Without skating at all.

Not even just pushing around.

Yeah.

Good for you for obeying doctors orders and also, and also good for you for deciding that your rate of recovery is going to be whatever it is for you.

Because I feel like I'm hearing both things.

On the one hand, you listen to the medical professionals.

On the other hand, I'm not hearing, Oh, you know, I looked at the average rate of recovery from this kind of fracture, this and that.

It's, it's like, it's as if you decided two things at once, that there are experts who have something to offer me here.

I'll follow their advice.

And yet I'm the expert at myself here.

I'm putting myself in your first person.

Uh, Tony's the expert in Tony and I'm going to make sure that I come back a hundred percent or better.

Yeah, not better, but, um, and I've, and I have come to terms with that because I know that I'm not going to be pushing myself the way that I did before I got hurt anymore.

There are some tricks now that are way more difficult just because whatever it's something changed in my body.

And for instance, I can't grab slob, like I can't, I, I can't do it consistently.

That used to be my go-to grab.

Could do that anytime over 60 foot gaps, whatever.

Like I could just grab, I knew where my board was.

I knew that was going to hold on to my feet.

And half the time I try to grab that way.

Now I don't reach it or I grab my foot instead.

And I, I don't know, I can't make the adjustment to fix it.

And so I've just sort of come to terms with, well, that's not the go-to grab anymore.

And that's okay.



## [Transcript] Huberman Lab / Tony Hawk: Harnessing Passion, Drive & Persistence for Lifelong Success

Your kids, I had a good run.

Yeah, your, your kids pretty, pretty vast.

So there's a lot of other things to reach to, aside from the 540, which by the way, congratulations, not only is it a 540, but, uh, done at least head high.

I've seen it with my own eyes.

And, um, and under really great circumstances, your wife there, just the two of you.

And after, and the trick that broke the femur in the first place.

So, um, congratulations on that.

I'd like to take a quick break and acknowledge our sponsor, Inside Tracker.

Inside Tracker is a personalized nutrition platform that analyzes data from your blood and DNA to help you better understand your body and help you meet your health goals.

I'm a big believer in getting regular blood work done for the simple reason that many of the factors that impact your immediate and long-term health can only be analyzed from a quality blood test.

However, with a lot of blood tests out there, you get information back about blood lipids, about hormones and so on, but you don't know what to do with that information.

With Inside Tracker, they have a personalized platform that makes it very easy to understand your data, that is to understand what those lipids, what those hormone levels, et cetera, mean and behavioral supplement, nutrition and other protocols to adjust those numbers, to bring them into the ranges that are ideal for your immediate and long-term health.

Inside Tracker's ultimate plan now includes measures of both ApoB and of insulin, which are key indicators of cardiovascular health and energy regulation.

If you'd like to try Inside Tracker, you can visit [insidetracker.com](https://insidetracker.com) slash Huberman to get 20% off any of Inside Tracker's plans.

Again, that's [insidetracker.com](https://insidetracker.com) slash Huberman to get 20% off.

Are there other things that you're thinking, you know, can't wait to get back to that?

Let's set aside slaw bears for now.

Yeah.

Um, yeah, I want to get my hand plants back the way I used to do them.

I have, yeah, it's so inverted, like it's one hand and hand stand.

Um, I can do them now, but I've seen you do them recently.

Yeah, but, but I used, they used to be my signature.

It was a tuck in the envelope and flopped all the way back and, and I can't get a hold of my board to pull it all the way back like I used to.

Um, if I can get that, I'll feel like that's it.

That's, that's, that was the last mile soon.

I'm not here to, uh, diagnose and, and treat these, uh, specific, uh, skateboard trick isms, but between your, what you said about the slaw bear and what you're saying about this, it seems like there's something about, about getting your, your, your front hand around and pulling it back, back in behind you. So maybe this is like the way that the femur is lining up with your pelvis and maybe some off-ramp something or other physical therapy could do it.

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I am actually working with, um, at Bescore, he is a, he is a doctor of physical therapy and he has helped me immensely through my recovery.

And when I'm frustrated with this motion or that's the same grab actually, as in the twist, he worked on me before it and was just contorting my body and my leg into these positions that I don't really even get to when I'm skating just to prepare me for that.

And he did, but that's what it took.

It's interesting that we're, um, talking about skateboarding and we're also talking about physical therapists.

We're talking about nutrition.

We're talking about sleep.

So growing up, he's like, no, none of that, none of that.

Never imagined any of this and I'm chuckling because, you know, growing up in skateboarding, um, early on, uh, for me, uh, not quite as early as you, but pretty early 12, um, and got out of it and back and yes, I can still do a thing or two here and there.

Um, but that's not the point.

The point is that, you know, the nutrition consisted largely of, you know, fast food or whatever was around cigarettes and beer where sort of the, the energy drinks and, uh, uh, and, um, supplements of the times, this is fortunately changed, but there, there was essentially no health promoting tools or aspects to it at all. But that was back then, but then over time, it seems it's evolved.

Like now I see, um, I saw a couple posts from Stevie Williams and like he's in the gym, um, I think I saw Danny way early on, working with Paul check and doing some balance work, neck work, cause he had broken his neck surfing and things of that sort.

So there seems to have been a big shift over the last 15, 20 years where skateboarders are taking good care of their bodies, like other athletes, thinking about the resilience of their bodies and also generally taking better care.

Like a lot of them opt not to drink and do drugs and all those sorts of things.

So, I mean, how does it strike you to see the way that skateboarding has evolved towards the option to be much healthier and treat it like a, like a serious sport where you're a serious athlete, a word that, you know, even 15 years ago, 20 years ago, if you called a skateboarder an athlete, some people might even be offended by people in skateboarding, right?

Absolutely.

Yeah.

Um, well, to answer your question in the early days, that was part of the, the scene in the culture, just cause the, the, it was the antithesis to organize team sports and mainstream culture.

And so it was just like, yeah, this is what we do.

Fuck it.

Who cares?

## [Transcript] Huberman Lab / Tony Hawk: Harnessing Passion, Drive & Persistence for Lifelong Success

Like we drank and we skate and everyone, it was, it was wild west, right? But as I never fell into that deeply because I saw how it affected people's performances and the skating itself was paramount to me. That is what I wanted to focus on. That's what I wanted to be good at. And I saw people partying and partying their skills away. So I had at least that forethought. Um, and then as skating got more established, popular, more of a career option, then people started taking it more seriously, especially competitors. I mean, and, and, but there's such a wide swath of, of what skateboarding is. And it's a big tense. So to say that it's more organized, yes, it's more organized over here. There's still all these skaters over here, partying, hopping fences. Don't care about contests. Don't want sponsors. Oh, well, like GX 1000, like those kids at Bomb Hills in San Francisco. Like, like, but that, that's what I love about it is the diversity of it all. And that that's, we're all part of this scene. So I was a competitor. That was, that was my path to success. And so I appreciate that people take it more seriously now and that they do have trainer, they have resources. I mean, they have sponsors that will pay for this kind of stuff. There was no such thing. I mean, like at, at our biggest skate contest, we were all staying at Stacey Perelta's parents' house the night before and he would take us out to get spaghetti because he thought carbohydrates was going to give us energy the next day. That was the extent of training in 1983, right? But nowadays we're treated like high elite athletes because they are. Like, if you really look at people that are at the top of their field, people like Nigah Houston, you know what I mean? Like the dude is a machine. He is, he is one of the most precise skaters that we've ever seen or precise athletes. This side of Nadia Komenich, you know, yes, I'm, I'm, I'm aging myself, but. What I'm saying is like, this is, this is, takes hardcore dedication, precision, athleticism and devotion. And so now they have the resources to back that up and to keep it going longer. I mean, yeah, I would, I'd be able to do this now, especially after getting hurt without the help of a doctor of physical training, probably not. I'd do it on some level, but I wouldn't get to where I am now. Um, and so, hey, I think it's awesome. I, you know, I never, I never wanted to covet skateboarding as this thing that no one else, like a gatekeeper to it, no one else can touch it.

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I always thought there was something to skateboarding that was magical and that was good for mental health and that was, that was required such, um, required passion.

And I didn't, I never understood why I didn't get bigger through those, those lean years.

It was always like kids, this speaks to kids.

Like it's, it's daredevil and it's active and it's exciting.

And you can do it as a group, but you can do it your own way.

And I don't know all those things.

It took a long time for everyone else to figure it out.

They definitely figured it out.

I mean, nowadays skaters are the cool kids in school.

Yeah, it's in the Olympics.

Like there was always discussion, would it be?

It was an exhibition sport in the Olympics at one point.

No, no, no, I thought it was it for, maybe it had a run at potentially being an exhibition, there were, there was talk of that.

Got it.

Um, but it never did.

And, and not that, I mean, at some point, especially in the late 90s or 2000s, skating was getting appreciated and, and kind of reached that threshold of, of is it mainstream?

Well, it's in, it's on McDonald's commercials.

So I guess that's pretty mainstream.

And so we already had come of age and it was like, we don't need the Olympics.

We're already more popular than a lot of Olympic sports, right?

So why do we need their validation?

And then at some point it became like the power dynamic shifted.

And it was like, Oh, they need our cool factor.

We don't need their validation.

And it was like, yeah, okay, you guys want it?

Sure.

Go ahead, hold the events, hold the qualifiers.

We'll participate.

But we don't need this.

Well, you've been an amazing ambassador for the sport that's driven so much of that wider acceptance and progression and invitation into different domains.

One of the things that I definitely want to talk about is the video game, right?

Because I think that the video game changed a lot of things for the general public in terms of their perception of skateboarding.

I mean, what it allowed, of course, is this is obvious, but it allowed kids that weren't going to, you know, bang up their shins or walk in with a broken wrist or you know, all skinned up to, to do incredible tricks, but in silico on a screen, right?

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And to pretend that they are the pro skateboarder.

That's essentially what video games are about.

And yet when you can see something, just like you can imagine it in a dream or while you're falling asleep and you can see something and hear an air quotes do something in a video game, it also is going to inspire a number of kids to go outside and grab a real skateboard and try that or try something like that.

So clearly the video game was a catalyst for what I consider now the wide acceptance of skateboarding as a sport in all its various forms.

Could you just talk for a little bit about the genesis of the video game?

Were you into video games prior to the video game?

Were you into technology generally?

And what sort of motivated the interest in the video game?

Because it certainly has changed the face of actual skateboarding and the perception of skateboarding.

Well, I've been into video games since the get go.

I mean, I was a kid, you know, playing pong, Pac-Man, Missile Command, Q-Word, you name it, and then getting the home systems in television, Super NES, Commodore 64, Sega.

Yeah.

But I always love technology.

So when I finally started making money in the 80s, my first kind of big purchase in terms of electronics was Commodore Amiga, which was considered one of the highest end home computers, you know, alongside Mac, but more graphic oriented and more game oriented.

And so I was always into that idea that you could do this kind of stuff at home, not just in arcades.

And then I got a call from a PC programmer that wanted to pitch a skate game and had a crewed engine of a skater that would cruise around, go in bowls and stuff like that.

And it was all keyboard controlled.

It was clunky, but it was something.

And the last thing that we had as skating was 720 in the arcade or a skater die for home systems for Commodore 64.

That was like the last thing that had happened for skateboarding in video games.

And so I went with him.

I was excited to get like, I got to, we got to go to Nintendo and pitch it.

We went to Midway, you know, we went to all these different console and software manufacturers and we're just told that this is a bad idea.

Skateboarding is not popular.

Home video games are barely a thing.

Why would anyone want to buy a video game about skateboarding?

Someone said those exact words to me at Midway.

And so he got frustrated and he needed to find a job.

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And I was, I was just kind of free floating.

So I said, okay, he goes, well, I'm not going to do this, but I feel like you've established yourself at least in the video game world industry that you're interested in doing something.

So maybe if someone does something, they'll call you and I was like, yeah, right, sure, sure enough.

Like a year later, Activision called me and they said, Hey, we heard you want to do a video game.

I said, well, yes, I would love to work on a video game.

I'm not a programmer or anything.

So we have something we're working on.

I would like to show it to you.

And so I went up to Activision.

They were working on a skate game, but it was based on an engine of a game that was already released called Apocalypse starring Bruce Willis.

So the first version of my game was Bruce Willis on a skateboard with a gun strapped to his back in a desert wasteland doing kickflips.

And it was awesome.

It was, it was truly like I picked it up and I got past that visual and then I started playing it and it was intuitive.

It, the motion felt right.

The engine was right.

And I was like, this is, this is the baseline of something special.

I didn't think it was going to be some big hit.

I just thought this is, this is going to be appreciated by skateboarders.

And that was my goal, the entire, uh, development process, which was about a year and a half after I signed on, we, through that year and a half, we were going back and forth with, they would, they would FedEx me builds on CDs.

I had a modified PlayStation and I would play it, make notes.

And I thought, man, skater's going to dig this.

And that was it.

And skating wasn't even that popular.

It was coming to, you know, it was starting to get some traction.

What year was this again?

Like 98.

So it was like X games were starting to come into the fold.

People were taking note of what skateboarding had become at that point.

And then I thought, this is going to be cool.

Skater's going to like it.

And then, um, not long before the release, they called me and they said, Hey, we want to, um, we want to offer you a buyout of future royalties for this game.

Um, cause I think, you know, there's, I think people are going to like it.

It was like, what does that mean?

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They go, we'll give you a half a million dollars and then you don't get royalties going forward, but you get that money up front.

And at that time, my life, like to hear someone say half a million dollars seriously sounded like a half a billion dollars.

Like no one had ever talked about numbers that big to me.

Well, also 98 was a little bit of a, of a quiet time for vert skateboarding too.

Right.

Sure.

Yeah.

It was all about skateboarding in general, but yeah, for, for luckily vert skating still was a thing because of inline skating.

Because inline skating was huge, right?

Late nineties and they were all vert.

And so we as skaters got to sort of ride those coattails because it was like, Hey, there are vert ramps cause everyone's rollerblading.

I forgot about that.

That did.

Like, and I have honestly, like I was the special guest at a couple of inline rollerblade shows where it was like, this is a team rollerblade live in special guests, Tony Hawk, the skateboarder.

And I was like, Hey, all right, dropping in, but it paid the bills.

Yeah.

So to answer, to like, to, to, from what you were saying, vert skating was, it was a thing at least established in the X games, which was something and enough for us to make a living.

So when they offered me this money, I actually was in a pretty good place in terms of my, I don't know, my options, my, my trajectory.

And I felt like, and I had, I had just bought a new home.

And I thought, I'm going to take a chance and just see what happens.

And like, that was the best financial decision I ever made.

Took the equity.

Yeah.

I just let it ride.

I was like, no, I want to see what happens with this.

And as soon as the game was released, it was getting stellar reviews.

And then I remember like the very next week after it was released, never stopped saying, okay, we're working on number two.

What do you want to do?

Like, what do you mean?

Well, yeah, we're doing a sequel with what?

Awesome.

And then we ended up doing like 10.

Amazing.

## [Transcript] Huberman Lab / Tony Hawk: Harnessing Passion, Drive & Persistence for Lifelong Success

Crazy.

Amazing.

I'm thinking about your decision to not take the cash and to see how it would go.

I'm thinking about your decision to buy a car at 16.

And as a consequence, get pulled over because you looked younger.

I'm thinking about the time when through the graciousness of your parents who took me in because I had no money to get back up to Northern California and they couldn't get ahold of my mom.

They took me to your home, but then they took me to where you were living the next day, which was in Fallbrook.

You don't remember this, but I do.

And I know you've heard this story before.

So forgive me because most people listening haven't.

But I remember getting driven up to Fallbrook.

You had the ramps in your backyard.

I walked in, got introduced to you.

You were very gracious, said, hello, what's up?

Said, feel free to push around on the ramps outside.

It was the mini, it was a spine ramp.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Two ramps back to back folks, spine.

Sorry.

No one played here.

I think Ray Underhill was there.

Yeah, he lived there for a while.

Yeah.

And as I recall, you had pretty vast music collection and we'll talk about music.

But it also seemed that there were a couple cars in the driveway and whatnot.

But it's clear to me, based on a number of things and that interaction and what

I observed there, that either you had someone in your ear, either your dad or your mom or both, or maybe it had been Stacy or maybe it was somebody else who was advising you to make very good financial decisions, like not spend all your money or continue to spend all your money to invest in things, you know, or maybe it was just instilled in you at a young age.

Who knows?

I'm asking, because I think so many people burn their early success, you know, what represents a lot of wealth for them early on, they burn that, where they start making just bad decisions.

You explained before why you tended to avoid drugs and alcohol and certainly any severe relationship to drugs or alcohol that would keep you from progressing and skateboarding.

But, you know, the ability to make really good decisions as a young, famous athlete,



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right, is more rare than it is common, even when people have coaches.

So I'm curious, you know, where did that shrewdness and that prudence come from?

And was Frank your dad and maybe Nancy also, you know, advising you all along like, hey, you know, think smart, be smart, because clearly you made some very smart decisions.

He was definitely a guide in it.

He was the first one who said, you should probably buy real estate.

I was 17, so I didn't even know that was possible, but he cosigned and made it possible.

But then after that, I ended up buying that home that you went to and it was four acre property and we built these ramps on it.

And that was amazing and definitely helped propel my skating to a different level than I ever imagined.

But at some point that was just a drain and it was a drain financially.

And I was living beyond my means and my income kept dropping because we were talking about not long after that was 91, 92, the slowest days of skating.

And I've got this giant mortgage and I've got this property and these ramps that I can't afford to upkeep.

I can barely afford my water bill at one point, you know.

And so what you saw might have seemed stable, but behind the scenes, it was, it was starting to unravel.

Birdhouse hadn't been started.

Birdhouse was started in 92.

And when I started Birdhouse, I took the equity from that house to start it because I didn't burn through my savings from trying to keep this place going.

So I took a second mortgage out on that house, right?

I took my equity out, started Birdhouse, sold the house for what I had taken out and then moved to my original place that I had when I was in high school and just pulled back on expenses.

I think that was, that was when I really became shrewd because I had to, I had, I had a first child.

I had an income that was very uncertain, very fluctuating.

And I was just eating Taco Bell and Top Ramen and peanut butter jelly sandwiches and, and not spending anything and, and taking every job, like the most random demo requests or we want you to be a consultant on this commercial because I'm too old, I'm 24.

I'm too old to be the guy skating because it has to be youth, right?

But they're like, well, we want to see what's possible.

So can you come up the day before and show us the ropes?

And so I would be the stunt skater that's filling in to show them the angles and stuff.

And then they would go hire.

Chet Thomas as the young kid.

## [Transcript] Huberman Lab / Tony Hawk: Harnessing Passion, Drive & Persistence for Lifelong Success

And then I would stand around.

I was getting paid.

I didn't care.

I think I remember those commercials.

Is this a serial commercial?

Something like that?

The serial commercial was Chris Miller, Frosted Flakes and I was Tony the Tiger.

So all the lines, so cow guys, you chat.

Yeah, yeah.

Um, I throughout the birdhouse, which is your company, but without telling people

What is it?

Skateboard company.

I remember Willie Santos was early on.

I remember he's a super nice kid.

Used to see him at the contest.

I remember thinking, well, Tony Hawk has his own company for skateboards.

That was revolutionary.

We had a team, you know, like Willie was a maestro.

Jeremy Klein, legendary street pioneer.

Steve Berra, who's kind of a, we called it ATV, but street and vert.

We had Ocean Howell, who was like our number one amateur.

We had Andrew Reynolds, Matt Beach.

We had a team, like it was full on.

Was it fun to move from rider to also rider, but team manager, owner?

Was it fun?

It was just necessary.

I can't say it was fun.

I mean, yeah, it was fun

because we were still just kind of reckless

and driving, you know, six of us in a van,

driving to skate shops across the country

and begging them for 300 bucks

so that we could get gas and food in a hotel room

and get on our way.

I don't know.

But for me, it just felt like a necessity to keep to, that was what I had to do to make a brand happen.

And so I was willing to do it.

And, but it was exhausting.

Yeah, because I had to be the coach

## [Transcript] Huberman Lab / Tony Hawk: Harnessing Passion, Drive & Persistence for Lifelong Success

and the tour manager and the skater.  
You know, I was putting myself out there  
on like the worst conditions  
and just rolling my ankle left and right.  
And it was all street and it just wasn't my thing.  
It was, it was hard, but I loved it.  
It made it happen.  
In my mind, I'm thinking you had to be  
Tony Hawk the skateboarder, Frank Hawk, the organizer.  
Yeah.  
And Stacey Peralta, the...  
Yeah.  
Because Stacey had been a pro skateboarder.  
I still think of him as a skateboarder.  
Yeah.  
Even though he's a filmmaker, right?  
Skateboarder.  
Just like I still think of Spike Jonze's skateboarder,  
BMXer, filmmaker.  
Seems like you had to integrate all of those.  
And I mentioned that because I am curious.  
I think a lot of people are probably curious.  
Are you the type of person like sit back in a chair  
at night and think like, okay, like how am I gonna do this?  
I mean, are you contemplative or is it really  
you just sort of identify what needs to be done  
this year and over the next three years  
and you know, set your milestones kind of short in.  
I guess now or back then?  
Back then.  
Oh no, everything was just in the moment.  
We got to get here.  
We got to get to Dallas by tomorrow.  
Like as soon as this demo is over,  
get in the van, we're going.  
We got to get to a hotel room, you know?  
It was just stuff like that.  
It was very much, but I respected,  
I think I learned to respect punctuality  
because I traveled with plenty of skaters  
that were not and didn't care and show up late  
and was like, dude, and like, I don't know these guys.  
And then when I was in charge, it was like,

## [Transcript] Huberman Lab / Tony Hawk: Harnessing Passion, Drive & Persistence for Lifelong Success

we're going to be on time  
because we have to respect other people's time.  
And we said we're going to be here at three o'clock.  
We're going to be there at three o'clock.  
And that's not easy with a skate crew.  
No, Mike playback, who as you know,  
is into girl to the humor and loud podcast.  
I talk about that.  
We got some other guys that came over from DC  
to as filmmakers and editors for us.  
And, you know, they're so punctual and they're so on it.  
And I noticed you showed up early today, right?  
Right on time or early, like early by five minutes.  
And that is a distinguishing factor,  
I think in any occupation,  
but especially in skateboarding  
where there's this kind of looseness.  
Sure.  
And so if you do show up on time, it really means a lot.  
The professionalism that, you know, was instilled in you.  
It's clear the different places where that showing up  
mentioned the shrewdness about the business decisions.  
I'm curious about another aspect of that,  
which is maybe a little more cryptic,  
which is, you know, whether or not it was the CD collection  
that I saw or your mention of the car,  
your interest in video games.  
It seems that one thing that you've done  
that a lot of guys that I knew,  
because back then, by the way, it was mostly guys now,  
as we said, women doing it too, women and girls.  
It seems like you have a lot of other hobbies and interests,  
music and et cetera,  
but that we never heard about you getting distracted  
or pulled down those lines.  
Like we didn't hear about you going and surfing  
and getting hurt surfing so that you couldn't skate.  
We're getting really into motorcycles  
or racing cars, right?  
You know, some people went hard left out of skateboarding  
into that, like Ken Block, the late, great Ken Block,  
but that became his main thing.  
Seems like you knew that skateboarding

## [Transcript] Huberman Lab / Tony Hawk: Harnessing Passion, Drive & Persistence for Lifelong Success

was the main frame and stayed with that.  
And yet you have a lot of other interests.  
Yeah, I think I, well, with other sports,  
especially like motocross,  
I have this huge respect for motocross.  
I think it's super exciting.  
I would love to do it.  
And I know that I would not escape unscathed.  
Like I would definitely want to learn the tricks,  
do whips and flips and whatever, and I'm gonna get hurt.  
And I don't want to risk my skate career for that.  
So I purposely pulled away from that type of thing.  
The last knee surgery I had is because I overshot a jump  
in mammoth on my snowboard.  
So that was the lesson.  
It was like, don't, what are you doing?  
Just cruise.  
Why, yeah, stay on the ground.  
Hit the powder.  
Right.  
You know, free ride with your bros  
because I learned my lesson.  
And so, yeah, you're right.  
But at the same time, like I still,  
I still love going surfing and snowboarding.  
I don't do them as much, obviously,  
but those are part of what I did all growing up.  
And they're important to me.  
I did, you know, do a couple of celebrity car races,  
like an Ask Car Race.  
And I totaled a car in the Long Beach Grand Prix  
because the student ran me into the wall.  
And it was like, well, that was fun, but I'm not,  
I don't have the bandwidth to get that serious about it.  
And now you have a family, of course, too.  
Of course, yeah.  
I mean, and those things, as fun as they are,  
and as, I don't know,  
as sort of auxiliary as they are,  
they require a lot of time.  
I mean, just for instance, that Long Beach Grand Prix,  
they want you to go stay in Palmdale  
for like a week and a half and train,

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and figure out how to truly know how to drive and be safe.

And it's like, I don't, I ain't got time for that.

Yeah, that's time you're not skateboarding.

Or with your family.

Right, yeah.

Right, now I feel the same way.

If I get pulled away from reading papers  
and prepping podcasts and reading the latest research

and thinking about experiments we could do,

then I, for more than a couple of days,

I start feeling the itch.

I have a feeling this stuff is programmed  
into one's nervous system after a while.

Like you've been skateboarding for so long  
that if you go a few days,

it probably just, your system is...

It's like depriving you of water or something like that.

Oh yeah, for sure.

I mean, well, just for instance,

our ramp is being torn down on Sunday.

Today is Friday.

Our ramp is being torn down on Sunday at 10 a.m.

to be moved to Salt Lake City for our big vert event.

I'm going there at 8.30,

so I can get a session before I get torn down.

I love it.

On Father's Day.

That's my Father's Day.

I'm going to work at 8.30 a.m. on Sunday.

I love it.

Speaking of family and lineage,

tell us about your kids.

You've got some talented skateboarders in your family  
besides yourself.

I do.

Well, I have four of my own and I have two step kids  
and they all skate.

My daughter, not so much anymore,  
but all the boys, five boys are all really into it.

My oldest son is the most,

he's the most prominent because he turned pro  
and has his own following.

He has a name for himself, Riley, and he's 30.

## [Transcript] Huberman Lab / Tony Hawk: Harnessing Passion, Drive & Persistence for Lifelong Success

Yeah, he kills it on street, he's a big street skateboarder.  
He does, yeah.  
But they're all good.  
They're all good skaters in their own ways.  
And it's so fun.  
I mean, I didn't, of course,  
they're surrounded by it their whole life,  
especially Riley, because when he was young,  
I didn't really have the means to have childcare or whatever.  
So I just had to take him with me on tourism and whatnot.  
So he was always around it.  
So he got good at it by default,  
but at some point started to shy away from it  
because he felt the pressure and my shadow.  
And it was like, this isn't fun.  
I don't know, people expect me to be super good  
or I have to do this stuff.  
And so he went, shied away from it,  
but then found a bunch of his friends in high school.  
They love skating.  
He's still good at it.  
So he found his crew.  
And they've all found their crews  
completely independent of me.  
And so when we go on vacation,  
for instance, we were, last year we were in,  
or two years ago, we were on the big on Hawaii.  
They wanted to go to skate parks.  
I don't want to go to skate parks on vacation.  
It's also a little harsh stuff.  
It's a great way to get hurt, right?  
What's that?  
Over in Hawaii.  
It's all weather worn.  
Oh yeah.  
And it's not even my scene.  
But then so I go,  
so I'm their chauffeur and I'm their filmer.  
I love it.  
That's my vacation.  
But because they all love it so much,  
you know what I mean?  
And it just, it's so cool.

## [Transcript] Huberman Lab / Tony Hawk: Harnessing Passion, Drive & Persistence for Lifelong Success

Like, I mean, how could I ever ask for more?  
It's amazing.  
Let's talk about Frank and Nancy a little bit,  
just cause I have this kind of odd connection  
to your family through those,  
it's really two or three day interaction,  
changing my life forever.  
Meeting you was spectacular as a young skateboarding kid,  
but also just the idea that someone would literally  
take me into their home.  
I mean, they had every reason to not trust me.  
First of all, I was hanging out with Billy Waldman,  
no explanation needed, the people who knew Billy.  
I hope he's doing well.  
I haven't heard anything about him,  
but I hope he's doing well.  
But we were wild,  
but he basically took me into your home.  
He and Nancy took me in,  
fed us or fed me.  
I had another friend with me.  
And, you know, I just have to say,  
as you're describing your family,  
I can only imagine what it must have been like  
for Frank and Nancy to see you have your kids.  
Did they get to live long enough  
to see that Riley and your other kids were skateboarders?  
My dad met Riley,  
but my dad passed away when Riley was two.  
So he's the only one of my kids that he met.  
My oldest sibling had kids,  
so he met two of his other grandkids besides Riley.  
My mom got to see some of Riley's success,  
but she suffered from Alzheimer's dementia,  
and so things slipped away.  
But I think that my dad would not believe  
that skateboarding is in the Olympics.  
To him, that is the top of the mountain  
because he was really into other sports.  
He loved sports.  
He loved the Olympics.  
He loved watching football.  
He loved watching baseball.



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He loved when the Olympics were on.  
He loved the competition element and the hype of it.  
And I think there was part of him  
that felt like, why isn't skateboarding in this?  
But he knew that there were so many hurdles to get through  
and so much more acceptance needed to happen.  
And I don't think he imagined whatever happened.  
Yeah, he was a special guy.  
I can still hear his voice.  
He's a very large guy, too.  
I was just smaller then.  
I definitely was smaller then.  
Oh, yeah, no, I mean, he had a big presence.  
And I know I've told you this many times before.  
This is actually how we got reconnected.  
I sent you a direct message and said,  
hey, I met your parents.  
In fact, they took me into your home,  
and I'm telling the truth,  
and you'll know I'm telling the truth,  
because they took me to dinner  
and they ordered black coffee after dinner.  
And for years, I would order black coffee after dinner.  
As a kid, you're just so impressionable.  
These really nice people took me in.  
I was like, wow, this is what a really healthy family looks like.  
I'm grateful to have loving parents always did,  
but I didn't have the healthy family structure.  
So for me, it was like, oh my goodness,  
these people drink black coffee after dinner.  
This must be what healthy families do.  
So by the way, folks,  
don't drink caffeine within eight hours of going to sleep.  
But, but...  
I still do that.  
But, well, it doesn't seem to be holding you back.  
Individualized, but yeah, it's spectacular  
that this lineage of Frank to you,  
and I mentioned Nancy,  
because it seems like, well,  
she might not have been at the contest  
and run around setting up tables and doing all that.  
Like she clearly was supportive as well.

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Oh, oh, she was.  
I did a lot of the events too.  
I mean, they needed all hands on deck  
when it started getting big,  
and no one was taking salaries.  
You know, that was the thing is that people thought like,  
oh, your dad's like, cashing on the skin.  
He never took up money for any of that.  
And he took so much shit.  
You know what I mean?  
He just loved it.  
It was for you.  
I have to imagine he went to bed later.  
It was for me, and it was also for the misfits  
that I surrounded myself with.  
And even though he was brash and he was like, you know,  
he was, I don't know, what's the word?  
He was foreboding and intimidating or whatever else.  
He did it for all those kids that were kind of lost.  
Like you.  
I mean, really, like he loved that it brought them together,  
that it gave them a sense of self,  
it gave them a sense of purpose.  
He saw that because he was that.  
He really had a rough childhood.  
And he did everything he could through his adult life  
to make up for it with his own kids  
and with the kids that they surrounded themselves with.  
So that's what he loved about it.  
Of course he loved seeing me thrive too,  
but he loved that he created this safe space  
and this sense of community.  
And so my mom, my mom was, that was her thing,  
was getting people together, gatherings.  
You know, oh, we should all get together.  
Even my siblings and I, as much as we want to emulate  
our parents, we don't do it as much as they did  
and we regret that.  
Well, there's still time.  
No, I mean, we do, but it's tricky.  
We're all in different areas.  
Sure.  
Yeah, the person that comes to mind

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when I think about your dad,  
I'm forgetting the movie,  
but there's this one Clint Eastwood movie  
where he lives in a neighborhood  
where I think it's a bunch of young Hmong gangsters.  
El Camino.  
And I just remember, like there's that scene  
of like Clint coming out on his porch  
and just standing really upright.  
Everything in his front lawn is everything super manicured.  
And just standing there like this immense presence.  
And that's how I remember Frank Hawk.  
Yeah, but he was a total softie.  
That's the thing.  
That's the, you know, there was a, it was all a front.  
Well, he was certainly very gracious.  
Like, you know, you got to see that side of him  
where it's just like, oh yeah, come on, we'll take you out.  
You want to go see Tony's place?  
Let's go.  
Like that's not some hard ass.  
Well, then there's a tail end to the story too  
where he actually called my mom.  
And I think there may have been a statement or two  
about, hey, this kid's 14.  
Like he can't be in Linda Vista Boys Club  
taking the bus back to Lancaster, et cetera, et cetera.  
May have been some discussion like that.  
But then they also paid for me to go home.  
Oh yeah.  
They flew me home.  
Yeah.  
So I think I owe you a couple of hundred bucks  
for a Southwest flight or whatever airline it was.  
Well, it's fun and I think important to reminisce  
about these people because they aren't just your parents  
but they've done so much and through you.  
You know, I really think that emotions and stories  
are really like the equivalent of energy in humans.  
You know, when people talk about energy  
because that gets carried forward.  
Speaking of which, we share a common love  
of some particular music.

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Are you somebody who listens to music  
to inspire you to get amped up, to go skateboard?  
Is music an important part of your life?

Yeah.

Let's put it this way.

I had a playlist for my 540 the other day.

Okay.

It's fine tuned to that trick  
and what would get me motivated and hyped to do it.  
You don't have to share with us what's on the playlist  
unless you choose to.

Oh man.

But was it high energy, low energy?

High energy, well, and some meaningful songs

like New Order Ceremony and Let's See,

Nine Inch Nails, Getting Smaller

because that was a song we used

at one of our big skate tours

and it was one of the most high energy sections of the show.

Gosh, there were so, I can't go through all of them,

I forget.

Gang of Four.

Wait, Gang of Four is,

shit, I forgot, what is it?

Oh, I find that Essence Rare fires up.

So I had like 10 that were just gonna,

if any of those played, I'm gonna make it

and I knew that it was about an hour and a half

and that's as long as I'm gonna try it before I'm too tired.

So you're listening in the warehouse

or you're listening in the warehouse?

In the warehouse, on random.

And then the song that I made it to

was off of that Prodigy album, Fat of the Lamb

and it's called Climatize, it's instrumental.

I used it for a birdhouse edit when 4-1-1 was the thing.

4-1-1 were these little like video newsletter type things.

Yeah.

Anyway, so when that song came on,

I was feeling it and I made it.

Fantastic, I love this because,

the neuroscientists in me is immediately gonna say,

we have this brain that loves to take in information

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and discard other information,  
but paired association is so strong.  
And when you couple that with some sense of reward,  
like the making of the varial below coping  
as early in life or making the 540 as a comeback  
to the injury after the injury.  
I mean, it was almost like, I loved all that music,  
but I was indoctrinated by it through the skate parks  
because that was the soundtrack to the skate.  
It was punk music.  
It was Sex Pistols and 999 and Black Flag and Divo  
and X and Buzzcocks and that was,  
that's what I kept hearing  
and that's what I associate with my best of times.  
Yeah, it's in your nervous system.  
Yeah.  
Yeah, there's a few voices,  
Rancid and Tim Armstrong and the-  
Operation Ivy.  
Operation Ivy.  
Yeah, Sound System was on that playlist,  
was on the 540 playlist.  
All right, you know, Tim will be so happy to hear that  
and Matt Freeman, the bass player  
and Jesse Michaels is now playing again with Tim.  
Right.  
The lead singer of Operation Ivy.  
Yeah, with their new gig.  
What's it called?  
They had a name and then they changed it.  
Oh, okay.  
Initially it was, I don't want to say  
because they changed it for a reason,  
but anyway.  
I know they're making the music.  
Yeah, which is amazing.  
Operation Ivy is incredible.  
My yearbook photo for, I think two years running  
was the cover of Operation Ivy  
because I didn't show up for the yearbook photo.  
Speaking of which, did you show up for yearbook photos  
or did you graduate high school?  
I graduated high school,

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but I didn't go to any of the events,  
prom or any of the auxiliary.  
I didn't know, I mean, I was an outcast.  
Like I was not, even though I had success in skating,  
skating wasn't cool.  
And I was not homies with anyone at school  
except for two other skaters.  
And we felt very ostracized.  
So, nah.  
Yeah, I did show up for the graduation  
because my mom and dad wanted to see it.  
Yeah, likewise, I graduated,  
but I could tell you more about the curves  
in the parking lot of my high school  
than I could about anything that happened in the classroom.  
Oh man, I broke so many sprinkler heads  
because the sprinkler heads were right next to the curb  
and there was a double-sided curb.  
And so, you'd do board slide  
because I'd go there early and board slide  
and then I'd just like lean too far  
and break the sprinkler head and never got caught.  
What high school?  
Well, I went to a couple.  
I went to Sarah High School,  
originally then I went to Sandiguito High School,  
which is in North County.  
And then I ended up with Tory Pines.  
I got so bullied at Sandiguito  
that I requested to be transferred  
because I couldn't survive there as a skater.  
I would have to hide my skateboard in the bushes  
before class and then go find it after school  
so that people wouldn't target me.  
Wow, the 80s were rough.  
It was like a John Hughes film.  
Whoa, for sure.  
It was so divided.  
It was jocks versus nerds.  
And then skaters were like,  
not even considered in that realm  
because they're just gonna get hammered  
because there were so few of us.

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Well, things have changed  
and not only have things have changed  
such that skateboarding is far more popular and respected  
and at least one mark of that is in the Olympics,  
although there are other marks of respect, certainly.  
But a huge evolution that I've observed  
is when I was skateboarding as a 14 year old  
and close to my 20s and then took some time off  
for sure, hardly any girls, hardly any women.  
There were a few, like Cara Beth Burnside,  
they got teased, ridiculed.  
It was hard on them.  
Super hard, yeah.  
Super hard.  
Now, largely through Instagram,  
but some other channels as well,  
you can see this young girl, Reese,  
on vert skateboarding better than a lot of grown men  
who have been skateboarding for decades.  
I mean, and then there are a number of other ones  
in street skateboarding  
and also taking really hard slams.  
Like, you know, so this is a complete revision  
of the recent history of skateboarding.  
So thoughts on that and on Reese and there are a few others.  
Was it Lizzie who took a really bad fall that was filmed?  
Broke the neck off for a femur, yeah.  
Yeah, these are tough ladies.  
Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
Doing it and for coming back.  
Lizzie did the loop.  
She did the full 360 loop.  
First woman to ever do it.  
So what do you think changed, like that paved the way?  
Is it just, you know, a critical mass of females doing it?  
Is it that, you know, Sky Brown, you know?  
For sure, there were the pioneers,  
people like Cara Beth Burnside and so many others.  
Patti Hoffman was one of the first vert skaters too,  
who were, they planted the seed.  
And then there were other women that took inspiration.  
Like, oh, girls can do this.  
Even though they're largely outnumbered

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and they get hassled for sure.  
And then through the street era,  
people like Alyssa Steamer,  
who paid the way for legit street skating.  
But then through the years,  
through the years, it started to become more common,  
more accepted, which is dumb to say,  
because it should have always been accepted.  
But the thing that really tipped the scale was  
when everything was leading up to the Olympics,  
there had to be equal divisions in equal disciplines  
for men and women.  
And suddenly there was no question of,  
should we have a women's event?  
Like, no, we have to have a women's event.  
Because that's the road to qualifying  
for the Olympic stage.  
And Vans Park series, to their credit,  
they were holding events simultaneously.  
Not that we're Olympic qualifiers, but just their own.  
And they said, these events are equal across the board.  
Equal prize money, equal attention.  
I mean, it was just like, that was just matter of fact.  
And that shifted a lot.  
It really did.  
And now if you go to a skate park,  
you can see plenty of women there.  
Yeah, it's awesome.  
And like literal women, like moms.  
You know, there are older women  
that are learning how to skate.  
It's awesome.  
Not that it matters so much,  
but does anyone claim to be the first female  
to do 540 on vert?  
Is that sort of a known thing?  
That would be Lindsay Adams.  
Fantastic.  
And she did that.  
I'll tell you how she did that.  
She was trying it.  
So she's trying to make a twist.  
She's married to Travis Pastrana.



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It's like the, you know.  
It's like the elite action sports couple.  
And she was trying them.  
She was getting pretty close.  
And then we did a big exhibition in Paris  
at the Grand Palais on behalf of Quicksilver.  
It was a huge event.  
They put a half pipe up  
and we did this giant show.  
There were thousands of people there.  
And it was very much unspoken but expected  
that I was gonna do a 900 at this event.  
I think it was, I wanna say it was 2010 maybe.  
And no, like 2009.  
And the organizers were kind of like,  
okay, so we're gonna do this.  
And then, you know, at some point you do a 900.  
And I was like, I can't guarantee that ever.  
Like every time I've ever made it,  
it's been pretty spontaneous.  
I've, you know, I've set out to do it  
and I've come up short.  
I can't guarantee it.  
I'll try.  
I'll try.  
And they were like, yeah, yeah, okay.  
And so I knew the whole time that we're skating.  
I was like, okay, everyone's expecting this.  
So I kind of went through the motions  
of doing my exhibition tricks, you know, playing the hits  
and then started trying 900s.  
And at the same time, Lindsay started trying 540s  
because she was feeling that energy.  
And so it was this sort of, not battle,  
but definitely we were trading hits.  
It was like, all right, you're going to Johnny's  
and then, oh, you missed it.  
And you're going to Lindsay, oh, she missed it.  
And then I, she almost made one.  
Like was riding down, you know,  
and then fell at the flat bottom.  
And it was like, oh, and then I made 900.  
And that was kind of the show stopper.

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Cause like that's what they expected  
and everyone's going crazy and whatever.  
People are coming down off the ramp, knees sliding down  
and we're saying goodbye to the crowd.  
And I look up and Lindsay puts her tail out.  
There's still people standing on the ramp  
and she puts her tail out.  
And I was like, I think Lindsay wants to try it again.  
Here we go.  
I'm on the mic now.  
She made it.  
Love it.  
She stole the show.  
Like without question, it was huge.  
You can look it up on, on YouTube.  
Like it's there.  
Lindsay Adams first, first 540.  
It was awesome.  
And then she made it and we all grabbed her  
and put her on her shoulders.  
That is awesome.  
It was pretty cool.  
That is awesome.  
Cause these things are like the four minute mile  
as a barrier, then people break that barrier  
and then other people break that barrier.  
It's, I mean, I, I've watched enough  
of skateboarding in recent years.  
You know, like the sky brown thing.  
Anyway, she's phenomenal.  
And I actually saw her family out to dinner  
here in Los Angeles and with her brother  
and folks are really gracious, really nice.  
And there again, you know, parents going to the skate park.  
We were, after all, she couldn't drive herself.  
I think she's got that time.  
She was probably like nine, you know.  
That's probably one of the biggest shifts too  
is that parents encourage their kids to skate now.  
Could you imagine that when we were young?  
Never.  
No, there were so many factors telling us not to,  
which just made us want to do it more.

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Sure.

But now, now kids are like parents are pushing them into it.

Get out there, learn tricks.

It's like, wait, that's not what we're supposed to be doing,

but it's cool that, that I think it,

I think what the, the, the really cool factor of all that is

there are definitely people our age.

I'm, I'm, I'm grouping you into my age category 47.

All right.

Close enough.

But, but that have kids and, and skateboarding

was such a special time in our life.

And then they're rediscovering it through their kids

and they're skating together.

And I think that's just so amazing

that someone of our age would be like, you know what?

I used to do that.

You're into that.

Like, let's go.

And then you could show your kid how to do a sweeper.

I could probably do that.

I don't have kids yet, but when I do, I'll show,

I intend on being healthy enough and to do a sweeper.

People can look up sweeper.

We don't have to explain it for them,

but a little layback grind or a sweeper.

Yep. Oh yeah.

Because they won't, they wouldn't think to do it.

No. And they're doing all these difficult flip tricks.

And that's not my, it's not my scene.

Oh yeah. What's your go-to on a game of skate?

If you're going to really like take out the younger generation.

I can do impossibles pretty, pretty regularly.

On transition.

Consistently. I knew I'm flat.

So this is where basically you scrape the back of the,

it's an allie really, but it wraps around the back foot.

The whole board wraps over your foot.

Yeah.

That's kind of my, my sneak attack on game of skate.

Does Rodney Mullen get credit for that tricks?

Oh yes.

That's a Rodney.

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Are you still in touch with Rodney?

Absolutely. Yeah.

Yeah. He's somebody that certainly deserves, deserves mention in the pioneering of tricks.

I think of-

He's the godfather of modern skateboarding.

I think of Rodney, you and Mark Gonzalez gone.

That's like the guys that-

I'm honored.

I drove the progression in different, partially overlapping directions that set the template for essentially-

I learned fingertips because of Rodney.

Like the first trick you saw me do,

I learned that because I saw Rodney do it on the ground.

And I thought, well, I can't do it on the ground,

but I have plenty of time in the air to do it.

It's awesome.

It's awesome that Stacey put you guys together.

We mentioned Bones Brigade,

but we didn't really talk about the architecture of it from the perspective of skateboard progression.

But it was kind of like any good band.

It seemed like there was really good chemistry,

interpersonally, but also that there was,

each person had something unique.

You skated the way you did.

Mike skated the way he did.

Stevie, the way he did.

And Rodney and-

We respected each other,

but we also fed off each other.

Tommy Guerrero, right?

Cause growing up in the Bay Area, like- Street, yeah.

In fact, Tommy skating the Hills of San Francisco in those videos, makes it look easy.

Those Hills are rough, they're dangerous,

and they have real life obstacles like moving buses.

You'll notice he wasn't stopping his top signs.

So that's fantastic.

We could reminisce about all these angles,

but the point being that spending time with people

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who do similar things or the same thing,  
but do it differently is one of the best ways to progress.  
This is why I routinely fly to Texas  
and hang out with Peter Atia, another podcaster,  
Lex Friedman, just cause they do things differently than I do.  
Where do you draw sort of peripheral inspiration from now?  
Like, I know you see Jimmy Wilkins at your ramp quite a lot.  
The Phenom, Jimmy Wilkins.  
It's kind of eerie how good that kid is.  
Who else are you spending time with besides Reese?  
And one of the reasons I asked this is that skateboarding  
is unique among many sports,  
and that a given session, a gathering to skateboard,  
will include an enormous-  
55 year old men and 10 year old girls.  
Exactly.  
Yes.  
Which is incredible.  
You don't think about soccer.  
You know, a serious game of soccer  
between professional soccer players.  
But also, it's not even that we're skating together,  
is that we are communicating and influencing each other.  
I mean, that is like the last conversation I had with Reese  
was she's talking about like,  
are you gonna try to do 540s again?  
I go, yeah, I'm kind of working on it.  
She goes, well, I think, cause she saw me try one.  
She goes, I think you need to pull out a little more.  
And she was right.  
And she's how old again?  
She's 10.  
And I didn't even consider that  
because I'm just back in my mode  
and I'm not taking into consideration  
that I don't have the snap that I had before I got hurt.  
And she was, I mean, that was one key to me making it.  
And you know, but to me, that's just,  
that's representative skateboarding  
and the inclusivity of it and the diversity of it.  
Where it's me, I'm 55, there's 30 year old pros  
that are at the top of the game.  
There are 17 year old up-and-comers, men, women,

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10 year old girl that is doing tricks  
that we've never even thought of or want to do.  
And it's all part of the whole mix.  
That's really beautiful.  
I wanna ask you about memorabilia.  
Not a topic that I think about much,  
but I think in a prior conversation of ours,  
you mentioned something about this.  
So, you know, there are skateboard collectors.  
There are people that collect stickers, skateboards.  
There's a whole market and world for this.  
And in addition to people wanting selfies with you  
when they see you, I imagine there's a long history  
and continued tradition of people taking a pen,  
putting your hand and saying, can you sign this?  
Because you are in this very small,  
but very clearly esteemed group of people  
where your signature increases the value of things.  
So, how does that work and how does that feel?  
Like if a skateboarder who, you know,  
there are the telltale signs of who is and who isn't, right?  
If they walk up to you and they're like,  
hey, will you sign this?  
Do you feel good about signing it?  
Or is that something that you refrain from?  
And if somebody's just merely a collector, a trader,  
and they're trying to build their portfolio, so to speak,  
you can probably also sense that.  
So, I'm not trying to put you in the hot seat here.  
Well, to answer your question, through the years,  
I was always open to that and I'm happy to,  
especially when people are skaters or skate fans and whatnot.  
In the last three years,  
there has been this new element of resellers,  
of people that just go buy signature stuff.  
They have nothing to do with skating.  
They don't care about skateboarding at all.  
They just want to get my signature on an item and sell it.  
And they usually do it on eBay or through their own channels.  
That's fine at some point.  
Like a few years ago, I respected the hustle.  
These guys are, they knew that I was gonna be at this event.  
Okay, they're outside waiting.

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They've been waiting for hours.  
I'll sign a couple of things.  
But in recent months even,  
they have figured out how to get my flight info.  
Like some hacked into my actual airline accounts.  
Some have sources at certain airports that get the manifests  
and they sell the information.  
I found all this out because I've actually  
held a couple of them accountable.  
Because I said, look, I'm not gonna sign this until you tell me  
how you knew I was gonna be here.  
I have no business here.  
I'm here to visit family.  
No one knows I'm coming here.  
Oh, well, we saw a friend said,  
they saw you at the Detroit airport.  
Like, no, they didn't.  
They wouldn't know where I'm going to anyway.  
Like why I saw it on Twitter.  
You didn't see it on Twitter.  
I'm on Twitter.  
Tell me the truth.  
There's a guy from TMZ that gets flight info  
and he sells it to us.  
Okay, thank you.  
But that has increased to a point where it's not sustainable.  
I can't please everyone.  
The last time I flew out of Chicago,  
there were about 15 people.  
One guy had a shopping cart full of skateboards.  
And they all bum rushed me at security  
before I went through security.  
Thinking that I'm gonna sign stuff.  
I'm like, you guys, I can't.  
I can't do that.  
I'm gonna miss my flight.  
And I can't delineate who like, I'm sorry.  
You guys have like sabotaged yourselves.  
I don't know what to say.  
And then I went through security  
and there were four dudes waiting at the gate.  
They had bought tickets, airline tickets  
so that it could be past security.

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The airline tickets they're not gonna use to chase this.  
So, I mean, when people want my autograph,  
but it's weird and it's intrusive  
and it's kind of creepy.  
Yeah, just tell them that a neuroscientist told you  
that you gotta get that slob air right.  
And if you sign too many autographs  
that you're never gonna get that.  
All my chances of getting it back.  
You're not gonna get the tuck knee.  
You're not just not gonna do the flap knee invert.  
You're just not gonna get it.  
Anyway, it's just a really weird new thing  
that has popped up and other than that.  
And so, the tricky part is when there is a public thing  
or a public exhibition or whatever  
to try to figure out who is the true skate fans  
and who aren't.  
Usually they're pretty identifiable,  
but it has ruined the experience for people  
who truly are the group skating.  
Well, thanks for sharing that.  
And we won't tell everyone what the telltale signs are  
so that these people don't exploit them.  
The skateboarders, the real fans will know.  
They won't have to worry about whether or not  
they represent accurately because you just will.  
On the positive side, something I've been wanting  
to learn more about from you is your philanthropic efforts.  
I think Kevin Rose, who's in the tech sector,  
was the first to mention to me  
that you guys have done some philanthropy together.  
And maybe you've done some with Jim Thiebo as well,  
the great Jim Thiebo.  
Yeah, well, both Jim and Kevin were board members.  
Jim is the current board member of the Skateboard Project.  
Well, tell us about the Skateboard Project.  
It's my nonprofit and we try to develop  
public skate parks in underserved areas,  
but more so by supporting the community  
and giving them the resources to do so.  
So groups that are trying to get skate parks in the area,  
we are the resource center for them.



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We'll give them advice, we'll give them funding,  
we'll give them our stamp of approval,  
and that can go a long way.  
And to date, we've helped to fund over  
almost 1,000 skate parks now  
and 700 or 800 of which are open.  
I mean, it's my proudest work for sure,  
and it's because I never took for granted  
the fact that I grew up near a skate park,  
and that was my home away from home.  
That was where I found my sense of community,  
my sense of identity, my crew,  
and so many kids choose the skateboard,  
but have no support in doing so.  
And so those skate parks are a lifeline.  
Yeah, I can attest, they absolutely save lives.  
There's no question.  
Where can people find out more about your foundation?  
We can provide a link, but I guess-  
Skatepark.org.  
So where does the funding for these parks  
actually come from?  
It comes from donations from supporters,  
it comes from fundraisers, some corporate.  
Sometimes funding is funneled through us  
for specific regions.  
Like the, we have a built to play project  
that's in Michigan and New York,  
and that's funded by the Ralph C. Wilson Junior Foundation.  
So they give us the funding,  
and then we have to give it to that area,  
but it's easy because there's plenty of projects,  
and now there's an abundance of skate parks in those areas.  
I love it.  
Thank you for doing that, for organizing around that.  
And I get to get more places to skate.  
I'm curious what's in the immediate horizon, right?  
These days you probably have the option to say yes  
to things and no to things.  
You have a family, you have your skateboard career.  
Where do you place your priorities  
in terms of how to carve up your day or your week?  
I mean, what would you like to make sure that you do

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for as much of the hours of your waking day for the next,  
let's just say five years,  
because if you wanna extend that out, you can, but-  
Well, I wanna be available to my kids first and foremost,  
and we still have one at home for the next four years,  
so I will make sure that I'm available to her.  
And in terms of career, I never had great aspirations.  
Like I never thought, okay, this is what I wanna accomplish.  
It was always just very more trick-specific oriented,  
so I was always like, I wanna try this and this and this.  
I would like to continue skating.  
I don't know if I'll be able to skate  
at the level I'm skating right now in five years,  
but I know that I'll still be on the ramp.  
I may not be doing it in public.  
Trying to advocate for public skate parks,  
doing more with the foundation.  
And whatever, I think the way I prioritize my time  
is what will resonate the furthest  
and have the best impact on skateboarding in general.  
I do feel that I've come to a point  
where, yes, I'm some unofficial ambassador to skateboarding,  
and I wanna represent it well.  
I wanna be fair in that skateboarding  
is all kinds of different things.  
It's not just ex-games or Olympics or whatnot.  
It represents a true culture.  
And I want to project that as much as I can  
and make sure that people understand  
that that's also positive.  
And I mean, really everything that I'm doing now  
is just kind of fun.  
I would say in the last five to 10 years  
is the first time I truly enjoyed  
what skateboarding has provided me  
in terms of opportunity and what it brings to me  
and what it means to my family.  
I have a much better appreciation and understanding for it.  
And these days, everything's kind of just gravy.  
It's just so fun.  
I can't believe I can still do it for a living.  
It's crazy, I'm 55 years old.  
And I truly ride my skateboard as a career.

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Like that's nuts.  
And I wouldn't have it any other way.  
Well, it certainly is earned.  
And I just wanna say thank you for a number of things.  
First of all, thank you for going to the skate park.  
Thank you for picking this trajectory.  
Thank you for inspiring me  
and so many other young people and old people,  
older people over so many decades now,  
both with what you did on a skateboard  
and off the skateboard.  
And including your resilience and determination  
to push and continue to progress  
to the point where you were badly injured.  
And then to push through that,  
come back at least match what you did previously.  
And I would wager that you will  
exceed your prior skill level going forward.  
So I wanna thank you for your resilience.  
I know it comes from an intrinsic drive.  
Your love of skateboarding,  
it just absolutely comes through.  
I share in some of that, of course,  
having grown up in it, but not nearly as much as you.  
But also just your willingness to stretch out  
into these different areas, like the video game thing  
or talk about X games, the Olympics,  
because that did allow for a lot of growth  
and lateral movement of skateboarding.  
And at the same time, just as you said,  
to bring it right back to the fact  
that skateboarding isn't one thing.  
It is not like other sports, it's its own sport.  
And it's its own lifestyle, it's its own thing.  
And we do consider you the ambassador for skateboarding.  
And I speak for many people when I say that  
we're very grateful that you are  
because you bring that shrewdness and that prudence to it,  
but also that get after it punk rock spirit  
and the goodness that your parents instilled in you  
clearly comes through everything  
from the philanthropy and onward.  
So I can't say enough positive things

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and we're expressing enough gratitude  
for what you've done and for your time here.

Your legacy in skateboarding,  
but also just in the game of life is clearly cemented.

So thank you.

Oh, thank you.

Well, and I appreciate that the ethos of skateboarding  
shines through on your show and just your crew here.

Clearly a lot of them come from the skateboard world.

So you're still supporting it, whether you know it or not.

Thanks so much.

And hopefully you'll come back and we'll do it again.

All right, sounds good.

Thank you for joining me  
for today's discussion with Tony Hawk.

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Thank you for joining me for today's discussion with Tony Hawk.

And last, but certainly not least, thank you for your interest in science.