

# IT TOOK AWAY MY ANXIETY

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**INFINITY PODCASTS 1314**

How much pain are you willing to tolerate before you're willing to course correct a California lawyer turned himself into one of the fittest men on the planet a rich role globally recognized Ultra endurance athlete New York Times bestseller and host of one of the biggest podcasts on the planet he sat down with a hundred of the world's smartest people is there one overall takeaway this theme of transformation so my story I graduated top of my class the world ranked swimmer and then I was

working as a lawyer so on the outside it looked like I was doing pretty well inside I was dying my first Escape was through drugs and alcohol my family didn't want anything to do with me in the marriage that ended on the honeymoon went to jail could barely make it up a simple flight of stairs without being winded and that was a harsh dose of reality I needed to overhaul my life I needed to do something that was going to be hard and uncomfortable you can't be a phoenix if you don't burn in the Flames first

we all want to be this  
idealized version of ourself  
and yet we still don't do it we  
are in a culture that prioritizes  
comfort and luxury and the  
impatience that we all have  
we overestimate what we can  
accomplish in a year and  
completely underestimate  
what we could do in a decade  
we don't have to suffer we  
don't have to be in pain it's  
our emotional lives that  
hold us back from accessing  
that potential so how do  
people in that situation take  
that first step in  
transformation what worked

for me after trying many  
different things was [Music]  
why should you listen to this  
episode all in all this  
conversation is fundamentally  
about transformation how you  
transform yourself from  
where you are now to where  
you want to be in Rich's life is  
the personification of human  
transformation this guy has  
been down and out he  
suffered with addiction failure  
and turmoil that most of us  
will thankfully never have to  
endure but he says in this  
episode and he'll prove to you  
that pressure that discomfort

can be and should be your  
privilege and if you lean into  
that if you understand  
that pressure is your privilege  
and discomfort is the pathway  
to all the good things that you  
want in your life then and  
only then can you reach your  
potential and one of the things

I really got from this  
conversation is this idea that  
all of us are much more  
capable than we believe we  
are we have more potential  
than we allow ourselves to  
believe and also one of the  
big things Rich will leave you  
with in this conversation

which blew my mind if I'm  
honest is this idea that  
addiction is on a spectrum we  
tend to think of addiction as  
as he says junkies or people  
that are ingesting or taking  
drugs but if you think about it  
we're all addicted we're  
addicted to distraction  
whether that's our phones  
whether it's  
pornography whether it's food  
whether it's alcohol as is the  
case in Rich's case whether  
it's our work how do we  
alleviate ourselves of that  
addiction to distraction that's  
what you'll find out in this

conversation and most importantly of all riches sat down with 800 of the world's smartest wisest and most successful people and from doing that he has learned a lot this is one of the episodes that you honestly should not miss enjoy [Music] rich [Music] this is a a broad question but it's intentionally Broad who are you and what mission are you on coming out of the gay at heart that's a very difficult question to answer I would say that I am a spiritual being having a human experience endeavoring attempting to

learn and grow in a number of ways I had an experience uh in my early to mid 40s where I was able to tap into potential that I didn't know existed and I expressed that athletically and that experience taught me that we're all capable of so much more than we allow ourselves to believe and it motivated me to go on this journey to grow and expand in other areas of my life because I realized if I had been sitting on this late and potential athletically for so long there must be other blind spots and I wanted to explore

those and so my mission has  
been to grow in the public  
sphere learn in the public  
sphere by having these  
conversations on my show  
and

then share that wisdom with  
other people for the purpose  
of elevating Consciousness  
and activating positive change  
in others you know you've got  
millions and millions of  
people listening to your show  
all over the world you've  
interviewed I think almost  
800 people right um which is  
staggering um on an  
individual level what is it that

you hope to impart or what impact is it you hope to have on the individuals that listen to your show I want everybody listening or tuning into the show to believe to their core that they are capable of of more than they may realize that that there is um a greater possibility for every single person regardless of circumstances and there are tools available for accessing that I think that's super important because I think it's so easy to passively or reactively live our lives we're all on some level in a

routine in a rut and we have  
blinders on because we're in a  
certain social environment  
where there's unstated dictates  
about what's okay and what's  
not and we're all creatures  
who want to feel a sense of  
belonging and identity with  
whatever group that you  
know we're aligned with and I  
think that that comes with  
very good things of feeling  
you know wanted and needed  
but also negative aspects  
which create blinders to the  
greater possibilities that that  
are available to us everybody  
is conditioned in sure some

way or another um and that conditioning starts fairly early what you're talking about there at least in how I heard it is to try and undo some of that conditioning so we can live more aligned to whatever worthy causes um right for us when was the when did you start being conditioned and what was that condition what was the first sort of con what's the first context or moment where you're conditioning began the conditioning that led you on the journey that you lived I went to a high school that was

very um achievement oriented  
grades were very important  
uh academic achievement in  
my household was Paramount  
and it was a situation in  
which no matter what I did it  
you didn't quite get the  
validation that you were  
seeking so you're always  
chasing it a little bit more a  
little bit more um to the point  
where unbeknownst to me or  
on an unconscious level like I  
needed to escape that  
Paradigm and my first Escape  
was was through drugs and  
alcohol and bullying bullying  
yeah what take me into the

mind of that young guy that's  
being bullied what is he  
thinking what is he is he  
scared going to school is he  
trying to escape who he is is  
he trying to fit in in certain  
ways what is he doing and  
what is the experience of  
bullying like for him in detail  
yeah to take myself back I  
think I just I just wanted to  
feel like I belonged and I  
always felt different than  
other than the sense of not  
being comfortable in my own  
skin like other people had a  
rule book for  
life that I lacked um and just

not having the social skills or  
the confidence to be able to  
make friends or feel like I  
was part of anything and then  
eventually you you sign  
alcohol in drugs as being the  
the thing that made you feel  
other than yourself in a good  
way well initially it made me  
feel like myself it was like  
this miracle salve where  
suddenly all of the  
unconscious anxiety and  
sense of difference between  
myself and others seemed to  
vanish and that discomfort in  
my own skin turned into  
Comfort like I suddenly felt

like oh maybe this is how  
everyone else feels all the  
time I've discovered this thing  
where now I feel like okay  
like I can exhale and I can be  
around other people  
without feeling anxious about  
it and I can look somebody in  
the eye and have a  
conversation or like flirt with  
a girl or do all these things  
that seem to come naturally to  
other people that seemed  
alien to myself and I just  
remember feeling so at home  
with that and just wanting to  
feel like that all the time and  
it got its claws in me and

that's how that kind of Journey Begins for many people who've had their version of my experience with alcohol addiction addiction comes in many forms and the the role that addiction was playing the role that alcohol was playing in your life at that stage can also be substituted for other things right so some people have it with food or with um or with work from sitting there and interviewing hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people what have you learned about the nature of really like

the role that alcohol was playing for you but also like the role that maybe for me like being a workaholic or for some people eating is playing what is it doing for us is it like an escape is it um in your case it was like the Salve that made you feel as you said yourself but what is that thing yeah I think that uh this is something I've spent a lot of time thinking about as somebody who's been in recovery since 1998 I've been to thousands of AAA meetings I know so many people in recovery and over

the course of 10 years of  
Hosting my podcast I've had  
so many experts in the realm  
of addictions variety and  
recovery and I've come to  
believe that this notion of  
addiction lives on a much  
broader Spectrum than we  
may realize when we think of  
addiction we think of uh the  
junkie or you know the gutter  
drunk but in between you  
know that polarity there's a  
whole spectrum of addictive  
and I would even weave in  
obsessive compulsive  
behavior that ranges from  
continuing to get into the

same bad relationship to  
being unable to put the phone  
down uh where we are seizing  
moments and opportunities  
through Behavior or  
substance to distract ourselves  
from ourselves because we  
are experiencing discomfort  
with whatever emotion is  
coming up and it's easier to  
divert to  
something that will give us a  
sense of ease and comfort or  
distraction than to sit with  
that sense of dis ease and I  
think that any kind of  
recurring repeated Behavior  
pattern that mimics that could

be characterized as an addiction it may be mild but I think nonetheless it's not you know it's qualitatively the same thing as the person who can't stop drinking and it all goes back to this inside job of trying to understand what makes us tick the nature and origin of those discomforts what triggers those and trying to find a way to not only sit with those but confront them and work through them so you can ultimately transcend them and liberate yourself from the behavior or the substance or whatever it may

be that is the kind of go-to  
default thing that you do  
when you start to feel like out  
of control or nervous or  
anxious or insecure or  
perhaps you know triggered  
or or any number of kind of  
emotional impulses that might  
arise what is the cost of not  
learning to be with myself so  
I'm looking at all these things  
for an addiction I'm definitely  
addicted to my phone all of  
these addictions I've got some  
of them in you know very  
varying degrees um so what  
what's the cost well time will  
tell right right maybe there

isn't a cost that is so significant that it mandates that you Rectify that behavior again it's a spectrum right so for you you might be able to engage in a certain Behavior without having negative ramifications in your life that are significant enough for you to redress that for somebody else it might destroy their life but I think developing an awareness around those behaviors and paying attention enough such that if you start to find yourself experiencing negative life ramifications as a result of

those behaviors you're not um  
in denial over that and you  
can make a course correction  
and what's the upside then of  
just learning to sit with  
yourself as opposed to  
reaching for the phone or for  
the the cake or for the the  
beer what is the what is the  
upside of that you know I say  
this because I think I live in a  
generation that have become  
so used to distracting  
ourselves um and the thought  
of  
like meditating or not having  
our phone on us is actually I  
mean it's like a it's like a

phobia um we haven't learned  
to sit with ourselves in  
Silence with our thoughts if  
you can't sit silently with  
yourself with your thoughts  
then you are not living an  
intentional examined life and  
I think to be addicted to your  
phone or to be living in that  
reactive mode where you're  
constantly distracting yourself  
robs you of something that we  
need as human beings which  
is rumination and boredom  
that is the juice of creativity  
and as a creative person  
somebody who does this  
show and talks to amazing

people and is writing a book  
and is very much in a space  
where your creativity is  
really uh the driver of  
everything that you do I  
would say to you it is of  
Paramount importance to  
protect your boredom to  
protect your quiet time to put  
boundaries around those  
distractions otherwise you are  
not going to be doing your  
best work and you are going  
to be depriving your audience  
of the best version of yourself  
the other thing is connection  
it's definitely it's definitely  
robbed me of connection well

it's it's pernicious in that way  
because at least with social  
media it gives you the illusion  
of connection and you know  
we're sitting here together  
because of social media like  
you reached out to me I  
reached out to you so it's not a  
binary there are amazing  
things about it and my entire  
career  
has been built on these digital  
tools and they're very  
important to you know how I  
kind of navigate the world but  
at what point does that meter  
kind of toggle over into you  
know the the red zone where

I'm being used by it and it's robbing me of my humanity and it's deluding me into this idea that I'm connecting with other people but in the analog world I'm just at home all the time and I'm not actually interacting in the real world and you know I think one thing we share Stephen is our show is all about the in-person experience like I tried to do the zoom thing I can't do it it's like this is not why I'm doing this yeah I'm not getting it feels transactional and weird and yeah and you know as as as much

as these these tools which are phenomenal um have given us the ability to connect in a certain way it's not true connection and I think you know in order to really feel like we're part of the human race we're hardwired to be with people in real world World settings when I look at your story I see multiple chapters and there's transformation in every chapter sometimes for better sometimes for worse but it's always forward so it seems like it was the path that you had to to go on you talk there

about the first chapter of your  
life which is your young  
there's bullying there's this  
feeling of sort of inadequacy  
and there's isolation what's  
the next chapter yeah so um  
awkward insecure kid  
difficulty making  
friends um but I found Solas  
in the swimming pool and  
that was really my safe haven  
perhaps my first addiction um  
and in lockstep with my  
Improvement in that space  
came uh came better grades I  
started to perform better  
athletically so by the time I  
was 18 and graduating high

school I had my pick of going to any college I wanted to go into Harvard Princeton ended up going to Stanford which in addition to just being a premier University I also happened to have the number one Collegiate swimming program in the country so basically anything I wanted to do was like laid out in front of me I arrive in California for college I grew up in Washington DC so traveled 3000

miles away to go to school enter alcohol and that began the sort of slow decline of my

ability to express my potential  
not only as an athlete and as a  
student but as a human being  
because it just gradually  
denigrated um all of my  
values and and sort of dented  
my aspirations to the point  
where I know really I no  
longer really cared about my  
trajectory or where I was  
headed with my life and was  
solely concerned with rooting  
out where my next good time  
would be and those were the  
good times and I would say  
that initially alcohol really  
saved me it taught me how to  
be a social person like I

enjoyed going to parties and I  
enjoyed figuring out how to  
talk to people and it was  
really this fuel that  
transformed me from this  
Naval gazing insecure kid  
into somebody who felt like I  
could comport myself in a  
social situation as long as I  
was using alcohol I've taken  
some of those skills and I'm  
now able to apply them  
without alcohol but very  
slowly over time you know  
my life the quality of my life  
just sort of declined and  
declined and declined so I  
was a functional alcoholic for

many years but I knew very early on that my relationship with alcohol was different from that of my peers because I would be the last person to leave I was immediately sneaking drinks I was the one who was throwing up and blacking out when everyone else knew what time it was to go home I started going out like more and more nights every single week and then fast forwarding through later years hiding my drinks sneaking my drinks hiding the empties and doing kind of all the dark stuff that one does

when they fall prey to this condition and it it there was nothing really sexy or romantic or rock and roll about it was just really kind of sad and pathetic to the point where at the end I was alone alienated from my friends my family didn't want anything to do with me until I sorted this out I was on the precipice of you know somehow I got through law school but I was working as a lawyer I was on the precipice of getting fired was living in a shitty apartment with barely any furniture

sleeping on a mattress on the floor and it was it was it was very dark for a very long period of time when did you get married the first your first marriage in 1995 20 must have been told that was so it would have been 90. 96 I think yeah they ill-fated marriage that ended on the honeymoon that's a sordid story that would take a very long time to untangle and explain um a marriage that ended in the honeymoon it ended on the honeymoon yeah uh incredibly um painful embarrassing chapter of My

Life um that that marriage took place after I'd gotten the the two DUIs but I was endeavoring to get sober and I think my fiancée not quite my wife because we didn't sign the marriage certificate which is a whole other aspect of the story um I think that she realized that I would be problematic as a partner but didn't have the courage to call the whole thing off and allowed the wedding ceremony to take place even though she didn't want to be married to me and it all kind of came to head on the

honeymoon um which is the last time that I saw her and that was really my bottom uh as an alcoholic even though I drank for a period of time after that because it was so emotionally devastating and painful that was really the nadir where I realized that my life had hit the skids in in in just a you know a way that I could have never imagined for myself post that um that I was gonna call it I guess it was a wedding post that wedding and everything that happened you returned to drinking

again you relapse because of the pain of that experience absolutely how long does that last night it was a long time ago I think it was about six more months of my life kind of circling the drain um before I finally decided that I needed to really take responsibility for my behavior at that point what are the people around you that love you doing and saying uh friends slowly stepping backwards from me um distancing themselves from me my parents were terribly worried and concerned and

they had sought out counsel  
of their own and started  
attending Al-Anon and I  
believe they had seen a  
therapist as well  
and and through the advice  
that they got was like you  
need to cut ties with this guy  
like you can't will him into  
doing what you know is in his  
best interest you have to  
detach and I recall very  
vividly a conversation that I  
had with my dad where he's  
like I know what you're doing  
it's very clear uh this path that  
you're on and we just can't be  
part of it anymore and if and

when you're ready to make a change or to really entertain sobriety in a real way we're here for you we're your parents and and we love you but until that point like we really don't want to hear from you anymore so that was a brutal pill to swallow incredibly painful but also catalytic because it snapped me out of whatever denial I was harboring about getting over on people or them not really knowing how I was actually behaving and I think it was an important step in helping me realize just how

dire the circumstances were for me at that time when your father said that what did you hear I heard you're a failure and you are unlovable do you think that was the right thing for him to say I think in my case and I'm only speaking from you know my perspective in this particular set of circumstances it was the right thing to do because it effectively moved me in the direction that I needed to be moved in and they had tried the other way which is loving me and being supportive and and kind of offering

up a soft landing pad and that was not working and I think they needed to do that for themselves to protect themselves as well and and I respect that choice you know I've been in many situations trying to help people get sober and it's a very delicate difficult thing to do it's just really challenging because if somebody's not ready and they don't want to get sober there's very little that you can do to try to you know create that Epiphany in them willingness is a self-generated um response that you can't

instill in somebody externally  
and until somebody's really  
willing to confront their  
demons you can't compel  
them to do so so uh that's why  
I think sobriety or addiction is  
so baffling and so painful for  
the

loved ones of people that  
suffer who can so clearly see  
you're killing yourself you  
need to do this and yet that  
person won't make that choice  
just addiction and um sobriety  
in that sense that I was  
thinking about when I asked  
that question because I've got  
people in my life that I've

tried to help in various ways  
and I've got a one one friend  
who has struggled with um  
pretty severe addiction and  
your natural inclination is to  
try and jump in there and give  
them advice and help them  
and pay for this and sort sort  
this out et cetera Etc but after  
you know years and years of  
it never working what do you  
do then and I'm thinking of  
one particular example of a  
friend of mine who struggled  
with

addiction and slowly  
everybody has just Fallen  
away the person's

management has fallen away  
their friends have fallen away  
um and I wonder sometimes I  
wonder to myself is that what  
you have to do is that do you  
have to basically give them a  
void enough space and stop  
holding them up in like sort  
of artificially suspending  
them uh and let them go to  
the bottom let them go to that  
Rock Bottom there is a logic  
in that you know you don't  
want to coddle that person  
you certainly don't want to be  
codependent in their behavior  
in other words making  
excuses for them that makes it

easier for them to continue down that destructive path um and there is wisdom in just saying hey man I love you I'm available when you're ready to get help uh but you know you're you're on your own thing man and I just I can't be part of it so call me when you're ready but until then good luck to you because the addiction elevator is always going down it's a progressive disease it only Moves In One Direction the best case scenario is that person's life stays the same but in almost every case it continues to

decline and it will decline to the point where the pain experienced by the person who is the addict or the alcoholic becomes more unbearable than the fear of the change and that is where their willingness is born and again it's not something that you can instill in that person you could you could like hijack your friend and throw them in the back of a car and drop them off in a rehab but he might escape from the rehab or he'll sit in the back and just bite his time until he or she gets out and they can

go back to whatever they're doing that's why this is such a difficult um problem to solve it is an internally generated thing the people that I know that have been able to get sober and stay sober are the people that shoulder responsibility for their own sobriety you can't get sober for somebody else I'm getting sober for my spouse or my kids or you know I'm getting sober because if I don't my boss is going to fire me those are those you might be able to do that for a short period of time but for the true addict

unless you're  
doing it for yourself and  
you're making it your number  
one priority chances are  
you're not gonna you're not  
gonna last over the Long Haul  
and it's confusing and when  
you love that person it puts  
you in a very treacherous  
position because if you do  
create that boundary and that  
person goes off and  
something terrible happens  
will you feel responsible or  
will you feel like you didn't  
do enough or if you had just  
done this or that that wouldn't  
have happened and that's a

very real predicament to put yourself in there's something quite counterproductive in the sense that when you're trying to help that person what often happens is your relationship with them becomes strained and then when your relationship becomes strained and you you become frustrated with the lack of sort of effectiveness of your support then arguments start you might say some things that you regret further tarnishing that person's self-esteem self-worth or whatever's triggering them to

try and Escape themselves  
through whatever addiction  
they might have and it it  
actually can make make their  
situation significantly worse  
sure destroy the relationship  
right which is why it's  
important to to interface with  
that from a place of neutrality  
right to not get emotionally  
agitated or activated by it and  
a good way of of kind of  
recalling that or reinforcing  
that is to understand that there  
is the person your friend and  
there is this  
disease this addiction right  
and if this person is acting in

their disease that's not the  
person they're not a bad  
person they're afflicted by  
something so powerful that  
they're unable to override it  
and and you know be that  
friend that you remember and  
I think when you when you  
kind of approach it through  
that lens you can have a little  
bit more compassion for that  
person rather than take it  
personally because they're not  
they're not acting out of  
animus towards you they're  
suffering from something  
that's so powerful that they're  
unable to to control it quick

one before we get back to this episode just give me 30 seconds of your time two things I wanted to say the first thing is a huge thank you for listening and tuning in to the show week after week means the world to all of us and this really is a dream that we absolutely never had and couldn't have imagined getting to this place secondly it's a dream where we feel like we're only just getting started and if you enjoy what we do here please join the 24 of people who watch this channel regularly and have hit

the Subscribe button means more than I can say and if you hit that subscribe button here's a promise I'm gonna make to you I'm gonna do everything in my power to make this show as good as I can now and into the future we're going to deliver the guests that you want me to speak to and we're going to continue to keep doing all of the

things you love about the show thank you thank you so much back to the episode okay so this was a quote I found about your opinion of

balance he finds balance  
extremely difficult and  
believes that if something is  
good then the more the better  
he believes balance is for  
ordinary people and he wants  
to be extraordinary he says  
this can be a blessing and a  
curse yeah definitely a  
blessing and a curse um I am  
hardwired for extremes uh  
this has been both a  
superpower and an Achilles  
heel it's the thing that has  
fueled me and allowed me to  
you know achieve uh some  
pretty cool things but it's also  
been the thing that um has

almost killed me so it's that love hate thing but I think behind it this notion of living a balanced life that we get served up like you need to be balanced and you know the best way to kind of pursue your life is in a balanced way everything in balance and the social conditioning around that idea is so powerful that for years I just felt like a terrible person or um like less than because I just could never figure out that equation to make everything feel like it was even adequately balanced because I feel most alive in

those extremes and that's part  
of what addiction is like  
you're just searching for those  
Peak experiences in unhealthy  
ways and also in healthy ways  
through Athletics and and you  
know and through uh  
creativity and and other  
avenues um but I always felt  
guilty about that like other  
people seem to be telling me  
that I shouldn't be doing this  
and yet this is where I feel  
like myself and finally I got  
to the place where I was like  
this whole balance thing like  
this is who I am and I decided  
to embrace it now that doesn't

mean that um you just blindly pursue these obsessions to the point of self-destruction what it means is for me again not giving advice uh in my experience when when I allow myself to uh immerse myself in something that um fascinates me whether it's an ultra distance race or writing a book or whatever it is giving myself permission to really focus on that and take it all the way to the wall is where I do my best work but that is only acceptable as long as that pendulum that's swinging all

the way up over here swings  
back goes this way and comes  
to the center because we all  
have buckets in our life of  
values that we you know need  
to nourish so a creative  
project for example I'm going  
to go I'm going to do that and  
that's fine as long as I come  
back and my family is  
nourished my relationship is  
nourished my friendships are  
nourished all these other areas  
that are important to me don't  
fall by the wayside for too  
long so balance in the macro  
but not balancing the micro so  
on a day-to-day basis or a

week-to-week basis my life is  
wildly out of balance but if  
you look at it over the course  
of a year you telescope out I  
think I think it's much more  
imbalanced than then  
one might suspect super  
interesting I've I think using  
that example of the Swing is  
it called the pendulum in  
society we started by  
glorifying hassle culture I  
guess and being out of  
balance and then there was  
kind of a movement towards  
that's toxic right and now I  
feel like the new pride is like  
I don't set my alarm clock

yeah yeah and I feel like a little bit is coming back the other way where people are going work-life balance like that's it's such balance is such a subjective thing and work is completely different for everybody like this is my work this is not I'm not you know for someone else their relationship with that work might be tedium it might be depressing they might be doing something that really doesn't

fill them up but I think there's needs to be Nuance in the fact that all work is different every

individual is clearly different  
and it is wired to find the  
Fulfillment in different ways  
so work-life balance in and of  
itself is a pretty ridiculous  
concept to think that there is a  
balance there really must be  
as you kind of describe a  
subjective balance where  
there's a balance for Steve and  
as long as I don't fall in  
sacrifice social connection  
isolation and all the other  
things then I'm balanced my  
balance could you know look  
much different from yours for  
whom and when right if  
you're 22 years old and

you've got this idea for a  
startup and you're a coder and  
you want to code like a  
maniac like

knock yourself out you have  
no other responsibilities you  
have the time you have the  
freedom to do that in that  
moment but that 22 year old  
20 years later with kids at a  
mortgage and whatever it's a  
different time that person's in  
a different place these things  
you know can't be they have  
to be contextualized right and  
yes if you want to achieve  
something great you are  
going to have to work very

hard and you're going to have  
to get out of your comfort  
zone you may even need to be  
obsessed if you're living an  
entirely Balanced Life where  
you're home at five o'clock  
and you're always at dinner  
and all it's like you're making  
it very difficult to achieve  
something extraordinary that  
extraordinary  
thing is going to require an  
extraordinary commitment  
which means in the social  
construct of balance you are  
going to be out of balance if  
you're going to feel  
uncomfortable with that

because you have other priorities in your life then maybe that's not for you and being out of balance to pursue something great in my opinion is perfectly fine again as long as you allow that pendulum to swing back and those other things in your life that are important are nourished and attended to so it's a very specific thing it depends on who you are what stage of life you're in what you're seeking and having the self-awareness to understand that you can't be everywhere all the time and you can't be a

hundred  
percent for all of the things  
that are important to you in  
your life in every single day  
so it's about conscious  
awareness and intentionality  
about where you're rowing  
that boat you can only row  
your boat in One Direction  
are you rowing the Steven  
boat towards Stephen today  
are you going to row it  
towards your girlfriend well  
you gotta you're gonna have  
to do a lot of rowing in a lot  
of different directions it's just  
knowing that you're making a  
conscious choice and doing

that with that understanding  
and appreciation I think is  
really important but all of this  
is to put the lie to the idea that  
anybody is living a balanced  
life on a minute to minute  
hour to hour day-to-day basis  
it's like a it's a  
construct that I think makes  
people feel guilty and bad  
about themselves because  
none of us are adhering to  
that idealized version of a  
balanced life that we have a  
mental picture of you kind of  
have it all you left rehab in  
September 1998. um and  
earlier on when you're talking

about transformation you describe someone who goes from being a fairly ordinary person to running a marathon that was one of the sort of examples you gave of something that intrigues you like how did they do that that's pretty much in many respects what you went on to do upon leaving rehab as you your life slowly move towards Ultra athletic sports yes and no I mean I think that uh the the shorthand kind of Google version of my story makes it look like all this stuff

happened in a very compressed period of time but actually when I left rehab which is where I live for 100 days and resumed my life in Los Angeles I spent the next 10 years trying to solve the Dilemma of my life that I had self-created I had to repair my relationships I had to become trustworthy to other people again I had to um you know be somebody who was reliable and would show up on time when they said they would all those sort of like normal things that normal people do I had to rebuild for

myself so for 10 years I  
immersed myself in the  
recovery community in Los  
Angeles and I tried to become  
that corporate lawyer that I  
thought that  
I wanted to be to be kind of  
approved of by my parents  
and by Society Without  
Really grappling with who I  
wanted to be because I was so  
caught up and so ashamed of  
my past and embarrassed of  
how I had screwed my life up  
that I wanted to prove to  
myself and to everyone else  
that I could be that person  
that I was at 18 when I had all

of these opportunities and choices and I was blind to kind of the inner Journey despite sobriety the blind to like really trying to figure out like what made me tick and what I might want to do for myself that felt like an Indulgence and so the ultra stuff came much later that came like so I got out of rehab at 31. it wasn't until I was turning 40 that I had another bottom where I had to reckon with my lifestyle choices with diet and movement Etc because I'd put on 50 pounds

and was just pursuing this corporate life to the point of of of of illness honestly like I was although I'd been this athlete I just could barely make it up a simple flight of stairs without being winded tightness in my chest heart disease runs in my family and just had a second situation in which I realized I needed to overhaul my life so there was a whole 10-year period in between those those kind of moments of Awakening that 10-year period is a 10-year period that a lot of people listening to this right now can

relate to where you found  
yourself in a professional  
context or professional  
endeavor

without asking yourself the  
question of like who am I and  
what am I actually interested  
in and you might be doing it  
because your mum wants you  
to be a doctor sure you have  
the Indian parents and they  
came over here and they want  
you to be a lawyer whatever it  
might be I hear that story a lot  
what is the question it people  
in that situation should be  
asking themselves and how  
do they take that first step in

transformation from  
becoming the banker that's in  
the city with a suit in town  
right now listening to this to  
the person that like would  
make make them whole and  
full and and love themselves  
in their life like what is the  
first step is it a question is it a  
retreat they need to go on  
yeah it's

a great question I think that  
question is probably different  
for everybody but how about  
just asking yourself who are  
you and I mean that in the  
broadest sense perhaps the  
most unanswerable spiritual

sense but I also mean it in the very tangible sense of like what are you doing are you really on the path that you want to be on did you choose this path are you here because of external pressures or expectations that you didn't ask for and I think when you turn inward and start exploring your interior to try to Grapple with what is making you tick what is impulsing the decisions that you're making the big decisions and the small decisions and developing a lattice work or an

understanding of what  
those mechanics are sets you  
on a trajectory to making  
better decisions for yourself  
so it's not like maybe that  
Banker is supposed to be a  
banker maybe super happy  
that's fine I'm not here to tell  
people they should quit their  
jobs I'm just saying that an  
examined life meaning that  
inward glance into  
understanding why you're  
making the decisions that  
you're making um historically  
uh you know the way in  
which you were raised that  
might have set you up to

make decisions you think  
you're making for yourself  
but are actually in reaction to  
unconscious uh uh you know  
kind of triggers that are built  
into you I think developing an  
awareness of that is really  
important in trying to  
understand that question and  
it took me a very long time to  
untangle that knot I don't  
think it's a simple process I  
think it's different for  
everybody it can come in the  
form of talking to a therapist  
or meditation there is no one  
modality for that but I think  
simply the commitment to try

to understand that I think is the process of gaining that understanding to help you make more intentional decisions for yourself and maybe it starts with an easy prompt like what did you enjoy doing when you were eight years old that you don't do anymore and why don't you do it anymore re-engaging with you know the childlike nature uh that is perhaps lost as we grow older and

kind of get into the flow of our professional lives one of the most important questions

I think I would add as well as  
how do you feel we very  
rarely ask ourselves that and I  
think we all have this sort of  
internal Compass which  
we've been given by life  
which is like how do you feel  
in this situation how do you  
truly feel not like how do you  
feel in the context of is your  
mother happy or is your  
father happy or a society  
impressed by you but like  
how do you actually feel you  
know and I think that  
sometimes for me has sat  
apart from the  
accomplishment so I could be

achieving something great  
and know that people are  
impressed and happy but  
really I'm going through a  
time internally  
right and um tuning into that  
voice of like how do I feel  
and tuning out of the like how  
do people feel about me right  
um has has really helped me  
in those moments where I've  
got to make a big decision to  
quit and I don't think people  
ask themselves that question  
enough well they may ask  
themselves that question but  
the answer is flip it right it's  
like I'm good cool I feel good

you know I feel I slept good  
last night no like how do you  
really feel and then  
continuing to peel back the  
layers until it gets really  
uncomfortable and then you  
know you're in the you're in  
the sweet spot right that's  
where the juice is I've peeled  
them back I've re and I've  
done you know raised my  
awareness I realize I'm in the  
wrong place but I'm 39 years  
old and I've got kids I've got a  
house we live in this part of  
London so I can get to work  
quickly we've built our lives  
around this you know person

I thought I wanted to be and  
I'm held in place by the my  
friendship group and my  
Monday's done people have  
that fear they think how do I  
how do I break out of that  
how do I shed yeah yeah well  
first I would say to that  
person congratulations like  
you created a life for yourself  
like on some level even if you  
want to leave that career path  
or you're unfulfilled in that  
you still are somebody who is  
deserving of acknowledgment  
for building something and  
you know that's an amazing  
thing so it's not about casting

that aside or  
disrespecting it for me I  
would say to that person what  
is it that gets you excited like  
what is it that you feel is  
unnourished in your life do  
you have a creative itch is  
there something calling you  
or something again that you  
used to do as a kid that you  
really enjoyed and for some  
reason unbeknownst to you  
you don't do it anymore  
maybe it's music like yeah me  
it could be music or or stand  
up or you play football right  
like being on a football team  
or doing something you know

just having coffee with your  
friend or what have you uh  
finding a way to build that  
back into your life in a way  
that isn't going to derail your  
current life but I think just  
breathing on that like giving  
space

to the things that bring you  
Joy in the most Primal sense  
like the simplest things that  
just you remember made you  
happy that you've forgotten  
and recapturing that and  
finding a way to respect that  
protect it nourish it um and  
and inject it into your life and  
I think the more that you you

kind of tend to that Garden  
suddenly oh a little  
opportunity over here pops up  
or something is telling me I  
should move this way these  
are very subtle energies that  
you have to be present for in  
order to notice them when  
they appear but I think those  
are the subtle energies that's  
the like those are the waves  
you want to be surfing and  
you can do that while you're  
working at the bank they don't  
have to be mutually  
exclusive and over time  
maybe you start moving a  
little over this way five years

later your life is  
unrecognizable and I think  
this goes to the impatience  
that we all have we all want  
to be this idealized version of  
ourselves happier fitter thinner  
richer whatever it is overnight  
and we overestimate what we  
can accomplish in a year or  
maybe in a couple years and  
completely underestimate  
what we could do in a decade  
we're not wired to think in  
decades it seems too  
intangible but if all you do is  
make tiny little changes to  
build in habits into your life  
that bring you Joy or

fulfillment or happiness or  
purpose in incremental micro  
allotments that don't disrupt  
the rest of your life you do  
that for 10

years straight your life is  
going to be different and I can  
promise you that 10 years off  
to rehab you have what you  
describe as your second rock  
bottom you're a workaholic  
you're trying to sort of  
appease the perception of  
people in your life to make  
them proud I guess um just  
before your 40th birthday this  
is when that sort of  
Reckoning in your life takes

place what is that Reckoning  
in your life what did you  
realize and and what did you  
see as the solution to that  
confrontation yeah so I had  
spent the better part of 10  
years uh people pleasing and  
doing my best to be  
successful living somebody  
else's life unbeknownst to me  
doing all the right things  
checking all the boxes  
becoming successful  
so if you were on the outside  
looking in it looked like I was  
doing pretty well inside I was  
dying because my soul my  
spirit was unheard and under

nourished like I didn't know  
how to pay attention to  
myself or the signals of my  
soul who were telling me I  
don't think you're that happy  
doing this and we're pressing  
that year after year after year  
to the point where uh I  
couldn't do it anymore so I  
was harboring a bit of an  
existential crisis about how I  
was living my life being this  
lawyer and kind of showing  
up in the world in a certain  
way that always felt like a  
costume that didn't fit me  
meanwhile uh although sober  
from drugs and alcohol I'd

sort of transferred a lot of that  
addiction  
energy into food and was  
eating you know a terrible  
fast food diet gained a lot of  
weight was inactive even  
though I'd been a swimmer in  
college wasn't really moving  
my body in any meaningful  
way for a number of years  
this existential crisis that I  
was having collided with this  
health scare shortly before I  
turned 40 where I was going  
up a flight of stairs after a  
long day at work and couldn't  
even make it all the way up  
had to stop halfway up the

flight winded out of breath  
tightness in my chest like  
wheezing you know thinking  
I swam at Stanford like I was  
a world ranked swimmer I  
can't I'm I'm like 39 about to  
turn 40. I feel like I'm fat and  
it just broke that spell of  
denial about  
how I was living where it  
became intolerable to  
continue along that path and it  
was very much like the day  
that I decided to go to rehab  
like this moment back to  
willingness like suddenly out  
of the blue I was blessed with  
this realization not only that I

needed to change my lifestyle habits but that I had the willingness to actually take action on that and because the decision that I had made 10 years prior when I went to rehab had been so transformational like I could have woken up that day and made a different decision what would my life look like and I had this palpable sense that once again this was just such a moment where if I could make a decision like I had 10 years ago maybe I could change the trajectory of my

life and I know that these moments are fleeting and and they require kind of immediate action or they pass right you could say maybe I should eat better or go to the gym once in a while like I'm tired of feeling like that's so vague I knew that that wasn't going to work for me and I needed to do something immediate that was also difficult that would mimic the experience of going into a treatment center for drugs and alcohol like I needed to have a structured situation that would snap me out of my

comfort zone and kind of  
create a new trajectory upon  
which I could build  
something different I think I  
think about this a lot in like  
businesses and organizations  
they almost need  
to Stage a crisis I call it to  
make change happen because  
when you when you're in an  
organization and there's  
maybe thousands of people  
and let's say it's AI or an  
innovation comes along  
people will go yeah it's a  
problem but you know I'm  
fine and then they'll kind of  
carry on keep on keeping on

the organization almost needs to Stage a crisis like everyone in a room and say we're changing today and really sort of terrifying terrify their team about the the prospect of not changing it's almost like staging a rock bottom because it will be the frog in the frying pan it will slowly creep upon you if you don't right at some point as I call it like stage of crisis which is to really get clear on where this is heading and where we're sleepwalking ourselves into whether it's with our health our relationships I

actually had this conversation with a friend of mine in his relationship because he's now in a sexless relationship and he's really unhappy but he's not saying anything about it he's kind of bringing bringing it up sort of quietly once in a while and his unhappiness in the relationship and resentment is coming out in other ways in the relationship like arguments and fighting where he needs to stop and like stage a crisis like not allow it to be brushed under the carpet anymore and sit down and say listen if we

can't solve this I have to leave  
this relationship and like I  
want to solve it with you but  
it's a deal

breaker for me see what I  
mean yeah I get what you're  
saying basically short of of  
like sleepwalking yourself  
towards the Cliff's Edge yeah  
do staging an intervention on  
your life by you know like  
concocting a crisis sounding  
they're gonna compel you to  
confront the elephant in the  
room that is the thing that is  
holding you back it's obvious  
to everyone else and yet  
you're refusing to look at it

yeah because we as you said earlier we want to avoid discomfort so if we can't just sweep just Comfort under the carpet and procrastinate it into tomorrow we do we do that in businesses we do it in our own lives so how do we maximize the discomfort today by presenting what the future will look like if we don't take action right now right and there is often a point of no return in relationships and in business for sure for sure so yeah I think that's a very kind of pragmatic uh you know three-

dimensional uh actionable  
way to look at it perhaps a  
more mystical way to  
approach this is to say that  
when you are living your life  
out of alignment with your  
best self the universe comes  
knocking and it knocks gently  
like you're maybe you're out  
telling lies or whatever it is  
like you're just not you're not  
you're not living your life in  
Integrity like in alignment  
with your own values and we  
all do this right we're not all  
living perfect lives so and and  
and so when you  
do that like there'll be nudges

and those nudges will be very graceful at first and if you ignore them a little a little bit louder right yeah yeah that's fine I can I can you know I can deal with that the knocks start to get more intense more intense more intense more intense and then you get two DUIs in six months and you're in jail or your partner leaves you or whatever it is right like how much pain are you willing to tolerate how loud does the knock have to be before you're willing to course correct change is very difficult we don't want to

make change or look if if if  
uh if change were easy or it  
was a logical thing like here's  
the answer do this and if  
everybody just did it there  
would be no self-

help industry there wouldn't  
need to be any books you just  
tell somebody what to do and  
they do it so why don't they  
do it right we don't like to be  
out of our comfort zone we  
have a certain way that we  
live our life and until that is  
so disruptive disrupted we're  
going to continue on that path  
right so the question becomes  
how much pain do you have

to be in before you're willing  
to walk through the fear of  
the unknown that the change  
presents how loud is the  
knock have to be how low  
does the elevator have to to  
drop and I think that that  
answer is different for  
everybody but the amazing  
and confusing thing about it is  
that the possibility of change  
exists in all moments we can  
make that choice  
at any time we don't have to  
suffer we don't have to be in  
pain and yet we still don't do  
it so unlocking that mystery  
yeah I mean well there's your

book you can answer that question well I've been playing around with this idea in my book there was a chapter I was going to write about time right so I wanted to write something about time and time management so I thought the best place to start is talking about death because that kind of puts time and context it's finite um so I started writing about that you know if you're 35 years old you've got 17 000 days left I'm trying to you know find all these ways where people can visualize the con because

because of what you said  
people can't think of decades  
we  
can't think of finality we can't  
think of infinity we can't think  
of long periods of time I'd  
also at some level don't  
believe we know we're going  
to die we don't live our lives  
accordingly yeah we think it  
happens to other people yeah  
exactly yeah deep down we're  
like somehow I'm gonna  
sidestep this thing it's not  
actually gonna happen yeah  
and you see that in our  
decisions like the things we  
pour our attention into clearly

we don't think we're on a  
clock here right um a clock  
we can't see so that's how I  
started the chapter then I went  
into time and I was like okay  
time management techniques  
I looked I was thinking about  
my own time management  
techniques I then was like I'll  
Google it chat  
GTP went on chatty speed  
talk to me about time  
management techniques  
there's so many of them and I  
thought to myself the reason  
why there's so many is the  
same reason there are so  
many fad diets because none

of them work unless you have discipline so that people just keep making new ones and they keep selling because none of them work without this thing called discipline so what causes discipline and then I arrived at this sort of discipline equation in my head where I kind of believe when you want I was going to say this in a super vague Way

Broadway when your perception of how meaningful the goal is Plus the enjoyment and psychological engagement you get from the pursuit towards the goal

so for me I really want to be a  
DJ I've played around with  
the idea for a long time I  
finally made the decision I  
wanted to do it why do I want  
to do it absolutely love music  
Love The Thrill and how  
energized I am from from  
Performance Plus the  
psychological engagement  
enjoyment I get from the  
pursuit it's like meditation  
DJing and the practice of it  
right so you go upstairs into  
my kitchen I spend hours  
listening to my favorite music  
and merging it with other  
songs I love for hours

forgetting about the whole world minus the perceived psychological cost of the pursuit so what does it cost me to pursue DJing and I think that is roughly my discipline equation so if you think about these three elements how bad you want it how enjoyable it is what does it cost you can kind of think of why people might or might not change and if someone fits into what you said about when the pain of staying the same becomes greater than the pain of making a change then people make the change

um when they really really  
want it and it's more  
enjoyable than it is painful to  
go in that direction Behavior  
changes right well I would  
take it one step further but  
first let me let me say this I  
would say that you're already  
a DJ you're making uh an  
assumption around what it  
means to be a DJ or to pursue  
DJing that comes with a lot of  
baggage it means success  
maybe you're envisioning a  
big crowd of people  
who are listening to your  
music but the fact that it  
brings you Joy and you've

found a way to carve time out  
to nourish that it doesn't  
matter how far it goes or  
doesn't go as long as you are  
kind of cultivating that out of  
that purity of spirit because it  
nourishes your life so that's  
what I mean when I was  
talking about the banker right  
like just DJ or kitchen table  
like it doesn't have to be any  
more than that if it if if you're  
finding so much joy in it then  
you can recalibrate that  
equation about how much  
energy resources and time  
you're going to invest in it but  
right now if it fits into your

life and it's it's making your  
life better than the question  
would be does it need to be  
more than that do you need it  
to

be attached to some external  
validation or monetary reward  
or recognition in order for  
you to believe that you  
actually are a DJ and that's  
not saying there's an answer  
to that question but it's  
something to think about this  
the reason I gave the DJing  
example is because it was  
something I was able to stick  
out I was able to quite  
essentially change and there's

some and my health was the  
same thing it fits into that  
discipline equation of at some  
point in my life I saw this  
pandemic happen I saw the  
fragility of this thing called  
Health in my young 25 years  
I'd never even knew was there  
I never even knew I had  
health because mine had  
fortunately always been well  
and then upon seeing the  
pandemic  
play out and hearing the  
doctors and scientists say that  
your current health you know  
obesity is linked to your  
chances of um suffering

having sort of worse effects of this disease that was enough for me to put me in the gym for the next three years and I haven't missed uh more than two days since pretty much in a week for the last three years that was my behavior change before then I was the guy with the fast food right so that was the moment that was the Line in the Sand moment that piece of information created willingness in you which is the first part of that equation which is the why like why do I care about my health right it

added so much weight to me  
caring about my health but  
discipline is  
easy when you have that why  
yeah answered right so if it  
was just that easy I think that  
more people would be able to  
make positive changes in  
their life but I think where it  
gets more complicated is  
when we understand beneath  
the surface that it's our  
emotional lives that are truly  
the things that hold us back  
from accessing that potential  
you can be incredibly  
disciplined but if you think  
you're a piece of or you don't

deserve good things in your life or you're being impulsed by some trauma that happened to you you were abused as a young person that's going to show up in your life as a barrier or an impediment from you doing the thing that you know you need to do to become the person that you could potentially become so the head discipline can drive us so far but if we don't sort out the heart and what is making the heart beat what is making us move in One Direction versus another and

untangling or detaching or transcending the emotional baggage that is the true impediment to our growth discipline is only going to take you so far so you um became an ultra Endurance Sports athlete from that point of where you can walk up the stairs without losing your breath what was that transformation so after that moment I decided to take responsibility for my well-being and thus began a pretty long and inelegant and non-linear process of first trying to figure out how to eat

in a way that would allow me to feel good in my body that began with a seven day juice detox cleanse that I did not because I felt like I needed to detox anything but I needed to recreate the experience of detoxing off alcohol that I had in rehab like I needed to do something that was going to be hard and uncomfortable and not eating and just drinking juice seemed like a good way to accomplish that I'd never gone a day without eating food before and that was an experience where I was incredibly uncomfortable

and I felt horrible for a couple days but on the seventh day I felt amazing and I couldn't believe that only drinking juices for seven days could result on day seven in this boost of Vitality and mental acuity that I hadn't experienced in a long time as somebody who was eating cheeseburgers every day and that made me want to figure out a way to feel like that all the time and so I ended up trying a bunch of different diets and what worked for me ultimately after trying many different

things was going entirely  
plant-based I'm not here to  
tell everyone that that's what  
they should do but that's what  
agreed with me and that's the  
way I've eaten for the last 16  
years and you know this um  
this approach to nutrition  
restored my vitality and gave  
me a renewed sense of energy  
so much so that I had  
difficulty sitting still and  
finally wanted to like move  
again and pulled out an  
old pair of running shoes  
from the closet and just  
started moving my feet again  
and I went back to the pool

for the first time in a very long time and was just connecting frankly with these things that brought me joy as a young person like I was a swimmer and I hadn't done it in a long time and I'd forgotten what it feels like to jump into a swimming pool on a sunny day and feel the water and connect with my breath and you know move my legs on a trail at dawn and I really loved it and I felt like that was a journey towards answering these questions that I was having on the existential front about what I

was going to do with my life  
because I had a lot of  
confusion at that time and just  
the

mental space of like being  
alone with my breath in the  
pool or on a trail running was  
very healing for me and I had  
no aspirations of becoming  
a competitive athlete with it I  
just wanted to feel good I  
wanted to like lose this gut  
you know frankly for vanity  
reasons I didn't like how I  
looked in the mirror and the  
weight came off really  
quickly and I felt like I was  
making incredible progress

athletically week after week  
after week um and then one  
day I went out like maybe six  
months into this experience  
and I was just gonna run for  
like an hour and I had one of  
those days you're an athlete  
you know those days where  
you just feel like you just are  
bulletproof and you can go go  
go and I just  
kept running and ended up  
running the better part of a  
marathon that day like 24  
miles and I'd never done  
anything like that before  
despite having been a  
swimmer I'd never been a

runner and that was a real watershed moment where I thought wow like I feel really good I didn't know that you could feel this good certainly not at age 40 and that got me thinking about potential and I'd never really realized my potential as an athlete in college because alcohol really destroyed my swimming career and so there was a sense of Unfinished Business there but I just wanted to see what I was capable of and so that um that set me on this journey to find experiences where I could tap into

that and that's where I discovered this whole world of ultra endurance and these crazy races and I became fascinated with that and ended up competing in this race called Ultraman which is a three-day double Iron Man race and that's the race that I ended up distinguishing myself in and and really the instigating point in that was reading an article where David Goggins had done that race back in 2006 I think and it was the story of how he got through that race that really inspired me and because he

wasn't the traditional  
endurance athlete triathlete I  
was able to convince myself  
that if he could do it that  
maybe I could and that set in  
motion me uh training for this  
race and and and uh and  
competing in it  
a couple times I've had two  
guests come here and tell me  
that we're in a comfort crisis  
and what they mean by that is  
they say that we're kind of  
optimizing our way um away  
from comfort in every sense  
of the word we're like you  
know we live in these sort of  
room temperature rooms

where we can go on a piece of glass and get someone to bring us our food in a metal car right to our doorstep and wet where and in fact discomfort pressure is where our growth our health and all of these things I'm fulfillment in many cases comes from doing an ultra endurance race is for me you know the one of the epitomies of of pressure and discomfort and sitting with that and accepting it do you believe that more of us should be making ourselves uncomfortable in that context more often and

that there's tremendous value in that I think about it when I hear like a Steve when I get on my bike and and just ride and just see and push myself see what I see where I can take it 100 percent you don't grow unless you go out of your comfort zone and that's in every facet of your life if you want to become smarter you have to read books or go to school like that's not always comfortable there's a million different varieties of this but yes we are in a culture that prioritizes comfort and luxury and it's all

about making our lives easier  
ironically what makes us  
happy is putting ourselves in  
difficult situations not so  
difficult

that they capsize our lives but  
difficult enough that we're  
testing ourselves and we're  
grappling with obstacles and  
we're overcoming them and  
on the other side we feel a  
boost in self-esteem we feel  
more ourselves we feel more  
alive and we experience  
growth and connection with  
self and connection with other  
people this is the stuff of life  
and yet it is not the way that

Society is constructed to we  
have to go out of our way  
now we have to seek the it  
used to be this was everyday  
life just to survive right and  
now we actually have to pay  
money and travel to places to  
have these experiences what's  
so amazing is is that you  
know when I started doing  
these Ultra races they're  
they're all very  
kind of like low-key under the  
radar there's not a lot of  
media attention on them um  
you know it's a subculture  
that has been around for a  
while but in the last decade

we've seen an explosion in interest uh in in like doing 100 mile races like there's lotteries now to get into a race where you have to run 100 miles like if you told somebody in 1800 that this was going to be the case they would think you were insane right so what does that say it tells us that we feel nourished by doing hard things that they're that we are extracting value from those experiences that we don't get in the mundanity of our everyday lives and yes we have to consciously extract ourselves

from the Comforts of our  
environments and  
put ourselves in those  
positions but the good news is  
there's lots of those things  
right now it's insane how  
many marathons the London  
Marathon was the other way  
like how many thousands of  
people ran it and then there's  
a Spartan Race and there's  
just a million of these things  
now that didn't used to exist  
because the human Spirit  
needs it it demands it and we  
have too long deprived  
ourselves of these types of  
scenarios that doesn't mean

that you want to be unsafe or  
put yourself in Peril but um I  
just don't see any other way  
or any other path towards  
becoming the better version  
of yourself without placing  
yourself in scenarios in which  
you're tested because succeed  
or fail you have an experience  
that's

going to teach you more  
about who you are what your  
limitations are and what your  
capabilities are the popularity  
of these um endurance races  
and even things like ice  
plunge pools and stuff sure all  
these things that make us feel

really uncomfortable again it reminds me of what I said earlier about the um because the there's been a real rise in sort of social media and the digital screens and all of these things now people are looking for places for community so bowling alleys and in real life events have increased and in the same way because we've optimized Our Lives to be more comfortable and easy now there's a booming industry around things that make us feel uncomfortable you said I didn't get into Ultra

Endurance Sports to win  
races beat others or stand  
Atop A Podium I got into it  
because it's the perfect  
template for self-discovery  
what did you discover about  
yourself and also I think it's  
probably important to say to  
people you're really really  
good at this Ultra endurance  
stuff like we haven't quite  
gone through your CV yet but  
I mean I've got a list of  
accolades that you've  
achieved and you're you're  
one of the the best at this so I  
think that's worth saying  
before we proceed yeah thank

you for that I mean I I've  
learned so much the amazing  
thing about endurance  
Athletics is you have to spend  
a lot of time with an elevated  
heart rate that's not so  
uncomfortable that you can't  
perpetuate it for hours and  
hours and hours but it's just  
uncomfortable enough where  
you're sitting in that  
discomfort and you have to  
develop a tolerance for that so  
what it does is it teaches you  
how to suffer how to manage  
pain but also how to be with  
yourself like when I was  
training for these races I

would go out like all day  
alone and it's just you your  
breath and your mind and at  
that time I really was trying to  
figure out like I can't be this  
lawyer anymore like what am  
I going to do like all I know is  
I really like doing this this is  
not a career path this is not  
I'm not going to support four  
kids doing this thing that I  
love but it is bringing so  
much value to me that I just  
know I want  
to keep doing it and I'm going  
to pay attention and pull  
whatever threads show up and  
what I learned through this

journey of training most importantly the training the races are just you know a demonstration of what you put into getting to that point um was on a surface level as an athlete I had a lot more to say than I than I ever believed that I could I was able to do things I never would have thought possible um and do it in my 40s which is an age where people think you're way past your Prime so that was huge and like I said earlier that opened up the possibility of tapping into potential on other areas of my

life but I also learned that  
when you cultivate and  
nourish that thing that is  
bringing

you Joy and you pay attention  
to the subtle voices that are  
telling you this feels right  
when you commit to that  
completely that will set you  
on a journey that will lead  
you to a place you can't  
possibly imagine when I put  
on the running shoes for the  
first time and just thought I  
love doing this could I have  
imagined that I'd be sitting  
across from you right now  
having a conversation it's

ridiculous it's Preposterous so  
what I learned was the power  
of connecting with the heart  
as somebody like yourself  
who lives in their mind and  
Prides themselves on their  
intellect and their analytic  
abilities understanding the  
limitations of that and finding  
a way to really pay attention  
to those kind of more  
ephemeral ethereal uh  
messages that one will  
receive when you're really  
quiet you're really honest with  
yourself and you're  
committed to taking actions  
that are in alignment with that

in a way that maybe you  
never prioritized before and  
that has been a path that I've  
blazed for many years at this  
point that has caused  
suffering and hardship but  
also beautiful creative  
offerings and you know a life  
that I could have never  
imagined for myself  
metaphorically it sounds like  
you almost ran away  
from your little career in law  
yeah I guess so yeah I guess  
so I guess so uh you know the  
law in me like how did that I  
don't like conflict I don't  
know how I became a lawyer

in the first place like I just  
you

know I I I could will myself  
to be be the lawyer that I was  
but it never felt right to me  
and I knew that I wasn't in the  
right situation for myself and  
it took me a really long time  
to walk away like I probably  
walked away from it over a  
very extended period of time  
it wasn't a very dramatic split

I was trying to figure out  
from the point of when you  
start doing the ultra  
endurance racing to the point  
where you get into sort of  
financial hardship 45 years

old you launch your retro  
podcast you've got this law  
job you start Ultra racing  
there's financial hardship is  
that because you you quit the  
law job or is that yeah  
because I was a bad lawyer  
oh okay no no what happened  
was so I I did exit like  
the big Law Firm thing but I  
continued to practice law as a  
solar practitioner and then in  
a couple different um  
incarnations of Partnerships  
with a couple people but as I  
got more and more immersed  
in the ultra world my  
enthusiasm and interest in my

law practice continued to  
dwindle and I was my own  
boss at that point practicing  
law so not a lot of new clients  
coming in right um I was still  
doing it making just enough  
money to get by but wasn't  
doing great because I just  
wasn't into it but I held on to  
it for a very long time and  
when you're holding on to it  
it's hard to get into the new  
thing until you're really  
willing to let go of the other  
thing but making that  
transition was very  
challenging  
even you know after Finding

Ultra came out uh I I completely severed my ties with the law at that point but there were the phone wasn't really ringing that much and there wasn't a lot of opportunities coming my way and it took a lot of patience and faith and I did the podcast for years before we were able to monetize it or do any kind of ads or anything like that I just did it as like a fun hobby or project what was it like for Julie during that period between sort of 2008 and 2015 things are really tough financially um you almost

lost your house couldn't pay a  
lot of your bills had your cars  
repossessed yeah it was very  
difficult um she was really the  
strength in that equation  
because there were  
multiple occasions where I  
couldn't take it anymore and I  
thought this is ridiculous I  
need to go back and get a law  
job what kind of head of  
household or you know man  
of the house am I if I can't  
even pay the bills and I'm  
chasing this Fool's errand in  
this direction of trying to do  
these creative projects or be  
this athlete like who who the

hell do you think you are and  
Julie was the one who was  
like no we've come too far for  
you to move backwards and  
the answer is that you are  
seeking and the solutions to  
the problems we Face are  
only going to be found by  
continuing to blaze the path  
that you've established for  
yourself and she had a  
conviction and a belief and an  
ability to see the more kind of  
developed  
actualized version of myself  
that I couldn't at that time and  
without her strength her faith  
her conviction I definitely

would have abandoned the path but she was in all the way and she would say these things are just things you're definitely on a path that you should be on I can I can see that and I want that for you and if we lose the house we lose the house cars are cars this stuff comes and goes but we're together and we're we're gonna we're gonna walk this path this is what we're here to do which is a amazing thing for a partner to say to you to have that kind of belief in you is such a gift so I just can't emphasize enough how

powerful um she has been  
like in this whole thing of all  
the things  
you've accomplished in your  
life of all the things you've  
done what does she mean to  
you I mean she's she is my  
you know partner in all things  
she's my North Star she's my  
spiritual counsel um she's my  
mirror yeah um and you know  
we're normal people with kids  
who you know bicker and  
argue and have the same kind  
of issues everyone else does  
um but she's a really special  
person really special it's really  
it's really something when

someone can see the potential  
in you in a way that maybe  
you can't see it at that  
moment in time or maybe you  
don't quite believe it it is such  
a gift you know they say um  
the greatest gift you can give  
somebody is your attention  
but if  
you have somebody in your  
life who believes in you so  
thoroughly that they can see  
past whatever situation you're  
in or whatever faults you have  
or things that trip you up and  
holds a vision for that better  
version of you and not only  
holds it for you says I believe

in you they're not telling you  
what to do or how to do it  
they're saying I believe in you  
and I trust you to find your  
way towards that person and I  
am holding that for you in my  
daily Consciousness in my  
sleep and my thoughts and  
my prayers that manifest a  
very powerful energy yeah so  
it's a curious idea that  
someone else can manifest  
your life for you in a kind of  
in an inadvertent way I've  
experienced that as well  
there's  
been moments in my life  
where my partner has said

something to me I've heard  
what she said I didn't believe  
it necessarily myself but  
because she believed it that I  
could do that maybe it did  
change something in me  
maybe it did make me go I  
trust her and she's smart and  
she's usually right and she's  
telling me that I can do this  
thing so maybe it is possible  
hmm I can remember so  
many conversations over 15  
years where someone said  
something to me about what  
my future will look like and  
because I trusted them um I  
think it helped that future

become a reality sure I mean  
just imagine the young person  
who uh you know has the  
opportunity to be with a  
certain teacher and that  
teacher

says you know you can do  
this like you're good at the  
like there's countless stories  
of people who win Oscars and  
get up and thank their  
whoever who said you know  
you should keep doing that  
thing and you know those are  
those are really powerful um  
you know gifts that we can  
give to other people he  
believes that if you follow

your true path the universe  
will support you quote I read  
about you as well yeah I do I  
do believe that um that's been  
my life experience I've seen  
that manifest in in many  
people um that I know over  
the years a lot of people in  
recovery and that doesn't  
mean that it's easier  
convenient or on your  
timetable um I I would say  
that the the path that I've  
pursued has been  
the hardest path I could have  
imagined it's the most  
meaningful and fulfilling but  
it didn't happen overnight it

happened over the course of more than a decade and it required a lot of conviction and faith and patience and pain we have to you know we had to lose a lot but there's that adage like you can't you know that you can't be a phoenix if you don't burn in the Flames first right and I feel like we had to burn in the Flames or burn off you know the residue of whatever in order to be reborn to do something different and I think when you have run that type of Gauntlet and you emerge on the other side of it

what you have to share with other people is all the more kind of poignant because it's your own lived experience and it's authentic and real I'm a big Manchester United fan and I know that's slightly contentious thing to say because not everybody here is a Manchester United fan but right now we're not doing great so we shouldn't threaten you too much but in June I will be playing at Old Trafford which is Manchester United's home ground for a charity match called soccer Aid honestly if I'm being

completely 100 with you it is an absolute dream come true regardless of my performance on the day just getting to run out on that pitch as a childhood lifelong fan of that club is a huge honor so I've been playing football about four times a week in preparation to get my fitness up and one of the most important things when you are training is to be nutritionally sound that is where heels rtds have played a role in my life over the last couple of weeks every time I train I have my heels that day

to make sure that I'm getting  
all of the essential vitamins  
and minerals into my body so  
that my body can convert it  
into what I need to be  
successful on and off the  
football pitch if you're getting  
in shape if you're trying to be  
healthy and you've not tried  
Hills RTD ready to drink give  
it a shot my health is always  
going to be my first priority  
so when my life becomes  
ready to drink is my  
companion so many chapters  
in your life rich so many of  
them we've been through  
pretty much all of them so far

and we  
arrive now at today now if I  
was to ask Julie what the next  
chapter looks like or or you I  
know you know it's funny  
because when people ask me  
this I my instinctive answer is  
I don't know but I'm gonna  
you know do my best at what  
I'm doing now but if you were  
to try and if you think back to  
your mission the mission you  
described at the start of this  
conversation what do you  
think the next chapter is for  
you that's a great question I  
think for me the challenge  
and the opportunity comes

from learning how to let go of  
striving and step into a place  
of allowing rather than being  
this animal of self-will who's  
pursuing and achieving and  
pushing and um and and and  
really kind of in their  
ambition to manifest  
something for Financial  
Security for legacy whatever  
it is to ease off that gas pedal  
and just be in a place of ease  
with everything where it  
doesn't have to be hard and  
what would it feel like if you  
if you didn't push but you still  
did the thing would you still  
be you would you feel like

you left something on the  
table because you didn't  
suffer to create the thing that  
you share with the world and  
I think that is so hard for me  
and I imagine might be a  
difficult thing for you to  
digest for yourself right  
because we both know if I go  
out and I push really hard I  
can do something and I can  
make it great and I and and  
I'm pretty sure what the result  
of that is going to be but what  
if you created  
out of a sense of joy and you  
didn't have to exhaust  
yourself in doing it and you

could enjoy your friends and  
your family and live a rich  
life without the stress that you  
place upon yourself or the  
pressure or the people  
pleasing or the need for any  
kind of external validation so  
that's the mountain that I'm  
trying to climb right now and  
I would say that I'm not doing  
it very well why'd you want  
to climb that mountain there  
because I think that there's a  
lot of of wisdom um in being  
more in flow as opposed to  
willfulness and I think that  
um there's a peace and a  
happiness to be found there

that I'm probably missing in  
my life right now uh and  
because it's new territory to  
be explored I know what it's  
like to do

this other thing and it's  
exhausting and it's not  
sustainable and I believe that  
there is a better way over here  
so am I in enough pain with  
this where I'm willing to  
entertain the possibility of  
trying something different or  
am I holding on too hard to  
this old modality and  
unwilling to embrace the  
possibility that the results and  
the the the fullness of life

could be better by this  
different way of approaching  
things has there been personal  
symptoms that have  
encouraged you to seek out  
another way of being sure  
yeah uh I have tiptoed up to  
burn out a couple times with  
the podcast and that's been  
ameliorated by now having a  
staff of really talented people  
to help me because I was a  
control  
freak perfectionist who tried  
to do everything myself for  
too long to the point of it just  
being completely  
unsustainable to now having

people that I Empower to do a lot of the work that I used to do and who now do it very well which has freed up my time and I still find myself with this sense that success has to be earned and the only way to earn it is to inflict pain on yourself and if you're not in pain you didn't try hard enough and it would have been better if you suffered more and I think that's a lie and I want to find out if it's a lie or if it's true thinking back to endurance racing it seems to be that it might be true you know you achieve that

through pain sure discomfort  
seems to be the the first  
hurdle to all the good places  
but actually that's very  
comfortable for me the real  
discomfort is to see what it  
would be like without the  
suffering that's harder to do  
yeah it's harder to do for me  
aren't you I often ask my  
guests are you driven or are  
you being dragged because  
saying you're driven is a nice  
way to frame yourself that's  
like an intentional person but  
so often we're actually being  
dragged by the insecurity the  
shame that desire to be

enough we're like we're  
strapped to the end of the  
Lorry and it's flying down the  
highway but we think we're in  
the driving seat you know and  
I think in so many facets of  
my life right now I know I'm  
well I suspect I'm being  
dragged but I think I'm being  
driven and I'm portraying it so  
what would an example of  
that be even the podcast you  
know do I do I have to be so  
like neurotic and obsessed  
with everything and every  
detail you said it before we  
started you're very obsessed  
about the detail the fact that

when we do the podcast in La  
we have every book is the  
same in the same world you  
know that's insane I mean it's  
a great story it's very  
entertaining but it's bananas  
but for me it's I mean I'm  
probably gonna try and justify  
it here but for me it's about I  
know that the small stuff is  
the stuff that most people  
don't think about so it's my  
place it's where we find the  
opportunity but generally of  
course I think about all the  
things I do all the businesses  
all the details to the  
point of some level of

suffering there's definitely a  
cost to my personal  
relationships when at Sunday  
when I'm on a date with my  
partner and I get a message  
and something's not quite  
right and then I lose 30  
minutes in despair like silent  
despair to myself in my head  
I just kind of I leave the the  
dinner table that's not a great  
way to live right I relate to  
that deeply um so I'm right  
with you and locked up with  
that um but what if you were  
to say okay but then okay  
okay so let me try and justify  
then everything the whole

house of cards caves on top of  
itself and all the good things  
in your life disappear yeah  
that's what I think right yeah I  
know and I'll say well all our  
ancestors they built these  
skyscrapers and this AI stuff  
and these cameras that we're  
using so we're innately meant  
to struggle forward that's  
hardwired into us it's why I'm  
here my ancestors struggled  
forward they built buildings  
and civilizations and they left  
that in my genetic code there's  
a little message saying you  
too shall struggle forward  
Stephen you two shall be

wired to climb upwards do  
you feel that uh to enjoy your  
life is an Indulgence that's  
fine for other people but  
you're on a mission so you  
can uh you can like have a  
different relationship with  
those aspects of life that other  
people find important I think  
so yeah yeah yeah no I'm like  
I'm just I'm just seeing if you  
see the world the way  
that I do you know what I  
mean but uh what are you 30  
how old are you I just turned  
30 years yeah so I'm 56 dude  
you know so check in with  
me and and what advice did

you give me we've got the same mindset look I think it's great that I'm all about the details and I just want to say for the record I shared it with your team earlier I think that what you have built here is extraordinary I have so much respect for uh not only the show the way you comport yourself uh the way that you are curious about the people that you talk to um and the fact that you've built this incredible uh audience in such a short period of time and the integrity and the you know the the the the quality is

is fantastic you  
know so I've been a fan um  
and a lot of that is because  
you are attuned to the details  
and I see that in you and I  
think there's something  
beautiful and wonderful about  
that the trick is to not allow it  
to become toxic to the point  
where it starts to denigrate the  
quality of your life so can you  
you know toggle it such that  
you're still pursuing what's  
important to you in a way  
that's sustainable because you  
want to be doing this for a  
long period of time right so  
after five or six years or ten

years like what is your relationship to this thing going to be and if it's not sustainable now where you feel drained at the end of the week rather than energized then maybe you look you're a brilliant business

person look at the model and figure out how you can tweak it so that you can stay in love with the process and I think

for me uh it's all about enjoying it for what it is and detaching from all the externalities like if I start looking on Spotify or apple where the ranking all that

kind of stuff like I know that  
I'm in a dark place right I  
shouldn't be comparing  
myself to other people I  
should just be present for the  
experience of having these  
conversations and trying to  
deliver value to the people  
who are taking time out of  
their day to listen and that's it  
doesn't have to be any more  
than that when I get caught up  
in that other stuff is when I uh  
start to make decisions that  
begin to  
become out of alignment with  
the mission thank you thank  
you for that advice um and

thank you for such a rich  
wonderful conversation um I  
think especially that that  
closing piece of advice is  
something that will resonate  
with everybody and I thought  
a lot actually starting up my  
career as an insecure young  
man that wanted to make  
millions and thinking that life  
was this kind of Sprint where  
you can Sacro everything else  
can wait including  
relationships social you know  
relationships romantic  
relationships family will I get  
this thing getting the thing  
and realizing that the kind of

the thing just moves forward  
off into the distance like a  
mirage and then I've read  
Simon's book about infinite  
games and thinking okay how  
would I design every system  
in my life so that I could run  
those systems for 40 or 50  
years in a sustainable way and  
this is one of them this is one  
of the ones this is one of the  
systems this podcast is one of  
the ones where I need to  
continue to remind myself  
that I need to design it in a  
way that is sustainable for 40  
years of my life including the  
period where I have seven

kids and a mortgage and a wife that needs me to be there and and also not just for me but for all the people that work here as well um and everyone can relate to that especially people that are being dragged sure in some way beautiful we have a closing tradition on this podcast where the last guest leaves

a question for the next guest not knowing who they are leaving the question for you get a 60-second phone call with a previous version of yourself what do you say you

then get to pass the phone to someone who is in your life at that moment and you get 60 seconds to speak to them too what do you say what'd you say hmm I think I would call up the 18 year old version of myself and tell him that it's okay to be who you are that you don't have to live up to anybody's expectations that you don't need to earn love and the best gift that you could give to yourself would be to find out what you love to discover the animating Force within you and above all to nurture that to mute out

all the noise of the external  
world the social and familial  
pressures and to just find a  
way to  
be comfortable with who you  
are  
because Who You Are is a  
hundred  
percent fine and you don't  
need to  
be anyone else in order to be  
accepted or loved and the  
corollary  
of that would be to not get  
caught  
up in trying to make decisions  
about the rest of your life or  
your

career path at such a young  
age but  
to instead explore and invest  
in as  
many experiences as you  
possibly  
can to Live Lean and to be  
adventurous and then I would  
say  
put your mother on the phone  
and I  
would tell her I know you  
love  
your son but you gotta leave  
them  
alone and let him be him why  
would you say that how many  
hours do you have [Laughter]

I  
understand rich thank you so  
much  
for an incredibly very  
lifechanging  
conversation in many  
ways but for your honesty and  
your  
vulnerability and for all the  
work  
you do because it's people  
like you  
that pave the way for what I  
do  
here and we're big fans of  
yours I  
mean that's why I reached out  
to

you and wanted to have you  
on the  
show so I'm so privileged and  
honored that you said yes um  
I  
freaked out a little bit when  
you  
responded because I've spent  
a lot  
of time watching a lot of your  
episodes I I love um the way  
you  
do what you do the Integrity  
in  
which you do it shines  
through and  
everything you've said to me  
today

about authenticity and being  
more  
aligned with yourself now  
makes  
perfect sense it makes sense  
as to  
why what I've seen from your  
content and the way you've  
lived  
um and the man that I've met  
today  
I see the alignment so thank  
you  
for the inspiration and thank  
you  
for the kindness and  
generosity  
today I really appreciate that

Steve  
and that means a lot I have  
crazy  
respect for your mission and  
what  
you guys are doing here and  
I've  
loved watching your  
trajectory and  
it was a real honor to come  
and  
talk to you today and man  
you're  
good yeah you were like I  
was like  
wow what do we talk about  
[Music] quick one some of  
you

will know that this podcast is  
now  
sponsored by the incredible  
Airbnb  
I'm a huge user lover and  
customer  
of Airbnb every time I go  
away on  
a trip whether that's work  
related or  
it's a holiday Airbnb is always  
my  
go-to but have you ever  
considered  
have you ever thought about  
making some extra cash to  
cover  
some bills or to help pay off a

holiday let me explain further  
perhaps people are coming to  
your  
town or city for a music  
festival for  
an event or a holiday and you  
have  
a spare room why not Airbnb  
it or  
your home office is free right  
now  
you're working away from  
home  
during the week you can  
Airbnb it  
honestly the possibilities are  
endless I've Airbnb one of my  
Apartments before and it's a

great  
way to make extra cash I'd  
highly  
recommend you all to at least  
check it out that extra space  
you  
have that extra room it might  
be  
worth more than you think so  
to  
find out just how much it's  
worth  
search [airbnb.co.uk](https://airbnb.co.uk) host that's  
[airbnb.co.uk](https://airbnb.co.uk) host check it out  
quick one as you guys know  
we're  
lucky enough to have blue  
jeans by

Verizon as a sponsor of this  
podcast and for anyone that  
doesn't  
know blue jeans is an online  
video  
conferencing tool that allows  
you  
to have slick fast high quality  
online meetings without all  
the  
glitches you might normally  
find  
with online meeting tools and  
they  
have a new feature called  
Blue  
Jeans basic blue jeans basic is  
essentially a free version of

their  
top quality video  
conferencing tool  
that means you get an  
immersive  
video experience that is super  
high  
quality super easy and super  
basically zero fast apart from  
all  
the incredible features like  
zero  
time limits on meeting calls it  
also  
comes with High Fidelity  
audio  
and video including Dolby  
voice

which is incredibly useful but  
you  
also have Enterprise grade  
security  
so you can collaborate with  
confidence it's so smooth that  
it's  
quite literally changing the  
game  
for myself and my team  
without  
compromising on quality to  
find.

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