

Gen Y Shift

Brian Johnson

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Ben: Welcome everyone to the Gen Y Shift Series. This is Ben Hart. I'm very pleased to be with you on our kickoff call tonight. It's going to be a really fun time. We're going to be rocking these calls about twice, maybe three times a month ongoingly, and we're going to be in some real established teachers. They're going to be sharing their wisdom as it relates to those of us in their 20s and 30s.

Also, we're going to be having on young leaders who are going to be sharing their inspiration, sharing their ideas, sharing their passions. And we're also really hoping to build community here so you can hook in from wherever you are in the world, connect to other cool conscious folks who are into the same thing as you are.

So I'm very pleased to be with you all tonight. I'm very happy to have my first guest, Bryan Johnson, here. Bryan is a philosopher and CEO of en*theos which is a company that creates cool stuff to help people optimize their lives. He's a co-founder with his wife, Alexandra, of the en*theos Academy, PhilosophersNotes, and Blissitations and is the author of A Philosopher's Notes. He's also featured in the documentary Finding Joe and has a monthly "Big ideas" column in Experience Life magazine.

So Brian, thanks so much for joining us.

Brian: Thank you, Ben. I'm really looking forward to our chat tonight.

Ben: Right on. So I just want to give people a little context, a kickoff call. You have a special honorary place in the pantheon of teachers we're bringing on. There's a number of reasons for that. One is we're bringing in an established teachers and young leaders who are in their 20s and 30s and you uniquely fit in the both of those. You have been quite awhile teaching through PhilosophersNotes and various causes as well as I believe you're still in your 30s. I believe you're in your mid or late 30s. So high five about that.

Also just in terms of my personal life, the reason why I want to bring Brian on is because about three or four years ago, I'm not totally sure on the time line, I was going through my own tough time in life. I was trying to follow my bliss, follow my passion and just having a real hard time with

it. And I came across some of Brian's works specifically his Optimal Living 101, and it just really was exactly what I needed to hear, his talk about the hero's journey, his work on the fundamentals, and just the way he kind of hammered that home. It really had an important impact in my life.

So I really wanted to have you here, Brian, as our first guest to come and help us rock those things for everybody. So thanks again. What I'd love to do is just to start off with your story. You've had a pretty interesting journey through leaving law school until now. So if you can just share with us a bit about that and how it led to what you're doing in the world.

Brian:

Yeah, sure. Well, first of all I'm honored to be your first guest and I'm thrilled. We got so much out of Optimal Living 101. I'm looking forward to talking about, as you mentioned, the fundamentals and the hero's journey, two topics that I'm so passionate about.

My quick story in my -- well, let's see how quick we want to make it and kind of what context. Neither one of my parents went to college. I'm just going to kind of back it all the way back to college. First generation college student, went to UCLA, studied psychology. Well, I ended up getting a minor in business. For a while I thought I'd get my PhD in psychology and at the time it was in the mid '90s.

I graduated in '96. They weren't doing a lot in the positive side of things. It was all on the negative, depression. I was actually studying autism with a graduate student. And this stuff didn't really inspire me. I was always in student leadership and what it was is it made great people great. And I wound up getting recruited by the old Arthur Anderson which was in accounting and consulting firm back in the day, and they kind of head me through a leadership conference.

I was turned on to Stephen Covey and Warren Bennis and these other great teachers. For the first time in my life at 20 years old, maybe 21, I was introduced to the idea that I could actually consciously create the life that I wanted to create. I just fell in love with that concept. I went to law school up at Berkeley and dropped out of law school, didn't know what I wanted to do when I left there other than burn my resume and coach a little league baseball team.

It's actually one of the hardest times of my life and it's easy to gloss over now what, 16 years after the fact, but at the time I dropped out of law school, ended a five-year relationship in the same 24-hour period of time, and I was devastated. I had none of the skills that I have now, and it's really, really challenging for me. I wound up moving back in with my mom and I'd like to say to her great delight. The only thing I knew I wanted to

be was to work with the kids and to coach a little league baseball team. I did that and out of that experience I had done a little bit of database consulting.

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This is now in 1997 and the internet was just starting to get some momentum. I had done a little bit consulting in that. I knew that there's some amazing stuff you could do, and I had the idea that in a matter of time every single team in the league in the world, little league baseball teams, soccer teams, adult baseball, softball leagues, that kind of thing would be using the web for everything.

Everyone's been sending some pictures grandma and grandpa could check out, et cetera, and cracked open a \$5,000 401(k) piggy bank and partnered with a brilliant technology guy who did the same thing. Under a little money, we built some technology to thousands of teams. We won the Business Plan competition at UCLA Anderson School. We wound up raising \$1 million, another \$4 million **[0:05:44] [Indiscernible]** right where the market crashed in basically 1999, 2000.

We wound up selling that business had enough to take a year or two off and figure what I wanted to do when I grew up and I wound up taking three or four and immersed myself in studying life and became a philosopher, a lover of wisdom. Philosopher is one of my favorite words. It comes from philo sophia, two Greek words, lover of wisdom, and wisdom is really knowledge of life and how to live effectively.

I thought that was the coolest thing in the world to really understand how does one -- how do you live? If you want to live to your greatest potential, what do you need to do? So I studied that and everything from the old school classics to modern day positive psychology. I thought about giving myself and getting a PhD again. It wasn't a program that integrated all the things I wanted to study -- philosophy and religious godism, psychology in nutrition and business and creativity and relationships and I just couldn't find a program.

I also needed to make money again. So I started my second business which was called Zadz, and now it's kind of like a Facebook for people interested in wanting to change the world. We wound up raising a few million dollars for that. The CEO of Whole Foods invested and became a friend, a mentor and had a great experience. And then I got for the end of a few years into that and I realized that didn't quite feel like what I was here to do. We sold that business to a company called Gaiam about five years ago.

I decided to give myself my own PhD in how to live, and I spent three years basically just reading and writing and thinking and teaching. I lived in Bali for a year and really immersed myself in this wisdom. Out of that, I created something called Philosopher's Notes where I distilled a hundred of my favorite optimal living classics into really simple PDF summaries and mp3s. You mentioned Optimal Living 101, and then I wrote a book called A Philosopher's Notes on Optimal Living which was my dissertation.

And then I'm kind of part philosopher, part CEO, and I've spent basically three years on, three years off over the last 12 years or so. Now, I'm really excited about creating more and spending more of my energy creating some cool stuff with en*theos and kind of splitting my time between the philosopher version of me where I like to read, write, and teach and the entrepreneurial side of me which I just love to create stuff that helps people optimize their lives.

So that's a little overview of kind of where I've been and where I'm at.

Ben: Beautiful. Thanks for that. It's quite a mouthful, quite the journey. A number of things struck me as you're sharing your story. What comes off the bat is when you talked about dropping out of law school, you talked about moving back in with mom, you talked about coaching a team. I think it's pretty easy for most young adults to relate to those struggles in that period.

And then when you started talking about building a business and raising millions of dollars, I think it could be easy for some young adults to create this feeling of "Oh, I can do that" or "That's not me" or "You're something else and I'm not able to do that." But what I love about what you talked about is you say often there are no secrets, and you really bring it back to the fundamentals of what allowed you to show up and rock your life the way you do. I'm wondering if you just speak to that a bit about the fundamentals that you're talking about.

Brian: Yeah, right on. Just to address your point here, if I can do it like I had no business experience, no background, I just had a strong allergy to getting a normal job. I just couldn't imagine doing it and I threw up driving home from work my first week at my first job. I couldn't handle that with a really, really strong passion for when I have an idea going for it and being willing to make mistakes and kind of go through different hurdles and just make it happen. So we can talk about that in more detail.

But what I've learned since then almost in hindsight is the importance of fundamentals. Actually, I didn't have fundamentals at all 15 years ago, even 10 years ago and really even five years ago. It's been something that

-- again, I'm looking in hindsight at what I've done in many ways in spite of myself. As I've immersed myself in this wisdom, one of the main things I'd come back again and again and again is the importance of having consistency on the fundamentals.

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A friend and a favorite teacher of mine, Robin Sharma, who has written a number of great books -- The Greatness Guide, The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari, and The Leader Who Had No Title are a few of his great books. I think it was in The Greatness Guide he talks about the fact that great people whether we're talking about athletes or politicians or entrepreneurs or teachers or whoever, what they all share in common -- they all view different things really well. What they all share in common is the consistency on their fundamentals. Their fundamentals were all different, but they're consistent on their fundamentals.

When I heard that, it just struck me because I always had a lot of energy and a lot of enthusiasm and passion but I wasn't consistent. I felt like I was kind of selling myself short in terms of what I could do over the long run without consistency on the fundamentals and now that's become my number one thing. For me, the question of Sharma asks and I talk about a lot of my work is what are the things that you do when you're feeling really good? What are the things that you do that when you're really on, you do them consistently, and when you're not on you tend to kind of let them slip?

A lot of teachers talk about it exactly that same trend. For me it's things like meditation. That's my number one. We call them "blissciplines." So fundamentals are blissciplines, kind of fun disciplines. Alexandra, my wife, and I haven't missed a day in nearly four years of meditation and we won't miss a day for the rest of my life. And that's a big one for us.

Exercise is another big one. Actually, I haven't always exercised consistently. I have over the last several years and now I'm having fun with that and seeing how many days in a row I can go and I just set that goal like 90 days ago. So I'm having fun with that. But exercise is something that's really, really important and that's universal.

And then nutrition is another big one for us. So eating well and taking care of ourselves that way. I find it when I do these things consistently, when I honor these fundamentals, it's much easier to stay plugged into the highest within myself. I don't want to imagine who I would be if I didn't exercise consistently. If I didn't eat well the way I know now how to eat, I'd be as up and down as I was 15 years ago and that's not fun.

Ben: Beautiful. It's really interesting. I've noticed that changes in my own life as it's gone from my fundamentals being things that I felt I should do and kind of like self-flagellation if I wasn't doing them to seeing, oh, in doing this, my greatest life gets to be lived. I get to show it more fully. I get to enjoy life more and I'm more positive and more happy. So that's a beautiful shift.

Brian: Yeah, totally. I think they're about as important at times. I think there are some things that we just know we need to be doing, and there's a level of you know what? Like it isn't that fun right now but I'm going to do it anyway. Michael Beckwith describes it beautifully. It's just you just get clear and you make the commitment and then you do it whether you feel like it or not. That level of self-mastery is huge.

And then, as you said, which is just amazing and you articulated it really well is then it became fun. I just feel great when I do these things. Why would I not do them? It doesn't make any sense and you get some momentum which is kind of self-propelling and the spiral goes upwards.

Ben: Yeah, absolutely. There's a number of directions I feel like we could go in this moment because I certainly think that for those people who don't have meditation as a part of their lives, it's so huge. I imagine that most people just being a part of our networks, The Shift Network and your network are already pretty into meditation. But if you can just give a little wrap on why you think that meditation is important, hopefully we can deal with some other people that way.

Brian: Yeah, well, I'll tell, first of all, I wish that someone was telling at 20 or 25 or even 30 that meditation is one of the most important things you can do and it is. We're chatting a little bit before about the importance of willpower and being able to basically get ourselves to do what we need to do, when we need to do right. Meditation is surprisingly one of the greatest ways to build your willpower. It's also one of the best ways to obviously connect to the highest within ourselves, and it's an important way to kind of discipline our minds.

So I approach it very practically. I tend to approach everything pretty practical. I don't start with the spiritual reasons for meditating. For me that's kind of a byproduct of being a healthy human being, but I meditate for several reasons. First of all, that's the way to train your mind and being able to put your focus, your attention where you want, when you want is the greatest skill we're ever going to develop.

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When we meditate whether it's for 5 minutes or 10 minutes or 15 minutes or 30 minutes or an hour or whatever it is -- I'm currently doing a half an hour every morning, I used to do an hour -- bringing your attention back to whatever you've chosen to meditate on whether that's your breath or a mantra or a prayer or some other imagery that you're creating, whatever your focal point is your anchor for that meditation, disciplining yourself when you get distracted which we always do, bring it back to that point of attention, bring it back to that point of attention. It's literally like strengthening a muscle in the gym. I've certainly seen its effects in my own life and in my own mind over the last nearly four years since I've done it consistently. That's my number one reason for doing it.

My number two reason for doing it is to get out of the normal kind of unexcited or kind of fight or flight response that we kind of get into and then do what Herbert Benson, Harvard M.D. researcher on meditation, calls the relaxation response and just to get that opportunity from my body to kind of relax. We know that eliciting the relaxation response literally changes our genetic expression more healthfully, and that's amazing.

Then for me the third reason is it's spiritual and it's the avenue to connect to our highest selves which for me kind of in order because I think too often we can jump into the spiritual without a foundation, and I found in my own life and just thinking about it that -- so we got to start to the most basic rudimentary fundamental stuff and only by functioning healthfully can we attain the highest with ourselves. Again, meditation is one of the most powerful ways to do it. So that's a quick look why I meditate and why I think it's an extraordinary practice.

Ben: Yeah, that's awesome. I think I heard at some point in one of your classes bringing up Jack Canfield's idea of "100% is a breeze, 99% is a bitch," and you taking that on and saying, "I'm never going to miss another day. I haven't for years." It's a beautiful example of that.

Brian: You make it easy. This is a great point. This is the way for us to actually implement our fundamentals, to take one thing that would have the greatest positive impacts in our lives and, as you know, I talk about this all the time and come back to it all the time in my teaching and in my own life of what's the one thing I need to be doing right now that I'm not doing that would have the greatest impact in my life and then make a 100% commitment to it. It's so easy when you do 100% commitment that little whiney voice that wants to negotiate with us even allowed into our minds to even get that negotiation going, 100% non-negotiable commitment and it makes things surprisingly easy.

Ben: Yeah, absolutely. I like the mantra of "What's the one thing I can do right now" because in the past I'd always try to take on eating raw and exercising constantly and meditating for an hour every day like all at once, and it just wasn't sustainable to take on all of that change and transformation at one time. So really just focusing on -- I actually got started with focus on exercise, and I mean exercise every single day and it almost became an expression of who I was. It became impossible not to exercise in a day and then I brought in meditation and then it slowly evolved. So there's a gradual way to do that.

Brian: Yeah, the researchers call that a keystone habit that you find "the habit" that if you did it would have the most positive impact. And what we know, again, this is scientifically validated that when you do something like that and you choose to exercise in a certain basis whether it's every day or five times a week or whatever it is or you chose to meditate first and do that, by choosing the one thing and doing it you're actually strengthening your overall self-control and willpower muscles where you will naturally do other things at a higher level. It's really, really cool to see the kind of transference of that skill on that capacity. It's built when we focus in one domain. It's pretty cool.

Ben: That's really cool. I know that you've been -- I haven't checked out Philosopher's Notes Volume 2 yet, but you've been profiling different books, The Power of Habit and things that have to do with habit and discipline. I'm wondering if there are any other big ideas in there that you'd want to share if people take on their fundamental.

Brian: Yeah, we need just some big ones and even just willpower. The number one way to build your willpower by a woman who teaches at Stanford, one of the leading thinkers on the subject, is meditation. It's amazing because what willpower is essentially, as I've mentioned, basically doing what needs to be done and the way that you get yourself to do that is you need to have a strong mind. You need to go and put your attention where you need to put it and the best way to cultivate that is meditation. So this was again a Stanford scientist telling us that's the best way to build willpower.

And then simple things like exercise is another great way to build willpower. Breath and being able to calm yourself and get out of that kind of shallow breathing, slightly anxious state and breathe deeply puts you into a place where you're more likely to do the things that are serving you and not spend it out into those that don't. So those are some simple big ideas.

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I really love your point of make it fun, like to me the idea of a philosopher and why I playfully call myself a philosopher is I want to rebrand it. If a philosopher isn't -- I actually disliked strongly my philosophy class. I only took one in UCLA. It was boring. It was pedantic. It's probably not practical information when these classic philosophers loved wisdom and they were all about optimizing our lives when we give it more virtue and happiness and not some esoteric kind of impractical ideas.

So your point of making these things fun is huge and making it a game and playing with yourself and challenging yourself to see how consistently you can do these different things and never missing a day again and that sort of thing brings a dynamisms to it. Beckwith is the one you coined the phrase "blisscipline," Michael Beckwith and he says your discipline moves to a blisscipline basically when you make it fun. You realize that this actually the most joyful thing that you can do that will bring the most joy into your life and then it becomes a fun game rather than some hassle on all that stuff.

Ben: Yeah, that's awesome. That's really awesome. I remember one point getting this giant calendar pinned on my wall and every day I would meditate. I would run upstairs where a big red marker and cross out that day, and it's just an absolute joy. It was good.

Brian: Yeah, right on. Jerry Seinfeld had this the same habit. You might noticed I might have done it, and it's partly inspired by him, the kind of idea of don't break the link, don't miss a day. Apparently, back in the day he would write a joke every single day, a new joke every single day and that was one of his trademark practices. That was one of his fundamentals. It was one of the reasons why he achieved the level of greatness that he did is he was consistent in that fundamental. So again, we do identify what our fundamentals are and then have that same level fun unabashed non-negotiable commitments on.

Ben: Yeah. That's awesome. Beautiful. Well, I think we're definitely rocking the fundamental talk right now, and I just want to underscore before we move away from it, just everyone out there who is listening to the call right now, just really taking time and as Brian is saying, just experiment with your fundamentals. See what works for you and also just have fun with it. For some reason, Michael Beckwith is going to my head right now. I think he talks about if you don't start putting the wisdom that flows into your life in the practice, you become spiritually constipated. I've had moments of that in my life, the fundamentals.

Brian: Yeah, we all have.

Ben: Keep it rocking.

Brian: Absolutely and moving a few steps from theory in thinking about it and talking about it and listening to it and studying it to practice. And he says the theory is actually the rudimentary spirituality of philosophy. The event stuff is living it. It's a lot easier to talk about these ideas and get excited about the last workshop, et cetera, but the advance work is actually make it a part of your life. So yeah, that's awesome, and we want to avoid the spiritual constipation or spiritual farts as I call it.

Ben: So when I think about people taking on the fundamentals and starting to work with them and being in integrity with what they're really committed to, your idea of the integrity gap comes to mind and that stuff had been a helpful mental model for me as I move through my day. I'm wondering if you would share on that.

Brian: Yeah, yeah, I appreciate that. That's one of my favorite models personally as well as the context of kind of how I came up with that goes back to the classic Greek philosophers again, and they said that if you want to live with happiness, eudaimonia, which literally means like kind of flourishing and really experiencing life at the kind of fullest point of flourishing, even live with something they called "arête" which directly translates as virtue or excellence but has a deeper meaning along the lines of living at your highest potential moment to moment to moment.

For me, whenever I thought of that, I always drew two lines. I'm going to draw them right now in my journal. It's kind of one line at the top and then another line, say, an inch below it parallel to that top line, and the top line is what you're capable of doing and the bottom line is what you're actually doing. If there's a gap between what you're capable of doing and what you're actually doing in any given moment, that's where regret and anxiety and disillusionment and depression come in. It's the integrity gap.

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If you close that gap and you live with arête, you live with virtue, you live with excellence and you get up in the morning and you meditate the way you said you're going to or you work out or you don't yell at your significant other or colleague or whatever, you live in your highest potential. You move that actual line up to the capable line. Literally, you squeeze out the regret, anxiety, disillusionment, and depression and you feel good. You're living with virtue and the natural byproduct of that is a sense of joy, it's a sense of connection of the highest within yourself, and that, according to the Greeks and I would certainly agree, is the essence of flourishing and the essence of feeling enthusiasm and joy and happiness.

So we can look at our lives and see where am I not living in integrity with my values? And by seeing that and then identifying these practices and fundamentals or bliss disciplines that we can adopt to close that gap, it's amazing how easily and quickly we can experience that and then the challenge becomes how do we do that on a consistent basis. And that's where the work little by little, day in and day out, week in and week out, month in and month out, year in and year out, we really start to see the rewards. So that's the integrity gap as I see it.

Ben: That's awesome. I appreciate the way you just ended that with a little by little, week by week, month by month because that's something that only has become apparent to me in the last few years that I definitely come into personal growth in the last decade and winds and transform and taken all these things and change and seeing all this growth in myself that really now to step into adulthood seeing, oh, wow, if I just show up fully each day, each choice, each practice, I didn't make leaps and bounds but it really is day by day by day by day. Such an important concept and that really I think has bought a whole level of patience into my life that wasn't there before. So I appreciate that.

Brian: Yeah, right on. Repeating of that over and over in the class I took with you. Yeah, I mean that's something that we can talk about a little bit too of just the difference between states and stages so we can get inspired for a moment going to a weekend workshop or reading a book we love or walking on fire or whatever it is, attending a passion retreat or whatever it is that inspires us. We have a state experience where everything is clear, and we can see what our potential is, we can see how amazing life is.

But the reality is we then need to honor the practices such that that state becomes a near stage of awareness, a near stage of development. And yeah, that was one of the bigger distinctions that I may with the help of Ken Wilber who's the one who articulates states and stages or states and traits and that patience is I think is a sign of maturity and it's something that I wish I could rely in 15 years. He told me that 15 years ago and I had this awareness to really begin meditating and exercising and eating well and practicing gratitude and all the other things that I do creative way and otherwise, it's amazing, it's exciting.

So I'm really thrilled to have conversations with you and others in Gen Y and really honor these fundamentals, these practices, and it's inspiring for me to see where you guys are at your age and frankly so far ahead of where I was at that point in my life. So it's really thrilling to imagine the next 10, 15, 25 years as you guys embody these practices and bring your gifts to the world.

Ben: Yeah, thanks for that acknowledgment. It's definitely such a beautiful thing to me to. Certainly, you're not that far ahead of me in terms of age but humbled out all the ways everyone who comes before who paved the road so that this wisdom is just trickling down farther and farther and people again earlier as if we need a 15-year-old **[0:28:35] [Indiscernible]**.

So talking about us closing our integrity gap and really rocking our fundamentals, it kind of naturally leads me into wanting to talk about the Hero's Journey. Actually, earlier today I scribbled down this quote from Joseph Campbell who is saying destiny is a fulfillment of the potentialities, of the energies in your system. It feels like when we're closing that integrity gap and we're rocking our fundamentals, we're really harnessing the potentialities in our system and it feels like our Hero's Journey naturally begins and we can take it on more slowly.

So I wonder if we could just describe the Hero's Journey for a second as the great JC or one of the great JCs has talked about this.

Brian: That's awesome. So yes, so Joseph Campbell, mythology expert, he basically studied ancient mythology to modern mythology and George Lucas, in many ways, wasn't a protégé but he was kind of a mentor to George Lucas. Star Wars is based on this idea of the Hero's Journey, all great storytelling and films. Yeah, most are going to have the Hero's Journey embodied within them.

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The basic idea is that the hero is living a comfortable life and then whether it's Luke Skywalker on whatever planet he was on or whoever, right? And they are called. They move their call to be going to the force of the unknown, right? And they enter this force of the unknown, they leave the community that their comfortable way, and they go into this forest and in this forest they meet challenges and they have all these adventures.

They often meet a guide or a wizard or a guru who's able to mentor them, and they are faced with their demons and their dragons and all these. And then ultimately, they are the ones that have to kind of take the next step on their own with everything that they have learned and kind of go for it and do battle with their dragon, et cetera. And then the most important phase is to return so they kind of win that journey and they come back with their awards but, as Joseph Campbell said, they bring the boon back.

They bring their treasure back to the world, and that's actually often the hardest and certainly the most important part of the process is we go on this journey, and many people who listen to this have already kind of felt the alienation from their community or from their families, and they just feel called to do more than what might be prescribed for them. Okay, great. You are now in that force of the unknown and they are learning and they're going through challenges and you're having different mentor and opportunities and wizards come into your life in whatever form. And now your process is really discovering your truth and living in integrity with them and then figuring out how you bring those gifts back to the world.

That's a rough look at how Campbell described it. And then the other important thing is that the great life is essentially is a repeating hero's journey after another hero's journey after another hero's journey. We're always at a new edge. We're not going to a point where it's just all figured out. That's not just how it works. It spirals up. Hopefully, we're navigating challenges with a little bit more of grace and wisdom and poise, but the great life is the one where we're re-entering a new force of the unknown and learning new lessons and conquering new demons and then bringing new gifts back to the world.

Ben: That's awesome. Definitely, those of you who haven't checked it out, I definitely recommend checking out Finding Joe, the movie Finding Joe. Brian is featured in that talking about Joseph Campbell's work, talking about the Hero's Journey and it's super powerful, really inspiring.

A number of things in the Hero's Journey, it sounds like in you in your own life like you're saying how you go in the hero's journey again and again, it sounds like you have gone through that and the idea of following your bliss is a big part of what is to go on the hero's journey. And I think maybe using your life as an example could be a great way of describing how that kind of unfolds and maybe that bliss doesn't necessarily change but the articulation of it or our clarity about it changes. I'm just wondering if you would reflect on your own hero's journey throughout the last 15 years.

Brian: Yeah, for sure. So then first I'll give a little bit of context about how Campbell came up with that. I actually talk about this a little bit in the film. Campbell was an amazing scholar. One of the things he studied was Sanskrit, and in Sanskrit and Hinduism they talk about the fact that there are three jumping off points into enlightenment: Sat, chit, and ananda.

Sat is essentially -- what is it, beingness? Now, I'm getting confused. Sat and chit is the beingness and consciousness and then ananda is bliss. It's essentially your rapture. He was looking and he's saying, "You know

what? If I'm honest, I don't know what proper beingness is or proper consciousness is. You kind of abstract ideas for me. But my bliss, my bliss I kind of grab on to, I can trust. I know what that is and I can follow my bliss."

So that's kind of the root of the concept in the phrase in following your bliss. And then for me it's interesting because -- and I talk about this a little bit in the film as well, but it's kind of there for me in hindsight. At the time I didn't this kind of this language or this frame for it, but when I dropped out of law school the only thing that I knew I wanted to do, the only a little bit of bliss that I have, that sense of intuition was that I wanted to work with kids. I wanted to coach a little league baseball team.

Now, at the time I was being ridiculed for dropping out of law school and I felt like an idiot and a failure and all these things. I in no way imagined that by going home and coaching little league baseball team, I had never thought that I would create a business out of it, and ironically I wound up hiring the law firm that I would have wanted to work for by the time I would have graduated. I never could have slated that. But I trusted myself enough to follow my bliss and that's one of the aspects of the Hero's Journey. And we all have sense of what lights us up, and it might be you feel inspired to do a triathlon or you feel inspired to create a website where you start blogging on certain topics.

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It doesn't need to be the thing. But when we trust our little glimmer of hope, that's essentially a connection to the divine. It's a jumping off point into enlightenment. It is our path to authentically living and stop doing the things that we think we should do or we've been conditioned to do or even told we need to do and start trusting ourselves. And when do that by looking within and saying, "What really fires me up? What really inspires me" independent of being guaranteed to succeed at it or seeing the full path, when we trust that little glimmer of bliss and start to follow it more, it tends to lead to pathways that we couldn't have imagined would exist.

As Campbell says helpful hands come to play, and these synchronicities occur that you couldn't have imagined. So that's a really, really formative one for me and the easiest one to describe. Since then, it's really for me been a matter of cultivating two things. One, my health and well-being because if you aren't eating well and you aren't exercising and you aren't taking care of your mind, you're not going to have a clear sense of what you actually want in your life. Your bliss is going to be muddy. It's not going to be pure and clear if you're unhealthy. So that's been one part of my practice to more consistently connect that highest within myself.

Then the second is to trust it and be willing to go where it's taking me where I feel inspired to go and also embracing the inevitable mistakes, the inevitable failures that happen in the process and having the courage to say, "Okay, well that wasn't it, but it did teach me this, this, and this, and now I'm closer and I know that I want to do this and not that," and just trusting that dynamic process of evolution. I've said a lot there so I'll take a breath.

Ben: That's awesome. That's awesome. A number of things come up for me. One is just the idea I think it's easy to think of the idea of following our bliss or life purpose is something we discover and step into and then it's all said and done. And really you're talking about an iterative process where it changes and it slows and we discover our new sense of bliss and really mastery becomes how to live in that state of discovery and then reflection and moving into the next thing. I think that's so important because in surrendering to that, we really then can just follow the threads of what's alive now and trust the process unfolding. It's awesome.

Brian: Amen.

Ben: Yeah. Yeah, a number of things, places I want to go actually in this moment. One is what are some recommendations you'd have for people sitting right now to start on that path, if people working jobs they don't enjoy? I think there's a number of ways that we just distract ourselves from feeling kind of the pain of not living into our fullest bliss and not walking our hero's journey so just saying, just contemplating and being with it. I was wondering if you have any other thoughts on what people could do as a step tomorrow to begin to walk that path more.

Brian: Several things come to mind. One, the fundamentals we've been talking about, identifying what are the practices you need to start doing and also the practices you need to stop doing.

In our team calls in our business we have our positive blissciplines that we're committed to individually and within our team. And then our negative blissciplines, the things we're going to stop doing. So I think that's important to identify. What comes to my mind that's kind of funny, you said the mundane little thing. I think it's easy when we feel overwhelmed and stressed by life to numb ourselves whether it's through alcohol or TV or video games or whatever it is, internet overusage, that kind of thing.

I think it's really, really important to get clear on where we go when we're not feeling good and to quit doing that and to experience the pain

and channel that energy that we usually put in a distraction into studying and into exercising and into all the other things that we know are going to help us figure stuff out because if we just numb out and we spend time in front of the TV or doing whatever other kind of stupid things we can do to waste our life for, then things aren't going to change. Years are going to go by and decades are going to go by and you're going to wonder what happened.

So we really need to take control and to see the things that we need to do that help us and the things we've stopped doing but are not helping us. And then again, read, study, journal, reflect. I've filled up countless journals asking these questions that we're discussing tonight. What would I do if I wasn't afraid? What is the number one positive and negative thing? I've filled up dozens and dozens of journals thinking about these things, and also I haven't had a TV in like 10 or 15 years.

So just choosing what's important and then aligning your life. Again, this is the integrity gap, what's important to you. If you're really committed to living a heroic life where you're giving your gifts to the world and living with happiness, meaning, and mojo, awesome, who do you need to be, What do you need to do, and to really approach that with -- again, a sacred and a fun reverence is to me **[0:40:07] [Indiscernible]** and that's where the true virtue and arête and joy come from.

[0:40:14]

Ben: That's awesome. I definitely want to underscore the talking about the negative blissdisciplines because I think that's so, so important. For all of you listening, I imagine when Brian was saying that one or two or five went through your head, and I know for myself those for the year where I just left some kind of flythrough and I would acknowledge it for a second and let it go away. It wasn't I actually sat down with my journal and wrote down all the ways to distract myself that I actually really consciously accepted that and then was able to start shifting it. I think we should also give more time thinking about that. It's awesome.

Brian: Yeah.

Ben: So we're getting close to time when I want to open it for questions. So people who are on the live line and also on the webcast, start contemplating any questions you want to have for Brian and people on the phone, you can hit 1. If you're on the webcast, you can start typing your questions in there and I can read them.

Before we jump over to that though, Brian, there's one other idea that I love from your work that was coming to mind today when I was thinking

about this call which is the idea that we become the average of the five people we spend the most time around. And what occurs to me is that there's a lot of young people out there who are into personal growth in spirituality and they don't have a community around them, they don't have inspiring mentors around them. I love your take on the way that you were thinking about the five people that you surrounded yourself with because it wasn't actually physical friends that you had in your life necessarily. Would you be down to share a bit about that?

Brian:

Yeah, certainly. First, the idea of the average of the five people you spend the most time with is kind of a classic Jim Rohn, Tony Robbins concept which is also validated by science and social contagion. We know again scientifically that who you spend time with you're going to become for better or for worse.

So it's really important that we pay attention to that and we know certain relationships service one another. And there are more and less graceful ways to navigate those relationships and a whole another conversation, but the way that I described it in that particular way when I talked about the idea was basically for me I start with the highest kind of average that I can imagine which is source, God, universe, whatever you want to call it. I want to spend more time every day with that connection.

For me that's my meditation practice, that sitting in stillness and allowing that to be present. It's also the time to be a nature and going high feeling every day and that sort of thing and that was kind of my number one. And then number two, I want to study. If I could do anything which is what I spend the majority of my time doing basically it's reading and studying. I feel like when I read a great book it's like I'm hanging out with this great teacher whether they're 2,500 years ago they wrote it or two and a half months ago. This is an extraordinary teacher who's taking the time to share the best stuff they know, and for me that's an intimate relationship and an opportunity to really get into their heads and I love that. So averaging up by spending time with wise individuals who you respect and admire and soak up their wisdom.

Then I don't know how I ordered it in that note, but then my intimate relationship with Alexandra, my wife now, is amazing and she totally averages me out and inspires me and that was a process as well. Really holding to my sense of what I wanted in a relationship and same with her in really choosing why we're on that front. And then of course friends and other people we spend time with and spending more time doing this type of thing. And as you mentioned then, Ben, in the community your guys are creating around this, meet people who share these values. Talk to them online and offline and really, really be conscious about that. And

again, classic teachers who talk about this as well from Bernard to Confucius and others.

If you can't find someone who's going to be positive, then spend your time alone kind of thing. That's how harsh they are about it. So those are some of the ways that I've approached it and in the process you become blessed because you become a better person and you naturally find yourself in situations where you're connecting with other people who share your values, friends and mentors, as I've said, it's a pretty cool process where you become conscious of it and deliberately create your ideals.

Ben: Absolutely. Awesome. Beautiful. So again, if you're on the phone, hit 1 and we can take your questions. And if you're on the webcast, you can go ahead and type yourself in there and we can read out your question. It looks like we have Vernon here. So Vernon do you want to go ahead?

Participant: Yes. Can you hear me?

Ben: We can. Go ahead.

[0:44:55]

Participant: Okay, awesome, awesome. Yeah, hey, Brian, I really appreciate your message. I had a question. Basically, I was curious about what your thoughts might be on throwing yourself off a balance? Like once your practice has become real disciplined and you're doing the same thing like, for example, in a traditional three-year Tibetan-Buddhist retreat, you do a very disciplined practice every single day but as you get towards the end of that practice and they actually have you do no practice where you actually just lie in the grass and like -- you're sort of like throw your practice off or like if you read *The 4-Hour Body* by Tim Ferriss or say things like -- or for example, like you have a week where you take off or like there's now a lot of scientific research.

It says like if you keep doing the same thing over and over and over again, there's actual evidence that shows if you actually switch off that pattern, it's actually beneficial to your practice. I wondered if in your research you've run across that philosophy and what your thoughts might be on that.

Brian: Yeah, I think from exercise, science and things like that, periodization is obviously huge, and it's kind of looking at what you're training and how you're doing it. So from a specific perspective, I completely agree. From a higher level perspective, there's still a consistency in the practice. You're maybe changing the particular details of your exercise routine or -- I'm

not familiar with the Tibetan routine that you described, but the actual approach from a spiritual perspective that there's still a consistent dedication to the practice itself.

And that's really where I come back to, and I think even just the consistency around our commitment to these ideals and allowing our compass to kind of shift a bit as we identify what our true north really is but honoring that commitment and finding ways that we can kind of maintain a consistency I think is huge.

I think the reality for most of us is not -- we've gone so long doing the same thing that we're kind of at a point we're ready for the next. It's we're always seeking the next fun and sexy thing that we never achieve a level of mastery. There hasn't been the three years put into a single practice, and there's this diffusion of energy and **[0:47:25] [Indiscernible]** starts rather than the mastery that we get when we say, "You know what, I'm going to do this for the next year, for the next two years, or for the next three years." And I think that that's extraordinarily rare in our culture. It's always looking for the next kind of orgasmic high and the coolest thing that we can do and the nearest thing we live that other mundane thing behind us, never really getting traction.

Participant: Thank you.

Ben: Awesome. Thanks, Vernon.

Brian: Yeah. Good stuff. Thanks, Vernon.

Ben: Right on. So again, hit 1 if you're on the phone, type in your webcast questions. Right now we don't have any other questions. You guys are pretty just soaking in it, it sounds like. So I can throw another one, Brian, while we're waiting for people to reflect is.

You mentioned earlier your ability to have an idea and just go for it fully. You've done that with the number of the businesses that you've started. As we talk about people's fears coming up and just being worried about what might happen, I'm wondering if you would speak to a bit of the inner game that you play with yourself around just really jumping in and going for it fully.

Brian: Yeah. Well, first of all, I should also mention that I have a lot of fear and I have had a lot of fear. It's kind of learning to embrace that has been a process for me. And again, the classic teachers tell us that courage isn't about not about not having fear. It's about feeling the fear and doing what needs to be done anyway. Again, if you looked at me over the last 15 years, there's been kind of an arc toward more great way of

approaching these things but then continuing to be willing to make mistakes and willing to embrace that.

I'm a total recovering perfectionist and everything had to be done a certain way which led to a lot of anxiety and stress and all that fun stuff. And now a big practice for me is really embracing making mistakes and really realizing that the path to achieving is being willing to fail and all of the fun stories of Babe Ruth. He hit the most homeruns and he also struck out the most. I was just reading the other day that apparently Michael Jordan, the only record that he holds is most missed shots. Pretty amazing.

So you have this great individuals are often the ones who have made the most mistakes in their given domain. So seeing it over the big picture and being willing to look a little silly while you achieve a level of mastery is huge and something that -- again, I had such a strong allergy to doing something kind of normal, that I wasn't passionate about, that I was willing to endure the pain on the other side of making this and continuing to go for it. But I think just having that willingness to stick in and persevere and move through mistakes is huge.

[0:50:14]

Ben: That's awesome. You mentioned mastery right then. And something I've heard you discussed a number of times is the idea of putting in the 10,000 hours to master any given talent or skill or endeavor. And I don't know if I actually heard you speak to what it is that you fully feel like you are giving yourself too in that way. I guess you just mentioned studying being your passion. But I'm wondering if you could speak a bit to 10,000 hours idea and how it's shown up in your life and where you feel you are in that journey.

Brian: Yeah. So first, the 10,000 hour idea conceptually is amazing, and a lot of different books talk about it, many that I profile. And the biggest thing that we can think about what that is, that a lot of people think that greatness is born and that you either have it or you don't. Researchers call that a fixed mindset, but the reality is that's not at all how it works. You can take someone like Mozart and was he born genius? Was he born the son of one of the world's leading of his eras, leading teachers? And from the time he was in diapers, he was learning how to do his scales and play the piano and he put in more hours by the time he's 10, 12 years old that most people put in their entire lives.

Then he achieved an extraordinary level of success in a very young age, but he did feel after putting in an incredible amount of work. And people miss that fact. They think he was born a genius. And the reality is he was

made a genius by the amount of effort he put in. And researchers tell us it's 10,000 hours which is a lot of hours if you think about it, of what they call deliberate practice where you're at your edge and you're consciously trying to get a little bit better.

And that's conceptually and I just love the concept and for me, as I mentioned, I kind of have two somewhat distinct domains that I'm passionate about. One is the philosopher and studying and learning and teaching, and the other is the entrepreneur and creating cool stuff. And I think that that's kind of where I've been putting in my time and I can play around with different calculations where I'm at but I actually don't think much about that. I'm just committed to doing more work and continuing to practice and continuing to share a lot. And I'm just excited about the growth that I can see and then also getting really excited about the future.

George Leonard who wrote a book called *Mastery*, which I highly recommend, he says that for the master, they are so committed to the practice of becoming a better human being and mastering whatever they are passionate about. The step they take towards their goal, they actually hope their goal gets two steps further away. And there's something beautiful about that where we're no longer obsessing about getting somewhere. We're obsessing about and really being passionate about being where we are and becoming a little bit better day in and day out and then letting the results take care of themselves.

So that's a practice that I've really been taking on and I've been passionate about. Those will be the kind of two domains I'd see the expression in is entrepreneurially and kind of student-teacher lives.

Ben: Awesome. That's great. So we'll rock over to another question we have Shane here. Shane, go ahead.

Participant: Hey, Ben, hey, Brian. I'm really enjoying the show so far.

Brian: Right on.

Participant: So my question and kind of for both of you and I'm wondering what your perspective is on what is the unique opportunity and also the unique challenge that is facing our generation, Gen Y, in terms of this kind of integral approach to life where we're really merging our meaning and our work. And so I'm wondering what you guys' perspective is on that.

Ben: Awesome. Go for it.

Brian:

Yeah, absolutely. Well, great stuff and what comes to my mind immediately is I think it's the same challenge, in some ways, it's the same challenge or different specific challenges obviously each generation has, but I think that we're all called and you guys are called to be the change you want to see. So it comes back to *arête*. It comes back virtue. It comes back to what is your ideal. If you can be whoever you wanted to be and you kind of create that ideal and you identify what's most important for you. Are you willing to live those ideals?

It's really easy to kind of think abstractly and get excited about making a difference in the world from an abstract conception, but the reality is it always comes down to each of us being the change we want to see. That's my kind of answer to that specific question also is generally when people ask me broad questions is, okay, well, each of us are called to be the change we want to be and more and more of us do that there will be an amazing kind of ripple from that perspective, and then you bring up the meaning in work.

[0:55:07]

I do think that your generation has seen kind of -- I just had the Gen X 37 and I had kind of a vague sense of -- my dad had the same job for 38 years and I appreciate everything he did, but I never really felt resonant with that. I think you, guys, kind of a step or a generation behind or even more clear on "You know what? No, I want to spend the bulk of my life in my work doing something that creates meaning," and that is one of the big challenges. How do you integrate that? How can you get paid to give your greatest gifts and greatest service to the world? That's part of a whole long weekend discussions, but again it's grounded. The foundation of that question is in these fundamentals and a little tangent on that.

If you want to see how tall a building is going to be, how many storeys it's going to have, look at how deeply they're digging the foundation. If you want a one-storey or two-storey building, you don't need a particularly deep foundation. But if you want to truly have something significant, you need to spend the time on the foundation, and this is why I keep on coming back to these fundamentals and to imagine that you and your generation honoring these fundamentals, you can do whatever you want. It's deeply inspiring to imagine what that might look like.

Ben:

That's awesome. I totally agree with so much of that. I think we're all going to start with whatever you were hitting there with the foundation as I feel like the opportunity is that we are called to create such a bigger foundation than we ever may have been in the past just with so much of the outer world that feels unknown, that feels chaotic with world economy, with what Occupy Wall Street, with yada, yada, yada.

It's not a world where we can just hook into a profession necessarily and just ride with it for the next 40 years. I think the immense beauty of that is that it calls us then to really go inside and ask, okay, what is mine to do, what is mine to be, and to let that flow out. So I think the crisis is that we have to realize life really is an inside game, and the opportunity is that we get to realize life really is an inside game and that from doing the work internally it ripples out in beautiful ways.

Yeah, it's awesome, Shane. Thanks for that question.

Participant: Great. Thanks, guys.

Brian: Yeah. Thanks, Shane.

Ben: Cool. We're actually hitting the end of our time here. We got some other questions, but I definitely want to honor our 6:00 p.m. stop. Before we close, I just want to, Brian, give a shout out to -- you have so many websites and businesses out there. I'm wondering what you would like to highlight for people to check out because I'm a big lover of all that. I guess entheos.com might be the biggest umbrella. What would you point people to?

Brian: Yeah and you can see me, brianjohnson.me is an easy way to kind of get the links to all the stuff, but Philosopher's Notes is some of you guys might dig just really quick kind of like clips, notes, summaries of these great books, et cetera. We've got the academy where we have some extraordinary teachers sharing their wisdom in a bunch of different domains. Meditation, we have something called Blissitations where we help people with guided meditations and other stuff that we use on a daily basis and a bunch of other stuff that we'll be rolling out at entheos.com in the months and years ahead. So that should do it.

Ben: Awesome. That's beautiful. I so appreciate you coming off and kicking off the series with us. It's so good to have you. We so appreciate your lighthearted wisdom blast. Great.

Brian: Yeah, for sure. If you want to take more questions, I'm happy to stay on a little longer if you have other people. If not, then --

Ben: No, I'm totally done. That'd be great. Let's rock a few more questions. So hit 1 again. Let's actually put your hand down for a second, but got Keira here. Go ahead, Keira.

Participant: Hi. I'm in the process of getting clarity about what my bliss is, and my bliss is seemingly in two divergent directions that I love to write and

there's also another piece that I'm passionate about, and I also love to teach. I know that at some point in my future, the three things that bring me joy are going to converge, but right now they seem to be a bit divergent. So what happens, I think when we're on a path to create a unique life that is authentic and is our highest and best expression, sometimes it looks chaotic at first. How do we go about synthesizing and integrating all those seats of bliss into a larger coherent picture?

Brian: Yeah, that's awesome. Well, first of all we call these good problems to have.

Participant: Good.

Brian: A lot of things you're passionate about and then I kind of laugh because when you said now it can look chaotic at first, my response was, hey, I'm second, I'm third and fourth and for me it's been really embracing that chaos. Osho talks about the fact that we want balance. We obviously want to create coherence in our life. But we're never going to reach a state of balance really where it's all kind of tied up and perfect. He says we're always kind of in dynamic equilibrium. We're on a tightrope almost. We're leaning a little bit too far to the right and then we're leaning a little bit too far to the left.

We're moving forward and for split moments we have kind of what you would call a balanced state, a perfectly balanced state. But there's really this dynamic balance that's being created day in and day out, and for me it has been very much like that. I still I am very kind of creative processes of making deeper and deeper values distinctions. It's spiral in some ways, and it's also like what you call where you kind of calibrating. We can slide off far on a pendulum to one side and fall on a pendulum to another.

It's almost like calibrating that, if you will, where the swings aren't quite so wide and that's where the coherence comes in. But that only comes from my experience through the commitment to this we have been talking about, the willingness to continue to experiment and explore and the embracing of the mystery and the fact that it's always going to be a little bit beautifully and inherently chaotic. Does that make sense?

Participant: Yes, yes. There is part of me that have to release my inner control freak because there is a part of me that wants to make sense of it now and kind of wants to have control over it. And you're right, there is a certain amount of it that is just mysterious, and if we live in the mystery then we can be more in the flow of our creative potential.

Brian: Absolutely. Then what you do is you employ your control freak to honor your blissdisciplines. That's the job for your control freak. Your control freak

is not in some self-flagellating way like the albino all monk, right, in the Da Vinci Code that's kind of whipping yourself in some harsh, terrible way. But in a beautiful kind of contained structured way where you honor your blissciplines and with that 100% commitment and then control what you do have control over which is your behavior and to a lesser extent your thoughts. And then as a byproduct, you'll start to see more coherence come in.

And then each moment like for me a big thing that I talk about in different sayings is this idea of our highest goal. Our highest goal is to connect with the highest within ourselves more consistently. It is actually an impossible goal because we're never going to be perfectly connected to our highest all the time. It's not going to happen. But what's beautiful about it is every moment gives us an opportunity to be more or less connected, and we can choose in this moment to breathe deeply, to do our medication practice, to do our workout, to write whatever form of writing you're doing. We can always step forward in the growth and we that choice.

As we do that, we exercise control of our behaviors and that good stuff. Things tend to find the level of coherence more naturally. But if we try to control the outcomes and the results, then it becomes kind of an uphill, less pleasant experience. Again, does that make sense?

Participant: Yes, yes, I'd learned that the hard way.

Brian: Yeah, we all have.

Participant: Yeah, yeah. But I'd like to thank you so much for that because I don't have to denounce and reject the control freak, the part of me that wants left brain analysis and control. I can harness that and repurpose that portion of my personality to harness the discipline.

Brian: Yeah, exactly. I heard a story once from a great teacher who said that -- it's kind of like I have a perfectionist voice in me. That voice is not helpful at all when I begin writing. It's a terrible voice when I begin writing because it doesn't even let me put the first word on the paper, right?

Participant: Right.

Brian: But it's a great persona. It's a great voice to employ at the end of the writing process when anything needs to be done. So what we want to do is observe these different personas and the voices in our consciousness and our being and know when to employ them and when not to because they'll have a place so we just need to put them in the right responsibility. And the things that are the control freak, I would call it my

perfectionist, would be similar, they need to take their proper role in their lives and not be the one in control.

Again, this is where meditation and that sounds like probably have a practice of that's what allows to cultivate that bigger mind perspective. We have the awareness to see when any one limited perspective is trying to take control. And we could say, "No, no, no, no, I appreciate it but I'm going to put you in your proper place," and we're going to connect to something bigger than just that little voice that happens to be trying to run the show right now. Is that helpful?

[1:05:20]

Participant: Yes, that's perfect because I am a recovering perfectionist, and those fear-based perfectionist thoughts prevent me from moving forward with what I know will lead to a fuller life. A perfectionist also prevents me from practicing the fundamentals.

Brian: Yup, yup, yup.

Participant: I also studied psychology. I have a bachelor in psychology and learned transcendental meditation when I was 16, but I can't remember the last time I practiced meditation every day even though I know the research of Herbert Benjamin, even though I have the training. Because of the perfectionist in me, I don't practice the fundamentals of nutrition and meditation because there's that negative self-talk then comes into play when I miss a day.

Brian: Yeah. Well, then it becomes fun and this is the part of the process. Another big thing for me that's very new, there's a book called *The Paradox of Choice*, Barry Schwartz I believe who talks about the difference between a maximizer and a satisficer. The maximizer is kind of the unhealthy perfectionist who is always trying to get maximum perfection essentially. The satisficer realizes they need to have standards that they have good enough standards. And they get to that point and they're like, "That's good enough. I don't even make it perfect." There's a diminishing return point I don't need to play in and really honoring that good enough standard and saying, "Okay, this is good enough for me in this domain. I'm going to move on" is really important.

Another book you might like by a guy named Tal Ben-Shahar. He wrote a book called *The Pursuit of Perfect*. He talks about an optimalist. An optimalist is basically a healthy perfectionist, and the number one thing that makes them different from a non-healthy perfectionist is they know they're never going to be perfect. When you embrace the fact you're never going to be perfect, there are 24 hours in a day, you're never going

to do everything you want to do, it's impossible. So then you optimize your life within the constraints of reality. And when you do that there's a freedom that comes in.

Then you choose the things you aren't going to compromise on one thing at a time whether it's meditation or nutrition or whatever and you have fun with it. But you don't try to do a hundred things and then ultimately disappoint yourself and hold yourself to kind of crazy standards, et cetera, et cetera. But it sounds like you did great and embrace the process more than anything.

Participant: Thank you. Thank you. The author of The Pursuit of Perfect, who is that again?

Brian: Tal Ben-Shahar. And Ben, if you have a way to send me to people, I can give you that PDF and you can send it out.

Ben: Yeah, I'd be happy to, absolutely. Yeah, cool. Great. Awesome. Thanks for the question, Keira. So Brian, we got one more coming through the webcast and then I definitely want to let us move into our evening, but this is an interesting one for this one.

This is from Andrew over in Australia and he's saying, "Thanks for sharing your wisdom. One question I ponder regularly and that sometimes confuses my journey is the idea of our soul contract before incarnation versus the idea of freewill. As time goes on, it seems that I actually have less freewill because no matter how hard I try to make something happen especially in the area of money it just didn't happen for me, whereas in days gone by it was easy for me to accomplish in these areas. It feels like I have a lesson to learn as per my soul plan that are in conflict with my will and it's quite uncomfortable. What are your learned thoughts on this, Brian? Thanks."

Brian: What a great question. Again, part of a longer conversation but my short answer to that question is I don't know on the reincarnation and I don't think anyone knows. But what I do know is that I think the healthiest use of our will is to do the things that allow us to connect to the highest within ourselves, our soul contract, however we want to frame that, and that's what I feel as my primary obligation in this lifetime is to do the work that I know connects me to the highest within myself.

As I do that I exercise my will consistently, diligently, patiently, persistently and playfully in that regard that then I'm connected to something bigger than me and I can allow that to flow through me. And that I feel is my ultimate responsibility and that's where we want to I think exert our will, not on attaining certain things or achieving certain

goals but on becoming the type of person that can most consistently allow that divine to flow through us.

[1:10:12]

And then when we do that, it becomes a kind of unfolding and that's surrender which is a very active surrender, which is surrender to the highest within ourselves which does require will paradoxically, right? It takes a lot of **[1:10:25] [Indiscernible]** to get to a pure state of being and that's really how I've engaged in the process and something that I hope that has some resonance with you as well.

Ben: Great answer. Thanks for that question, Andrew. That's great Beautiful.

Brian: Well, that was fun.

Ben: Yeah, that was great, man. I just want to so acknowledge you. Big hug. Big high five. I just love for you being in the world and I love the way that you've touched my life and just really happy to have your light rippling out more and more. So thanks for being here and sharing with this crew.

Brian: Yeah. Well, thank you and congrats on your new series. And again, thanks for inviting me to play and we'll have a lot of fun. I look forward to seeing you continue to share all your wisdom, and I'm excited to see everything in the future.

Ben: Absolutely. Beautiful. Well, have a great evening and we'll definitely talk later.

Brian: All right. See you, Ben.

Ben: All right. For those of you who are sticking around, I just want to let you know next week we're going to back with -- we're going to back on Tuesday with Gay Hendricks who's going to be here talking about his books, *The Big Leap* and *Five Wishes*, which are both amazing books, very relatable to what Brian was talking about today with the hero's journey, and he's really going to talk about how we can step into our zone of genius and how we can really get clear on what will allow us to live our most blissful life.

So every week whenever we have this, we want to give the opportunity for discussion groups. So for people who would like to stick on the line, we can stick you into discussion groups, probably groups of two or three or four depending on how many people stay on the line. Yeah, I think, you can certainly share whatever you like, but I think the best place to start from this call might be to share your name and where you're calling

from and then go into a little talk about the fundamentals kind of what fundamentals you're either working on your life or what fundamentals you're thinking about bringing into your life. And then you're also welcome to share about your hero's journey as well and what you're stepping into or would love to step into.

And for those of you who are on the webcast, because the discussion groups can only happen on the phone, you can call on your phone or through Google Voice or through Skype and you'll be put onto our life Maestro line and then I can stick you into a group if you'd like.

So those of you on the phone though, if you'd like to be in a group, just stick on the line and I'll put you in and we will see you back here next Tuesday. And again, thank you so much for being here. So happy to just bring more community of people in their 20s and 30s and beyond who are rocking their lives. So it's great and we'll see you again soon. Much love.

[1:12:39]

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