

Shep Gordon (Full Episode) | The Tim Ferriss Show (Podcast)

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SUMMARY

In this episode of the Tim Ferriss Show, Tim interviews Shep Gordon, a legendary talent manager known for his work with iconic artists and for pioneering the celebrity chef phenomenon. Shep shares captivating stories from his career, including his innovative PR stunts, the importance of service in management, and the lessons learned from both successes and failures.

- Shep Gordon has managed numerous famous artists, including Alice Cooper and Teddy Pendergrass, and is credited with creating the celebrity chef movement.*
- He emphasizes the importance of understanding an artist's appeal and targeting their audience, even if it means upsetting parents to create buzz.*
- Shep discusses the significance of allowing artists and managers to fail, as it fosters growth and deeper connections.*
- He recounts humorous and insightful anecdotes, such as the disastrous cannon stunt with Alice Cooper that turned into a successful publicity moment.*
- Shep highlights the importance of service over greed in management, drawing from his experiences with mentors like Roger Verge and the Dalai Lama.*
- He reflects on the impact of fame on artists and the challenges they face, particularly in maintaining their identity amidst public scrutiny.*
- Shep encourages listeners to appreciate the miracles in life and emphasizes the value of compassion and connection in both personal and professional realms.*
- He concludes with a call to action for everyone to vote and engage in their communities, stressing the importance of civic responsibility.*

Optimal minimal. At this altitude, I can run flat out for a half mile before my hands start shaking. Can I answer your personal question? Now, what is the perfect time? What if I get the I'm a cybernetic organism, living tissue over metal endoskeleton. This episode is brought to you by MeUndies. If I'm not going commando, I'm in MeUndies. I have been testing these underwear for 3 to 4 months now pretty much every day and in fact throughout a bunch of my other underwear this morning and on the road in the house. They are extremely comfortable. They look good, feel good. They are made of micro modal two times softer than cotton as scientifically tested using the kawabata method. Sounds very fancy of course. And I get a lot of compliments from the ladies for these. You don't get diaper butt. You don't get the tired elastic band. They look great and they have underwear for both men and women. Check out meundies.com/tim and you can see everything I've been wearing. The ridiculous, the sublime, everything in between, including my favorite, which is called out. And I would be remiss if I didn't mention their lounge pants. This is a new thing.

And I've been wearing their lounge pants when I record podcasts. I've been wearing them out and about when I'm walking the dog, meeting people for coffee. And they are extremely comfortable. They're made from the same material as the underwear, but some of them, like the blue ones I have, have pockets so you can walk about without seeming like you're off of your meds and completely crazy. So, that is awesome. And if you're not happy with the first pair you try on, I assume that refers to the underwear, they'll refund you completely and you can keep the pair you tried on for free. But if you're that kind of person, you should be ashamed because that's disgusting. Uh, meandies.com/tim.

Check it out. This episode is brought to you by Audible, which I've used for years. I love audiobooks, and I have two to recommend right off the bat. Number one is perhaps my favorite audio book of all time, and that is *The Graveyard Book* by Neil Gaiman. The only audio book I've wanted to immediately listen to a second time as soon as I finished. It's amazing. You will thank me. *The Graveyard Book*. The second is *Vagabonding* by Ralph Pototts, which had a huge impact on my life and formed the basis for a lot of what became the 4-hour work week. So, all you need to do to get your free 30-day trial is go to audible.com/tim and you can choose one of those two books, or you can choose from more great options than you can possibly imagine.

So, that could be a book, that could be a magazine, that could be a newspaper, could be a class. It's that easy. Go to audible.com/tim. That's audible.com/tim and grab a book. Enjoy. Hello boys and girls, kittens and squirrels. This is Tim Ferris and welcome to another episode of the Tim Ferris show where it is my job to deconstruct worldclass performers, the best of the best in many different worlds, whether that be chess, military, or in this case entertainment. Now, I've wanted to get Shep Gordon on this show for probably a year and a half, two years, and it'll be very clear within the first few minutes of this conversation why. He has been named one of the 100 most influential people by Rolling Stone magazine. And he is the man, he is the icon behind the icons, behind some of the biggest names you've ever heard. You can say hello to him on Twitter and Instagram at Super Menchep.

If you like the storytelling and lessons of Cal Fussman, you're going to love this episode. Shep has worked with and befriended and has some incredible stories about and hilarious stories which you're going to hear some of the biggest names in the entertainment industry from Alice Cooper to Bet Davis, Raquel Welch to Gratcho Marks, Blondie to Jimmyi Hendrix, Sylvester Stallone to Salvador Dolly, Luther Vandross to Teddy Pendergrass and his job was in effect he had many jobs but to make them as famous as possible and we we dig into how he did that. the PR stunts, the biggest successes, the biggest failures. There were quite a few that blew up right in his face. On top of that, he is credited with inventing the celebrity chef phenomenon, which revolutionized the food industry and turned the culinary arts into the multi-billion dollar industry that it is today. He worked with all of the first wave of the now known as celebrity chefs. Nobu Matsuhisa, Emeril, Legosi, Wolf Gang Puck, Roger Verier, and many others. And then on top of that, he's he's done quite a bit with his holiness the Dalai Lama. And it doesn't end there. Now, Anthony Bourdain, a huge fan of Sheps, has released a memoir detailing Shep's life and adventures titled *They Call Me Super Mench*, a backstage pass to the amazing world of film, food, and rock and roll.

And I've been reading this and enjoying every page because it is hard to conceive of how many stories and life

lessons Shep has. It is like the the most titilizing titilizing, is that a real word? The most sort of rockous drug infused party story combined with the best MBA you could possibly receive. So without further ado, please enjoy my conversation with Chef Gordon.

Chef, welcome to the show. Aloha. I'm so happy to be here. Thank you, Tim, for having me on. It's my pleasure. And I was mentioning before we started recording that about a year ago, I took my family on a trip for Christmas and we all sat down and we watched Super Mench and the collective thought was at some point in time you need to connect with this ship character. So I'm very excited to have you on the line. And could you place for the people listening where you are at the moment?

Yeah, I'm uh on a beautiful white sand beach called Kyaba Kapu Beach on the southwest shore of Maui. You might be able to hear some waves rolling in the background. And I'm sitting on my um porch which overlooks the ocean and feeling very very lucky. And how did you end up in Hawaii? Because I know it's it's a very important place to you. And not only that, but your home has been a a refuge of sorts for many many people uh including notable folks for decades now. But how did you end up in Hawaii?

Um like many things in my life, what partly by accident, partly by um taking action? I wanted to quit smoking. This was back in the early 70s. And um I had read about a house that Colonel Tom Parker, who was Elvis Presley's manager, had rented in Honolulu and brought his office over to a big spread. And Colonel Parker was a hero. I said, "Oh my god, if I could sleep in Colonel Parker's bed and quit smoking, what a cool thing to do." So, um I rented the house. It was in Kahala in Halu and brought a bunch of people from my office over. Sadly, we weren't environmentally conscious in 72. And I remember we all threw our cigarettes out the window driving in from the airport and um I just got in with the wrong crowd in Honolulu. It wasn't working at all. My spiral was sort of going deeper and I decided I had to leave Honolulu, go to an outer island. I had a friend who um had a tour going to the outer island and those days I had a hydrooil.

I took the hydrooil, put one foot on the dock in Maui and turned around to my friend and said, "I'm living here the rest of my life, and I just feel different in my skin here. It's been very magical." Now, if we were to look at rewinding the clock and a shift in location, h how did you get your start in the music business for people who who do not know the backstory? Um, another great accident. I have great accidents.

I was always a uh a a child of the 60s, a liberal Jewish so socialistleaning activist, very active against the war um active against Rosi and always um had a vision of myself as a young man as like a savior on a white horse charging into trouble and um so I took a job as a probation officer. I had long hair. I was uh using psychedelics and I thought what a beautiful thing to bring love and peace to to a probation hall young kids.

It was a Reagan error. I thought they were being you know misused, misguided. And I went to California, got a job as a probation officer. Didn't work. Sort of got beat up by the kids the first day and realized I was not going to change the system by being a probation officer and um drove into Hollywood late at night. didn't have a lot of money. There was a small motel that had a vacancy sign. Checked into the hotel, had a balcony. It was a It was exactly Hotel California. It was two stories around the swimming pool. Um palm trees, a life I didn't know. And

you know, went out on the porch and took a little psychedelics. you felt a little sorry for myself having just been beat up at a jail, but also felt amazingly empowered to be on my own in California, free, healthy, and I heard someone screaming down at the poor girl. And having just come from a jail, my brain, for some reason, went to violence, and I thought she was being raped. And um I ran down to the pool and separated these two people. And the girl um got very mad, punched me in the mouth. They were making love.

I took the raw guess. And in the morning when I went down to the pool, the girl was Janice Joplin. And um around the pool was sort of the Hollywood Wax Museum. Jimmy Hendrix, um Jim Morrison would come and go, um the Chambers brothers who were very big in those days and I was big fans of. And um my journey began one day. Uh Lester Chambers said to me, um, "What else do you do for a living?" Because I started selling some psychedelics to everybody at the hotel.

And uh I said, "I don't really know." And he said, "Are you Jewish?" I said, "Yes." He said, "You should be a manager." And uh he introduced me to Alice Cooper. And I've managed him for 47 years. So I have I I've uh I'm replaying the documentary in my mind. And it seems like, as you mentioned, you've had some fantastic accidents, but you've also created some incredible things in your life. And you seem to be a master PT Barnum of sorts. And I was hoping you could discuss some of the some of your favorite stunts that you've put together because the the one that the one that jumps to mind and there I'd love to hear uh about a few of them but but at least one that comes to mind was the the broken down truck in London. Uh but you you can tackle them in any order that you'd like, but I just think these are so genius. Uh, I'd love for you to explain a few of them. I I start with Piccadilli. My philosophy was that you didn't have to wait for history, that you could create history.

And um, we were in the entertainment business. So different than maybe in politics where you create history. Um, there are there aren't really victims. So I always felt good about creating history in an entertainment sense. And the key to to really managing an artist was to try and understand what what is it that appeals to their audience. What is if you can get it down to a word or two words or three words, sex appeal or rebellion appeal or there's there's broad categories that if you can tap into, you can pick up a big audience.

And with Alice, we realized very early on it was hatred of parents that every child at some point in their life rebelled against their parents. I lived through it now. My kids came home with hip-hop music and it's like, "What are you doing?" And I knew hip-hop music would be gigantic because that's that's the way life works. It works that way in clothes. It works that way in everything. So, I knew my focus my focus was getting parents over the breakfast table to tell their children, "If you dare buy an Alice Cooper record or go see him, you're grounded."

If I could accomplish that, so I never really cared about the music magazines. I cared about Newsweek, Time, um, the network TVs. I cared about the things the parents watched, not the kids. Mhm. Um because I didn't really know how to get the kids except for paying, this was the polar period. It was paying for hit records and we didn't have money. So, we start making some progress in America. It starts working. We start pulling stunts off Alice. We get very lucky with um the chicken incident where I threw a chicken on stage and the press thought that Alice bit his head off and said this these horrible stories about him which broke him wide open in America.

and I assumed it spread to England. I get to England, there's no ticket sales and I'm now trying to figure out how do I in a matter of 10 days get every parent in London to hate Alice Cooper? That's not an easy task. And so I go in and there was a brilliant guy working in Warner Brothers who who was the uh the fifth Beatle, Derek Taylor. He was their PR man and he was brilliant and he said, "Tell me about this Alice Cooper." had never heard of Alice Cooper. And I told him and I told him what I was thinking. We started talking and I said, "Is there anything that all the parents in London watch or do or see?" And he said, "Well, the morning shows are gigantic because everybody checks them for the traffic before they leave home. There's helicopters and it's it's really big.

It's like, you know, um our TV in Britain is very boring, but this is something that gets a lot of views." and what's the uh what's the busiest traffic in the morning at rush hour and he said Piccadilly Square it's always backed up and out of that developed this we had just done a photo shoot with Abdon which was Alice naked with a snake covering his genitals so I said to Derek you know we just had this great shot and I took it out and said what do you think about putting it on like a flatbed truck and breaking it down at Piccadilly would that piss everybody off and he said yeah come on and I said we could do this and he said you know we and he found a driver and he paid for the truck through Warner Brothers and we asked the guy to break it down two or three times until they arrested him because we knew they would arrest him. Um, but that was our story and it hit the morning news. It was helicopters, traffic was backed up 30 miles. We had, you have to remember this is 72 or 73. We had girls on the flatbed truck in hot pads giving out flyers for the concert, but it sold out. There's also many things that didn't work because when you live on the edge like that, there's so many things that don't work.

And and I think I just I just gave a talk to a bunch of uh DJs and business guys in that world and and what I tried to get across is that the failures are almost more important than the successes. That's really what separated Alice and I from so many other managers and artists and what made his career go so long is because we were both allowed to fail and we supported each other. So here's a great failure story.

He gets his first stadium show, Three River Stadium, Pittsburgh. And I'm trying to think, what do I do? It's a baseball stadium. We have to do something really Alice Cooperesque because everything's going to be so small on a tiny stage. Even in those days, I don't even think they were using screens in concerts. Um, this was really early days. And it was, I think, the first stadium show maybe other than the Beatles at Chase Stadium. There were very few stadium shows. So, I said, I got it. shoot them across the stadium out of a cannon. How cool would that be?

Alice Cooper going through the stadium. So I go to uh Warner Brothers who built all our props. They did the guillotine and they did the the gallows. And the guy there was so nonchalant about it. He said to me after I explained to him what I wanted, he said, "What period cannon? You got to be kidding me." He said, "No, World War I, World War II, Revolutionary War." And I said, "Give me your best cannon." and he went to a drawer and he took out blueprints for a cannon with someone in it to get shot across it. He didn't say stadium, but it was it was the trick. It was a shallow bottom. The trick was Alice would crawl in the cannon, go into a a a bottom that was pitless. It was a dummy already dressed like him, looking like him. He would run he would uh crawl out of the cannon, run around, get driven around to the other side of the stadium. We would do some shtik, you know, with flames getting ready to blow up the cannon. When he got there, bingo. And it would go across the stadium

and Alice would come out triumphant. Well, we did it the first night for rehearsal and the cannon, which was 40t long and six tons. The dummy came out and it went maybe one foot.

Just flopped out. Yeah, just flopped. It was the worst thing I ever saw. But Alice couldn't see it. He was in the cannon and pulled around the side. So he said, "How was it?" I said, "The worst thing I've ever seen in my life." And I made a very rookie mistake which I had never made again. Which was advertising what we were going to do. No. No. So in Three River Stadium, they're on the radio going, "Watch Alice get shot out of a cannon. Watch out."

And we sold out. And we had press coming in the night before to send stories back to the news because that's all you had was like the six o'clock news. and they wouldn't have been able to get um so now what are we going to do? I said, "Go to sleep. I'll figure it out." He wakes up and in the hotel were um fire extinguishers that had foam. So he said, "What are we going to do?" I said, "It's going to be a giant penis." Put these two balls on it, filling it up with this foam. You get on it and rub it and lick it and just masturbate it to death. And the foam will come out 40, 50 yard, you know, Rose. It'll be fantastic. and I'll figure out what I tell Pittsburgh.

So he gets in and he rubs and he works so hard and it drips out it's worse than the night before little drop. And now this is a time when most managers and artists would be choking each other to death. That is the point I want to make out of the story. Now why why is that though? Why? Because I've now embar I'm a manager. I've thought of it. I put him on a stage in the most embarrassing situation. I got it right as a normal human being. Not to mention even an artist. You would tend to give the guy grief who put you in this horrible situation. It's horrible.

And I It was all on me. 100% on me. Um I write the shows with Alice. He lets me do everything. It's 100% on my shoulders. Instead of it, he said, "Can you cover it?" And I said, "Yeah." He went to sleep and I stayed up all night and I figured out, okay, how do I turn this disaster into a gigantic win for Alice Cooper? What would be even bigger for Alice Cooper? Because we're sold out. So that's okay. Even bigger for him than getting shot out of the cannon. And here's what we did. He showed up the next night. The cannon blew up. He was in the cannon when it blew up. The TV crews were there. They watched him getting taken off into the ambulance. We announced from the hospital that he it wasn't serious and that he was going to come and do the show.

And we did the show with him in a wheelchair and nurses and doctors, everybody giving him plasma. Nothing happened to him. It was all a setup. But the front page paper was about how great Alice Cooper was. What other artist in the world would come and play a show for his audience from a wheelchair. Um so you you know out of that failure came even a stronger bond. And I I think you know that's one of the important lessons to learn from from that is that if you're it takes a family to make a business as much as a family as a uh as it takes to make a family you know it takes a group a town a village and the people you work with you need to allow them to fail or they'll never really win because it both are tied so closely together in the creative world. Now you you so I want to underscore a few things and ask a follow-up question. The f the first is you talked about aiming to upset the parents in say London or or the UK. So in a way you're doing almost the opposite of for instance uh the founding editor of Wired magazine talks about 1,000 true fans and trying to find your 10,000 true fans, but you

did it indirectly almost by trying to find targeting your 1,000 true haters. I mean, finding the people who would do your advertising for you by disliking you, which I think is just so interesting for a very specific reason.

Uh I think that art is a very narrow window when it comes to personal choice. The largest entertainment figures of our decade all had one thing in common, hatred of parents. Um the Beatles were horrible. The Rolling Stones pissed on gas stations. Bob Dylan Fump feet. Um, jazz guys with dopers. It's there's only a few things that every single person goes through. They go through rebellion. If they don't go through it, they end up on a rooftop killing people. So, my attempt was to pick up rather than get a thousand people who loved Alice for what Alice did. If I could make him the the face of a rebellion, I had a huge audience to pick from. And in 72, it was the biggest tour of the world. And uh before we started recording, we were chatting a little bit about uh and we didn't get into it because I I've um speaking of rookie mistakes, I've learned that it's best to talk about it when you've hit record.

But we have a a mutual friend, maybe others, but at least one mutual friend and Rick Rubin, and he's he's said to me before, you know, the best art divides the audience. I agree 100%. That's such a that is such an educated statement. And um well, I think we'll we'll definitely come back to to Rick. You mentioned the rookie mistake of announcing what you were going to do before you did it. Uh are there any other particular rookie mistakes that you made or that you see managers making? And this might be a good time just for people who are outside of the entertainment and music worlds to define what a manager is exactly. What does a manager do? I think it's a you know it's it's not a curriculum profession.

So I think it's a wide range for me as a manager. I always envisioned my job was to get an artist so he didn't have to use his second name. That to me was my focus to make him an internet you know no one says Alice who or Luther who or Groucho who or Raquel who who are my clients. There are other managers who are very very dollar orientated who can squeeze a blood out of a dollar.

There's other managers who are great at getting Coca-Cas, meaning actually fetching the beverages for the artist. It's really an artist driven profession for the most part. It's what they're looking for and what their need and what they're willing to share. And it's a very wide range. I I think there's for me the really talented managers are the ones who get ahead of their client by six months or a year and go come this way. You'll notice a pothole right here.

Be careful. um who really have a vision of of what the audience is, what the attraction is, how to put it in a picture frame that doesn't compromise it, doesn't make the artist chase the flavor of the month, but uh knows how to promote the essence of what they are, which gets so much to what Rick Rubin's comment was. Um that once you have the success and you have your audience, you're never going to keep them at a rebellion because they're going to drop off in five or six years. rebellion goes bye-bye. So, it's a matter of taking that and taking the essence of what this artist has creatively that makes them a great artist and putting that in a picture frame that the people who picked them up by these broad strokes say yes that's that I can relate to. I want to stay with that. So, I what he said is so brilliant. I never really thought of it like that. I always say it's from the other side is it you pick up your broadest audience by social revelations rather than art because that's obscure.

But what he's saying is perfectly right. So each one of those artists depending on what they want to do with their art is very different. Some making the most money is the most important. Some being the most famous is the most important. Some not being told what to do is the most important. So different than a doctor or an accountant. There's no real curriculum and nowhere to really learn to be a manager. I'm gonna come back to the rookie mistakes question, but I I have to bring up because it was it was one of the most hilarious portions of the doc with Mike Myers, which was a flashback dramatization, a reenactment of getting one of your clients to agree to have you as a manager. But there was a competition of sorts. And uh I was just thinking to myself, this is not the type of thing when you said there's no curriculum. This is probably not the case study that would be used in an MBA program about uh music and entertainment management. But C I I'm guessing that you uh you remember which example this is. Could could you please replay this for folks? You know, it's funny because it's in some ways not my proudest moment.

I I I was impressed nonetheless. proud or proud or not. But uh and I it's something I never would have ever talked about if Teddy it's it regards an artist named Teddy Pendergrass and um he was a very macho afroamerican artist. I would have never talked about this if he hadn't actually written it in his book which amazed me he would admit it but it was early on in my career. I was very successful and had a had a great reputation which didn't exist in the management business at that time. And one of my clients was Grato Marks. And the executive of Groucho's Marks, his estate was a gentleman from CBS named Gddard Leverson. And he was very good to Gratcho. And he was a legend. And my armpits got sweaty every time I went to see him. Um, you know, he was a living legend. And he had someone in CVS reach out to me to ask me if I would manage go look at meet with Teddy Pendergrass to manage him. He was a very important artist to the label and they would like me to be involved. and you couldn't say no to to Goddard. So I went to Philadelphia. I didn't really like the show, but I realized that the fellow named Teddy Pendigrass was actually the lead singer of Hal Melvin and the Blueotes who were one of my favorite groups. So I went backstage. There was a long line of Jewish managers. There were all these great characters. Sid Shinberg who had all these companies. His name Sid Arthur I think it was Arthur Sh and it was SAS. So he had Saskco, Masco, Fasco, Dasco, you know, was fantastic.

His letterhead was fantastic. He managed BB King and a bunch. But there was all these great Jewish managers backstage. So I didn't even bother going in. I went home. About a week later, they called me up. How was the meeting? Didn't take the meeting. Please, Mr. Leverson would like you to take it. Would you go back down and take the meeting? I go back down. Pull up to his driveway. There's a white Rolls-Royce with license plate teddy. I go up to the penthouse. this beautiful girl like a lingerie opens the door.

Then this the most beautiful man I've ever seen in my life comes walking in and um I completely dropped everything I was going to say and I decided this is I I I don't really this is not going to happen and let me just get out of here. So I said, "Um, listen man, what there's not a lot of things I know in life, but there's one thing I know for sure. You have no credentials whatsoever to figure out which one of us fasttalking Jews is telling the truth.

You had the best group in the bunch. And there's no way you're going to know who's telling the truth. So here's what I suggest. Let's get together for a weekend. Bring the best drugs you have. Bring the best women you have.

bring the best booze you have and let's just party. And if you drop before I do, I'm the wrong guy for you. I mean, if I drop before you, if you drop before I do, I should be your manager because when you collapse, I'll be able to take the money from the gig out of your pocket and save it.

And he looked at me like I was completely out of my mind, as he says in his book. But then he said, "Yes, oh [__] now I got to do this." and we met in New York at a hotel and we did what we said we were going to do and he collapsed a couple of days later and uh I managed him the rest of his life without a contract and by the way never collapsed again and uh and there were there were at least a few I suppose innovations we could call them that came of that collaboration. I think for me as a manager that may have been the the crowning point of um creating history because it was so focused and it was um I had an artist who was big enough that I had the luxury I could do it and I had an artist who completely completely trusted me because all we hit were headwinds. But the concept was I was trying to Teddy's sex appeal was unbelievable. The amount of panties we would get on stage and bras with phone numbers. The reaction of even old Jewish women, but unbelievable. The sect was just unbelievably strong. Songs, his producer, they allowed us all to to really drive it. So, we produced a stage show that went to that. We produced songs that went to that, Closed the Door, songs like that that really highlighted sex, not romance, sex. And then I was trying to say, how do I tell this to the public? How do I really get across that this is a black Elvis? How do I get I have every black person in America. How do I get the white audience to see it and really get it and understand it? And I came up with this concept out of a very angry moment to at one of his first shows where I had to wait backstage while this bevy of women went into his dressing room and I was really angry and um I said to him after I got to see him, I said, "You know, this is crazy, man. we should do shows for women only. That's it. So that I have a chance. Let me be in the in the house with the women. And um we both looked at each other and said, "Can you do that?" And I said, "I can do it." And everybody fought me. They lawyers from halls called me up. It's, you know, it's u bigotry. I said, "No, no, we'll sell tickets to women. We're just going to say for women only." And that's what we did. We devised an ad. We did concerts across America. Radio City Music Hall in New York, Greek Theater LA. We did concerts for women only. We had 100% women. I don't think one man showed up at any of them. Um, we gave out chocolate teddy bear lollipops to which was so hot.

And then we got to when we went to advertise it, I got to a challenge point which was there is a line between saying what you are and being arrogant about what you are. And when I saw the ad with this picture on it, I said, "For women only coming at a teddy is a little arrogant." So we we ended up not using his picture. We got a stuffed little teddy bear that every girl loves. And we put a little note on it that said, "Come spend the night with me. Love Teddy to really soften it up." And it sold out in like a second. And they were fantastic shows. And then I I was managing Luther Vandross and I I said, "Okay, how do I apply that same set of principles to Luther who's not sex, Luther was romance. Luther was all about whining and dining and the anticipation and how beautiful romance is." So what I did with him, which I thought was not as focused as Teddy, but the same highway, which was um we gave out to the top radio stations in America, a contest where you could win Luther marrying you on the air.

So it really drove romance. And I think weddings, if you look at statistics, Luther's music for that decade was probably the most played wedding songs. So anyway, that's that's and that's how you have fun and that's how you develop an artist. But all those things to get back to failure take an artist and a manager trusting each other

to go out on a limb. The question of failure, the question of mistakes made, are there any other rookie mistakes that you see a lot of people making in the position of something like a manager or that that you made that come to mind? Any particular sort of archetypal or critical mistakes? Yeah, I think it's less a list of mistakes than it's it's a mistake of intentions. What I see at least from the people I see and talk to is they're not in the business really for service. They're in the business for greed. And out of greed, you just do stupid things and your visions blur. If if you're in it for service to your artist, which is really a manager, I mean, again, there are different types of managers. There are managers who are power guys who I get it. They build empires off it and they're great for their artists. But I think, you know, I have an assistant who has a daughter who's being sought after by everybody in the music business, record companies, managers, publishers. She's a beautiful 21-year-old girl, Lily Miola. And um I see the difference between the phone calls that come in for her and the things that I do for Alice.

Like I wake up for Alice and I think about how am I going to enhance his career? How am I going to, you know, like right now we're running Alice for president. We wrote into the show a piece where Hillary beats up Donald Trump in the show and we have a Alice Coop for president. We're selling t-shirts. We're going viral. And it's fun. It's funny for us. But it's me waking up and thinking, what can I do to add to Alice's career? And most of these young people I see coming around it, when I sit and talk to them and they ask for advice, they're not asking advice for their artist. They're asking advice for them. How do I get more clients? How do I how can I get a piece of publishing? How can I I think it's a general rule maybe for humanity at this as our civilization moves along. But I think it's motivation more than actual things wrong because I think again there's no school for management. So every manager is going to make lots of mistakes. Well, it reminds me of a story I've heard you tell. I think it was in a commencement speech actually. I might be misplacing that, but you were talking about a guide to cooking rice from I want to say some type of u from his holiness in the Dalai Lama. Exactly. And 90% of it or more was about the intention of when you select the rice when you boil the rice and and uh only perhaps 10% of it was was technical. Let let me ask you how do you maintain that orientation or how did you come to have that service orientation because of course I would imagine all things equal you want to be financially successful as a manager uh so that you can do the things you want to do and so on and I guess it's a byproduct of making your clients financially successful but how did you maintain that lens of service over greed did it ever get the best of you and then you correct course or or did that has that not been the case? You know, it's a it's a very timely great question because I really thought my life was completely random and I couldn't understand any of the decisions I made. I never questioned my decision. You look in the mirror and you say, "Why would you possibly do this?"

Doesn't make any sense." And things like um as a manager, you have a right to commission the life of the projects you work on. So, I worked on the Beatles anthology record, for example. I have a right to collect commissions on that. I always chose not if I'm not working with the artist, I didn't want to take their money. So, I chose never to do it. Which when you look in the mirror, you say, "What are you, a schmuck?" to yourself.

But if you have a strong foundation and you can feel that foundation, which is, you know, I shouldn't really be making money off these. They're going out and living their it's their life. It's not my life. You go back to it. And I always thought all those choices were just random like maybe I was it was ego of thinking I was a good guy or I don't know what the motivation and when I wrote the book I realized that I'm actually living my father's life and

he was a man of pure service pure service to me and my brother and he really gave up almost everything else in his life but was joyful because he was serving us. And as I met mentors along the way, Roger Verier in particular, I saw how he was the first person I really met who was very successful and very happy. Most of the people I was meeting, I would say 99% of the people I met in show business who were the kingpins were miserable. They were cheating on their wives. They were alcoholics. They were they were just miserable. They were just drowning the pain. And I think that those kind my dad first and then seeing the mentors made me think, you know, you're going to die with the money. Enjoy the moments you're here on the planet. And if service is a way to enjoy it and comes naturally to me, I I I don't want to fight it by falling into the traps of all those normal traps of greed and stuff. I'm I'm good enough at what I do that I can make a living. Now, I've heard I've heard and I want you to to correct me here, but that it took something like 10 to 12 years for Mike Myers to get you to agree to do the documentary. Maybe you can give me some some color there, but um the follow-up to that is going to be why a book? Why do a book? Yeah. Um I um I've always cautioned my clients when I started working with them that if I do my job perfectly, I have a good chance of killing them because I will make them so famous that they can't survive. So, I've always had a very corrupted view of fame. I realize that's what I do for a living and I'm good at it and it can provide great stuff for people, but they have to be prepared that they're going to take a fall and hopefully get up from that fall. So, the last thing I really wanted to do was test myself. Why would I really want, you know, didn't make any documentaries aren't financial. I didn't view it as being of service to anybody or anything except my ego. And I didn't want to have to deal with fame. I just didn't want to have to flirt with it. I saw too many people I love fall victim to it. So, I said no and laughed. And then I had some uh near-death experience and didn't know it luckily. I mean, it was beautiful. And I woke up in a hospital room, very drugged out. And um by the second day realizing I was very alone, that my life was fairly isolated.

I was in a hotel room. I had just I mean a hospital room I just almost died. feeling very high and I think very starting to feel really sorry for myself which is unusual for me because I'm usually feeling how lucky I am and right in the middle of that Mike called. Hey chef, how you doing? I said, you know, I'm really doing miserable. It's one of the few times in my life I can't find the footing. I'm like sort of kind of lost a little bit. And he said, uh, well, how about doing the movie now? Now we got now we have like a really dramatic moment to go to. And I said I think my ego probably said because I was feeling sorry for myself. I said yeah maybe that's a good way to come out of this thing if I live. Let's do the movie. So I got well uh got some good help from my friends and maybe a month later remembered that I had told him we would do the movie. So I called him up.

Hey Mike, how you doing? And uh great. I said, 'You know, remember, did we have a conversation when I was in the hospital? I said, do the movie. And he said, yeah. He said, go ahead and do it. I staffed up. I got six people working here. [Laughter] Okay. And I really assumed that like my cousin in San Diego would see it or that he would abandon the project or I I didn't it was hard for me to think of it as real. And I I knew Mike socially. I didn't know him professionally except enjoying his talent and I didn't realize how driven he was. And he spent the next year of his life, seven days a week, 24 hours a day on this thing. I I did nothing. But I remember about 11 months into it, I got to New York and I he invited me up for a cup of coffee and say hello. And I went up and I walked in his apartment. It was like walking into CSI.

It was pictures of me every of my life all over every wall. You know what CSI the way they had the criminals. Yeah. Right. Right. Right. So u and the movie came out and um at first I was really embarrassed especially with

the name I couldn't look anybody in the eye when they'd say oh I hear you got a movie. What's it called? And I would feel my eyes go down to the floor and I would say, "Super Mench, could not look anyone in the eye." And the film company asked me to come out for a screening somewhere in the Midwest. And it was the first time I had seen it with the audience. It was at some film festival. And I was really embarrassed. I mean, like a truly embarrassment, super mentioned. Like, oh my god, this is this is so egotistical.

Uh, so not what it's so not what my vision of myself is. But so I started questioning my vision of myself. But anyway, as the movie's over, I walk out into the lobby and this very Aryan couple. They almost looked at the top of a wedding cake, right? Was standing there and the woman had tears in her eyes and they just stood in the corner. They waited for everybody to take pictures, you know, the things that happened after a screening. And um I walked over to him at the end said, "I'm so h glad we wanted to talk to you. We just moved here from St. Thomas and our children had grown up and there we were empty nesters and we came back and we realize we have so much to be blessed for and we just don't do enough good stuff." And watching the movie made us realize we have to change that in our lives. And we'd love to start with you. And we don't have much, but we're hunters. And you said you like to cook and eat. We have a lot of venison in our freezer.

can we give you some venison? And uh I went back to the house, got the venison, it turned out my roommate in college was there next door neighbor in St. Thomas they had a picture of Oh wow. When I saw the effect it had on those people and then I came back and I started getting emails and calls we we spoke about Rick Rubin before. That's how we reconnected out of nowhere. I hadn't seen him in 30 years. He he got a hold of me and said, "Can I fly over to Maui and spend some time with you? I saw the movie and I really could use some time with you and he came over. I hadn't seen him in 30 years. So it affected all I the first thing I package I got when I got home was a this beautiful bird cage came from Africa and it had like 50 white silk flowers in it and one pink one. And this four-page letter from a girl, 19 year old girl, who said, "Listen, I'm not different than the other flowers, but I know if you would let me out of the cage, I could really help my people." You know, just these things coming from every corner. So, that was sort of a side note. And I had a friend, Roy Choy, a chef, who had a book signing in New York when I was there, and he's on Anthony Bourdain's imprint. And I never met Anthony, and I was a huge fan of him. at the book signing, he walked over to me and he said, "Um, hey, I want to do your book.

Maybe this is a moment where I can try and figure out what motivated me and maybe if there's anything in what motivated me that other people can use, maybe some techniques that I never was aware of, but that I can find by looking backwards." And that's really the exercise. And they and they agreed that if I didn't want to put out the book, I could give them back the money and we just end it. So that was the journey for me was to try and see is Michael always said there are these interconnections and I always thought of my life as random to see are there are they connectors that could help other people along the way and hence the book and what impact would you like the book to have? I I would like people to to realize how lucky they are.

I end the book with maybe the one of the things that maybe I can add to some people's lives, particularly here in America, which is just where you drop out of the womb, you won the game. You win. You won already. You're in America. You have a chance. You can get clean water. You get food. Hopefully, you get some love. There's

not a bomb dropping on your head every second. That alone is something to meditate on every day.

How special you are and how rarified it is to be born into something like this. And then maybe the second thing is to try and see the miracle in everything. So that when you see somebody who your initial reaction is hatred or you see a snail walking on the ground and your initial reaction is kick it out of the way to try and see the miracle in it. If you see the miracle in it because everything is a miracle. You're not going to be able to hurt it. You're going to have a different attitude towards it. To the person you hate.

you're going to feel sorry for that they don't see the miracle in themselves and sorrow is a much better emotion than hatred selfishly for yourself and in there there's also practical you know how you try and make business into compassionate business how you try and make it a win-win not winners and losers and I talk a lot about how you create history things like u guilt by association taking a nonfamous person and putting them next to famous people the fame starts to bleed off and we live in a fame driven world. So for commerce, fame is important. So I want I want to ask you about regular practices in your life related to Buddhism and appreciation in just a minute. But since you brought it up, could you describe what you did for Anne Murray that uh pertains to your your last example of that fame by association? Yeah. Yeah.

And was a great example of guilt by association. She's a wonderful singer, one of the purest voices I've ever heard. She was a school teacher in Toronto. who went on a TV show for the summer and sang a song called Snowbird which became a number one record around the world. Huge impact but she was very very very Canadian white bread and but she wanted to make it. She wanted to be on Midnight Special which was a big show there. She wanted to play in Vegas. She wanted to do all the things that stars do. Um but she wasn't a star. She she was a girl who had a hit record that nobody really knew who sang it. So she came to me for management and um one of the first things I did with her was try and uh because the song was so big and so strong I knew that I could include her and stuff if I had her with important other people. So I booked her in at that time. Alice Cooper had a group called the Hollywood Vampires, a drinking group. And it was John Lennon and Harry Nielsen and Mickey Dol and the Monkeys.

Big faces at the time. Particularly John Lennon who was in his dark era and was not being seen at all. When he left Yoko for a while, he was in California. Everyone knew he was there, but nobody was seeing him. And the press were anxious to see him. So, uh, I booked her in California on Thanksgiving, which I thought was very funny because she was Canadian. I tried to make it all as absurd as I possibly could. And, um, I got the guys, I went to see the guys and I said, I got that on my hands and knees and they all I used to drive them all home at night because they all got too drunk to drive and nobody could afford cars. So, I I was the designated driver. So, I got that on my hands and knees and I said, "Guys, I'll drive you all all the time, but you got to come help me with this girl from Canada who is um so opposite from you that if you guys would stand next to her, I could help make her famous and I'll drive here forever." And they came down and we had this great picture of Anne Murray, John Lennon, Harry Nielsen, Alice Cooper, Mickey Dolan, which went out around the world. Immediately Midnight Special called up to have her host the show and oh by the way you think she can get John to come with her. Well, we'll try and we did try. Uh Rolling Stone called up for a big interview. She made a bunch of covers with the picture. And for the next year or so we sort of dangle a little bit that maybe John or

Alice or somebody would show up and the rest is sort of history. She got a long-term contract in Vegas and life went well for her. I I didn't know the the contrast aspect of it that you thought through because when I looked at the photograph, she does pop out almost like she's superimposed on top of the photograph.

She really pops out. Oh man, I don't know if she ever forgave me for doing the picture. She She thought she was compromising her career. Seems to seems to have worked out pretty well. Yeah. Now, you mentioned Roger Verge, uh, and a lot of people associate you with music, but you're also very widely credited with creating the celebrity chef phenomenon and movement. How did you meet Emerald Legazi? I met Emerald um, on a trip to New Orleans.

Had had started to become a little bit of a foodie because of my association with Mr. Verge. And down in New Orleans, there was a chef named Paul Prudholm who was very famous, the only really famous chef. And I had a friend of mine who had just taken over a large record company, EMI, and we went down for Jazzfest. And it was his birthday. So I got a hold of, I think it was Mr. Verier or somebody who made reservations at Paul Prudomes for the two nights we were going to be there. And we went the first night and it was a not a good experience. So we decided to go somewhere else the next night. We went to um a very touristy but wellrespected operation called Commander's Palace. Oh yeah. Very famous. But served thousand meals a day.

And um we had a reservation. We get there a little guy with like half glasses and doesn't look at us at the major D stand says 45 minute wait. Take him to the bar. And to get to the bar you walk through the kitchen. And um I caught this guy's eye and he came over and gave me a big hug. I had never been there and said, "You guys taken care of?" And he said, "Hooked up," I think was the words he used. I said, "No, as a matter of fact, we got to go stand in the bar." So, he took us to the bar, he poured a champagne, came back in five minutes, took us to the a table, and proceeded to bring every cost up to the table with with the help. And every time he'd leave, we'd say, "Who does this guy think we are?" And he's treating me like I'm his best friend for life. But we didn't want to blow our cover. When the meal's over, I said to him, "Okay, who do you think I am?" And he said, "You know, I have no idea." Um, I didn't know if he knew about Ver or not, which was always like an underpinning. Maybe he knew I was Ver's friend, but he said, "It's boring here. Once a month or once a week, I pick someone coming through the kitchen who I think wants to go on a ride.

I take him on a ride and he took us on a ride. Then he gave us a note to go to Tippetas to see the Neville brothers, which was sold out." and poured a old bottle of conac into the four paper cups for us to leave. Wow. And maybe couple of years later, maybe a year later, year and a half, two years later, I ended up in a unique situation with um 50 or 60 great chefs um who asked me to manage them. Wolf Gang Puck, Nouvo, um a whole and Paul Prud, a bunch of a whole big group of chefs. And I remembered Emerald and how he treated me. And um I said, you know, I'll do it, but there's one guy in New Orleans. I want to bring in a memorable. And they had all heard of him. I didn't realize at the time he had just opened his own restaurant. That's why they had heard of him. And I called Commander Palace to tell him what I was doing and see if he wanted to join. And they said he opened his own restaurant.

It was Emeralds. And our journey began. Wow. I mean, we could go into so many different rabbit holes with all

these stories, but I'd love to talk about some of your practices, uh, current practices. So we were talking about recognizing the miracles and by extension appreciation. What practices do you have in your life to help cultivate that and maintain that perspective? I I I wouldn't say that I have a discipline. I I I'm not a practicing Buddhist and I don't really practice any hard and fast disciplines.

What I try and do in my life is Joseph Campbell always talked about going into a quiet room for 20 minutes and doing what makes you happy. Um, and what I try and do is schedule. I know things that make me happy. I know being in a jacuzzi makes me happy. I I don't know why, but I get in a jacuzzi. I sort of leave my body. I space travel. I deal with issues that I don't deal with when I'm in my body or, you know, perceived to me to be in it. And that 15 or 20 minutes I I usually say is like a tuning fork. I do that. I cooking for me gives me that same head space. So when I get to a point where I'm starting to get confused, I'll go to the kitchen and cook for a half hour. And that sort of brings me back to a place of thankfulness, consciousness, focus, just brings me back to where I want to be. And I think for me, those are the two that I really use as my foundation. when I'm truly lost, I go to those two and I try and But I think, you know, I I think um if you're lucky in life, you find you find those things that that that get you back to what's important because there's so much fool's gold, there's so much noise that to really stay focused on what's important and what makes you happy and what is compassionate is difficult and I think needs constant reunion. What What have you noticed? I mean, you mentioned you mentioned the dangers of fame and how a lot of these celebrities just become moths who are consumed by the the flame, so to speak. What separates the people who get killed by fame versus the people who do not?

Well, I think you know the one thing I always say fame and I realize that I I need to put a qualifier on which I didn't do in the movie or really in the book. And I need to qualify it by saying that the fame that I've dealt with for most of my life was fame attained by people who were in front of large audiences in real time. So the 90% of my artists who achieved fame had a live people applauding in mass amounts as opposed to film stars as opposed to authors as opposed to people who got fame in other ways. So mine is fairly slanted and I think so for me my until I really wrote the book and started to think about these things my my saying those words was because the people in front of me were normally trying to be headliners in stadiums and for that subgroup of people I think it rejection is so gigantic to get to a place of success that there's normally something driving them some hole somewhere in their life, something that they need filled. Maybe it's love from other people. Maybe it's I don't know. In each person, it's different. Um maybe they they don't have a personality, so that's their personality. But when you get to filling a 30,000 seat hall, for the most part, whatever that hole was doesn't get filled.

And that's when the real problems begin. And that's what you see in artists when they're selling 300 and 400 seat halls, they're they're fine. They may have it drunk, but when they're headlining stadiums, now they go to rehab. It's part of the tour. Let's see. We'll tour 65 days, then we'll go to rehab. So, I think my view of it is very slanted. But I think there's, you know, so many common things about I was talking to um my my first glint of fame was uh they were playing the movie at the TriBecker Film Festival and Michael Douglas was doing a talk with me and I was walking to it and walking for me is one of the things like the jacuzzi or the cooking.

When I'm walking, I don't put headphones in. I sort of space travel and deal with issues. you know, I'll deal with a topic just been on my brain and I love that. That's what I love about walking. I walk five miles a day here. I

walk in New York a lot. Um, and it's quiet time because I'm not famous. So, nobody stops me. Nobody cares. So, I'm taking my walk and the very nice lady said she worked at CNN. They had just screened the movie. Did I have a few minutes to talk to her? I stopped for a minute. She explained that she had been trying to get into management and production. She had had problems as a child at home. She wanted me to talk to her about how I overcame those insecurities of youngness to become who I am. And my instinct would be to be thankful to be able to help her. That those are the moments you want in life where you can, you know, help somebody who needs help. And um but I couldn't. and I had to get to be it at the theater. And as I was walking there, I start I explained to him I'm really sorry. I gave him my email. As I was walking, I started thinking about someone like Michael who I've walked with a million times. He gets stopped by every single person.

Wants a picture, wants to tell him a story about how he met his father, wants all great stuff. But you completely lose your own path in life. You're now on someone else's path. I'm sure it happens to you many times and it's weird. That's a weird thing to cope with. Yeah. It's it's really uh I don't know if you've if you experienced this that time, but it's it's really sad and frustrating also because the person who you told you had to leave to go to this meeting may or may not have even believed you. Right.

Correct. Oh, no. I I realized no you know I like to think of myself as a Johnny apples seed of joy and you so anyway my question to Michael when I got there was he you saw I said before you ask me a question I got to ask you a question I said I just the last 30 minutes of my walk I got stopped by this girl and for the last 30 minutes of my walk all I thought about was how horrible it is that I couldn't give her what she needed it was so simple and was she angry was she not angry would she ever contact me or and Michael that what goes through your said I'm the guy who's put up his arm for 30 years to keep people from you what goes through your brain when there's a guy in a wheelchair and we walk by him and you know he wants to stop you for a second it's important to him and we're just walking by and you've been doing this your whole life what is that effect and he said you know it's horrible but you you get numb to it he said I hate to admit it I hate that it happens to me but you realize realize that you only have 24 hours in a day to get through life and you have to make some choices and it's horrible because it takes an age off who I'd like to think I am.

So those kind of things build up, you know, that's just one little part of fame where if you're a conscious good person, all of a sudden you start hating yourself for what you have to do all the time. And I I don't know if this is it's maybe completely unrelated, but I heard from a mutual friend that someone came to your house recently, wanted to share a record, but that you didn't have any type of music system and haven't had a music system for 20 plus years. Is that is that true? And if so, why is that? Uh Rick Rubin came. I have no idea why except that I I almost feel cheated if I don't hear the ocean.

The rhythm of this ocean like I'm hearing it now is just so beautiful and so the rhythm of life and I feel so blessed to be on it and hear it that I almost it almost felt like an intrusion so many times. So Rick Rubin came and I had I think I mentioned it before we had nice lunch and we talked and then he wanted to play me something. I said I don't I listen in my car I don't really have stuff to listen here. So he outfitted my house with Sonos, which I must say I am really happy I have because I use it a lot and I do realize that music was sort of missing in my life and it really has uh heightened my my life here. What type of music do you currently listen to the most? I would say

90% of the time I listen to Teddy Pendergrass radio on Pandora. No kidding. I'll have to do that. I I use I listen to Pandora on my Sonos every day while I'm writing. So, I'll see see how how Teddy treats me. It really makes me feel good. I I I love Teddy and it just makes me feel good. I I makes me smile every time his voice comes on. Plus, I love his music. I'm going to uh ask just a couple of short questions and the answers don't need to be short, but these are some of the questions that I love asking everybody that I have on the show. And you can certainly punt if one doesn't provoke anything in you. But what book or books uh you know besides your own have you gifted most to other people? Uh Joseph Campbell many many years ago couple of the Dolly Lama books. Um most recently Norman Lear's book the uh is it a biography of Norman Lear? It's a biography. It is just the most brilliant thing I've written I've ever read. Um Keith Richard's book. I gave away a bunch of those. I thought it was his voice was so pure. Yeah, I've heard tremendous things about that as well. I haven't read it yet myself. Said it to a lot of artists, friends of mine saying if you're ever going to write a book, you want your voice to sound to be as clear as his voice was. It was him. And um Quest loves cookbook.

Quest. That's right. What is it? Uh what is it called? Innovative Cooking. Innovative Cooking. Yeah. He he is the nicest guy. Uh he was just here for a week. Oh, is that right? Yeah, we had a really nice time. He was another one who reached out, saw the documentary, and said, "I I really would love to speak to you for a while." And he threw a little dinner party for me in LA. Um, and then he came out here for a week, which was really nice. He's uh he's he's an extremely nice guy. I I met him years ago and believe it or not at at one point at least and he's spoken about this uh lost I think it was 50 to 70 pounds following the slow carb diet in my second book. I think he mentioned that to me actually. Oh, no kidding.

Yeah, he's I told you he did the slow carb diet. Yeah, he's such a sweetheart of a guy. You know, he's a real artist. I I don't meet that many pure artists anymore because I'm not living in that world. But everything he touches, I went to see he was doing a a DJ thing. I had never been to a DJ show and he did one here and it was brilliant. But his the cookbook is brilliant. It's completely different than anything you've ever read. Great cover, too. Yeah, great cover.

Uh, if you could have a gigantic billboard anywhere, what would it say? Help. You know, if I had a in today, if I had a gigantic billboard, I would would be completely different to probably any other time in life. And I I don't want to talk to politics, but I think everyone has an obligation to try and highlight how filthy this has all become and how disastrous and um how wrong. So I think although I normally would say I would use it for something completely different um like climate change or um right now I just really scared to see the direction of our country a country that I love that's given everybody such great opportunity. Do you have a quote or any quotes that you live your life by or think of often? Yeah, not really. Um I think in my professional capacity get the money.

I definitely have to force myself to think of that. Um, but not really. I'm I'm very lucky. I'm really thankful. I live a very simple life at its core. So, no, I don't really there's no real every second of my life is just I'm really blessed. I'm lucky. Who are uh I'm just arbitrarily pulling out a number here, but three people or sources that you've learned a lot from or followed closely in the last year or so? That's Let's come back to that one. We'll come back to that one. What is the best or most worthwhile investment you've made? And by investment, it could be

money, time, energy. For instance, there's uh a woman named Amelia Boon. She's one of the world's top endurance athletes who is on this podcast. And for her, it was paying her first \$450, which was a financial stretch at the time, to enter a competition called World's Toughest Mudder, which she ended up winning. And it created this whole path for her in life that she never would have anticipated. Um does any particular investment of money, time or energy? My investment of money, time and energy was for the four children I raised uh to see the effect it can have on a human's life and that I could be helpful on it. Just And all of uh are all of your all of your children are adopted?

Yeah, I never quite you know I never adopted them. It was um they're all they're a family. Mhm. um from Newark, three sisters and a brother. Um and in the days when I when their mother died, it was a huge safety net for um children without parents. The government provided huge benefits. And although we didn't partake of any of the benefits, I never really I'm not an accumulator.

So I could have been broke at any time. I I lived by making money, but I wasn't an accumulator and I didn't want the responsibility on my head of once I adopted them, they lost the entire safety net. Oh, I see. It just the the change in legal status. Change in legal status changed everything. The consequences to me were that they couldn't be a tax deduction. I see. Now, by accumulator, does that mean that you historically or even still currently don't save? I say it, but I'm not, you know, I'm not a I I don't I'm not a billionaire, right? Well, most most people aren't. I mean, you know, I I'm I'm at a point now in my life where I can maintain my lifestyle.

Um I feel confident for the rest of my life I can maintain my lifestyle, probably more than my lifestyle. But in 1970 19 whatever year was it I thought 1992 I think we got together I know it's 26 years ago whatever that is um I didn't know if I I didn't know that I would be able to keep my lifestyle it was only dependent on being successful right um and I just didn't want that on my head.

it was easier for me to pay the taxes on the money and that was really the only dividing line. So, what what advice would you give to I have at least three friends who have brand new infants right now or are going to have their first kids in the next several months? What advice would you give to them as first-time parents? Spend time with them. Provide them with all the tools they need, as little TV as possible. Mhm. Um, and lots of love.

Just love and compassion. And see that if they see the miracle in that kid, every time they look at it, they will never get annoyed at them crying or screaming or kissing on the floor. It'll all become a miracle. Beautiful. And that's what it should be. I remembered the Yeah. I mean, it's it seems like something that might be easy for people to gloss over with the the spending of time, but it's it's something that was emphasized to me also by um Seth Goden, who's an author, among other things. And uh he said, you know, you're in effect, I'm paraphrasing here, but he he said to me that, you know, your kids are getting homeschooled from 3:00 p.m. to say 10:00 p.m. no matter what. And it's up to you to choose whether it's by watching TV they're getting homeschooled or by interacting with them. And you know, he he has conversations with them over dinner a lot of the time. That's his one of his rituals because it offers sort of a a very informal semi-distracted environment in which they can tell him the truth without having a serious feel to it. If that makes any sense. No.

Yeah. No, I think it's, you know, I think the thing to remember is that they they only have one path and it's there. It's so if you if you make a path for them that's compassionate and reasonable and makes sense, that's the only path they know. If you give them a path of neglecting them and letting TVs teach them everything, they're going to live in an alienated world. So, I promised I would, so I'm going to come back to, but we can skip this one if need be. The um people or sources you've learned from, learned a lot from. And you know what? You mentioned mentors earlier. This could be way back in the day. Doesn't have to be recent, right? Uh I think some of the most significant people in my life I'm for sure Roger Ber who uh was a great French chef considered maybe the godfather of all the chefs. And for people who want to look him up, how do you spell his last name? B E R G. Mhm.

Um he through his kitchen came people like Danielle Belaloo, David Boule, Alan Ducas, Uber Keller, some of the great chefs of our time came through his kitchen and and what he taught me is you can be successful and happy and you do it through service. And that's a hard concept sometimes to get in your brain, but when you when I got to spend time with him, I could see in some ways how selfish it was because he became so happy, making someone else happy. And then I had the unbelievable luck and honor of meeting his holiness, the Daly Lama, and cooking for him on a number of occasions.

And um the same thing, it's service um makes him so joyful. He giggles every second and he lives his life of service. But for me, those were probably my two greatest mentors. And then someone like Michael Douglas has uh always been an amazing inspiration to me. He the work he does quietly for the UN, for Israel, for anybody who needs him and things that he feels are important. He's been on an anti-uclear kick for as long as I know him, probably 35 years. before anybody was talking about it. He's been an ambassador for the UN. He never says no to helping people and he has a fun lives his life creative. He's productive. Doesn't take security with him. Lives his life and um and is of service. He I'm doing a a benefit in New York in September for Chef Rier with the CIA and 12 great chefs.

And um Michael's coming and talking just because I asked him to. And there was a time when I was trying to make the chefs famous. I wanted guilt by association for the chefs. So I asked him if he would host dinners with all the famous people in LA who would come if he invited him with my chefs with Mr. Ber. We had these dinners where Michael would uh you know present Verge in the room would be Stallone and Nicholson, Danny Devito and Anthony Quinn you know and guilt by association work as you could tell they are celebrity chefs now.

Um so I think he's been a big inspiration. I've been very lucky to have a lot of people and yeah I mean you've passed that on also. I mean, if you just look at the culinary world as one example, I mean, you um and for people who want to check it out, I mean, you gave a a great I think it was a commencement speech at the CIA, which I should probably explain for people is not the Central Intelligence Agency.

Yeah. The Culinary Institute of America. And uh you you mentioned that you know before the celebrity chef phenomenon in a way sort of paved the highway I think as you put it. Yes. The people at the top of their game I mean these are the the A-Rods or the Derek Jeters of their sport so to speak in the cook in in the world of chefs

were making like a hundred grand a year and now you can come out of culinary school and some people will get entry level or I should say first jobs that are \$100,000. So, it's it's really opened up a world of opportunity for those people as well and a world of caution. As I said in the CIA speech, if they if their only focus is making meals that people pay \$100 a piece for, they're in for a big crash.

Them and the culinary arts. Yeah. They have to start they have to start feeding. I said in, you know, I told the kid, I said, "You're going to graduate. You're going to get a job for a quarter. You're going to be in a restaurant that's \$400 meals and you're going to walk outside the restaurant, look to the left and look to the right and there's going to be homeless, hungry people. And if you think your only job is feeding those diners, you are in for a really rough life. Yeah, definitely. And I want to give credit to somebody you mentioned earlier uh in fact, uh Roy Choy. So he and um a friend of mine named Steve Jang who's involved and also Daniel Patterson who has uh quite a few restaurants, one of which Alta SF I'm involved with in San Francisco. Great guys and they have uh started I believe there are at least two locations now a lowcost healthy food local L k and I went to their first location opening in Los Angeles and um so he's doing really good work I think and trying to give it back. He's he's he's the real deal, right? He is the There's a a fellow from England, Jamie Oliver, who really, in my opinion, was the first really conscious chef out of this celebrity chef movement. I think they're all I don't mean to say that any of the other ones aren't conscious. He was a fellow who understood that it was important for him to use his fame to not only do \$100 meals. And um Roy Choy is has picked up the gauntlet here.

It's I I got very lucky to know him well and he is the real deal boy. He really gets it. I mean, he wants to make money. He wants to send his kids to college. He wants to do all the things that we all want to do for our families. Um I'm sure he wants to be famous like everybody else, but he um completely understands that um we all have to travel together. This is not a oneperson journey. Yeah, definitely. He did a did a hell of a job training John Favro for Chef as well.

Yeah, I was on that shoot a lot. It was a really fun shoot. I went to it a lot. So, I just a just a couple of last questions and uh hearing the sound of the waves is making me want to get outside and go for a long walk. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. I can definitely hear it. It's making me want to chase daylight to go for a hike with my dog. Beautiful, isn't it? I mean there there is that rhythm that exists all over the planet whether it's the breeze coming through the trees or the sound of the waves or you know the snow the ice melting or this those sounds that just you sort of know you're home.

It's uh it's it's meditative very meditative. So, one question I have to ask is for for all the people out there who may one day end up cooking for the Dalai Lama. Uh, should you have yakmilk tea on the menu? Maybe you could provide some if you have any experience. Yes, I do. So, uh, I was really fortunate they accepted he was coming to Hawaii and they accepted my offer to cook for him. And I'm uh again I'm not a practicing Buddhist and I didn't know a lot about his holiness and I did some research and I assumed he was vegetarian. I couldn't get anybody. Tibetan people are so beautiful and so gentle that when you ask them what should I make for they would never it's so aggressive for them to tell you what to make. So all they would say is oh he would love anything you make. um they're completely of service. So I couldn't really find out but I in the research it said that the only real staple in Tibet is yak. Yak is across I think between like a goat and a cow and they live high in

the mountains. There's no vegetables really there that so everything's made from yak. It's yak stew, yak milk, yak butter, yak cheese.

And the most popular thing is yak tea. So, I have a friend who does tours of Tibet, wonderful guy named Kenny Ballard. And um I asked him if he could get me some yak butter to make yak tea so that I could have yak tea for his holiness for his first breakfast. Thinking I was, "Oh my god, how cool is this? I'm so cool." And I get the yak butter and it's the smelliest thing you've ever sme was in a jar.

Still smelled up my whole house. It was It's so smelly. But I had it. And I get there and the f the only the only requirement for cooking for him. They asked me no questions. They they didn't ask me if I could cook. They all they said was you can't have expectations. If you have an expectation that you're going to meet his holiness, then you shouldn't cook for him. So we got I went to my crew. We got all those expectations out of our brain. You have to assume you're not going to meet him.

We're going to cook the meal. Someone's going to deliver it to him. you're doing this for service, not for a photo op. And the first morning they asked me to bring him his meal and I'm completely shocked because I assume I'm not even meeting him and it's five o'clock in the morning and one of the things on the tray is the yak tea. So I put it they have you cover your mouth to feed his holiness. So, I cover my mouth and I go up the steps into his room and I walk in and he's uh in his robe with top down.

So, his chest was bare and he's brushing his teeth looking in the mirror and gets a big smile. Looks over. Oh, hello. Big smile. Go, you holiness. I'm so nervous. I can hardly I can hardly speak. I tend to get nervous in front of power figures particularly at that point in my life. Now I've sort of adjusted. But that was it was almost overwhelming. I just didn't want to faint. It was like and and he takes a whiff or two. He goes, "Oh, yak tea." And I said, I I got so proud. Like, oh my god, chef, you pulled this off. It's so amazing. It was worth all the effort, all the smell. You are the coolest guy in the world. And I hear him say, as I'm telling myself this, his second line is, "Oh, that's why I leave to bed. It smells so bad."

That was the Yaktler. [Laughter] Oh man. Uh, well, we could we could go on for days and I don't want to keep you for days. Uh, but I I I I want people to hear your stories and to learn from you. What is the title of the book? Where can people find it? Uh, what would you suggest people do who want to learn more? Uh, it's called The Backstage Pass. I have to look up the title.

And I can I can certainly link to it also in the show notes. So, for people who just want the convenience, they it's here's the name. They call me Super Mench, a backstage pass to The Amazing Worlds of Film, food, and rock and roll. Superch. And it's um it's can be ordered through Amazon or through any of those services. It's published by um Anthony Bourdain through Echo. I'm really proud to have Anthony as the publisher and I hope everybody enjoys it.

And for those people listening, I will of course link to everything in the show notes at uh forworkweek.commpodcast. And Shep, any last words, any requests of the audience for them to take with them

and consider or act on? Anything else that you'd like to say before we wrap up? This is so out of my wheelhouse, but the only thing I really have to say is please go vote. We need everybody to vote their conscience and think about their children and about what kind of world they want to live in.

Mhm. Then make a choice. But but this is a critical time. We need to vote. Absolutely. Here here. Well, Shep, I hope we do get to meet in person sometime. And uh this so much here. This has been a blast on your show. I listen to it. Amazing. Thank you. Well, I uh I I I think you're doing important work and we didn't even have a chance to to skim the surface really of a lot of what you're doing right now. Um but I will add I will now we'll do another show.

We'll do another show. Maybe I can have one of those papayas and uh thank you so much for the time. I really really appreciate it. Thank you. Mahalo, as we say in Hawaii. Have a great day. Definitely. and to everyone listening. As always, thank you so much for joining us and until next time. Pay attention, experiment often, be nice, and pay attention to the miracles. Hey guys, this is Tim again. Just a few more things before you take off. Number one, this is Five Bullet Friday. Do you want to get a short email from me? Would you enjoy getting a short email from me every Friday that provides a little morsel of fun before the weekend? And Five Bullet Friday is a very short email where I share the coolest things I've found or that I've been pondering over the week. That could include favorite new albums that I've discovered. It could include gizmos and gadgets and all sorts of weird [__] that I've somehow dug up in the the world of the esoteric as I do. It could include favorite articles that I've read and that I've shared with my close friends, for instance. And it's very short. It's just a little tiny bite of goodness before you head off for the weekend. So, if you want to receive that, check it out. Just go to 4ourweek.com.

That's 4hourweek.com all spelled out and just drop in your email and you will get the very next one. And if you sign up, I hope you enjoy it. This episode is brought to you by Audible, which I've used for years. I love audiobooks, and I have two to recommend right off the bat. Number one is perhaps my favorite audio book of all time, and that is The Graveyard Book by Neil Gaiman. The only audio book I've wanted to immediately listen to a second time as soon as I finished. It's amazing. You will thank me. The Graveyard Book. The second is Vagabonding by Ralph Pototts, which had a huge impact on my life and formed the basis for a lot of what became the 4-hour work week. So, all you need to do to get your free 30-day trial is go to audible.com/tim and you can choose one of those two books or you can choose from more great options than you can possibly imagine.

So, that could be a book, that could be a magazine, that could be a newspaper, could be a class. It's that easy. Go to audible.com/tim. That's audible.com/tim and grab a book. Enjoy. This episode is brought to you by MeUndies. If I'm not going commando, I'm in MeUndies. I have been testing these underwear for 3 to 4 months now, pretty much every day, and in fact throughout a bunch of my other underwear this morning, and on the road, in the house. They are extremely comfortable. They look good, feel good.

They are made of micro modal, two times softer than cotton as scientifically tested using the kaabata method. Sounds very fancy, of course. And I get a lot of compliments from the ladies for these. You don't get diaper butt.

You don't get the tired elastic band. They look great. And they have underwear for both men and women. Check out meundies.com/tim and you can see everything I've been wearing. The ridiculous, the sublime, everything in between, including my favorite, which is called out. And I would be remiss if I didn't mention their lounge pants. This is a new thing and I've been wearing their lounge pants when I record podcasts. I've been wearing them out and about when I'm walking the dog, meeting people for coffee. And they are extremely comfortable. They're made from the same material as the underwear, but some of them, like the blue ones I have, have pockets, so you can walk about without seeming like you're off of your meds and completely crazy. So that is awesome.

And if you're not happy with the first pair you try on, I assume that refers to the underwear, they'll refund you completely and you can keep the pair you tried on for free. But if you're that kind of person, you should be ashamed because that's disgusting. Uh meandies.com/tim. Check it out.