



# Recovery session

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Transcribed by [Amie](#)

02:08 **Alex Libre:**

Hey, Michael.

02:10 **Michael Montgomery:**

Hey, Alex. How's it going?

02:11 **Alex Libre:**

Good, how are you?

02:14 **Michael Montgomery:**

I'm better. I'm up.

02:15 **Alex Libre:**

Yeah, you seemed up even last night, right?

02:18 **Michael Montgomery:**

No, I was, I was, but it's. Yeah, I mean, it's still. I'm really glad I have a standing desk because I can't really sit at the moment. If I sit, it's really hard to get back up. So. Yeah, feeling, feeling better. And I'm. I'm in the end, glad I did it without any big painkillers, you know, any opiates or anything. Opioids.

02:39 **Alex Libre:**

Yeah, I just switched. Well, I have like various chairs and a standing desk and like different arrangements of what I do when I'm working. But I just got this like, like dental office style stool. That's like a rolling stool with a low back and it just helps me out, like posture. It's kind of exciting, like shaped. Yeah, you know, I found it. I just normally.

03:15 **Michael Montgomery:**

Fall.

03:15 **Speaker 3:**

Yeah.

03:17 **Michael Montgomery:**

Oh yeah.

03:21 **Alex Libre:**

You're pretty tall.

03:24 **Michael Montgomery:**

Hold on a sec. No, I'm like five. Five, ten and a half is what I've always said.

03:33 **Alex Libre:**

Nice.

03:36 **Michael Montgomery:**

Yeah. So anyway, feeling pretty good, you know, just. Just this, you know, it's a wake up call about health and, and you know, as I said at the meeting last night, I'm just so glad that this happened when there were no patterns of alcohol in some kind of connection with it.

03:56 **Alex Libre:**

And what did you mean by that exactly? Like that your recovery would have been slower or that it would have been. Yeah.

04:03 **Michael Montgomery:**

Oh, yeah. Well, I think, I think my feeling is that the, the whole experience would have been worse. My body would have been in weaker shape. I think the pain would have been higher and then the recovery would have been harder and I would have been trying to get alcohol to cut.

04:18 **Speaker 3:**

Yeah.

04:19 **Michael Montgomery:**

Would have been really, you know, not good. I'm trying to think about the times when this happened before. I mean, I probably was drinking to some degree or it's possible. So, you know, it just, it just, it just gets in the way of so many things and it just would have made it a lot harder. So.

04:44 **Alex Libre:**

Yeah, I mean, that's like its own reason to not drink is just the way that it interferes with other activities. And like, you know, by drinking you suddenly like, can't do other certain things. I mean, is that a motivator when you think about reasons why you don't want to drink drinks like, like the enam. Other valuable parts of your life. Alien kind of.

05:14 **Michael Montgomery:**

Definitely, definitely. Drinking has, you know, it, it pushes those other things away, you know, and it's definitely gotten away of. I mean, it definitely, you know, complicated my relationship with my wife. There's things that, you know, I didn't want to do. I just want to stay home and ultimately drink. And so the. I mean, I think that when I made a decision to stop drinking or when I cut back on my drinking, it really did help our relationship. But, no, it takes control of your life. It's all you really care about. Your. Your only partner is alcohol. Your thing. You really, really, you know, and so, yeah, no, I definitely became more reclusive. I mean, I remember when I first started with aa, this whole thing of wanting to be alone, and there's.

06:09 **Alex Libre:**

So. What's that phrase?

06:10 **Michael Montgomery:**

I saw it in a smart recovery thing. You're. You want to be in your Something of destruction. You're.

06:18 **Alex Libre:**

Oh, den of destruction, I think Den of destruction.

06:22 **Michael Montgomery:**

Yeah. And so. And so that, to me, was being alone.

06:25 **Speaker 3:**

Yeah.

06:25 **Michael Montgomery:**

And. And I know, you know, a lot of people experience it differently. They want to go out and party and be around other people. And maybe it's unlucky. I mean, maybe, unfortunately, I didn't want to do that because maybe I would have gotten into more trouble. But. Yeah, no, it definitely. It definitely pushes other stuff out and. And. But you do develop those habits. Like, you know, my dad. My dad, kind of late in life, after he retired, he was active, but eventually he just became not quite a recluse. But he didn't really. He didn't do much, and he sat. You know, he liked to sit and read and watch some tv. And. And I always wondered whether that was in part a result of alcoholism, you know, and just a kind of a behavior pattern that he developed. Maybe he just felt he was. I don't know, maybe he just felt he was old or tired or whatever.

07:21 **Alex Libre:**

But he wasn't drinking at that point.

07:23 **Michael Montgomery:**

Right?

07:23 **Alex Libre:**

He was. Was that. He was not drinking at that point?

07:26 **Michael Montgomery:**

No, no, no, he wasn't drinking at that point. So maybe that. That doesn't really make much sense. I just wonder whether when you're drinking, you develop these behavior patterns that. Yeah, that might stick with you afterwards, but that doesn't really make sense because he stopped drinking. He stopped drinking after my parents got back together, after he got back together with my mom. So that would have been like. No, he got, you know, he stopped drinking when. When they split up. So, yeah. Know, that would have been like, 1988, and they got back together in the early 90s, and he was sober until 2014. So maybe that doesn't quite work.

08:00 **Alex Libre:**

I mean, I also think there's like, a potentially causation in different directions here where, like, I don't know, even in your life specifically, let's say, like, there might have been not just increased recip. Because of drink drinking, but you might have been drinking, you know, you know, reclusively because you already had some other underlying desire to, you know, separate from society and separate from the drinking. You might want to. Want to have protection or something.

08:31 **Michael Montgomery:**

I think that could be. There's definitely some things. There's definitely some things that in my earlier life, I kind of wanted to be separate from people or I got interested in things that I knew were not like, mainstream and that, you know, I wanted to be different or away from the mainstream. So you.

08:54 **Alex Libre:**

You did want to. You said you. You wanted to be different from the mainstream.

08:58 **Michael Montgomery:**

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. And. And thus that kind of pulled me away from the mainstream. I mean, I remember. I don't know why I've been thinking about this. Like. Like in high school, you know, after the end, I played a lot of soccer. At the end of the season, they have. Would have a little, you know, thing at the school to give out awards banquet. I remember, like, oh, I'm not going to that. I didn't go. Or I remember I was like, I was chosen homecoming king senior year, which is kind of a setup. I didn't want to be it, and my friends kind of made it happen, but I didn't go, like, oh, participate in that. It's like.

09:38 **Alex Libre:**

So that's actually really funny.

09:41 **Michael Montgomery:**

Yeah. But whatever. Whatever the reasons are, you know, know, once. Once my drinking kind of went underground, then I was. I was doing it in secret. I mean.

09:53 **Speaker 3:**

Yeah.

09:54 **Michael Montgomery:**

Ipso facto. I mean, and. And that was. That was really damaging because that, I think, is when my drinking really change. Shifted. And I think I was drinking a lot more and a lot more hard stuff. Or vodka.

10:12 **Speaker 3:**

Yeah.

10:12 **Alex Libre:**

Huh. I mean, I'm kind of interested in this, like, line of thinking along, you know, sort of. Sort of trying to remove drinking situation and think about what drives you to want to isolate more generally because. And not physically in terms of like creating, you know, drunk. Drunk alone, but like the idea of isolation also from other people emotionally by not telling the full truth. So you can't develop a full bond in a sense.

10:52 **Michael Montgomery:**

Right.

10:52 **Speaker 3:**

Yeah.

10:53 **Alex Libre:**

I don't know if any of that resonates and brings you anything.

10:56 **Michael Montgomery:**

Yeah, it does. I mean, I know that, you know, I think back on many times when I kind of ghosted people, I just didn't maintain something or I didn't follow up and I didn't keep people in my life. And I've done that a lot. You know, I think I told you I went back. I did my 40th college reunion, and I'd never been back to that. And for the most part, like, none of the people I went to college with, I've really with. With one or two exceptions I've stayed in contact with. And some of that's natural. You go. You go different directions. But I think there was something. There is something to that. And it was. It was important for me to go back and see some of those people and reconnect. And that felt

really good. So, I don't know. And it happens here too. Like, not really building close relationships, having friends, people from work, but not really developing close bonds. Like, I have very few, like, friends who I would really. Who I really share things with regularly. There's a few. And no one I've ever. I can't think of anyone I've ever talked about really honestly about my drinking other than, you know, sessions like this or even that therapist, Eve, I don't think I was fully, like, fully straight with her. So.

12:22 **Alex Libre:**

And what. What was like for specifically withholding things with Eve, someone that you sort of trust as a therapist and felt was confident and that sort of thing. Like, what was the fear holding you back from fully disclosing? Was that you always with your wife in session?

12:35 **Michael Montgomery:**

Yeah, that was kind of a family therapy type thing. And I just think fear of just afraid and probably also wanting to keep my options open so that, you know, if you don't. If you don't talk about it, then you're not lying about it. Right. I think those are the two main things. I mean, I know, like, you step back and it's like, I think, you know what I. My sponsor, my AA sponsor, I feel like I was pretty honest with him, I think. I think, you know, I think when I first stopped drinking or stopped drinking in that context, I feel like I was pretty honest with him through that process. I mean, the other thing, like, you want to put out of your mind is how many people you're drinking has impacted. Right. And to it really kind of come clean on that. What does that mean? But anyway, back to. Back to. That wasn't really the point. The point is, yeah, I think I've. I've kept people at a certain distance.

13:42 **Alex Libre:**

And I. I mean, I feel like the keeping people at a distance, not being entirely truthful in the sense of, like, full vulnerability by disclosing things that might be risky or whatever. I think that that often happens when people feel almost like. Like they're. They don't feel like they as a person are presentable publicly in the way we want to be or something. Or there's almost lack of pride, lack of self confidence in terms of not maybe in the normal sense, you're not excited to show yourself off in the world and would you rather retreat a little bit? Fewer people see you. Whereas I think when people are, for example, a lot of the time they're like hyper social because they're very, very confident and they want the world to see them. And so I'm wondering if there's an inverse thing that can also happen, you know, not necessarily depression, but just you don't want people to see you in your current state or something, you know. You know.

14:47 **Michael Montgomery:**

Yeah, well, I mean, I mean just that, you know, I had that book event last week where I was.

14:50 **Alex Libre:**

Yeah, yeah.

14:51 **Michael Montgomery:**

In conversation with. She's actually kind of a friend about her book. An author. Yeah. And you know, that event was like a block and a half from my office, you know, down on Sutter Street. And I didn't like, you know, we have a slack internal. Slack channel. Like, I didn't let anyone know about that. And that was not by neglect. I just didn't want people to know. I didn't want people there. Like, what's that about? Like, what is that? You know, And I think part of that was because I. I think deep down I knew I would do an okay job, even though I was super nervous. So it wasn't. I don't think it was fear of up. I mean, maybe that was a little bit of it. But I can't really explain why I didn't do that,

why I didn't like let. Because, you know, some of them, I think would have come. It's like right by the office and I just. I just didn't do it. And I was aware of not doing it.

15:45 **Alex Libre:**

I think what I sense from you is something I have my. In myself as well is like a. I don't know, like a hesitation to be perceived as potentially showing off or bragging. Like, and it could be perceived. When you say, oh, and you just don't. You don't want to deal with people potentially thinking that about you, and so you don't have them at all. That's common line.

16:16 **Michael Montgomery:**

Yeah, I think it's possible. Like. Like, possibly because like, I was happy to mention the screening of this film I worked on last year. On the Slack channel, but in part because, you know, I contributed to it. But it was these two guys who were the directors and one of them used to work at my organization. So I felt like I was.

16:37 **Alex Libre:**

You weren't.

16:39 **Michael Montgomery:**

So I can see that. And that's probably was part of it. It felt a little like I'm self promoting.

16:46 **Speaker 3:**

Yeah.

16:46 **Michael Montgomery:**

You know, but I could have, I could have. We have a guy who does comms who's like, his job is to get us out there in the world and he makes sure anytime any of us are appearing anywhere, he plugs it internally. So I could have done that and I know I could have done that. So whatever. I think that it's weird. Part of me is like, I didn't want anyone there.

17:09 **Alex Libre:**

Yeah.

17:10 **Michael Montgomery:**

I didn't want any of those people there. I don't want him in that part of my life. Like, that's crazy. It doesn't make any sense.

17:15 **Alex Libre:**

But because that's interesting to me because it's like potentially similar isolation mechanism happening in this interview with you that could be a similar underlying force that has historically driven you drink. And even though now you're not drinking and you're determined not to drink the same, some of the same structures, tendencies that previously led you to drunk, obviously still going to be operating now. And it's just good to kind of track those in some way, not necessarily be aware of them, you know.

17:55 **Michael Montgomery:**

Well, no, that's actually something that's been an issue over the years because I mean, I do, I do get nervous when I'm, you know, appearing publicly or going live on a show or whatever. And I know that in the past, like, if it was an evening thing, I would, I would definitely have to. I think I learned, I think I learned that I could not have any alcohol in me. Like that there's, it's too much of a wild card, even if I had just a couple drinks, that it made me perform more poorly. Yeah, like, like

you think, well, you have a drink or two and you get comfortable and you, and there's some truth to that. But any, Anyway, I, I learned that and I actually think pretty consistently was able to avoid alcohol. Of course I would drink afterwards. But I mean, I actually think that's an example of like at an intellectual level or whatever, I could say, okay, you know, don't drink in this period because AI, there's also reasons know why you shouldn't. And, and so I think that I, I, I learned that like it's just not a good idea. And I learned, you know, my wife helped me to. To prepare, to, like, be super prepared. And that gives you confidence because you always have, like, I always have extra questions in case, like, we run out of questions and there's no questions from the audience. And what the do you do? Right. So, I mean, that's good that I can navigate that.

19:36 **Alex Libre:**

I wonder, though, if it's not necessarily this intellectual debate that you're able to win in your mind and rationally decide to not drink. I wonder if it could also be viewed as, like, you have these huge competing motivators or drives. One is like, to drink. The other is to, like, avoid performing poorly. And it seems like the avoidance of forming poorly is even more powerful than your desire to drink.

20:06 **Michael Montgomery:**

That's. That could very well be. That fear is so intense. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. But. But still. But still, I think it's a. It's pretty. A pretty conscious thing.

20:20 **Alex Libre:**

Yeah, I guess it's still. It's compatible with the rational intellectual.

20:24 **Speaker 3:**

Yeah.

20:24 **Michael Montgomery:**

So that. That's why, like, it. In this whole. I had. I didn't take the med today. Just. I. I've got so many meds in me. I just like. And this is not that I have in the back of my head, I'm gonna go drink. But it's just like.

20:37 **Alex Libre:**

I mean.

20:40 **Michael Montgomery:**

I'm just saying. But. But the point is that. That the whole thing with the medication, it does put something in my head. And maybe it's not just intellectual. Maybe it's. It's. It helps me channel my emotions, but it really helps. It really helps frame, keeping my framing consistent as I get towards the end of the day.

21:01 **Speaker 3:**

Yeah.

21:04 **Alex Libre:**

So it's interesting how much there's like a temporal aspect to this for you and, like, almost like a circadian rhythm of your alcohol tendencies where, like. Like, you. You were saying something. For decades, it's been this, like, sort of 5pm you know, I.

21:20 **Michael Montgomery:**

My body. It's almost like my body wouldn't accept alcohol before. It wouldn't. It would taste different, it would feel different. It wouldn't taste different. It would feel different. Like, the effects

on my body, literally, I mean, this is. But literally, you get after five and it. You know, so I never. I mean, even way back in the day when I would have a, you know, whatever. Like, way back in the day, like, watching football games on a Sunday, I didn't want. I didn't want to drink beer. I mean, maybe I did when I was really young. But that pattern that's. That's been established a long time for me. I'm it doesn't mean it's any better, but it means that I don't ever have to worry about I'm going to be drinking in the morning or afternoon or something.

22:01 **Speaker 3:**

Yeah.

22:02 **Michael Montgomery:**

But that does make the pill more strategic because there is that period, you know, from five to eight. You know, that's. That's the key zone for me. Maybe a little later, but that's why just being engaged and being busy, I mean, that's exactly the time when I can easily disappear into my office or whatever.

22:24 **Speaker 3:**

Yeah.

22:25 **Michael Montgomery:**

Or I'm coming home from work, you know, which you can, of course, you know, say you're leaving the office at.

22:31 **Alex Libre:**

A certain time, leave at a different.

22:33 **Michael Montgomery:**

Time, and leave earlier than you say you're leaving, and then stop and get some booze.

22:40 **Alex Libre:**

And so it really feels like the naltrexone is interrupting that process.

22:45 **Michael Montgomery:**

Yeah. Yeah. I mean, what. Like, as we talked about, whether it's actually doing more than that and interrupting something physical.

22:53 **Alex Libre:**

Hard to know.

22:55 **Michael Montgomery:**

It's hard to know. And I'm sure I'll have. You know, I'm sure there's going to be times when I. When I really want to get drunk. And, you know, maybe they'll. Maybe I'll test the system, but, you know, assuming it works. But I don't. I don't plan to do that. And I think right now just having it in my system in the middle of the day just kind of gets my mind off of things. You talked about that. Yeah, I think before I started the meds, like, you just kind of get it out of your head a little bit.

23:27 **Speaker 3:**

Yeah.

23:27 **Alex Libre:**

I mean, you haven't seemed super receptive to this in the past, but how open would you be to that injectable form so that you really don't have to worry about it for a whole month? Just. Just



something about that seems.

23:39 **Michael Montgomery:**

I feel like I read something about that. Just. It seems a little. Medically, it seems riskier or something. I don't know about risky, but, I mean, if I thought that I was. Could. Could try. Could potentially game it, you know, and not take it one day and then get drunk, which is always possible, given the past.

23:58 **Alex Libre:**

But you don't really expect that.

24:00 **Michael Montgomery:**

I don't. I don't. I don't see that it could. You're right. I mean, a month and I'm doing great, and then, you know, I'm feeling great, and that could lead me to drinking. It's.

24:12 **Alex Libre:**

But you can just always change your mind in the future in terms of, like, if you do start to gaming. You can switch to the injectable six months from now if you really wanted to. You don't, you don't have to decide anything, you know. You know.

24:23 **Michael Montgomery:**

Well, my wife was asking how long I plan to be on the medication and I said, I don't know, you know, I don't. I'm not gonna try to figure that out right now. I mean, it would be great if I didn't need it, but right now I really feel like I do. I need that extra.

24:40 **Alex Libre:**

Insurance, you know? Yeah, insurance.

24:42 **Michael Montgomery:**

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. But anyway, so I, I think that. But also just like again, just being in such pain.

24:54 **Speaker 3:**

Yeah.

24:54 **Michael Montgomery:**

I don't want to leave my body more vulnerable to that than it needs to be. And alcohol really can you up long term. Can really set you up for some really bad illnesses as you get older.

25:06 **Alex Libre:**

Yeah, definitely. Are you in generally good health, would you say? Like.

25:10 **Michael Montgomery:**

Yeah, yeah. I mean, I've been in a doctor in a while. That's one thing I need to, you know, we switch doctors. I mean, I haven't had a physical in a couple of years, so I need to, I think I'm in. I mean, I don't know, I'm overweight.

25:24 **Alex Libre:**

But you exercise, you know.

25:26 **Michael Montgomery:**

Yeah, yeah. I mean, there was a period of time when I wasn't exercising that much. But, you know,

we eat pretty well. We tend to cook our own meals and, you know, I mean. Yeah, we walk, you know, My wife's got knee, knee problems, so we're not. We used to walk up when it was the hill every morning and we haven't been doing that. But I think that, I mean, that's why I'm bummed out. I up my back because I was really getting into this workout routine and I really, really love it. So I'm going to have to, you know, I gotta get to a physical therapist and figure out like, what I should and shouldn't do given these back issues, you know. I mean, I don't know. The day, the day I, I, the day my back went out was the day I swam. And that doesn't. Like, I wouldn't think of swimming, but I don't know. I've been working out a lot, so.

26:16 **Alex Libre:**

I could see swimming potentially playing a role in that. If you were, if your back was being activated during the swimming significantly and then in a way that, I mean, you don't often swim.

26:25 **Michael Montgomery:**

Right, right, right.

26:26 **Speaker 3:**

Yeah.

26:27 **Michael Montgomery:**

This recently started and I'm not a great swimmer either, so you're right. My body wasn't used to Those movements, those motions.

26:34 **Alex Libre:**

Well, okay, so let's, let's pause and see. I feel like we can. This is like a decent inflection point where we can talk about whatever that feels relative to you. You know, we've got 20 minutes and what would be most interesting or meaning like, you know, we can sort of do it kind of full folded at this point. What's been on your mind or what? Maybe anything I've talked about in recent sessions? Any thoughts?

27:09 **Michael Montgomery:**

Well, I guess we've talked a fair amount about this medication because you've seen other people use it. You've seen. I mean, we talked about that guy who went off of it and died. That's just like.

27:22 **Speaker 3:**

Yeah.

27:23 **Michael Montgomery:**

What was his name again?

27:24 **Alex Libre:**

Scott.

27:25 **Michael Montgomery:**

Scott. That name does really ring a bell. He was pretty active in the group.

27:30 **Alex Libre:**

Yeah, he was there almost every single week for three years or something. I mean. Yeah.

27:37 **Michael Montgomery:**

Yeah, Scott.

27:38 **Alex Libre:**

Anyway, he usually had his last letter name starting with M and Scott. M in the thing.

27:44 **Michael Montgomery:**

Yeah, yeah, no, definitely. I'm sure if I saw it.

27:47 **Speaker 3:**

Yeah.

27:49 **Michael Montgomery:**

I mean, but it's a powerful reminder. Yeah, yeah. Really? Totally.

27:57 **Alex Libre:**

Like, are there any non. Let's say like less tool based, less practical, more underlying? Maybe not. Or any kind of practical tools you want to kind of talk through? Either one.

28:21 **Michael Montgomery:**

I'm thinking here, Take your time.

28:23 **Alex Libre:**

I'm also summarizing what we discuss.

28:30 **Michael Montgomery:**

I mean, I guess one thing is we've talked about it a little bit. I think it is pertinent is I guess we've talked about it, but why I was able to apparently so easily go back to drinking in certain periods, you know, like why, why Given, you know, a lot of stuff we've talked about, I, I thought I understood. And what, what, what would pull me back? Oh, we talked about triggers and I guess to. I guess one thing to talk about is like, how do I push ahead with sobriety? I mean, okay, not drinking. Like, what, what more can I do to build on that?

29:19 **Speaker 3:**

Yeah.

29:20 **Michael Montgomery:**

And especially given, you know, be active, be social, have some interest or hobbies. All of which makes sense, I think. I think. Yeah. Building, building on sobriety. So that, I mean, we've talked about all this, but that is a topic that's interesting to me.

29:47 **Alex Libre:**

I mean, I, I think a great direction on that front is like thinking through where you want the end game for this recovery to be or steady state, you know, equilibrium. Like, let's say two years from now you've successfully been not drinking. One question is kind of like how much recovery stuff do you still want to Doing, if any. What other aspects do you want to be different, where they are now and like classic and smart as activity, which I find even without writing down, just thinking like basically the core ideas, like you want to talk about various areas in your life, specific activities, hobbies, whatever, and you sort of rank them in terms of how much energy you're allocating towards them, how good the quality you feel like they're at right now, and then what delta is between that where you want to be both in terms of wanting to allocate more or less of your sort of, sort of mental energy to it, or if you want it to be like a, you know, kind of improve significantly or already in place. Like maybe we talked through some of the areas of life that feel like.

31:03 **Michael Montgomery:**

That'S a really good idea. I should. When we're done, I'll pull up my book too, because I remember doing that exercise and I remember liking that exercise and it's really good. As I'm approaching some kind of a transition.

31:17 **Speaker 3:**

Yeah.

31:18 **Michael Montgomery:**

For a transition that makes a lot of sense, actually.

31:22 **Alex Libre:**

You want to be able to like visualize what your future could potentially look like, what a great life, you know, nice, really good, rich life would feel like for you. And I think if you lack somewhat visual visual of that, you can look ahead to. It's much less likely to manifest, you know?

31:43 **Michael Montgomery:**

Yeah, no, no, no. And that would reinforce this idea that shit doesn't really change, you know, Whatever. Yeah, no, I think that makes a lot of sense. What would be a good way to. To start that?

31:54 **Alex Libre:**

Yeah, I mean, I think for one thing, like, like I can go.

31:58 **Michael Montgomery:**

Sorry to interrupt. I. I have my notes. I won't pull them out now. I mean, I do have my notes.

32:02 **Alex Libre:**

Do you have them like here? Like, do you have them like accessible now? Now just pull them up. I mean, maybe that would be a good hold up.

32:27 **Speaker 3:**

Nice.

32:36 **Michael Montgomery:**

Just. I'll. I'll go very quickly to see if I can find those.

32:39 **Alex Libre:**

Yeah, no, you're good. Good.

32:40 **Michael Montgomery:**

You're good. What do I want for my future? What I value most.

32:51 **Alex Libre:**

And when did you fill this out? Like what, what year this is?

32:57 **Michael Montgomery:**

23 maybe this is when I first started with you. I think so. It's been a few years. A couple years.

33:03 **Alex Libre:**

A couple years at least.

33:05 **Michael Montgomery:**

But this is like. Well, the change plan worksheet benefits, cost of drinking, cost of benefits of not

using. Hold on. It's funny to go back these. Is there an acronym for what we're talking about?

33:24 **Alex Libre:**

A lifestyle balance pie? I don't know. It's not usually an acronym.

33:38 **Michael Montgomery:**

Nice. Wow.

33:39 **Alex Libre:**

Perfect.

33:41 **Speaker 3:**

Yeah.

33:42 **Alex Libre:**

Maybe if you can see, take a look at how two years ago version of your life stacked against now and then. You use that where you want to go from here.

33:54 **Michael Montgomery:**

It's kind of hard. I mean, I laid out creative work, civic, voluntary engagement, marriage, kids, work, work, work, health, leisure, hobby, finances. I don't know. This isn't.

34:13 **Alex Libre:**

No, that seems, that seems right to me. I mean, it seems like, like reasonable categories to have.

34:18 **Michael Montgomery:**

Yeah, I've got these numbers anyway, I'll. Anyway, that's interesting. So I, what I would say is that, I mean, I, I see, I see my shift obviously away from formal work because that, you know, that isn't just nine to five. I mean, that absorbs a lot of my creative time and absorbs a lot of my thinking about the world. Kind of absorbs social time without a lot of deeper social connections. So I, I think that it's going to be really important to find not just other interests, but, but like, I don't want to say institutions, but things that exist in the world that I can engage or interact with. I think that's going to be really important. Maybe those are circles of friends, but I think something a little more community, you know. Well, like, you know, I'm. I'm on the board of this World Press Institute which brings foreign journals to the US Every year. And that's fine. I mean, they're coming the end of this month. I'm going to host them. We'll have a dinner here. I'm, I'm trying to get them to see, get them to see the new mayor, getting them into San Quentin Prison. Like, like that kind of stuff. But that's like a very kind of on and off thing. Yeah, maybe, maybe being a. More engaged at a community level. But. But I think that's going to be important, like, because that gets me out of my head, out of the house.

35:55 **Alex Libre:**

Is that what you meant though, when you said like institutions or in terms of like, like. Or do you just mean, like, you want it to be more organized and formalized so that you can sort of, sort of build a routine out of.

36:04 **Michael Montgomery:**

Yeah, yeah. It doesn't have to be in, quote, institution, but something that's more than an idea or.

36:10 **Speaker 3:**

Yes.

36:11 **Michael Montgomery:**

Pursuit or a hobby. Like something more than that. Like structure about sports and a sport that I can do with other people, you know, like golf. Well, maybe I should, you know, start golfing again, although not with my back the way it is, you know. Yeah, there's. I mean, the stuff I've talked about with my wife about learning to play the piano. That's not a group thing. We've got, you know, the Harvey Milk center here that does the. I just think that as I get older, you lose your identity when you finish your work. I'm no longer a part of Reveal or whatever. So there's going to need to be some. I'm not saying affiliation, but something.

36:53 **Alex Libre:**

I feel that space.

36:55 **Speaker 3:**

Yeah.

36:56 **Michael Montgomery:**

That's more than just going out and playing golf. Right. And I think there's lots of possibilities. I'm standing up again. There's lots of possibilities, but I think I need to be somewhat deliberate about it.

37:11 **Speaker 3:**

Yeah.

37:11 **Alex Libre:**

And I think you need to figure out what you actually want genuinely to do. I think when you're sort of vaguely thinking about what you could do to fill your time in a semi organized way, it feels all feels very abstract. Need to tomorrow start taking steps towards making reality and start contacting the organizers, organization, whatever, and by forcing it in that way and thinking like, if I really was going to do like right now, would I, would I want to? Like, like maybe that'll provide clarity as like what, what is the right direction to take? Because you feel like even now it's just, you know, you know, you, you would, would, you would, you would send an email tomorrow to sort of get through, you know, you know.

38:00 **Michael Montgomery:**

Right.

38:00 **Alex Libre:**

I mean, what feels like, are there any of them maybe to eliminate first? Are there any hobbies, ideas, organized activity structures that you feel like things you should want to do but don't actually want to and therefore things.

38:20 **Michael Montgomery:**

Well, yeah, I mean like creative, like whether it's learning to play the piano or some kind of art, you know, applied art. I mean, I, I feel like that's not necessarily just something I should do. I, I feel like if I could, you know, if I could tap into my creativity in a way that I haven't really professionally in the way I'd want to, I think that could be really satisfying. I have a lot of hang ups about like I was terrible in trying to learn an instrument when I was a kid. I mean, so it's like because I love music or because I love piano music, jazz or classical, does that mean I should learn to play the piano? I don't know. Am I kind of idealizing what it would be like? But I do think that doing creative work gets me thinking differently and gets me out of this kind of logical what's going on in the world,

how fucked up the world is. Like, I think it would allow me, you know, my wife's an artist. We have a lot of artist friends and I love the way they kind of can really operate and think differently in the world. And as I slowly move away from my job, I want to slowly move away from constantly thinking about politics or, you know, not that I wouldn't be engaged. So that's like when I think about creativity or art or whatever and you know, I mean, could go take a class and I mean there's all these, you know, free classes and city, all this stuff that's possible. And you know, one thing, you know, being really consistent about not drinking is it opens up more time. Yeah, you're not drunk every night doing nothing. That also allows me to interact with nature a little bit more. Like, you know, not the piano, but art, you know, working in a volunteer, like home, you know, whatever. Or working, you know, volunteering at a non profit like, you know, here, which I have a lot of friends do. And that's really great. I don't know, that's like a should thing. Maybe. That's. Yeah, like, like.

40:35 **Alex Libre:**

But how important is like the social.

40:38 **Michael Montgomery:**

What's that?

40:39 **Alex Libre:**

Oh, sorry. You can go ahead.

40:41 **Michael Montgomery:**

But just something that gets me out of the mind that I'm in right now when I'm working. Right. And getting me out of that kind of ego space where it's my job to figure out the world and, or communicate it to others. Like, I don't want to teach, I don't think. I mean, I've taught classes at Cal, but like, you know, you're like, oh, work with young people, you know, like mentor young people. Like KWL has a whole mentorship program with young, you know, audio people. And it's like, I don't know, I don't, I don't, I don't know if I think I want to. That doesn't appeal to me. Yeah, that would be an obvious thing to do.

41:28 **Alex Libre:**

It's good to get clear on something like that. That probably is not really what you want to do. And I mean, I'm struck by a little bit like, like it seems like the big utility of any of these things is in basically that, like it'll, it'll snap you out a little bit. It's like very, very driven problem solving, like somewhat negative because of the state of the world, you know, you know, that headspace and get you in a different light, you know, you know, I don't know, lightweight, kind of relax, relaxed mode. And it seems like it's not even.

42:10 **Michael Montgomery:**

Lightweight, but it is a different, I mean Artists are engaged in the world.

42:14 **Alex Libre:**

Totally. But it is not lightweight, maybe just lighter, like less. Well, I think it's also like driving.

42:22 **Michael Montgomery:**

What your goals are, you know. Yeah, it's an ambitious. Yeah, I'm going to get a big story. I'm going to like, you know, get a lot of readers and get a lot of attention and get some awards and yeah. Have some impact. But yeah, I think it's, it's ambition.

42:36 **Speaker 3:**

Yeah.

42:37 **Michael Montgomery:**

Because I think, I mean I can keep doing that, but I think I need to expand this other part of my life. Yeah, I can do both. I mean, you know, it shouldn't just stop but as I get older these other things I think would be more important. So for example, what do I really take pleasure in? I really take pleasure in being outdoors, walking, hiking. I really take pleasure listening to music. Do I take pleasure in watching cable news? No. Do I take pleasure in listening to news on the radio? Not really. It's something I've become, you know, it's part of my pattern. But yeah, so I, I'm just looking at this. I didn't, it's. It's hard to tell how I rank these things. So I can't really make sense of this. I'll look at it some more, but I don't, I don't think it's changed that much. Yeah, I think that, I think the difference is that I feel this change coming sooner now. I mean, I made this chart out like three years ago.

43:48 **Speaker 3:**

Yeah.

43:51 **Michael Montgomery:**

And you know, I think in the past I would have been afraid of that because you know, you like you're going to lose your identity or lose your status and, and it's been something my wife has been struggling with, with her art not getting as much attention as it used to. But you know, I mean, I think you know, being, I mean, but the key thing here is like playing the piano is playing the piano alone. You know, some of these things are doing it alone. And, and I want to find a way not to be alone all the time. I want to be working with other people. So what would you know most likely be in some kind of a, you know, non profit effort of some kind. I don't know what it is but, but I do like working with people. I mean, I do like working as a team. I like when I'm able to do that with my job. I really like that.

44:45 **Alex Libre:**

So I mean there's sort of three utilities then of your, of, of let's say retirement activities or, or just future activities. There's like, like this, like Almost anti ambition, like this desire to like stop being so driven towards, you know, sort of ego related accolades and focus more on, on what you really really enjoy. And there's also the aspect like just having structured time such that you don't like, like waste away drinking. And then there's also the aspect of like anti isolation and pro social community building in a sense and engaging people in an energized way. And I think like different activities, different parts of those three. But that was summarize what seems.

45:36 **Michael Montgomery:**

Yeah, I think avoiding stuff that leaves me solo or alone, I think that's pretty important. I'm talking about my dad. Like I don't want to be like that when I'm his age. Just sitting in a chair reading history books the whole time. It's funny, I was just going through my notes thinking of the conversation last night. This must be from the book. I don't know. On the road to recovery. Boredom can be a dangerous sinkhole. That's pretty funny. That must be from the book. That's definitely something that you know. It's not good for me to be sitting around alone a lot.

46:10 **Speaker 3:**

Yeah.

46:10 **Michael Montgomery:**

It's just not even if I'm reading or playing the piano. That's, that's not so. You know, I've talked, we're almost done here. I talked to my wife about this a lot about figuring out ways to, you know,



be with other people. I mean I, I, I had that event at this mechanics institute downtown which is, I know we talked about this. Have you ever been to that building?

46:33 **Alex Libre:**

No, actually yeah.

46:35 **Michael Montgomery:**

It's the oldest chess club in the country. It's like a really cool old building. And I joined, you know they have events all the time and I can imagine, you know, going there occasionally for an event or for some music and it becoming a place I go to with others. So you know, something like that. You know, it is the beginning. So yeah, I, I think I'm gonna, I'm gonna work on this a lot more. This, this, this also kind of gets me excited. Like okay, what's, what's next?

47:04 **Alex Libre:**

Yeah, exactly. It's forward looking. And the last thing I wanted to say, I know we're over time is just that I think it sounds like for social aspect things you're maybe limiting yourself by thinking that it all means, I think you get a lot of social juice from like FaceTime call with a family member.

47:26 **Michael Montgomery:**

That's true. I mean I, I, that's totally right. I have an old college friend who we were having regular, regular zoom calls.

47:35 **Alex Libre:**

Yeah, you can schedule them to recruit.

47:37 **Michael Montgomery:**

Well, I reconnected. I mean, we hadn't talked for a couple of months, and his wife died. I'm like, oh, man, that's so.

47:42 **Alex Libre:**

Jeez.

47:43 **Michael Montgomery:**

But yeah, I. I think that's mean. We have during COVID We started. I think I mentioned this before. Friday evening, 6 o'. Clock. We called it Covid cocktails.

47:52 **Speaker 3:**

Oh, yeah.

47:53 **Michael Montgomery:**

Friends. Some in San Francisco, some in different parts. And we've been continuing that because, like, we really built up our relationships because we wouldn't see each other that often.

48:05 **Alex Libre:**

Yeah.

48:06 **Michael Montgomery:**

Or Covid. So I agree there's lots of potential. Lots of potential there. Okay. All right.

48:12 **Alex Libre:**

So we're.

48:14 **Michael Montgomery:**

We're on for Tuesday.

48:15 **Alex Libre:**

Yeah, let me just take a look and make sure the times look good for both of us. So Tuesday, we've got 4:30. Is that still work?

48:23 **Michael Montgomery:**

Yeah, yeah, I'll double check.

48:26 **Alex Libre:**

Yeah, it looks like all 4:35. I think that's what we have recurring now.

48:34 **Michael Montgomery:**

Okay. And then we'll need to wind down, I think, towards the end of September.

48:43 **Speaker 3:**

Yeah.

48:46 **Alex Libre:**

Yeah, I'll double check. Check dates, but I think it'll be.

48:51 **Michael Montgomery:**

We talked about eight weeks, right?

48:53 **Speaker 3:**

Yeah.

48:55 **Alex Libre:**

I think it was like August 5th or something like that.

49:00 **Michael Montgomery:**

That's amazing.

49:01 **Alex Libre:**

We can take another look. Yeah, definitely coming towards the end of it. And I think, you know, just a little bit about, like, what you want to get out of the remaining, like, six sessions, whatever it is. And don't. Don't be afraid to, like, kind of steer us in that direction.

49:17 **Michael Montgomery:**

Yeah, no, I'll give us some more thought. That's a really good idea. Okay, man, thanks.

49:20 **Alex Libre:**

Cool. All right, thanks.