**Episode #24**

**Speaker 1** [00:00:01] Welcome to the Cabrera Lab podcast. Drum roll.

**Speaker 2** [00:00:09] Are you ready? Yep. Here we go.

**Speaker 1** [00:00:12] You look like you're crying

**Speaker 2** [00:00:13] Because you cracked me up.

**Speaker 1** [00:00:15] Yeah.

**Speaker 3** [00:00:15] and pretty funny.

**Speaker 2** [00:00:16] You are pretty funny. I am notably not funny, according to my family. Yes, you are. Come on. Okay.

**Speaker 3** [00:00:24] Negative self-talk

**Speaker 2** [00:00:26] No negative self-talk. Interesting that you just said that. I'm kidding. No, it's interesting you just said that because of what I was thinking about talking about today.

**Speaker 1** [00:00:34] Oh, for real? Oh my god.

**Speaker 2** [00:00:36] We didn't plan that.

**Speaker 1** [00:00:37] Synchronicity. Oh my gosh.

**Speaker 2** [00:00:40] We're in sync.

**Speaker 3** [00:00:45] This is the worst beginning.

**Speaker 2** [00:00:49] You know what? I bet it will be one of the most popular beginnings because we look at these people cracking themselves up having fun in their daily life.

**Speaker 1** [00:01:00] What's the topic?

**Speaker 2** [00:01:01] I had this weird thought. We often use the words the norm, the norm. Now listen, I was talking to one of our children who shall remain nameless, who didn't do very well on a test. And this child said to us, well, but I did better than the norm."

**Speaker 1** [00:01:29] Which is like, pouring gas out of fire. Right!

**Speaker 2** [00:01:31] Right. And so I was thinking about this, like, why is it that as humans we are so in love with the idea of comparing ourselves to the norm? Why do we have the norm, first of all? I mean, I know why we have a norm, but we have to norm, and then we make ourselves feel better by comparing ourselves the norm. And we actually use the norm as an excuse to do poorly sometimes in this case. I mean, talk about that. That's crazy.

**Speaker 1** [00:02:02] The reason is because we're social animals. Well, yeah. Kind of lemmings. We like to, we like to we succeed in packs.

**Speaker 2** [00:02:12] Right, so what you're saying is there's good parts to the norm and there's not as good parts.

**Speaker 1** [00:02:18] Well, I mean, norm just means... normal Normative normative which When you say it that way, it doesn't sound that great. Like I don't want to be normal I don't think I have a real risk of being normal, but yeah, like who wants to be normal?

**Speaker 2** [00:02:46] But I also think.

**Speaker 1** [00:02:47] But maybe some people want it.

**Speaker 2** [00:02:49] Well, so what you're saying is there's comfort in being part of the norm, because there's that that

**Speaker 1** [00:02:54] Yeah, I mean, if I'm being honest, like there's weird parts of my neurodiverse brain that every once in a while I kind of long to be like just normal

**Speaker 2** [00:03:04] Yeah, but if you're normal, it's not that great. Yeah, it is not great. I mean, I'm sort of normal. No, you're not. In some ways, I am. But here's the thing that I have a problem with. I think that often we weaponize the concept of the norm against children, where we say Johnny's 2.2 points behind the norm and Johnny's literally four years old. And it's too soon to worry about Johnny.

**Speaker 1** [00:03:32] That's incredible, that's crazy.

**Speaker 2** [00:03:34] Right? So that bugs me.

**Speaker 1** [00:03:36] when we say that Johnny below the norm.

**Speaker 2** [00:03:38] Yeah, well, like we use the norm against people who are probably, for one reason or the other, reasonably below the norm, but absolutely over time going to exceed the norm. Right. Like we don't match up our expectations with the reality.

**Speaker 1** [00:03:57] That happened to one of our kids in reading. I know do you remember that was?

**Speaker 2** [00:04:01] That was a very sad occurrence.

**Speaker 1** [00:04:04] That was bonkers. Yes. I don't have as much problem of comparing to the norm as I do overestimating how much of a, I sometimes call it machete scalpel. You know, like a machete is a pretty, relatively not sharp blade for cutting, like very rough, you know, forested jungle kind of thing. A scalpel is a very precise instrument and when people say things like, you're a three-year-old like they said to us, you know, you are a three year old is two and a half months behind in reading and you're like, that's a scalpel level statement that there is no scalpel level evidence for. You teachers, you administrators, do not have the evidence. make that statement. No scientist has the evidence to make that statement. Right. So we're using this like very scalpel level thing to say your son has fallen two and a half months at three years old or however old he was. He was actually five. Five, yeah, whatever.

**Speaker 4** [00:05:25] Thank you very much.

**Speaker 1** [00:05:28] It's a scalpel level statement in the context of machete level data. And the research on that is pretty clear, that boys will lag behind girls, for example, in reading, that schools tend to... tend to, uh...

**Speaker 2** [00:05:51] I apologize.

**Speaker 1** [00:05:52] pathologize boys in reading. They do. They also tend to pick books that are very fictional narrative which boys at a young age don't like. They like more graphic novels and like, psychopedias and things that, you know, different things. Boy topics. Boy topics. Yes. So if you get a boy Captain Underpants, the whole set, you don't read, They'll read. They'll READ Captain Underpants because they love that stuff. Um, and, and so, and the data shows that boys, boys and girls eventually even up, even up over time, over time around 12.

**Speaker 2** [00:06:34] I think some of the research that we did, because that's how we are, when somebody says something we research it and verify it, said that by the time they're 18 there's actually no discernible difference. And sometimes boys exceed the girls in reading skills.

**Speaker 1** [00:06:51] They said they said they wanted to do an assessment remember like I think a lot of parents are dealing with this kind of stuff They said, they wanted it to do and assessment Yeah on our kid, and I said I'll let you do an assesment on that kid if we can do a parallel assessment on the school They didn't like that They didn' like that

**Speaker 2** [00:07:12] Right, because...

**Speaker 1** [00:07:13] Let's do a parallel assessment of the school's methods.

**Speaker 2** [00:07:17] of engagement.

**Speaker 1** [00:07:18] of engagement, of reading, of pedagogy, of all of it. Then we can really compare in context what's going on.

**Speaker 2** [00:07:30] Well, I think what you were saying about the scalpel versus machete thing, I mean, the fact that, and I think this happens a lot, where people try to pigeonhole you into this idea, this very narrow idea what the norm is, to make for their own agenda or to make their own purposes, right? To make you seem much, much worse off or much more far away from the norm, as a tactic almost, right. And I think we do it all the time in everyday conversation. With the words normal, normative, norm, all of it.

**Speaker 1** [00:08:05] And it's super perspectival, right? Because the norm is on a graph and the graph is, the X and Y coordinates of the graph have already been decided. So it's, and it's from that perspective of whatever X and y represent that the graph is normalizing. Right. So, you know, if you don't buy into that perspective then who cares? Like a great example is intelligence. Like if you think that. what you get on an IQ test is what matters in life. Well, then I guess that graph and that normal indicator is meaningful. But if you don't think that that's really what is meaningful in terms of life success and things like that, which I think there's a reason to believe that it's not. Who cares? It's a norm that nobody cares about.

**Speaker 2** [00:09:03] Well, yeah, and I also think without knowing it, people aren't realizing, especially for children, when you constantly are saying they're, you know, above the norm in height or weight, or they're above the normal in reading skills, or whatever it is, in a strange way, early in your life, you're teaching them to get their identity in comparison to others.

**Speaker 3** [00:09:25] Yeah, I think that's true.

**Speaker 2** [00:09:26] rather than just in understanding their own unique strengths, weaknesses, you know, pros and grows, and understanding that that's part of life, is, you now.

**Speaker 1** [00:09:38] And like being a superstar, most of the superstars I've talked to, they compare themselves to themselves. They compare their effort today to their previous efforts. And so they're looking for norms around their own data, not norms in relation to others. That's right. Because we're kind of unique fingerprints, you know? Yeah. I know that sounds kind of. Kind of what? Kind of foofy, but. Bye. See ya. you know, we're kind of unique fingerprints. Like we bring together a lot of weird stuff to create that which is us. And so you can't plot that on a normative X, Y graph. You can't plop the complexity of what makes a human, on a two dimensional or even a three dimensional graph and establish normativity. Yeah, yeah. who knows what's gonna in evolution There are these niches and organisms occupy these nichas.

**Speaker 2** [00:10:45] meaning they have their own specialized identity and function in the larger.

**Speaker 1** [00:10:52] They're able to adapt to some unique little place in the world, you know, and that nobody else can adapt to, you now, and then they find their little home.

**Speaker 2** [00:11:05] and we should do that too.

**Speaker 1** [00:11:07] I think so.

**Speaker 2** [00:11:09] Well, the other thing I keep thinking about is, it's so ingrained in everything we do, this idea of the norm and being above or below it. I mean, you think about what happens to a person or, you know, a person along their trajectory if they're constantly told they're above the norm, above the norm, BYE

**Speaker 1** [00:11:29] Yeah, or below the norm.

**Speaker 2** [00:11:31] Well, I'm saying it's

**Speaker 1** [00:11:32] You're in the tail.

**Speaker 2** [00:11:33] both ends. That will completely shape that person's self-perception. You can end up with hubris. You could end up with no confidence.

**Speaker 1** [00:11:44] I noticed this in bars.

**Speaker 2** [00:11:46] Drinking Bar.

**Speaker 1** [00:11:47] Yeah, like whenever you play pool in a bar, you always play just a little bit better than the people you're playing against.

**Speaker 2** [00:11:58] I have not had that experience.

**Speaker 1** [00:12:01] Which bugs me because I always think like so if the person was better I would play better. So why don't I play? As good as I can play No, like I'm saying, like, if the people are terrible at the, you know, when they're putting quarters in the pool table, I'm not a pool shark or anything, but I'm okay. And like I am talking bar pool, not like billiards, like just playing pool in the bar, right? If the people are terrible, then you'll play just enough to beat them.

**Speaker 2** [00:12:35] Oh, I see. Right? Yeah. Meaning, yeah, you're setting your skill level based on

**Speaker 1** [00:12:40] Based on there.

**Speaker 2** [00:12:41] instead of just being in the day-to-day life.

**Speaker 1** [00:12:42] Instead of just being as good as you can be interesting. It's really an interesting phenomena

**Speaker 2** [00:12:48] I think that translates across everything, right? So say, you know, for example, we have high achieving kids in some ways with grades and things. Well, okay, so if I have to put in 70% of the effort and I still get an A.

**Speaker 1** [00:13:04] Totally. I hear kids talking about that all the time.

**Speaker 2** [00:13:05] I'm going to put in a hundred percent because I just

**Speaker 1** [00:13:06] I just did a ton of kids were saying that.

**Speaker 2** [00:13:10] saying that.

**Speaker 1** [00:13:11] They say, oh, I get straight A's. I don't even work hard. Right. Imagine what they could do if they weren't comparing to the norm. Right. Right? That's what I'm saying. I know you are. I agree with that.

**Speaker 2** [00:13:24] It's a problem. It is. Because we're not reaching our full potential and we're challenging ourselves just to challenge ourselves.

**Speaker 1** [00:13:32] 100%.

**Speaker 2** [00:13:32] just for our own sake.

**Speaker 1** [00:13:34] Like, imagine if everybody just sort of said, what am I capable of? Rather than, can I get an A? Yeah. Because getting an A, not that getting an, I got all straight Fs, so, in high school, so. That's a pipe dream for you. Getting an A was like, impossible.

**Speaker 2** [00:13:56] Yeah, you mean in the scope of life it really is fairly meaningless in some ways. It's also meaningful in terms of your opportunity.

**Speaker 1** [00:14:03] It can be meaningful in terms of the doors that it opens, which is a sad part of that kind of thing. Because if you're not understanding that it's going to open those doors. I sometimes talk about, you know, people talk about opening doors. and you think... So it's like about there's this door and does the door open or will the door open? But I think life's way more tricky than that. I think it's a hallway and it just is walls and there are secret doors.

**Speaker 2** [00:14:42] Oh.

**Speaker 1** [00:14:42] that don't look like doors. and they only open for certain people. Really? Based on how hard you work and how much effort you put in and also probably who you know and all those kinds of things. But this notion that will the doors open, it pre-assumes that you know that there's a door there. Right. And what I see happening all the time is especially young people, they'll look around for the door, the opportunity, and then if there's an opportunity, they might perform. But what they don't understand is there's opportunities everywhere and they don t always know that they're in that moment standing in an opportunity. So it's more like a secret door that looks like a wall. And then all of a sudden the wall opens.

**Speaker 2** [00:15:41] Because of your hard work. Yeah. Yeah. And your hardwork is how you get to see it.

**Speaker 1** [00:15:46] Yeah, usually hard work. Yeah, I think more passion or curiosity or just integrity or you know, any of these sort of like things that as an as an older person as an older adult now today I go in the world and I'm like, I really notice it when somebody has integrity. Yes, you know I notice it. Yes. Somebody that goes an extra measure when they don't have to I notice it because so few people do. So I notice it, I go, wow, that that person is like They're doing a good job just because they enjoy being good at something. Yeah. Right? They're not looking for the door and then playing to the opportunity. And in a weird sort of way, I think that's where opportunities come from. They come when you don't know that they're there.

**Speaker 2** [00:16:37] That's true. You miss them a lot. You miss opportunities a lot

**Speaker 1** [00:16:40] So you should always just kind of like think of everything be your best self as much as possible have integrity

**Speaker 2** [00:16:48] Yeah, I mean, but the other, the sort of, how would I put it? I don't want to say dark side. The other side of the norm is the fact that the norm has been established by people who are normative, right? Which means that people who are.

**Speaker 4** [00:17:05] Wanky

**Speaker 2** [00:17:06] non-normative or neurodivergent or in any way different are being judged against a criteria that is not fair, right? Meaning, I'm a neurotypical person. Yeah, pretty solid. Pretty solidly neurotypical. And there were doors. There were? For me. There was no hidden doors. There wasn't a hallway without doors. Oh, really? There were doors, those doors are put in place by the other people in front of me that were the same, right? That's, that's, that's that's

**Speaker 1** [00:17:44] So you have like door goggles. I don't know that nobody gave me a set of door goggles

**Speaker 2** [00:17:50] Well, that's why I'm singing.

**Speaker 1** [00:17:51] Like you have an extra sensory door you're like

**Speaker 2** [00:17:55] I see the door.

**Speaker 1** [00:17:56] I don't see the door.

**Speaker 2** [00:17:57] Because the doors were designed by people who are also like me.

**Speaker 1** [00:18:00] Whoa, that just blew my mind.

**Speaker 2** [00:18:05] Did it really?

**Speaker 1** [00:18:07] Yeah, you don't want to be that, like, cynical. I don't wanna be that cynical that it's that sort of, like...

**Speaker 2** [00:18:14] Right, but it's just like what you've been saying, like we say all the time about a fish being asked to climb a tree, right? Well, the normative people set up the trees. The normative are monkeys, right, and so we made trees.

**Speaker 3** [00:18:27] You made truth.

**Speaker 2** [00:18:27] Because we can climb them. And so what I'm trying to get at is when you think about...

**Speaker 3** [00:18:33] I always want that to be different, like you guys should be fish.

**Speaker 2** [00:18:37] or there could be a pond and a tree. Why don't we have a tree and a pond?

**Speaker 1** [00:18:41] I agree, but can we be the monkeys? I don't care. Monkeys are just more fun.

**Speaker 2** [00:18:47] Oh, they are.

**Speaker 1** [00:18:48] Yeah. Fish. Yeah, fish. You got one.

**Speaker 2** [00:18:51] Well, let's think of a different thing. What could you ask to climb a tree other than a fish that couldn't climb it, but that's cooler than a face?

**Speaker 1** [00:18:58] Well, everything's cooler than a fish.

**Speaker 2** [00:19:00] Okay, but what's cooler than a fish that's not able to climb a tree? Lots of things can climb trees.

**Speaker 1** [00:19:06] Yeah, a lot of things. Even a slime mold could technically climb a tree.

**Speaker 2** [00:19:11] Maybe fish is the only option. Yeah, it's common. You're stuck. You're a fish. But the point is that this whole idea. So the norm is a useful construct, mathematically and statistically and societally and medically. It has value, the idea of a norm, in certain contexts. But it's also abused in other contexts in many ways, like our experience with Arsene and the reading thing. I mean, that was ridiculous. That was traumatic for him to feel inadequate for no reason. Completely. Don't even get me started on crackheads. But I didn't appreciate what that did to him. He's fine now.

**Speaker 1** [00:19:58] He's a great reader. He's about way above us.

**Speaker 2** [00:20:01] straight-A student. Yeah, what I was saying is, it's weird because you take an idea like the norm and just like we say all the time, you have to see all sides of it, right? So the norm has a functional value mathematically, societally, medically, because it helps us make decisions. But it also has this other side to it, which is it can be weaponized in an individual context or in a social context. And also, it has set the playing field in a certain way. And there are people on that field now who struggle to get on it. Totally. It's not good.

**Speaker 1** [00:20:43] I had a friend, a really smart friend, tell me once, we were selling a house and it was not a great market to sell a house, it was a buyer's market and I was complaining like, you know, it's kind of a buyer market and it's going to be hard to sell the house now and blah, blah, and he said, he's pretty good at stats and things like that. So he said, the thing is, you only have to sell one house. So the aggregate statistics are kind of irrelevant.

**Speaker 2** [00:21:18] Oh, that's interesting.

**Speaker 1** [00:21:20] Like statistics works that way, right? Cause you can have a house that's way over in the tail. Yeah, that's right. Right. So like, if all you have to do is sell that one house, then just sell that. Focus your effort. Focus your effort on that because you don't have to normalize the one house. Right. That's just one data point.

**Speaker 2** [00:21:41] Right, but then take that to people.

**Speaker 1** [00:21:42] That was the point.

**Speaker 2** [00:21:46] Oh, you were explaining it and I missed the point.

**Speaker 1** [00:21:49] I was explaining why.

**Speaker 2** [00:21:50] No, you were making that point. You were connecting it to people.

**Speaker 1** [00:21:52] I'm saying, yeah, like, if we base our individual performance on the norm, on the aggregate statistical norm, as if our individual performance can't exist well beyond or well below the norm. a problem. It's a, it's a it's it's kind of a macro-micro shift in the view that changes the thing.

**Speaker 2** [00:22:27] I wonder if part of our job is to help people think differently about the norm, the concept of the norm. The mental model that is the norm we all have a mental model of what it means to be norm, normal, normative.

**Speaker 1** [00:22:41] I don't know what that is, do people think of that as preferable?

**Speaker 2** [00:22:46] I'm not saying that people prefer to be in the norm, but I do think people.

**Speaker 1** [00:22:51] they prefer to be above the norm, right?

**Speaker 2** [00:22:54] They compare themselves to the norm.

**Speaker 1** [00:22:56] But if they're above the norm by even just a little bit, then they're kind of like, oh, I'm fat and happy. They can be complacent. Or I'm not fat and Happy or whatever. They can complacent They can become complacent

**Speaker 2** [00:23:07] They don't need to challenge themselves.

**Speaker 1** [00:23:08] Yeah, which is kind of a motivation killer.

**Speaker 2** [00:23:13] It is, so I wonder if we should try to change worldwide the way people think about the norm and the way that they compare themselves to the norm.

**Speaker 1** [00:23:23] Yeah, maybe don't. I don't know. It hasn't been a big part of my life. I've always compared myself to me because I just figured... I probably wasn't going to fit in anyway.

**Speaker 2** [00:23:36] Oh, yeah, you came from a different...

**Speaker 1** [00:23:38] So like, I never really was part of the norm, never got to be part of a norm. Yeah. So never really thought of it. I don't think of the normal. Like the norm doesn't have any real value or like. Meaning. Yeah. It's kind of, it's kind.

**Speaker 2** [00:24:00] It's a non-

**Speaker 1** [00:24:00] inert.

**Speaker 2** [00:24:01] non-essential thing. It's interesting because I was on the other end of it, as you know. I was always above the Norman grades and in things and I wasn't until I had actually one particular professor when I was in college. Because when you're told all the time that you're above the norm, you don't push harder than you think you need to push because you think that you are already there. And I remember I wrote a paper for him and it was a good paper. And I handed him my paper. He said, is this the best you can do? Yeah. And I was, and I said, oh, maybe not. And I took the paper back. And then I rewrote it, worked on it some more. Same thing, I hand it to him. He says, is the best she can do. God, maybe it's not, you know, and I, you know, so you doubt you said I went back. I wrote it again, right? And I was writing a three page paper on de Tocqueville's Democracy in America. It was not an easy task, right. So I do the third time and he asked me again and I took it back one more time and then I rewrote it.

**Speaker 4** [00:25:07] fourth time.

**Speaker 2** [00:25:07] The fourth time I handed in, and he said, is this the best you could do? And I said, yes. And he said great. And I got an A minus on it. So sad. I thought it was an A-. But that's the thing is, there was more in me. But I didn't even question that, because I had been taught my whole life that I was better than most. than most.

**Speaker 1** [00:25:29] Yeah, whatever you turned in was good enough. It was going to work, yeah. Right.

**Speaker 2** [00:25:32] Right. And then, but that was transformative for me. So I was like, oh, I can go above expectations. I can push because I want to be better for myself, not because I'm, you know, and it totally changed the way I think about everything from that point on and my first jobs. And so I became that person that went an extra mile. one.

**Speaker 1** [00:25:52] yeah always like contrast that against my experience of like we i think we were reading i forget what grade it was but we were readin like the outsiders or something yeah which i liked the book and i read the book i got a lot out of the book but um there was a book report due and i didn't have like the interest enough to write the book report but at the time I was building a Native American diorama, like the ones in the Natural History Museum with my father, like a really, really nice one, really elaborate, and it took like a couple months to build and I was in the process of building it, and so I turned that in.

**Speaker 2** [00:26:36] You turned in a diorama to satisfy.

**Speaker 1** [00:26:39] a book report on the outsiders.

**Speaker 2** [00:26:41] wasn't even about the book.

**Speaker 1** [00:26:44] This is Jeff.

**Speaker 2** [00:26:45] Totally unrelated.

**Speaker 1** [00:26:46] And, but it was cool. It was super cool. And it was what I was interested in. Yeah. And my teacher just didn't know how to make any sense of it and gave me an app.

**Speaker 2** [00:26:59] Oh, see that's

**Speaker 1** [00:27:00] But it's I think the diorama was like a like a plus.

**Speaker 2** [00:27:06] Yeah, I mean, so that's part of the point, right? So why not have a system where you can demonstrate some understanding of the book in any medium you choose? Or not. Or not, when you could just-

**Speaker 1** [00:27:19] You could just build a diorama.

**Speaker 2** [00:27:20] No, you're right. I don't know how to handle

**Speaker 1** [00:27:23] Like, why that book? It seems pretty random that you just pick a book and make everybody read the same book. Why not just have people read a book that they're interested in? There's a lot of books. Like there's no shortage of books.

**Speaker 2** [00:27:42] Right, I'd say.

**Speaker 1** [00:27:42] So you could just pick a book that you're interested in.

**Speaker 2** [00:27:45] See, that would be more interesting. What if every person picked the book they want to read and then they told the whole class about it for four minutes?

**Speaker 1** [00:27:52] That'd be awesome. And it's like, I read 30 books. Then the class would have read 30 bucks.

**Speaker 2** [00:27:56] That's a good idea.

**Speaker 1** [00:27:57] It's a great idea.

**Speaker 2** [00:27:58] You heard that here because that's a great idea.

**Speaker 1** [00:28:01] We have to normalize which book we read.

**Speaker 2** [00:28:04] Swacky.

**Speaker 1** [00:28:06] That's silly.

**Speaker 2** [00:28:07] Right, so here's a class's example of the problem with the norm as a concept. I was told I was above. You were told you were below. That fundamentally- I wasn't-

**Speaker 1** [00:28:15] I wasn't even on the norm because there was no XY coordinate norm for diorama building. You were on a different page. It was just a dot on a page. You're the anomaly over there. It was a random data point in space.

**Speaker 2** [00:28:31] would think about.

**Speaker 1** [00:28:32] There was no norm associated with it. So sad. Yeah, it's very sad. For little Derek.

**Speaker 2** [00:28:37] or younger dare.

**Speaker 1** [00:28:38] I thought it was a cool project, and I got to work with my dad, which was amazing. And I got the study something I cared about, which is the long homes of the Native Americans. And I've got to build it and tactily think about it at super micro and macro levels, and it was amazing, and we got to go to the Natural History Museum together and see some of the amazing dioramas before we started it. and then we tried to build a diorama that was like museum quality diorama, which I learned a ton of stuff about. You know, I just thought I'd share it with my teacher. Yeah. Seems like a cool thing to do.

**Speaker 2** [00:29:19] It is a cool thing to do, but here's where you butt up against the idea of the norm again. So it's normal.

**Speaker 1** [00:29:24] That was not normal.

**Speaker 2** [00:29:24] Here's what's normal, everybody reads the same book and has to write a report on it, that's normal.

**Speaker 1** [00:29:29] A.K.A boring. Boring, yeah.

**Speaker 2** [00:29:32] That's why I'm saying this norm thing is, it's not good. I mean, I don't know if it's like good. It's just, it kind of, I mean I don' wanna curse, but it's, you know, it messes people up. Think about.

**Speaker 1** [00:29:43] Was that the curse you were going to use?

**Speaker 2** [00:29:44] I'm trying not to curse. It's messed up. But here's the point. It set me on a trajectory where I didn't push myself as much as I could have. It set you on a tragedy where you literally believed for a long part of your life that you were dumb, lazy, you wouldn't fit in. It set up a bunch of mental models for you that became how you interacted with the world and the path that you took, just like it did for me, just different paths. We should think about that. We should start some sort of a campaign to like, stop the norm.

**Speaker 1** [00:30:19] Avoid the noid. Remember Avoid the Noid in Domino's Pizza? He was the little gremlin dude in the pizza that made it like cold or something. Avoid the NOID. We could be AVOID, AVOORM the NORM. Storm the NOR. Storm the norm. Ignore the NORMS. Was that Noid?

**Speaker 2** [00:30:42] I don't remember the NOID.

**Speaker 1** [00:30:43] The Noid, he was like this like little circus clown, like Jester. What's he gonna do with the pizza? I think he would make it cold because it was like when Domino's was offering 30 minutes or less or it's free or something and the Noid would be like this dastardly little guy that would like make the pizza cold or make it do stuff to the pizza. That wasn't cool. There's so many possible things. Yeah. And so.

**Speaker 2** [00:31:10] But what does he do to the pizza?

**Speaker 1** [00:31:11] does bad things to the pizza.

**Speaker 2** [00:31:14] Why is he in a red pantsuit with ears?

**Speaker 1** [00:31:15] He's a poor jester.

**Speaker 2** [00:31:20] There's a picture of him with a pizza crusher here.

**Speaker 1** [00:31:22] Yeah. Oh, that's right. They had the they had the thing in the center.

**Speaker 2** [00:31:26] Oh, the little table thing.

**Speaker 1** [00:31:28] The table!

**Speaker 2** [00:31:29] Little plastic people think

**Speaker 1** [00:31:30] And that would make it so the pizza wouldn't get crushed. That was like an invention at some point. Now it's just kind of standard, but.

**Speaker 2** [00:31:37] Avoid the noise. Okay, so we need to come up with a slogan about the norm. Ignore the norm? Ignore? I don't know if it's ignore the norm...

**Speaker 1** [00:31:43] I'm not like fundamentally against the mathematical concept of norm.

**Speaker 2** [00:31:47] No, but that's what I'm saying. That's where it's useful is mathematically.

**Speaker 1** [00:31:50] Yeah, but it's just like, how much weight do we put in these norms and where we sit in relation to them?

**Speaker 2** [00:31:59] That's the part that I worry about, is how it affects how we think about it.

**Speaker 1** [00:32:02] I think a better measurement is our motto, better every day.

**Speaker 2** [00:32:07] Yes.

**Speaker 1** [00:32:08] You know, we're better at what? At the things you care about? Better than who? Better than yourself? You know? And like, that's kind of the most important measure of success because, you know, success really happens incrementally. That's right. You know. I think Einstein said something to the effect of like, I forget what he said. about compound interest. He said it was like one of the most important ideas in all of the mathematics. And it's just this idea that this like little, these little incremental compounding effects, if we understood that not just as a financial concept, but as like a universal concept, not just in finance, but as something that applies kind of universally to life.

**Speaker 2** [00:33:01] Micromix the mic.

**Speaker 1** [00:33:02] The micro makes the macro. Yeah, it's just like these little things add up. And if you can get better every day than you were the day before at whatever you care about, whether it's diorama building or book reporting or de Tocqueville or well, you know, whatever it is.

**Speaker 2** [00:33:19] Three pages on TOEFL.

**Speaker 1** [00:33:20] Yeah, that's hard, but whatever you care about and do better than you did yesterday.

**Speaker 2** [00:33:26] and compare yourself to yourself.

**Speaker 1** [00:33:28] And compare yourself to yourself.

**Speaker 2** [00:33:29] That's a recipe for happiness because if you're always progressing on the things that you care about in relation to Where you're at and you're starting you that that means that the field you're on is always fair Yeah, right because it's you against you. Yeah, and I think everybody would do better that way

**Speaker 1** [00:33:47] They'd do way better. We'd have a world full of superstars if everybody did that.

**Speaker 2** [00:33:53] Not just superstars, you-

**Speaker 1** [00:33:54] The norm would be super stardom.

**Speaker 2** [00:33:57] Tonight ruined it.

**Speaker 1** [00:33:59] I ruined it.

**Speaker 2** [00:33:59] No, it's not about that. It's not superstars, because superstars still comparative. It is about

**Speaker 1** [00:34:06] I'm saying like people that are just like off the charts doing amazing things for themselves like for themselves Yeah, not just for themselves. They would be doing amazing thing for others Because they would be so good at what they did because they were just focused on Incrementally getting better than they were the day before it's something they were passionate about something they cared about

**Speaker 2** [00:34:24] they'd be happy.

**Speaker 1** [00:34:25] Regardless of whether anybody else cared about it.

**Speaker 2** [00:34:27] but they'd be happier.

**Speaker 1** [00:34:28] and they'd be happier, they would serve the world, they would self-actualize.

**Speaker 2** [00:34:35] you would not have anxiety and insecurity.

**Speaker 1** [00:34:37] I think that's the way to build.

**Speaker 2** [00:34:38] I think that's a winning concept.

**Speaker 1** [00:34:40] better every day is something that we could all do and all get behind and it would be good for everybody and good for society. It would be. And I think, you know, a big part of like what we're doing with the thinking quotient, the assessment and then that kind of establishes a baseline and then you got your your course, the credential course that kind of gives you the background. to sort of get better every day at the mental models that you're making that drive whatever it is you're passionate about, you know? Yeah. That's kind of a, that's the real point behind Better Every Day.

**Speaker 2** [00:35:25] Yeah, and I think the nice thing about Better Every Day is in a way, in a sort of circuitous way through this conversation, it is the opposite of the norm, right? It counteracts that tendency we have to be comparative with others, now we're comparative with ourselves. Exactly. Right? Am I getting better at this or that? How am I improving? And that's a recipe for success. It's a recipe for happiness. It's recipe for. Self-assuredness reduces all those things that people are dealing with.

**Speaker 1** [00:35:58] And we're trying to get better every day ourselves. We're trying get our podcasts better every day. We are. Every episode, and we're super psyched that people are enjoying it and watching it. Yes. Downloading it, liking it, commenting on it. All of those things help us out. Help us move this all forward. Help us moving forward. We're now in the 3% of the podcast worldwide. so we're moving up pretty quick. Um, because of you all, thank you and, uh, share it with your friends, share it with their loved ones, share with your colleagues, share everybody, your enemies, yeah, like people you don't know on the street, just tell them about.

**Speaker 2** [00:36:43] to share it.

**Speaker 1** [00:36:44] Share it because that's going to help us be able to do cooler and cooler things.

**Speaker 2** [00:36:49] It's gonna help us get better every day.

**Speaker 1** [00:36:52] And that, I believe...