

**The Joe Rogan Experience #1309 - Naval Ravikant**

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**Joe Rogan**

Two, one, boom. All right, we're live. Thank you very much for doing this, man. I really appreciate it. I've been absorbing your information and listening to you talk for quite a while now. So, it's great to actually meet you.

**Naval Ravikant**

Thanks for having me.

**Joe Rogan**

My pleasure. My pleasure. You are one of the rare guys that is - you're a big investor. You're deep in the tech world, but yet you seem to have a very balanced perspective in terms of how to live life, as opposed to not just be entirely focused on success and financial success, and tech investing, but rather how to live your life in a happy way. That's not balance.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah. I think the reason why people like hearing me is because it's like if you go to a circus and you see a bear, right? That's kind of interesting but not that much. If you see a unicycle, that's interesting. But you see a bear on a unicycle, that's really interesting, right? So, when you combine things you're not supposed to combine -

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

- people get interested. It's like Bruce Lee, right? Striking thoughts, philosophy, plus martial arts. And I think it's because at some level, all humans are broad. We're all multivariate, but we get summarized in pithy ways in our lives. And at some deep level, we know that's not true, right?

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

Every human basically is capable of every experience and every thought. You're a UFC, comedian, commentator, podcaster, but you're also more than that. You're also Father, lover, thinker, et cetera. So, I like the model of life that the ancients had, the Greeks, the Romans, right? Where you would start out and when you're, young you're just like going to school, then you're going to war, then you're running a business, then you're supposed to serve in the Senate or the government, then you become a philosopher, there's sort of this arc to life where you try your hand at everything. And as one of my friends says, "Specialization is for insects." So, everyone should just be able to do everything. And so, I don't believe in this model anymore of trying to focus your life down on one thing. You've got one life, just do everything you're going to do.

**Joe Rogan**

I couldn't agree more. And I think that sometimes people find certain success in whatever the endeavor is and then they think that that is their niche, and they stick with it, and they never change, and they did it almost out of fear.

**Naval Ravikant**

But it's hard because there is a - the analogy around mountain climbing. It's like if you find a mountain and you start climbing and you spend your whole life climbing it, and you get, say, 2/3 of the way, and then you see the peak is like way up there, but you're 2/3 of the way up. You still really high up, but now to go the rest of the way, you're going to have to go back down to the bottom and look for another path. Nobody wants to do that. People don't want to start over.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

And it's the nature of later in life that you just don't have the time. So it's very painful to go back down and look for a new path, but that may be the best thing to do. And that's why when you look at the greatest artists and creators, they have this ability to start over that nobody else does. Like Elon will be called an idiot and start over, doing something brand new that he supposedly is not qualified for. Or when Madonna or Paul Simon or U2 come out the new album, their existing fans usually hate it, because they've adopted a completely new style that they've learned somewhere else.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

And a lot of times they'll just miss completely. So you have to be willing to be a fool and kind of have that beginner's mind and go back to the beginning to start over. If not doing that, you're just getting older.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah. I mean, I don't even know if it's willing to be a fool. It's just, to me, that the most exciting thing is to try to get better at something, to learn things. I mean, it's really exciting when you just have incremental progress in something that you're completely new to.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah, I live for the "aha!" moment - that moment when you connect two things together that you hadn't connected together before and it fits nicely and solidly and it kind of helps form a steel framework of understanding in your mind that you can then hang other ideas off of. That's what I live for.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

It's like, curiosity fulfilled. It's what little children do too. You know, my little son is always asking why, why, why, why, why. And I always try and answer him. And half the times I realized actually I don't really understand why, I just have a memorized answer for you, but that's not really understanding.

**Joe Rogan**

You know those are weird conversations, right? When you're talking to kids and you say, "Look, the reality is, I don't know a lot of things."

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah. I just memorize a lot of things. Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

And there's certain things that you just can't know.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah, you realize that you have answers for a few things that you've thought through then you sort of have cover ups, like trapdoors, like don't go here. This is just a cover up. I don't really know the answer to -

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

- what the meaning of life is or how we got here.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

And then you've got a whole bunch of memorized stuff because a lot of your - a lot of intelligence these days just the external brain pack of civilization. I know it's out there. I know the answers are out there, and I have to look them up and I've memorized some of them. And I kind of understand how money works and the Federal Reserve prints it and what this government thing is, but not really.

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

So.

**Joe Rogan**

Not good enough to teach it in university.

**Naval Ravikant**

Exactly. Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah. I think people do that with almost everything in life these days, in terms of like have like a one page, a one sheet, like a brief summary of what the explanation for what this very complex subject might be.

**Naval Ravikant**

TL;dr, right?

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

Don't give me the lecture, give me the book. Don't give me the book, give me the blog post.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

Don't give me the blog post, give me the tweet. Don't give me the tweet - I just - I already know.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah. I got really fascinated by the way you read, because I thought there was something wrong with me by doing that. But you don't really just read a book to completion, you read and then you pick something else up and you just kind of go based on your whims, whatever you're interested in.

**Naval Ravikant**

I was raised by my - I was raised by a single mom in New York, and she used the local library as a daycare center, because it was a very tough neighborhood. And so she would basically say, "When you get back from school, go straight to a library and don't come out until I pick you up late at night." So I used to basically live in the library, and I read everything; I read every magazine, I read every pictograph, I read every book, I read every map. I just went up stuff to read. I just read everything. So I got over this idea of that reading a large number of books or reading a book to completion as a

vanity metric. Because really, when people are putting up photos on Twitter, Instagram, and look at my pile of books that I'm reading, it's a show off thing. It's a similar thing, right?

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah. Sure.

**Naval Ravikant**

And the reality is, I would rather read the best 100 books over and over again until I absorbed them, rather than read all the books.

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah. Because your brain has finite information. Finite space. You get enough advice, it all cancels to zero. There's a lot of nonsense in books out there too. So I don't read anymore to complete books, I read to satisfy my genuine intellectual curiosity. And it can be anything; it could be nonsense, it could be history, could be fiction, it could be science, it could be sci-fi. These days it's mostly sci-fi philosophy science because that's just what I'm interested in, but I will read for understanding. So, a really good book, I will flip through. I won't actually read it consecutive in order and I won't even [inaudible 0:07:05] when I finish it. I'm looking for ideas, things that I don't understand. And when I find something really interesting, I'll reflect on it. I'll research it. And then when I'm bored of it, I'll drop it or I'll flip to another book. Thanks to electronic books I've got 50, 70 books open at any time on my Kindle or iBooks and I'm just bouncing around between them. It's also a little bit of a defense mechanism to how in modern society we get too much information too quickly, and so our attention spans are very low. So you get Twitter, you get Instagram, you get Facebook, you just used to being bombarded with information. So you can take that too. You can view that as a negative and be like, "I have no attention span," or you could view that as a positive, "I multitask really well and I can dig really fast. I can - if I find a thread that's interesting, I can follow through five social networks through the Web, through the libraries, through the books, and I can really get to the bottom of this thing very quickly. It's like the Library of Alexandria that I can research at my disposal." So I no longer track books read or even care about books read. It's about understanding concepts.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah. You brought up two awesome points. First of all, the social media aspect of books and basically anything. It's like, it's such a weird way to display your life because, you know, you're displaying the best aspects of your life and some sort of a glass case, you know, just, it's an unrealistic version of your life that you cultivate and you curate.

**Naval Ravikant**

And I'm as guilty of that as anybody.

**Joe Rogan**

Everybody's guilty of it. I'm guilty of it too.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

I mean, I pose with my dog every time I run.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah. We're always signaling, right?

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

It's like, rather than really looking at yourself, you're looking at how other people look at you. It's like this one remove mental image. And it's kind of a disease because social media is making celebrities of all of us, and celebrity is the most miserable people in the world, right? Because they're this strong self image that gets built up, it gets built up by compliments. Every time somebody pays you or me a compliment and we're like, "Oh, well, thank you." Right? Then that builds up an image of who we are. And then one idiot comes along, one out of ten, one out of 100, and they can easily tear it down. Because it doesn't take many insults to cancel out a lot of compliments. And now you're carrying around this big weighty self image, and it's just very easy to be attacked. And because you're famous or you're well known people want to attack you. So, being a celebrity is no good. It's actually a problem. Like, one of my tweets is - these are all reminders to myself, is, "You want to be rich and anonymous, not poor and famous."

**Joe Rogan**

There's benefits to it.

**Naval Ravikant**

Of course. Of course.

**Joe Rogan**

But -

**Naval Ravikant**

We wouldn't do it.

**Joe Rogan**

It has unusual problems that you don't get trained for, and you really will not understand unless you experience it. You know, it goes having this conversation with my wife. We're talking about people that just come up to you and they don't care what you're doing. They don't care if I'm with my daughter, if I'm holding her, if I'm feeding her, if we're, you know, we're in the middle of an intense conversation. She's crying. She could be crying. And some bro will come over and just immediately have to take a picture, doesn't care, his needs supersede the daughter. And my wife is saying that before she knew me she used to think that that's just part of the price of being famous, that people like you. That's just part of the price being famous. And now when it interrupts her life, and, you know, it interrupts the children interrupts friends and, you know, she - now she's like, "This is annoying. Like this is not healthy. This is not a smart way to interact with people." And that people have this weird challenge, this weird thing that if you become famous, there's this weird challenge where people just want to come to you. Especially today. Because if they get a photo of you, then that boost their social media profile. Like, "Hey I'm sitting here with [inaudible 0:10:52]. Look at this [inaudible 0:10:54]."

**Naval Ravikant**

Anonymity is a privilege. On the other hand it's self-inflicted.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes. Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

I mean, we brought it on ourselves.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah. I don't think we knew what it was though.

**Naval Ravikant**

We did. But we carry on, so.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

It tells us we are getting something out of it, so.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.



**Naval Ravikant**

You know, there are times when some someone approach me in public and I'm a little resentful. And there are other times I just like actually, I'm really grateful that, you know, I worked for this. I got this.

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

This is the payoff, just embrace it, smile, grin and bear it.

**Joe Rogan**

But you have a different sort of celebrity too, right? You're a hero amongst investors and amongst - I mean, you've just been part of -

**Naval Ravikant**

I'm a hero among young male geeks. Which is -

**Joe Rogan**

Those are some of my favorite people.

**Naval Ravikant**

Right. But that's not the kind of celebrity I think most people set out to get.

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

Especially most guys.

**Joe Rogan**

Right. Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

You want the cute females.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah, you want chicks.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah. Yeah, I look at my brief little YouTube clips that have a tiny little podcast going now, and it's like 95% male.

**Joe Rogan**

Sure. Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

Maybe the -

**Joe Rogan**

This is very highly -

**Naval Ravikant**

18 to 35.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah. What do we - What does the numbers? Yeah. It's in the 90s.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

You do that one very small podcast where you just have small with three or four minute clips.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah. So what it was, I did a tweet storm called: How to Get Rich without Getting Lucky. And it got pretty popular on Twitter. And it's really about wealth creation. I just used a click bait-y title. And it's trying to basically layout timeless principles of wealth creation that if you absorb them, you become the kind of person who can create wealth, create business, make money. And my theory behind that is like there are three things everybody wants. There's actually more than three, but let's start with three. The three basics. Everybody wants to be wealthy, everybody wants to be happy and everybody wants to be fit. And I know there's a lot of virtue sitting that goes on, like we don't want money and, you know, I don't care about being happy, and happiness is for stupid people. But let's face it, like you want to be rich and happy and healthy.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

That's the trifecta. Now of course you also want to internally calm state of mind, you want a loving household. So there are other things that come into it. But those three, I think they can actually be taught, right? And a fitness, I'm not going to teach. There a lot of people who you've had on here including yourself who know a heck of a lot more about fitness and health than I do. But I was born poor and miserable and I'm now pretty well off and I'm very happy. And I worked at those, and so I've learned a few things. There are some principles. And so I try to lay them out, but in a timeless

manner where you can kind of figure it out yourself. Because at the end of the day, I can't really teach anything, I can only inspire you and maybe give you a few hooks, so you can remember things when they happen, or put a name to them. So this podcast actually ended up explaining this tweet storm. So there's a tweet storm with like 36, 38 tweets, got very famous, got translated in dozens of languages. And these were principles that I came up with for myself when I was really young, around 13, 14. And I've been carrying them in my head for 30 years and I'd been sort of living them. And over time I just realized, like, sadly, or fortunately, the thing that I got really good at was looking at businesses and figuring out the point of maximum leverage to actually create wealth and capture some of that. And do it in very long term kind of way, not the, you know, banker crash the economy.

**Joe Rogan**

Right. Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

Get build up kind of way. But, you know, build businesses and help people and provide value kind of way. Especially when applied to modern technology and leverage in this age of infinite leverage that we live in. So the podcast is just explaining each tweet. So these a little three, four, five minute snippets. I don't like to say the same thing twice. I don't like to explain in detail. I just - I feel like, if you have something original and interesting to say, you should say it. Otherwise it's probably been said better. So that podcast tries to be information dense. It tries to be very concise, it tries to be high impact, it tries to be timeless, and it has all the information. I think you need the principle that if you absorbed these, and you work hard over 10 years, you'll get what you want. So I've got the one on wealth creation, I'm going to attempt to do one on - happiness is a big word but - you know, happiness and inner peace and calm and all that. Because what you want is you don't want to be the guy who succeeds in life while being high strung, high stress, and unhappy and leaving a trail of emotional wreckage with you and your loved ones.

**Joe Rogan**

Which is more common than not.

**Naval Ravikant**

Because you got to focus.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

And it's very hard to be great at everything. You want to be the guy or the gal who gets there calmly, you know, quietly, without struggle. You want to be the person who's the - when there's a crisis going on, you want to be the calmest, coolest cucumber in the room who still also figures out the correct answer.

**Joe Rogan**

If you can be. You were - One of the things you were saying is that you feel like happiness is something that you can learn, and then you can teach yourself to be happy, even just by adopting the mindset that you are a happy person and proclaiming that to your friends. And so you've sort of developed a social contract. I'm a happy person. And I have to live up to that.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah. I've got hundreds of techniques. But the mo-

**Joe Rogan**

How did you develop that one?

**Naval Ravikant**

Well, there's just a - There's social consistency, right? Humans have a need to be highly consistent with their past pronouncements. So the way I started my first tech company was I was in a - working inside a larger organization, and I told everybody that I was going to start a company. I was like, "I hate this place. I'm gonna do my own thing. I'm gonna be a successful entrepreneur." Six months passed, nine months pass, then people started, "You're still here? I thought you were gonna go start a company. Are you lying?"

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah. Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

That was the implication. So we kind of know this, right? Social contracts are very powerful. Like if you want to give up drinking, right? And you're not serious about it, you'll say, "I'm gonna cut back, and then I have only one drink a night, I'm gonna only drink on weekends." You tell yourself. But if you're serious, you announce it on Facebook. You'll tell your friends, you'll tell your wife, you'll say, "I'm done drinking. I'm throwing everything out of the house. You'll never see me drink again." When you say that you know you're serious. So I think a lot of these are choices that we make. And happiness is just one of those choices. And this is unpopular to say because there are people who are actually depressed, you know, chemically or what have you. And there are people who don't believe that it's possible because then it creates a responsibility on them. It says, "Oh now, if I'm - you're saying if I'm not happy, that's my fault." I'm not saying that. But I'm saying that, just like fitness can be a choice, health can be a choice, nutrition can be a choice, working hard and making money can be a choice, happiness is also a choice. If you're so smart, how come you aren't happy? How come you haven't figured that out? That's my challenge to all the people who think they're so smart and so capable. If you're so smart and capable, why can't you change this?

**Joe Rogan**

There are a bunch of people though that actually take pleasure in being miserable. There's something about the pursuit of excellence and of success that supersedes all other pursuits, that in their eyes, it is the peak, the pinnacle, the most important thing.

**Naval Ravikant**

It's not a tradeoff. I would argue that I - Now, when I say happy, happy is one of those words that means a bazillion different things.

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

It's like love, right? What does that mean?

**Joe Rogan**

Right. I love cheese.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah. I find it a little bit more tightly, right? So let's go back to desire, right? This is old, old Buddhist wisdom. I'm not saying anything original. But desire, to me, is a contract that you make with yourself to be unhappy until you get what you want. Okay? And I keep that in front of minds. So when I'm unhappy about something, I look for what is the underlying desire that I have that's not being fulfilled. It's okay to have desires. You're a biological creature, and you put on this earth, you have to do something, you have to have desires, you have a mission. But don't have too many. Don't pick them up unconsciously. Don't pick them up randomly. Don't have thousands of them. My coffee's too cold, doesn't taste quite right. I'm not sitting perfectly. Oh, I wish it was warmer. You know. My dog, you know, pooped in the lawn, I don't like that. Whatever it is. Pick your one overwhelming desire. It's okay to suffer over that one, but on all the others, do you want to let them go so you can be calm and peaceful and relaxed? And then you'll perform a better job. Most people, when you're unhappy, like a depressed person, it's not that they have very clear calm mind. They're too busy in their mind. Their sense of self is too strong. They're sitting indoors all the time. Their minds working, working, working. They're thinking too much. Well, if you want to be a high performance athlete, how good of an athlete are you gonna be if you're always having epileptic seizures? If you're always like twitching and running around and like jumping, and your limbs or flailing out of control? The same way if you want to be effective in business, you need a clear, calm, cool, collected mind. Warren Buffett plays bridge all day long and goes for walks in the sun. He doesn't sit around like constantly loading his brain with non-stop information and getting worked up about every little thing. We live in an age of infinite leverage. What I mean by that is that your actions can be multiplied a thousand fold, either by broadcasting at a podcast or by investing capital or by having people work for you or by writing code. So because of that, the impacts of good decision making are much higher than they used to be. Because now you can influence thousands

or millions of people through your decisions or your code. So, a clear mind leads to better judgment, leads to a better outcome. So a happy, calm, peaceful person, will make better decisions and have better outcomes. So if you want to operate at peak performance, you have to learn how to tame your mind just like you've learned how to tame your body.

**Joe Rogan**

I love what you're saying. Warren Buffett might not be the best example because he drinks like I think six Coca-Cola is a day and he eats mostly McDonald's.

**Naval Ravikant**

And he's still alive somehow.

**Joe Rogan**

It's amazing.

**Naval Ravikant**

It shows you that low stress is more important than -

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah, but he looks like shit. Like, how old is he? I mean, he's a fairly old man, right?

**Naval Ravikant**

But Charlie Munger is I think in his 90s, right?

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

He's made it really far.

**Joe Rogan**

I wonder what Warren's doing, you know. I mean, just, he's got to know that's bad for him.

**Naval Ravikant**

It's terrible.

**Joe Rogan**

But he doesn't care.

**Naval Ravikant**

He doesn't care. I think he's just low stress.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

Stress is the big cure.

**Joe Rogan**

Right. So he's just enjoys that Coca-Cola.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

And that's a problem. Maybe there is a tradeoff, right? It may be him enjoying that junk food and that coke, just that the pleasing of the mind is maybe better than him just eating wheat-grass shots and

-

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah, and be miserable.

**Joe Rogan**

- canned salads and just being - Yeah, just super worked up about everything.

**Naval Ravikant**

It's like if you need your glass of red wine to de-stress and calm down, that's probably better than you flying off the rails.

**Joe Rogan**

Right. Right. And I think that that's applicable not just in business but in probably any pursuit. And I like what you're saying about allow that one thing to be your obsession, but everything else just, you know, learn how to let things go. Pick your battles.

**Naval Ravikant**

And we'd like to think that - we'd like to view the world as linear, which is, I'm gonna put in eight hours of work, I'm gonna get back eight hours of output, right? Doesn't work that way. Guy running the corner grocery store is working just as hard or harder than you and me. How much output is he getting? What you do, who you do it with. How you do it, way more important than how hard you work, right? Outputs are non-linear based on the quality of the work that you put in. The right way to work is like a lion. You don't - you and I are not like cows. We're not meant to graze all day, right? We're meant to hunt like lions. We're closer to carnivores in our omnivorous development than we are to herbivores.

**Joe Rogan**

Don't tell vegans that.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah, sorry. Look, I wish all that stuff worked. I don't want to eat meat. Future generations will look back at us as worse than slavers, you know, because the holocaust were committing with the animals, but they'll have artificial meat to taste and are healthier, it is better than the real thing, so.

**Joe Rogan**

Allegedly.

**Naval Ravikant**

Allegedly. But, so, as a modern knowledge worker athlete, as an intellectual athlete, you want to function like an athlete. Which means you train hard, then you sprint, then you rest, then you reassessed. You get a feedback loop, then you train some more, then you sprint again, then you rest, then you reassess. This idea that you're going to have linear output just by cranking every day at the same amount of time sitting - that's that's machines, you know. Machines should be working 9:00 to 5:00. Humans are not meant to work 9:00 to 5:00.

**Joe Rogan**

No, I agree wholeheartedly. But that's - for people that are working for someone, there's not really that option.

**Naval Ravikant**

So that's unfortunately the the rub, right?

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

That's kind of where my tweet storm starts. Which is first of all, the first thing if you're gonna make money is that you're not gonna get rich renting out your time. Even lawyers and doctors who are charging 3- 4- 500 dollars an hour, they're not getting rich because their lifestyle is slowly ramping up -

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

- along with their income, and they're not saving enough. They just don't have that bit of retire. So the first thing you have to do is you have to own a piece of a business. You need to have equity,



either as an owner, an investor, shareholder or a brand that you're building that accrues to you to gain your financial freedom.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah. And I was really fascinated by another thing that you were bringing up about working for yourself that you feel in the future whether it's 50 or 100 years from now, virtually everyone is going to be working for themselves. And believe the way you put it is that the information age is gonna reverse the industrial age.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah. If you go back to hunter gatherer times, how we evolved, we basically worked for ourselves. We communicated and cooperated within tribes, but each hunter, each gatherer, stood on their own, and then combined their resources of the family unit. But there was no boss, hierarchy, hierarchy, hierarchy.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

Where you're like the third middle manager down. In the farming age, we became a little bit more hierarchical as we had to run farms, but even those were still mostly family farms. It's industrial work with factories that sort of created this model of thousands of people working together on one thing and having bosses at schedules and times to show up. The reality is, if you have to go - I don't care how rich you are. I don't care whether you're like a top Wall Street banker. If you have to go - If somebody has to tell you - Somebody can tell you when to be at work and what to wear and how to behave, you're not a free person.

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

You're not actually rich. So we're in this model now where we think it's all about employment and jobs. And intrinsic in that is that I have to work for somebody else. But the information age is breaking that down. So Ronald Coase is an economist who has this cost here and a very famous theorem, but he basically just talks about why is a company the size that it is. Why is a company one person, instead of ten people, instead of one hundred, instead of a thousand. And it has to do with the internal transaction costs which is the external transaction costs. Let's say I want to do something - let's say I'm building a house, and I need someone to come in and provide the lumber. I'm a developer, right? Do I want that to be part of my company? Or do I want that to be an external provider? A lot of it just depends on how hard it is to do that transaction with someone externally versus internally. If it's too hard to keep doing the contract every time externally, I'll bring that in-house. If it's easy to do externally and it's a one-off kind of thing, I'd rather keep it out of the

house. Well, information technology is making it easier and easier to do these transactions externally. It's becoming much easier to communicate with people. Gig economy, I can send you small amounts of money, I can hire you through an app, I can rate you afterwards. So we're seeing an atomization of the firm. We're seeing the optimal size of the firms shrinking. It's most obvious in Silicon Valley. Tons and tons of startups constantly coming up and shaving off little pieces of businesses from large companies and turning them into huge markets. So what look like the small little vacation rental market on Craigslist is now suddenly blown up into Airbnb. It's just one example.

### **Joe Rogan**

That's great example.

### **Naval Ravikant**

But what I think we're going to see is whether it's 10, 20, 50, 100 years from now, high quality work will be available. We're not talking about I'm driving an Uber, we're talking about super high quality work will be available in a gig fashion, where you'll wake up in the morning, your phone will buzz and you'll have five different jobs from people who have worked within the past or have been referred to you. It's kind of how Hollywood already works a little bit with how they organize for a project, you decide whether to take the project or not. The contract is right there on the spot. You get paid a certain amount. You get rated every day or every week. You get the money delivered. And then when you're done working, you turn it off and you go to Tahiti or wherever you want to spend the next three months. And I think the smart people have already started figuring out that the internet enables this. And they're starting to work more and more remotely on their own schedule, on their own time, on their own place, with their own friends, in their own way. And that's actually how we are the most productive. So the information revolution by making easier to communicate, connect and cooperate, is allowing us to go back to working for ourselves. And that is my ultimate dream. Even when I run a company and I have employees, I always tell those people, "Hey, I'm gonna help you start your company when you're ready." Because I think that's the highest calling. Maybe not everybody will get there, but it would be fine if we were - even working at 10 person company or 20 person company is way better than working in 1,000 person company or 10,000 person company. So this idea that we're all factory, like cogs in a machine, who are specialized and have to do things by rote memorization or instruction is gonna go away and we're gonna go back to being small groups of creative bands of individuals, setting out to do missions. And when those missions are done, we collect our money, we get rated, and then we rest and reassess until we're ready for the next sprint.

### **Joe Rogan**

Has there ever been a study done on happiness as it regards the size of companies?

### **Naval Ravikant**

Not that I'm aware, but to me it's obvious. It's just obvious. The smaller, the company the happy you're gonna be, the more human your relations are.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

The less you have rules to operate under the more flexible, the more creative. The more you'll be treated like a human just because you're able to do multiple things.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah. This brings me to what is a subject that keeps getting brought up nowadays is universal basic income with the oncoming -

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

- apocalypse of automation. This is how it's being portrayed by Andrew Yang who's running for president. I sat down and talked to them about it, it's very compelling. And he's a very smart guy. And he's an entrepreneur himself. And when he starts talking about automation and how it's going to just eliminate massive amounts of jobs and leave people stranded, what - do you - I know you're a guy who thinks about the future.

**Naval Ravikant**

I'm gonna brought the unpopular point of view on this.

**Joe Rogan**

Okay.

**Naval Ravikant**

I think it's a non-solution to a non-problem. And I mean that in the sense that automation has been happening since the dawn of time. When electricity came along, that put a lot of people out of work.

**Joe Rogan**

Did it?

**Naval Ravikant**

Right? A lot of people carrying buckets of water and, you know, lighting lamps and all those kinds of things.

**Joe Rogan**

And this was the concern with factories as well.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah. Abs- Everything. Literally every single thing that comes along.

**Joe Rogan**

Even the printing press, right?

**Naval Ravikant**

Absolutely. And what it does is it frees people up for new creative work. The question is not, is automation gonna eliminate jobs? There is no finite number of jobs.

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

We're not like sitting around dividing up the same jobs that were around since the Stone Age. So obviously new jobs are being created and they're usually better jobs, more creative jobs. So the question is, how quickly is this transition going to happen? And what kinds of jobs will be eliminated? What kinds of jobs will be created? It's impossible looking forward to predict what kinds of jobs will be created. If I told you ten years ago that podcast was gonna be a job or that, you know, playing video games gonna be a job, or commentating on video games is gonna be a job, you would have laughed me out of the room.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

Those are nonsense jobs. But yet here we are. So society will always create new jobs, civilization creates new jobs, but it's impossible to predict what those jobs are. So the question is, how quickly is that transition happening? Well, the reality is even though everybody keeps talking about this automation apocalypse, where did record low unemployment? Explain that. Where's the transition?

**Joe Rogan**

Donald Trump! That's it.

**Naval Ravikant**

All I'm saying is, it's - I don't see it in the numbers. I don't see it actually happening.

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

The question is, how quickly can you retrain people? So it's an education problem. The problem with UBI - there's a couple of problems with UBI. One is, you're creating a straight - you creating a slippery slide transfer straight into socialism, right? The moment people can start voting themselves money, combine with a democracy.

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

It's just a matter of time before the bottom 51 votes themselves. Everything the top 40 line.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

And it just - By the slippery slope, fallacy is not a farce. I know people like saying that, but they haven't thought it through. But the moment you start having a direct transfer mechanism like that in a democracy, you're basically doing it with capitalism which is the engine of economic growth. You're also forcing the entrepreneurs out or telling them not to come here. The estimate I saw for 15 K, your basic income for everybody would be three quarters of current GDP. And of course GDP would shrink in response as all the entrepreneurs fled. So you would essentially bankrupt the country. Another issue with UBI is that, people who are down on their luck, they're not looking for handouts. It's not just about money. It's also about status. It's about meaning. And the moment I start giving money to you and put you on the dole, I've lowered your status, I've made you a second class citizen. So I have to give you meaning. And meaning comes through education and capability. You have to teach a man to fish, not to basically throw your rotting leftover carcasses at him and say, "Here, eat the scraps." So it doesn't solve the meaning problem. And lastly it's nonsense to hand 15 K out to everybody, you want to means test people. There's no reason to give it to you and me. So you end up back towards the welfare system where you do have to figure out who needs it and who doesn't. So I think the better route is that we actually establish a set of basic substance services that you have to have and we provide those in abundance to technology based automation. So get basic housing, get basic food, get basic transportation, get high speed internet access, get a phone in your pocket. Those are the kinds of things you want to give people. And finally, in terms of the rate of automation, I think we can educate people very quickly. One of the myths that we have today is that adults can't be reeducated. We view education as this thing where you go to school, you come out and you're out of college and you're done. No more education. Well, that's wrong. You have all these great online boot camps and coding schools coming up there are ones that even pay you to go there now. You can educate people and mass, and you can educate them into creative professions. People who are talking about AI automating programming - I've never really written serious code. Coding is thinking, it's automatic structure of thinking. And AI, they can program as well or better than humans is an AI that just took over the world. That's end game. That's the end of

the human species. And I can give you arguments why I don't think that's coming either. People who are thinking – and I know it take the opposite side from some very famous people in this debate, but we're nowhere near close to General A.I. Not in our lifetimes. You don't have to worry about it.

**Joe Rogan**

Even in our lifetimes? Really?

**Naval Ravikant**

It's so overblown. It's another – it's a combination of Cassandra complex. You know, it's fun to talk about the end of the world combined with a God complex, like people who have lost religion so they're looking for meaning in some kind of end of history.

**Joe Rogan**

Right. Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

The reason why I don't think AI is coming anytime soon is because a lot of the advances in so-called AI today are what we call narrow AI. They're really at pattern recognition machine learning to figure out, like what is that object on the screen or how do you find the signal and all of that noise. There is nothing approaching what we call creative thinking. To actually model general intelligence, you run into all kinds of problems. First, we don't know how the brain works at all. Number two, we've never even modeled a paramecium or an amoeba, let alone a human brain. Number three, there's this assumption that all of the computation is going at the cellular level, at the neuron level, whereas nature is very parsimonious. It uses everything at its disposal. There's a lot of machinery inside the cell that is doing calculations that is intelligent that isn't accounted for. And the best estimates are would take 50 years of Moore's Law before we can simulate what's going on inside a cell near perfectly, and probably 100 years before we can build a brain that can simulate inside the cells. So putting it at saying that I'm just gonna model neuron is on or off, and then use that to build the human brain is overly simplistic. Furthermore, I would posit there's no such thing as general intelligence. Every intelligence is contextual within the context of the environment that it senses. It evolves in the environment around it. So I think a lot of people who are pedaling general AI the burden of proof is on them. I haven't seen anything that would lead me to indicate we're approaching general AI. Instead, we're solving deterministic closed set finite problems using large amounts of data, but it's not sexy to talk about that.

**Joe Rogan**

If you're talking about mirroring the actual abilities of cells or are you talking about recreating the actual mechanism? Like, what is going on inside cells and biological organisms.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah, we just don't know how intelligence works.

**Joe Rogan**

Right. We don't know.

**Naval Ravikant**

We have no idea. So most of the AI approaches basically say we're gonna try and model how the brain works. But they model it at the neuron level which is saying, this neuron's on, that neuron's off.

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

They're combining their signal. But I'm saying, the neuron is a cell inside the cell. There's all this machinery going on that's operating the neuron that is also part of the intelligence apparatus. You can't just ignore that an abstract that out. You have to model it down to the inside the cell level.

**Joe Rogan**

It's also part of the biological organism itself.

**Naval Ravikant**

And it has all these needs that, you know, the biological organism has to have food and rest.

**Joe Rogan**

There's a balance going on. But when you eliminate all that, when there is none of that, and it's just calculations, and we get to a point where it's just this thing that we've created whether we call a computer, but it doesn't have to be a moving thing even a thing that you've created that stores virtually all the information that's available in the world, stores all of the patterns, of all the thinking, of all the great people that have ever lived, all the writers, all the people that have ever published anything, all the people that have ever spoken any words. Stores all of their points, all of their counterpoints, all their contradictions, applies logic and reason and some sort of sense of the future, and starts improving upon these patterns, and then starts acting on its own, based on the information that's been provided with.

**Naval Ravikant**

Well, first you would have to actually simulate a structure of the human brain that can hold all that information. You're basically done with tens of thousands of brains worth of information.

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

We can't even build one brain in the next decade or two or three.

**Joe Rogan**

Well, in terms of an actual physical brain, yes, but what about something that recreates the abilities of a brain?

**Naval Ravikant**

Like I said, nature is parsimonious. So we've got this three pound [inaudible 0:37:39] object that can hold all this data. Nature has been very efficient in evolving kind of how we get there. I just don't think computers are anywhere close to that, like they can hold that amount of data with that complexity, with like the holographic structure of the brain where it can recall in many, many different ways. And then I don't think you can evolve a creature to be intelligent outside of the boundaries of feedback in a real medium. Like, if you evolved - if you raised a human being at concrete cell with no input from the outside, they wouldn't have any feedback from the real world.

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

They wouldn't evolve properly. So I think just dumping information into a thing isn't enough. It has to have an environment to operate in, to get feedback from. It needs to have context.

**Joe Rogan**

But isn't that biological? I mean, if you have just the - all the information that people have accumulated and the lessons that people have learned, and you program that into the computer. Like, if we can take a computer that can beat someone at chess, the real question was, well, can we make it some sort of an artificial intelligence could beat someone at Go? Which is far more complex a chess. They figured out how to do that too. And that was a giant shock, right?

**Naval Ravikant**

These are still man made very closed bounded games. They're not on the road to the unbounded game of life. They are completely artificial.

**Joe Rogan**

But this - didn't Go, didn't that give you like a little bit of a pause?

**Naval Ravikant**

A little bit. Go is not - Go or League of Legends or Fortnite, they're not completely deterministic.

**Joe Rogan**

Right.



**Naval Ravikant**

But they're still very artificial or very bounded games. Being good at Go doesn't mean that you can then suddenly figure out how to write great poetry.

**Joe Rogan**

Right. The creativity for sure is something that's afraid.

**Naval Ravikant**

A creativity is the last frontier. So I do believe that automation, over a long enough period of time, will replace every non-creative job or every non-creative work. But that's great news. That means that all of our basic needs are taken care of. And what remains for us is to be creative, which is really what every human wants.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

I mean, what are you doing right now?

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

This is the creative job.

**Joe Rogan**

Sure. That brings us back to the idea of meaning and universal basic income. I think the idea of giving someone \$15,000 a year doesn't necessarily cause whatever one would worry about is people being on the dole. You would have a bunch of listless people out there with no meaning in life. But the idea is that \$15,000 a year, and I'm not necessarily sure I agree with this, I'm not even endorsing this. But that \$15,000 a year would just provide you with the necessities to get by in life. It would give you food. It would give you shelter.

**Naval Ravikant**

Well, it's not gonna stop at 15, because the moment people are like - I mean, 15 like -

**Joe Rogan**

People gonna demand more.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

Brad Sanders would be on the -

**Naval Ravikant**

15, 16, 17, 18, 19 -

**Joe Rogan**

I want \$45,000 a year. These companies are too big. Yeah, that could happen.

**Naval Ravikant**

It doesn't stop. It just goes all the way to bankruptcy.

**Joe Rogan**

The concern is the slide to socialism.

**Naval Ravikant**

It's obvious.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

I mean, heck if I was on - if I was not working and I was getting my 15, I would happily vote for the guy who would give me 20 or 25. It's just common sense. We'd be stupid not to.

**Joe Rogan**

What do you say to the people that don't believe that there is such a thing of ethical as ethical or compassionate capitalism? There's many people today that are espousing Marxism and they're espousing some sort of a socialist society where they believe that capitalism is screwed people over and eliminated the middle class and -

**Naval Ravikant**

There absolute problems with capitalism. I think monopolies are a problem. I think that crony capitalism is a problem, but the government, you know, kind of gets in bed with them and sort of forces things. I think the bankers have really, you know, raped society and the rest of us are suffering for it.

**Joe Rogan**

Literally.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah. They've essentially taken huge risks where they privatize the gains and the socialize of losses. So when it fails, they basically get bailed out and bankrupt everybody else. So capitalism has gotten a really bad name. Let's talk about its free exchange, free markets. Free markets and free exchange are intrinsic to humans, from when the first person started a fire and somebody came along with a deer and said, "Hey, if I cook my deer on your fire, I'll share some of it with you," right? So specialization of labor, we trade, that's built into the human species. Basic math comes from accounting, keeping track of debts and credits and so on. We need to be able to engage in free trade. The correct criticism of capitalism is when it does not provide equal opportunity. And so we should always strive to provide equal opportunity. But people confuse that with equal outcome. When you have equal outcome, that can only be enforced through violence. Because different people - free people make different choices. And when they make different choices, they have different outcomes. If you don't let them suffer the consequences of bad choices or reap the rewards from good choices, then you are forcibly redistributing through violence. It's interesting that there isn't - that there are no socialist - working socialist examples that exist without violence. You basically need someone to show up with a gun and say, "Okay, you're not allowed to do that. You hand this over to that person." So one of the reasons why I do this podcast is because I believe everybody can be wealthy. Everybody. It's not a zero sum game. It is a positive sum game. You create something brand new, you exchange it with me for something brand new I've created, there's higher utility for both of us. The sum of the value created is positive. It's not like status where it's like you're higher up, I'm lower down; you're, president, I must be vice president; you're a plus one, I'm a minus one. It has to cancel zero. We should be all for playing positive some ethical games. The problem is because of these looters who have ruined capitalism's name, but then you get socialists coming in and saying, "Burn the whole system down."

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

You burn the whole system down, we end up like Venezuela or the former Soviet Union. You don't want to be a failed socialist states with emaciated teens hunting cats in the streets to eat, right? That's literally what happens in some of these places. So I think it is very important not to destroy the engine of progress that brought us here.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah, the idea that socialism just hasn't worked yet that it needs to - we just need to do it right. If we do it right we can - Have you ever [inaudible 0:43:49]?

**Naval Ravikant**

Right. 100 million debt and -

**Joe Rogan**

Yes. Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

Let's keep trying.

**Joe Rogan**

All over the world. Yeah. And in every single time -

**Naval Ravikant**

Absolutely.

**Joe Rogan**

- it's been implemented. Have you ever had a conversation with someone who is a socialist? Were you -

**Naval Ravikant**

Oh, many times. Some of my better friends are socialist.

**Joe Rogan**

Really?

**Naval Ravikant**

We really get into it. Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

And what does that - I mean, does anyone have a compelling perspective at all?

**Naval Ravikant**

I think really socialism comes from the heart, right? We all want to be socialist. Capitalism comes from the head because there are always cheaters in any system.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

And there's incentives in a system. So when you're young, if you're not a socialist, you have no heart. When you're older, if you're not a capitalist you have no head, right?

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

You haven't thought it through. So I understand where it comes from. I always liked Nassim Taleb [inaudible 0:44:24] on this, where he said, "With my family, I'm a communist. With my close friends, I'm a socialist. You know. At my state level politics, I'm a Democrat. At, you know, higher levels, I'm a Republican. And at the federal level, I'm a libertarian." Right? So basically the larger the group of people you have mass together who have different interests, the less trust there is, the more cheating there is, the better the incentives have to be aligned, the better the system has to work, the more you go towards capitalism. The smaller the group you're in; you're in a kibbutz, you're in your Commie and you're in your house, you're in your tribe, by all means, be a socialist. With my aunts, with my brother, with my cousins, with my uncles, with my mom with my family.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

I'm a socialist. That's the right way to live a loving, happy, integrated life.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

But when you're dealing with strangers, I mean, you want to be a real socialist, great. Open all your doors and windows tomorrow.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

Please everybody, come take what you want. See how that works out.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah. This idea of income inequality, that always strikes me as a very - it's a deceptive term. Income inequality.

**Naval Ravikant**

Well, let's flip it around. It comes from outcome inequality.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

And the outcome inequality is there because you made different choices. Now again, going back, if it was because you didn't have the same opportunities, that's a problem.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

So society should always try to give people equal opportunities. So for example instead of basic income, what if we had a retraining program built into our basic social fabric which said that every four years or every six years or whatever it is, maybe every ten, you can take one year out and we'll pay for you to go retrain completely. And you can go into any profession you like that has some earning power and output, hopefully a creative long term profession, and you can re-educate yourself. That would be much better for society on all levels than basically just saying, "No, you're gonna be the dole for the rest of your life."

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah, you just - you'd have to lead that horse to water and then make him drink.

**Naval Ravikant**

It requires people -

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

- to put in some effort.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

Right? You know, we can't all just sit around. It's just not [inaudible 0:46:24].

**Joe Rogan**

Well, that's my perspective on income inequality. There's always effort in equality. And thought in equality.

**Naval Ravikant**

There's just some people that are obsessed. And if those people become successful, it doesn't mean they stole from you. It just means that they put in the amount of energy and effort that it's required to reach where they're at.

**Joe Rogan**

And there's a lot of virtue signalling that goes on now where people say, "Well, it's because you're privileged."

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah, what's all that?

**Joe Rogan**

You know what the greatest privilege is? You're alive. 85% of humanity is dead.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

So, how privileged are you? Then you're living in the first world, then you're - you know, you have four limbs, et cetera. So you can take that argument all the way. It's kind of a nonsense discussion.

**Naval Ravikant**

What's a very weird progressive argument? And as it pertains to race, is always a weird one, right? Because white privilege to me, although you could look at what they're saying on paper like, yes, yeah, I'm sure there's more black people that are harassed by the police. I'm sure there is more black people who are treated suspiciously by shop owners and the like.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

But the problem isn't the people aren't treated poorly. The problem is the people who treat the people poorly. The problem is racism.

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

The problem is not people that didn't ask to be born white or whatever they are, and they don't get harassed. So this idea of white privilege or male privilege or whatever it is, that's not the problem. You're just looking at someone who's not a victim of this particular problem that you're highlighting, but you're not looking at the perpetrators of the problem. You're making people perpetrators by simply existing and having less melanin in their skin or having their ancestors come from [inaudible 0:47:59] different location.

**Joe Rogan**

[Inaudible 0:47:59] by another -

**Naval Ravikant**

It's a sneaky way of being racist.

**Joe Rogan**

It's a sneaky - Yeah. Yeah. And then they say you can't be racist. It's not racist because you're white.

**Naval Ravikant**

That's right. That is - that's hilarious. If you can't be racist against white people. That one -

**Joe Rogan**

Right. Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

I found -

**Joe Rogan**

That's a variation of the whole still while I hit your argument. You know, stop struggling while I'm hitting you.

**Naval Ravikant**

But it's just so silly. You've just completely changed what racism mean.

**Joe Rogan**

But what's hilarious is mostly the people who are yelling racist are not the minorities.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

What I look in my Twitter or my social media or on my news, it's white on white violence.

**Naval Ravikant**

Virtue signal.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah. It's white on white violence.



**Naval Ravikant**

Yes.

**Joe Rogan**

What's mostly going on is it's elitist whites, blue state whites, college educated whites, beating up on high school educated whites, blue collar - It's a white collar versus blue collar war that's going on. And the rest of us are just kind of watching like, "It's kind of interesting."

Naval Ravikant

Well, it's also a side effect of the ability to broadcast, right? Like everyone with a Twitter handle has the ability to broadcast. Everyone with a Facebook page has the ability to pontificate and have these long rambling - these huge statements that people put out when you read them. It's like, "How much time did you put in this? What the fu- Do you put that much time in your kids?"

**Joe Rogan**

Or your job or -

**Naval Ravikant**

Or your job or your life or your future or planning for your - you know what? How much do you work out a day?

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

I mean, you just these - some - I've read some people's Facebook posts, I'm like, "This is a preposterous amount of effort that you put into saying virtually nothing."

**Joe Rogan**

Let's say humans are being creative.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

Let's see an AI do that.

**Naval Ravikant**

Well, that's true. It is creative. It's creative in a very odd way, right? Because it's creative and that they're trying to elicit a response from people and they're trying to raise their social value or raise their position on the social totem pole.

**Joe Rogan**

It's signaling. And it's easy signaling because the kind of thing that everybody has to agree with you.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yes.

**Joe Rogan**

Because nobody wants to be seen as a horrible person.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

And it's very hard to make that nuanced arguments against that and this is just kind of go along.

**Naval Ravikant**

Right. But it's also - it's - some of it is so cliché that it seems like I know one guy who poses as a woman on Twitter but he does it -

**Joe Rogan**

Just [inaudible 0:51:02].

**Naval Ravikant**

- obviously.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

What is this, the name Tatyana?

**Joe Rogan**

McGrath. Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yes.

**Joe Rogan**

Hilarious.

**Naval Ravikant**

Used to be [inaudible 0:50:09].

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

Oh, is that the same guy?

**Naval Ravikant**

I think so. Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

That's hilarious. I did not - They killed his account.

**Naval Ravikant**

I think it's the same one. I'm not 100% sure

**Joe Rogan**

They killed his account for pretending to be trans-racial.

**Naval Ravikant**

That's right.

**Joe Rogan**

They didn't -

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah. He basically says all the crazy stuff -

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

- that people aren't allowed to say. But he says the craziest version.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

And kind of just shows how it's okay. It's like, I saw a tweet from recently just said - or her, that it's not okay to be white.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes. Yes. And a ton people agree. But it's so close to what they say.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

It's so close that it's like the most artful form of subtle parody.

**Naval Ravikant**

Because if you replace in half of these things, if you replace the word white with black or Asian.

**Joe Rogan**

Oh, my God.

**Naval Ravikant**

Watch the lynch mob they send upon you.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah. Yeah. It's a strange time in that respect that these are so much noise.

**Naval Ravikant**

There's a famous old saying that's, "If you want to see who rules over you, see who you're not allowed to criticize."

**Joe Rogan**

Excellent. Yeah. That is a - That's so true, right? Yeah. That's so true. I wonder where this is going. I really do. I wonder. Because this is - It seems like this new found ability to broadcast that we have with, whether you have a YouTube page, whether you have Twitter or whatever you're doing, this new found ability to spread whatever you're trying to say to so many people with very little understanding on the most part from what's known -

**Naval Ravikant**

I think it's actually a great thing overall.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah I do as well.

**Naval Ravikant**

Because now it means that any human can broadcast to any other human on the planet at any time. So for example if, you know, a totalitarian dictator were to come to power and someone was beating up, you know, had fascist beating up an old woman, like, that would get broadcast out instantly.

There would be an instant outrage hue and cry rallying. So in that sense, it helps bring attention to the plight of anybody. But right now, we're going through the phase where we have this newfound power to assemble mobs. And people don't know how to deal with that. So it becomes very easy to setup a mob and have it attack somebody.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

Take all the context out. Like, even this conversation I'm sure people will take out snippets, put them on social media, and try and get somebody outraged.

**Joe Rogan**

Of course.

**Naval Ravikant**

And so you have to learn how - First of all, society has to get over this idea of outrage. Like, to me, like outraged people are the s- - people who get easily outraged are the stupidest people on social media. Those are the people I block instantly. It's just kind of very low level thinking, right? These are the foot soldiers in a mob. Eventually society just has to get over it. We have to understand that these are all snippets being taken out of context. These are doctored video clips. These are just someone who's trying to get outraged over something. Eventually they'll also be anti mob tactics. Like, for example, if I go to someone's Twitter feed, and all it is is full of political ranting, raving, conspiracy theories, do I want to work with this person? Do I want to associate with this person? Do I want to be friends with this person? Their mind is just cluttered with junk. Now, I don't necessarily blame them. I think that the human brain is not designed to absorb all of the worlds breaking news 24/7 emergencies injected straight into your skull with click bait headline news. If you pay attention to that stuff, even if you're well-meaning, even if you're sound of mind and body, it will eventually drive you insane. This goes back to Clockwork Orange where he's, you know, has his eyes opened. He's forced to watch the news. But I think that's what's happening right now, because these are addictive, right? Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, these are weaponized. You have social statisticians and scientists and researchers and people in lab coats, literally. Best minds of our generation figuring out how to addict you to the news.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

And if you fall for it, if you get addicted, your brain will get destroyed. And I think this is the modern struggle, right? The modern struggle. So the ancient struggle used to be the tribal struggle. You had your tribe of friends and family, you had your religion, you had your country, you had your loyalty, you had your nationality. At least you had meaning and support. But now, you would struggle against

other tribes. Modern life was so free. Everything's become atomized. We stand alone. You'll live in your apartment alone. You live in your house alone. Your parents don't live nearby. Your friends don't live nearby. You don't have any tribal meaning. You don't believe in religion anymore. You don't believe in country anymore. It's fine. You got a lot of freedoms. Fantastic. But, now, when they come to attack you, you're alone and you can't resist. So how do they attack you? It's all well-meaning. I don't fought capitalism, I love capitalism. But, look at how it happened. Social media, they've massaged all the mechanisms to addict you like a skinner pigeon or a rat who's just gonna click, click, click, click, click. Can't put the phone down. The food, they've taken sugar and they've weaponized it. They've put it into all these different forms and varieties that you can't resist eating. Drugs, right? They've taken pharmaceuticals, and plants, and they've synthesized them. They've grown them in such a way that you can't - you get addicted, you can't put them down. Porn, right? If you're a young male, you wonder on the internet, it'll like sapped away your libido and you're not going out in real life society anymore because you've got this incredibly stimulating stuff coming at you. Video games, another way to addict people. So, you have this - you have entire large factories of people that are working to addict you to these things and you stand alone. So the modern struggle isn't individuals learning how to resist these things in the first place. Drawing your own boundaries. And there's no one there to help you.

**Joe Rogan**

That's terrifying. I mean, it is.

**Naval Ravikant**

Surprised if you don't.

**Joe Rogan**

It's a new road that needs to be navigated by young people that are - there's no map, there's no guidebook on how to handle this.

**Naval Ravikant**

Our generation is the transition generation. I think our kids will know how to handle it better, because they'll grow up with it. I hope. I hope.

**Joe Rogan**

I hope too. You're seeing some ridiculous behavior from people today. That's so common. I mean, I don't know if you've been paying attention to this, but there was a guy who - he made a video. It turns out it wasn't even him that made the video at least that's not what he said. But it was a video where he sort of doctored Nancy Pelosi talking, and made it look like she was drunk. And then a bunch of people retweeted it, like, "Oh, my God. Look, she's drunk." And so one of the online publications, some website, tracked him down and dox him. And turned out he's just a day laborer who is an African-American Trump fan, and thought it would be funny to do that. And it turns out that he didn't even - at least according to him, he actually just put it up on his Facebook page. What's even more disturbing is Facebook gave up his information to this website.

**Naval Ravikant**

Right.

**Joe Rogan**

For what? Because he made something funny that made people seem drunk? There's a million of those about me. I mean, you could find them. I mean -

**Naval Ravikant**

Well, I think Facebook and Twitter and a bunch of these other social media platforms are committing slow motion suicide through these kinds of activities.

**Joe Rogan**

That was a stunning one though.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

That they would give up this guy who is a laborer because he made a parody video or he made someone look foolish with editing.

**Naval Ravikant**

Well, you now have, basically, the media views it as their job to go after individuals they don't like.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah, I use media with air quotes in that regard.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

I don't think this is something that the New York Times would have done.

**Naval Ravikant**

No, no.

**Joe Rogan**

Anything is possible, but -

**Naval Ravikant**

But the media is getting more and more desperate, right? Because what happened was, before the internet, you could have two local newspapers in every town and you could have two local news

stations, you know, TV stations in every town. And then CNN came along and started commodities in the news 24/7 broadcasts. And then the internet came along, that was the final nail in the coffin. Because what the internet did was, it said, actually if there's a fact that's news, you can distribute that immediately. It can go on Twitter, it can go on Facebook, it gets reprinted on Google News a thousand times. You know, you go on Google News, you're like, okay, watch a piece of news, which source and 3000 other articles. Too many, right?

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

So news has become commoditized. So the entire news media has shifted into pedaling opinions and entertainment.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

And so, now they've become a variation between like cheerleaders, shock troops enforcers, you know, talking heads. So these are now tribal. Well, these are not propaganda machines signaling for their tribes. It's a right wing one, that's left wing one, right? There's the Alt right, there's a Control left, and the two of them were just fighting it out using their various media organs and memes. So basically when you see one of these news organizations doxing an individual, that's like a tank running over a soldier. Right? That's what's going on. It's just a war. And so, there's no such thing anymore as a neutral media commentator. The illusion of objectivity that journalism had is lost. There's no longer one guy like Walter Cronkite that everyone's gonna listened to.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

It's now just shock troops fighting wars with each other.

**Joe Rogan**

How does this play out? Have you thought about it?

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah, a little bit. So what the internet does - A lot of this is internet driven. What the internet does, is the internet creates one giant aggregator or two, for everything. One taxi dispatcher, one e-commerce store, one search engine, one, you know, one social media site for friends and family, one for business, et cetera. So the internet is this giant aggregator where it creates one big [inaudible 0:59:16] for everything, and it creates an atomized long tail of millions and millions of



individuals. What it gets rid of is the medium sized ones in the middle. So, for example, you might have had like seven Hollywood studios, let's all give me Netflix. You had, you know, like 10 large e-commerce players - commerce players, from Walmart to Costco to, you know, Kmart and whatever. Not just gonna be Amazon. And a ton of small individual brands. So that's the world that we're headed towards; one [inaudible 0:59:48] and millions of individuals. So where it ends up long term is media will be a few gigantic outlets. You know, it could be the New York Times, it could be Facebook, a few like that, and there's gonna be just a really long tail of millions of independent people. So this idea of who's a journalist and who's not, you know, is assigned to journalists or not. Everyone's a journalist. That's the world that we're headed towards. I do think that extreme power, the most powerful people in the world today, and this is not well-known, but the most powerful people in the world today are the people who are writing the algorithms for Twitter and Facebook and Instagram. Because they're controlling the spread of information. They're literally rewriting people's brains. They're programming the culture. And they're doing it very subtly. Like Google, I believe, that, you know, one of their Execs got up in front of Congress, and the Congressman asked him, you know, "Do you manipulate search results?" He said, "No, we do not manipulate search results." "Really? That's your job. That is literally all Google does. Google has one job which is to manipulate search results to pull them out of the noise and rank them properly." And the precise algorithms of how they do that is very hidden, very complex, but influences the hearts and minds of everybody, including all the voters. Now, if Google, Facebook and Twitter had been smart about this, they would not have picked sides. They would have said, "We're publishers. Whatever goes through our pipes goes through the pipes. If it's illegal, we'll take it down, give us a court order. Otherwise we don't touch it." It's like the phone company. If I call you up.

### **Joe Rogan**

Right.

### **Naval Ravikant**

And I say something horrible to you on the phone, the phone company doesn't get in trouble. But the moment they started taking stuff down that wasn't illegal, because somebody scream, they basically lost their right to be viewed as a carrier. And now all of a sudden, they've taken on liability. So they're sliding down the slippery slope into ruin. Slope into ruin where the left wants them to take down the right, the right wants to take down the left, and now they have no more friends, they have no allies. Traditionally the libertarian leaning Republicans and Democrats would have stood up in principle for the common carriers, but now they won't. So, my guess is as soon as Congress - this is - this day is coming, if not already here. It might even have been here today actually, because you saw something related in the news. The day is coming when the politicians realize that these social media platforms are picking the next president, the next Congressman. They are literally picking. And they have the power to pick, so they will be controlled by the government.

### **Joe Rogan**

In what way? How do you think they're gonna be controlled? You think they're gonna have to adhere to strict principles of freedom of speech?

**Naval Ravikant**

No, no. Unfortunately -

**Joe Rogan**

First Amendment?

**Naval Ravikant**

Unfortunately it's headed the opposite direction, right?

**Joe Rogan**

The opposite -

**Naval Ravikant**

I wish it was freedom of speech. Much more likely they're gonna be - in the short to medium term, they're gonna be hauled in for hearings. They're gonna be pressured massively, do this, don't do that.

**Joe Rogan**

My concern about that is the hearings that I saw with Zuckerberg. Those people were completely incompetent. They don't seem to understand.

**Naval Ravikant**

They don't. They don't. But they're just applying pressure. They're just trying to scare him so he'll do what they want. And -

**Joe Rogan**

What do they want him to do?

**Naval Ravikant**

They want him to basically suppress the other side. So if you're a right wing, you want to suppress the left wing. If you're left wing, you want to suppress the right wing. And if you just see where these companies are headquartered in Silicon Valley, all the sensors, and that's really what they are. There are sensors working inside these companies. They're just called - they're called by different names, obviously, right? It's doublespeak. You call the Department of Defense when it's the Department of War. So in this case, the Department of Safety and Trust when really it's a Department of Censorship. The sensors are inside Silicon Valley, so it's going to reflect Silicon Valley politics.

**Joe Rogan**

Which is extremely progressive left wing.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

And if you're not that, you really have no place.

**Naval Ravikant**

That's right.

**Joe Rogan**

I mean, try being a conservative and open conservative at Google. Good luck.

**Naval Ravikant**

No, you get lynched.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah, it's crazy. I mean, I don't think that there was ever a thing like that, that was so influential and so politically ideologically one sided.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah, there's a little saying on the internet, I think it's called Conquest Law, that any organization that's not explicitly left or right wing eventually becomes left wing. And I don't know why that's true but it does seem to me to be true.

**Joe Rogan**

Well, it's a fascinating battle that's going on right now. I mean, it really is. And conservatives. And as far as social media is concerned, they're just getting chopped off at the hams, left and right.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah. What'll eventually happen is that whenever you suppress speech, the organism metastasizes, then it has to start turning towards other means. If you're unlucky, it goes towards violence. If you're lucky, they'll find other outlets. I think what will happen is we will start creating decentralized media that's not owned by any single entity. That can't be suppressed or shut down. That will then start spreading these various things.

**Joe Rogan**

And that will take the place of Twitter or Facebook or what have you.

**Naval Ravikant**

That's right. But it's gonna take 10 years, 20 years.

**Joe Rogan**

At least.

**Naval Ravikant**

It's not overnight.

**Joe Rogan**

Well, you know, Twitter took 10 more years to get to the point where it's at this mess right now.

**Naval Ravikant**

Right.

**Joe Rogan**

But it was so interesting to have Jack Dorsey and to talk to him about where it's going, where he thinks he's gotten his own principles, which he believes that it's a fundamental right, and he believes that freedom of speech is something that we all should have, and that these platforms should essentially be like utilities, like the electric company.

**Naval Ravikant**

Jack is correct. And he has the right vision. It's just he's in an organization where the other individuals in the organization feel differently.

**Joe Rogan**

Very differently. Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

So the organization itself can get hijacked.

**Joe Rogan**

And his timeline for changing things, is like, it's decades.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

I mean, I don't - I shouldn't say decades, but I mean, I was like, when do you think that something -

**Naval Ravikant**

Right.

**Joe Rogan**

There is a part - There was one idea of having an uncensored Twitter. Like, one Twitter that's the wild west. Like, you can have regular Twitter or you could try Wild West Twitter.

**Naval Ravikant**

Well, that already exists and that were called Gab.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes. But Gab isn't named Wild West Twitter. They - when people dox people, they remove things like that.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah. I mean, I think there's certainly lines around violence and -

**Joe Rogan**

- illegality that you don't want to cross, but -

**Naval Ravikant**

Yes.

**Joe Rogan**

- Gab is closer to free speech platform, but it's still not decentralized. I can still get shut down.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yes.

**Joe Rogan**

I can still get taken out.

**Naval Ravikant**

Which also suppressed heavily.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes. And the people on there are right now extremely right wing. So it's not a pleasant place for someone like me to hang out [inaudible 1:06:00].

**Naval Ravikant**

With all the people that have been kicked off or something else, so -

**Joe Rogan**

That's right. That's right.

**Naval Ravikant**

- try going over there and being moderate. Try going over there.

**Joe Rogan**

No.

**Naval Ravikant**

There's no room for you.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah. Unfortunately, because I don't identify as any party or any creed -

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

- you know, it doesn't work for me.

**Naval Ravikant**

Is that a problem in Silicon Valley when you don't identify as anything? Do you get pressure?

**Joe Rogan**

Totally. It used to be okay, it's not okay anymore.

**Naval Ravikant**

When was it okay?

**Joe Rogan**

Like, 10 years ago, I would say it was okay.

**Naval Ravikant**

And then you started seeing a shift?

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah. And now you have to pick sides. Otherwise you're automatically the enemy.

**Naval Ravikant**

Really?

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah. Struggle sessions and all that.

**Naval Ravikant**

God. Struggle sessions.

**Joe Rogan**

I'm exaggerating for effect, but definitely has that oppressive feeling to it.

**Naval Ravikant**

Right. And you also have to be politically outspoken.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

It can't be something that you just stay neutral about.

**Joe Rogan**

Right. It's like when Tim Ferriss, I think at some point, put out a tweet about how you can't just say anything anymore and, you know, people are being suppressed. And a whole bunch of people who loved him from Silicon Valley piled in and said, "What is it that you can't say? What are you afraid to say? You can say whatever you want to him. Go ahead. What are you afraid of?" They're like baiting him.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah. "What was he trying to say? Well, we have to put him in that box. He was someone who is thinking about saying something he shouldn't have said."

**Joe Rogan**

"Now we know."

**Naval Ravikant**

One great tweet I saw was, you know, "The left won the culture wars and other just driving around shooting the survivors."

**Joe Rogan**

Wow. That's hilarious. Yeah, I wonder. I wonder who has won the culture war. Certainly a battle that's been won in terms of like controlled social media. Controlled social media is absolutely laughable.

**Naval Ravikant**

Well, this is unfortunate for conservatives, but technology is a force that also pushes left. So if you look all throughout human history, like the left it essentially grows and grows and grows, right? Why is that? Why is it inexorably that - as some commentators have said, Leviathan slouches left, right? Leviathan is the government, why does it slouch left? And I think a lot of that has been because of

technology. Technology has made it so that it makes more - it's like industrial revolution technology. We all band together. We're wards of the state, right? Contraception is a technology that kind of helps lean left where it takes away from the family unit. Abortion is a technology, right? It wasn't possible thousands of years ago. So technology actually empowers the individual. The individual means that you have the breakdown of family structure and religion and all that. And I'm not necessarily opposed to that. But it does mean that there is a leftward shift to it. Now we are getting a small set of technologies that actually can take you more rightward. Encryption is an example, because encryption makes it easier to have privacy. It makes it easier to have money that is outside of the state. Guns. 3D printing of guns is an example of a technology that is more of a rightward shift. But generally, technology leads the world left.

### **Joe Rogan**

Yeah it's also usually highly educated people that are involved in technology in the first place. And I think when you look at universities in particular, they tend to lean left in this country as well.

### **Naval Ravikant**

Well, universities - What happened to the university is very interesting. Universities first when, you know, became the arbiters of data and intellectualism and know what's right and wrong. So there's a time period when it was like, "Should we be doing that or not? Well, let's look at the University, what do they have to say? What are the smartest people, the professors, the think tanks have to say?" And the universities got this credibility from the hard sciences. So they got this from, you know, physics and math and computer science and chemistry, because these deliver real things; the Manhattan Project, the microprocessor, the space vehicles and so on, the electric car. So they gain this mantle of authority and legitimacy from the hard sciences. So then, come the social sciences kind of sneak in. Then you get economy - economics. And microeconomics is a real discipline, real science, real math behind it, logic, reason. And then you get macro economics which can be politicized a little bit more voodoo, and then you get social studies, and then you get gender studies, and then you get blah blah blah blah blah blah. And so what happened is that because we took scientists to be the high priests of our new world, science itself has gotten corrupted. And the social sciences, and you can tell they're fake sciences because the word science tacked on at the end have come in and hijacked the universities and become the new think tanks. And so, essentially, what you see going on today in the universities is a war between the social sciences and the physical sciences. And the crossover point is biology, right? Where you can see like the whole gender is a social construct movement is attacking biology and evolutionary biology. Just like in the social sphere, they're coming after the comedians, right? But you can see the struggle going on in the universities. And I would say the physical sciences are essentially losing that war.

### **Joe Rogan**

What can be done? Or is it just something that has to play out? Is it - Do we have to realize the consequences of the foolishness?



**Naval Ravikant**

Well, the good news is, the physical sciences have a reality on their side, right?

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah, but it's not even - in many ways, it's not respected.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah. But at the end of the day, your aircraft still has to fly, you know, your microprocessor still has to compute. So, there's only so far they can take it. But I do see, for example in biology, a lot of biologists are facing this difficult thing where they have to say things that they know are not true to keep their job.

**Joe Rogan**

Like what?

**Naval Ravikant**

Well, you had Brett Weinstein on here.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

Right? So, that's a clear example.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

So there's just, the crossover line of what is acceptable and what's not is entering into biology. And biology will probably suffer the most. Synthetic biology for example, will - you know, a lot of this will end up in China, because it won't be - you won't be able to map facts and reality and actions together, you won't be able to get grants, you won't be able to get the adulation of your peers. I don't know enough here's, so now I'm in shaky territory, but it's just my sense that that crossover battleground right now is an evolutionary biology. Economic's lost.

**Joe Rogan**

Well, it's certainly in terms of gender and that sort of - that seems to be one of the major battlegrounds.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah. And it's also gonna happen, for example, Blank Slate theory. You know, are we nature, are we nurture.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

It's kind of socially unacceptable to say that, you know, a lot of it is nature and not nurture or vice versa, depending on which side you're on.

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

Those kinds of discussions get corrupted.

**Joe Rogan**

They do get corrupt. And it's really unfortunate because that's an unbelievably important thing to understand. Like, what makes a person a sociopath? What makes a person a super successful person, a winner?

**Naval Ravikant**

Right.

**Joe Rogan**

What makes a person a drug addict? What are these factors?

**Naval Ravikant**

You can't have a reasonable conversation about climate science anymore.

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

It's not a science, it's all politicized.

**Joe Rogan**

You can't even bring it up.

**Naval Ravikant**

Everyone's got their minds made up already.

**Joe Rogan**

Well, it's uncomfortable to me as people have their minds made up and they don't even have the data.

**Naval Ravikant**

On most of these topics, people are talking past each other anyway.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

They're talking about different things. Like, when you get into, you know, when you get into gun control for example. Right? One side is talking about the right to bear arms in case a tyrannical ruler or King drastic over the country. The other side is talking about school shootings and, you know, protecting people in their homes, right? From crime. So they're just talking about two different things.

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

And it's just not politically acceptable to even talk about the same thing. Or when it gets to immigration, the right is talking about - you know. The left is like bundling together illegal immigration and legal immigration into one thing.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

Right? Whereas on the right, sometimes you've got racists hiding in there. So it doesn't help their cause, right? They're talking about two different things.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

If they were talking about the same thing, which is how many immigrants should we let into the country and, you know, what are the criteria for that. That would be a very different conversation than no immigrants or everybody comes in. And then also on the left, you know, you had this benefit that everybody who's currently coming in illegally is gonna vote for the left because of where they're coming from and their socioeconomic circumstances. To me, the test of any good system is, you build a system, hand it over to your enemies to run for the next decade. So for example, if you want a censorship on Twitter or Facebook, you should build that system, and then hand it over to the other side to run. So if you're a left winger who's promoting censorship, let somebody else running. Same with immigration. If you want immigration system, build the system, then hand it over to the other side to running. That's how you know it's a good system.

**Joe Rogan**

There's no room for nuance when you're dealing with these political battlegrounds. When you're dealing with right versus left and one side has clearly established stance that you're supposed to take, like gun control is a great example of that, right? There's no room for, what about mental health? What about the fact that so many of these people are on psych medication?

**Naval Ravikant**

Right.

**Joe Rogan**

Why is that not being asked?

**Naval Ravikant**

We're running one of the greatest mental health experiments in history.

**Joe Rogan**

The greatest, right?

**Naval Ravikant**

When we're doping everybody up and SSRIs.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah. And, you know, maybe if you give 30 million people SSRIs, maybe like 29.9 million are a lot happier. And then you have a fraction that commit suicide or detonate. Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

Right? You're basically trading the mean for the variance.

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

You have blowup risk. Yeah, there's no room for nuance, which is why I stay out of politics, largely.

**Joe Rogan**

Do they drag you in though sometimes?

**Naval Ravikant**

They always try.

**Joe Rogan**

Well, even this conversation forces -

**Naval Ravikant**

Even this conversation.

**Joe Rogan**

- you get - to get dragged in.

**Naval Ravikant**

Sure. But -

**Joe Rogan**

I'm sure there's gonna be some people -

**Naval Ravikant**

Here's the thing about politics. Because there - we have a first pass the post system. What that means is that whoever wins 51 percent of the vote in this country gets a lot of the power, right? It's not like proportional representation where the Greens have 10% and, you know, libertarians of 3% or whatever it is. Just like you're all Democrat in power, now all Republican. Because of that, to win, you have to pick one of these two sides. Right? You have to choose. You can't just basically say, "I'm gonna be, you know nuanced about it." You can't vote for a third party that's throwing away your vote, right? I have a friend who's trying to fix that, he's starting this thing called a good party, where like you kickstart your vote. So you combine all your votes, you hold them in reserve, and then when you have enough to win, then you vote that person in power. Right? So you don't throw your vote. But outside of those hacks, we're never gonna be a third party elected. So because of that, all of your beliefs have to neatly fit into the Democrat bundle or the Republican bundle. And so, when you get into that tribe, if you signal out of that bundle, you get attacked.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

So it's literally - it's making you into an unclear thinker. It's making you into a model thinker. If all of your beliefs line up into one political party, you're not a clear thinker. If all your beliefs are the same as your neighbors and your friends, you're not a clear thinker. You're literally just - your beliefs are socialized. They're taken from other people. So if you want to be a clear thinker, you cannot pay attention to politics. It will destroy your ability to think.

**Joe Rogan**

Ugh. That would dread.

**Naval Ravikant**

Most of modern life, all our diseases are diseases of abundance, not diseases of scarcity. Like old times, I may have starved. You know, old times if I got sugar, that was a wonderful thing. I should have eaten all the sugar to get my hands on. If I'd gotten a piece of news or gossip, that was interesting data that would have helped my life and move me forward. If I'd gotten some brief amount of entertainment, whether through video games or magazines or whatever that would've been good. Now, it's all disease of abundance. We are overexposed to everything. So, the way to survive in modern society is to be an ascetic. It is to retreat from society. There's too much society everywhere you go; society in your phone, society in your pocket, society in your ears. You're being socialized right now by listening to this podcast.

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

We're socializing you. We're programming you. Everyone's trying to program everybody. The only solution is turn it off.

**Joe Rogan**

The only solution is to turn it off and concentrate on your breathing.

**Naval Ravikant**

Meditation. Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes. I mean, that's huge.

**Naval Ravikant**

It works. It's been a lifesaver for me.

**Joe Rogan**

Oh, I do it. And I do it whenever I get like spare time. I was at the doctor's office this morning and I knew I was gonna be 20 minutes, so I just sat there with my eyes closed for 20 minutes and I melted.

**Naval Ravikant**

You know, when I was growing up, there was this statement, I think it was Pascal, he said, you know, "All of man's problems arise because he cannot sit by himself in a room for 30 minutes alone." And it's very true. I always needed to be stimulated. And when the iPhone came along, bored and was dead.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

I would never this bored again. If I'm standing in line, I'm on my iPhone, and I thought it was great. And when I was a kid I used to try and overclock my brain like, "How many thoughts can I think at once?" The answer is only one, but I would try to like think multiple thoughts at once.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

And I was proud of that. I was proud that my brain was always running, this engine was always moving. And it's a disease. It's actually the road to misery. And now that I'm older, I realize that you actually want to, again, rest your mind, you want to learn how to settle into your mind. Now, I look forward to solitary confinement. You'll leave me alone for a day. It'll be like the happiest day I've had in a while. And that is a superpower that I think everybody can attain.

**Joe Rogan**

The superpower of learning to be alone and enjoying it.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah. Well, I think it's critical. And I do think that these times where you just think about things, just be alone and think about things are so rare these days. And I think during those rare times is when you really get to understand what you actually believe or don't believe.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah, it's funny. When I first started meditating, it was really hard, right? Because everybody - I think a lot of people who listen to this broadcast have heard of meditation that has a good reps. Everybody tries it, they struggle, they kind of give it up. It's one of those things that everybody says they do, but nobody actually does. Right? It's like not eating sugar, right? Everyone talks about how, "Yeah, I don't eat sugar."

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

Then the dessert tray rolls around and everyone's going for the cookies.

**Joe Rogan**

Yep.

**Naval Ravikant**

Right?

**Joe Rogan**

Yep.

**Naval Ravikant**

So, it's become one of those things. And in fact it's now even become a signaling thing where it's like, "Oh, how much did you meditate?".

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

"I meditate this much."

**Joe Rogan**

Yep.

**Naval Ravikant**

You know, there are people now wearing headbands saying - with Tweety Bird that chirping there when they're in deep meditation. I don't know how they make it work, but they'd be like, "I've got a lot of chirps today. How many chirps did you get?" Right?

**Joe Rogan**

"Oh, your meditation technique is wrong, mine is right." But really, all it is is the art of doing nothing. Okay? And it's important because I think when we grow up, right? All this stuff happening to you in your life. And some of it you're processing, some of it you're absorbing, and some of it you should probably think a little bit more about and work through, but you don't, you don't have time. So it gets buried in you. It's all these preferences and judgments and unresolved situations and issues. And it's like your e-mail inbox. It's just piling up, e-mail after e-mail after e-mail that's not answered, going back 10, 20, 30, 40 years. And then when you sit down to meditate, those e-mails start coming back at you. "Hey, what about this issue? What about that issue? Have you solved this? Do you think about that? You have regrets there? You have issues there?" And that gets scary. People don't want to do that. Like, "It's not working. I can't clear my mind. I better get up and not do this." But really what's happening is it's self therapy. It's just that, instead of paying a therapist to sit there and listen to you, you're listening to yourself. And you just have to sit there as those e-mails go through one by one, you work through each of them until you get to the magical inbox zero. And there comes a day when you sit down, you realize the only things you're thinking about are the things that happened



yesterday, because you've processed everything else. Not necessarily even resolved it, but at least listen to yourself, and that's when meditation starts. And I think it's a very powerful thing that everybody should experience and that's when you arrive upon the art of doing nothing.

**Naval Ravikant**

Well, I think it's even a problem that most people are getting their meditation from an app.

**Joe Rogan**

I will not use an app.

**Naval Ravikant**

It's sneaky. I mean, Sam Harris is a very good meditation, I'll [inaudible 1:21:22] to that. But you should be able to just do it. And many people can't.

**Joe Rogan**

It is literally the art of doing nothing.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yes.

**Joe Rogan**

So, all you need to do for meditation is just sit down, close your eyes, comfortable position, whatever happens happens. If you think, you think; if you don't think, you don't think. Don't put effort into it, don't put effort against it, it's all you need.

**Naval Ravikant**

Do you concentrate on your breath?

**Joe Rogan**

Or do you have a specific technique?

**Naval Ravikant**

Nothing. No. You just -

**Joe Rogan**

You just sit.

**Naval Ravikant**

You just sit.

**Joe Rogan**

I think about my breath. That's all I do, I just -

**Naval Ravikant**

You can do that.

**Joe Rogan**

I try to only concentrate on breathing.

**Naval Ravikant**

I used to do that, but at some level, all the concentration - Every meditation technique is leading you to the same thing which is just witnessing.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

And concentration is a technique to steal your mind enough that you can then drop the object of concentration. So you could also just try going straight to the end game. The problem with what I'm talking about, which is not focusing on your breath is you will have to listen to your mind for a long time. It's not gonna work unless you do at least an hour a day, and preferably at least 60 days before you've kind of worked through a lot of issues. So it'll be hell for a while, but when you come out the other side, it's great.

**Joe Rogan**

You get rid of the chatter.

**Naval Ravikant**

Or when the chatter comes, it's in the background, it's dimmer, it's smaller, you've heard it before, you see the patterns. It's more recent. It's something you need to resolve anyway. And you will get moments of actual silence.

**Joe Rogan**

What is your - what's your ultimate state when you meditate? Like, is there a state where you've achieved, rarely, if ever, where you just - you're in bliss or you're in harmony or you're in enlightenment? Like, what -

**Naval Ravikant**

It's kind of indescribable, because when you're really meditating, you're not there. When there's no thoughts, there's no experience through, there's nothing.

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

There's just nothing. So it's it's hard to describe. But I would say that it's like a - you could definitely - every psychedelic state that people encounter using so-called plant medicines can be arrived at just through pure meditation. And I've definitely hit some of those states.

**Joe Rogan**

You've hit some transcendent psychedelic states where you're -

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah, I've had -

**Joe Rogan**

- hallucinating, the whole deal?

**Naval Ravikant**

I've had trippy visuals, I've had the kind of lights and colors, I've had the so-called downloads, I've had the realizations, I've had the bliss I've had the light, I've had the colors, but -

**Joe Rogan**

But not every time?

**Naval Ravikant**

No, it's rarely. And in fact, I would say that's also like an experience that you can start craving which will then actually take you out of meditation, where you really - and I'm not enlightened or anything close to it, so not even in the ballpark. But my own experience and this is this personal experience, is the place where I end up the most, that is really the one that I want to be at, is peace. It's just peace.

**Joe Rogan**

Peace. Happy.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah, peace - To me, peace is happiness at rest, and happiness is kind of peace in motion. You can convert peace to happiness anytime you want, but peace is what you want most of the time.

**Joe Rogan**

That's interesting. You can convert peace to happiness anytime you want.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah. If you're a peaceful person, anything you do will be a happy activity. And by the way, being on social media, engaging in politics, will not bring your peace.

**Joe Rogan**

There is nothing less peaceful.

**Naval Ravikant**

Right. And the w-

**Joe Rogan**

In today's day and age?

**Naval Ravikant**

The way we think you get peace is by resolving all your external problems. But there is unlimited external problems. So the only way to actually get pieces on the inside by giving up this idea of problems.

**Joe Rogan**

Who thinks you can get peace by resolving external problems other than politicians?

**Naval Ravikant**

Everybody.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah?

**Naval Ravikant**

That's what everybody struggling to do, right? Why are you trying to make money? To solve all your money problems. Why try to win at politics? Because then you'll be at peace because your people will have won..

**Joe Rogan**

It's a daunting task to get your shit together.

**Naval Ravikant**

It's easier to change yourself than to change the world.

**Joe Rogan**

That's true.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

And the best way to change the world is to change yourself.

**Naval Ravikant**

Exactly. It's - all these people who are shouting on social media, the best way is just to actually live the life that you want other people to live. Like, I went to New Zealand, and there's this guy that I met with, and - you know everyone's on social media shouting about environmentalism and conserve and sustain. And I go to this guy's house, and he was doing a very quietly, very gently, he was doing a two week long zero waste experiment, where he was throwing out nothing. So every package that he opened he would keep and he would like clean it up, so he would keep his Amazon boxes, he keep the little contain- even tea bag. If he opened the tea bag, he has to figure out how to compost the tea inside, how to make the tea itself useful, how to make the tea bag like a little storage item. So there was no trash. He was literally living with zero trash waste, and he was doing it. And it was really inspirational. Meeting people like him made me far more environmentally conscious than, you know, any amount of people yelling at me on social media ever will.

**Joe Rogan**

How long did he do that for?

**Naval Ravikant**

I think it was two weeks. It was hard.

**Joe Rogan**

What the fuck are you gonna do with tea bags?

**Naval Ravikant**

He had quite the collection.

**Joe Rogan**

The tea bags.

**Naval Ravikant**

He wasn't filling them with little things.

**Joe Rogan**

It sounds like you're a crazy hoarder.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yes.

**Joe Rogan**

Like a hoarder person with stacks of tea bags in his house.

**Naval Ravikant**

Very impressive guy.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah, that's a strange way to go about things. I appreciate it. I mean, look, it is entirely possible to somehow or another engineer all of our cups and all of our things and all about to be biodegradable.

**Naval Ravikant**

You know, the struggle with the modern environmental movement is that they identify the correct problem which is finite earth spaceship. Earth is all we got, don't ruin it. But they don't have the solution. So what they say is no growth, no growth, no growth. The problem is you got 3 billion Indian and Chinese who aren't going to stay in poverty.

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

They're gonna roll whether you like it or not. So you can yell at them, you can scream at them, you can yell at us and scream at us, but that's not gonna happen. So the only way out, unfortunately is, again, through technology, which is you have to build green technology. And I give Musk a lot of credit, you know, for being one of the few people who's out there trying to do that. So you build things that are biodegradable and good for you and healthier. And everybody wants to be healthier; Chinese want to be healthier, Indians want to be healthier. They want to be cleaner. If you say, "I can clean up your rivers, I can clean up your forests, I can have your children not get sick with cholera and diphtheria and typhoid, I can cure your diseases, I can help make your immune system stronger, I can give you clean drinking water." Like, that is what causes people to become environmentalists. Not shouting and screaming at them that they shouldn't grow and they should stop pumping things into the sky. You know, they have no concept of that. They're just trying to get out of poverty. So, I think the modern environmental movement identifies the correct problem, but then doesn't come up with the right set of solutions that are appealing to people. People are not going to give up economic growth. They're gonna have to get rich first.

**Joe Rogan**

That's - Yeah, that's a very good point. But how do you do both?

**Naval Ravikant**

You lower the price of clean technologies massively. So you basically make clean technologies cost competitive -

**Joe Rogan**

Through subsidy? Through -

**Naval Ravikant**

- [inaudible 1:28:22] technologies. Innovation, ideally, you can subsidize in the short to medium term until the innovation curve is crossed. I mean, like, Tesla doesn't have any patents, right?

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

Or they freely give away their patents. That's the example of how you can do it. So, you know, someone - if you wanna get rid of plastics such straws, yeah, you can do it here and there, you can get San Francisco to ban plastic straws. But China's not gonna ban plastic straws. Not until you build a paper straw that is, you know, same cost, good durability. And then you educate the Chinese like, "Hey, this is petroleum. You know this plastic that you're doing is petroleum. This is bad for you. Here is the chemical composition. Here's the things that are going into the bloodstream." And they want healthy, happy kids also. So they're gonna have their kids use paper straws. Maybe straws aren't the best example, but you can - you know, this is true with fossil fuels for example. That's probably the best one. Or replacing a lot of plastics with glass and paper and so on.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah there's a new technology that was just - Rhonda Patrick [inaudible 1:29:29] in her Twitter today about, they're able to convert plastic waste into fuel. And that there's companies that are actively trying to do that now.

**Naval Ravikant**

Right.

**Joe Rogan**

So then, in that way, plastic waste will become valuable.

**Naval Ravikant**

Right.

**Joe Rogan**

It will become a commodity and it becomes something that people are resource.

**Naval Ravikant**

Now, there are certain problems this doesn't solve; this doesn't solve carbon, this doesn't solve -

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

- deforestation, you know. So there, you kind of have to step in with other means. So for example, look at the Amazon, right? Everyone's complaining about the Amazon being deforested. Well, you're not the poor Brazilian farmer.

**Joe Rogan**

Right. Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

So you're sitting here in your comfortable chair, like social media hammering away at, you know, the evil Brazilians with deforesting the Amazon. But the Amazon has incredible resources. If we really care about it, we should turn it into an incredible tourist park and put your money where your mouth is, start doing eco-tourism in the Amazon, start paying for it. And then maybe take the future rights for all the pharmaceuticals that come out of all the incredible plants there and start selling those off, so that people - so that maybe give the pharmaceutical companies an incentive to preserve the biodiversity the Amazon, say, "Hey, if you buy this patch of the Amazon, you conserve it, and you conserve it." Whatever plant medicines that come out of there that you can then license, you get the patent for 20 years or 30 years or whatever. So I think there are solutions where we as the first world, those who have money, can put our money where our mouth is and go and rescue these kinds of properties.

**Joe Rogan**

That's a very interesting solution. But I could see immediate pushback from people that don't think the pharmaceutical companies should have the rights to this natural plant.

**Naval Ravikant**

Okay. Or the government does it. And then the government gets the patents and the government will auction off the patents later or -

**Joe Rogan**

That's even worse.

**Naval Ravikant**

- or they'll license them -

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.



**Naval Ravikant**

- or whatever it is. Right?

**Joe Rogan**

Well, that's - the often - like, just this. The often the problem is there is no really good solution. There's a bunch of solutions that also have drawbacks.

**Naval Ravikant**

That's life.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

Right?

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

That's the tradeoff, so.

**Joe Rogan**

As being a human.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

It's very messy.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah. It's a constrained environment. So obviously I skew more towards a private property capitalist type solutions, because even though they're not perfect, they have been proven to actually work. Right?

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

Once something is your property, you take care of it.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

You're not going to crap all over your own house. But it should probably be temporary property, not permanent property. You see a lot of countries around the world now doing this no foreign ownership of land thing, for example, where Mexico has no private ownership of beaches. Right? So you can draw the line at certain points.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah. Do you enjoy doing this kind of thing. We break things down and give your perspective on things and try to illuminate certain complex subjects?

**Naval Ravikant**

I'm not trying to illuminate so much as - you know, talking to you, I learn as much as I say. And I learn it from myself because I'm being forced to articulate it, right? I can sit around and think my thoughts all day long, but a lot of it's gonna be nonsense. It's not - I'm gonna - 'cause there are gaps in thinking where you make leaps, because you're kind to yourself that you don't realize you're making. But when you're forced to write it down, and this is why I tweet, or when you have to talk to somebody, you have to complete those gaps and make it a proper logical chain. And the mistake that I made when I was young was, you know, I always wanted to seem like the smartest kid in the room, you know, like, just like you probably want to seem like the funniest kid in the room or the toughest kid in the room, right? We're all losers starting out. We want to be winners. So we pick the thing we're good at and we double down on it. So I was one of the smartest kid in the room. So what did I do? I read a lot of books. I memorize a lot of things. And then whatever I hadn't memorized - this is pre-Google - I made it up [inaudible 1:32:41]. Okay? Pre-Google. After Google, fact checking started.

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

And I had to get better, right? So Google improved me that way.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah. A lot of people.

**Naval Ravikant**

Exactly. So, now what I realized is that the biggest mistake was memorization. Right? Because when you're actually trying to live your life in congruence with reality, you want to have a deep understanding what you do and why you do it. And so it's much more important to know the basics really well there is to know the advanced. Knowing calculus wouldn't help you today, doesn't help

you in business, doesn't help you in most things. But knowing arithmetic really well will help you, really, whether it's at the corner grocery store counting change, to figuring out the value of your podcast business, to figuring out how to do the probability math on, you know, some action that you want to take. So understanding basic mathematics cold is way more important than memorizing calculus concepts. And the problem is – and this is true of, I think, all reasoning, it's much better to know the basics from the ground up solid foundation of understanding, a steel frame of understanding, than it is to just have a scaffolding, we're just memorizing advanced concepts. This is why that a lot of people I'm sure that you listen to who are really smart, they use a lot of jargon and you can't quite follow their reasoning. You don't know how they're putting things together and you – this deep down suspicion, "They don't even really understand." Right? So if you look at the most powerful thinkers especially the ones where money or life is on the line, they have to understand the basics really, really well. Richard Feynman, the famous physicist was able to – he had this piece in one of his lectures where he takes you from counting numbers on your hand, all the way to calculus in four pages of text aurally but written down to four pages of text. And it's a complete unbroken logical chain that takes you through geometry, trigonometry, pre-calculus, analytic geometry, graphs, everything, all the way to calculus. He understood numbers at a core level. He didn't have to memorize anything. When you're memorizing, it's an indication that you don't understand. You should be able to re-derive anything on the spot. And if you can't, you don't know it.

**Joe Rogan**

So do you apply that to things other than mathematics? You applied it to –

**Naval Ravikant**

Everything.

**Joe Rogan**

Everything.

**Naval Ravikant**

Everything. Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

You don't even make attempt to memorize things. Just make attempt to understand them.

**Naval Ravikant**

You can't help but memorize things.

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

But if you can't - And this is where Twitter is great for me, is I try to understand something. And then I try to write it down in such a way that I can remember it, just the basic hook that will point towards the deeper understanding. And I'm forced to explain it to people. And that's how I know I understand something. So this is what I meant originally we talked about reading, a good book I'll read one page in a night, and then I'll spend the rest of night thinking about it, or I'm chasing down references in Wikipedia or weird blog posts trying to understand it. You know. So for example, there was a - I was dealing with - this is a few months back, I was dealing with a question of - stupid topic but - the meaning of life, right? What's the meaning -

**Joe Rogan**

How could that be stupid though?

**Naval Ravikant**

Well, it's trite. It's trite. You're not supposed to think about it. It's something you ask your parents when you're young.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

They tell you, "Don't worry about it," or they say it's -

**Joe Rogan**

"Go get the job, hippie."

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah, exactly. "Get a job, you friggin' hippie," or "Here is God. God is the meaning of life," right?

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

And so I was just trying to resolve for myself, like, "What could the answer be?" Right? Not, "What is the answer?" But, "What could the answer be?" And so, at a core level, I was forced to kind of hunting down all these weird little things and really understand for myself. And it's got to be personal, right? But I've established, for myself, what it could and could not be. And that gave me some level of peace. So now I have to keep asking that question.

**Joe Rogan**

What is the meaning of life?

**Naval Ravikant**

I mean, you - I think the question is more interesting than the answer. Everyone should explore this on their own. But let me just explore a few parts with you, right?

**Joe Rogan**

Okay.

**Naval Ravikant**

So first is, if I gave you an answer, if I said, "The meaning of life is to please God." "Well, which God?" "Okay. Judeo-Christian God." "Well, okay. Why that one? Why this thing?" The problem is it's a why question. You can keep asking why forever, right?

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

Any answer I give you, you will just ask why again, why again. Why again.

**Joe Rogan**

Right. We're little kids.

**Naval Ravikant**

That's right. And you end up in a place called [inaudible 1:36:42]. Okay? This is a philosophical exercise. But I kind of thought it through, then googled around it and there's a thing called [inaudible 1:36:48]. And [inaudible 1:36:50] says that any questioning like this, why, will always end in one of three places. Okay? First is infinite regress. Right? "Why?" "Because of this." "Why that? Why this. And it just keep playing forever. The second is circular reasoning. "Well, A." "Why A?" "Because of B." "Well, why B?" "Because of A." You're trapped in that. Or the third is an axiom. And the most popular axiom is God. But it could be anything; because of math, because of science, because the big bang, because of simulation. Right? These are all axioms. These are all just stopping points. Saying simulation - We're in a simulation or saying it's the big bang is just another way of saying God. God's a dirty word, so we don't use it as much anymore, but same thing. So you end up in one of these three dead ends, essentially. Right? So there is no answer. The real answer is because. Right.

**Joe Rogan**

What is the meaning of life?

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah. You get to make up your own answer is the beauty. If there was a single answer, we would not be free. We would be trapped. Because then we would all have to live to that answer. Then we'd be Borg like robots. Each one competing with each other to fulfill that single meaning more than the

others. Back to signaling, like I'm better at it than you are. But luckily there is no answer, so you just do whatever you want.

**Joe Rogan**

The meaning of life. It's funny that that was the basis of all existential angst, that you don't -

**Naval Ravikant**

You don't know why you're here.

**Joe Rogan**

And you have this feeling that it could be meaning less. It is - I mean, if you - when you start pondering the multiverse, the universe, the galaxies, the solar system, the planet, the organism, the cells inside the organism, the bacteria, the parasites, the symbiotic relationship we have to our environment, and you start going, "Jesus Christ, what - am I just a little piece of this thing?" It's like -

**Naval Ravikant**

Well, the answers to all the great questions are paradoxes.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

So for example, you're asking like, "Do I matter?" That's like really the question you asked, right?

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

Well, "How do I matter in this infinite universe?" Well, you know, on the one hand, you're separate. No two points are the same, every point is - every two points are infinitely different. You're completely separated. No one will have your thoughts, your emotions, your feelings, your experience, so your life as a single player game. You're trapped inside your head and you're just aware of a bunch of things going on and that's it. On the other hand, I cannot say the word Joe Rogan without invoking the entire universe. Joe Rog- alien comes along says, "What's that?" "Joe Rogan." "What's Joe Rogan?" "That's a human." "What's a human?" "Bipedal ape." "What's an ape?" "On the earth." "What's the earth?" "Planet." "What's a planet?" "Solar system." "Where was the carbon made?" "Inside stars." Right? It's like, I have to create the entire universe to just say the words Joe Rogan. So in that sense, you're connected to everything. It's inseparable. So the answer to that question of, "Do I matter?" Is, "I am nothing and I am everything." And you'll find this with all the great questions. The answers are all paradoxes, which is why at some level, it's sort of pointless to pursue them, to find a trite answer like I'm giving. But the act of pursuing them is actually really useful because then it gives you certain intrinsic understanding in your life that brings a level of peace.

**Joe Rogan**

I feel like there's - with many people, this stress of this question is also accentuated by unhappy lives. It's accentuated by unhappy choices, by being trapped. There's a big difference between not knowing what the meaning of life is and, "God, I've got gotta get the fuck out of this job. I have to. I can't live my life this way. What's the meaning of life if this is my life?".

**Naval Ravikant**

Which is why I always start with, "Let's get you rich first." That's why I'm very practical about it. Because, look. You know, Buddha was a prince. Okay? He started out really rich, and then he got to go off in the woods. And in the old days, what happened was, if you wanted to be peaceful inside, you would become a monk. You would renounce everything. You'd become an ascetic. You would give everything up.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

You'd renounce women, men. You'd renounce children. You'd renounce money. You'd renounce politics, science, technology, everything. And you would go out in the woods by yourself. You had to give everything up to be free inside. Well, today, we have this wonderful invention called money where you can just store stuff up in a bank account. Okay? And you can basically save - You can work really hard. You can do great things for society and society will give you money for giving it things that it wants and it doesn't know how to get. And then you can save that up. And you can live well below what your means and you can find a certain freedom in that, and that will give you the time and the energy to pursue your own internal peace and happiness. So I believe the solution to making everybody happy is to give them what they want. Let's get them all rich. Well, let's get them all fit and healthy, and then let's get them all happy.

**Joe Rogan**

Is - Are those things even possible? Can ev-

**Naval Ravikant**

Absolutely.

**Joe Rogan**

Everyone can be rich?

**Naval Ravikant**

Everyone can be rich.

**Joe Rogan**

Everyone.

**Naval Ravikant**

Here's my thought exercise for you.

**Joe Rogan**

Now it seems like we're in an infomercial. "Everyone can be rich."

**Naval Ravikant**

I'm not selling any -

**Joe Rogan**

"Look at my home. This is my Rolls Royce."

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah. So, that's a good point.

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

So everything that I've ever created on this topic of how to make money, I will never charge a dollar for. Because that would ruin it. That would show that I'm just another huckster -

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

- who's ready to get rich off of you. There are no get rich quick. That's just somebody else trying to get rich off of you, right?

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

So it's - So to me, it's more of a philosophical contribution where - for it to have meaning, and to be legit. I can't charge you anything for it. But yes, everybody can be rich. And let me give you a thought exercise. Okay? Imagine if tomorrow, we could wave a wand and everybody was trained as a scientist or an engineer. Everybody. Even if you weren't very good, you had enough understanding computers, you could write some code, you could build some hardware. And don't tell me people can't do it, because they can. That's just the [inaudible 1:42:39] of soft expectations. That's just you



looking down on somebody else. They can do it. They just have to be educated. Now if they're educated, all this hardware, software, engineers, scientists, biologists, technicians - hard sciences, not the social sciences. We would all be done within five years. Robots would be doing everything, from cleaning toilets to cooking food to flying airplanes and driving Ubers. And what would we be doing? We would be doing all creative jobs to entertain each other and researching science and technology. We would have wonderful lives. So it is really just a question of education. Nothing else.

**Joe Rogan**

Is this a scale issue though? I mean, you're talking about it as if this would work with 300 million people.

**Naval Ravikant**

It'll work with 10 billion people. It'll work -

**Joe Rogan**

Really?

**Naval Ravikant**

- with space-faring race with 100 trillion people, just [inaudible 1:43:11].

**Joe Rogan**

We have the resources. We have the ability.

**Naval Ravikant**

The universe has infinite resources. You build it. You know, have you heard of a Dyson sphere?

**Joe Rogan**

Mhmm.

**Naval Ravikant**

You know, you pull the Dyson sphere on a star and you gather all its energy, like that. There's so much energy out there. One asteroid's got all the minerals that we need. One sun, one solar system has got all the power we would need for a long, long time. You know, we can extract it of nuclear fusion, you know. We're not that far from those kinds of technologies working. It's just a question of guts and, you know, and interests. Like, we should be building Nuclear Fusion test plants on the moon. The moon should be littered with [inaudible 1:43:45], it's no downside.

**Joe Rogan**

Right. Yeah. How would that work?

**Naval Ravikant**

Well, it -

**Joe Rogan**

Does it send a bunch of people up there to work?

**Naval Ravikant**

The problem - Robots.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

The problem with fission - nuclear fission is that, you know, nature creates energy through nuclear energy. Right? Like, the sun creates energy. Nuclear energy. Now for transmission, we use photons because photons don't interact. And so photons are great for information transmission, but they're actually not great for energy transmission. For energy creation, you want nuclear to work. And the problem is, because nuclear energy, you know, we built it with a bomb, we have dirty nukes, all those kinds of problems at Fukushima. Three Mile Island Chernobyl. We don't innovate anymore on nukes. Imagine if when the first steam engine blew up we said, "Oh, no more steam engines for a while."

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

Very carefully regulated. Billion dollars of regulation. You can't innovate that way. When the first airplane crashed, we said, "No more innovation in airplanes." Right? So we need a way to iterate on nuclear fission, and eventually fusion, and get them working, safely, cleanly, passive failure, et cetera. If we're gonna find our way out of the energy trap. And the best place to do that is someplace like on the moon or Mars.

**Joe Rogan**

Do you think that it's actually a possibility that they could get nuclear power to the point where it's not a detriment? Because what everyone's worried about is a meltdown, right?

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

And we do have these old plants that are running on this.

**Naval Ravikant**

This is 50 year old technology.

**Joe Rogan**

It's crazy.

**Naval Ravikant**

Right.

**Joe Rogan**

Because there's no ability to shut them off.

**Naval Ravikant**

Right. And very old technology. They do now have Gen IV nuclear reactors that are passive failsafe. So in other words, when they fail, they fail into a s- we need to pull the plug on them. They fell into a state where there's no leakage. There's no problem.

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

Their default is a positive outcome as opposed to the current ones, the old ones, where if you unplug them, like, everything melt down.

**Joe Rogan**

And these - even these Gen IV are just Gen IV. They're not Gen V, Gen VI -

**Naval Ravikant**

They're not Gen 80.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

Right.

**Joe Rogan**

We are microprocessors, right?

**Naval Ravikant**

And that should be something that people are working towards.

**Joe Rogan**

I hope so. I mean, in an ideal world, we would - The problem is, if you have nuclear energy on the moon, how do you get it home. Right?

**Naval Ravikant**

Right.

**Joe Rogan**

So what you actually got to do is you've got a rabbit on the moon, and you're using it there maybe to launch more satellites, more rockets, further out into the solar system. And that's the initial use case. But then eventually, the technology gets so good you can bring it home.

**Naval Ravikant**

Now I want to go back to this idea of getting people rich, that somehow or another, that's gonna make people happy. How do you stop the natural progression that people have of, you know, "Oh, you know, I have got a nice Chevrolet."

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

"But I really want a BMW. I've got a nice BMW, but now I want a Mercedes. I have Merce- I want a Ferrari."

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

How do you stop that material -

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

- possession trap because -

**Joe Rogan**

You can't at some level. But I think most smart people over time realize that possession is don't make them happy. Right? It's just, you have to go through that. You have to buy your stupid car to realize that it doesn't attract girls, it actually attracts other dudes who are like, "Hey. I like that car, man."

**Naval Ravikant**

Right.

**Joe Rogan**

Like, you have some expensive cars out there, some fancy cars. Tell me how, you know, how much that attracts women versus men.

**Naval Ravikant**

Well, I'm married. Those are for me. I just enjoy machines.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

So for me they're toys.

**Joe Rogan**

That's a particular thing we enjoy machines. But I think very - as you get older, you just realize that there is no happiness in material possessions. Now, lack of material possessions can make you very unhappy.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yes.

**Joe Rogan**

So being poor can make you unhappy, but being rich is not gonna make you happy. And what happens, unfortunately, a lot of people struggle through their whole lives to make money. They make some. They're exhausted. And then they're like, "Well, now, why am I not happy? I guess I'm just not a happy person and smart people aren't happy." That's like got a great little way - People feel better about it, they say, "Well, if you're smart, you're not happy." Right?

**Naval Ravikant**

That's right.

**Joe Rogan**

Whereas I positive the other way. If you're smart, you should be able to figure out how to be happy, otherwise you're not that smart.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah that is an offensive statement, that if you're smart, you're not happy. I've heard that before and I just do not understand the logic of that other than self-justifying.

**Joe Rogan**

I understand where it comes from.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

It comes from, if you're smart, it's usually because you thought things through and you have very busy mind.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

And so, busy mind can often rob you of peace of mind.

**Naval Ravikant**

Right.

**Joe Rogan**

Because when the peace that we seek is not peace of mind, it's peace from mind. Right? And so if you look at all the crazy activities you do to be happy. All right? Whether it's like trying to get laid and have an orgasm or, you know, extreme sports or looking at something beautiful or taking a psychedelic, you're trying to get out of your own mind. You're trying to get your monkey mind to stop chattering at you for a moment. You're trying to get peace from the mind. And there are other better ways to do that. Most of the ways we try to get peace from mind are indirect, whereas if you understand things if you see things properly you will naturally slowly develop peace from mind. Sorry if I went on a tangent there.

**Naval Ravikant**

No, it's a good tangent. It's a good tangent because I think that oftentimes the pursuit is what's thrilling to people and the possibility that one day they'll be able to rest and that they'll have reached this goal.

**Joe Rogan**

That's the fundamental delusion, that there is something out there that will make me happy and -

**Naval Ravikant**

Yes.

**Joe Rogan**

-[inaudible 1:48:56] forever.

**Naval Ravikant**

The golden years.

**Joe Rogan**

There is, it's called death.

**Naval Ravikant**

Oh.

**Joe Rogan**

That'll take care of everything. That's the great leveler.

**Naval Ravikant**

But when people look at, particularly social media - let's bring it back to that. When you see someone who - you know, you see them posed in front of their mansion, with their beautiful car, and they're leaning against it with their designer clothes on, their expensive watch. I want that.

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

That's what I want.

**Joe Rogan**

What you really want is freedom. You want freedom from your money problems.

**Naval Ravikant**

Right.

**Joe Rogan**

And I think that's okay. So people - once someone can solve their money problems, either by lowering their lifestyle or by making enough money, and, you know essentially, what you want to get everybody to the retirement. But not retirement in the, "I'm 65 years old sitting, in a nursing home, collecting a check," retirement. Different definition. Retirement is when you stop sacrificing today for some imaginary tomorrow. Okay?

**Naval Ravikant**

Yes.

**Joe Rogan**

When today is complete in and of itself, you're retired.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

And so, how do you get there? Well, one is, you can have so much money saved up that just your passive income off of that without you having to lift a finger. Coverage your burn rate. Keep your burn rate low. Right? A second is, you just drive your burn rate down to zero. You become a monk. A third is, you're doing something you love. You enjoy it so much it's not about the money.

**Naval Ravikant**

Right.

**Joe Rogan**

So there are multiple ways to that path, but the most common is people just say, "I need to make more money." And the kind of wealth creation that I talk about is about creating timeless principles and adapting yourself that making money won't be an issue, and you can do it by doing what you love. Right? Like we get into this model of, "I must work for other people, working my way up the ladder. I must, like, do what that person is doing to make money. But really today in society, you get rewarded for creative work, for creating something brand new that society didn't even know yet that it wanted. That doesn't know how to get other than through you. So the most powerful moneymakers are actually individual brands, people like yourself or Elon or Kanye or Oprah or Trump, right? These are individual brands. Eponymous name brands who themselves are leverage. Like you are leveraged. You have podcast media going out to everybody, that's leveraged. The podcast work for you when you sleep. They have knowledge that nobody else has, which is your knowledge is the knowledge of being Joe Rogan. I mean, who else is a UFC fighter and a commentator at a podcast and a comedian and, you know, interesting all these things and knows all these people, can't replace you. So we have to pay you what you're worth, and -

**Naval Ravikant**

I never fought in the FCU.

**Joe Rogan**

Oh, you didn't? Okay. Sorry. Or you know, whatever. You're involved in that whole scene. You just have a unique set of skill-sets. So because of this unique what I call specific knowledge, because of the accountability that you have with your name, because the leverage that you have through your media, you're a money making machine. I'm sure at this point, I can make you start over tomorrow, wipe out your bank account. You'd be rich again in no time. Because you have all the skill-sets. So once people have those skill-sets, and the beauty is the way you've done it, is you don't have any competition. There's no substitution. If Joe Rogan were to disappear off the air tomorrow, it's not like random podcast number twelve would step in and fill that thing. No. It's just gone. So the way to get out of that competition trap is actually to be authentic. The way to retire is actually to find the thing that you know how to do better than anybody. And you know how to do that better because



you love to do it. No one can compete with you if you love to do it. Be authentic and then figure out how to map that to what society actually wants. Apply some leverage, put your name on it, so you take the risks, but you gain the rewards. Have ownership and equity in what you do and then just crank it up.

**Naval Ravikant**

I think people have to be very careful to not get trapped along the way with things that you can afford with your current lifestyle, the way you're living and the way you're earning, but they're also imprisoning you and the fact that you are now going to have to work this 40 hour week job in order to get this thing that you can afford. But now you're saddled down to this job. You're not saving. You're not putting things in a good place and you're working for these things. Working for things as rewards -

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

- is a real trap that a lot of people fall into.

**Joe Rogan**

It's the biggest one. Nassim Taleb also says that under two great addictions; heroin and a monthly salary. And that's why you can't get rich [inaudible 1:53:15] your time.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yes.

**Joe Rogan**

Because, you know, when you start charging more and more for your time it's a slow upgrade loop, and then you upgrade your house, at the same time your car, at the same time you move in the neighborhood. You really also have to get used to ignoring your peers or upgrading or changing the definition of your peers.

**Naval Ravikant**

Right.

**Joe Rogan**

A lot of people here who are poor here, but they would be rich if they were living in Thailand and Bali. And if they had the luxury of a remotely doable job, they may want to be living there and saving up money.

**Naval Ravikant**

But the ignoring the peers is an issue, because the Keeping Up with the Joneses is a real phenomenon. Yeah envy makes the world go around. And then there's this other thing that people have to avoid even allowing their mind to think when they're hearing what you're saying. And all those logical fantastic advice there's these six dirty words, "That's easy for you to say."

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

That is a terrible trap.

**Joe Rogan**

And look, I grew up as a first generation immigrant in Jamaica Queens with zero money. Single mom, two kids, working day and night, go to school. You know. I wash dishes. I was working catering jobs. I was mowing lawns. I was working since the age of eleven on and off here and there. Then have two cents to rub together. You know. I had to borrow \$400 to go to college, like, I was short \$400.

**Naval Ravikant**

400.

**Joe Rogan**

I had to find \$400.

**Naval Ravikant**

Wow.

**Joe Rogan**

I didn't have it. You know, got rejected from a job at Dunkin Donuts. So like, okay, it's not to say that it's easy.

**Naval Ravikant**

Right.

**Joe Rogan**

It's not easy.

**Naval Ravikant**

It's not easy.

**Joe Rogan**

It actually really frickin hard.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

It is the hardest thing you will do. But it's also the rewarding thing. You know, look at the kids who are born rich, no meaning to their lives.

**Naval Ravikant**

It's desirable place.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah. Your real resumé is just a catalogue of all your suffering. If I were to ask you to describe your real life to yourself, when you look back on your deathbed, you're gonna go back and say what are the interesting things I've done and it's all going to be around the sacrifices that you've made and the hard things that you did.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

Anything you were given doesn't matter. You know, you have your four limbs, you have your brain, you have your head, you have your skin. That's all for granted. So you have to do hard things anyway to create your own meaning in life. Making money is a fine one. Yes, struggle. It is hard. I'm not gonna say it's easy. It's really hard. But the tools are all available. It's all there.

**Naval Ravikant**

There's also there's these traps that people sort of establish in their own mind of giving themselves excuses or giving themselves insurmountable obstacles, insurmountable paths, victory.

**Joe Rogan**

Victim mentality.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah, it's somebody else's fault. That's my skin-color's fault. That's the system's fault. Yeah. Those people are sinking. I feel bad for them. I want to shake them out of it and say, "Actually, you can get out of it. You just have to stop thinking it's everybody else's fault."

**Naval Ravikant**

You have to alter the perspective.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

But it's so difficult for people to do. It's one of the most difficult things for people to do is to change the way they approach reality itself.

**Joe Rogan**

At the end of the day, I do think, even despite what I said earlier, life is really a single player game. It's all going on in your head. You know, whatever you think you believe will very much shape your reality, both from what risks you take and what actions you perform, but also just everyday experience of reality. If you're walking down the street and you're judging everyone, you're like, "I don't like that person because their skin color, I don't like that - Oh, she's not attractive. That guy is fat. This person is a loser. Oh, who put this in my way." You know, the more you judge, the more you gonna separate yourself. And you'll feel good for an instant because you'll feel good about yourself. "I'm better than that." But then you gonna feel lonely. And then you're just going to see negativity everywhere. The world just reflects your own feelings back at you. Reality is neutral. Reality has no judgments. To a tree, there's no concept of right or wrong or good or bad, right? You're born, you have a whole set of sensory experiences in stimulations and lights and colors and sounds, and then you die.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

And how you choose to interpret, that is up to you. You do have that choice. So this is what I meant, that happiness is a choice. If you believe it's a choice, then you can start working on it. And I can't tell you how to find it, because it's your own conditioning that are making you unhappy. So you have to unconditioned yourself. It's just like, I can't fix your eating habits for you. I can give you some general guidelines. but you got to go through the hard habit forming of how to eat right. But you

have to believe it's possible and it is absolutely possible. I was miserable. I'm happy as a clam. And it's not just the money, I got there before the money.

**Naval Ravikant**

You got happy before the money?

**Joe Rogan**

Mostly, yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

How did you get happy before the money.

**Joe Rogan**

I started getting older, you know. I just realized, like, life is short, I'm gonna die.

**Naval Ravikant**

Again. Try it, right?

**Joe Rogan**

Try it. Try it.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah. Well, Confucius had a great saying that, you know, "Every man has two lives. And the second starts when he realizes he has just one."

**Joe Rogan**

Wow.

**Naval Ravikant**

And I read that. It was one of those book dropping lines. You know, it's like mic drop. Confucius had a lot of mic drops.

**Joe Rogan**

Confucius is a bad motherfucker.

**Naval Ravikant**

He was.

**Joe Rogan**

That's a crazy one.

**Naval Ravikant**

That was a great one. Or another one is, "Next time you get sick -" You know, because everybody may get sick every now and then. It's like, "A happy person wants ten thousand things, a sick person just wants one thing." Right? So it's your unlimited desires that are clouding your peace, your happiness, have desires. You're a biological creature, stands up and says, "I can do something. I move. I resist. I live." But just be very careful about your desires. This is the oldest most trite wisdom, desire is suffering. That's what it means, right? Every desire you have is an access where you will suffer. So just don't focus on more than one desire at a time. The universe is rigged in such a way that if you just want one thing and you focus on that, you'll get it. But everything else, you got to let go.

**Joe Rogan**

Did you make a gradual shift to happiness or was it a radical change?

**Naval Ravikant**

It's ongoing. It's gradual. Everyday gets better.

**Joe Rogan**

So you were happier today than you were a month ago.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

Allegedly.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah. Yeah, I'm very happy these days. Deliriously so. It's actually hard for me to hang out with normal people.

**Joe Rogan**

Really?

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

So you've made a significant shift over the period of like, how many years?

**Naval Ravikant**

Probably about eight years.

**Joe Rogan**

Eight years.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

Wow. And is this something that you've pursued through certain books or is it just like you've made an understanding or gained an understanding in your own mind, and then started pursuing it based on an understanding?

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah, it's very, very personal. It's basically, you have to decide it's a priority. And then I tried every hack I possibly could. I used - to you know, I tried all the - I tried meditation, I tried witnessing, you know, I even tried [inaudible 1:59:46], just to see what it feel like.

**Joe Rogan**

How did it feel?

**Naval Ravikant**

It was it turned me from a pessimist to an optimist, but I didn't like the physical side effects nor did I want to be in a drug for sustained basis. So I dropped it, and I felt -

**Joe Rogan**

So, it did turn you into an optimist?

**Naval Ravikant**

Yes.

**Joe Rogan**

Interesting.

**Naval Ravikant**

At the time, I used to be a pessimist. Yeah. I started doing things like I would start looking at the - you know, in every moment and everything that happens, you can look on the bright side of something, right? And so I used to do that forcibly and then I trained it until it became second nature. So for example, like a friend of my wife's was over, and she - when we were dating, and she took all these photos, she took like hundreds of photos, and then she sends them all to us. And my immediate reaction was like, "Why are you dumping hundreds of photos on my phone? I don't need hundreds of photos." Have some judgment.

**Joe Rogan**

Right.

**Naval Ravikant**

That was my immediate reaction. And then I could say, "Actually, how nice of her. She sent me hundreds of photos. I could pick the one that I'd like." Right? There are two ways of seeing almost everything.

**Joe Rogan**

Yes.

**Naval Ravikant**

There are few things that are like high suffering so you can't do that, other than just saying, "Well, this is a teacher." Right? But I slowly work through every negative judgment that I had until I saw the positive. and that second nature to me. I also realized that like what you want is you want to clear minds, you want to let go of thoughts. Happy thoughts disappear out ahead automatically, very easy to let go of them. Negative thoughts linger. So if you interpret the negative, the positive and everything very quickly, you let it go. Right? You let it go much faster. Simple hacks get more sunlight, right? Learn to smile more. Learn to hug more these things actually released serotonin in reverse. They aren't just outward signals of being happy. They're actually feedback loops to being happy. Spend more time in nature. You know, these are obvious. Watch your mind. Watch your mind all day long. Watch what it does, not judge it, not try to control it, but you can meditate 24/7. Meditation is not a sit down, close your eyes activity. Meditation is just basically watching your own thoughts like you would watch anything else in the outside world, and say, "Why am I having that thought? Does that serve me anymore? Is that conditioning from when I was 10 years old? Like, for example, getting ready for this podcast.

**Joe Rogan**

You got ready?

**Naval Ravikant**

I didn't.

**Joe Rogan**

But I did. But I did. But I did.

**Naval Ravikant**

Oh, you did.

**Joe Rogan**

I couldn't help it. And what happened was the few days leading up to this, my mind was just running. And normally my mind is pretty calm, and it was just running and running and running. And every



thought I would have, I would imagine me saying it to you. My brain couldn't help but rehearse what it's doing. It's just rehearsing all the time to talk to you. And then I was even rehearsing - rehearse telling you about the rehearsal. Right? So it was all playing all these meta-games. And I was like, "Shut up. Stop it. What is going on?" And it took me a while to figure out. "Oh yeah." You know what it is. When I was a kid in Queens and I had no money and I had nothing, and I needed to save myself, the way I got out was by sounding smart. Not being smart, sounding smart. That was the skill I perfected. So I am hardwired to always rehearse things so I will sound smart. It's a disease that keeps me from being happy. But when you see that, when you realize that, when you understand something, then it naturally calms you down. So after that, I stop rehearsing as much.

**Naval Ravikant**

Wow.

**Joe Rogan**

But is still a trained habit.

**Naval Ravikant**

That is a really interesting point that you want to sound smart. Many people do that and especially young people. When you see someone who is smart or someone who appears smart, they say smart things. You kind of want to sound smart. I want people to think about me the same way I think about that person.

**Joe Rogan**

That is my disease. That is my feeling. It is what clutters my mind. The thing I have to ask myself now is, if I can - Would I still be interested in learning this thing if I couldn't ever tell anybody about it? That's how I know it's real. That's how I know something I actually want.

**Naval Ravikant**

That's a common thing though. I know I suffered from that when I was young, the desire to sound smart. It's very common.

**Joe Rogan**

Well, all of us start out - you know, everything you're a winner now in your life, it's because you were a loser at some point.

**Naval Ravikant**

Right.

**Joe Rogan**

If you had gotten all the girls, if you had all the money, if you had everything you want, you're a good looking and in junior/higher high school, you wouldn't have done anything with your life. And you would have peaked early. It's like the Bruce Springsteen Glory Days song, right?

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

You were to marry your high school sweetheart. You'd be living in your hometown. You know, you'd be a manager at the local McDonald's, whatever that first dream job you had. Thank God, we didn't all get what we wanted when we were young.

**Naval Ravikant**

Right.

**Joe Rogan**

Or we would be trapped in that. So you have to be able to break out of where you came from. I don't know where I was going.

**Naval Ravikant**

That is interesting too about people who peaked too early.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah.

**Naval Ravikant**

Or maybe those people that peaked too early can do the Elon Musk thing, and just abandon it and start something new, and then learn that the joys of sucking at something.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah. And actually, in our profession especially, when your high visibility. The problem with peaking is that you then get drowned in death of a thousand cuts. People have expectations of you. "Hey, Joe, can you come to my event? Hey, Joe, can you look at my business plan? Hey, Joe, can give me advice in this? Can you, you know, talk to my friend? Can you come in this podcast." You're just being assaulted all the time with inbound opportunities. So you have no time to start over with anything. So you have to ruthlessly, ruthlessly disappoint everybody.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yes.

**Joe Rogan**

Eliminate and clear your schedule. Drop all the meetings, not even respond to the e-mails, is the only way you can be able to start over with anything.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah. We talked about this and I'd love your approach to meetings.

**Joe Rogan**

I hate meetings.

**Naval Ravikant**

If not life or death - I'm the same way. I avoided a good one recently and this was someone that was just tracking me down as a high profile person in a big organization and I'm like, "Can we just talk in the phone?" Then we talked on the phone. There was nothing to say. It was just - they wanted to get me in the office and come down.

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah. And meetings should really be phone calls, phone calls should be e-mails.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

And emails should just be text. Right?

**Naval Ravikant**

Many of them, right?

**Joe Rogan**

With meetings - I mean, I despise meetings. I used to own the domain. I don't do coffee dot com. I eventually let it go, but I used to respond from default, I don't do coffee, you know.

**Naval Ravikant**

Oh, that's hilarious.

**Joe Rogan**

It is a little bit of a jerk move, but really where it comes from is when I was young, one of my principles was, I knew I had to make money. It was my overwhelming desire. And one of the things I did was I said, "Okay, I'm never gonna be worth more than what I think I'm worth." No one's gonna pay me more than what I think I'm worth. So what am I worth? So I picked an hourly rate for myself that I was worth. And I said I'm never gonna squander my time for less than this. Original is 500 bucks an hour, then I upgrade to 5,000 bucks an hour. You know, it's ludicrous. But pick an aspirational hourly rate. Aspirational. It has to be a little ludicrous. And then what I would do is if I have to return something, I'm standing in line to return something and it's below my hourly rate, I'll throw it away. If I have to - or give it away.

**Naval Ravikant**

Right.

**Joe Rogan**

If I have to do some task and I can hire somebody to do it for less than my hourly rate I would hire them. And so I just became extremely jealous of my time. Which doesn't mean you can't have fun, rest, leisure, spending time with your friends and family. That's all great. Don't count that. But if you're doing anything you don't want to do - which is the definition of work. It's a set of things that you have to do that you don't want to do. If you're working, it better be for your hourly rate. Otherwise don't do the work. And so once it came out of that, then it just raise the cost of meetings. The cost of meetings is so high, especially given all the people who are in there, right? One person is talking, seven people listening, you're literally just dying an hour at a time. So you have to just drop non-urgent meetings or figure out how to be more efficient with them if you gonna do anything great. The extreme example is business travel. Getting on a plane to fly halfway around the world for one meeting, which never amounts to anything. And then like wasting your whole little life there and then flying back. So about five years ago I resolved, I am never gonna travel for business.

**Naval Ravikant**

Wow.

**Joe Rogan**

And I haven't traveled for business since. I only travel if the travel experience will be so entertaining and joyous because I have friends or to place I want to see or whatever, that it will be complete in and of itself. Because I know that whatever the business meeting I came from, it's never worth it.

**Naval Ravikant**

Wow.

**Joe Rogan**

And actually that principle applies larger than just travel. It applies to life in general. This - One of the secrets to happiness is to really embrace what you're doing in that moment. That's trite. But where that where that comes from is saying, "I only want to do actions that are complete in and of themselves," right? If I'm looking for some ulterior motive down the line, it's not gonna materialize. And if you think it is, maybe - even if it does, it'll be pretty short lived. Anything you want in your life, whether the car or whether it's a girl or there's plenty, when you got it, a year later, you're back to zero. Your brain had hedonically adapted to it, and you were looking for the next thing.

**Naval Ravikant**

That's a great statement, hedonically adapted. That is what happens to people. You get accustomed to whatever it is. I realize that when I first got a new apartment, it was a nice apartment. After a while I got used to it. I was like, "Oh, okay. This is just an apartment it's just where I live. I'm used to it. It's nice but I'm used to it."

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah, we all go through this learning. It's, you know, it's riding the Ferris Wheel of Life. It's like you get out the bottom like I want to get the top. That's so exciting. You ride it up, you get a little dopamine rush and get little serotonin. Then you ride it back down as that wears off and you need another high. Then you ride it back up and ride it back down. In fact the more highs you get, the harder it gets to go around the wheel, the more bored you get of it, the harder it goes to go back up.

**Naval Ravikant**

So what lights your fire now? Like, what gets you motivated to do things into act?

**Joe Rogan**

Art.

**Naval Ravikant**

Art?

**Joe Rogan**

This is art.

**Naval Ravikant**

Oh, okay.

**Joe Rogan**

Art is this creativity. It's just, anything that's done for its own sake. So what are the things that are done for their own sake? There's nothing beyond. Loving somebody, creating something, playing, art - to me, creating business is a play. I create businesses early stage because it's fun, because I'm into the product. Even when I invest, it's because I like the people, I like hanging out with them, I learn from them and I think the product is really cool. So these days, I will pass on all kinds of great investments because I'm like I just - the product's not interesting, it's boring. I'm not gonna learn anything.

**Naval Ravikant**

That's a beautiful luxury.

**Joe Rogan**

It is a luxury. Art and learning, yeah. It is a luxury - these are not 100% or 0 things, right?

**Naval Ravikant**

Right.

**Joe Rogan**

You can in your life start moving more and more towards that.

**Naval Ravikant**

Right. But it's a goal.

**Joe Rogan**

It's a goal. When I was younger, I used to be so desperate to make money that I would do anything. If you'd shown up and said, "Hey, I got a sewage trucking business and you're going to go into that," I said, "Great, let's do it. I want to make money." Thank God no one gave me that opportunity. I'm glad that it went down the road of technology and science which I genuinely enjoy. And so I got to combine my vocation and my avocation. I mean, what are you doing? You're playing. You're having fun.

**Naval Ravikant**

Yeah.

**Joe Rogan**

You're doing art. You're not working.

**Naval Ravikant**

No. That's what I would say when people say I work hard. I'm like, "Sorta, not really."

**Joe Rogan**

I'm always "working" but it looks like work to them but it feels like play to me. And that's how I know no one can compete with me on it, because I'm just playing 16 hours a day. And if they want to compete with me, and they're gonna work, they're gonna lose, because they're not gonna do it 16 hours a day, seven days a week.

**Naval Ravikant**

Listen, man. There are some gems of wisdom in this conversation and I hope people pull things out of this and apply them to their own life. And I'm certainly going to listen to you again and try to apply some of this to my own life, stuff that I'm not already applying. But I really appreciate your time and I really appreciate you coming in here.

**Joe Rogan**

Thanks for having me.

**Naval Ravikant**

And please tell people your small little podcast, it's just The Naval Podcast, right?

**Joe Rogan**

Yeah - best way to find me is on Twitter, actually.

**Naval Ravikant**

Okay.

**Joe Rogan**

I'm just @naval. Then I have a website at nav.al. I have a youtube channel Naval. And I have a podcast Naval. That's it.

**Naval Ravikant**

Well, thank you very much. Thank you.

**Joe Rogan**

Thank you, brother.

**Naval Ravikant**

I really appreciate it. Thank you. Bye, everybody.