

Part of it is that you really don't need as much work as you might want to. We just have this thing built in our head where it's like eight hours. That's what we agreed upon. But like, I don't have to wake up at six to get ready to go drive. And I really don't, unless we have like planned meetings, I really don't have to work at this very moment.

Hello and welcome back to Venn exploring the intersection. I'm Joel Sam and I'm joined by my cohost, Ted Tyler. And we've been podcasting quite a bit in the midst of the coronavirus crisis.

Today, we have a special guest live in studio. Now I know what you guys are thinking, Joel, we're in the middle of spatial distancing, we're not supposed to invite people into the studio. We're just supposed to bunker down and avoid all human contact. Well, here's the loophole. I live with our guest. Our guest today is Marcus Salinas. He is not only my roommate and good friend, but also my landlord. And today we'll be interviewing him about a few things that Marcus has done much better than me in life, such as home ownership, the stock market, working from home. Marcus is going to help us navigate all these topics and tell us what it's like to be a millennial mogul.

Marcus, go ahead and introduce yourself.

I think, I think, Joel, thank you, Joel. I think you did a great job. Howdy, my name is Marcus. I'm not sure what else to say at this point. He set the bar very high for me, so I will try to not knock my head on it.

Well, Marcus, tell us what you do and kind of how you have navigated work life a bit after graduation.

Yeah, what I do right now is I do freelance software development. And so what that means is I work from home a lot. My life is on my laptop and my machine and wherever I go. So I make a lot of web apps. I work in software. My theory is just that a part of it being the future of work as well, that things will become more independent.

People will be more able to work more independently, like as contractors in their own location or wherever they want. And then also there's just going to be a huge demand for automation. And so kind of seeing both of those things as I graduated and I worked for Texas A&M for a year and a half. And my boss at the time, Dr. Ray, also helped me kind of forge this idea because his research was on the future of work as an economist. And he helped me kind of bring in and focus this idea of like, yeah, actually I think this is a lucrative field.

And then there's more to it. But yeah, software development. Great. Right off the cuff, Ted, do you have any thoughts about the future of work slash being a millennial mogul and what that

means? Well, I mean, first I'm excited that we have a landlord on our program, someone who owns property. That's a first probably. Maybe Joel, next time I could have my landlord come on and we could do a landlord miniseries, what it's like to be a property mogul.

But Marcus, yeah, so glad that you'd come and talk to us. And I'm curious, why did you own a home as someone who has been a wanderer the last five years? The prospect of spending money to actually own something just really frightens and scares me.

Why did you decide to buy a home in Bryan? Yeah, I think that, and Joel can attest to this, my personality is I'm very risk-taking in a way, but for things that don't hurt my body. So like I won't go next to a cliff. Joel will also attest to that while we were on top of a mountain during spring break.

But financially and for everything else, I really am not afraid to pull the trigger on something because there's a mentality in my head that things are always going to work out. Part of that is my faith, but the other part of it is I just really believe in myself.

I have a very high self-esteem and I think highly of myself, honestly. So kind of taking on and going into answering your question about why I decided to buy a house was because analytically or logically, I thought about, well, I'm going to be here for a few years at least, at the very least two or three years. And I don't want to spend money on rent because it's a waste of money.

I have a lot of expendable money. And yeah, and so the fear of people thinking about settling down, I wasn't concerned with that. I have no problem doing that on the one hand, but on the other hand, if I really never felt like I was trapped because in my head I was like, well, if it comes down to it, I can sell the house. And if I can't sell the house and it comes down to it, well, then I guess I could rent the house out because this is kind of a, I mean, that's just what Bryan College Station is. You know, there will always be people here. People will always be moving.

There's more to it that I got lucky in the spot that I got. I did not plan for this. But the area that I picked, I think is going to be booming. But to answer your question, a lot of it was my fears, the fears that most people would have. I kind of logically in my head thought through them and not saying that other people don't. But they probably saw that risk. And to me, it really wasn't that much of a risk. It just, I just had this belief that things are always going to work out. Man, I love that.

I am also, I also would never jump off a cliff, but I would take a risk that does not harm my body or physical well-being. So I can relate to that. Maybe less of the finance. That's funny because I'm the opposite. I love cliff diving. I love just standing on a precipice and just staring out into the void. But when it comes to like something personal or creative, I really don't like risk.

When it comes to like moving to a new city or getting a new job or something like that, I'm like, oh, I can't even. It's just, I just overthink and analyze until I drive myself crazy.

Yeah, and I understand it. I think I can kind of understand with people. Part of it also just is my personality that I've realized is that I have a very hard time, I guess, actualizing. I don't know if that's the right term, but I have a hard time actualizing things that happen, if that makes sense.

One example that we can talk about, and I don't mean this to brag, but I got very lucky in the stock market in September of 2018, and it was really dumb looking back on it. But I did some put options on a thousand dollars in the span of a week. I turned a thousand dollars or one day, really. I turned a thousand dollars into ten thousand dollars. And then a week after that, I turned ten thousand dollars into fifty thousand dollars. But I did not realize how much like now looking back on it, like, holy hell, it's a lot of money because I ended up losing most of it, also in stock options.

But it's something that I learned about myself is that I don't really, like I said, that actualization of like, oh, my goodness, like I have a house or, oh, my goodness, you know, something could happen and I could lose my house or I can't make payments. I'd have to declare bankruptcy or whatever. That just doesn't really hit me.. . What would you say? So, for example, I am a young millennial, perhaps the youngest of the millennials. Shout out to my zoomer friends, love my zoomer friends. I get along with them really well because I'm right.

Wait, wait, wait. Can we talk about how, Joel, one thing I kind of want to rant about and I've got another rant after the break, but did people have started calling this generation the zoomers because they're on zoom all the time? No, no, no, no.

We've been we've been we've been propagating this idea much before the age of zoom that we live in. And I just I'm really worried that we're going to lose the momentum we had trying to coin this phrase.

I want to put this out there. You heard it here first. OK, we've we at Venn have been saying, OK, zoomer for months now, and now the video chat app zoom is like being conflated with this generation.

It's like, no, it's like that's that's unrelated. OK, as long as you've got receipts, I think you're good.

Yeah, I don't know. Check the can. Ted, can you check the logs? We'll get an intern to do it. One that we haven't laid off already.

But anyway, Marcus, I'm a young millennial and I have a job that gives me some disposable income. Should I get into homeownership? What should I think about when getting into homeownership? Like what are the variables I should consider and why should I care or why should I invest in this?

I think that's a great question. And my answer to that would probably be no. But also, like a lot of people, it depends on a lot of answers. It depends on the situation. That's the safe, moderate answer that people give. And I really don't like it, but it applies in this case. It's wise. Right. But I would say that for my unique situation, it worked out because of the things that I mentioned beforehand, just my location, where I plan to be, the money that I was making. I had the room and I had the leeway to do it.

But I would say to answer your question, I would not have bought a house if I didn't live in Bryan College Station, because like a lot of young millennials or a lot of millennials nowadays, just people in their 20s in general. I think you'll find out that, you know, we have a hard time settling down the job market again because of my future of work.

People are becoming more and more, what's the word, velocity. They have more of a lot. They're moving places a lot. Often you stay at work for like a year and then it's cool to go to the next one.

And it's kind of moving towards that independence of like people being able to work for themselves. And so the answer to your question is probably not, because I know you and I know I understand your story and who you are and you have a tendency to want to keep moving around.

At the same time, though, if you are saying, "Mark, I'm thinking about looking at this as an investment," I would say probably yes. Of course, I'm not the know-all answer to anything, but I will tell you that it just makes sense if I say that there's a limited amount of land. There are more people that are growing, although, you know, COVID-19 might delay that a little bit, but eventually, you know, more people are going to be coming and land will always get more expensive. It's a great investment.

Homeownership specifically, it's a little bit more difficult. You're going to have to have a lot more capital. I've learned that a lot, too. Just to handle filling a house, dealing with management, property managers who, from what I've been told, is not a very good process or like they're just not reliable. You have to just account for that, but it's a safe, I would call it a safe investment.

What should we consider when it comes to things like different housing markets for different cities? How can I identify what's a good housing market versus maybe a riskier housing market?

Yeah, that's a great question and I don't know the answer to it. You have assumptions. Again, it ties into this belief that I have a high self-esteem and I think what I think is right. If I thought through it, then it must be right. It leads to bad conclusions and results sometimes, but at the same time, if you're in San Francisco, for me logically, going to California, I would just never live in California.

Nothing bad in California. I love Southern California. I wish I could live there, but for me, the people that go to San Francisco and work as baristas and work three jobs and they live in a 400 square foot apartment kind of thing, but with two other people somehow, it never made logical sense to me to spend all that money. It just seems like a waste.

If your goal in life is to, I guess, live or just experience life, why don't you just try to move? Surely, there's another job that you can find in a less expensive place. Don't buy money in San Francisco. Don't buy a property in San Francisco. That's late stage.

I talked to a guy or there was once a guy who got into Bitcoin and he bought rental properties in Detroit. That was a good idea. I mean, this was three years ago, maybe two or three or four years ago, so Detroit kind of was hit by the recession and the property was kind of low value. But again, just naturally, I think that even though manufacturing jobs are still kind of getting replaced, that the property value is going to go up eventually. But honestly, real estate in itself for millennials is, I would call it late stage capitalism. You don't want to do it until you have a lot of funds, basic capital.

Marcus, you might be the only single millennial I know in BCS among my friends that is a homeowner. So that makes you an expert for this question, in my opinion. Why do you think so many millennials, maybe besides, what do you think is at the root of us not wanting to purchase homes? Do you think there's something beyond just we want to keep moving to jobs? Do you think there's something else that keeps us from making the plunge, so to speak, in buying homes?

Yeah. Speaking of plunge, let's go deep into just human psychology and what I think about culture, because I really think this is a culture question and part of it is the Internet.

I think that for myself and perhaps I'm not sure how old you are, Ted, but I think you kind of be looped in that and maybe even Joel. But specifically, my year of 1994, 1995 was the year that we, that human generation had this nice blend between kind of analog and digital.

Oh, this time before where you could just like leave your phone in the car or like you could just ditch the house and like nobody can get in contact with you and you kind of have to deal with it to like where now everybody's contacted. Everything's instant.

And, you know, you might have talked about it before. You surely heard about it, this idea of instant gratification. And I think kind of having that culture of instant gratification in everything has caused people to and most young people to kind of lose the, I guess, the vision or I would say the benefit of investing in something.

And what I mean by that, of course, I mean a little bit deeper. I'm talking about like friendships and property and a job, right? There is something beautiful about a commitment and somebody just kind of sticking through something and working through it for years at a time.

And to answer that question, and it's kind of concise it together, that is, I think, is more of the root of the issue, just being in a culture and an environment where our relationships are instant and we get all the information that we need. And then whenever we're done with them, we can just ditch them. Our jobs, you know, we can just move anywhere because we can fly anywhere.

It's really easy to rent just furniture or rent a car or, you know, just travel public transit, hitch a ride, go couch surfing. You know, technology has given us instant gratification and the ability to kind of live more nomadically and just kind of tying that into every aspect of our life.

And it just prevents people from kind of making a commitment, in my opinion.

What are what have been some of the interesting reactions you've gotten from peers that once they find out you're a homeowner? Are they like horrified or do you think they're like, "Wow, actually, Marcus is really brave and I wish I was that brave to buy a house?"

Yeah, honestly, I this is something that I've noticed or maybe it's just that people say it and my mind just filters it out. But I have never, or I shouldn't say I've never, I don't ever recall somebody reacting to the fact that first of all, I don't really talk about it. I just don't like to talk about it unless it's necessary.

But the other part about it is I don't ever recall someone, you know, bringing it up and saying, "Marcus, I can't believe you own a house. I'm so proud of you." Maybe my boss. You know, one time when I told him about it, he was like, "Oh, you're going to be a homeowner. Oh, good job. Good job. That's great." But other than that, you know, I I don't recall anybody, you know, ever giving me praise or thinking about it.

Yeah. Sorry, I kind of lost track of the question, but. Yeah, I mean, that was more or less the question.

Yeah, I think it's brilliant that you are a homeowner and I would like to also be a homeowner one day, maybe in the not so distant future. But I was curious, like what's your what the reactions

have been like? But it sounds like people just don't even. Maybe it's just something that just doesn't come up in conversation.

Yeah. Great. Thank you for getting me back on track. Yeah, I think that obviously people may talk more. I'm not saying it in a bad way, but you may talk more about it when I'm not there. But, yeah, I was going to say one more thing and I'm going to remember it and had to deal with. Oh, I was going to say that you can own a home.

You can't. You can. It's very easy, actually. And I know you may know more about what happened, you know, in 2008 that caused a recession. But still, similar things are happening today.

Humanity does not learn about the errors that it made in its ways. So it is very possible for somebody who an engineer, I should clarify, an engineer who has graduated college and does not live in a very large city like San Francisco, New York City. Right. Very expensive city.

It's very easy for someone to get a house because especially for first time homeowners, they will give you grants. I mean, there's strings attached to that, but you can get a grant to get a down payment. And then honestly, you only need three and a half percent. Again, there's problems with that. And that's what I did. But you only need three and a half percent to kind of first buy a house.

So even if you take a really even a new house in a semi decent neighborhood is about, let's just say, two hundred thousand dollars, like a standard three, two and a half, whatever one and a half bedroom, three, two. So two hundred thousand dollars and then three percent of that is about what, six grand.

And so for me as an engineer and I made sixty thousand dollars a year, I had about two thousand dollars a month of what I called free money. And so in two thousand and roughly three months time, I could have the down payment on FHA loan to get a house. So it's actually I don't think it's that hard to buy a house. The problem that comes with it is that your investment is going to take a it's not it's not the best investment.

Right. Because people are always going to be like, well, you want really low payments. And that's the truth. So my payment is pretty high for my house and I'm hoping to refinance it. But it's definitely buying a house.

I don't really see that much of accomplishment if you're an engineer. I mean, two thousand dollars is a lot of money. That's a lot of avocado toast. That's a lot of Spotify subscriptions. That's a lot of fair trade coffee. Starbucks. Actually, I can't. It still blows my mind how much people

spend on coffee. It's ridiculous. Sorry, guys. I mean, that's the nectar and ambrosia of our generation. That's what fuels us and enables us to live passionately and dream extravagantly. I drink water and sweet tea. I encourage everybody to do the same. All right. Well, let's transition a bit to talking about another investment, the stock market. I'm not a player in the stock market. It frankly scares me. I'm not a gambler.

I'm not a risk taker unless it's, you know, something physical like we've discussed. Yeah, I just need that adrenaline. But when it comes to my finances, I'm really concerned about losing out on money like my hard earned money. I'm worried about it feels like gambling, honestly, because I don't think that I know enough of what I'm doing. Ted, are you into stocks? I'm not into stocks, but I do have a mutual fund. And right now I'm just like scared to check how much lower my balance is. So I've decided I'm not going to look at it for 18 months just for my peace of mind. Great. Yeah.

So, Marcus, can you teach me, a young Padawan, how to enter the stock game? Is now a good time to enter the stock game with all the, you know, things that are crashing and you know what, how do I get started? I don't know anything. Lots of things that are crashing. That's funny. So, yeah, this will be the last time I say it on the podcast, which is that for a lot of things that we talk about, it may seem like and I may talk very matter of factly, but I'm no by any means an expert in any of these subjects.. . What I will say and what I'll preface with is that this kind of goes into one of my mentalities. Maybe this can kind of help this idea of millennial mogul or whatever, which is the fact that if there is something I don't understand, I want to understand it.

The fact that I've heard this so much before and it kind of bothers me with people when they say, you know, oh, that's too complicated for me or I just really don't understand it and I'm never going to understand it. That mentality, I think, is bad for a lot of reasons.. . There are some things that are difficult. Like I myself, I'm not good at what do you call it? Mechanical physics. I'm terrible at it. I, you know, I took it and I got a C in it in college. I got a C in it in high school. Like I just never understood how physical things move in motion. It took me till I was like 19 or 20 before I understood how a car works. An engine and a drivetrain, all of that stuff. Well, I'm a mechanical engineer and I still don't understand how a car works.

So it's kind of the first thing I would like to talk about is that I think people need to kind of deteriorate or take away that process. Like the stock market is like you say stock market, you might have a little shake, like a little quiver of saying, oh, stock market scares me. Things are crashing. Numbers are going up and down. But I just wouldn't let that be. I don't think it's a very good fear in the sense of like, especially once you understand it, then it's not really a fear at all. And then it actually becomes a tool and it's a really cool thing.



So the stock market in general, I would say that people should always invest in it. You know, use your 401k. That's just I don't want to use what people have already been talking about.

And you probably already heard in your life. The stock market is a good investment. If you're putting your money in a savings account, don't do that. It should definitely be in a mutual fund like good old Ted has it in.

Ted, don't worry. It's OK to look at it. You know why? Because you've never lost until you sell. So it's otherwise it's just a number. It's not actualized or realized, I think is the term for it.

So you should invest in the stock market. ETF is going to be the safest bet. Like that's probably why Ted has it. But if I were you, honestly, like I would probably put it if it was me and like I cared about an actual investment in the stock market because I look at my house as my investment right now, I would probably just pick two or three really lucrative tech companies, maybe Uber, but not maybe Uber and Lyft. That's kind of more of a gamble. Definitely Google, definitely Amazon, you know, stocks, stocks only go up. It's a fact of life.

Even when they come down, they'll come back up eventually, especially for anyone that's young. Even my parents who are in their 40s, mid to late 40s. You know, my mom still has got 20 more years of work. And so even now, if the economy was crashing, I would tell her to invest, just keep investing like 20 years. It's crazy how much money you're probably going to make in 20 years, especially with automation and automation is going to kill the stock market. I'm not going to get into that, but definitely invest.

Stock options was a riskier thing for me. I don't encourage people to do that. It is gambling in a sense. Of course, there are a way the difference between gambling and betting is that gambling is purely look at the numbers like you have a slot machine is programmed to win one out of every a million. All right. And for whatever the reason, you just think that you're going to be the one.

That's that's gambling. And betting is kind of having a, you can use information to make a more educated guess about what's going to happen.

And that was kind of.

Marcus, can I get your opinion on form of investment? One of my former roommates used to use.

OK.

So during the summer 2017 through like fall 2018, when President Trump, a lot of people were leaving his cabinet, they're either being fired or resigning. One of my friends started betting to see who would be the next person to leave or resign or when this person maybe not have charges

filed by a certain day. How do you think that kind of investment stacks up? And do you have any suggestions for our listeners that are interested in that sort of investing?

It sounds like sports betting. That's what it does. It does. Yeah, it's like political betting. I don't encourage it. I've done sports betting. I don't like it. I don't like gambling, actually, which is funny because, you know, stock options, people might view it as that. But I don't encourage it. The thing again, stocks always go up even when they go down, like Ted is fearing to look at his ETF or his investment account. It's not actualized. So even though the number may be red for the last month or even though he's down 50 percent of his portfolio or whatever, you haven't realized that loss until you actually say, all right, I actually want to pull this out.

So if you give it a few years or a few months, even just like even six months, who knows what's going to happen? It might go back up to normal. And then all of a sudden everything's cool. Whereas, you know, if you're doing this political betting thing, you really just put your money down and then it's over pretty quick. And so if you're in it for the thrill, that's good. But if you're looking at it as an investment, that's not... I just don't. The betting gambling is so dumb.

Marcus, can you explain what stock options are?

Stock option.

I can briefly do my best. The idea is that, well, in generally you think about investing in a stock, which is basically part ownership of a company. And so what you're saying is that I want to put money forward so that you can take this money and invest it. And then when you're investing this money and your company continues to grow, I'm going to make profits, right? Because I am a part owner.

Stock options are taking that away and you're saying you don't really care about the companies.

And there's more to it that I don't understand, honestly. But it's basically saying, I think that this company is going to go down in price. The stock value is going to go down in price. So I'm going to write a contract with somebody else that says, I believe this price is going. Let's say it's at one hundred dollars. I believe next week it's going to go down to ninety five dollars. And so if it goes down to ninety five dollars, well, congratulations, your contract that you wrote has now increased in value because what it says is that if you own this contract, depending on which way you can go, you can either buy or sell at what they call the strike price.

So imagine that if it was at one hundred dollars and you have stock, that's one hundred dollars, right? You have a lot of it, like a thousand shares.

Sorry, I got confused with numbers, but let's say you have a thousand shares at one hundred dollars and it goes down to ninety five. Well, what it's saying, that contract is saying, well, you can sell your shares for still one hundred dollars at one hundred dollars. So you still make that five dollar margin. Right. And so you pay somebody a premium on top of that. And that's kind of the money that you make for making that play, that bet.

Yeah. So it kind of does sound a lot like sports betting in the sense that you are betting on a prediction of what the market will do rather than actually owning part of the company and just kind of riding their rises and falls.

OK, that makes sense. That's a really good explanation.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

It's got it.

Sorry.

It's just like that.

I'm going to stop.

Good.

Joel, what if I have an idea?

What if we tried to put Venn on the New York Stock Exchange?

Marcus, Marcus, how many?

I think we have to do like two dollars.

What would you say?

Yeah.

Marcus, walk us through.

Like if Joel and I want to monetize this thing, how do we get it on the New York Stock Exchange?

Guys, you're talking to the wrong.

First of all, I think that you have to have a from what I know, I would say you have to have a valuation, a valuation of probably several hundreds of millions of dollars.

Oh, easy, easy.

Because the New York Stock Exchange does not list people that are under a dollar, I think.

So if your share price is under a dollar per share, I think something like that, they kick you off.

I can't remember.

Maybe that's the S&P 500.

I don't remember.

Or the Fortune 500.

So but yeah, I think Macy's recently got delisted.

Oof.

Yeah.

Shout out.

Do you think we could get my mom is the only person that still shops at Macy's.

So I don't tell the department store why.

All right.

Do you think we could get listed on the Bryan College Station Stock Exchange?

Yeah, you can do whatever you want, man.

Honestly, like if people that's that's the beauty of economics is that if people want to buy it, you know, there are people that that that trade a fictional you could probably think of the most ridiculous thing and somebody probably buys and sells it like probably this thing about let's think about like 1990s army figurine, little green men.. . There's probably a market somewhere on the Internet where people are buying wheeling and dealing these little green men, these paratroopers. Right. They're really I guess they might have been printed less than the other, you know, the regular troops. So if you wanted to, if there was a Bryan College Station market, we could definitely get it started.

You just got to convince people to invest. And, you know, that's how that's how things happen. Listeners, a.k.a. investors, if you're hearing this and want in, send us an email and we'll we'll make it happen. We would love your investment. And on that note, we're going to transition to a break.

Welcome back to 10, where we explore the interesting intersection between unique things. Today, we've been having a pleasant conversation with a millennial adult, Marcus. He's a homeowner and he's told us a lot of really great things about the stock market. And he just told me some really fascinating computer keyboard shortcuts like control shift T. You can use that to bring the last window you closed out of, apparently. So didn't know that.

Maybe listeners, you probably already knew because you're really tech savvy. But I'm not. So that's why I'm thankful to have people like Marcus. Marcus, we're going to do a lightning round. So what we'll do is we'll ask you 10 questions and you need to answer them as quickly as possible. Just whatever comes to mind. And they should be really good. So Joel and I will take turns. I will start.

So you do software development. What idea needs to die in your field? I think the idea that you have to use the terminal to be productive or somehow better ID all the way. Nice.

What are three qualities you look for in a significant other? That's a hard question. I would say, let's just say honesty, loyalty, and her faith in Jesus.

Marcus, what physical and personality traits do you like best about yourself? I'll say personality wise, I enjoy the fact that my parents gave me the ability to see, I guess, the silver lining in most things. Then the idea of hard work and what are the benefits of that physical attributes? I don't really think about myself physically that much, so it helps with my high self-esteem.

What's something you like to do the old fashioned way? Everything. No, no, no, no. It's a funny thing that if people know me, they kind of like double do a double take. And I think it's probably like social media or contacting people. You know, people think I'm so tech, like everything I have to do is about efficiency and automation. But like, I just love meeting up with people in person. And yeah. Yeah. Marcus has no social media. I have a Twitter. Wow. Google Plus. Shout out. Google Plus. We can link to your Google Plus in our show notes. Our listeners can connect with you on this thriving up and coming social media. It died. It's all right.

Marcus, if you could ask God one question, what would it be? Sounds like a good question. OK, why did he create me to desire to be married? And yet all of the women that I've dated have been the opposite of that. So now I don't know if it's them, but they're they're doing their own thing. Right. But it's just like, yeah, I've yeah. If you had the power to change one law, what law would you change? One law? I think that definitely probably universal voting. I would just I don't know if that's necessarily a law. It's maybe something I would implement, basically, just that everybody is automatically registered to vote. And then there is a safe, secure way for people to vote in every single election. Marcus, 2020.

What do you do to unwind, Marcus? Uh, I isolate.

So it's a general question. The general answer is that I do whatever I want to do. That's that's that's that's a specific answer, if you can believe it.

So which I have as long as I'm doing what I want to do, then I'm winding. I'm unwinding. What's something that you're interested in that most people would not expect? Dude, I don't know. Harry Potter, maybe. I don't I don't know. I don't know. People expected me. I had this example that I just thought of. But I lost it. I was talking anyway. Never mind. This is Harry Potter. I don't know.

Marcus, how much social interaction is too much? So there's several ways to take this question. Answer it quickly. If there is a small group of people, like one or two people, depending on how well I know them, maybe a night. If I really care about them like a significant other, there's never

enough. If it's a large group, it's definitely probably about an hour or two. Like anything more than eight people. Just let's bring it down after that. Eight people is my minimum.

All right, Marcus, how do you feel or sorry? Who do you feel played the biggest role in shaping the person you are today? My mom has to be. Yeah. Her hard work is a hard question. My dad, too. There's stuff to get into that. But definitely when I think about anything, especially my emotional connection, because I can sometimes be an emotional being emotionless. I have strong feelings about myself. I have strong feelings for my mom whenever I think about her and the things that she's done for me and my siblings. And shout out to moms, moms, getting good recognition. They don't ever get enough. Forget me something. I don't remember. I know it's in May. It's on the calendar.

Yeah, we'll get a we'll have an intern look up that answer and get it to us so we can tell our listeners to get their mom something for Mother's Day.. . Thanks for those answers, Marcus.

Guys, before we go on, though, I just I have something I need to get off my chest. I need to rant about something.

Do it. Will you guys listen to my rant?

Of course. Of course. I guess I have to. I guess it's my job.

OK, so one of the things we're going to talk about with Marcus today is this whole work from home thing. And, you know, for me, I don't like to work at home. I like to work out and about. Usually my work takes me to a local coffee shop.

I can't really do that now, so I'm kind of, you know, trying to make the best of it. I'm trying to recreate the coffee shop scene in my house as much as possible.

So, you know, I usually try and find some good indie music to play in the background and make my coffee. And I've even tried to, like, find some like coffee shop ambiance, like background noise to play, like the cling of the glasses and baristas, you know, making awkward small talk.

But there's something that's not in those background noise soundtracks, you know, it's missing. There's things like, you know, there's no soundtrack that has the sound of a hydro flask being dropped from a table and just creating a clashing gong.

There's no really bad dating advice that 20 year old each other. There's no conversations about the Enneagram happening at the table next to each other. There's just like these coffee shop ambiance soundtracks are not realistic.

The Russell of the pages of the ESV journaling Bible that has been highlighted with all of the impact verses for the semester. It's Bible edition, though, you know, not every coffee shop ambiance.

And there's no like there's no like really like awkward whisper sounds when people are like talking about God next to you, but they don't want other people to know they're talking about God.

And just like, you know, all those like things that really make it the coffee shop experience for me, I can't recreate. Like, I wonder, like, can we get some sort of like Instacart or maybe like home delivery of some people that we know aren't sick to perform these tasks for me while I'm trying to study? Because I need someone to drop their hydro flask every five minutes, and I need to hear a really poor Enneagram conversation, and I need to hear some bad dating advice. It's just not realistic. And that's my rant.

You know, there's a name for a job similar to what you're talking about. It's called a Foley artist, F-O-L-E-Y. And a Foley artist is a person that specializes in creating very specific sounds for use in movies or soundtracks. So, yeah, we got to hire a Foley. We got to find someone on Upwork. I was about to say, just contract it out, Ted. You got it. Actually, that's a great start. Let's do it. Let's start a startup. Start up right now. We do A.I. ambient noises. We find a Foleyist. We work together. Right. And then we just release the software. People pay nine dollars a month and then they can click all of these artificially intelligent generated, automatically generated backgrounds with all of your little mistakes, all of your little whispers. Million dollar idea.

That you just said into a podcast that's public. That's right. You know, somebody wants to take it, they can. There's a lot of million dollar ideas... All right. Well, on that note, Marcus, a lot of us are working from home now, thankfully. I have been back in the lab this week. I spent a whole week working from home. And then now this past week, I was half at home, half in the lab. And I'm so thankful because I was losing my mind. Marcus could tell that I was like on edge and not OK emotionally.

Marcus, for those of us who have all of a sudden been constricted to the home life and you've been working from home for quite a while, what are some tips that you could give us to maximize productivity, to eliminate distractions, to cultivate our home, to be both a place of work and a place of rest and relaxation?

I think the biggest thing would be and I've had this conversation with several people since, you know, COVID-19 hit and people working from home is that home is not a location. It is a mind state and work is not a location. It is a mind state.

The difficult thing about this is that, you know, I know that I have been aptly created to kind of be able to focus. I feel bad sometimes when people interrupt me when I'm actually like working because it's completely different than who I am normally in my usual, you know, carefree kind of laughing, wanting to interact with people way. I'm very focused. And it is like if you bother me when I'm working, I'm very short and I will get very annoyed if you do it.

For me, kind of sticking with that idea of just that, it's the best advice I could give somebody would be to focus on making work a mind state. How do you do that? That's a great question. For me, it's hard for me to explain. Honestly, I wish I could help.

Obviously, you know, find a location that's quiet. That definitely helps me focus. I've moved out to the garage now because I really part of it is that if I just hear any noise or anything, especially when I'm focused, I'll get annoyed. But the other part of it is that it's hard for my mind to kind of engage in that work mode if I get distracted. It's kind of like you think about it, like building up onto a ramp. So my advice would definitely be to think about and understands that, you know, work is not really where you go.

It's just kind of like what you like. Just it's what you're doing. You just kind of have to be in a focused mode.

Marcus, I have a question for you. Can you relate to all these articles and tweets by parents who are really sad that their kids are all working at home now because you have four adult kids that are also your roommates and your tenants? Are you, did you exile yourself to the garage because you've got four kids that are now at home pretty much? I would say that I exiled. I guess we can say, yes, I could have worked in my, a lot of it was just the the least amount of effort. So I could have set up a station in my room that I share with and I could have worked there during the day. I just enjoyed the garage, partly because it was there. But in a way, yeah, I get away from everyone.

I'm not sure what the articles in the tweet said. I don't, I don't really keep up with this. Well, basically, parents are losing their minds because their kids are home from school and they're like, how do I work when my children are asking for a snack every 15 minutes? So one suggestion I saw today, there's a dad that has a mailbox outside his door where if his kid wants something, he says, OK, if you want something, you have to write a letter and you have to put it in the mailbox. And at the next break time, I'll read your letter and I'll and I'll deal with whatever you want to talk about.

So, you know, there's parents are trying to figure out, like, how can we get any work done when our kids are interrupting us every five minutes? And fortunately, Papa Marcus doesn't exactly



have that problem because I also I'm a child in a lot of ways, but I actually also have a full-time job. So I'm trying to focus myself, trying to get my work done. Yeah, it's terribly unfortunate... Well, I guess that helps me understand.

So in a way, I would say more than no, just because everyone's kind of independently doing their own thing. You know, even if we want to call them my children, which they're not, they're full grown adults and I treat them like that. You know, if someone's being too loud, then we can talk about it. Unreasonably loud. We can talk about it. But most of what I do is just kind of I wouldn't say passive, but it's just a way to kind of avoid it.

So instead of, you know, asking everybody to be as quiet as possible, right? It's just easier for me to go to the garage and just, you know, not try to lose my track of thought. It's a really unfortunate situation. I didn't even think about for parents that have to stay home.

If I were to have a quick on the spot solution, I like the mailbox idea. But yeah, it's really about just dividing your work into hours spurts, honestly. So it's a hard it's a hard thing. I don't know how kids work. Honestly, I don't. I don't have experience with them, but I would, I would try to imagine the splitting up my day into hour chunks or 30 minute chunks.

You know, I also, Mark, as I can relate to being bothered when people are annoyed when people like bother my workflow. And usually this doesn't happen if I'm at a coffee shop because I'm working in a coffee shop and we're really trying to get the most intense work done now.

But I saw this ingenious thing that this guy did and I think it was maybe after Christmas or something. He had like a sign that he put on the front of his desk that you could see when he walked in and it said, um, Christmas was great. I had fun for new years. I got some cool toys. Thank you. And it was just a great way to like reduce awkward, awkward small talk that interrupts your flow. And I think that guy's my hero and I want to be like that guy.

I hate that. I just want to love you by asking you about this time where I didn't get to see you. And for that, I'd love to be rejected.

I hate that.

Yeah. So I can talk, I can talk to something about this is that I think people need to, there's two things. One of them is that people need to realize that I don't know if we're going to talk about 30 hour work week. Let's talk about it. Let's talk about it.

But you know, my opinion on the 40 hour work week is that it's super overrated and I can't believe it.

My opinion is this, any listener here, if you, if you work 40 hours a week you're basically should ask for a raise even if you just got a raise because even in this time because because the 40 hour work week in my opinion is at this point in technology and the state of humanity, if you have to work 40 hours a week, you're being overworked is my opinion.

Technology has advanced to a point where a lot of exchanging of ideas happens instantaneously or even 20 or 30 years ago, you know, that didn't happen. And so part of it, I want, wouldn't say I say that because I think people need to kind of understand it's such a dramatic shift though.

You know, it took me several months between when I finally moved from part time and kind of still working at like a location on site to like just being independently on my own.

But the two ideas is that one is that you're not as productive as you think you are on the eight or nine hours workday. Most of like two, at least when I worked for Koch Industries in the summer of 2015 they told me that they only plan for people working out of an eight hour shift, like six hours of productivity.

So you're looking at about two hours of people like mainly wasting their time. And if you really thought about your own work or you talk to other people, there's actually probably a lot of more downtime than you think.. . So part of it is that you really don't need as much work as you might want to.

We just have this thing built in our head where it's like eight hours. That's what we agreed upon.. . And then the second thing is that you would got to kind of shift of the mentality of like, well, if I don't have to go to work at 8am every morning, some people still have to, right. But like I don't have to wake up at six to get ready to go drive.

And I really don't, unless you have like planned meetings, I really don't have to work at this very moment of nine, eight, like nine 30 to 1030. Right. Cause I don't have a meeting till 11. It's kind of having that fluidity of understanding, trying to think about what is, I don't want to get into the measurement of time, but like how schedules can kind of just be more fluid.

So like if you need to work, Oh, but something's more pressing now. I just take care of it now. Right. Like, and that's kind of how I operate and I love it. It's freedom. So like if something comes up in my head and it's like, I really need to, I want to research something or I just want to take a break and watch a YouTube video or like my roommates need something or somebody invites me to go to lunch like as a stop and go. And then I'll be like, well, I'm just going to make it up like from seven to eight tonight, seven to nine.

And so kind of just being fluid in that regard. Absolutely. And I feel like that's also the, even though Marcus and I have almost opposite personalities, I feel like that's also something that I prefer, something that I would love to have in my workflow.

Since I've been partially working from home over the past couple of weeks, I've realized like my employer just requires me to log what I did and when I did it. And so if I want to work a really random weird schedule and I don't have any meetings or phone calls scheduled, then I can do that as long as I log it and I've realized like, Oh, I benefit a lot from getting that mental space to be able to take a break at like 10 30 and go make some coffee or edit a podcast or do something that's not even remotely work related.

It gives me a good mental break in, instead of getting stuck in that rut of working for hours on end with no human contact and losing a part of my soul in the process, which is a small part.

Yeah. I think it's really interesting what you're talking about, Marcus. Just technology, like the whole point of technology is really to make our lives easier and more efficient. But the fact that we have technology and we're still working the same amount of time, if not more time, it's pretty. When you think about it like, very counterintuitive, it's like, well, why would I even maybe spend time making something if I know it's going to require me to still work just as hard, if not harder, because now people know they can access me at all hours of the day.

Work comes anywhere with me because of the cloud, because of video conferencing, even though we're in the midst of a natural, of a worldwide pandemic, life is still pretty much for a lot of, you know, companies normal and I can, I'm still like going to meetings and stuff.. . So yeah, I think you bring up a really good point about yeah. Just because we have all these advances doesn't mean we're still going to be as productive with the amount of time that we're putting in. Yeah.

Yeah. There's a few things to say to that. One of them would be, I'm really interested. For me, at least, I'm really interested to see how remote technology kind of persists after this COVID-19 pandemic is kind of mitigated. Just think that first of all, companies are operating, they've laid off, not a lot of companies, but some companies laid off a lot of people and then they might say, well, Hey, we're actually still as productive as, or like pretty productive as we used to be. So why do we need to hire more people? Or another way we might look at it is like, Hey, we now have this technology that's been forced upon us for whatever the reason.

So we want to use that as a perk for those new hires. And for people that we have right now, like if you want to work remotely, that you can. And I'm curious to see how that affects, I guess, the job market and things going forward.

You know, there's a flip side to that. As someone who works in an office full of mainly antisocial engineers and scientists, for us, our best work comes as a function of collaboration and creativity. A lot of those people would prefer to work from home or prefer to work independently, to where

they don't have to be bothered by people all day. And by people, I mean me coming up to everybody's desk and asking how their weekend was, and asking what they're doing next weekend, and asking if they want to come to happy hour, or asking for help on some really simple thing that I don't know how to do.

But a lot of those people would probably prefer to work in a more solitary environment. However, I believe that even in my very technical field, it would be a detriment to creativity. And on top of that, I think it's a detriment to people's mental health. So even if you're introverted, you still need human connection. And for a lot of people who maybe live alone or they don't have close friends and family, maybe they move to a new city, like that human element is really important. So do you think that remote work could be a detriment to people's needs for social contact?

Yeah, you make a great point. I would say that as far as it can, all things considered, talking about the market and capitalism is that if it comes down to it and to answer your question, I think, yes, it's definitely a detriment. I don't think that, especially for me, I'm not a big fan of the idea of remote work. And kind of their effects of being just locked in for the last week and a half.

Right. For me, I'm thriving. This is what I've been doing. This is what I enjoy. I'm fine with being by myself and staying at home.

Right. But I think for some people like yourself or maybe a majority, I don't know the numbers, I think it could be a detriment. But the problem is, I really believe that the market is going to do what makes the most profit. And so if companies are going to do what they're supposed to do, the market is going to do what makes the most profit. And so if companies see that, like, "Hey, we can, uh, one example would be like, Hey, we can downsize our building and not have to hire as much people if we just onboard them. So we don't have to build more office space. Uh, or, uh, you know, we don't have to pay for parking or things like that."

Or another thing would be like, "Hey, there's a group of people that we really don't need to have on all the time and they can work remotely. So why aren't we just outsourcing this or contracting this out? Um, so that we can make money." And again, kind of moving towards that future of work where most people are actually contractors and independently working for other people. I really believe that that's where the market's heading and much like, you know, I don't want to get into it. There's several podcasts and other things you can talk and people, uh, making it aware of the fact that the companies are going to continue to do what makes the most money and not really necessarily what's best for humanity or their employees.

So. Yeah. And I think, I think you're right. I think, uh, there will be some companies that will, maybe they'll stay more in this mindset or they'll reduce the amount of office space they have.

Cause like, well, we can actually get work done and we've maybe we fought it for a long time, but this is actually better for our bottom line to still have things, um, happen, but it's just all over distance.

But I also think it won't be as dramatic as we expect because I do think a lot of people. I think even myself. Like I'm probably more like you, Marcus, like this, um, like having to stay while I enjoy going to different places to work, I actually kind of enjoy being by myself.

And so that part hasn't been too bad, but I do think that even for me, I appreciate the space to kind of work by myself and flush out all my ideas, but I do enjoy that face to face collaboration.

And what's, I think what's most annoying about Zoom is you can't really have side conversations on a video conference, which that's one of those things that I think has always been really useful about big meetings is you don't want to have a ton of distractions. But even when, um, I don't know, I think some of the best conversations that have happened have maybe been like small little snippets of conversation in meetings or in meeting spaces. And you just like can't do that over Zoom cause it just, you know, immediately goes to the person that's talking.

And so I think, um, I don't know, I think you're right in some ways, but I do think a lot of things that are more collaborative based, maybe a company won't totally shift to remote work, but maybe they will take like their accounting department or they will take it, you know, something that doesn't maybe require a lot of like face to face collaboration to bring up the best of ideas or to really communicate.

So yeah, I think it will, it'll be interesting to see the effects of it. But I think there's also the question of will people have an appetite for it or will they say, well, I've been doing this for three or four months and I have to go back to the office. I have to like be back to people because I think even a lot of introverts will kind of have had their fill of alone time when this is all a set and done and we can go back more towards normal.

Yeah. We'll see you after, if we'd look like, uh, uh, uh, what's his name? Uh, on Jumanji when he comes out of the Robert Williams. Thank you.

We all look like that at the end of this. Um, my one thought with that is that it's, um, I think that people are going to be more inclined to it.

So what we're kind of doing is we're crossing two streams that have happened, which, which is that people are now working from home, but also people are having to stay at home because of the virus. And so I think that people are going to say like, Hey, I really enjoy being able to work from home. It's very handy.

Again, it blows my mind that there are people in metropolitan cities that spend at one to three hours a day in transit to get to and from work back to their house. It blows my mind. It's such a waste of time and productivity. Well, that's when they listen to our podcast. Oh yeah. There you go.

Um, like just thinking about all that lost productivity of humankind of like the squaws of people in LA that have to like transit, they know that long.

Um, they like that part. Uh, I think that what people don't like is kind of being trapped indoors. But then when you kind of, hopefully my idea would be that, well, once people have the perks of being able to work from home and all of the time and the productivity they have, you can do your laundry, you can make food actually. Um, you know, it doesn't take that long to transit from things.

And then the fact that like, Oh, I can still go out and do social events. Oh, my friend wants to have lunch at 12 from 12 to two. Oh, well that's fine. Cause then I can actually just, you know, work a little bit later in the evening. Cause that's the way that my work works and you kind of have that flexibility and that freedom. So.

Yeah. Well, thanks Marcus.

And thanks for coming on the program. Just to close, you know, we talked about a lot of things: home ownership, stock market, working from home. Um, a lot of elements of what makes up the ideal that is the millennial mogul.

Marcus, if you could say one thing to a millennial or even a zoomer, now zoomers are graduating college. Uh, although most of them are graduating from zoom university, um, you know, we're seeing the first class of zoomers graduate. What would you say to those people just entering the workforce or people who've been working for five years? They have a little bit of capital, they want to invest and, but they're kind of dealing with a lot. People are dealing with a lot nowadays. And now we're in the middle of a pandemic.

What would you say to encourage them or maybe one step to get started in making really smart financial decisions, really smart, um, kind of investments in this space. Um, there's a lot of things. Um, I will say that, um, if I were to inflect what I believe that I did that helped me make successful besides my faith and things like my mother and the influence that I had, um, it's just the mentality of, uh, again, that things are just always going to work out no matter what you decide.

Uh, and then the other thing would be to challenge what, I don't know where I got this from. I think it was Bo Burnham, but this idea of challenging the form, I don't know what that means. But the way that I translate it is to, there are normal things that people do or in humanity, the workflows, what you expect, right? That whole, uh, wife kids want to have dogs, something like that. I don't remember like the American dream, right? That's the normal baseline and people just want to shoot for that. And in this goes through a lot, permeates in a lot of things in my life, but for, um, almost anything, whether it's advice or whether it's something that you want to do, people will most likely tell you the safe, normal thing to do.

And I, I, and I would encourage people to challenge that, right?

I was at a dilemma where I could have been the safe route, still worked at the center, and continue to just, you know, make a paycheck. But I decided to take a risk. Um, because the honest truth is I really think things are always going to work out right in the end of it all, no matter what. We live in the United States, it's a beautiful place. Like we have unemployment, but even then, if you just work hard, I think you'll be fine. But yeah, the biggest thing I can encourage people is just to, um, not be afraid to take risks, be okay with questioning, you know, is this, everybody else is doing this. Why can't it be done better?

Wow. That was good. Marcus, thanks so much for coming and teaching us how to be a mogul and to be a millennial at the same time. That's been good. Listeners. Thanks. Um, thanks for tuning in and listening to us talk with Marcus and until next time control shift T...