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G Mark Hardy: [00:00:00] Hey, I'm here in Chicago at THOTCON, and if you haven't been to a Hacker conference in a while, stick around because you meet some of the most amazing people.

G Mark Hardy: Hello and welcome to CISO Tradecraft, the podcast that provides you with the information, knowledge, and wisdom to be a more effective cybersecurity leader.

My name is G Mark Hardy and today I have Ryan Gooler with whom I have spent some time here at THOTCON and was on my panel the other day, and we talked about Gray is The New Black: Why you should listen to the old person in the room? And so Ryan, welcome to the show.

Thank you very much. Pleasure to be here.

G Mark Hardy: you don't have as much gray, but you certainly have a much better beard than I. So well done, sir.

But, let's talk a little bit about yourself and your background, how you got involved in doing the cybersecurity things.

So I've been around for about 18 years. Professionally at this [00:01:00] point. I got my start fresh out of college. Fresh out of dropping out of college, doing network and system administration as a goal, starting off filtering spam for a living. And then after a few years, I got to do system administration as a job. And when talking to other folks around me I found out that I know more about security than my coworkers.

And so I had a very good guiding mentor of a manager at a time who said, okay, you clearly know what you're talking about. You are our security guy now, and that ended up pushing the rest of my career forward.

G Mark Hardy: So you really didn't start out cyber security, but you're doing successfully here. But then you didn't even start out with a four year sheepskin to get out there, and yet you're doing quite well. So there's a lot of what we've

been telling people when we had an episode several weeks ago. How we're doing a disservice to the people who want to get into cybersecurity saying, oh, [00:02:00] you have to go ahead and you have to get this degree and then you have to apply for this job. And of course everybody wants to hire new hires into cybersecurity and you get all kinds of money just like a draft.

It doesn't really work that way. And there was an article that was just sent to me by a friend last night about how we've been telling people to learn how to code and you'll have a lifetime job but because of AI and everything they're not doing so well. But yet you did pretty well, considering. So what are your thoughts about the conventional wisdom of having to go through the narrow path because at the end there's going to be a pot of gold waiting. I think you have to make your own path, right?

So I've been asked this question many times for many folks. How did you get your little people? I've had my path. It worked for me at the time of the situation I was in.

It may not work for you. However, remember, a degree is a path to success. There are other options. You can go, you can start your own thing. You can, [00:03:00] get in early on somebody else's startup. You can go for the degree, you can make something interesting and see what happens. All of these are options that are available to you.

Keep trying them until they succeed and you don't have to say, oh, if I don't have the degree, I'm not valuable enough for this. Entirely incorrect. That may help you, that may get you other things that you want for your career and your life. And if it doesn't, don't chase it. You're just going to be frustrated chasing something in order to continue going down a direction you're not liking.

And in a way, that's the essence of hacking, isn't it? Keep trying until you succeed. So if you try one attack and it doesn't work, you don't say, ah, it's too tough. You try something different. You try a different approach, and you keep working at it because you understand that not every single challenge has the same solution.

And so life is that way in a way where we [00:04:00] look at the problem and we simply say, trying to go through that door doesn't work. Don't give up. Try a side door, try the go through the bedroom window, whatever it is. You get there. And so as you had made that transition into security and you, we talked earlier about somebody kind of pointing you in that direction.

What are your thoughts of the value of mentor at working for somebody who actually has your interest in mind and not necessarily just the profitability of the organization? great to mention this. So the manager I had at the time was a man named Nate and the mentorship I got from him. Cut 10 years off of my career path, bingo.

And this was to the point where I found a good mentor. He realized I had massive thirst to learn, massive drive, and some talent to go along with it. And he ended up hiring me three times. As we went to different companies, it was [00:05:00] okay. This job ended, he got to a new place. Alright. Hey, Ryan, are you looking for a new job?

I need you to come over here. I was like, okay. I know what I'm getting into. I know who I'm reporting to. I can just let have my stuff in. Interesting. So in a way, you were able to not necessarily ride the coattails, but you had somebody who realized that value that you provided at one organization and then said, Hey, I'd love to have you on my team at the next place.

Now, from that perspective. It used to be that when we joined the company, you worked there and if you go back 50 years, you retire with a gold watch. And there you go. And you're 65, here's your social security check. And by the way, statistically you'll be dead in 24 to 36 months anyway, so you won't stress the system, have a nice retirement bondage grandkids until you're in the ground.

Very different world today. Absolutely. and so part of our career management is not necessarily waiting. For our master, some known career path to say, okay, fine, [00:06:00] just stick here another three years in two months, and then you can get your next promotion. We really need to be in charge of our own careers, but in doing so, we can't blindly just grab at the next bright, shiny object that comes along because there'll probably always be a little bit more money.

There'll be a little bit more something or other, but it's not necessarily what's going to get you to where you want to go. So did you ever stop and say, where do I want to be in five or 10 or 20 years and work your way backwards? Or is it really like Zelda, where you uncover a new level, oh wow, I've just opened this part of the jungle.

So I started off with the plan of okay, by time I'm 30, I want to have visited Japan for two weeks. I want to establish myself as. Have some sort of career doing like system administration or some other similar work. And I want to, have [00:07:00] developed some sort of relationship with a, partner of, mutual choosing.

By 26, I had hit all three of those and thought I didn't make any goals for after this. At this point, my career and my opportunities were accelerating so fast and I was so far ahead of what my plans were. I decided to, let my hands off the drains for a while and say, okay, I'm going to chase what is most interesting and most challenging and see where I end up.

And that was probably one of the best decisions I have made because it's landed me in amazing places. I think a very zen sort of a thing. Just the life will unfold for you. But one of the things you mentioned I thought was really important is what comes after? What comes after next. Because I've gone through in set goals.

When I started my first company, I had set written in writing a three year gold set that I'll [00:08:00] have my own business within three years. And I made, it actually took two years and six months, from when I started and probably two years, eight months when I wrote it down. So check, but then the thing is, that now you're there and you go, okay.

I'm king of the hill. There's other hills over there and other hills over here, and there's, you can eventually, nothing left here. So to get to the next level, often we have to come down the hill, we're on Go through the valley and come back up again. And sometimes that's forced upon us, either through restructuring or.

Being laid off or being cut back, which is always a bit of a traumatic thing the first time it happens to you. Until you realize it kinda happens to all of us. and then the second one is, that how do you avoid staying, if you will, in desperation mode where you need something and therefore the first minimum qualifying job comes along, you take it.

[00:09:00] Compare it to, this is what I want. Because to go back with Herman Hesse, Siddhartha, one of the things he said is, I can fast. And what he was saying with that is, I don't have to grab the next job that comes along. I can wait. I can not eat for a day or two and I won't die, but I find something I really want.

So were you able to find things you really wanted, or if you found you were things that they weren't what you wanted? What would you have changed to give yourself a better positioning to be able to, if you will, fast? So I came from Boy Scouts, as a childs. And so one of the things that was really ingrained early on for me was preparation.

You prepared. And in the modern career path, the vast majority of positions I have been in about the two to three year range. Then something happens

intrinsically or extrinsically [00:10:00] that says it is time for you to move on. And so I make sure that I take the, a part of the salary that I'm making and I make sure I have a, I have, three tiers of savings.

I have a oops fund. Which is put about 50 or a hundred dollars a month in there. That's four. Oh, tire blew out of my car. I need a couple hundred dollars for this. No problem. I have that already saved up. It'll refill naturally over time. When the next oops happens, I'm ready for it. I have an emergency fund, which is, okay, I'm out of a job for a while.

Let's start tapping this and decrease some of the luxuries in life until I can afford them again. And then I have, I. investments for later In life that if I [00:11:00] really need to, if things are dire, they are available, but you never want to get down to plan C if you can avoid it. But I found when you get to this point, I always give myself, when a job ends and I wasn't prepared for it, I give myself a week to.

Grieve and be sad and think and decide where do I want to start aiming my career from here? And at the seven day point I am done. It's time to put that plan into action. And realistically speaking, I'll tell folks when you are going through and you do all of your interviews and you get a job offer and you're really thinking.

I'm not really sold in this place. Just because they said yes doesn't mean you can't say no. At that point, it's completely [00:12:00] fine and it may be a very good decision to do and I've read by some of the motivating officers who said, if it's not a hell yes, should be no. If it's something I don't know, do we really want to do it?

It was like last night, we really want to go out. Until two in the morning at the after party here at THOTCONn in Chicago. It's not really. We had a really good day. We met some really amazing people and I don't really feel like dragging in. I gotta get up in the morning, I gotta go catch a flight.

I do a podcast, of course. And so we said last night, it's not a hell yes. It's a note. So we hung around and, enjoyed the White Castle Gourmet meal, which is my first one, by the way. I have to admit there. So if there's any White Castle fans out there, let us know in the comments. But, so yeah, so three funds.

You've got the hoops fund, the short term, if you will. Let's go ahead and cover some stuff. And then the longer term, which ideally you never touch, because eventually you're going to get old and gray and maybe social [00:13:00] security

is, was envisioned, is not going to be there. And even if it is there as envisioned, you're not going to live well.

If that's the only thing you've got, what's different today I think, is that you don't have situations like my dad who had six children and never made more than 30 grand a year in his career, but he was always surrounded by friends and family and fun. But when he retired, that's it. Social security.

And, fortunately he wasn't eating cat food out of a dumpster behind Walmart. But some people end up there because of poor planning. In his case, his time and energy and money went to his family, and I deeply appreciate that. But for a lot of us in this generation, we don't have six kids or five, or sometimes even one.

or if you have one, wow, that's pretty cool. So the dynamics are different. We can do a little bit better for our future. But the same thing is you don't want to necessarily take it all with you over the horizon because as they say, you don't see the Brinks truck. [00:14:00] Going behind a hearse. And so at the same time as we think about making sure we plan for our future, let's not wait till the last minute to give back. It's a little bit of life advice here. be a little bit generous as you go along. The fact that in somebody's will they left such and such would rather say somebody has said, Hey, while you're still alive, let me give you this.

Let me see you enjoy. You have, whether you have kids or potentially grandkids or even some charity that you care about, or even a nonprofit or even the hacker world, do some good now. And the people that argue, if I kept it in the bank and I compounded it, or I put all my VOO and it'll be worth so much more later, people, the time value of money is important, but also the time value of life is even better.

And I'll especially say, since I grew up. Not, super broke, but not a lot extra. my grandmother did a bit of [00:15:00] this for me because it turns out about a thousand dollars when you are in college, scraping by being able to afford either a bus pass or a haircut every month.

A thousand dollars then is a lot more valuable to me than $50,000 now. Good point. And even if you think about it, if you're starving, you get a ham sandwich now is better than a gourmet meal two weeks from now, you might not be around in two weeks. So yeah, I think one of the things I remember years ago, I was approached by somebody at a security event and said, Hey, G Mark.

I'm making more money than my parents ever made in their lives, and I'm 24 years old. I don't know what to do with it. Somebody said, go out and buy the biggest house you can and then make double payments on the mortgage. Somebody else said, go ahead and put it all by treasury bonds, or put it all in the stock market.

We don't do a very good [00:16:00] job, in my opinion, of giving out solid investment advice either through our academic life in high school. There ought to be a, here's how to manage your money for the rest of your life course. Even in the real world, and so we find out that you look at professional sports players who make millions, sometimes tens of millions of dollars a year, and they're broke at 35.

It's just all gone because it just comes in and it goes right back out. What have you found is either the discipline or just the thought that allows you to be able to pay yourself, if you will, and put money into these three funds? So there's two key things I do for this. One, automate the finances automatically have things taken out and put away because you will forget to do it.

If you don't, and computers are very good at [00:17:00] automation. Stop spending your human lifetime on the things computers are good at and let them do their job. The second thing is the, as I go in the funds, the Oops fund is immediately in my bank account. The emergency fund is at another bank, so I don't see it immediately, and the long-term funds are at a third institution.

That requires me to actually spend some additional time where really I check those about once a quarter to make sure

and then leave them alone. One of the worst things I think a lot of people do when, especially when getting started on that part financially, is paying too much attention to your money. You are looking at the numbers, you're focusing on the numbers. You're thinking, I have this number in my account at all times.

Stop, move a lot of that money out. Give yourself a allowance from [00:18:00] it. And when you open your account, you're like, okay, I have two grand in my account. That's how much I have to spend. Sure I have 50 in the other account over here that's feeding it. But you don't think about the 50. You only ever see the two, so you spend the two, and then when you get a job change or a raise or a promotion, you don't put all that into your spending money.

No. You live a little bit below your means and you let those two diverge slightly. So you're doing okay even if your income's going up higher. So over time,

you're accelerating your ability. To provide for your future. Yeah. one of the things I really recommend to folks is if you get a bonus or an unexpected windfall, you went out with friends at the casino and actually got something this time, 10% of that, take it. Enjoy, indulge, do whatever you want with it. The other 90% move away as quickly as [00:19:00] possible. You'll still remember the great time you had with the 10% of your bonus or whatever, and okay. Is it a difference for you of oh, I got a 10,000 bonus.

Are you going to be just as happy with a new laptop versus a used car? Probably, but you have a new laptop and $9,000 collecting interests. Make money with a laptop and unless you're going to drive for Uber, you're not going to make money with that car. No. So it's one of those things of, don't put limits on what you're indulging yourself in.

That lets you still enjoy it, but doesn't. eat up the entirety of your winnings. And about 20 years ago, I took a course by, from a guy, the name of John Childers, and he had a bit of advice. He said, 'cause he was getting people into speaking gigs. I've been a professional speaker for years.

He said, when you make money, when you get a big chunk of [00:20:00] change, come in, take 10% and blow it. Just go out and have fun and enjoy it with the other 90%. I've never been very good at 10% blow.

Starting out, I remember when I graduated from college, I probably had a net worth of about $1,400 and that's 'cause my grandmother gave me a thousand dollars for graduation.

And then even after five years in the Navy active duty, I. It didn't have a whole lot because my starting salary was 11,000 a year as a commissioned officer with three undergraduate degrees in a leadership management position. things have come a little bit better since then, but if inflation adjusted, not a whole lot better.

And yet somehow I had heard along the lines, I think it was as a lieutenant's junior grade. So I've been in the Navy a little over two years, and we're getting ready to deploy over to the. West Pacific for seven month cruise and they had a stop and they had to, a couple guys from [00:21:00] called USPA and IRA. It was a mutual fund company and they gave a little lecture about pay yourself first and you should set money aside and put money in now into your future and da.

And it's okay, that makes sense. Pay myself first. I remember we had a port visit in Hawaii and I went down to Charles Schwab branch so I could say, here, let

me open an account. And I started putting money away and every. Payday. There was an allotment automatic deduction that went to that, and it just accumulated.

Now, after a couple years, I gained a little bit more financial sophistication. Had none. At that point, I realized that these guys are getting a 7.5% sales commission. It's okay, I get it now. I don't need to pay a seven and a half sales commission forever, much as they'd like me to do. I can go ahead and get no cost mutual funds.

I can diversify. But they earned every penny of that seven and a half percent for those first couple years to cause me to get that [00:22:00] behavior locked in. Good habit. Pay yourself first. Pay yourself regularly, and as you said, automate it. What about other things in life? Are there things that we can automate in life that.

Take away from the, as you had said, lets computers do the stuff they do best and then go live your life. And some of us, we get, anybody who's, OCD or a DH, ADHD or whatever, you willing to get all the details right. And all of a sudden, you don't need to do all those details, let the computer do them.

How do we let go? If you figure, I don't know if that's something you've ever struggled with, absolutely. I've struggled with that. Yeah. I.

Much more prolific when I was younger that went by the name Zif Frank and his videos are still available and still fantastic, and one of the concepts he has is of a finishing stand, which is a logo or [00:23:00] something small that you make that you say, I have put the finishing stamp on my product project. It is now finished.

I am not allowed to continue to work on it. I have made mine, if you run onto me on online, if I give you one of my stickers, my finishing stamp is on every sticker I give people, and it's my icon on every platform I use. To say, okay, I had this idea for a sticker to give to people, due to no contact with anti-matter.

This idea is done. I have completed it successfully. I can print out as many as I like, but I've done with that. And the other thing to remember is just the standard rule of 20% of your time is spent on 80% of your project and 80% of your time is spent on [00:24:00] the last 20%. If you stop. When you're 80% done and it's not quite perfect, you have enough time to do four more projects.

And ideally, if you have other people who can pick up and run with it, it works. So I had, created a command in the Navy, the Center for Naval Leadership. I had been the National director for the Reserve Officer Leadership course. We got together with some other captains. We said, Hey, we're going to build this thing out in the Navy Reserve for Leadership Training because there's an act.

Counterpart and we put this whole thing together, we built it all out. And when I went from, and I tell people, never join a crew with a pre-commissioning size of one. 'cause that was it in August of 15. And then by September of 2016 had 170 instructors, 72 classrooms, or teaching 10,000 students a year.

that seems bigger than SANS. but of course you get a medal for it. You don't get stock options or cash for it. But I remember talking to a friend of mine who [00:25:00] is. Quite successful. He was a two star admiral at the time. It was a little bit senior to me and I said, I've got this thing up at about the 90% level.

I can take it to about 99 or more. What do you think? He said, move on. So let somebody else finish it. You go ahead and take on the next challenge. I, sir. Good idea. I went ahead and I threw my hat in the ring and I ended up getting command of the US Pacific. Operations where I was the joint operations center director for two years.

I made 24 trips across the Pacific. And again, there the general's so I'm here for my two executive duties, says, Hardy, you're going to be here a lot. I said, what do you mean? all our colonels and captains are in Iraq and Afghanistan. You reserves all I got left. I serve. So not only did get a chance to do some really interesting work there, I gotta see the world from the four sta level.

But I was able to hand off to my chief of staff, who was my number two guy, make him the number one guy and let him go ahead and paint into the corners and, move things [00:26:00] later. And it's fun because you come back years later and then you look at what you had created. When it's a business, small business or a military command or something like that, you get to put your stamp on it as a CEO or the founder, or in that case, the CEO and the pre-commissioning CEO, and you create the culture.

And in creating that culture, you tell people what's important, what's not important. Culture is the expectation that a group has on each other, and therefore, if one person leaves and a new person comes in. Everybody else expects them to do such and such. I want to fit in. Most people do. And so serve the culture.

And as a result, it seems, and almost like the cells in our body, you wait enough years, every single one of them has cycled through and replaced, but they're still you. So how do you know we stay ourselves. And when we go through these transformations, but we also build our [00:27:00] personal culture, it becomes your reputation, if you will.

Hey, let's get this Ryan Guy. He's really good at this or he is good at that. Sometimes we go places where the culture is toxic or it's not what we think aligns with our core values. Have you ever run into that, and if so, what's your survival technique? I'll, definitely say my survival technique, straight off leave.

If you are not fitting in that well, your choices. Very much are going to be, do I try to fake it? Do I try to change myself or do I find a place where I do fit in? And you will notice none of those options are change the environment to fit mine. Because that's not going to work because Maya Angel who said, go where you are celebrated, not merely tolerated.

And I think [00:28:00] that was very good advice and I think a lot of us have found ourself in that. And it all ties into if I've got those reserve, that fallback fund. And I thought Seth might be good, but it wasn't a hell yes. And anyway, because I didn't have the money. And then you find out it's not where you want be, it's stripping your gears.

You can spend a lifetime being miserable. And what you end up doing is as I print on the back of my business card, I've got a number of things, little philosophy from G Mark and one of them is if you don't have a plan for your life, you will be part of somebody else's and you'll trade the most valuable thing.

You have your time for some fixed amount of money. Which you then redistribute it and you pay your taxes and you pay your rent, and you pay your car payment and you pay for your food, and you pay for your computing time and you pay for, and whatever's left is maybe the stuff we can put ahead of these funds.

And then even what's little left beyond that? We live our life, but then we gotta carve that out around the time we're working. It doesn't seem like a [00:29:00] very good deal, and yet this is what society has sold us for generations. Go ahead, work, go to school, get a degree, get a good job, work for 40 years, go ahead and retire in social security or to get cancer and die.

And there's more to it than that. And so for advice you've given, actually get out and other things you might offer, insights that you've gained. That if you could

roll the clock back to, or even 20 years and tell a younger self, Hey, you gotta be doing this. Can't do it for our own lives, but we can do it for people who are our listeners and our followers, what advice have you figured out that you'd want to share?

So probably the two biggest things I've realized have been very valuable that I wish I had learned even sooner than I had. One is the risk is not as bad as you think it [00:30:00] is. Take it, see what happened. See where you end up, especially when you are young and your net worth. It's

when I left community college at my net worth was negative $350.

There's not a lot of down from there. You can take that risk land where you are and be like, okay, just get up. And I've gone from 1% to 0%. Okay. I can get back up to 1%, no problem. The other one is. Look for the joy and wisdom in the things around you. I mentioned taking a, I wanted to spend two weeks in Japan and did so I booked a tour and I did not realize I had booked a seniors tour to Japan.[00:31:00]

Until I got there and everyone else was white hair gray beards. hey, it's not so bad. But what I discovered with that was I wanted to go visit all of these places and by getting this tour, everything was slowed down so you didn't have half an hour here to rush to the next place, to rush to the next place we go to the temple.

You have an hour and a half. To enjoy, to sit to Rome, to talk to people with you. You have time on the bus to sit and exchange stories and know, Hey, how did you get here? Where did your life get here? And one thing I time again was I'm happy to see somebody traveling and doing this.

And it was one.

You can go in and you can land and be like, okay, it's great. I'm going to [00:32:00] go on this trip, and oh man, I'm surrounded by all the old people. Or you can be like, alright, I'm on the bus. There's a bunch people around. How can I make this as interesting and valuable as possible?

And when you approach with that attitude, whichever path you choose, you are correct and you'll find that.

So start with the positive attitude of, I'm going to get everything I can out of this. If I have this, bad job that I don't like, okay, I'm looking for another one until then, I'm going to get every good outta this that I can before I move to the

next place. Because there's something good in any bad job that everyone's ever had, and you can ask them about it and you will find it's yeah.

That this was terrible. Was awful. Okay. What was a good story? there was that one, one time. [00:33:00] And, we lived for that stuff. I remember Thoreau had written, we have nothing to learn from old people. He was very much, discard them. But our talk that we gave here at THOTCON and Gray is the new black.

Why you should listen to the old guy in the room, was very well attended and nobody walked out, which is always a good sign. And I didn't see anybody with their head down or falling asleep. but also the keynote was Clifford Stahl, who's even older than I am by a number of years, and that was captivating, because of that experience.

So it's not always that you get to go and spend the time with people who have gone ahead of you. For people my age, there was almost nobody to follow In cybersecurity, you're Lewis and Clark, you're out there exploring new things and you're figuring stuff out, and you're doing things and you're writing it down hopefully.

And then you look back and you find out that, wow, the stuff that you thought of and did. Then moved on has be bloomed into an entire industry. Like we stopped here for water at that river, and now it's called St. Louis. There's an entire city [00:34:00] there 200 years later. But at the time, we just needed to get some water, it seemed Yeah, it's a good place. I luck it around. Here we are now at the point where instead of going through the forest and colonizing cybersecurity and figuring things out, we have well-developed careers. You're not someone who does it all. It's not like Sir Isaac Newton you would go to in 1684 and say, Hey, I need to know everything there is to know about mathematics.

Come to the right place. There's nobody can go to the state. I dunno, everything. Cyber security. If somebody's starting out in a career or if we as CISOs or security leaders are trying to advise people getting into their career, how do we help them tune their. Approach so that they end up on ideally the longest possible path that will be fulfilled instead of the start, stop, start, stop, start, stop.

Eventually like brownie in motion, bouncing to the right job. So

this [00:35:00] is one of the things that I've given this advice to many folks. Hey, I want to get into cybersecurity.

Oh, what do you want to do? Oh, I want to be a pen. Is that because that's the only job you know about in this industry. Let me tell you about a lot other interesting things.

And when you're first getting started and you're first learning and you're just being absolutely terrible at the thing because you're learning and that's the most joyful part of the process, try as much as you can and chase whatever captures you. Because everything else you learned going broad, early will show up and be synergistic to what you're doing later.

But don't spend your time saying, okay, I thought I wanted to be a pen tester, so I'm going to keep chasing that no matter how many signs. I'm saying that actually forensics seems way more [00:36:00] interesting, but I wanted to be a pen tester. Stop change forensics is more interesting. Chase it. Go do that.

Your might be way more interesting and fascinating to you.

Do it. don't follow your original plan if you find a better one along the way. Yeah. And remember for everybody's heard my, number of times G Mark's law that I wrote. Over 20 years ago, it was a corollary to Moore's Law. Half what you know about security will be obsolete in 18 months. Which means if you don't love learning, if you don't want to go ahead and add to your body of knowledge, if you want to go out and party all the time and spend Friday night there trying to figure out a new system, or you got your flipper zero and trying to get something else or whatever, if you don't passionate about it, don't do it.

I, and I've shared this before on the show, I had an Uber driver in the Bay Area when I told him what I did. I want to, goodness, cybersecurity here pays a lot of money. How do I do that? That motivation. I said, it's like national football, that you have a lot of talent and then you work hard [00:37:00] every week at it.

I like what,

say this? It's dude, that's why you driving Uber. You have to really want to invest in yourself and continually replenish that knowledge. What we have through a series of events, either things like THOTCON here in Chicago 3 1 2, by the way, for the name for THOTCON, or a lot of the B sides that have emerged.

When that came out from DEFCON 12, and that was the year they said, all you experienced speakers can't speak. We want all new speakers. A couple guys said, that's ridiculous. We'll take the old 45 record model the A side and the B

side and we'll just do a parallel conference for all the old guys to speak at and women.

And then it caught on. We had over a thousand B sides worldwide 'cause they made it into a Wiki. But those resources are out there and not just the knowledge, but the chance to explore and poke around and learn things and then get in with a group of people. And just hang out. Almost everybody I know is more than willing to welcome somebody and show them the rope, so to speak.

Let them figure out what they want. [00:38:00] Observation is spot on that somebody might say, oh, I want to be a pen tester because it sounds cool. But once you figure out where they're at, wait a minute, they're very constructive in their thinking. They like to have every I dotted and every T cross, and they want to make sure that this thing all fits together.

He said, GRC actually might be where you want to be because compliance. Could really rock your boat if this is who you are. And as we bend ourselves and try to fit sideways into some position, we're not going to be happy and we're going to be unproductive. We're going to be looking out the window. And even though if we're not in the office nine to five, 40 hours a week, like the old days, we're going to get distracted.

We're going to play with a dog,

perform well, and get something that you're going to overclock.

I want to keep going. So in the interest of going, because you gotta catch pretty soon, how about some concluding thoughts? Anything that we didn't talk about Youa? [00:39:00] the one thing I will say for, folks getting in, folks who've been in for a while always be teaching what you know. Because it doesn't matter how much you think, oh, I'm the new person in the room. I, don't know all these stuff, all these other folks know all these stuff.

You are incorrect. You have interesting stories. You have good ideas. You have things other people don't know. And I personally had an amazing experience with this once where I went to a.

A bunch of amazing, brilliant people and sat down and taught a nuclear engineer how to pick lock because she did not know how, and that was just okay in everything. In that dimension. This person will run circles around me educationally, but I know more than her [00:40:00] than this thing, and I can teach and I can learn in return.

And when you teach is one of the best ways to go ahead and be able to reinforce your learning because you want to know more than you're going to teach so that you've got the depth if somebody asks you a question. And therefore, what I've found is one of the best ways to explore something is to study it and teach it.

Or what I've been doing the last four and a half, almost five years now is find something interesting and then go write a podcast. Okay, we're out time here. So Ryan, thank you so very much for your. Having you on the show here at CISO Tradecraft for our watchers and your listeners, thank you for being part of our audience.

If you like CISO Tradecraft, and for some reason you're not yet subscribed, please do so follow us on LinkedIn. We have a whole lot more than podcasts. We have a Substack newsletter. We have information that comes out on a regular basis. You can catch us on about 12 or 13 different channels and let other people know where it is that you're getting your knowledge and your insights that are helping you with your career.

'cause we'd [00:41:00] like to reach out to others. So pass it along, let 'em know. And as always, we'd love to hear back from you. If you've got any ideas or anything you'd like to talk about, drop us a note. Best way to reach us is on LinkedIn. Until next time, this is your host, G Mark Hardy. Thank you and stay safe out there.