

ClimateTech Headhunter Silas Mahner | Transcript

Introduction ([00:00](#)):

Welcome to Green Building Matters, the original and most popular podcast focused on the green building movement. Your host is Charlie Cichetti, one of the most credentialed experts in the green building industry, and one of the few to be honored as a lead fellow. Each week Charlie welcomes a green building professional from around the globe to share their war stories, career advice, and unique insight into how sustainability is shaping the built environment. So, settle in, grab a fresh cup of coffee, and get ready to find out why green building matters.

Charlie ([00:33](#)):

Hey everybody. Welcome to the next episode of the Green Building Matters podcast. Once a week, I get to interview a green building professional somewhere in the world. Today from literally my favorite city, New York. Even though I'm based in Atlanta, I've got Silas Mahner with us, and we're gonna talk about all things climate tech, ESG, and job placement. Silas and his team do a fantastic job just helping everyone navigate their green careers in this overall movement. We'll also talk about some of the other work that he does, but Silas, welcome to the show.

Silas ([01:05](#)):

Super, super happy to be here and super happy to hear that New York is your favorite city. I was gonna mention it, but I was like, I don't wanna upset somebody from Atlanta.

Charlie ([01:14](#)):

I'm fortunate to just have gone to New York City quite a bit as we've built up our green building companies over the last 15 years, and it's just a special place. And I know you, you call it home there. A lot of sustainability comes out of real estate, not just new construction, but existing buildings, portfolio real estate. New York has some of the strongest laws, essentially local mandates for decarbonization. And so it's great to see that coming

outta New York. I like to have all of my podcast guests give us that origin story. So where did you grow up and go to school?

Silas ([01:51](#)):

My story's a little different from a lot of people. I'm originally from the middle of nowhere in Wisconsin. When I say that, I mean, we actually grew up in the woods. Everybody says what town you're from. The nearest town is where the grocery store was, about 15 minutes away. And it's about 4,000 people, 5,000 people. I grew up in the middle of nowhere in Wisconsin, son of a carpenter. Worked for my dad growing up. And I think that instilled in me the idea that I always wanted to build a business someday. I still don't exactly do that today, but I know it's something that I'll do in the future. And the interesting thing if you know anything about Wisconsin is there's not a lot of people, especially in Northern Wisconsin, who are particularly, how do you say, climate advocates, let's put it that way.

Silas ([02:33](#)):

A lot of people who are like, oh climate change, maybe it's not really real. Renewables are bad for the economy, et cetera. And so I just kind of took it like, oh, I guess, right. I had no other reference point. And then one day I started my career in insurance. I actually didn't go to university by the way. I just went straight into my career selling insurance, mainly because I wanted to make a lot of money. After about a year of doing that, I was like there's gotta be a bit more to life than just making money. I was still pretty young. I need to learn more. I went on this journey to try to find something a little bit more fulfilling and just kind of randomly bumped into somebody who said, 'Hey you sound like a sales guy.' Do you want a job in recruitment in renewables in New York? And I said, certainly. I definitely wanted to leave Wisconsin. I was actually trying to move to Detroit at the time, but I said, to move to Detroit I accidentally ended up in New York. Not a bad outcome. I moved on to New York, and actually two weeks before Covid happened to start working in renewables recruitment, I was like, we'll give it a shot. I don't know much about renewables, but we'll see. We'll see where it goes.

Charlie ([03:40](#)):

Wow. Okay. Now that's how you got to New York. That's how you got into sustainability and left that small town. I myself grew up in a very small town in the north Georgia Mountains and wanted to get to that big city, in my case Atlanta. You stuck around New York, all through the pandemic. New York wasn't the same, it was literally quiet. For the first time. From that time, but you stuck around and it's vibrant again now. Talk to us a little bit more about the sustainability side, and it's not just renewables or there's some other kind of ways you can tackle this green movement. What else do you have going on there?

Silas ([04:20](#)):

The things I do now, when I got into renewables recruitment, I was mainly just, okay, I'm gonna learn this job. I'm gonna figure out how to do this. But really early on, my boss, he told me he said you seem pretty interested in the startup side of things. You might take a look at cleantech companies. They were still called Cleantech at the time. I was like, oh, that's interesting. Through my work with Nextwave, I got to bump into some companies that were doing a little bit of things outside of renewables a little bit early on. Let me look into this. I was just very blown away by the fact that in so many of the cases, these technologies were better technology itself, like the product itself was better.

Silas ([05:00](#)):

In many cases, they were cheaper than the existing kind of conventional way, or in some cases just cost parity, and they were better for the environment. So I thought to myself I really do not understand why anybody, anybody would be against these things, because it's a triple win situation. So I was like, this is very fascinating. And it was right around, like three months into the job, I said I think I wanna make that my, my goal. I wanna go towards that. So I'm in renewables now. My company offers some latitude to move eventually into, into another desk. I'm gonna start working towards that. So I decided at some point I would also build a podcast to talk

to climate tech founders and VCs and learn from them and see what's going on.

Silas ([05:39](#)):

And I ended up starting about a year later. I have a podcast called a Clean Techies Podcast, and am still doing the same thing. Been doing that for two and a half years. Not quite as long as you eventually may. I'll never catch up on episodes, but maybe I'll get the experience you have at some point. But that's how I got into the climate tech side of things. And it's just because there's so many fascinating things. If we really care about fixing the climate problem, you need to decarbonize everything, which means you have to reinvent the entire world, and everything has to be re-engineered from the beginning. It's just so exciting. It's like the most exciting. Obviously there's a lot of challenges with climate change, but it's super exciting to be alive right now, in my opinion. So many opportunities to build companies and to just make a really big difference in the world.

Charlie ([06:22](#)):

Love that optimism. I just recently got back from the blueprint conference in Las Vegas, all about prop tech, climate tech and construction tech, but that was 2000 people attending right below us, and the Venetian was 25,000 people at the renewable energy, the re plus conference. And for those listening, this might be our first pro tip between Silas and I is to go to some of those conferences too. It's not just maybe the normal meetups, like there's some other conferences and other places to go see what's really happening out there. There's a lot of VCs there too. It's very exciting to see the other tech startups and just what's really happening here to help us fight the good fight. I'd like to look back a little more on my career so far. Did you have any mentors along the way? Sometimes a mentor is an in-person mentor, sometimes it's just someone you don't have access to, but you really follow their work and you're inspired by them.

Silas ([07:20](#)):

I think there's two people I would bring up aside from my boss, who was somebody who taught me a lot of things. When I first graduated high

school, I started working as a gardener at the church I grew up going to, and the reason I was working there was this fellow who basically paid to restore the church. He's a very successful individual. Sold his company for about a hundred million in 2000. He, and then went to do some kind of work for the church, and he still lives a very humble life taking care of the gardens. Now, he taught me something very early on, early on about contacts, and I think this plays into potentially some of the career advice we can talk about later. But he always said, he's a very old school guy, but he always said contacts. It's a number one asset in business. And so I just remember really, really hyper focusing on that because he mentioned it all the time, and you need to know people, you need to build relationships. It's something a lot of people overlook nowadays that they only reach out when they need something. And where I come from in Wisconsin, it's really easy to get a meeting with somebody if you just say, Hey would you like to grab a coffee? And it's not for 30 minutes. It's for an hour. There's no agenda. You just connect with them and you understand what they're about, what they're doing. One of the pieces of advice from, from one of my early mentors. And that's really stuck with me. I think that the theme of contacts is extremely important, especially when we talk about job hunting.

Silas ([08:37](#)):

The other person, oddly enough, was actually, when I was moving out to New York. I had a job offer as well to go to an HR tech company in Atlanta. I ended up staying in touch with the person who made me the offer. I didn't go that way, of course. But he's been very, very helpful to me as well. Just kind of helping me think outside the box of when you have a goal, don't necessarily think, oh, I need to do this and then this, and then this to achieve my goal. Just ask yourself really kind of unbiasedly, what is the shortest point from where I am to where I want to go? Don't think about additional steps in between.

Charlie ([09:14](#)):

Some good wisdom here you're sharing with us in your career. I kind of wanna go back a little bit there with connections that turn into obviously

relationships and you brought up something that's important is don't go to someone just when you need something. I have genuine curiosity. I was thinking of you, man. How's everything? You know, that's okay. And maybe in a couple months, I, we might wanna reconnect. It might be something we can talk about. But I think an entrepreneur, I like Gary Vaynerchuk. He says, jab, jab, jab, right Hook. So make sure you're giving, giving, giving. Maybe you have an ask one day. And you wanna make sure that ratio is more giving to asking. And so I think that's what you're saying. And I love it.

Silas ([09:59](#)):

I think that the reason why I feel like a lot of people shy away from it's because they, it's people, are so skeptical. Nowadays, everybody assumes you want something. And I think that part of the issue is because people only come to you when they're asking for something nowadays. But if you really want to be a good partner for business or anything, you should be giving, you should be checking in. You think of somebody, oh I have this memory of this, actually, this happened just the other day. I was in Austin a while back, and we had brunch with some of my friends there, and I just thought of my friend Nick, and I said, oh let me just drop him a message. Heey, Nick, thinking of you. Just really appreciate the things you've done right? And it makes a huge difference,

Charlie ([10:41](#)):

Fantastic. That's really good stuff. One more look back so far in life and career. What's on the highlight reel? What are some of your proudest accomplishments so far?

Silas ([10:52](#)):

It's an interesting one. I never know how to answer this. I would say probably the thing I'm really proud of is the podcast. To be honest with you. I've got over 120 episodes now, and I know that a lot of people never make it past what I think seven, episode seven or something like that. I'm really proud of that. Really proud of the consistency that I was able to put in there. And the other thing I'm really proud of is the ability to see into what

people want. So as a recruiter, but also as a manager, understanding what my employees want or what the person I'm speaking with wants in their career, and being able to have developed this, this way of being objective. Even in cases where it doesn't serve me. If I'm talking to somebody for recruiting them for a position, and they tell me some things that really in the end. I know this job is not the best for them, or This job has two, two components that are good for them, but that other component, they're better served at their current company. And being able to just share that with them, and seeing people have that realization, that aha moment, because you're the third party. You're the person on the outside. It's easier in many cases to recognize what's going on. That has been very rewarding and something that I am pretty proud of.

Charlie ([12:07](#)):

I love that, man. Congrats on the podcast. To our listeners here, we'll put a link over to Silas's podcast. I'm a big fan of podcasts, obviously. I think it's growing a lot in the last two years especially. I hope you continue to serve and make sure everybody checks out Silas's podcast. Let's talk about the present day. Your bio says the climate tech and ESG headhunter. I love that. There's probably some listening who didn't even realize that was something someone could do. But tell us about nextwave, tell us about being a certified B Corp, which I think is amazing, and just what's a day in the life of man? What keeps you busy day to day?

Silas ([12:45](#)):

So just kind of, to round it out. I work with a company called Nextwave Partners. It's a recruitment consultancy. And there may be people who don't know what that is. I certainly had no idea what a recruitment consultancy was when I first heard about it. But basically, there's people who help companies get other people hired. They find particular talent. And so we're globally based outta Singapore, and we serve renewables, climate and sustainability around the world, working with funds, and then following the money into their portfolio companies to help them. You basically build entire teams. Or we also show up when people are in need of

really particular technical talent or something of that nature. And if I remember correctly, the second part of the question was what keeps me busy day to day.

Silas ([13:27](#)):

On a daily basis as a recruiter, the main thing you're doing, and this is something a lot of people who are not recruiters won't understand because they don't see it. But really we're trying to fill mandates for our clients. Our clients come to us with a particular need, and we have to go scour the internet. Obviously LinkedIn is a big place, but sometimes I'm looking through Twitter, trying to find people doing whatever you have to do and getting referrals to find the right person. And there's such an art to it. It's actually quite exciting when you get into it. Some people can see it as monotonous, but I really get excited by the fun kind of game of finding somebody who they're probably relatively happy with in their career, because if they're good at what they've probably got into a good position.

Silas ([14:12](#)):

But then you have to find a way to break through to them as a stranger from the internet and get them to get on a call with you. And then once you get them on a call, you have to then understand what matters to them, what do they wanna achieve in their career, and then can you provide them what they need? And you have to be objective about it. You can't just say, oh, this is great I've got this great job for you. You have to first understand what they want? Do they want advancement? Do they want to learn more technical skills? Are they looking for a better mentor? Maybe they don't have that in their current role. And there's so many different things that it can be. So the majority of my time is finding people, understanding what they are, what they're all about, what they want to achieve, and seeing if I can pair them with the right opportunity. The difficulty comes when you care about people, it's very hard 'cause you can't help everyone. Sometimes what they need is not something you can offer. And that's always a hard thing. I try to do what I can to provide some resources, like doing things like this to help them with their journey. But yeah, that's a big part of it.

That's mainly, I'd say that the majority of my time is spent talking, talking to people and figuring out what they want.

Charlie ([15:12](#)):

I was placed when I left a large construction company, and I don't know, this must have been 2005, I got placed at an Opus Corporation, that's where I cut my teeth. I'm really grateful looking back on it, but I felt like I built up a relationship with the recruiter and just became a champion for me. But I could tell not just to be successful, but just to build a personal relationship and if this one's not good, here's what I like about this other company. So for those listening if you're thinking of some career changes and stuff even at my companies we use placement firms sometimes, depending on the opening. So just don't shy away from this. I think you can get a champion and advocate in your corner, and, and I like the work you're doing.

Silas ([15:58](#)):

I think there are some things that it's very difficult for people to see the value of a recruiter at times. But one example that I can just cite from yesterday, literally, is I had this candidate I was able to place yesterday who, when I took over the process to help manage him, he was basically rejected by the hiring manager, mainly because there was just some feedback from the team that they said, well there was just one thing that we just didn't quite like, it wasn't the hiring manager, it was the team. And when I spoke with her, the hiring manager, I could tell she really liked his skillset. And I said I really think if you believe in him, you gotta back him. That small thing is really a minor nuance. And if you're gonna let an opinion ruin a good hire, I don't think you should do that. And I backed him and I took him from being out of the process to now in the process and placed them. So like, there was a lot of things, if you find the right recruiter, they can help you substantially with that process. So don't underestimate them, but help them. Work with them, not against them.

Charlie ([16:55](#)):

Absolutely. So what are maybe some newer job titles or just what wasn't around two or three years ago? Obviously, we had a pandemic, but sustainability and renewables, clean tech. All this is really accelerated, if anything. So what are some newer opportunities you're kind of seeing? It's kind of exciting.

Silas ([17:14](#)):

I'd say broadly, there's a lot of things happening across climate and green buildings. The one principle I would say is that generally speaking, there's not actually that many "new jobs", just new applications for the technical skill set. Hire managers oftentimes don't recognize that they think that oh, we need somebody with experience for 20 years in this and this thing that's only been around for three it happens quite often, I have to bring them to reality. But the only titles that are substantially new would be anything inside of this ESG kind of realm. It used to be called sustainability or corporate responsibility. And now ESG has become a big thing, an ESG consultant or whatnot, and is further getting broken down to help people understand the nuances, because it's still very confusing.

Silas ([17:57](#)):

A lot of CEOs of companies, they hear about the SEC regulations coming, they don't quite know yet. There's a lot of resources out there. But to somebody who's not in space, it can be very confusing. So there's further segmentation of the ESNG separately inside of what that means for a company. A lot of the sustainability consultancies that we help fill roles for their focus on the e part. Which is okay, but they do call it ESG. What we're gonna see continuing happening is further segmentation and nuanced special specialties inside of these companies once the leadership learns what actually is going on underneath the hood of sustainability. You've seen sustainable building engineers, that's a new title. I think you've got DEI experts that are happening to get hired now, climate and energy people who are helping particularly procure energy for buildings and things of that nature.

Silas ([18:51](#)): I'm really excited to see what's gonna happen with the nature-based solution side of things in buildings and green roofs and things of that nature. Those are the big ones, I would say. And then across the other climate tech verticals not necessarily something new, but something that's very important right now and growing a lot is chemical engineers are needed in so many cases because there's so many things happening in the kind of green fuel space. That's a big one. And also just being a chemist, you can do a lot of things with materials. It's very, very interesting to see what's happening there.

Charlie ([19:23](#)):

Man, that is exciting. I know for the longest time sustainability professionals need to be generalists, but I'm hearing from you the market's saying, now I need a specialist here. Maybe this is something you're very passionate about within the sustainability movement. I love it, man. Well one more because you're a subject matter expert on this. I've always heard that people hiring managers only read the top one third. Maybe you need some bold words that pop out or numbers, but I don't know, in a virtual environment, work environment and many applications any maybe top two or three tips for someone on their resume? What do you like to see?

Silas ([20:02](#)):

I would say this is, as a recruiter, this is relatively controversial, but I do think that resumes are dead because I think that it's very difficult in the market we're in right now. I would say there's a lot of openings, but only a certain percentage of those are, "seriously" hiring. So you've got all these "openings", but not really any movement. You've got a boatload of people looking for jobs. So you've got hundreds and hundreds of applications going into these openings. And in a lot of cases, I can speak from experience, the majority of people who apply do not meet the criteria. Usually there is a specific need for g h g inventories inside of food and agriculture, for example, whatever. It's very special. And people are applying thinking, oh yeah, I'm a great fit for this. But in reality, they're not looking and honestly asking themselves are they a good fit for the criteria that's required. So for

that reason, resumes are very difficult. If you are somebody who's trying to get a role that's maybe not exactly your specialty, it's very close and a lot of related skills, you have to do something more than that. I'll get to that in a second. If you want actual resume advice, I would say make your, your, your resume very clear at the beginning. It has to be very clear what you do? Don't use technical speak. Obviously, some people understand the technical speak, but make it really clear like, I helped do this, and I did this many times, very quantifiable things.

Silas ([21:31](#)):

The thing I do a lot as an example, I'll ask candidates a lot of times, like, okay, so have you managed a team? And they kind of give you this long-winded yes, answer when the answer if it's real, would be, yes, I manage this many people for this many years, not, I manage this many people on a project basis. Like, be honest about what you cannot do or what you have not done. So that is something that people are usually trying to inflate, and you can't, you can't capacity, you can't fake the interviews with most companies. So one thing is to make it very clear and put the information that is valuable in your CV. And I would just say, as things become specialized, the things that are valuable are the particular technical skills within ESG as well as the industries you've served, especially if you're a consultant, especially for those people working out like ey, for example.

Silas ([22:18](#)):

You need absolutely need to identify which industry you've focused on, because the only way you're gonna be the biggest fish in the pond of applicants is to truly stand out from demonstrating the technical skills, whether it's LCAs or GHG inventories or something of that nature, and then also the industry. Have you worked with financial services? Have you worked in food and agriculture, et cetera. Beyond the CV though, the reason I say that the resume is dead is I really believe that if you're trying to kind of stretch to this next level, which everybody wants. Everybody wants to grow in their career, or at least most people, you need to be a little bit more out of

the box. So the thing that I learned through this com this organization called Discover Praxis, was to create a video pitch.

Silas ([23:05](#)):

A value proposition to your potential employer. So you should first of all, have a website that demonstrates your portfolio, because it's interactive, it's better. Then just a cv. But then when you find the job you're interested in, for sure, you can go and apply. There is HR who's gonna swat down a lot of things based on very simple things that you could be very, you could sneeze sideways, and they say, no, I'm not gonna interview that person. But if you do that, and then you go and reach out to the hiring manager directly and say, with a video pitch saying, Hey, I really am excited about this opportunity. My understanding of the opportunity is that you need X, Y, Z. I can do these two things, and I really wanna learn this third thing, and I'm really excited to reach out to you. I would love to work with you. Here's my contact information. Make a minute and a half video pitch. If you go out of your way to do something like that, people are probably gonna interview you. Even if you're not qualified, they'll probably speak to you because who does that? So that would be my, my tips. I know it's a little more than you asked for, but those would be my tips.

Charlie ([23:59](#)):

Fantastic, man, that was very valuable. I think our listeners are taking notes and I get that too, as a business owner, and I would, that would stand out to me. It's that effort. You've already put in some effort, you've been proactive and, and it's customized. It's not general, and yeah, I mean, you, it's all about attention. So thank you for those tips. Let's talk about the future some more. Silas I love to ask this question, What's next? What are you excited about in our world? Green buildings, healthy buildings, et cetera, smart buildings, but maybe even within the recruiting industry in your space or just with sustainability anything coming down the road you're kind of excited about?

Silas ([24:39](#)):

There's too many things to talk about. I would say perhaps the most exciting things to me within sustainability as a whole, especially in the green building space, would be, I'm very excited to see how the very difficult to decarbonize buildings are like the really old ones because a lot of people are focused on new buildings and the relatively easy retrofits. But if I'm not mistaken, there's a lot of opportunity to decarbonize really old buildings like the one I live in New York. That are just so poorly built from an efficiency perspective. I think that it will be exciting to see companies start to solve these things. I think because of so many people piling into the climate, there's a little bit of growing pain right now, especially for job seekers. But what it will mean in my estimation is you will see people realize, okay, how can I differentiate myself?

Silas ([25:30](#)):

And then they're going to either start companies or they're going to find ways to become more niche in what they do. And then you're gonna find people solving really particular problems. I think this is an example in the ESG, sorry, like the let's say ESG carbon and carbon emissions tracking and reporting softwares. There's all these SG softwares out there, they're all generalists. And what you're seeing is in order to win, they have to become specialized. So I think that the same thing will happen where you have people breaking down each nuance of a green building, like we are very good at replacing the windows, or we have this particular paint that's more sustainable, which could be anything but highly nuanced and a specialized future. That's something I think will happen.

Silas ([26:16](#)):

And I guess broadly for the recruitment side, I do think recruitment is an old industry. It's very old school. And in a lot of ways, I do believe there are ways that it will change, it will become way more interesting with AI in particular. I don't know exactly how this is going to look, but one person I've had on the show has talked about the ability of AI to read CVS and comprehend what they might be able to achieve in the future. What are they well suited for, kind of predicting their future learning? And I would be

really fascinated to see how this plays a role into helping hiring managers take the bet, because they're really apprehensive to take a bet on somebody who doesn't already know exactly what they need to do, especially when the economy stuff, and you don't, you, you don't have time to make multiple shots on goal with your, with your hires. So there's a lot of things there that I do think are interesting, and I think there's so much room for innovation in recruitment, but it's probably for another show.

Charlie ([27:12](#)):

That hiring manager can kind of creep their own data lake, train their AI for what they usually look for and who knows. I love it, man. It's exciting. Well okay, let's just do some rapid fire questions here, Silas, I'm really enjoying our conversation. What would you say is your specialty or gift?

Silas ([27:29](#)):

I would say, I think I brought it up a little bit earlier, is the ability to be able to look at what people want. And even if it doesn't serve me the outcome, what they want, if it doesn't, it's not helpful for me to be able to recognize that and be objective about saying, Hey, you know what? I think this is the best thing for you. I would say that's probably, probably it.

Charlie ([27:49](#)): Love it. Do you have any good habits or routines, rituals you share?

Silas ([27:53](#)):

I would say something that's very important to me and that's helped me succeed, I think is, has been making sure the mornings are for me. I know you talked at the beginning of the show about your routine, having the mornings, just for me, getting up early it's really like a basic thing, but it really makes a difference for people who don't get up early. I, I just feel like you wake up and then immediately you become a slave to your job or to the world or whatever. But if you can get up and enrich yourself through whether I, I have, I have a prayer routine in the morning. I read, I learn languages, I do whatever these things that are good for me, and then I start work and I feel good that no matter how late I work, and no matter what else I don't get to in the day, I've done the things that matter to me first.

Charlie ([28:35](#)):

Love it, man. It's kind of priming you for the day, but you've already I can tell you like some business books and stuff too whether it's Sharpen the Saw and Seven Habits, it's you're, you're putting in those reps. Alright, so I'm a fan of the bucket list. Not everybody has a bucket list, that's okay. But what are one or two things maybe on your bucket list, any travel or adventure you wanna write A book? Sounds like starting a company one day. What's on the bucket list?

Silas ([28:59](#)):

The thing I thought of when I think about this is that one day I want to visit Antarctica. I know it's not, people think that's ridiculous, but I would love to visit Antarctica because I want to go to all the continents. And this may be somewhat controversial nowadays, but I would love to meet Elon Musk and just have a conversation with him. Like, I think he's just the most fascinating person. And another thing I'd love to do is go skydiving. I think I've done bungee jumping now, and I said I never would, but I'd love to go skydiving.

Charlie ([29:26](#)):

Love it. That's a great bucket list. Actually Walter Isaac and Isaacson's releasing that biography of Elon Musk.

Silas ([29:34](#)):

I already have it. I've got it sitting in my bed already.

Charlie ([29:37](#)):

Love it, man. Last couple things here. So as you look back on your career, is there any advice you wish you'd received earlier?

Silas ([29:45](#)):

I think people did tell me this, I just didn't listen early on. But the thing that's been very impactful for me as I've achieved a certain level of success and then you think, oh, like I should be happy now. You sometimes have these moments where you doubt it. And what I would say the advice would be is as you set out on your journey, whether you're going into high school, college, your first job, whatever, as you set out on your journey, remember

that even if you go the conventional way, you do everything the way that people ask you to, or the safe way, no matter what you do, no matter you're trying to do, build something great or do something just like average, and you wanna have a nice life, your career will not be a straight line, and it's okay.

Silas ([30:31](#)):

And you've gotta really internalize that because otherwise you're gonna have moments where if you feel like it's supposed to be a straight line, once reality comes and you, and you see that it's definitely not a straight line. Everybody knows this now, like as they get into their career, but young people don't. As you start to see, oh man, this is not going in a straight line, I'm depressed, I don't know what to do. You just have to realize and internalize that that's actually normal. That is not unusual whatsoever. Everybody has these crooks and turns and things where you wake up one day and you're like, do I actually wanna do this? Is this the right thing? And you gotta have mentors, have people to talk to. And sometimes maybe that impulse is correct, you should follow it. But in some cases it's maybe just a moment of doubt and you gotta push through it. But just remember, it will not be a straight line no matter who you are, no matter how successful people are. This is my favorite thing to ask people on shows like, in your early career, how did it go? People always think it's great. They think it was smooth sailing at the beginning because they're at a level of success now, but it never was never smooth sailing, no matter how clean they make it sound.

Charlie ([31:33](#)):

That's good. That's a good question. Might need to add that one. It's not a straight line. And I might add one more thing to our listeners, Silas, I like to talk about, think of time in terms of seasons. You have Kronos, most people will measure time in minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years, but you can also measure time in kairos or opportunities and seasons. So that in your world. That job, that's the next one. Think about it for a season. It's not forever, it's not like this is, I gotta make the best decision for the rest of

my life. No, no, no. Think of it in terms of kairos, that next opportunity or season. And so I think in a straight line and think of everything when it comes to time and seasons. That's what I would add to

Silas ([32:16](#)):

That was a really hard thing for me to learn. I thought that once you set a goal, and especially if it's a long-term goal, at one point I had set a 10 year like, roadmap of what I wanted to achieve. And when I got to a point where I had to make a decision, if I do this, it's going to change my trajectory. And I was doubting myself. I was like, whoa, but I'm not doing what I said I would, am I a liar? And I had to realize that it's okay, it's okay to change because if you made your roadmap for your whole life at 18, the opportunities and the type of life is gonna be substantially not as exciting as if you continually adjust it as you go and you learn.

Charlie ([32:55](#)):

I love that. Last thing here. Just let's say someone listening is getting inspired. They might even give you a call and see if you can put 'em in a credible position. Say they're just now jumping into this green movement. Any words of encouragement as we come to a close?

Silas ([33:10](#)):

I would say be patient and don't get discouraged with the difficulty of the job search. The market is extremely difficult. There's a lot of people moving into the space and not necessarily a lot of people moving out or moving up. So the entry level positions can be few and far between. And for mid-level people moving up, it can be difficult, but be patient and find your niche. There is going to be plenty of opportunity in space. I know a lot of people wanna make an impact and they're eager to get out there, but just continue doing what you're doing. There's so many people and founders who have created mind blowing technologies that they were only able to do that because they worked in a conventional industry for many, many years. They understood how it worked, and they realized, hey instead of going to work for a climate tech company, why don't I just build one?

Silas ([33:58](#)): I have an opportunity right in front of me. I see the issue, I understand it, I'm gonna go do it. So I would encourage people. It's not exactly a fun thing, but in some cases, really just like being willing to see around you. What can you do right now? Maybe you can't get that job in sustainability just right yet, but perhaps you could do something to impact your community from a social or environmental perspective. There's so many things you can do. So just don't be discouraged as you're looking and, and take your time. Be patient.

Charlie ([34:27](#)):

Be patient. Hey everybody, make sure you connect with Silas on LinkedIn. Check out his podcast as well. Silas, just wanna say, man, you're doing amazing work. I know that because I can read some testimonials even on your LinkedIn where I hope you realize this. You're having a lot of impact not just on careers and, and giving a lot of encouragement, but who knows where the people that you're placing will end up and the impact, the positive impact on the environment that they're gonna make in part because you got 'em in that better position. I really appreciate your time on the show and just wanna say thanks.

Silas ([35:01](#)): Thanks for having me on.

Speaker 4 ([35:03](#)):

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