

EPISODE 843

“TH: Life is challenging. Life is hard. Leveraging an alter ego to allow you to slay those dragons and those enemies to move more gracefully through things is a fantastic thing to leverage.”

[INTRODUCTION]

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FT: Do you have a secret identity? Our guest today says he might want to consider adapting one. Welcome to So Money everybody. I'm your host, Farnoosh Torabi, and today we are welcoming Todd Herman to the program. Todd is the author of the new book, *The Alter Ego Effect: The Power of Secret Identities to Transform Your Life*. Just to put things in perspective, just how hot this book is, it had close to 20 publishers fighting over it. Quite the bidding war, and you can actually get your copy tomorrow when it hits all bookstores.

Who is Todd Herman? He is a friend. He grew up on a farm on Alberta, Canada milking cows, taking care of chickens. Today, he is a toughness and performance coach to professional and Olympic athletes. He's also a dad. He's also a leadership and performance adviser to billionaires and hundreds of entrepreneurs. Not to mention, he has created this incredible business achievement program called The 90-Day Year. It's catered to business owners who want to master the art of execution. I've actually spoken at 90-Day Year. I know firsthand Todd is incredible at what he does.

Today, he's going to share why having an alter ego is critical to achieving your goals, whether they're to master your finances, climb in your career, anything, and how to identify and tap into your alter ego. Todd's also going to share the alter egos of some pretty famous people, including Oprah. She's actually talked about how she channels a specific group of people. I had no idea about this. Finally, the incredible daily practice that Todd says has been the greatest method for him to build and nurture relationships. It's something we can all do, and it's actually quite simple when we think about it.

Here is Todd Herman.

[INTERVIEW]

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FT: Todd Herman, welcome to So Money, and congratulations. Your book is launching tomorrow. I feel very fortunate to have you on right before it happens, before you take over the world even more than you have already. But welcome to So Money.

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TH: Farnoosh Torabi, you are a peach. Thanks for having me. Yeah, it's an exciting time.

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FT: Calling me a peach from a farm boy.

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TH: Yes.

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FT: I'm going to take that as a compliment.

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TH: Yes, you should. It's a colloquial term that is a term of endearment. So, yes.

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FT: Wonderful. So let's just get right to the big news, which is your new book, your first book, probably one of many. It's called *The Alter Ego Effect: The Power of Secret Identities to Transform Your Life*, and this is really a book that encapsulates your life's work in training top athletes to perform at their peak.

There's a lot of philosophical quotes out there, #moneymotivation on Instagram. You hear like just be yourself. It's all about being yourself. What your prescribing is this alter ego effect, which reconcile that for me. So am I being myself? Am I being someone different? What does that mean?

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TH: Yeah. I mean, I always challenge people around the idea that what does – Because authenticity is really the term that people kind of will [inaudible 00:04:18], right? But what does authenticity mean? So for me, someone who helps Olympic athletes, top pro-athletes, or top leaders in business and entrepreneurs and all sorts of types with our training programs. The thing that people struggle with the most is that when they lay their head on the pillow at night and they get there and they look back on their day, that there were these moments where they didn't perform like they know that they could, and we call those things moments of impact. Where there was this opportunity to say something, introduce yourself to someone. Maybe speak up in a conference room when someone had shared something, or when someone makes a comment to someone else that put them down in some way and you don't say something, or you don't do something, or you didn't respond to your son or daughter the way that you wanted to.

Well, that operating in-authentically, and I'm not saying that to beat people up and you're supposed to judge yourself with it, but that's what we as human beings do. We beat ourselves up when we lay our head on the pillow at night and we just lament about what we could have done. So authenticity in my world and I think I would encourage other people or other people's world is to think of it like this, it's that when the results that you're getting on the field of play, the ambitions that you have, are not a reflection of who and what you're capable of. That is authenticity, or being in-authentic is when you have the capacity to do something and you're not doing it. That's in-authenticity.

So that's why – I mean, the term fake it till you make it. It's a terrible term, because – Well, A, the word fake it is in there, and as you know, there's probably better ways of saying things than that. The alter ego effect has nothing to do with faking something, because faking something – That feels like an outside approach. It's like an outside – I'm going to fake it on the outside, but inside I'm actually not feeling that way.

I talk about the science of it throughout the book. This is about acting very intentionally about who and what we're bringing on to our important fields of play that we send. I'm going to use that term all the time. It just represents we all have different stages. You've got your vocational world, or your business world that you stand on, or you've got your home life, or you've got your relatives, or you've got your friends that you hang out with. Those are all different stages or circumstances that you put yourself in.

Of course, we all have different parts of our personality that get magnified when – You're not the same when you're with your friends as you are with mom and dad. There's elements of you that get highlighted. So This adaption of an alter ego or a secret identity that we use to help people perform is to allow some people who have struggled with themselves because of maybe trauma, something that happened to them in the past, or it could be even something as simple as, "I want to maybe tap into a different side of my personality," and as a creative expression for them.

We can talk about stories and examples in a second. Just allows them to activate something that is really powerful and a part of the human condition, and it's this ability to create our own worlds. This imagination, this creative imagination that human beings are gifted with that truly makes us unique on the planet. Well, we leverage that to help us get out of our way and untap the capabilities that we have instead of keeping them trapped inside of us.

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FT: The promise of your book is quite liberating, that you can actually step into this alternative persona to accomplish what you want to accomplish. To transition to one story that was really pivotal for you, like maybe was your aha moment, was when you met Bo Jackson, a

professional athlete, who took on the alter ego of Jason from Friday the 13th when he would step on the field, which begs the question; how do you identify who this alter ego is and should be? He happened to watch a movie and was sort of fascinated by the cold calculating nature of Jason, and maybe that's what he related to that on some level. But how do you identify this person, this alternative ego?

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TH: Yeah. So we all have these parts of ourselves that – And I talk about in the book. As just a frame of reference, I talk about the ordinary world and the extraordinary world. In the ordinary world, the enemy pulls us in there and he uses different forces to kind of trap us, which are things like judgment, and criticism and worrying about what others are thinking about you.

Like I said before, like trauma is something that is a major hidden force, or impostor syndrome. Anyway, there are these parts of ourselves that we wish sometimes we're showing up as, and they actually end up coming down to like qualities and characteristics that maybe we wish that were to select. It's the most obvious to go to for people as a frame of reference is when you're watching a movie, because you're so caught up in the story and you resonate with it, and there might be something with the protagonist that you're like, "Oh, man! I wish I could – I love how Lara Croft is just so adventurous and she can just figure it out like MacGyver, just figure things out," or "James Bond is this like cool and calm and just that brazen confidence and he walks into a room with," or you could go to superheroes or literary characters.

So all of us have some character from our past that we just actually are drawn towards. You should ask yourself, "Well, what is it about them?" Because sometimes we see in those characters what we wish that we have in ourselves. Then when you relate it to – You're struggling with something in business. Maybe you're in a sales role, or maybe you're a parent and you wish like my alter ego – And I've got three little kids live here in New York City and I tell people it's like raising an oak tree in a thimble here in New York.

But when I think of someone who is almost inarguably just the best human around children, it was Mr. Rogers, and I grew up watching Mr. Rogers. So if I can take on some of his characteristics as a parent, and they're inside of me. I'm just using him as a frame of reference

to draw them out of me so that when my middle one, Sophie, who's got this fantastic ability to send a crescendo of screeching and crying to a level that drives me into a rage, it would be terrible for me to meet that energy with a rageful energy as well, or anger as well.

So what would Mr. Rogers do in that moment? Well, he would always get down on his knee and get down to eye level with young kids. So that's what I do as well. Instead of me coming at them with that same emotion, I'm going to come at them with the same sort of caring and affection and love that he would.

It might sound crazy to someone that I have to literally think about that. Again, none of us are perfect human beings. So using these things as helpful totems and just markers for us to adapt, it's transformed the way that Sophie in the past would have kind of gone off. Because that's my first response now is to get down and just give her a big hug or an embrace. The length of time that it takes for her to kind of overcome those things is completely shrunken to a few seconds as supposed to several minutes.

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FT: Do you think the world would be a better place if we all adapted Mr. Rogers to some extent in our mind?

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TH: I don't know if you've ever seen the amazing documentary that was done on him.

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FT: Yes, of course.

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TH: A third of that documentary is talking about what his alter ego. That cat puppet that he used and his wife talks about it in the movie, where she said, "He used the puppet as his alter ego,"

but that was really who he truly was. He allowed the puppet to kind of draw out of him how he really felt, which was this loving and affection.

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FT: Daniel Tiger was at the Daniel Tiger –

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TH: Daniel Tiger was his –

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FT: Now, like taking on – He's like the new generation Mr. Rogers.

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TH: It's exactly what it is. So which is just incredible. I get shivers thinking about it, because as soon as I started watching the movie –

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FT: I was in tears on a plane watching this. I was that person.

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TH: Yeah, I watched it on a plane as well.

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FT: In a window seat.

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TH: What's crazy about this is what I know is going to happen from the book. Again, I've been living in this world – I mean, I've been building alter egos for athletes to help them with performance for well over a decade. It's been 16 years. I know that it's kind of one of those things where people can't unsee it. They're going to hear people talk about it all the time in interviews that it's such a prolific things. Most common response I get back to people actually has nothing to do with it being in-authentic or being fake. That's actually very rarely an objection I get from people.

What people often say is, "Todd, I feel like I've been doing that, or I've done that in the past." My response back to people all the time is, "I know you have, because it's a natural part of the human condition." Every young kid, every single one of us pretended to be a superhero at some point in time, or a nurse, or a fireman, or a cowboy, or insert whatever role or kind of character there is. We all play with this idea, and then overtime we're told to act our age and then we start to create a narrative in our head that, "Oh, acting my age, or growing up means stop being playful."

Yet this is the thing that – I mean, 82% of my clients, just so you know, in pro Olympic sports and in high-achieving other fields. I have referred off to some of the top therapists on the planet, because many, many people are driven by trauma. Many people, I'm one of them, have been through some tough things. That's not what I do. I'm not a therapist by any stretch of the imagination. I'm a mental game strategist at peak performance, which means I'm giving people strategies to help continue to perform.

Now, I'm not here to help someone unpack trauma. There are other people that are far more skilled at that, and I think you – There's a lot of people out there who say that they do a heck of a lot more than what their skills allow them to. It's like the answer to that, because I'm a life coach and I could solve everyone's problem. Well, maybe you should stay in your lane and just stick to your specialty.

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FT: [inaudible 00:15:14]

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TH: Yeah, exactly. Exactly.

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FT: I'd love to learn a little bit more about your background, and we've known each other for some time, but we really haven't had an opportunity to unpack Todd Herman a little bit. You have on your site these really fun bullets, bullet points, about fun facts about Todd Herman. I just want to share some of those with our audience to give a little bit of color to the man behind this amazing book.

So we've already established that you're a farm boy from Alberta, Canada, and this is fascinating to read. You're a daily letter writer. You've written over 4,000 personal letters to people, five a week since you're in your early 20s. Why?

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TH: At first it was a challenge by an early mentor of mine, Jim Rohn, who was famous in the speaking world back in the early 90s. He passed away in 2009, but he was kind of one of the fathers of the speaking world and an amazing business philosopher. But we were talking about just sort of some of the things that he would – I was just asking, “When you point to some of the activities that you do that help you to be successful, what are they?”

Often times, we all do these. We think of like some action steps that take you directly towards the goal, and what he said was relationships are always the thing that are going to grease the slide for you, Todd. Ever forget that. When two people might be going after the same contract to get a job and one person is amazing at persuasion, but the other person knows the owner of the company and they've had a relationship for a long time. That person is going to get the role.

Anyways, he was just telling me about that and he said that he has a habit of writing letters to people. I said, “Okay. Well, maybe I'll –” I said to him, I said, “Well, I'll write letter.” He's like, “I'll

challenge you to write a letter a week,” and I get it, and I wrote my first letter and only a few days later I got a response back from the person and it was so positive. It made me feel so good.

I was like, “Well, why wouldn’t I want to do this every single day?” So people talk about like gratitude journals and how important that emotion of gratitude is. So my letter a day writing habit is my way of taking the amazing powerful emotion of gratitude and not keeping it with me and passing it on. So if I read Farnoosh Torabi’s amazing book. I will sit down and I will write you a letter. Every single book I’ve ever read, I’ve always sent a letter to that author. The most common response back I get from people – Again, I’ve written out well over 4,000 letters, is you have no idea how much I needed to get this today.

Because just think about it, life is challenging, which is actually what I talk about in the book, just life is challenging. Life is hard. Leveraging an alter ego to allow you to slay those dragons and those enemies to move more gracefully through things is a fantastic thing to leverage. Writing a letter to someone and saying, “Farnoosh, we’ve never had the opportunity to meet before, but I just wanted to say how much I appreciate you sitting down and slaving away at writing this book.” Before I actually wrote a book, what I would say is I’ve never written a book before. But what I know is from hearing other people talk it’s the most difficult thing. Specifically, I love what you wrote on page 72. It completely shifted my perspective about money. Then I’ll put in the words that you said in the book. Then I’ll say – I’ll end it with simply, “Thank you so much for taking the time to put your words and your experiences on paper. It impacted me. So, thank you. All the best.”

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FT: That’s beautiful.

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TH: And I never ask for anything. There’s no, “Hey, if you’re ever in New York City sometimes, ping me. I’d love to buy you a coffee.” Nothing like that. It’s just –

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FT: [inaudible 00:19:14]

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TH: Yeah.

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FT: Are you emailing these letters now, because it's so hard to find people's home addresses.

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TH: No, not at all. In fact, I've got my kit that I use every single morning, and I use a wax seal. I use the classic or the old school. I drop the wax on the envelope and I have my seal and I stamp it shut. I even have a have a very specific wax that I use, because the way that the – People who've never sent a wax-sealed letter before they don't know this. But if you use too hard of wax, the way that letters are sorted in the U.S. Postal Service and any other postal service ends up breaking the wax. So you have to use a wax that's got some flexibility to it. So there's a specific wax that I use.

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FT: My goodness! The art of letter writing by Todd Herman. This is the next book, apparently.

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TH: Yeah, I don't email thing. I want to show up someone's mailbox.

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FT: You are a bright sock enthusiast as well. Did you like that transition?

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TH: That was very journalistic. That was outstanding.

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FT: My Columbia master's degree in action. You're a rootbeer aficionado. You're a dyslexic.

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TH: Big time.

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FT: What age were you when you realized this and how – I mean, that's a triumph in and of itself, to sort of manage that and then become so successful. I actually find that many dyslexics are like some of the most brilliant people I ever met.

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TH: So here's the interesting thing about it. I become a bit of I'd say armchair expert at dyslexia. There's actually 29 types of dyslexia last time I was told or checked. They might have found more. But I didn't find out until I was in a car accident when I was in my early 20s, and –

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FT: Really?

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TH: I got kind of t-boned. I got hit from the side by a moving truck. So there's a big – Not a semi, but a big truck, and my head went into the windshield on my side window. Then he kept on

pushing me into a lampstand, and then my head kind of got thrown into the other side, because my seatbelt busted.

Anyway, so I had to get all these like psychological testing done, and when I was going through this test, they were giving me around just how my vision was working. This psychiatrist came in and she said, "Have you been diagnosed with dyslexia." I said, "No." She's like, "You've got dyslexia." I said, "Well, that would explain my entire childhood then," because reading was so hard for me.

There's people who get letters mixed up. There are some people who get words mixed up, so the sentences don't make sense. Mine is that the sentences and the argument of a paragraph, it's jumbled by the time I get finished the paragraph. So it doesn't make sense in my head. Sometimes I reread the same paragraph like 17 times.

If someone else is finishing 110 page book when they're in grade 6 in three hours, it's taking me an entire weekend to get through it. How it ended up shaping a lot of my personality was I was a class clown and I use that to deflect away the attention of maybe calling on me especially after a reading assignment.

So you're a class clown and you're interrupting kids, which is a very common thing amongst people who are ADD, or dyslexic. To your point about successful people, four of the six sharks on Shark Tank are dyslexic, and it's because – Because the world that you're operating inside of, because school is so rigid. Because that world is not flexible and adaptable to you because it's so rigid, you have to end up finding creative ways to exist inside of it. So you end up leveraging and building a very good creative problem solving muscle at a young age, which then only serves you later in life. It doesn't feel like it's serving you early in life. But you build this really kind of strong muscle that really does serve you.

I actually do a lot of kind of – I used to do a lot more, but now I'm just really busy. I used to do a lot of conversations to young kids around like, "Hey, listen. School can be tough, but this is not the prescription of what life is going to be like for me, because some of you are developing a muscle that is going to allow you to get flexed and bring you a level of success that you have no idea is waiting for you in the future."

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FT: Right. No, I completely agree with that. You also talk on your site and you're very open about how you failed at several businesses. You've had so much success and that has also brought with it some failure. In one case, you lost your entire life savings. This is a money show. We got to dive into this. Let's unpack that.

[00:24:12]

TH: Yeah. So I was – When I started my sports business, I built it off of the back of speaking. When you're speaking on stages, you get this great opportunity to be in front of sometimes people that aren't your ideal customer that you're going after at the time, but it still doesn't mean that they aren't resonating with your message. So I have a lot of people who contact me even though I'm working with athletes. I say, "Listen, I love what you had to say around mental toughness and developing that along with how to build strong teams. Do you do any work with the government?"

So my first ever client beyond sports was actually the Kennedy government, and I went in and I did this training with them. So long story, I ended up building this really big leadership program for almost all of the oil companies around the world, and I ended up selling that business. With the money that I made, I moved to New York City. This is back in 2007, and I started to come into the business of a friend who was scaling, but it was kind of beyond his skill now. We partnered up together and he ended up a year later – So I bought into it with the money that I've made, plus a little bit more, and he embezzled all the money out of the business. So I lost all of what I had earned, plus some more putting me into debt.

So the lesson I took from it, because a week later I was out for a drink with a friend of mine, Mel, here in New York, and he was, "This is unbelievable. If this was me, if I had just that lost that –" And it's millions. If I lost that much money, I would be underneath my covers balling my eyes out. How are you out with me right now?" I was like, "Yeah, of course I'm not happy that this happened, but I haven't lost my skill and I am still young, thankfully." I was 31 at the time, or 32 at the time.

Again, I was saying that outwardly just so I could believe as well, but I was upset. But the lesson I took away from it was – And I saw this great kind of answer from Daymond John, who's on Shark Tank. He was on a panel discussion at an event that I was at as well and speaking at, and someone had asked the question around risk and how entrepreneurs are just more risky. He said, "They're not." That's one of the biggest mistakes that people make when they think of entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs have a higher risk tolerance, but don't make the mistake of betting your entire life savings on starting something. Those stories are far more rare than they are status quo.

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FT: That's why they're stories, because –

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TH: Exactly. It's such a great way to explain it.

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FT: Yeah. Men bites dogs. Not dog bites men.

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TH: Yeah. My point around that is I – Because, again, you get clouded by the fact that this was a really close friend of mine. So you have a high-degree of trust that – You're not even going to think about that. If this was someone who approached me, I'd be like, "Okay. Well, how do I know this person?" Yeah. So that was tough. But it took me four and a half years took a lot with the million plus dollars in debt. I mean, I met my wife in that timeframe as well, which is why we have such a close relationship, because she didn't meet me when I was at my high time. She met me when I was sort of crawling myself out. Yeah, there's a lot of good things that came out of it. But not to say that I didn't wish it didn't happen too.

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FT: What's your money mindset like these days? Now that you've had all these experience to pull from and now you're very successful. What would you say is your greatest sort of money mantra philosophy around money that you have? You have a lot of philosophy around leadership and business and entrepreneurship, but what about money?

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TH: Yeah, I think that for me money is on the other end of me continuously everyday giving more and more value to other people. The more – When I was young, I would try to take such a direct route to the money. Like I'd focus on money a lot, and then all it did was typically make me feel bad that I didn't have enough of it at the time, because it's such a score card for people. Again, this is coming from someone who comes from sports who are always talking about the outcome, and even in the training we do, the most stressed and anxious athletes, the most stressed and anxious business owners or corporate professionals are people who are always delaying gratification or delaying the enjoyment of their work until a goal is achieved. It's a terrible way to exist.

If you're always focused on outcomes, outcomes, outcomes, winning the race, earning the medal, winning the tournament, getting the check, all those kinds of things, they're fleeting moments in time. So for me I kind of back it up and when I finally learned this for myself, again, it was me taking my own medicine from what I was telling other people, that if I just stay focus on the process, the money is absolutely the outcome. I just want to focus on it.

So I know that if I stick to doing the work that I am engineered to do, that I am built to do and often times built to do way better than other people, just money falls out the other side. I'll still set goals. We still have like – My wife is a CFO, and it makes a phenomenal skillset to have in-house. She worked at Experient, and she was the CFO of one of their divisions where she's got a phenomenal financial skillset, and it's amazing to have that in our house.

We'll still set those financial goals for ourselves. I just want to focus on them. Almost I'm of the type, because I train on this. The moment I set the goal, because it takes – For me, there's a lot

of thinking that goes into the goal that I'm setting. Then the moment I accept the goal, my emotional response to the goal being set is it's inevitable. That thing has no chance of not getting hit.

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FT: Our sponsor is Chase Slate, and you're talking about goals, and one of the things that we've been asking guests in the beginning of the year is what is something that your wife and you are working on financially this year? Is there a solution? Is there a goal? A specific?

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TH: Yeah. So this year the resolution for us is to solidify the financial system around our kids and their future. Now, because there were – Again, just like many business centers. There're many things that happen to you that you just can't predict, and last a couple of years I've had to go through a major lawsuit with a former business partner that I had to take to court. Those things are expensive. So some of those kind of other financial goals were delayed.

But this year, it's about really putting together that financial system for our children who are all very, very young still. So that's one of the things that we're solidifying. Some insurance stuff. Just a lot of the kind of that security blanket kind of part of the financial stuff is a big part of it. Then because now – Because the book has been such a huge part of my mental bandwidth this last couple of years, now it's also looking at and getting involved in some other investments on the real estate side of things.

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FT: Awesome. Well, it's a good year to buy into real estate. I think it's definitely becoming more a buyers' market. To your point about getting your kids set up, that's so important, because I think – And I just had an interview with a wealth advisor who is telling me that even the wealthiest of Americans, the transfer of wealth lasts maybe three generations. So it's a lot to say to someone like, "You need to make as much money and have it last for all the generations to come." But then I think what's really the mistake that's happening is that over the years and it

gets passed on, the generations don't do their part to keep it going and make the sound investments and all that. But it's nice to know that even when you achieve so much success, like Todd Herman, that there still more that needs to be done on the financial play. It's a work in progress.

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TH: Always. I mean, if there's one thing that I've been consistent with that I always tell people, is if there's any level of success that I've had is directly related to the quality of the mentors that I've had in that area. So I didn't have – My father was always amazing with money and my other brother, Ryan, who's a little bit older than me, he was around my dad more in working on the farm and ranch than I was. I was kind of around the house doing a lot of kind of the crappy labor, like pulling the weeds in the windbreak where the trees were and stuff like that.

So Ryan was around dad, and maybe he had a little more personality or personality for this too, but he's been amazing with his financial investments more than I was. So I delayed getting a mentor in the financial area longer than I should have, and the moment that I did, then that whole world got figured out. Anytime you're trying to do things on your own, that's the slowest way that you can do anything.

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FT: Right. No, absolutely.

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TH: So the fact that people are investing their time and mental bandwidth and energy for your podcast, I would say that easily the level of wealth awareness and skill for your podcast versus another podcast would be completely different.

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FT: Well, thank you. I'm going to put that on the cover of the podcast. This is going in my marketing material.

[00:34:36]

TH: Where smart, wealthy people hang out, the So Money podcast.

[00:34:38]

FT: Yeah, there we go. Todd Herman. Let's talk about, before we let you go, I kind of forgot to ask this. But it's so important, your alter ego, Todd, Superman.

[00:34:51]

TH: Yeah. Well, he was an influence for it. Definitely. Most of my kind of profile photos have me wearing a pair of glasses. I mean, I talk about it in the book when I started this business. I was 21 and I was so insecure with how young I looked, and when I played football at a high-level and I played college football, I had an alter ego that I actually used on the football field, and it was Geronimo, and Geronimo was a composite of a native American tribe that I kind of had in my head taking on in the field and that kind of like war dance type thing. But also, Walter Payton and Ronnie Lott, who are two phenomenal hall of fame football players in the 80s and 90s, and they were my inspiration from a skill perspective.

So when I started the business and I was not doing the things that I needed to be doing in order to grow and how so insecure with how young I looked and who's going to listen to me if I'm on stage, I remembered the whole alter ego that I use in football and I said, "Why don't I use the same thing in business? I'm still trying to perform." And I always was around people growing up that were incredibly smart.

Mark, my best friend in my small little school that I was in, he had glasses. In my sister's grade, the grade below, James had glasses, and he was super smart. So I just adapted this belief at a young age that people who wear glasses are smart. So I went out to LensCrafters at the West

Edmonton Mall in Edmonton and where I lived at the time and I bought a pair of non-prescription glasses.

Now, this was long before. This is '97. Long before it was cool and fashionable and stylish to wear glasses. Even the optometrist is like, "You don't want a prescription. Are you sure?" I was like, "No. No. No. I got 20/15 vision, funny look and all that, and I got the glasses and I left. But when I put them on, I called it my reverse Superman or reverse Clark Kent. Superman would put on the glasses to become Clark Kent. I would put on the glasses to become my superhero version of myself in business.

Those glasses, they carried with them the traits that I needed and that I wanted, which was to be decisive. Which was to be confident and to be articulate. When you know in our world when you're trading information or ideas or coaching for dollars and cents, what people are really buying from you is confidence. Because maybe at the time they don't have confidence, but they look to you as a vehicle to give them more confidence. So that's what I was really selling with people is for them to be more confident and they were going to get that from me with our system, and it changed.

The moment I would ever have a thought of being insecure about my age, I would immediately take those glasses off, because I would never dishonor my alter ego by wearing those glasses and feeling insecure, because Superman wouldn't.

[00:37:59]

FT: That's a great story. I love that so much. My son is four and a half, and between the hours of 5 PM and bedtime, he is Spiderman. Because we've had this conversation now, Todd. I'm going to encourage him to continue this for as long as he wants.

[00:38:15]

TH: Well, can I share with you one more story then that will help that.

[00:38:17]

FT: Yes please.

[00:38:18]

TH: Because I'm sure there are a lot of people who've got young children or kids and I find that stories about kids. Anyway, it just resonate with people. One of the scientific studies that I reference in the book about why this process is so powerful for people is there's a great study that was done at the University of Minnesota by this lady where they brought a bunch of young 46-years-old into a room and they had a puzzle in there for them to work on, but the puzzle was unsolvable. There was no way to solve the puzzle. They wanted to see how long they would stick out and work on the puzzle for until they kind of quit to measure their level of grit and perseverance.

Then afterward, they brought in a rack of costumes, Batman costumes and Dora the Explorer costumes and say, "Hey, pick your favorite costume." So they would. The kids would pick their favorite costume, put it on. Then they brought in another puzzle for them to try. Again, it's unsolvable and they want to see how long they would stick it out now that they're wearing a costume. The level of grit and perseverance of each of the kids went up markedly.

But not only that, the surprising thing was the level of positive self-talk about themselves, because kids would say things like, "Batman wouldn't quite. So I'm not going to quit." That's the power of this. When we adapt the traits of the people that we admire or look up to or wish that we had, you end up displaying a side of yourself, or you start showing up differently. That isn't being fake. That isn't being in-authentic. That's bringing your absolute heroic self to those moments of impact that are important to you.

[00:40:00]

FT: Yeah. It's strategizing in real-time with an actual model to reference, which is a real advantage in life. I'm going to have to think about who my alter ego is. I'm trying to think. I got a lot of people on my list of people I admire, and I probably over the years taken bits and pieces from people like, "I don't know, Oprah, Murphy Brown.

[00:40:30]

TH: Murphy Brown. That's classic.

[00:40:32]

FT: [inaudible 00:40:32].

[00:40:32]

TH: I know.

[00:40:34]

FT: Yeah. When I think about all the people that I love to watch on TV when I was growing up, Barbara Walters. But this is like when in doubt, always, it's what would ___ do? And that's your –

[00:40:47]

TH: Even Oprah Winfrey, I talk about Oprah's alter ego in the book and how –

[00:40:52]

FT: Who is Oprah's – Who is it?

[00:40:53]

TH: So, Oprah's alter ego was the tribe of women that came before her that she's now standing on top of and allowing her to do what she can do now. So people like Maya Angelou. Hers was a composite of many. So she has a quote that I share in the book. She says, "When I step on the stage, I never step on the stage myself. I step on the stage as one surrounded by many."

[00:41:20]

FT: Wow! My Gosh!

[00:41:22]

TH: I know, and like in the book, there are so many. I'll let everyone know that. So on the cover of my book is a pair of glasses. Of course, I just told the story about myself. So people automatically think, "Oh, okay. Well, that's Todd kind of in his glasses." No. It's actually not about my glasses, and people think, "Oh, okay! Well, it's Clark Kent, Superman. Well, that's kind of smart. It's actually not about Clark Kent, Superman." The glasses that I have on the front cover of my book are an exact replica of one of the most famous people in modern American day history who led one of the most important movements of the 20th century, and you'll find out who it is if you read the book. But there are so many stories, Farnoosh, of people like Oprah. Just they say subtle things that gives you a clue as to their mindset that helps them to do the hard things.

[00:42:10]

FT: Yeah. It's not a coincidence. It's not a coincidence how people achieve success. Todd Herman, thank you so much. The Alter Ego Effect is out tomorrow. So you can – That was a great tease, by the way.

[00:42:24]

TH: Well, they can scratch that itch in a very short amount of time. Yeah, I'm excited that we've got it on Audible. So if people like it in audio form, and of course Kindle and a hardcover. If you're someone who is an achiever and you do hard things, then I hope you'll find an answer in The Alter Ego Effect.

[00:42:44]

FT: If it's any indication of how incredible this book is, 19 publishes bidding on this book. Everybody wanted a piece of this, and I don't know who published it, but they're definitely lucky.

[00:42:58]

TH: Yeah. Well, thank you.

[END]