

EPISODE 277

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:33]

FT: Welcome back to So Money everyone, I hope you're having a fantastic day. Today I have the great pleasure of bringing back Lewis Howes to So Money to talk about his latest book out today. Yup, that's right, you can go over to Barnes and Nobles, Amazon or your local bookstore after you listen to this and pick up a copy which I highly recommend that you do. In fact I'm giving away 20 free copies, listen to the end of this podcast to discover how you can be selected.

The book is called *The School of Greatness*. It's the same title of his very successful podcast and as I said, I've already had Lewis on the show before in case you miss that episode, you'll have to check it out it was episode 4.

Now a little bit of background to catch some of you up about Lewis. A lot of you may recognize his name, he is a former pro football player, he is an elite athlete, after suffering a career ending injury he bounced back creating a multimillion dollar online business as a business coach and speaker.

In his new book, he shares the tips and habits that he uncovered in interviewing some of the greatest people including Olympic gold medalist Shawn Johnson and Pencils or Promise CEO Adam Braun among countless others, he's uncovered that greatness that comes from within. He decided to write about his experiences and share a real world guide to living bigger, loving deeper and leaving a legacy. His ultimate goal is showing people that anyone is capable of achieving success.

In our conversation, we talk about some of the tenants from his book, what are the secrets to greatness and he talks about how you have to do something painful every day. Really? What does he do? We talk about adversity, we all experience at some level adversity. His advice is you have to embrace it, you have to learn how to transform that adversity into achievement and

can you be successful without adversity? Finally we discuss creating your circle of greatness. What if you're not so happy with your friends? How do you go about creating a community of supportive and frankly smarter people?

Here is Lewis Howes.

[INTERVIEW]

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FT: Lewis Howes, congratulations on *The School of Greatness* book. Coming back for round 2 on So Money. We can't get enough of you, welcome back.

[0:02:50]

LH: Thank you, I appreciate it, I'm super pumped.

[0:02:52]

FT: I want to talk all about your book, *The School of Greatness*, it carries the same name as your very successful podcast. I have to tell you Lewis, just from author to author, I bow to you. I have watched you really promote this book in a fun way, in a very organic way over the past 12 months.

You were on this show in January talking about how you got this book deal recently and that it was going to really take on a lot of your energy. Share with us a little bit, indulge me, a little bit of the behind the scenes because your strategy is really on par. Actually, I've learned a lot just watching you, if I ever do another book launch. What are the greatness tips for book launching?

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LH: I probably had like 12 key things that I wanted to do with this launch. I started strategizing before I even sold the book. I had a game plan of what I was going to do once I did sell it. I

asked the top authors and book marketers for a couple of years prior. Just picking up the things that really were, we're going to ask them the great questions.

I still don't even know if I'm doing it as well as I had planned to do it but I'm doing everything I can in my power with my energy and it consist of a number of given things. One is, asking friends to buy lots of books, that's number one. I'm asking people to buy 5,000, 10,000 a thousand and a hundred, 20, it doesn't matter. Whoever they are, I'm trying to figure out what's the win/win for them buying books. Maybe they have a mastermind group so they buy 20 copies. Maybe they have a company with a 1,000 employees and so I figured out a way to get the distribution into those employees, maybe they have a webinar or a big podcast. Figuring anything I can to get in front of those audiences and create the solution for them that's going to help serve their audience but also serve my mission of selling my book.

I'm doing a ton of podcast in general, I've probably done 50 podcast interview so far that are all that have come out around the week of the launch. The goal for me is to get as many sales that first couple of weeks. So the podcast world has been big and doing it for almost three years now so I've built this great relationships and added a lot of value to people who have had on as well.

The next thing is reaching out to everyone who I've had in the podcast and sold their book for them and asked them, "Hey, what can we do to get this out to your audience in a major way?" Then giving them suggestions of what I could do has some terms with guest posting or videos or whatever. Then I'll let them be creative as well with it.

Then I'm trying new things. I'm doing a lot of social media stuff using Instagram, I've got about 10 videos, I'm going to be releasing over this next few weeks that people will see, they're little 15 second videos. I've got a huge book trailer that's coming out right now the day we're recording this, it will already be out when this is up. Doing a lot with social. I'm doing a ton of guest post, I've got a whole PR team who — I've got a cover of a magazine coming out in the same week as it comes out in Barnes and Noble so I have my book and the magazine cover.

Just a lot of press opportunities, I'm doing the whole Periscope world, I'm doing daily Periscope sessions and selling books that way. I'm trying to do whatever it takes, I'm also doing an online summit so I interviewed 28 experts on greatness last month and we're releasing it two weeks

after the book comes out with Rodale, my publishers. So the goal is to continue to get sales through the holidays, through the New Year and build this kind of ground swell of great value and content, where people that are buying. That's kind of just scratching the surface.

[0:06:43]

FT: Just scratching the surface? Okay, so what have people said to you in reaction when you asked them to buy books? Because I think that is such a simple ask although few authors do it, it's a little uncomfortable to ask your mother in-law to buy books. Have they been generous about it or have they been like, "Uh?"

[0:07:02]

LH: Here's the thing, if you don't ask, you won't get any book sales. I mean you'll get some people who reach out and say, "Hi, let me buy 50 books for you or whatever," you'll get some of that. Really, I learned the art of shameless self-promotion back when I was a teenager when I would watch my brother after jazz concerts, he's a jazz violinist and there would only be like 30 people that show up to these jazz shows because it's very small audiences.

He would go after each set, he would go out with a box of his CD's and hand them to the people one by one, put them in their hands and say, "Will you buy my CD?" and stand right in front of them and ask them this. They would either say yes or no. He would either make them feel uncomfortable and guilt them into doing it or they would just say no thanks or whatever. He would get way more money by just asking people to buy than just putting a little stand in the corner with the CD's that say leave 20 bucks and get a CD. You're not going to generate as many sales than if you're constantly asking people to buy.

[0:08:03]

FT: Exactly.

[0:08:04]

LH: So I think it is uncomfortable and I think there's a dance in how you do it so that it doesn't feel uncomfortable. I think when you build relationships where all you're doing for years is giving, giving, giving and saying, "How can I make you money and support you and then help you achieve your goals?" And then you never ask for anything until one time you say, "Hey bro, I would love your support, I'm going to support you no matter what but this is a huge moment for me in my career and I'm trying to sell this many books. Do you think you'd be able to buy a range between this many and this many?"

And I give people range I was like "Do you think you can buy this many books? Here's where I can see it could be a good fit to your business to your customers and if not, what would be a good solution for you?"

[0:08:51]

FT: Here's what we're going to do at So Money, we're going to buy, let's see, how much is the book? It's like 20 bucks right?

[0:08:58]

LH: \$25.99 retail but if you buy in bulk, I can get a special discount. [Laughter]

[0:09:05]

FT: We're going to give away some free books. I'll talk about that in the end, how you can do that but we're definitely going to give away some free books courtesy of your best friend Farnoosh and So Money.

[0:09:15]

LH: Thank you.

[0:09:16]

FT: You're welcome of course, I know, it's important, you got to get people this book in people's hands and by the way Lewis, it's not like you're selling a used car, you're selling a really, really great book that you poured your heart and soul into that this is years in the making, I know a lot of this stems from your podcast.

Speaking of your podcast, it's really going through the roof, like eight, nine million downloads I saw the other day.

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LH: Yeah, nine million about to hit nine and a half million soon, yeah.

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FT: What came first? Because now, everything's kind of feeding everything right? The podcast is feeding the book, the social media, the speaking engagements, but did it really all just start with the podcast? I know you also do webinars. What was the platform that started it all for you?

[0:09:58]

LH: Well I mean LinkedIn is what started it all for me eight years ago when I kind of got in the online marketing world, it was learning how to leverage LinkedIn to build relationships with influencers. I was broke, I was sleeping on my sister's couch for a year and a half after recovering from a surgery playing football. A mentor said, why don't you check out LinkedIn to see if you can find some opportunities to make money or find a job.

Early on I was just building my profile and reaching out to influencers one by one and asking them how they got to where they are in their career and their business and how they became successful. I was doing this eight years ago. That led into other people asking me how to use LinkedIn as well and introducing people on LinkedIn and writing a book about LinkedIn.

Then learning how to use Webinars which really kind of launched my financials career I guess by helping me generate more income was positioning myself in front of larger audiences via

webinars. And that changed the game for me financially and it still does today, it's my main bread and butter, it's educating for free on webinars and then offering advanced training in your services at the end of them.

Now when I sold a company where I had all these online courses and I was in transition, trying to figure out what I wanted to do next. Really, what I love to do is reach out to influential people and ask them how they got to where they are, the same thing I did from the beginning. I asked a couple of friends who were doing podcast and I was like "Is this really working? Do people listen to this?" because I thought it was dead. A couple of buddies were like "Yeah, it actually drives the most traffic for me and it's incredible, I get a lot of leads and I'm impacting a lot of lives".

I said, "I think I could do this, it shouldn't be that hard." And I had the network already just like when you launch, you had this incredible network we had, everyone on from the beginning and it's probably helped you grow it. When I launched it, I had no clue what I was going to do and I wasn't doing it to make money. I told myself I wasn't going to have sponsors for the first year, I just wanted to do it as a passion thing because it was fun for me.

And it just took off and two years into it, this book idea came about because so many people wanted more information, they wanted to learn the exercises, the strategies, the behind the scenes and the practical information, a lot of storytelling on the podcast. But I wanted to package it in a way that people could take their life to the next level and become great in any area through specific actionable exercise and inspiration.

[0:12:33]

FT: Well let's get to some of those exercises, those action, those takeaways. Lewis, first of all though, how do you define greatness? It's a simple concept, it's probably one of the first words you learn growing up, it's great, you're great.

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LH: That's great, you're great, yeah, great job. I ask this question everyone I interview at the end because I'm always interested to see what people's response is. We all have a different

definition I found. I haven't even looked up in the dictionary what it is actually. I should probably look it up but greatness to me has evolved and has evolved based on where I'm at in my life. I think when I was in High school, greatness probably would have been being a professional athlete, like my dream. Like achieving that dream of being a professional athlete or making a lot of money maybe? I probably had a different mindset than what I wanted or what I thought greatness was, maybe being perfect at something.

But realizing now over time, going through a lot of different experiences and still a long way to go to where I want to be. Greatness for me right now means discovering and figuring out what your greatest gifts are and what your dreams are. Making the most out of those gifts to achieve your dreams and impacting the maximum number of people in the world along the way.

[0:13:59]

FT: And I love that definition because it doesn't mean like you said, you have to be an athlete or the top of your game or whatever, field, it's really about understanding yourself, which by the way, we don't really take the time to self-reflect enough, we're busy.

[0:14:11]

LH: Exactly.

[0:14:14]

FT: In the introduction, you talk about 8 areas of focus and what it takes to be great and I really clinged on to the one tip about adversity. You overcame adversity, I've overcome adversity. Does that have to happen though? I mean, some people have a smooth life.

[0:14:31]

LH: I don't know, some people looks like they have a smooth life.

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FT: Maybe it's just relative?

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LH: Yeah, I think its relative. I mean maybe everyone in the third world country thinks that everyone in the United States has a smooth life. When in reality, we have a lot of inner turmoil, we have a lot of things that might be holding us back or barriers, I think it all depends.

[0:14:51]

FT: You say "turn adversity into advantage". Some people have this mentality that they can't control some of the bad things that happen to them. Let's say they lost a loved one or they lost their job or there are a lot of things that you can't control, what's your take on that?

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LH: You know, I've been going through adversity lately actually in the last few months, I've been putting this book out, finishing the book, putting it out and also going through a breakup with someone that I'm completely head over heels in love with.

For me, it was really hard for me and it's been a challenge to fully disconnect and let go of my ex-girlfriend. I find myself throughout the days, I don't know if you've ever been through a breakup that was really hard for you but I find myself throughout the days, like every 20 minutes just thinking about it, missing it. Feeling like maybe I made the wrong decision.

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FT: Withdrawal. Totally withdrawal.

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LH: Yeah, withdrawal, I feel like my arms are cut off, I have so much love to give and I have so much love that I want to receive and I was doing that for a year and a half and now I'm not doing it.

It's shifting in a different way let's say. But it's a challenge and the thing is, we never know, this is a great thing because we never understand why we're going through this adverse times, a lot of times we never understand it, we don't understand why our parents got divorced. We don't understand why we broke an arm or leg or someone dies, we don't understand these things and it probably doesn't make sense and you could probably get really mad or frustrated or hurt or angry, a lot of these things can come up. At least I know they have for me and a lot of friends of mine who have been through adversity.

It's something that I've learned is that this adversity, the greatest challenge is that some of the greatest minds and success stories I've ever had comes from the stories of adversity they have faced throughout their life. Where they had extreme incidences of adversity and pain that they went through.

When you ask these people who have achieved greatness in this different areas of life, if they could go back and change what happens, they didn't have to feel that pain, they didn't have to suffer, they didn't have to go through that adversity. They usually would say, "I wouldn't wish it on anyone but I wouldn't take it back because it's made me the human I am today and it's given me the tools, the mindset. The grit."

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FT: Empathy too.

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LH: Yes, "The compassion to get to where I'm at and to be able to serve people on a bigger way." There's a spiritual pastor named Rob Bell who I'm becoming friends with more and more lately, he's been on tour with Oprah and a bit on Super Soul Sunday a New York Times best author.

He gave a speech recently that made a lot of sense for me. Because sometimes we just have to have faith that it's all going to make sense even when nothing makes sense. He gave the speech and said, "The world, scientist have come to the conclusion that the world is made up of 94% of what it's called dark matter. These black holes, this darkness, these things in the universe that are surrounding all the planets, it's all this darkness, this dark matter that they don't know what it is. However, they say that this 94% of darkness that we don't know what it is, we want to be able to survive or grow and thrive without the darkness, without the dark matter."

When I apply that to my own life, I think about it, the things that have been adversity, the things that have made me struggle or made me confused or upset, those are the things that actually allow me to grow and thrive. And even though I don't know what they are and it just seems like a lot of darkness, I've got to just have faith that it's helping me grow into who I need to become.

[0:19:07]

FT: Yeah, it is not a coincidence, I think, that in just doing this show too, So Money, talking to a lot of millionaires and very high achieving individuals that they came from either nothing or had real adversity where they were disabled for a timeframe or they lost a loved one. Talk about being triumphant, I think that you're right on the money with that one.

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LH: Yes.

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FT: In chapter five, we talked about mastering your body. This has to happen right? You can't be great and just be eating Doritos and watching reruns of real housewives on demand. I don't do that.

[0:19:49]

LH: Exactly. I think it was, I got to figure out what this quote exactly is but Richard Branson from Virgin America and Virgin everything, someone asked him the question one time, “What’s the key to being a successful entrepreneur or building a successful business,” or something along those lines and he said the answer was working out and exercise.

I was like, interesting that one of the richest guys says that the key to being successful in business is exercise and working out because in my mind, I feel like if we don’t have control of our body, if we’re not in healthy alignment with our body and our emotions then we’re going to have, it’s just a scientific fact that there’s excess weight that holds us back from making better decisions and giving us better energy throughout the day.

So I think if we want to be successful in business or relationships or anything, we’ve got to have our health under control and I don’t think it means having a six pack necessarily, I just think it means having the energy to be able to make hard decisions and overcome adversity that comes your way every single day. Because we are busy, there is a lot of things that are being thrown at us and if our mind and body isn’t able to handle it, we’re probably going to react in negative ways as supposed to clear and compassionate ways, I think it’s all about the health.

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FT: Coming from you as a former football player, you are an athlete, this is something that you’re used to, it’s part of who you are, for a lot of people this is something they have to train themselves to do well and consistently. Any advice for someone who is really busy, says to themselves, “I don’t have time to work on my body,” what are some easy things they can do?

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LH: I would say you need to shift your mindset first because the body is all we have. If you don’t have time to focus on all we have then nothing else really matters and if you ask someone, a billionaire that has cancer and is going to die in the next year and if you ask them about it, they would give all of their money away and take everything back to live another year or a few more years.

You want to start really shifting your priorities and thinking about your health as number one because if you can't be healthy, if you're just going to work all day and take care of everyone else and never take care of yourself, and you're making money but you're going to die at 50, how is that serving your family and the people around you when you're not being healthy.

I think it's more of a shift in mindset as a priority where you say okay, at least 30 minutes every single day, I'm doing something where I'm focusing on me and health first so that I can work harder. That's why I take the approach of doing something painful every day with your body.

Pain can look different for a lot of people, that could be walking a hill every day, that could be doing stairs, that could be running, it can be working out, anytime I've worked out where you sweat, I mean just getting out of bed and walking can be painful sometimes because we want to lay there.

Doing something where you're moving, you're exercising for at least 30 minutes a day and that's just a foundation that you set up for your lifestyle forever.

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FT: I know you interviewed Ariana Huffington, she speaks on this publicly. I heard her speak at a woman's conference recently and I will never forget this line, she said, "We are more concerned about the battery life on our phones than our own energy and our own battery life," because we will run on empty, we will go eight days without sleeping much whereas if we are down to 8% battery in our phones, we will jump around. We will jump over desks to get to an outlet. I've actually taken a cab to an Apple store because I needed to get juice and I was going to be out in the city for a while.

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LH: Wow.

[0:23:49]

FT: Yeah because that to me was more immediate need than probably my sleep. Thanks for putting that in perspective. What do you do that's painful every day?

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LH: I mean, I work out and I try to just push myself, it doesn't have to be —when I run three miles, it hurts because my lungs will hurt and it's not like I have to just destroy my body where I can't walk, it's more just doing something every day that makes you uncomfortable is what I really mean. Do something uncomfortable.

When I run three miles, I'm a big guy, it's uncomfortable, my chest is wheezing, my legs are burning and that's enough. Some days I push it harder depending on the season of my life I'm in where I'm training. This morning I got up and did squats for about 20 minutes and I was shaking, you know, just shaking my legs and I was like, "Okay, I've done something today where I'm pushing myself and growing."

I think of if our muscles in our body isn't being pushed just a little bit even, every single day, it's going to stop growing, it's going to stop growing at a healthy way and it's going to start growing in an unhealthy way.

[0:25:01]

FT: A little thing that I do, my son is now 26 pounds, he's very tall for 15 months. Instead of putting him in the stroller, I try to carry him as much as possible in the Bjorn so it's ergonomic, so I'm not like breaking my back but I tell you, it's a workout.

[0:25:17]

LH: That's good workout, that's a great workout.

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FT: Moms out there, your kid is your best dumbbell okay?

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LH: Heck yeah and then just do some air squats.

[0:25:25]

FT: Just do some air squats, exactly. I want to end on one of your other chapters' themes which is about surrounding yourself with greatness. We've heard this before, I don't even know who invented this expression but now I feel like everyone's adopted it, it is that "You're the average of the five people you spend the most time with."

If you're hanging out with losers, how do you find those five top performing people that are smarter than you that will be willing, also, this is hard, that are willing to actually help you? How do you create a circle of greatness?

[0:26:01]

LH: I think it starts with yourself and I'm going to relate this to dating because a buddy of mine Matt Hussy who is like a relationship expert for women, teaches women how to get the guy, he's got a huge following and I did an interview with him one time. The last question, I was like "Okay, if you want to find the perfect partner, the match, the man or the woman of your dreams, what do you do that's going to lift you up and make you your best self and get you everything you want?"

And he said, "I want you to go out there and create a list of the qualities of the person that you want." Create a full list of every quality you want, you want them funny, smart, intelligent, sexy, adventurous, write everything down, great values. Write the list down and then go become that person. I was like "that's fascinating." A lot of people, we want these mentors, these inspiring people to be able to hang out with us and connect with them but why would they want to spend time with us if we're not being that ourselves.

That doesn't mean we have to have millions of dollars, it's more about the qualities that we bring to the table and who we're being in those relationships, that's going to attract inspiring people. You're attracting the losers you're hanging out with because you're probably living the similar type of values, or being in the same types of conversations.

A couple of ways is just to continue to evolve yourself. When I was 23, just starting out, I learned public speaking, I went to a public speaking class every week for a year. I started Salsa dancing, I started learning online marketing, I started just acquiring new skills with other friends but on my own as well and just taking action to become more valuable to other people in the world. I think we need to constantly grow and cultivate new skills and hobbies that we're inspired by so we have more to bring to the table and we can kind of reach that next level of influence a relationship.

Also if you want to connect with these influencers and inspiring people, it's really finding some of those people and then seeing how you can offer a lot of value to them without asking for anything in return. I did a lot of apprenticeships essentially where I work for free for months and months and just soaked it in by giving to them and not asking. So I think you got to approach it like that.

[0:28:30]

FT: I remember earlier when you're on this podcast back in January, you talked about how you were really impressed and inspired by Tim Ferris and you didn't know Tim. How did you become now one of his good friends, you guys are buds?

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LH: Yeah, three years of emailing and showing up at events where he was and promoting him.

[0:28:53]

FT: Stalking him, let's just be honest.

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LH: Try to get as much value as I could but always finding a way to serve and making sure that I read everything and just was connected to what he was inspired by and then figuring out, when there was an opportunity to help him, reaching out and saying, “Hey, let me know if I can help you here, I know this is important to you.”

I think that goes a long way. When someone reaches out to you and helps you in a big way, you’re willing to reach out back and connect with them and give them time and build that relationship.

[0:29:24]

FT: Yeah, you’ve heard it on this podcast before ladies and gentlemen, be a go giver, not go a getter, I think that was Zig Ziglar.

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LH: That’s right. Is that Zig Ziglar or Bob Burg?

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FT: I have to go back to history.

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LH: Bob Burg has a book called *The Go Giver*, I believe but.

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FT: Well, maybe he attended a Zig Ziglar seminar.

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LH: Probably.

[0:29:44]

FT: [Laughter]. Lewis Howes. Congratulations on *The School of Greatness* book, I know you have worked so hard bringing this out and I'm looking forward to seeing your name at the top of the New York Times best sellers list, no pressure.

[0:30:02]

LH: Here's the thing, that's been my dream, it's a goal and obviously that's what I'm shooting for. But the thing is, something I learned about greatness as well is you cannot be so attached to results and expectations that you have because if it doesn't happen then you're going to be heartbroken forever and you're going to be resentful and mad.

So I've learned to focus on my vision and put it out there but not hold on to it so tightly and be open for what will come from it anyways. Obviously that's the goal and I'm still putting it out there but anything can happen, so we'll see.

[0:30:42]

FT: I know so many great things are going to happen and that's kind of the exciting thing about launching a book or anything is that you really don't know what's on the other side. But if you do the good work and you are authentic and genuine about it, I think that great things will come back to you.

Thank you so much for being really leading by example. The book is about other people, a lot of times you've interviewed so many people in your book, but you yourself are a source for many of these tenets in your book and so we thank you for all of the inspiring work that you're doing Lewis.

[0:31:14]

LW: Thanks Farnoosh.

[END]