

**EPISODE 427**

[SPONSOR MESSAGE]

[0:00:34]

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[INTRODUCTION]

[0:01:23.2]

**FT:** You're listening to So Money everyone. How are you? How's it going? June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016, summer is upon us almost, can't wait. My son's turning two years old this month, I cannot believe it, how time flies. Parents out there, I don't know what you do to make time slow down but someone, please teach me because this is just going way too quickly. I wanted to bring on today's guest because it's almost summer.

It's pretty summery right now in New York. Sun is shining, flowers are in bloom and a time to think about vacation and if you haven't planned a vacation yet, this is where our guest today is going to come to the rescue. Matt Kepnes is the creator of the award winning budget travel site Nomadic Matt. He is also the author of the New York Times bestseller, *How to Travel the World on \$50 a Day*.

So here's how it happened. In 2005, Matt took a trip to Thailand and it was there that he decided to quit his job, finish his MBA and just travel. His trip was supposed to last one year but fast forward now 10 years later, he's still trotting the globe. I mean wouldn't it be nice to make a living off of traveling the world?

That's what Matt's doing and he's going to tell us how he's doing it, he's also going to talk about how to do it on a budget, how to spend less than \$50 a day, he confesses that his MBA was probably his biggest financial failure. He also talks about why he insist on paying his own way when he travels because truth be told, he could probably, thanks to the popularity of his blog, he could travel for free anywhere, any time if he really wanted to.

Here is Nomadic Matt.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:03:01.2]

**FT:** Nomadic Matt, welcome to So Money. Matt Kepnes is your full name but we'll call you Nomadic Matt for the next 30 minutes because I think that's a lot cooler and it's your brand. Welcome to So Money.

[0:03:12.4]

**MK:** Hey, thanks for having me Farnoosh. Everyone calls me Nomadic Matt.

[0:03:16.0]

**FT:** Everyone does call you that? That's cool, it has a great ring to it, you've definitely done a great job of branding yourself and the reason I found you was because I was researching an article, my column in Oprah Magazine in August will have to do with how to travel on a dime especially if you haven't traveled all summer and you want to go somewhere quick and fast and fun.

Let's start there. I want to go on a trip this summer, last night I was on Airbnb and I went on Homeaway.com to try to find a summer rental property for a week. Nowhere too fancy, I'm good with the Jersey Shore but I'll also do the Hamptons if I can, if I can afford it. There's nothing, even if I had all the money in the world, I would not be able to find anything at this point. What's my best bet at this point? I have a two year old also, let's keep in mind.

[0:04:05.2]

**MK:** You want a whole house or an apartment?

[0:04:07.8]

**FT:** I would like a whole house, yeah. I would like to be able to invite family and have to be able to cook and all that stuff.

[0:04:15.9]

**MK:** VRBO or Home Away deals with more luxury houses so you'd probably find more offerings over there. Airbnb is more apartments as well as get some homes and luxuries but VRBO and HomeAway really specialize and you and your family go to destination X for a week and really getting a home, hence the name.

[0:04:38.3]

**FT:** All right.

[0:04:41.1]

**MK:** I would stick to home life. You're just going to have to switch dates if you can't find anything. You're getting into summer time, the Hamptons are really popular, things are going to get booked out. August would probably be better but a lot of the people who use VRBO and HomeAway book for one week, two week blocks at a time. Since you're getting the whole house, owners can't really turn around, lots of people.

[0:05:07.7]

**FT:** All right. So I invite anyone listening, you have a summer home and you want me to live in it for a week, email me. 'Cause we are looking for somewhere to crash in August just to get away from work and the city but enough about me that was a selfish question. Let's talk about how you got started as Nomadic Matt. You went to get your MBA, I imagine you envisioned a career doing business. Instead, you went on a trip and it lasted 10 years and here we are.

What was the turning point for you? At what point were you like, "Business, not so much for me." Although I'm sure in your day to day operations, you incorporate some business strategy because you make a living off of doing this, why make this transition?

[0:05:51.7]

**MK:** I don't think there was a specific aha moment, a lot of that time when people will tell you to find your passion and follow your dreams, I never woke up one day and said, "I really desire to be a travel writer or own a big travel website." Just one road lead to another road, which led to this road and I found myself really enjoying it.

So I'm just riding this road. Will I do this forever? I don't know, forever's a long time. Right now, I really like doing what I'm doing. How I came to this point was really just — I started this blog as a way to keep my friends and family informed about what I was doing and where I was going. Mostly my mom. So she knew I was alive.

[0:06:37.4]

**FT:** Yeah, that's important.

[0:06:38.5]

**MK:** Every time I get on a plane, "Oh my god, didn't you just see this news?" I started at a time when they weren't many travel blogs. So it was really easy to get found so to speak. I started

getting more and more readers and mostly asking about the practical nature of travel, “How do you do this. I want to go travel, I want to go do this, I want to go do that,” and so I started blogging more and more about it but it was always something in the side of my brain.

I was an English teacher in Asia, I was really into the whole make money thing, make money online thing that was around in 2007, 2008. I thought that was fascinating, I tried to get into that but travel blogging was always the side thing. It was like, “I liked to travel, I liked to write, I’m going to keep it on the side.” Then one day a friend who is an early mentor told me, “Why you have all these stupid little ad sense Google websites? You’re a travel expert, just focus on travel.”

And I said, “Oh, I guess so, I’ve never really thought about it before, I don’t know? I’ll think about it.” So I decided to put more effort into the travel log, incorporating what I learned, trying to build marketing websites online so people can click on Google Ads, and slowly over time it built up, and built up, and built up. It took a couple of years but eventually it sustained itself. During that time I was doing a million other things until one day I found that the only thing I was really doing was my travel blog. I actually really enjoyed it. Yeah, some days are really stressful but it suites me right now.

[0:08:27.1]

**FT:** Well you started the blog, was it 2007?

[0:08:31.5]

**MK:** 2008.

[0:08:32.2]

**FT:** 2008, which seems like forever ago and in some ways, in Internet time, it was forever ago. It was a different landscape, people weren’t on social media as much back then, we didn’t have Snapchat and there weren’t as many travel bloggers but I would guess it was still pretty competitive to differentiate yourself.

So putting on your MBA hat here, when you look at how you've built your travel blog/business and brand, what did you do strategically that helped set you apart? You have a New York times bestselling book, not all travel bloggers can say they have that. You actually have a lucrative business, not all travel bloggers can say they can do that. What were the ingredients that helped you not only set yourself apart but also make this sustainable?

[0:09:18.7]

**MK:** Early on, it was easy to set yourself apart because there was nobody else. It was sort of like that blue ocean strategy they talk about in so many MBA courses that Cirque de Solei did so well. But of course, all blue oceans become red oceans and you get competition. I think one thing that really set myself apart if I would to take myself out of the equation and just look at it would be, I write really long detailed post.

So they get their sort of every green they follow that Tim Ferriss format where longer, detailed resources are better. Additionally I network other travel that's why I know all these big Internet marketers and other authors and successful entrepreneurs because I don't just focus on meeting people in the travel industry. I focus on meeting people in any industry that's successful and try to become their travel guy.

So if they have a travel question, they ask me and if somebody they know has a travel question, they refer me. I also focus a lot on SEO. If you can dominate search, I mean if you're looking for a trip, you go to Google. You go to any search, "What do I do in XYZ?" So that's really good, but I think one of the things that sets me apart from everybody else is that — this is something I tell a lot of my travel writing blogging students. Your story is never about you, it's always about the reader. Nobody cares about your trip, they care about knowing if they can do that trip too.

You don't care that I went to Sweden. You're like, "Great Matt, that was fun. I'm not going to Sweden." You want to imagine yourself there and have the ability and then the confidence that you can replicate that experience too. A lot of travel blogs just talk about the free stuff they get and what they did today. But the majority of people don't care what other people do during the day, just trying to survive and do their own stuff.

[0:11:35.0]

**FT:** So what are the biggest questions you get from travellers? What do people want to know? Obviously they want to know how to save money, which we'll get to in a second because I want to learn some of your best tricks for saving money on a trip. But what do you find are the biggest questions that go often unanswered?

[0:11:52.9]

**MK:** I relate it to money because that's usually the biggest one. Safety is a concern, you know, "Will I survive this? How will I be able to communicate with people? How I make friends?" There's just a lot of fear of the unknown. Everyone is like, "Okay, well I can afford this." There's an eternal struggle where people wonder if they can actually do it. That's really difficult.

I mean I had no idea if I could do it or not. And a lot of people can't do it, they come home. Or they go and they realize that they just don't like it. We idealize long term travel and I mean, no one more so than probably me. That's what the whole blog was about, go travel the world and find yourself. But it's important to recognize that sometimes finding yourself is finding yourself back home. So I always tell people that just go do it if you don't like it, you can come home.

[0:12:54.6]

**FT:** Yeah. Have you ever been to North Korea?

[0:12:58.4]

**MK:** I have not.

[0:12:59.6]

**FT:** I just interviewed someone who went, a female. So talk about safety, fear the unknown she's got a few pointers on that, she wrote a book about it called *My Holiday in North Korea*. You should probably interview her for your blog, I think it would be really interesting.

Let's talk about money, that is the biggest question people have for you and I mean, why not? Travel is expensive. How do you do it economically these days? What are people doing wrong? Okay let's start there, what's the biggest mistake people make when it comes to financing a vacation?

[0:13:31.9]

**MK:** They assume it's expensive, that's the first mistake. They assume that traveling must require, hotels, expensive meals, cabs, tours, expensive flights. I mean that's partly because we have internalized the notion of travel in America as something that is a luxury, you do once, maybe twice a year where you don't travel, you take a vacation. Go to a resort and take your cruise.

These are all high end activities and that's what we assume all traveling is like. When you're traveling long term, you're doing none of that. You're really just living like people do in destinations. Like you go to the market, you take public transportation, you find two places to stay, you don't have fancy meals every night, you don't stay in resorts, you find free tours.

I always describe budget travel as doing exactly what you do back home except somewhere else. You wake up every day, you don't go out and take a taxi cab everywhere. You walk sometimes. You don't eat at the most expensive restaurant in the city every day for every meal. You don't find the most expensive activity and do that all the time.

You budget in your life so that you can make your money last, it's really the same thing on the road but we don't think of that because we don't live in a travel culture, we live in a vacation culture. You go elsewhere around the world, the whole idea of taking a year off in a gap year is pervasive. In America, it's not.

[0:15:16.7]



**FT:** That's where a lot of the problem stems from, is like our culture is more about using up our two weeks, one time of a year. I mean that's the problem, companies don't really give us the time off and even when you work for yourself, you feel like you have to just keep working because you don't know when the next paycheck's going to come.

How do you get over that psychological hump? Feeling like you can not only afford this as far as money but time as well. 'Cause if you're not working, you might feel like you're behind a bit. How do you justify that?

[0:15:50.0]

**MK:** Right. That's always something I hear a lot. Well it's really easy for Europeans to travel, they get eight months off a year, in fact they never were. You know who gets less vacation time than us? The Japanese and the Koreans. They'll legally get a month a year. I mean they sleep in their office, they're workaholics just as much as we are. Yet they still manage to get away. I think part of the thing is we view travel as this thing that you have to go really far away and we have to see it all.

That becomes stressful. "Well how can I go to Europe in two weeks?" The answer is you don't go to Europe in two weeks, you go to Spain or you go to England or you just go do southern France, you make it smaller. Yeah, we're pretty far from everything. If you mean the other side of the world but on this side of the world we have Canada, we have Mexico, we have the Caribbean, all of central America, South America, there's still a lot on this side of the world to see.

If you're going from New York to Buenos Aires, that's one overnight flight, it's no further than, in terms of time away than like going to London, which is another overnight flight. So you can still go to Argentina for two weeks, it may seem far away but you leave at night and get in there in the morning and leave at night and get back here in the morning.

So I think people always assume that, "Oh, I want to go away for two weeks or I want to go away but I only get two weeks' vacation a year." Well it's still two weeks, you can still go

somewhere. You can also think of travel as a local thing. We always think of travel as, "I've got to go far away," but what about the stuff around you?

I love the US, I've driven across it multiple times and there is so much to see and do in the United States that you might not be able to get to Europe but you could probably go in a road trip through New England or the south or maybe go hiking in two week treks up the Pacific Crest Trail. There's always an option. If you think of travel as anything that is away from your home like where you live.

[0:18:18.6]

**FT:** Do you travel alone mostly?

[0:18:23.3]

**MK:** It varies. Mostly I do but I often, I have so many friends abroad that I just end of going to visit them and I'm sort of traveling with them. It's really hard to get friends to come with you. I think if I had to wait for friends, I'd probably still be in my cubicle waiting.

[0:18:48.3]

**FT:** Yeah, what was your former life? Paint the picture for me a little bit.

[0:18:53.2]

**MK:** I worked in healthcare. I was an administrative assistant for a while, you know when you walk in to see a patient, you go, "Hey, what room is Billy?" I'm the guy that said, "Billy is in room 102." So I did that, that involved patient services and such and then I moved more into the office side of it as the executive assistant for one of the surgical chairs for a couple of years and I went an MBA and realized I wanted to go travel. So I quit, went away for what was supposed to be a year then here we are another 10 years later.

[0:19:38.4]

**FT:** Do you regret getting the MBA? It must not have been cheap?

[0:19:42.0]

**MK:** Oh yeah, every day. What a waste of time.

[0:19:44.6]

**FT:** Really?

[0:19:46.6]

**MK:** Yeah. It was such a waste of money. I knew — see I like to start things, I like to finish what I start and when I decided to quit my job and travel the world I was already in the MBA program because I had, on a semester break, I had gone to Thailand and made this life changing decision and I figured, “Well I should finish the MBA just to have it,” because at the time I thought, “Well I’m eventually going to come back,” right? Get a real job and it will be good to have. In reality, I should have just put the degree on hold until I came back and figured out my life more and that would have saved me like \$40,000 plus interest over the years. MBA’s are not cheap.

[0:20:38.6]

**FT:** We’ll file that under biggest financial fail, we’ll skip ahead because that’s coming up in one of my questions is what’s your biggest financial failure? Would you say getting your MBA was your biggest financial failure?

[0:20:49.5]

**MK:** No, not my biggest.

[0:20:50.8]

**FT:** There's worse? Okay, give it to me.

[0:20:52.7]

**MK:** That one's going to have to not be shared by anybody. Nobody knows that one, but I will say that I got to keep some things close to the glove, right? I will share lots of stuff but the biggest one, I'm too ashamed to admit.

[0:21:06.3]

**FT:** No. Why are you too ashamed? You're so successful, what do you have to lose?

[0:21:12.1]

**MK:** Oh, respect. I can't share it, but I will say with the MBA that if any of your readers want to buy my MBA, I will sell it to them really cheap.

[0:21:26.1]

**FT:** What are you going to give them? Like a piece of paper with...

[0:21:29.4]

**MK:** Yeah, scratch out my name, write their name, I'll white out, whatever, best offer.

[SPONSOR BREAK]

[0:21:39.6]

**FT:** Need a website? Why not do it yourself with Wix.com? No matter what business you're in, Wix.com has something for you. Used by more than 84 million people worldwide, Wix.com

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[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

[0:22:39.9]

**FT:** Okay, so what would you say is your money mantra Matt? As someone who is a world traveler, you wrote a book about how to travel the world on \$50 a day, did you actually do that yourself?

[0:22:53.4]

**MK:** Yeah. I've done it for less than that too.

[0:22:57.2]

**FT:** Phenomenal. Well what's your money mantra?

[0:23:00.6]

**MK:** Be frugal, not cheap. I'm the type of guy — we talked briefly about how we both had our mutual friend Ramit Sethi, he talked about how nobody wants to cut out a latte, I'm the type of guy who will tell you to cut out the latte because when you're saving, every little bit for your trip counts, so cut everything out as much as possible.

But when you're on the road, you sacrifice so much, why be cheap? Why did you go to Italy if you're going to make pasta in your hostel? Why are you going to go to Africa and not take a safari?

[0:23:41.0]

**FT:** Right.

[0:23:42.6]

**MK:** Pick and choose your battles, you're probably not coming back to Australia anytime soon, so if you really have always wanted to dive the Great Barrier Reef, dive the Great Barrier Reef, make it out somewhere else. You can cook some extra meals, cut back on the drinking, go into a bigger dorm room, do something.

Be frugal, not cheap. Because most people who save for their trip, when I coach people on this, I always say, "Cut everything. Live like a monk or a nun or a hermit because when you're over in Brazil and you're sailing down the Amazon, you will not care that you spent two weeks inside your house cooking pasta and watching Netflix."

[0:24:32.6]

**FT:** You'll quickly forget the pain associated with that. I want to also ask you, where you got the travel bug?

[0:24:40.6]

**MK:** My parents and I didn't really travel that much. My dad really loves road trips so we drove a lot for it to see my grandmother, when I went at one cruise, Disney world countless times, that was really it. When I was in college I went to Montreal twice.

[0:24:56.1]

**FT:** So that's why you wanted to get the hell out? Once you got the chance, you're like, "Finally!" Between the Disney Cruise and Canada, there's a lot more to see.

[0:25:06.6]

**MK:** Right, I always liked the idea of travel right? It was always like what you did right? When you get a job, you have two weeks, you go on vacation, that's what it's like. So on my first trip I went to Costa Rica and that was in 2004 and that's where I fell in love with it. I love the endless possibility that every day brought, the fact that you could wake up, you could do anything you want that day, there was no rigidity to it.

[0:25:36.9]

**FT:** You can do that in real life too, you can do that at home. You can wake up and go, "Today is a new day and I can do anything I want." You could.

[0:25:46.1]

**MK:** You could, but first you have to go to work from nine to five.

[0:25:49.2]

**FT:** No, you could go in and quit and say, "I don't like this job." I mean perhaps not as whimsically if you are in Costa Rica but I'm being inspired just listening to this because I think that all the things that you're telling us about what we can do and how we can act on vacation, let's apply that to real life and see what happens.

[0:26:08.9]

**MK:** Right, I mean yeah, go quit your job. I know lots of people who just hand in their resignation and such but if you have kids or...

[0:26:18.3]

**FT:** Or explore the town that you live in. I live in New York City, I haven't done half the things that tourists do when they come here and I don't know if I would regret it but I kind of feel like it's been a wasteful — I've been living wastefully a little bit here. I don't actually know, the United States of America, let alone New York that well. I have never really been to the middle of this country, I never really been to — I've never driven cross country, I feel like sometimes your exploration can start right here right now.

[0:26:46.9]

**MK:** Okay, so this weekend, I want you to go — actually, today, I want you to write down the three things you've always want to do in New York City and go do it this weekend. Saturday is a day of rest, right? Problem with folks like us is we work all the time. The Internet, podcasting, it all never stops, but take Saturday off and go do three things. Three things is a manageable list. It's not like you're like, "I've got to go see 10 things." You could do three museums, a park, you can all do that in a whole day. So go do that this Saturday.

[0:27:25.5]

**FT:** Okay, I think I have a birthday — yeah, Sunday I have a birthday party but Saturday I've got nothing to do. So that's going to be my day of rest. Financially, what did you learn as a kid growing up, that you still hold on to?

[0:27:39.2]

**MK:** My parents always taught me the value of work. They were never frugal or cheap. We grew up in a two income, middle class household, and my dad has a pension for buying every new



model car. My dad always worked a lot, and he always said that, "If you want it, you have to work for it. You shouldn't go into debt. So work hard and pay cash as much as possible." They were never frugal misers or anything like that. I definitely got the value of work from my parents.

[0:28:18.2]

**FT:** What do they think now of your traveling empire?

[0:28:18.2]

**MK:** Being parents I assume they're very proud, they tell me all the time how proud they are of me and then followed up by, "I wish you could just be home more. Can't you come and visit more?" Parents are parents but I'm pretty sure they're quite proud.

[0:28:36.3]

**FT:** Do people come up to you all the time and go, "Do you have a discount code for this hotel?" You must get some nice invitations to travel too Matt, right?

[0:28:46.8]

**MK:** I could probably travel the world for free for the rest of my life just on the laurels of what exists already. But I like to pay for all my travels because going back to what I said earlier about how...

[0:28:59.0]

**FT:** You can be honest then about how the experience really was.

[0:29:02.3]

**MK:** Right. If you go back to what I said, "No one cares about you, they want to be able to replicate it." If I just do all this sort of paid travel, that's great for me and you as a potential

traveler might be like, “Oh that sounds cool, we should add this to our list,” but it’s not going to get you to buy my book or book through my website because I’ll be unrelateable.

[0:29:26.0]

**FT:** What would you say was your So Money moment? A moment in your life, in your career that you just felt that all the hard work paid off, you made a really great financial decision?

[0:29:37.5]

**MK:** When I could afford to buy a business class ticket.

[0:29:39.9]

**FT:** Where were you going?

[0:29:42.4]

**MK:** Sydney to New York.

[0:29:44.0]

**FT:** Oh boy, you’re going to need business class for that, that’s a long journey.

[0:29:47.7]

**MK:** Yeah, I didn’t have any miles for an award ticket. But I will say this, also a little travel hack, I bought it in a different currency that was doing worse than a dollar, so I got it still on discount.

[0:29:59.4]

**FT:** Interesting. Okay, so that’s a good hack.

[0:30:02.4]

**MK:** I bought it in New Zealand, Kiwi dollars. So it was like a third cheaper because I didn't buy it in US dollars. I went to the US version of their website and it was more expensive.

[0:30:23.3]

**FT:** But once you put in your credit card, they know you live in the states, doesn't it just — you can actually still hack it? Just by going to the Australian side of the website?

[0:30:34.5]

**MK:** Yeah, I use a VPN to trick the servers to say I'm in Australia.

[0:30:43.1]

**FT:** How do you do that? How do I get a VPN that says I'm in Australia?

[0:30:47.6]

**MK:** You just download a VPN and set the location to where you want. It also helps that I was actually in Australia.

[0:30:55.2]

**FT:** Is that ethical?

[0:30:56.8]

**MK:** That's not for me to decide.

[0:30:59.2]

**FT:** You just — you're like, "It worked and that's all I care, it worked." Interesting. Okay, so that's a true hack. What are some other hacks for saving a lot of money? That saved you a 30% discount on a business class ticket, that's a lot of money. That could have probably gotten you another maybe coach ticket someplace else, so give me some more.

[0:31:21.4]

**MK:** Some good travel hacks, there's always the points and miles thing that people should do. It could be just simple, easy, ones that don't take too much time. I would say that when it comes to flying, inconvenience yourself.

[0:31:36.5]

**FT:** Inconvenience yourself. Okay, that doesn't sound like a good vacation to me.

[0:31:40.4]

**MK:** Well, I'm just talking about the flight, just to get the cheap flight, not inconvenience yourself on the plane, always get a good seat. But nobody wants to wake up early for a flight or fly that red eye or connect three times, right? So if you fly midweek or early or really late at night or add a few connections then you will find cheaper flights because most people don't want to do that. They pay more money to fly mid-day to go direct, all these things.

Airlines generally have cheaper flight tickets in the morning, mid-week, at night, 'cause fewer people are trying to book those tickets. Then, on the plane, they're flying the flight time is full so you can go pick your better seat. If you're trying to get from Vegas to New York, mid-day on a Sunday, that plane is full and you might not get a good seat.

[0:32:39.8]

**FT:** What about upgrades? Are there — I did this thing once I was traveling a lot between New York and LA and I was flying with I think it was United most of the time. Eventually every fourth

trip or so I would be able to qualify for a relatively inexpensive upgrade to first class, sometimes a free upgrade.

The trick was, going to the airport, well in advance of your flight. If you were one of the first few to check in at the airport, they might give you the option of getting the upgrade. So I literally would run to the kiosk if I saw someone ahead of me, I would try to beat them. All because I wanted to be the one who would get the offer for the \$80 upgrade to first class or sometimes the free one. Usually it would work.

What else? What else can people do to get a free first class upgrade or my friend actually said that on his way back from Austin to New York, he's like, "I'm going to," — he's like, "I intentionally picked the last flight out," because by then he was pretty sure that he was going to get bumped or given the offer to give away his seat to somebody else and then he could be able to stay the extra night, get free hotel and then just go back to New York in the morning, which was totally amenable with his schedule. Are these all hacks or is this just dumb luck?

[0:33:56.0]

**MK:** Combination. If you want to pick overbook flights, like your friend, yes, I know lots of people who do that so they can get certificates and such. Me, my travel schedule is always so flexible that I have no problem taking the next flight if they're offering to bump you and give you money and hotel, I'm like, "Yeah, I'll take it, I don't have anywhere to be."

For most people, that's unrealistic right? What you were saying about how you got the upgrades is mostly a product of the fact that you flew a lot, which is what I do. I'm hooked onto American. So for me, I get a lot of upgrades because I'm already flying American. I have the status, I get the offers. For your average person, it really is dumb luck. A lot of people are like, "Oh, if you give your flight attendant chocolates or if you're really nice to the gate lady."

I have a friend that does it all the time. Yeah, if you give your flight attendants chocolates, and you're really nice to them and you're in economy, they'll probably bring you back a little extra from business class, like, "Here is the business class meal, here is some wine." I once got a bottle of champagne 'cause I gave the Lufthansa guys chocolates but you can be really nice to

the gate agents, they have the power. Maybe if you're on your honeymoon or you have to go home for a funeral.

[0:35:40.9]

**FT:** Always say it's your honeymoon.

[0:35:42.6]

**MK:** Yeah.

[0:35:43.3]

**FT:** Even if it's not. Or say it's your anniversary or your birthday, because that will always get you something.

[0:35:49.3]

**MK:** Well they know if it's your birthday or not because they can say.

[0:35:51.4]

**FT:** Well yeah, don't lie about your birthday but.

[0:35:53.7]

**MK:** Yeah, the reality is, airlines have capacity to the point where they are often very full. Those seats in business class and first class go to elites who have to get bumped up before they will offer you, the guy that bought the cheapest ticket of all.

[0:36:13.7]

**FT:** But you brought chocolates.

[0:36:14.8]

**MK:** Yeah. So it's really luck. You can optimize that by doing what your friend does and finding the last flight, going at a time that you know is like really booked. So if there is one direct flight to go back to this Vegas example, right? Nobody wants to wake up at 5 AM after a weekend in Vegas. They either stay up or...

[0:36:48.9]

**FT:** They miss their flight.

[0:36:51.9]

**MK:** They miss their flight. So that 2 o'clock flight back east is always full. Every airline it always runs full. So get yourself on that flight as an unassigned seat and chances are, you could get bumped. You probably won't get bumped up but what they'll do is they'll probably bump you for the next day then they'll bump you up.

So you can do those things where you fly the busiest time in the hopes that you're going to be the one that gets bumped because when they say, "Hey, who wants to get bumped?" Nobody ever wants to get bumped. If you're flexible, and it doesn't matter that much, take the bump. Just on your regular JFK to Heathrow flight, unless there is a lot of other delays or the plane is really empty and the woman's feeling nice, chances are, you're not moving up.

[0:37:47.2]

**FT:** Right.

[0:37:47.5]

**MK:** It's often just luck.

[0:37:49.7]

**FT:** So I've interviewed a few other blogger extraordinariness such as yourself in different categories so interviewed a man who left the corporate life to talk about Uber and other car sharing companies and he's the Carshareguy.com, you're Nomadicmatt.com and I find it very fascinating how you all have made massive careers out of what started as a hobby, a past time, a passion really and turn it into a full-fledged business. At this point, even though you started as a blogger, what would you say is your biggest income generator?

[0:38:27.4]

**MK:** My biggest income generator is affiliate sales. People booking their travel through my website. I'm in many ways a booking site. Moving away less of a blog and more of an eCommerce booking engine.

[0:38:41.6]

**FT:** It's interesting because I go to your site and it doesn't really scream eCommerce to me, are you going to re-launch it or you like the fact that it kind of is more inviting as a place to browse. People probably spend a lot of time on your site, there's a lot of information.

[0:38:57.4]

**MK:** I do the soft sell, right? By the time you're ready to book and stuff, I got to you, you've been on my site for 20 minutes. Chances are, you're more likely to book because I become the trusted resource so to speak.

[0:38:57.4]

**FT:** Go down the rabbit hole at Nomadic Matt and you'll find yourself booking tickets to Australia and in good time. Matt, thank you so much for joining us. I have a couple of more questions but these are more fill in the blanks. I'm going to switch them up for you because you are the traveler, I'd be curious to learn the following.



If I had only one place left to travel in this world, it would be \_\_\_\_\_.

[0:39:35.2]

**MK:** Butan.

[0:39:36.4]

**FT:** Butan, have you been there before?

[0:39:38.8]

**MK:** Never.

[0:39:39.7]

**FT:** You've never been there? So why make this the last trip?

[0:39:42.6]

**MK:** It's got mountains, it's quiet, it just seems like such a magical place, that's where they based Shangri-La off of though, let's go see it.

[0:39:51.0]

**FT:** Why not go there this year?

[0:39:52.2]

**MK:** Good question.

[0:39:53.3]

**FT:** Got to save the best for last I guess?

[0:39:54.4]

**MK:** Yeah.

[0:39:56.1]

**FT:** Let's say you won the lottery, and this is a question I ask a lot of people. If I won the lottery tomorrow, let's say someone gave you a hundred million bucks, first thing I would do is \_\_\_\_\_.

[0:40:05.4]

**MK:** Fly first class around the world.

[0:40:06.6]

**FT:** Nice. And you like American or you just happen to just, it's what stuck?

[0:40:12.0]

**MK:** I like their partners and they're better than — they have nicer planes than United. I wouldn't fly American around the world, I'll fly all the nicer airlines.

[0:40:19.6]

**FT:** My brother used to — Emirates. I was just going to say, my brother worked at Emirates as a consultant and I think he got like a free trip as part of that gig. I hear it's amazing.

[0:40:28.3]

**MK:** He is lucky.

[0:40:29.3]

**FT:** If I was stuck on an island, let's say you had to go to Stranded Island, three things you would take with you?

[0:40:35.9]

**MK:** Does this Island have Wi-Fi access?

[0:40:38.8]

**FT:** That could be one of the things that you supply.

[0:40:41.0]

**MK:** Okay, all right, I would take *The Alchemist*, a chess set and a sat phone.

[0:40:50.3]

**FT:** A satellite phone. Who would you play chess with?

[0:40:53.4]

**MK:** The person on the other end of the satellite phone.

[0:40:56.5]

**FT:** Okay, interesting. Why *The Alchemist*? You read that — you've got to read it more than once?

[0:41:06.3]

**MK:** I've read it about a dozen times. It just never gets old, it's always inspiring, makes you really want to go out there and follow your dreams and live life and...

[0:41:14.4]

**FT:** I need to give that book another chance. I started reading it and I fell asleep.

[0:41:18.5]

**MK:** You should give it another chance.

[0:41:20.2]

**FT:** It's a slow — is it just me or is it kind of slow to start?

[0:41:23.1]

**MK:** It's a little bit slow.

[0:41:23.2]

**FT:** It's a little bit slow, okay. Maybe I was also younger and less a lot of things. So maybe now I'm wiser, older and more patient. Now that I'm a mom, I'll get past page three? All right, last but not least, I'm nomadic Matt and I'm So Money because \_\_\_\_\_.

[0:41:39.3]

**MK:** Because I'm frugal and not cheap.

[0:41:41.2]

**FT:** Because I'm frugal, not cheap. I already tweeted that, I multitask while I was interviewing you and I went on Twitter and I tweeted that just to get people a little curious about listening to the rest of our interview and it's been really fun connecting with you, thank you so much.

Your advice will be in the August issue of Oprah Magazine, I'm sure that's like your favorite magazine right? You subscribe to it, cover to cover right? You and Oprah curling up?

[0:42:06.9]

**MK:** I wish I was curling up with Oprah. Do you know Oprah? Have you met Oprah?

[0:42:11.4]

**FT:** I have never met Oprah but I feel like I'm getting warmer now that I — she's inviting me to write for her magazine and I feel like, it's going to happen, and when it does, I don't know. World, brace yourself. I'm going to have one of those ugly cries, I think that's what's going to happen.

All right Matt, thank you so much and wishing you continued success.

[0:42:36.9]

**MK:** Thank you, you too, have a great day.

[END]