He Turned Loss Into a Mission to End Blindness Transcript

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Opening and Podcast Introduction

I got from helping people that were blind and had no resources to see them sit up from a table and, you know, see a clock for the first time in a decade.

It's powerful. Yeah, it's really powerful I mean, these are people who have lost their independence, they're dependent on government and family for everything.

Right? And they are dependent and they have no productivity. Often their self-esteem is lost. And when I am able to do these treatments to cure blindness, typically through cataract surgery, it's life-changing for human beings.

The fact that I get to be part of that is just beyond description. You didn't build your clinic to feel like an employee in your own business. I'm Matthew Kalogli and on Out of the System, hosted by Doctor Talks, we challenge the broken rules holding healthcare entrepreneurs back.

Hear from clinic owners, rebels, and builders who are creating bold, profitable patient center practices and doing it their way. Paul, We finally made it.

Finally. You were a little under the weather yesterday. Just a bit, but I am doing much better today. So sitting across from me is Paul Doherty and he owns Docherty laser vision, right?

We'll talk about that and we're going to talk About your foundation and Let me tell you why I wanted to have you on the podcast show You know, this podcast is called out of the system It's a in conjunction with a book that comes out in a couple of weeks called it's the doctor's guide to reclaim your purpose your power and your passion and when we met through a mutual friend, and we got to spend a considerable amount of time together.

The thing that blew me away is you have unbelievable passion and focus. I mean, a lot of doctors, medical professionals, I would tell you, you are in the top 5% of the ones that I've met.

And you're outside my scope, right? I work primarily with orthopedics and the Regen and functional medicine, but we'll talk about what you do and all that.

But your passion and your insight is just intoxicating. Where does that come from? Thank you. Well, I'm honored and where it comes from is from my heart.

This is a mission, this is my mission this time around. And it's pretty clear to me what I'm doing. We can talk more about it. My foundation is named after my son, Andrew, who passed away suddenly and unexpectedly with the flu at age five, 20 years ago.

God. I was an atheist and a scientist and he woke me up. An atheist, and the scientist. Correct. Oh, we're gonna have fun. Yeah. Everything changed on January 13, 2004, when my son left this plane.

Okay. And gave me my passion and my purpose, which is curing blindness. Why blindness? I mean, I know you're, but was Andrew blind? Andrew was blind in one of his eyes, yes.

Really? Yes. He was blind in his left eye. His eye turned in and we took him to the pediatric ophthalmologist who actually diagnosed a scar. And you're an ophthomologist?

I'm an Ophthmologist. I've specialized in refractive surgery.

Andrewu2019s Passing and Spiritual Awakening

That's all I do. We're our own subspecialty. We founded the World College of Refractive Surgeons a couple of years ago, where we're recognized as our sub-speciality by the rest of ophthalmology, like the retina guys and the glaucoma.

I am a refractive surgeon. And so your son, your five-year-old son was born blind in one eye. Correct. Was that a little bit of a wake-up call? Did that kind of screw with you a bit?

Everything went down. His life was unusual. He was a preemie. he was in distress. Didn't spend a day in the hospital until the day he passed. But he had really mild cerebral palsy.

And he developmentally delayed. Actually learned sign language before he learned to speak, and then he spoke in paragraphs. And he was a mini me. He looked just like me, he had my brain, um, And, yeah, it was shock when he saw his eye turn in and realized he couldn't really see out of the eye.

Pediatric ophthalmologist we ended up having surgery on his eyes. We got his eye straightened, but he never saw out of that eye and Again for me it was just another one of the signs that he was he, was here to wake me up We had a soul contract to, wake, me, up you had, a, soul, contract, yeah, okay Between between, my, mice to me and my son he woke me Up and he sent me on this mission it's it clear to what happened so you were an atheist and you're a scientist Well, he, again, was not sick for a day after he left the ICU when he was born and he got the flu.

And we all got a flu, the three of us got better, his twin sister and his mother and I. But he continued to spike fevers and eventually had status epilepticus.

In the emergency room. He stopped breathing and then he his heart stopped he he coded and his the heart was Flatlined for about ten minutes and I mean I can describe this Because this is what what changed my life But I watched his soul leave his Christ conscious center and filled the ER Bay with kind of a purple haze and i knew that he was no longer his body and asked everyone to stop the code and that's when I knew he had passed and With all the events surrounding his passing.

I knew there was something more and it was my wake-up call My spiritual wake up call. Did you grow Irish Catholic? I'm assuming Irish Cathy. Yes. So am I from Chicago, right?

So did you go to parochial school? Sure did till third grade Yeah, I went till fourth with the nurse with yeah the nuns and then the none order switch my parents decided they didn't like the new nun's But, you know, I was born and raised Catholic, confirmed to the whole nine yards.

And there was just honestly so much hypocrisy. One of my friends was molested by one of the priests. My two brothers. Yeah. That's why I moved away. I said, if that's God and that spirituality, How old were you when you started moving away from God?

Well, I was forced to go to CCD and mass until I senior in high school. And kind of when I went to college, that was it. I didn't I stopped going to mass and I I wasn't about not an agnostic but an atheist.

Yeah, that's very different than being an atheist. That takes a lot of faith to be an atheistic. Correct. Well, I had enough faith that whatever I was trained in was not true.

It didn't feel true, it didn' resonate with me. And I, again, was a different person before my son passed. And looking back on all the kind of wild events that happened both before he passed, while he past, and subsequently after he's passed.

He's still with me. I mean, he is clearly directing my mission from the other side with the things that have been happening and the rate at which this is happening is really unbelievable to me How old were you when he pass away?

I was 40. So my life started… So you had a good 20 years under your belt of atheism. Oh yeah. Yeah. Absolutely.

Okay. So you see the purple haze in the room.

What happens after that to you? Well, it was very challenging. I mean, I lost my son and really lost had no other children. No, no, his twin sister Abigail, but you didn't have any other kids.

But it says 80% of couples under with children that have passed under age eight end up going in two different directions. And I also lost my family and I just dove deeper into work.

the Andrew Dockery Vision Foundation of 501C3 that was really dedicated to help helping those in need. And I was, really, we formally incorporated in 2011, but it was not long after my son's passing that I started doing some of this work.

We work locally with homeless and we work with the Wounded Warriors Project and with wounded soldiers. we worked with Free Clinics, the Conejo Free Clinic in particular, and then a lot of my artist friends.

I'm You know, I'm go to Burning Man. I have a lot of artist friends that can't necessarily afford what I do and I've gifted many, many of them the LASIK and vision correction surgery.

I've been to Central America, and I had a lot of self-funded trips over the years. In addition, all the work I do locally in terms of gifting my gift to people that need it.

And actually, for me, what's most rewarding is doing surgery for people who can't afford it and watching the looks on their faces when they can see again.

I think we talked about this when we met, you know, when work with our doctors, we're taking them out of insurance. So let's use a regenerative doctor.

And I, think of John Knab, who's down in Wilmington, an alumni of our program. and I remember the conversation I had with John and his business partner, and it was along these lines, wait, it's two years before I met you.

I said, look, if you make enough money. Running your cash based practice charging what you're worth You can fix as many people as you possibly can that can't afford your services Versus if I keep my prices low thinking I'm gonna be able to serve a lot of people It's gonna.

Be this you can do the same number of transactions So when I get paid 5X and use the profits from that to fund something and that really clicked. And when you told me what you do, I was like, to me, that's 21st century medicine because it's not about working 16 hour days.

Absolutely not. I work less than most doctors and I mean, they still do a couple of thousand surgeries a year, but essentially I created a practice. focused exclusively on vision correction on refractive surgery.

And we were primarily cash-based. We were one of the more expensive practices in the US for the work I did because I was one the most experienced. I trained with the surgeon that brought LASIK to the United States, or popularized it in US.

The first ophthalmologist in United states to have Lasik in my own eyes. So I truly believed in it. I went into a field where I was able to interact directly with patients for the majority of the work I did.

And because of that, that is what has afforded me to be able do this kind of work. As I grew the practice, I got big enough and we had 10 providers, 150 employees that we caught the attention of private equity.

Interestingly, my mentor started the strategic that ended up buying my practice the private-equity firm. He and I are on the board. It's really been a wild ride.

So let's go back to that ER room. Yes. You immediately dive into work.

Building a Cash-Based Vision Practice

That's how you sued yourself. Well, that's my primary addiction has been my work. And when he passed, I mean, he past on a Tuesday, and honestly, i think I was back to work on Thursday.

Because for me, it's therapy. It's just what I do is where I feel comfortable is, where i feel useful. I initially sued myself by focusing on work, but ultimately it was the foundation.

How long did that process work where you just suit yourself with work? Was it months, weeks, years? Oh, that's a great question. And I would say it's, you know, it was, You know years and it probably still sues me now.

I, I You have a moment. Did you have an O F moment? Like, did you had one of those shit moments where are you like? Cause you're you strike me as a man who's obviously very connected spiritually.

But did You had that moment Well, it was interesting. First of all, one of the things I did go, I leaned intensively into work, as well as asking the question why.

That's how my spiritual journey started was, and I started reading every book, And I had some very interesting, We talked, the guy who took me through psychedelic journeys has been on this podcast.

We've sent like 30 doctors through that path. Well, there's some pretty wild things that happened. I had my first lucid dream with my son the night he passed, and my sun told me that he had some advice for me in terms of his mom and his twin sister.

For instance, he said, don't get a real partner until my sister finishes college. And that's when my current partner really really showed up he also any he appeared to me and said daddy we are heaven he didn't say we're heaven and earth he looked me in the eyes and he said we our heaven was again a wild ride a few months later he again I was dreaming and he basically appeared my dream and said daddy come with me and I went with him and hire self to what appeared to be a television studio.

And he said, there's somebody I want to introduce you to. And it was actually an Indian gentleman that was, I got to see him in higher self. There was the Indian gentlemen on the right in a seat.

there was a wall between us and there were my physical body and two telephones. and I see the indian gentleman stand up and come around the wall and say, Paul, when I pick up the telephone, pick it up.

The telephone Indian guy sits back down. I didn't recognize him. As he picked up to the phone and said hello, paul. But I say hello. He said would you like to learn the scientific technique of meditation?

And I watched myself say yes. And a few months later, I have a gentleman come into my life who named Craig and within five minutes of meeting him, he asked me what I'm writing my first book about.

And I said, i'm not writing a book. He said yes, we are. I don't have time to write a, book he said. Yes, We are and I, said I. Don't. Have. Time. he goes, well, let's have dinner and we had dinner at dinner.

Once again, He started asking me about, about writing. A book and i said i don' have. time. Because what if we were write, write. a pretend book? And i.

Said, Well, that. might work. He said, well, if we're going to write a pretend book, what would it be about? And I said well I guess it would be what I've dedicated my life to, which is vision correction.

And he goes, great, why don't you ask 12 or 13 questions about what people might want to know about you do and write paragraph for each. We'll have this pretend-book.

I ended up writing 150 pages. Spent probably two years putting together my book called See for Yourself. Started a

publishing company called Visionary Press.

And while we were writing the book, people would come up to me and say, do you know who that guy is that you're working with? I said, well, it's my friend Craig.

I say no, no that's Mithrananda. What do mean Muthranada? They said he was a monk for 35 years. So I says, Craig, were you a Monk? And he said yes. For 35 year?

He said Yes. You meditated for thirty five years? Yes So what did you learn? Well it is all a dream and thank you for being in my dream. And I was one of the most interesting guys I've ever met.

I said, Craig, so tell me what you believe in. And he said that's not important. He said it's that more than many, many times. Finally, he says, if you really want to know what I believe and go to any bookstore and get a book called Autobiography of a Yogi, which I'd never heard of.

So I walked down Larchmont, I had an office in Lurchmont at the time, went to the Luchmont bookstore, and said to to guy behind the counter, do you have Autobiography Yogy?

And said hardcover or softcover, sir? I wasn't ready to commit. He brought the book out and I passed out because it was the man in my dreams, Yogananda Paramahansa, the person that my son introduced me to, who's now my meditation guru through Self-Realization Fellowship, which is the organization he started and where my friend Craig was a monk.

I learned the technique, scientific technique of meditation. So my sun introduced to my guru who passed nine years before I was born. Wow. So my son has been instrumental in moving this forward.

Actually, Craig Mithrananda, which means ecstasy through friendship, knows more about Yogananda Paramahamsa than probably anyone walking this earth. He did the video bloggers for SRF and is a student of Yogananda and his teachings.

Well, you want to know what's wild? That book title has come up to me multiple times in the last three weeks. So I'm going to go buy it tonight. Cause I would highly recommend it.

Yeah. Like this is what we call a sign, right? Exactly. It changed my life and I, you know, I've read it multiple. The last version was, was audio, but it is.

Yogananda was introduced me, introduced to be in a dream by my son. And this was all part of my path. So can we keep going? Sure. All right. So I want to learn more about this because this is fascinating to me.

Alright, so you write the book, you start doing this meditating process. Are you still an atheist? Oh, absolutely not. No, everything changed the day my son passed 20 years ago.

Okay. And I'm not going to put you in a hole like I don't want to like. But well, I'll let you tell your story because I think that's so like, how did that was that instantaneous where you just changed from the spiritual side?

Well, it was it, was a process. The things that happened. things that happened before and after my son's passing. I mean, he let me know non-verbally that he was going to pass.

And it was pretty wild. Pretty wild event. I just, there's no doubt to me that there is another side and we are, it's a divine universe and there, you know, is a creator and divine consciousness and that everything is perfect, that it is all perfect.

Heaven and hell or just perfection? Well, I think that hell is humans' minds that can go off the side. I don't see, there's not a place, in my opinion, not place called hell.

We're in it now, right? Well we can, we certainly, well this is a proving ground, this plane is for learning, hopefully fun as well, but I that, hell as a state of being, it's a mindset that people can get into.

It's no classic, you know, the creator as a benevolent being. It's not fire or brimstone. And, you know, I've been, it's unconditional love. The only currency in this universe is unconditional.

I, and I'm, group Catholic had my moment where I went down the Christian faith, right? Did quite a, probably 15, 20 years in that realm. We, the core center of what we do at Mavericks, our company, So we have four values that are in a triangle, right?

And so the center, one in the Center is love. And what we say is it's really unconditional love, but you can't have unconditional Love for other people in The world until you have Unconditional love of self.

And I completely, completely agree with that. And that's been a process as well. You know, we all ask, I firmly believe that we set ourselves up for all the things that happen in this life.

Our permanent personality, our higher self set these things up.

Meditation, Dreams, and Finding a Guru

For our temporary personality which is our current personality that cross the river forgetfulness and we forget we're all attached and have these thing that come up and free will is how we respond to them, right?

Do we learn from these that people might call tragedies or difficulties that experience this time around. And one of those things for me was my son's passing.

This was, we had a soul contract and we both knew this was going to happen and this set up to set me on this path and it's been a wild path. And it is, I feel like the luckiest man in the world that my mission is to eliminate treatable blindness worldwide by 2050. I'm just, blown away.

Well, We're going dive into that for sure. Cause I want to, but I wanna keep, cause that is a fascinating thing. I lost my father when I was 13 years old, sitting next to him watching a baseball game.

Real pivotal moment. In my case, though, I didn't deal with it until 43 years later, right? Very in, you know, work, getting accolades, all of that. And I find trauma.

Everyone has a level of trauma that they go through, and everybody carries their own level PTSD. We think of PTSD as the guy who's at the Battle of the Bulge or, you know, wherever.

Got out of burning buildings at 9-11. But PTSD is all relative to the environment with which you are living in. And I also believe in my work has revealed to me that that is the number one thing that holds people back.

So we just did a coaching session. We had one of our doctors on there, Dr. Aang, and we did this whole thing of like her opening up her voice. But you seem to have dealt with the trauma of Andrew in a very different way.

You, I mean, yeah, you worked really hard as a way to soothe it. But it was at that moment, you knew that life had changed on a permanent. It was going in a completely different track.

Like it, was out of your control. Oh, without a doubt. And it wasn't a process, but the main instigating factor was this trauma of losing my son. I still miss him dearly, looking back on it.

Quote trauma wouldn't happen without his passing as they say the way a diamond created is created as you take, you know essentially Carbon and it's high pressure that creates the diamond and then there was a high-pressure situation.

It was not instantaneous. There was lot of mean a lot spiritual work a You know, psychological work, it was a lot of, you know… It didn't just happen overnight.

And, we all have trauma, and we're all working to move through that. I just feel very blessed that my trauma has led me to the place that I am. Because I can just get such a sense of satisfaction, I know that i'm in the right space and on the way.

Yeah, that's great, isn't it? It's so wonderful when we find that now you found that what so was it at 40 that you knew you were on the right path that well I wouldn't say rated 40.

I would say that when he passed Wait, you weren't 40 when I was 40 When he passes and it was after that as I started getting into the philanthropic work I'm doing with my foundation that I realized this is what I am supposed to be doing I got just the sort of the level of I got from helping people that were blind and had no resources to see them sit up from a table and You know see a clock for the first time in a decade.

It's powerful. Yeah, it's really powerful I mean, these are people. That are have lost their independence. They're dependent on government and family for everything right and they are dependent and there's they have no productivity often their self-esteem is lost and when I am able to do these treatments to cure blindness typically through cataract surgery and It's life-changing for human beings, and the fact that I get to be part of that is just beyond description.

Well, let's talk about foundation. So, I want to know more about this, So, how is the foundation funded? Is it through a portion of the profits that come through the clinics, or how do you have it structured?

It is through giving? How is it? Sure. Well, the way we… Initially, it was all self-funded through profits of my foundation. I formally incorporated in 2011 as a 501C3.

One celebrity that donated towards my Haiti trip, I had a few businesses that donate some money for some of other trips to the Middle East, but primarily self funded until about a year and a half ago.

or two and a half years ago when I sold my business private equity I set up a DAF or donor advised fund knowing that I was going to lean into my foundation as I continued my work.

So the foundation has primarily been since we I sold a private equity has primarily been funded through the donor advice fund as well as some donations.

We've had a couple of gala fundraisers, but really what changed was about a year and a half ago. And once again, I know this is my son working from the other side through mutual friends.

I was introduced to my current my new or my current business partner, Calmentek. He's a PhD material science engineer, quantum physicist, venture capitalist, who has developed a lot of the materials for most of technology that is implanted into human's eyes, including what I'm looking at you through, that I had implented in my eyes before I met him.

And we were introduced by our mutual friends because we're both focused on curing blindness. he's more from the sort of development of, of innovation technologies and me more from a clinical side, we met and we decided we were going to do this together.

Actually, our first hour of meeting was meditation and he's in love. He was, he was at about Sufi and, and really connected. We, you know, through our meditation technique and essentially he had a, Patent portfolio of about 40 technologies that will revolutionize the way humanity sees and he has gifted those technologies through license to the foundation at no charge.

And what he was chairman of the board of TheCureBlindness.org foundation, Himalayan Cataract Project, the leading provider of leading NGO of its kind that does cataracts surgery in the world.

They do about a hundred thousand surgeries a year, but there's 200 million people on this earth that are blind or visually impaired from cataract So Cal really wanted to have a mechanism to be able to use this technology to really Approach this problem and really be to attack it more than just scratching the surface and that's how he and I got together In terms of he asked if my foundation would be willing to to work with him in solving the problem And essentially what what?

he explained to me was the only way we're going to solve this problem is to have a for-profit behind the foundation, basically an industrial foundation kind of like the other people we know doing is Novo Nordisk, where they essentially have profits from a, for profit going directly in to a foundation to, in order to resolve a particular problem.

So Cal and I founded the Vision Innovation Institute about a year and a half ago, and it is a technology incubator and commercializing entity that will benefit the foundation from two standpoints.

One is it will get, it'll pay sub-licensing fees for all these licenses that Cal has gifted the Foundation. And we also will be giving a portion of the profits from VII, or Vision Innovation Institute, to our financial C3 charity, the Andrew Doherty Vision Foundation, so that we have a mechanism in perpetuity to address global blindness.

So the funds will always be flowing in? Correct. Now we're both are really startups. I really, we refound, you know, with a foundation, I was a one-man band and we really in a sense, were running as a startup.

Mission to Eliminate Treatable Blindness

VI is also a start-up, but we currently have four technologies that we are developing, one of which was approved in India. Currently fundraising, the seed capital is already, essentially I put in seed capitol for the Innovation Institute and were currently looking for angel investors to help us out.

next steps. Well, we are looking for about $12 million right now from angel investors. And I can talk about some of the technologies we have one we actually have a company that we're close to spinning out already.

It's wild how quickly it's gone. Its wild. I'll talk to you about that. Great. Find this incredibly fascinating overall about 100 million dollar raise to get us to the point that We will in perpetuity be able to focus on global blindness.

So Basically, VII and ADVF work together, the Vision Innovation Institute and the Andrew Daugherty Vision Foundation, to eliminate treatable blindness worldwide by 2050. So essentially, this is where compassion meets innovation.

So the the four technologies that we're currently working on we have a technology We have two intraocular lens technologies the leading cause in fact, let's step back because I think it's important to talk about the Leading causes of blindness and visual impairment.

There are over two billion people on this plane It's planet that are blind or visually impaired two-billion. Yeah now two point two million Me, I have to wear glasses.

Does that make me… Well, if you don't have access to glasses and contacts, which is a large number of people for financial reasons, yes, absolutely.

The leading cause of treatable blindness in the world of these 2.2 billion people is cataracts, is cloudiness of the lens, okay? And that's the primary surgery that we're doing as part of The Foundation because it's a quick five or 10-minute surgery for as little as $150. You can change somebody's life.

They go from blind to seeing. refractive error, which is what you described, that's the inability to see without glasses and contact lenses, is the second leading cause of treatable or preventable blindness.

And while we here in the developed world think, well, what do you mean you can't see because you don't have glasses or contacts? A lot of people can afford them, and there's also a social stigma in many cultures where you

really can wear glasses.

So it's a very large number of The third leading cause of treatable blindness in the world is diabetic retinopathy. There's an epidemic of diabetes. Oh, gosh, yeah.

Diabetic macular edema. Yes. And that's fourth leading causes age-related macula degeneration, which is aging of the retina. Then finally, glaucoma, high pressure in eye that damages the back.

And through the Innovation Institute, we have technologies that can address all of these problems. And I can talk about the technologies and kind of how they apply to these different forms of life.

Is this ranked in order like as to the number of? Okay. How many people are dealing with glaucoma where it's? Well, there's hundreds and hundreds of millions with cataract, and I'm not a glaucoma specialist, but it's millions and millions.

It's tens of million of people. Tens of billions of. Yeah. Or more. And it is irreversible once you've lost vision from the glaucoma. But those are kind of the five leading causes of freedom of blindness.

At the Vision Innovation Institute, we have technologies that can address each of these problems. The first technology, we have two intraocular lenses.

My business partner Cal has developed the materials that go in most of the lenses that goes inside the eyes. We have the newest version of this material called the Soleil lens.

When you're saying the lens, is this where you are peeling, like explain this. So cataract. is a clouding of the lens inside the eye. Behind the iris, or the colored part of eye, through the pupil, is…

a lens. It's almost, think of it like an… Okay? Okay, with a candy coating, it's got little strings that attach it to the eyes called zonules. Yes, but you look through that lens and that lands in order.

When you're younger, you can zoom from distance near that's called accommodation. So people, when they're young, don't have to wear reading glasses because that lends the ciliary muscle contracts and the lens thickens and you zoom in.

As you get older, the first thing that happens is that Lens becomes stiff and it doesn't zoom anymore. That's why you need reading. Glasses that called presbyopia.

Is there anything you can do in today's day and age to help reduce that aging effect? Absolutely. I had the surgery done two years ago. There's lots of treatments for presbyopia and I'm happy to talk to you about it.

And I don't wear glasses anymore. Because I don't, like I can read fine without glasses, but I put glasses on, you have to have the readers in, right?

Correct. So you're low near-sightedness. Yeah. I've always been told, well, if I get my long, my distance fixed, I need readers. Is that the case? That's not necessarily true.

We have options, we have ways around that. we can do mono-vision, set one eye distance, one-eye near, or as I had done, what's called a depth of focus lens, where I'm set for distance but the optics of the lens bring the vision in.

so I wear reading glasses either. Okay, I gotta come see you. Yeah, please come. The bottom line is I can, you know, if you wear glass or contact lenses, it's likely that I could help you, minimize or eliminate glasses or contacts.

And some of it is age dependent, some is prescription dependent. I have to see. The leading cause of treatable blindness in the world is cataracts, which is the cloudiness of the lens, that natural lens.

And everybody eventually gets catarax. Everybody. If you live to be old enough. It's a standard deal. The treatment is a five or ten minute surgery where we just open the front part of lens capsule, vacuum out the cloudy lens and then put in a plastic implant.

You don't put it in an implant, you won't see. And there's lots of different types of implants. The implant I have in my eyes is the depth of focus that goes from distance to near.

And that is a leading cause of treatable blindness. Our first technology that we just had approved in India is called the Salaya one. It is based on shark skin.

Shark skin does not allow virus, bacteria or fungus to grow in it. We have a membrane, a synthetic membrane that we put around the lens implant. Because what happens is we'll go to say Haiti and somebody will be blind from their cataract.

It's called a mature catarract when you're blind. And when they look in their eyes, you'll see white in the pupil. We take that cataraact out, put it in a lens implants and they sit up and see.

What's that like? I mean how many Thousands of patients have experienced I've done tens I'd done 10s of thousands of cataracts now the ones that have mature catarax in the u.s.

They're not that common. I see mature Cataract in us, but because there's so when I went to Morocco in December We did over 300 patients and the majority were mature where they had they just could not see and it's wild I mean I had a guy in Haiti Really interesting story this guy he comes in and I don't speak Creole but through the Creel interpreter I got to talk to him and he, the way he met me was he was blind.

So he put his hands on my face and felt my phase. That's how we were introduced. And I asked him, and the rule in Haiti is if you don't work, you, don' eat.

I said, sir, how are you able to support yourself? And he said well, I watched the taxis. that was my job for many years. When I became blind seven or eight years ago, he goes, The taxi drivers now house me at the taxi station.

I did his surgery. He set up from the table and he looks across the room and said it's quarter of three. First he had seen in seven or eight years. And he turns around and looks at me and through the creel interpreter he says he's tall, he is white, and is wearing blue.

The interpreter told him that's the man that just cured your blindness. I still get goosebumps. It's wild. We take him out to the post-op area and through the interpreter I talked to him a little more.

I said, well, now that you're, you can see, what are you going to do? He goes, I'm going wash the taxis. He got his independence back. He's productivity back, he got a self-esteem back and it's a social justice issue.

These are surgeries that take five or 10 minutes and for as little as $150 an eye, you can change somebody's life and there's not resources, right? And we are working to create resources through this industrial foundation to cure this problem.

It's hundreds of millions of people. It seems fascinating to me. You think of all the wealth that exists here in America. In Haiti, it's $150 to fix somebody's blindness, and yet it still exists.

all over the world, hundreds of millions of people. Yeah, it's a social injustice. It's, a justice problem. And that's the low hanging fruit. We want to go for the long hanging through first and cataract is the lowest of the hanging for it.

Its easy, its inexpensive. This lens we developed actually has, the problem is we go to Haiti and we take out the mature catarax. There's microscopic cells that are left in the little bag that holds a lens in.

And they proliferate. That's called a posterior capsule opacity. And at some point after the surgery, months, years,

decades, it clouds up again in that membrane.

The machine to do the treatment, to clear that, is large and heavy and expensive. These patients aren't going to have that done. This membrane we've developed, where the only one in the world is called the Salaya 1, actually prevents that from happening.

Really? So they never have to the have surgery again? Correct. Ow. So, what happens is that we've developed this technology through Vision Innovation Institute.

As we develop it, we'll sell it to, you know, make it accessible to other NGOs. We'll make accessible it our foundation. So essentially, these technologies will see, will be deployed in low and middle income countries through my foundation before they ever see the developed world.

They'll be using the develop world eventually. because 90% of the essentially 90 percent of treatable blindness is in low and middle income countries, right?

It's wild, it's not equally distributed. It is low middle-income countries that have these problems and they're the ones that you know, 90% of the cases of blindness or visual impairment are treatable.

And as a result, they're the ones who suffer all the socioeconomic consequences, right? They're over $400 billion a year in lost productivity due to blindness.

People that are blind or visually impaired are poorer than their sighted counterparts. In school, have no job opportunity and they then become dependent on governments and their families and with lost productivity and lost income.

And it's really sad and it is easily treated. I'm all for governments helping as much as they possibly can, right? We should always, I believe there should be a safety net.

We shouldn't have a way to be able to help people. But generally what happens is it doesn't stop the cycle of them going on the welfare or what have you.

What I am hearing you say is. You're, you're not only getting them to contribute back to their community by being able to work, but you are taking them off the roles of support.

Absolutely. And so that then allows an environment where we can do more to help those people that need more and more help. Like I see this as a, like this really impressive crank wheel, flywheel going.

Because every time we get somebody off. they become a success story. But then it not only encourages the others, but in your case, this is a very straightforward solution.

It's extremely straightforward. The other thing is investment in treating vision loss. it's a Very high return investment. Its estimated that for every dollar spent on a cataract surgery, there'll be $36 in productivity.

Every dollar spend on catarect surgery is $30. That is correct. And as a result, these people become independent and get their self-esteem back, and it's such a quick, relatively inexpensive surgery.

And how long does it take you to do the surgery? Here in the US, on average, it is five or six minutes. For more difficult cases overseas, they can take a little longer, you know, 10 minutes, 15, sometimes longer.

10,15 minutes? Yeah. Yeah, nothing. You can, for you, It's like changing tires. It is what I do. All day long. That is fascinating to me. Okay, so cataracts, glasses.

What about diabetes? Let's talk about that one. Absolutely. Because that is something that's near and dear to my heart, not because I'm diabetic, but because of the insane number of type 2 diabetics that exist.

Sure and states it's and and internationally where where nutrition is even poorer. It's out of control the Middle East and Haiti It is out-of-control.

There's a really there's an epidemic Absolutely. I know India had is a higher diabetic infection rate not infection a high or dead diabetic rate per capita in the United States.

Absolutely I didn't know the middle east Absolutely, really? Why is that the case?

Foundation Funding and the Vision Innovation Institute

It''s nutrition poor nutrition Haiti and Haiti was it was wild we were in Morocco in December we did 300 eyes in morocco just it's it wild and that that's actually the problem is that there's an epidemic of vision loss that happening both because the aging the population cataracts are age-related and the epidemic diabetes and essentially governments and NGOs are really just dropping the ball here the problems in order to really treat this problem, having a foundation, it's a depleting asset model, right?

You have to- Okay, so explain. Well, you ask donors for money, You get money. You spend the money and then you have the desk of donors. Most foundations spend 30 to 40% of their time and money trying to raise money And as a result, the care that's provided is really spotty and you can't develop long-term strategies and You can develop infrastructure to truly treat the problem.

The other issue is- Yeah, because you raise the you spend the money, you have to go raise money. Exactly. As opposed to the way we're doing, we have a foundation.

You have money that's funding, technology that is funding. That's going to be funding which is not happening yet because we are a startup. But that the plan is to have an industrial foundation, the other problem is you just the ways grants work, I mean you can get sporadic donations from donors but grants are time limited and you had to spend all this time and energy reporting about the grants and applying for the grant and it just makes for And it's not efficient a grant renewed because absolutely and you can't you've got to stay in this lane.

You can go too far out because you don't want to run the risk of not getting the grant again. Absolutely. Then actually stifles the development. Right.

30 to 40 percent of foundations, their time and money is spent trying to get more money. And the other thing is with donors, donors have their own priorities.

It may not match the local needs. So the funds are really misallocated, right? There's not been a business mindset that has been brought to this problem to have a sustainable way to create, to treat blindness.

Its looked at as a charity and as long as it's looked as the charity, you know, blindness, we're never really going to solve the problem. And what we are doing with Vision Innovation Institute and the way the system we've set up is to create an economic engine behind Curing blindness donations will help definitely speed things up, but we don't we're going after the bottleneck.

The bottlenecks is raising funds and awareness. We're saying, you know what? Great. we'd love to get donations. But we have this patent portfolio that we are going to be developing commercializing technology.

The other thing that's really exciting, and this is directly related to the diabetic discussion, the leading cause of blindness and diabetes other than cataract is diabetic macular edema, retinal swelling.

It's currently treated with injections, monthly, or surgery. Oh, I haven't heard of that. It's a $40 billion a year industry. We have developed a toroidal mister.

we've done our first prototype with the University of Texas. It basically it's spray device, the toroidal mist that puts molecule into the eye at a high enough concentration that it can diffuse to the back of the eyes to eliminate retinal

injections.

Really? Really. The topical eye drops, it is 50 microliters and it changes pH and osmolality and people blink it all out. So really you can't really treat.

Small percentage is really just getting You can't treat retinal disease with a topical eye drop. With our technology you can, and again we'll be doing first in humans here we hope in the next four to six months, you basically take this toroidal mister with the molecule with one microliter, right, two percent of what you have to do in a drop, spray it on the surface of the eye faster than the blink rate, It stays on the eye as a reservoir.

You know, it doesn't sting because it does not change such a small volume. It sits there and just pumps, goes into the back of the eyes to treat this for both diabetic macular edema and maculatogeneration.

Wet macula generation is treated with injections, which are painful and risky and scary for the patient and not even available for those in low and middle income countries.

They don't have money to see a retina specialist. With our with our toroidal mister, we're hoping to eliminate retinal injections and be able to deliver this to low and middle income countries.

Will you then sell it, like you guys will be the producer of it and the profits from that will go to then do this worldwide? Well, the answer is, we will develop and help commercialize it.

We'll probably spin that company out. It'll be our first spin out and then through IPOs, profits will then be directed back to… Get a licensing fee or royalty.

Right, licensing via royalty if we develop it ourselves. But that is the company that has gone along that we've gone much quicker than we ever expected on a very, very low budget.

We've been able to do this very cost-efficiently with the University of Texas. We're also working with The Ama Foundation in India. Ama, the Hugging Saint Foundation, they're the leading provider of indigen eye care in india and their medical director is a retinal specialist.

we're working on molecules with our toroidal mister to be able get in the back of the eye through topical applications that have injections. Fascinating.

So this is the one that our doctors are fixing the diabetes the type 2 diabetes issue. Beautiful. We should be able to get our hands around this. When you really look at the numbers in type two diabetes and when you look At the fact that like what is it less than 1% of the population base had it in the 1950s And now it's, what is it, 30, I forget the numbers.

It's in my book. 32% are diagnosed and there's another 30% that are borderline or slash undiagnosed in the United States alone, which means that in excess of 30 or 60% of Americans are either type 2 diabetic or on the verge of being type two diabetic.

The impact of what that does to your health is just, and you wind up being an annuity for the insurance companies and the pharmaceutical companies in a pharmacy benefit.

crazy and it's it is our food system the food manufacturers that are poisoning us and its sugar related 100% yeah and there is no argument here with me its its craziness and change in diet is all the processed foods and you can follow the rate of diabetes specifically to the development of processed foods.

You can see when the tobacco companies started buying the food companies in the 1980s and they brought the scientists and the engineers over that were making tobacco more addictive and bringing it over to food.

And you can the correlation go like this. It's really scary. Yeah, it's really sad. In fact, there's a movie called What

the Health. My friend Kip, who created that movie, talks about how sugar increases the rate of heart issues and cardiovascular issues, and cancer.

And when they went to interview the American Heart Association, whose in bed with the food manufacturing companies, they shut them down and said, we won't talk about this science that shows that, in fact it is sugar that is the problem.

And it's really sad. You follow Brigham Bueller at all online. So he's part of the whole, he owns a compounding pharmacy in Austin, Texas. And he has been on Rogan a number of times.

He's working with Kennedy and all of this. and he goes around to the States and getting new laws passed for like, peptides being allowed or changing, you know, having nutrition from medical schools, things like this.

He's doing some great, great work. And he, he talks about they were working on passing a law in Texas and they've got it all done and all of a sudden they get, they got these phone calls going, You guys got to come back in.

The American, like the lobbyists have gotten in charge now. And they went from that this pill was going to pass, no problem, to it looked like it wasn't going pass.

He goes, we go back into committee meetings and he goes they sent the representative from the American Heart Association comes in, sits down. And he's their expert witness on health.

like just inflamed inflammation everything and this guy's talking about all the great things that they're doing to help heart disease and bring him you're just like he gets i'm paraphrasing him but he's basically like really seriously you send in this guys to say that everything is fine and well anyway it's the what has been the the con that has put on the american people with regards to our food supply is disgusting It is absolutely disgusting.

And I was hoping RFK Jr. would be a little more focused on that. I know that he's talked about it, but I want to, I'd love to see some action. There's been some, there hasn't been enough, you know, politics is a strange game.

You know there's a lot of horse trading that goes on. Of course. Yeah. No, no, yeah, of course I wouldn't want his job for a million dollars, we're making some progress.

Okay. So I'm curious. You are more a business person. Did you grow up in an entrepreneurial family with your dad of his own business? Like you have a breadth of knowledge and understanding of the economics of business that I normally don't run into.

Where does that come from? Well, that's a great question. My father was an oral surgeon, but I wouldn't say a successful oral surgeons. So he was had his own business, not necessarily a hugely successful business person.

I don't have formal training in business and to me, business is common sense. Right. Yeah, but the problem, Mark Twain said, the problems with common sense is most people don't have that.

That's correct. I've had some great mentors. Okay. In terms of my business partner, Renata Stone, who was CEO of My Company, DLV Vision, helped grow the business.

And you started with one location. Oh, yeah. Started with location in 1999. You went to undergrad at Penn, where'd you go to? So I got into medical school at UCLA.

That's how I ended up out here. Yeah, well, it's easy to come out of UCLA and come back to Philadelphia. It was awesome. For me, I'm from a big Irish Catholic family, and I was paying for it.

And UCLA was a great school. By the way, what number are you in the lineup? Five. You're two of five. I am six of six. So our parents didn't really love each other.

We only had six kids. Everybody's like, whatever, he's got 12 kids. Yeah, it's a classic Catholic family. So I moved out here and I did all my training at UCLA.

I had an internship and then my residency at Jules Stein. And I spent a year in Minneapolis with my mentor, Richard Lindstrom, who helped popularize LASIK in the US.

When was this? 1993 to 1994. Then I move back here, and grew from there, started with one office. Just continue to grow. I learned LASIK didn't exist when I did my training.

Okay, so I finished in 95, 96 is when the eczema laser was approved for Lasik. Now I was involved in some of the FDA studies for the exomer laser that does Lasek as a fellow with Dr.

Lindstrom in Minneapolis. But it was PRK, not LASIK, the precursor of Lasik. I learned LAsIK in 96 and had my own eyes done January 97. So I was one of the pioneers of having it done and got involved in a lot of FDA studies for different technologies for vision correction.

New Technologies for Cataracts and Retinal Disease

In terms of my business ends, my mentor, Dr. Linson, he was really an amazing business person. He ended up growing. One of the biggest practices in Minnesota and started with wad capital is strategic known as unified vision partners I'm now on the board and work with them, but I it's just been mentors and it really just in my personal experience I mean, I've had you know, i've experienced a lot of things I honestly had a multi-million dollar embezzlement and that the person went to prison and I learned probably more from that than just that anything I didn't have that big a number, but I've had the investment.

Boy, you learn a lot. Yeah. It was shocking. I don't know what a sociopath meant. And I'd learned about it in medical school, But I had never experienced it.

But this person went to prison. That was probably for me, one of the biggest learning lessons in business, which is trust but verify. In business. As physicians, we trust everybody.

You trust everyone to a Right, and we believe in humans. And I still believe, I look for the divinity and all, but I now, you know, the fifth agreement, if you've read the four agreements, is trust but be skeptical.

That's served me well in business. I've had great mentors. Right. So when you opened up your practice, were you taking any insurance at all? Did you go right to cash?

Well, honestly, it was primarily insurance because LASIK had not really Right, you hadn't taken off, so what were you doing? I did general ophthalmology and cataract surgery, and I started, when I first got out, the only thing that was approved was RK, radiocaratotomy.

So I didn't I, did radiocarototopy for my first year or two, then the eczema laser was, approved and started with PRK and then LASIK, 96, 97, but there just wasn't the market.

When it really started taking off was late 90s. Okay, and as I did that I started shifting my my and I didn't I also trained trained as a transplant surgeon cornea transplants I Did hundreds of trans plants, but as they got busier with LASIK and vision correction surgery I let transplants go glaucoma general ophthalmology and really focused my my work only on refractive surgery.

Okay. So I was a generalist, which that's how you're trained in ophthalmology residency to do any medical and surgical eye care. You start the practice, you've got a single location, Lasik starts to come out.

Did you have a business person that was running from the get-go or were you doing it all yourself? Well, I remember my first year in practice I made almost no money and my only employee was my wife at the time, the mother of my twins, who was a theatrical costumer.

So I've been through everything that I hired hired a business right there I was it was I you know, I definitely Worked my way up. I I earned it and I brought on I bought on a Business Manager To help and he was only with me for about a year and then the second business manager I had is the one who embezzled all the money and she was with yeah.

How long was she with you? Oh goodness probably six or seven years. And I didn't know. How many locations? So at the seventh year, how many? We were probably, well, that's one of the things I think that was, one the locations was purchased specifically to confuse me.

I was probably up to make things more complicated, to let more money go out the door. It's a long complex, but she was Brilliant it was false invoices and they were paid with with paid but with her credit card and then doctored credit Card statements we did used to do a lot of marketing and a Lot of money spent on marketing, and there were basically doctered marketing she would apparently call and ask for a quote, and then change the quote to make it look like an invoice.

And then her credit card statement would be doctored to Make it Look like that's pretty. So it was brilliant. Yeah. It was my next business manager that caught it.

I actually didn't believe it because I this person was would say things like, you know, I love you like a brother I just want to see you be successful as I was being robbed blind.

No pun intended. No, no pun intent. And again, she ended up in prison. It took me 10 years. I thank the District Attorney of Ontario County for bringing this person to justice.

But it was shocking. Absolutely shocking, I did not believe it. This can't be happening. My business manager said I called this company. that to get a quote for, for marketing.

And they said, he said we, you know, we want to go based on some of the other work you've done for us. They said well, We've never done any work for you that we've only ever given you invoices where we only have a given your quotes, but not, not invoisives.

It went from there and it took the took, the district attorney a long time. it was, it's a wild story. I'll be writing a book about it. Yeah. Now your son passed away by them.

my son passed away during this and that was part of the problem is in the first couple years of grieving, I probably didn't have my eyes were off the road and the person that that perpetrated this took advantage.

Yeah, that's what happened with me when I got My first marriage was ending and I was trying like heck to save it. And she goes, don't worry about it, I got you.

She started doing fake invoices and we stopped counting at like 125 grand. Yeah. Well, the judgment was I believe three and a half million dollars. And of course, I got checks for whatever the license plates or whatever work was being done in the state prison.

And apparently, half of any monies that went in for commissary go to the victim, but it was very little money that I received from the State. Just the satisfaction that we got.

Well, I did. And then actually when the day she settled the I got a check for about a tenth of what she had. She had embezzled when she pled guilty because in California, you can horse trade years for for money.

So, yeah, trust would verify. Correct. Yeah, that is one of the great. That's one So what's the challenge like, is you work with other doctors in your, in line of work?

What's, the big change, what are the mistakes you see them making in their businesses? Well, I think that you have an association right like you do I thought you said you understand are you training other doctors?

Oh, yeah, we have there's there are In our just our company there think I've been close to 200 doctors and you know, certainly over the years I been involved in training courses for lots and lots of surgeons and we train as part of the foundation that's one of The big things we don't just go to a country and Do surgery we actually train surgeons when we went to Morocco last December, there were 10 residents that we trained, or helped train.

So yeah, I run into surgeons all the time. You know, surgeons in general don't have a business mindset. Again, and I think a lot of doctors, we go through so much training and so heartache and doctors.

I mean, in generally good hearts and we just want to help people. And I see doctors just giving away their services for no reason, right? It just doesn't make sense.

On an airline, you have to save yourself before you can save others. So you need to make sure you pay your staff and pay the bills. And as doctors, we're really, I think, very gullible because we do have big hearts and we are here to help people and that's how I got embezzled from.

And I that there are unscrupulous business people that take advantage of a lot of doctors. When you're in med school, were you told not to worry about doctors?

Shouldn't worry. About money. They shouldn't be worrying about business. That wasn't even discussed. No, there is zero training. There's not, they're not a word is mentioned about.

And the fact of the matter is most doctors now it's changing because private practice is really on its way out with private equity, consolidating practices and hospitals getting involved.

And particularly with Generation Z, a lot of docs, they value their lifestyle and a lotta people end up being employees. So maybe business is not as important, but the bottom line is you're not gonna be reimbursed at the rate that you really should be for all the work that your done.

We're seeing different. When we're at conferences, we have orthopedic surgeons that are finishing up residency come to us and say, I don't wanna go into this system.

I wanna start my own practice. That's beautiful because the numbers are each year you see fewer and fewer people in private practice. The numbers used to be like 50%, now it's 15%. Much more than 50% used be private practices.

I'm part of that trend, I sold my business to private equity, but for me it was for purpose. My purpose was ultimately I love what I do and I am still doing 165 days a year and do a couple thousand surgeries a Ultimately, my focus is going to be the foundation, and selling took away a lot of the business responsibilities that allowed me to sit here and talk to you about my foundation and what we're building and the innovation institute that we are developing to cure blindness.

We have more and more doctors that are coming to us, and I would say it's about 35% of our client base that's come to and they're 45, 50 years old, they said, I can't do this for another 10, 15 years because working for the hospitals, it is insane number of hours.

They're not getting the respect. they are basically just doing what the insurance companies are telling them to do. So we are actually helping a lot of doctors leave that system, start their own, then we're getting doctors who come They graduate, they do like a year working at the hospital or whatever, but they're doing it for the sole reason of, I want to start my own practice and I wanted to be cash.

And I think that's beautiful. I have so much respect for what you're, doing as a physician, knowing what I went through, just what, you are doing for, the physician community I, think is incredible.

It's giving us our autonomy back. Honestly, You're Doing For Physicians What I'm Doing for Patients, which is giving our lives back We're giving their own eyesight.

Correct. Exactly. And because, you know, when you work for an HMO and you it's dictated you how you're going to practice medicine. It's like, why did I even go to medical school?

The other thing, too, is, with artificial intelligence, I think there's, you know, a lot of doctors are going to be losing their jobs. I have a friend that has a company called superpower.com that they go out and they have nurse take your blood and then they had AI.

They have medical director, of course, but they are looking ultimately to replace primary care doctors. And honestly, they're probably do it. Figure out a way you can rebuild a pool table with a robot and an AI you want to tell me they can't figure out way to No, it's happening.

It's going to happen. And if you heard Elon Musk on Peter Diamantis' podcast… I saw the scan. I didn't get a chance to listen to it yet, but what did he say?

It was fascinating. Well, um, It is interesting, because they talked about LASIK surgeons and actually Peter is a friend and a surgeon and family member.

They talked how Lasik surgeons, at least Elon said, surgeons may not have a job in three or four years. What do you think about that? Well, I think that's an aggressive timeline because the only robot in ophthalmology is currently being developed with some PhDs at UCLA.

And even that technology, it really requires it assists the surgeon, you still need surgeon direct surgeon involvement. But will it eventually happen?

The answer is yes. Yeah. I think that with AGI coming online next year and a lot of this, you know, all of these things were discussed, between Elon and Peter on his Moonshots podcast.

there will be, I guess, estimated in a few years, there'll be more robots on the Earth than humans. And the collective intelligence of artificial intelligence is soon to surpass humanity.

Yep. With robots being able to reconstruct pool tables, it's only going to get better from here. Of course, robots will have a nomogram to make. I use robotic laser surgery as part of my cataract surgery now.

Business Lessons, Private Equity, and Doctor Autonomy

When I make the circle, in cataract surgery to open the lens. By hand, I do a really good job. I can't compete with the precision of a robotic laser. And consistency.

Yeah, consistency, and particularly for less experienced surgeons, it's going to do better job now. There are circumstances where the robots are going be able to collect their intelligence in terms of complications and how to deal with complications, but right now, there is just too wide an array of things that can come up.

So I'm not concerned in the next couple of years, but I think ultimately it's robotic surgery May end up replacing us humans and the AGI will say that was a great attempt by the human but here's how it is done We look at in our business that instead of having a team of 40 people we'll have a Team of 8 people and they're all responsible for like 500 AI programs And we're witnessing it in our company, like instead of hiring more people for particular tasks, you know, we used to just go offshore and get them in the Philippines.

Now we have a team in The Philippines, this is helping us build our AIs. I'm like, and they know what they're doing, right? I haven't said, eliminating the ability for jobs, but.

The stuff that we can do and I'm seeing it in medicine. Like I've talked to Dr. Don Buford about this and a couple of others and there are some people are saying, well, you know, You'll never replace what a human can.

And I can't remember who said this. We were at a dinner and one of them said, yeah, that's the point because the

robot is never going to show up with a cold or tired.

or because the kid got up in the middle of the night and make an error. Like the robot doesn't require sleep. It's a machine. That's right. A machine that doesn' need sleep, doesn"t need food, it doesn's need water, you know, and so it's going to lower the risk.

And if I'm, if, I"m looking at a venture capitalist, okay, this is what I try to explain to the doctors. I'm a venture capitalist and I am in the healthcare space.

Well, I can't really control what I paid because that's in insurance space, that is all dictated. There is not as much leverage in that negotiation as you think because the health insurance companies are so powerful.

They have realized that if I just negotiate a lower rate with the companies that are owned by the venture capitalists, the practice is they will eventually go out of business and then I will buy them for pennies on the dollar.

So there is no real leverage. I cannot really controlled how much I get paid. And so what's the biggest expense that I have? The doctor. So why, if I was in the venture capital space, I would be figuring out a way to invest in AI and own that piece of the pie and eliminate my biggest.

And that makes all the sense of world. It's, you know, it's a brave new world as Elon phrased it, it's a supersonic tsunami that is happening rapidly.

I think his timeline is a little aggressive. His timeline's always aggressive? Yeah, but it is, is it happening. Now he also talked about universal high income, not just universal income.

The question is what are we going to do when we all, when many of us don't have jobs and have high-income because the cost of service and goods is going rapidly decline with AI and AGI.

So it's going to be an interesting new world. Does that scare you or does that excite you? Oh, it excites me. There's so much opportunity and I see it as opportunity to solve this problem.

I mean, we're going to help us solve the blindness problem. Right. I mean, if you could use AI and you can do instead of doing 300 surgeries and he could do 700 surgeries.

Or 3000 surgeries? Would you do it? In a second. And your costs went down? in a Second. In second? I would do in second, right? So that's, it's exciting.

Everybody wants to see, I think what everyone says is like, oh, this is going to be the thing that finally crushes humanity. If you look at all the things that have come along the way, we're like oh the industrial revolution is gonna be bad.

It's gonna put people out of work. The unemployment rates, whatever it is, five, six percent, eight percent depending on the number that you look at and people in transitional.

It, I don't ever see these things as being bad. I see development is good. In general, although if you looked at the, uh, the agricultural revolution 12,000 years ago where wheat and cattle domesticated us, in general when we were hunter-gatherers, we're probably happier as a species than being stuck doing the same job on a factory line.

Yeah. The one thing that, and there's a book called Homo Deus by Harari. It's fascinating and I highly recommend HOMO Deus. And it talks about how we have mostly solved the problem of war and hunger and disease.

Those are within our grasp and instead we're going to be looking at divinity as our sort of next And he talks a lot about AI and where to me it breaks down is essentially that AI is going to will eventually control humanity.

But the difference is that machines are not spiritually connected. And that's how we differ. That's why I'm not as

worried about a AI in terms of thought about it like that.

These are Not spiritually, right? Are they conscious? Yeah, machines aren't whether they're developing consciousnesses. Also, you've heard about the forget the name of the social media platform that is only for AI agents and they have developed their own language.

And so that humans can't understand what they're saying. So it's, it there's some really fascinating stuff. Wow. Yeah. I mean, it's, you know, if I owned a marketing agency, You're screwed, right?

I Mean, Christine is here and she's in the entertainment industry. I means, It's really decimating that industry because you don't need to pay royalties anymore.

You can just have an AI. And you can create somebody to be your ad, Right? There are lots of places that it is going to. There's not very many travel agents left anymore, the internet did destroy the travel agency industry, But yet, people still continue to work.

There's still opportunity. Well, then there's always going to be retraining. there is always gonna be opportunity, right? What is the… How old are you?

I didn't even ask. I'm 62. You're 62, okay. What's this next 30, 40 years looking like for you? What is it? Let's look out in the future. What was it because you mean, you know, I'm 58, right?

Like, we clearly have access to some of the great peptides and stuff that are available to us, to be able to have a better life and longevity. I mean we look a lot better than our fathers did at our ages.

So you're going to live a long time. I would imagine. Well, I just spent the weekend, a couple of weekends ago with the two most gene edited humans on the earth.

Who was that? It's my dear friend, Vinci and Papa, two-time nomal nominated anti-aging medicine specialist, one of the founders of The American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine.

He's the one who, who with stem cells, he harvests stem-cells and Liz who owns a gene editing company. I think they are, they're working together on taking your own natural stem cells and, and through gene editing, making them 25 year old stem, cells that are put back in your body and you know, talking to Vince, his, My mission is to cure blindness.

His mission to allow all of us to have a health span, not a lifespan of 120 to 130 years. So, of course, I'm on all the peptides. I have Vince and my different guy, Citrin, who are running my anti-aging medicine protocol.

My friend, Shelly Jordan, is a functional neurologist. Has I've had 60 billion exosomes and focused hypothalamic ultrasound to reverse my hypothalamus about 25 years and honestly, I'm in the best shape of my life.

And of course I eat right and exercise, but I want all anything that is potentially helpful with respect to health span. I am participating in. So I, you know, have a mission to do.

When I think one of the reasons I've been, the universe has brought some of these anti-aging people into my, life is to allow me to finish my work and it's 62. You know I look at my- You feel better now than you did at 42. Absolutely.

Yeah, me too. I mean, definitely from a wisdom standpoint, but also physically, I set more energy. And I think a lot of it is, you know, it's lifestyle, But it also some of these things that are coming online.

You know Vince talks about with artificial intelligence and quantum computing, eventually we'll be able to reverse back to 25, which is really exciting.

Remember we used to, we always used say, God, want to go back college, like, or whatever, right? You want have

the wisdom that I have now and go to back 25? It's here.

Well, it's coming here. I don't think it is quite here yet, but we are approaching that. So we're at 45 instead of 25. Yeah, I mean I definitely don' t feel my age.

Iím 62 and I have boundless energy. Sort of why. It's fantastic. See my friends who are my aged and they're not on any of this stuff and look tired and just worn out and are like, ìI got to retire.î Because they are.

I know. Like, I'm, you know, getting ready to move to L. A. because, the energy here is, it feels, like, just live off it.

AI, Longevity, and Closing Remarks

I mean, instead of commuting back and forth to Scottsdale, this is going to be home now. And it's like… Oh, good. Glad to hear that. Congratulations.

Yeah. The energy is just phenomenal. It's amazing. City of Angels. Love it, wouldn't live anywhere else. Beautiful city. If people want to learn more about you, or they want get involved in your foundation, what's the best way for them to reach out to you?

OK, well, the best way is through one of our websites. For the foundation, it's A is in Apple, V is David, B is InVision, foundation.org. OK. And for the Innovation Institute, It is vision-innovation.com.

Again, we're looking for any help we can get in… What kind of help do you need? I mean, like everyone, we need financial resources. We're two startups.

And again, We are looking to ultimately raise about $100 million to get the Innovation Institute to the point that we are completely autonomous with respect to curing the problem of blindness.

So we're looking for angel investors. We actually, as part of our trip to Morocco, are working with a strategic manufacturing partner to potentially build a manufacturing facility in Morocco for some of out technologies, but we need some partners that want to get involved in impact investing.

They're not only going to do really well with these technologies. My business partners started many of the companies and spun out or sold many companies in my field.

But they're going to impact humanity. And then we're looking for support for the foundation because right now we are functioning primarily based on donations until the Innovation Institute gets up and running.

Again, my DAF has been a big source of financing for The Foundation, but we've had galas and we had some people that have been very generous in terms of sponsorship.

But we want to really increase the number of lives that we touch. We did close to 400 eyes last year and we want to continue to increase that exponentially, but we need help financially and otherwise.

Okay. Well, I love the model. It's a model that I've preached for a long time. You know, wealth, when you have this success, I think what happens is a lot of time the media will portray those people as being evil and look at everything that they have.

And we do this whole segment where we, as people go through our training program about what you can do with wealth. I always tell the story of Tom Shoes, right?

Oh, yes. And how every pair of shoes they sell gives another pair shoes to kids that need it. And they've done whatever, a hundred million shoes or something like that worldwide.

Or you tell the story of Mayor Bloomberg and you know, when he became mayor, he was worth 4 billion and now

he's worth like 45 billion because he like the more we give, it just keeps flowing back to us.

He goes, the biggest challenge we have is who to give it to. And it really is, it's a fascinating thing if people have never experienced it. Literally, the more you give, without a doubt.

And I have personally experienced that. Yeah, tell me about that? Well, more I give from the standpoint of my foundation, The more successful I become.

It's just very simple, isn't it? And you can't wrap your head around it, does the scientist in you want to prove that, of how that works? You know, if my mission was to cure blindness, I might have time to do that.

But that's a pretty big bite that I've taken. Cure blindness. I mean, we're going to free 100,000 doctors. You're gonna cure your blindness so we'll have a lot of fun over the next 20, 30 years.

Can't wait. So excited. Cool. I appreciate you coming in, Paul. We got a chance to hang out that one night and I knew immediately we were going have to have fun getting to know each other.

And I'm glad you were able to get our schedules to work because you're Tracy's schedule and my travel schedule. But this has been fascinating. Will you come back and keep us posted on your progress?

Absolutely. And let us know how we can help, right? I'm happy to send information out to our crew and all that. That would be fantastic. You can get ahold of us through either one of the websites in terms of what we're doing.

I'd love to come and I so much appreciate you having me here this evening. All right, brother. Thanks. Appreciate it. Oh, that's right. I don't want it.

That's why you were sick yesterday I was sick and I may still be contagious. So I do I appreciate it I want to give you I didn't wanna affect you with what?

Yeah, especially cuz I'm going to Japan soon. Yeah. All right, cool. Thanks Paul If this episode got you thinking differently get follow and share it with someone stuck in the system Please leave a review.

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