

The Tim Ferriss Show Transcripts

Episode 43: Margaret Cho

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Tim Ferriss: Boys and girls, this is Tim Ferriss. Welcome to the Tim Ferriss Show, for those of you who are new to the program. This is the form through which I try to dissect excellence, to find the tools and tactics or approaches that you can use. That ranges from billionaire investors to trust prodigies, to mega platinum musicians to, in this episode's case, comedians. A comedienne – E-N-N-E-A-N or stand-up comic, depending on the terminology that you prefer. Margaret Cho, she has an illustrious career, and is a prodigious talent, and she also a polymath.

She's not only a very celebrated stand-up comic, but she has been a fashion designer, a singer, a song writer, and she's been in feature films, of course, and TV series including Sex and the City, and 30 Rock, she's been on Dancing with the Stars, and we don't have time to go through all of her accolades.

This particular conversation digs into her inspirations, tricks of the trade, different practices that you can borrow: sexuality including bi-sexuality, and her topics of choice, her different challenges, addiction, and we also delve deep into the slow carb diet. I hope you can indulge me on that particular segment of the program. It goes into some nitty gritty details because Margaret had a bunch of questions. She's followed it, and is a fan of the protocol. Perhaps it'll help some of you out there.

As always, you can find show notes at 4-hourworkweek.com/podcast from links and further resources. 4-hourworkweek.com/podcast. We're using new audio equipment in this introduction, so let me know what you think. I'd be very curious to hear your thoughts. Without further ado, please meet Margaret Cho.

Hello ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to another episode of the Tim Ferriss Show. I am very excited for this episode because I have someone that I've admired for a very long time, and been a fan of for a very long time joining us today, and that is Margaret Cho.

Margaret, how are you?

Margaret Cho: I'm doing great, thank you very much. That's wonderful.

Tim Ferriss: Of course. I was having one of my many nights of insomnia, which I've dealt with and improved on. I was sort of scanning through Twitter, and I came across your profile because I'm a huge comedy fan. [Inaudible] also follows you, and my eyes just about popped out of my head. I was so taken aback and reached out, and we connected, and here we are. Where are we finding you at the moment? I know you travel a lot.

Margaret Cho: Today, I am in West Palm Beach, Florida. There is something – a big storm outside, so that's thunder. I'm always on the road, so I'm doing a show here today.

Tim Ferriss: Very cool. I know we have some precious time with you before you take off.

It is hard for me to know even where to begin because you've done so many different things, and it seems like lived so many different lives. You've had television, books, and film, obviously, the stand-up. When you meet someone who's unfamiliar with your work, who doesn't recognize you, if they ask you what do you do, how do you even respond to that?

Margaret Cho: Well, usually I just – I think I identify, mostly, as a stand-up comedian. Thank you for your kind words, I was excited to connect with you, too, as I'm a big fan. I think comedy is really what I would say I do. I think probably you're the same in that you are quite the multi-hyphenate in the different things you write about, and the different things you talk about. How would you define yourself besides – would it just be author, or would it be [inaudible], or body expert, or a thinking expert?

Multi-hyphenates are kind of tricky because –. As you are an author, I guess I am a stand-up comedian. That's the basic place I start from, but there's so much more.

Tim Ferriss: For sure. It's something I've had trouble with for a very long time. Depending on who I'm talking to, and how badly I want to kill the conversation, if I think they're just being polite and trying to get through three or four cocktail questions so they can glance over my shoulder and move on, I'll say something like, "Professional dilettante" comes to mind. Drug dealer was one I used to use. It

turns out it's a great way to get people out of your house at a dinner party if you ask them if you want to do heroine. There are a lot of –.

Margaret Cho: Yeah.

Tim Ferriss: Tricks of the trade, depending on where you are.

Margaret Cho: That's a great idea.

Tim Ferriss: Now, the stand-up comedy side of things, I've had the good fortune of occasionally having the chance to chat with people when I've gone to live shows, for instance.

I'm always interested to know – if you've been asked this question a thousand times, feel free to answer a different question. What compels you to do comedy, and is it the same now as it was in the beginning?

Margaret Cho: It's exactly the same. What compels me is I need to be heard, and I need to make people laugh, and I need to express what I think things that need to be said. Also, to just have a good time. I've had that impulse, I think, since I was about eight years old. I always wanted to be a comedian. The impulse to do it, the intention, and everything is the same; nothing has altered. I think this is probably the same for most comedians out there.

There are quite a lot of people who de-develop a kind of aversion after doing it for say, 30 or 40 years. They really feel like they need to retire. I'm more on the side of I think I need to do it more, actually, as I get older. Unfortunate in that, it sustains me, that it's a way that I make a living, but it's also my social life, and a great pastime, and a great, great thing to do.

Tim Ferriss: The aspect of my career that a lot of people ask about is writing. I've noticed there are different breeds of writers. This is going to come back to the stand-up question. A lot of writers, and I would say myself included, have a need – almost a therapeutic need to write, at points, no matter how hard the process is, almost as a way of self-medicating, and getting neuroses out of their heads.

Margaret Cho: Yeah.

Tim Ferriss: I'm not projecting here, but this is for me, there are many times when I will write in the morning, and the material I know is pure garbage; it's just completely self-indulgent morning pages, but it's

my equivalent of taking my psyche and sort of whacking the rug to get the dust out of it before I move onto my day, so that I don't have all the gremlins in my head. I'm curious if at least in the stand-up world, or the comedy world, it seems – it seems that people have different drives, and different things that keep them going. I'd be curious to know if you could comment on what it is for you.

Margaret Cho: Well, I think that I have the equivalent of morning pages – sort of thing because, I work almost every day. I mean, I perform almost every day. There are different things that I do, but as a comic, it is really a daily effort.

You kind of burn off all those ideas that are like [inaudible] on the top, and then you can get [inaudible] of it. I guess I have that kind of a meditation, too. I wish that I had more of that as a writer, as an author, that's something that I would like to pursue more, but I still don't have the intent need for it that I do as a stand-up comedian.

Tim Ferriss: When did you do your first professional stand-up, and when did you decide that you were going to do it professionally?

Margaret Cho: I decided that I was going to do it professionally when I understood that I was going to become an adult, and at some point, this would be my job, and my identity. As soon as I understood what the job of stand-up comedy was, then I became very committed to doing it.

I think that's an unusual thing, maybe, for somebody to choose a profession at eight years old, but I knew it was more than a profession. It was really a kind of a calling. I really started early. I started doing professional performances at 14.

Tim Ferriss: Wow.

Margaret Cho: I was [inaudible] by 15, I was making a pretty great living by 18, and then I was on television by 20. It was a very, very important thing for me, and it was really destiny.

Tim Ferriss: Who were some of those – the early inspirations and role models for you that you looked to as models? If that were the case at all, in the very early days.

Margaret Cho: The main model for my early years, and of course, pretty much until now Joan Rivers.

That's been a very difficult – right now, a lot of comedians are feeling the loss of [inaudible] and Robbin Williams. It's a really – it's a terrible time in comedy because it's like we lost our – the king and the queen. Now, it's like who is the heir? Mostly, it's the sorrow and mourning, so it's pretty terrible.

Tim Ferriss: What made Joan special? Obviously, she had just an incredible career and longevity, and endurance, my God. What was it that of all the people out there, really appealed to you about her when you were getting started?

Margaret Cho: I think that she was so unafraid. She was so – just her fearlessness, and she was a woman, and she was just so mighty.

In the live comic, the stuff that she would do in clubs, and at night, not including the Emmy or the red carpet stuff, or the Oscar stuff. She was so filthy. She was so – to the very end. The most raunchy comedian you could imagine. She would shock us – the most unshockable people. She was incredible. The reason why she and I were close is that she really taught me a lot about gratitude. She had intense and immense gratitude for everything in her life, and she wanted me and all these other comedians that she would foster in a way.

She wanted to instill that in us that this was a really magical thing, this gift that we were given, and that we should be really grateful for it. That's the most valuable lesson I've ever learned from anyone. She was really a combination – like parent, like a mother, or like Mr. Miyagi, Pat Morita from Karate Kid.

She was a really – she was a great mentor and a great woman.

Tim Ferriss: Do you have any particular ways in which you practice gratitude? Is that a part of your schedule, in some way? Is that just a general philosophy?

Margaret Cho: I don't think so. I don't think so. I should. It would be really great to have that as a practice to make a gratitude list, or something like that. Mostly, it's an attitude every day. I'm really happy in what I do. I really love what I do. It's a really great feeling to do what you love. For me, it's about making money, of course, but I would still do stand-up comedy without making anything.

I'd put just as much effort into every show, no matter how much I'm making, or whatever. It's something that I always wanted, and I'm so happy that I get to do it. I think it's just wonderful. I don't

actually have a practice, but that might be something nice to implement later.

Tim Ferriss: If we're looking at your schedule or your rituals – actually, before we even get to that – you mentioned fearlessness. There are very few things I can imagine that would strike complete panic into my heart more than getting up on stage and doing stand-up. You really have to – you really are not going to be given any mercy laughs by most people; you have to stand on your own merit. What are some of the – what are some instances where you have been most afraid on stage?

Margaret Cho: There were a couple of times where I lost my voice, and then I had to figure out how to do shows without having a voice. I utilized some voice software in my computer, and then I also brought people onto the stage who would act things out. I would actually act them out, and they would read them from behind, so it was like a puppet or something. That was helpful. It was really terrifying to not have the capacity to deal with a heckler, which I'm very good at. It's one of my specialties. It's kind of the immediacy of my performance – it took away my spontaneity, it took away just a lot of the freshness and unpredictability of what live performance and stand-up comedy is, which to me, is the greatest part of it. That was really terrible.

I probably have the worst shows of anybody in my category, in the level that I am as a comedian because I am so committed to taking risks as a performer, I can really do terribly. Sometimes, that can be really scary if you are in different countries like in England or Scotland where you're the high [inaudible] – if you will – in comedy. I've had really bad fights, and a couple of instances where I was really scared for physical harm because I really was not – I give it to people. I really let them have it if I'm backed into a corner. It can be really nuts. People can get really angry.

Tim Ferriss: When you said – I'm just paraphrasing here, but I'd love for you to expand a bit on – on what you just mentioned, related to sort of having the potential to do worst in your category or class of comic. Why do you have higher crash and burn potential? Why do you have the added risk factor?

Margaret Cho: I think because I will come off of anything scripted, and I will go with the flow, and I will really engage with an audience on a very personal level. I'm not the kind of artist that can go on autopilot. This actually happens much more than people realize. I don't really have that ability. I build it from the ground up, and I build it

from scratch every time, from the beginning, so that in itself is a huge risk. When you're not necessarily relying on a tried and true, and things that you know work, and you're going into everything [inaudible].

You really are – you're plugging into something divine, but that – it's not so reliable because we're human, so it can be very scary. I think that's the energy that I strive off of, that's what I love, but it is a kind of risky behavior.

Tim Ferriss: Sure. You can be knocking for the muse, and they might not be open for business on that particular –.

Margaret Cho: Right.

Tim Ferriss: Talking about heckler – this I would love to dig into a little bit. What are your favorite ways of dealing with hecklers? Is there a Margaret Cho playbook? Do you have any particular responses? If you're just like, "You know what, I don't want to deal with this guy right now. I need to cut him off at the knees", what are some of the fastest ways of dealing with hecklers? Maybe there are different types of hecklers.

I'm sure there are. I'd love to hear a little bit about that.

Margaret Cho: Well, there are different types, but the best thing to do is to really just not engage somebody, and really try to find out what they're trying to say. So there's no set – there's no set lines, or there's no scripted idea of what to say to shut them down. It's really going deeper, and finding out why this person was choosing to disrupt a performance that everybody has paid for, and that everybody is there and agreed to sit for? Why did somebody want to rebel against that? I'm curious about it. I usually give them quite a lot of time. If I had – there's a potential to create a whole show around them. This is something I learned from –. It's great.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah.

Margaret Cho: I learned from Paula Poundstone, who is an absolute genius at that. She will –.

She'll do a show, and if somebody gets up to go to the bathroom, she'll go to their chair, and she'll take their jacket, and put it on, and go through their pocket. She is so fearless when it comes to talking to an audience, and so I learned that from her. It doesn't have to detract from your performance; it can really be an

incredible journey that will only be taken one time. It's not to encourage hackling at shows, but sometimes, it's really inevitable. My goal is to just try to take that road as it presents itself. If it doesn't work – the only reason it doesn't work is if the person is too drunk, then I'll just have them kicked out, and that's a whole other thing.

Tim Ferriss: Now, if they're not excessively drunk, what type of question might you ask them, or questions? If they're like "Boo" and you can tell they're not totally drunk, they're just being an idiot. What type of question might you ask them, or what might you say to them?

Margaret Cho: Well, ask them why they're yelling out, or what the purpose is, or what they need. Then, I can ask them about who they're with. I can ask the person they're with about why they're saying that. Like, why are they like that? Are they like this all the time? [Inaudible], and I'll get an explanation from the partner, or whatever. It's very interesting. You can also talk to other people around them like, people that are seated next to them like, "What was this person like before the show?" or "What were they saying?" like, what lead us to this? Then, somebody from another part of the room will complain about it, and then you go over there, and do the same thing. It can be very, very interesting.

If you just utilize what they're saying, and you incorporate it into what you're doing, and then, if you have an encyclopedic knowledge of your jokes, and therefore, you can call on anything that you have that might be relevant. I love that immediacy, I think it is really what is great about stand-up comedy, is that there's that potential to do anything.

Tim Ferriss: Sure, absolutely. That's part of why I enjoy going to live shows. You really don't know how the movie is going to end. You have no idea of how things are going to develop. Are there any particular – I'm just trying to think here – non-standup influences? People who are not stand-up comics who have affected – this could be movies, books, anything, or people outside of the realm of comedy who have impacted how you perform, how you present, and how you develop your material?

Margaret Cho: I think Madonna is great. I love Chrissie Hynde, I love a lot of female rock singers. I am a musician also, so I get a lot of inspiration from Bjork. Music is always really inspiring, and the performance style of somebody like Janis Joplin, I would love to capture as a comedian.

That would be my ideal, if I could be a comedian that is what Janis Joplin as a singer, that would be great. Singers are incredibly [inaudible] show. I think it's because a long, long time ago, I happened upon a pet psychic who – I had a dog who I loved very much, and she – it was like this television show about psychics. I was doing it, I was talking to her, and she said that my dog thought I was a singer because dogs don't understand what stand-up comedy is. I thought that was the sweetest – of what I do. He thought I was singing. For him, it is, it's song.

Tim Ferriss: That's really – what type of dog?

Margaret Cho: He died, but he was a big shepherd mix. Like a big fluffy guy that you would get at the pound of kind of every dog at once.

He was that.

Tim Ferriss: It makes me think of very, very early on for me, when my first book had just come out in 2007, I was headed to south – by Southwest the first time, to give my first Keynote, and I was extremely nervous. I was just a sweaty, nervous mess, even days beforehand. I had no real way to rehearse in front of people, so I ended up going to my friend's garage. He had three Chihuahuas of different sizes. I realized that if I focused on presenting to them – I assume they didn't understand a word – but if my actual style of presentation was not really dynamic, they would get bored and walk away. If I was really animated, they would sit there kind of bug-eyed, and look at me, so I used the Chihuahuas as my test audience for developing my material for that first Keynote.

Margaret Cho: That's perfect.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah.

Margaret Cho: That's so perfect.

Tim Ferriss: It actually worked out extremely well because my tech failed. My laptop had some type of a glitch, and the projector wasn't working, so I had to go off script, and I had to work without the tech. The question of fearlessness and being nervous on stage, you were not shy, at least as people know you now about talking about race, gender, sexuality; you really cross into all sorts of different worlds that many people, I assume, would avoid because they're perceived as sensitive topics. Were you ever nervous about approaching those types of subjects early on, or have you from the very get-go –?

Margaret Cho: No, it's a nerve-racking thing because you want to have a sense of privacy. Sometimes, when you reveal things on stage that are – it can be kind of weird.

I think that – I think the privacy is really overrated though because it's just a kind of social construct that doesn't really mean that much because all human beings are – we've felt all the same things, we've had all the same heart breaks and tragedies, and dumb things, and stupid things. We really are not – none of us are strangers about it; we've lived it all. It's not like anything I say it's not something we haven't – everybody hasn't felt, but still, things can feel odd and weird.

But I was more conscious of it when I was younger. I'm bisexual, and I was really scared of revealing that for maybe the first ten years of my career. I was told by my management then, that it would be really bad to be gay in any way, and that I should not express that.

That was a really scary thing because in relationships with women, and stuff, I had to hide that, which always felt odd and weird that I could have fine relationships with men, and show that, but with women, it was somehow wrong. I really gave up trying to pretend anything but myself very early.

Tim Ferriss: When did you make that leap? What was the year, roughly? I'm trying to think of it in terms of cultural and political climate. When did you come out – so to speak – publicly?

Margaret Cho: I think probably about '95 or '96, or something like that.

Tim Ferriss: '96.

Margaret Cho: Pretty early.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah, pretty early on.

Margaret Cho: Now I realize, when I look back – women's bisexuality is a lot more – I don't know. It's a lot easier to deal with.

People have a harder time dealing with men, male sexuality, and fluidity there. What's hard is women who are just – who define as lesbians, but I think they have a harder time, as opposed to women who are bisexual. There's some kind of glamour and majesty

attached to bisexual women that – I’m not sure it’s true, but it certainly is kind of a archetype, or stereotype even.

Tim Ferriss: Sure. I think that even in – I live in San Francisco; I’ve been there for ages. It’s sort of joked that bisexual women – no matter what, which is ridiculous, of course – are often referred to as unicorns. I think there’s that – it sort of occupies a very unique place in the mind space of even mainstream America, for whatever reason.

Margaret Cho: Yeah.

Tim Ferriss: Have you ever had disclosed anything on stage that at least, for a period of time you regretted?

Margaret Cho: Well, I think that I earlier – I’ve been working on a show that’s really about mental illness and addiction, just part of the trajectory of the thing that I’m trying to explain. I’m talking a lot about prescription pill addiction, which I had a really bad case of it for – it stopped about a year ago, but before that, it had been about five years, where I was really having a problem. It’s one of those things where – that addiction is very strange because it’s so deadly and destructive, just in the way a heroin addiction would be, but it’s prescribed by a doctor. I was actually getting it from my actual doctor, and it was that – there was all of these levels of legitimacy to it, and in secrecy, as well.

Disclosing that is very weird because it really shatters a lot of these illusions of – I don’t know – immaturity, and being sane – like, sanity and stuff. That’s a whole – it’s hard to disclose, but it’s also important to because that [inaudible] keeps me – not sober because I still drink red wine, but I think it sort of keeps me more sane. It’s a really crazy addiction to have.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah, I think it’s a very insidious – like you mentioned also because it’s extremely common. Even with doctors themselves, it’s extremely common.

Margaret Cho: Yes.

Tim Ferriss: It’s not talked about nearly as much in detail as – you pointed out for instance, compared to heroin addiction, or something like that.

What type of medications? Just out of curiosity.

Margaret Cho: Anything like Percocet – you know you can get – this is weird, but do you know what [inaudible] is sizzurp, which is like hydrocodone cough syrup –?

Tim Ferriss: Yeah, sure.

Margaret Cho: That or even morphine, or methadone, or anything – any opiates. That's what's really my problem, and it was really, really destructive, but at the same time, you don't exactly feel high, so it's almost a cheat. You're actually not really high, you're just not sick. After you get properly addicted to those drugs, they really have no use at all, as a kind of a high. They only serve to keep you from being sick, which is a really bad thing.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah, you just need it to get it to baseline to not have the physical withdrawal symptoms. Speaking personally, I think I've been very fortunate in – a lot of respects, of course, but one is that hydrocodone, Vicodin, etc., all make me extremely nauseous. All of these opioid derivative drugs make me very, very sick. I learned that after a shoulder surgery, I was given all these painkillers, and I couldn't really take any of them because they made me so sick. Which, I think is a blessing in disguise in a lot of ways because my likelihood of abusing those things is very, very low.

Do you find at least, within the world of comedy that people tend to, if they have addictive personalities – I have no idea if addiction is more or less common in stand-up comics than the general population. Of course, a lot of the tragedies are highlighted, which I think my skew the public perception.

Do people tend to be either addicted to depressants and opiates, or stimulants? Do people often end up addicted to both, or do they tend to fall on one side or the other?

Margaret Cho: I think they tend to fall on one side or the other. I, myself, can speak that I'm much more of a depressant. I'm much more of a downer. I've never been a cocaine, or whatever – that's never been my thing. Then, there's people who just want everything. Stand-up comics, in particular, our job is really to obsess on things, and that's what stand-up comedy is, it's just obsessing over topics. You're just going crazy on something. That's fine in the context of stand-up comedy, but it's terrible if you were just living in the world. The connection with comedy, comics being depressed, and self-destructive, and suicidal it goes with the territory.

The job requires that kind of thinking, so it can be pretty difficult to manage that, and if you add drugs on top of that, it can be really, really hard. Then, the lifestyle also because it's very solitary; you're traveling all the time, your schedule is off, it's weird, there's a jetlag. Then also, press and shows. It's a very – it's a destructive and difficult lifestyle, almost like being in a band, but you're not with anybody else; you're the only one. As musicians are very legendary known to be very self-destructive, the same way, at least they have a community with them on tour, even if it's just a few guys in a band. We don't have that, as comics, we're just alone, and it can get really messy.

Tim Ferriss: Definitely, and I think that perhaps to a lesser degree, you see some very similar symptoms of problems surfacing in a lot of writers, as well.

Margaret Cho: Yes.

Tim Ferriss: Particularly writers who develop a habit of – No.1, they're going to be isolated almost by definition; that's part of the reason that I'm taking a break from writing books, quite frankly. At three years at a stretch inside your own head is sometimes a scary place to be. Particularly, those writers who develop a late-night writing schedule, which is something that I have, I think are prone to that depression and darkness. Of course, there's a long history of people like Hemingway, who end up not at a very positive punchline at the end of things.

Margaret Cho: Yeah.

Tim Ferriss: Personality-wise, do you find there are certain characteristics that are common among the people – the stand-up comics who are addicted to stimulants versus depressants?

Do you find you can kind of guess which people are going to go one way or the other?

Margaret Cho: Yeah. I think that people who are really ADD, who are really kind of scatter-brains and their minds are everywhere, I think that just like hyperactive kids are given Ritalin and Adderall, I think they're really helped where they tend to crave stimulants because it focuses them.

Tim Ferriss: Right.

Margaret Cho: I think that people who are pretty focused, but depressed and kind of moody, minor chord, like down or dazing, bummed out people are really helped and lifted by opiates because they're offered injections of endorphins, which is something that they're either lacking, like their serotonin is messed up, or whatever; they're just not getting it.

Then, the positivity of that, or the burst of positivity that an opiate can give you – of course, which is countered by terrible depression, which is actually worse than your baseline makes everything way worse. I can see why that would be attractive. That's what I have. I have that kind of a downward sort of thing. I take some effort to look for a positivity, and also for gratitude, which is why I'm so grateful for my own gratitude and why I need it so much.

Tim Ferriss: How did you – what was the catalyzing moment that led you to start taking your prescription drug addiction seriously? How did you end up kicking it? What did that look like?

Margaret Cho: I just really had no idea how much I was taking. I really had no idea what I was taking.

I didn't understand the counter indications like, completely crazy things I was doing to myself. Then, I was taking all this Ambien, which is another thing, which I think is actually a very, very dangerous drug that many, many people are very dependent on.

Tim Ferriss: Agreed.

Margaret Cho: I also have a very – I have a bad insomnia problem. That in combination with opiates is a deadly thing. My friend Ana Nicole Smith died from that. Really, it was that kind of suicidal behavior of taking so much, still not knowing if I would wake up, and not really thinking I would wake up. I think that was really – it just became really apparent. I threw everything away, and then I told everybody around me, in my circle, in my work, and I was talking about it on stage.

I made it very clear that this was a problem that I was going through. I think just making that – making it not a secret anymore was really what it was all about. When I wasn't having to hide [inaudible], or talk –. If I talked about it then, it would only resolve the situation. I fortunately was able to walk away, and I was very sick for a time because it's the natural – that's what happens when you take those drugs. Afterwards, I was so much better, and I

didn't have a need to go back to it, or a sense that this was going to be repeated. It wasn't like I went to rehab, and it wasn't like I sought treatment, which most people should. I just was able to escape, fortunately.

Tim Ferriss: How did you – the day that you threw out all of your medication, why that day?

Was there – did you scare yourself somehow? Was there a conversation? Did you look in the mirror and see something you hadn't noticed before? Why that day?

Margaret Cho: I just think there was so many patches in my memory, that I didn't understand why I didn't remember, and I didn't understand. I could feel the degeneration of my brain. I could really feel it. I sensed that I don't think I'm going to get that part of my brain back. I really felt an emptiness, like cleared out, like I had deleted files that I didn't want to delete. That was so terrible. When you just have a blank space, when you should have something there, and evidence that things that were not really – like, room service I don't know that I ordered. Weird photos in my phone, that I don't know who these people are and why I have them.

Weird sexual situations that were like, I should not – “Who am I talking to in this manner that I don't remember even meeting? What is going on?” All these things at once. You go, “I have to get out of this. This is really a weird space because it's almost like somebody takes over your body for you, and drives it, and that's really strange.

Tim Ferriss: Agreed. I've seen – just speaking of Ambien, I've been on trips before with friends where I've seen them come downstairs after going to sleep like the Walking Dead on Ambien, go crazy doing all sorts of ridiculous things for hours, go back to their bed, and have no recollection of any of it the next day.

Margaret Cho: Yeah.

Tim Ferriss: One of my two best friends growing up, I'd say about a year and a half ago died of an accidental contraindication.

He'd had a lot of alcohol, never took any illicit drugs, or recreational drugs, and he was complaining to a buddy of his about a headache, and his buddy gave him a very strong prescription depressant, and he took it, and never woke up, and that was it. It

just took one shot. People need to take the alcohol interactions really seriously.

Margaret Cho: That's a major problem with alcohol and Ambien, and also opiates, too. The whole thing wrecks your liver, but on top of that, it's a judgement that goes completely out the window like, you don't know what you're doing. It's something that alcohol does in that, it just really messes everything up.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah, for sure. I think this is a very important topic to explore for folks, but to switch gears a little bit because I'm constantly impressed with how prolific you are and have been.

What does your process look like for developing material? Let's just say that you've just finished – you've just finished a special, or you just finished – you basically aced whatever you've been working on for the last "X" period of time, and it's time for you to start over – you have that feeling. What does the process look like? How do you come up with your material?

Margaret Cho: Usually, [inaudible] San Francisco, actually. I just started it recently. [Inaudible] city, and I hang out with old comedian friends I haven't seen for a while. There's a lot of little shows that happen, there's like The Deluxe on Haight Street, and there's a bunch of different kinds of nights that happen usually from Sunday to Wednesday, which for comedians, are days off.

That's when I'll start to go to these little clubs in the city, and work things out, so I kind of put together everything new, just out of notes that I have. I'll do that, and I'll do that in different cities, and I'll work them into larger performances. I will have some level of prepared material, but then I'll work on the new script from – new things, and I'll also improvise where I am. It just grows. But usually, it's built from a small, maybe two or three jokes, and it'll grow into an hour of comedy that would be – maybe a year to make it really perfect because I would take it internationally, and make sure that it's great, and I'll actually commit it to either a special or album, or something like that.

Tim Ferriss: Do you take it international before you test it on the mainstage in the U.S.?

Do you use internationals –?

Margaret Cho: Yes.

Tim Ferriss: That's really interesting. That's the first I've heard of that. A lot of folks may not realize that – even companies like Nike, for instance, will do tons of testing in places like New Zealand; smaller English-speaking countries to refine the products and marketing, and positioning, and everything that they then bring back to the U.S., but they don't want to have their debutant ball in the major leagues. That's really interesting.

Margaret Cho: Yeah, it's great because – what's great about going internationally is part of the joy of performing – the audience is just so grateful that you came, that they will give you – they cut you some slack. It's a great thing that you can actually negotiate – kind of like a nice workshop with them because they know how far away it is, they know you don't to tour there, but they know you from whatever different things, and they're so glad that you're there.

For me, it's a great, great thing. It's not something that a lot of comedians in America do. I, for some reason, have the ability to travel, and I get to do many countries in Europe. The only countries I haven't done shows in are Italy and Spain, which – the market is very different there. Every place else has been really fantastic, and Australia, also. I had to cancel a New Zealand tour because I've got a thing – like a TV show, but I definitely look forward to going back there.

International markets are really wonderful for me to work out what I want to do in the future.

Tim Ferriss: What makes Spain and Italy so different? I'm very curious.

Margaret Cho: I think because of the [inaudible]. It makes it difficult for women to talk about sex in the way that I do.

Tim Ferriss: Right.

Margaret Cho: I'm very, very –. This is a joke that I tell.

I don't even know if I should tell this joke, but it's just for –. I hadn't had sex in a really long time – not a really long time, but I was upset because Robbie Williams died and Joan Rivers died, and I can't, I couldn't, I didn't want to. I just didn't feel like –. So I was out at dinner, in San Francisco not long ago, and I was with two gay guys. Just my way, I love getting [inaudible] these guys I love. We were at the House of Prime Rib, which is excellent.

Tim Ferriss: Fantastic, yeah. I know exactly where it is.

Margaret Cho: It's good. It's really good. We were eating, and then the [inaudible] so cute. I'm talking to them, and then – he was so adorable, and he was really young, too. Then, we left, and my friends were like – they were trying to encourage me like, “You should talk to him. He really liked you.” I said, “He's too young”. One of them went back, and gave the guy my phone number, and I was like, “Whatever”. I went back to my hotel, and it was like 1:00 a.m., and the guy actually called me, which was amazing.

I thought it was so brave. He came over, and it was wonderful. It was so great. It was like this therapy dog. I don't think you can tell that joke – and it's not a joke, it's a true story – but I don't think you can tell that joke in Italy. I don't think you can tell that joke in Spain, without some kind of repercussions of people getting really angry. Like, “What are you doing? How can you just do that?” I'm a 45-year old woman, I'm really – he was much younger than me. I should've had sex with his father. It was not – but it was really what I needed.

Tim Ferriss: I wonder about that. Given the intensity of porn that comes out of Italy – not that I would know anything about that – but I'm astonished that they would be so judgmental to people on the stage, but I guess there's the public facing laughing, and then, there's the private porn doing, and maybe those are two different mentalities. Go figure.

Margaret Cho: They're two different things. Also because of the language, too. I think it's hard for American comics just in general, but especially somebody that's really brash and cocky about sexuality, and how it isn't a shameful thing. It's a little bit too much for that. Those markets have always been a little bit hard for me.

Tim Ferriss: Which markets on the flip side? Which countries respond best to the brash sex talk and everything else?

Margaret Cho: Sweden, France is incredible, Germany is probably the best, but Finland, definitely Norway is amazing. All of Scandinavia is so down with it. They're so excited. Denmark is incredible. I think they've traditionally been very, very sex positive. Their history in porn is pretty amazing.

[That's a great place to go, too. Northern, colder countries. I think Germany is the ultimate place because there's so much – kind of liberal thought there, so much ease about sexuality there that is really amazing.

Tim Ferriss: I'm glad you mentioned Denmark. Those are my people. That's probably half of my bloodline. That's why I have a big blockish sort of Lego head. It's a courtesy of my Danish genetics. I didn't get the height, though. That's kind of a rip-off. I got the gigantic head, the Sponge Bob square pants head, but without the height. To jump to a different type of question, when you think of the word "Successful" who's the first person to come to mind, and why?

Margaret Cho: I guess it would be Steve Jobs. That would be somebody that's so successful beyond. Also, [inaudible] who became kind of a legendary mean that was beyond human. I think that would be my definition. Somebody that sort of crosses the line from business to art, to – I don't even know what that is, that kind of visionary. It's pretty profound.

Tim Ferriss: Do you feel successful? I think a lot of people would consider you successful. Do you feel successful yourself?

Margaret Cho: Absolutely. I know that I am. I'm very grateful for that. I know that's an achievement. There's much, much higher levels of success I would like to achieve, but then, I know [inaudible].

Especially because I'm probably – of my peers, I'm the one who's sustained it the longest, that I have been pretty active and out there, very, very visibly for the last 20 years, and that's a good thing.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah, it's hard to string it together for that long, for sure.

Margaret Cho: Yeah.

Tim Ferriss: If you could change or improve one thing about yourself, what would that be?

Margaret Cho: I would like to have a lower percentage of body fat, which is why I'm doing 4-Hour Body. It's coming well.

Tim Ferriss: Awesome. Well, you mentioned before we started recording that you had some food questions, and I'm happy to answer those, obviously.

Margaret Cho: Well, when you talk about your cheat day, I almost dread mine because I am physically sick. Every time I over – eating – now, in the 4-Hour Body, for very religiously now, for about maybe seven months, or four or five months.

It's a big difference. I try to go for the three day, the cheat day, and I dread it. I'm afraid of it. It doesn't feel good to me because any time that – flour, or excessive amounts of sugar – they taste so good, but they don't feel good in my body. I wonder if there's a way to manage – have a better digestion during that time. It doesn't feel good to me.

Tim Ferriss: The cheat day is designed to do a few things. The first is based on the assumption that people are going to cheat no matter what, and you can contain the damage if you schedule it in advance. That's principle No. 1. Principle No. 2 is that by spiking choloric intake once a week, you can help to prevent a lot of downgrading of the metabolism, whether that's thyroid or otherwise.

There are people out there who say for instance, "Well, I'm only going to have one cheat meal instead of a cheat day to limit the damage that I do". I only recommend that to people if that means they won't succumb to cravings later in the week. By being disgusted once a week – it's not mandatory, but typically, what happens is exactly what you're describing, so people start to dread overdoing it on cheat day, and they naturally start to dial it back a little bit.

In the beginning, when people are most likely to quit any diet in the first two to three weeks, that cheat day is so overdone, they're so disgusted, that evening and the following day, they can't wait to get back to a cleaner type of eating because they just feel better.

Margaret Cho: Yeah.

Tim Ferriss: There are ways to cheat – so to speak – to spike the caloric intake without having some of the digestive issues, if that is a problem.

For a lot of people, that means simply avoiding gluten among other things. For instance, if I am training for athletics or I know that I have to have a lot of work done on a Sunday or a Monday, the day after a cheat day, I will focus on carbs or carb-rich foods like sweet potatoes, or brown rice, or even white rice as opposed to getting it from wheat, flour; things of that type that I know are going to put up a huge fight going through my digestive track.

There are definitely ways to do it, and minimize some of the discomfort while still checking the boxes that prevent you from cheating later. Another recommendation is that you can make the first meal of the day a slow carb compliant meal.

A very easy way to do that is to – for instance, you can have a small amount of lentils out of a can. Literally, this is something I’ll do often times, is I’ll have – and there are a lot of reasons for this, but the fiber, which is important for gut flora and bacterial balance in the GI tract, you could have a spoon out of a can, literally, lentils in the morning with maybe one or two eggs, and that will naturally inhibit your appetite later in the day. You’ll be able to cheat, but you’ll be less prone to ingesting the last 2000 calories of rocky road ice cream with snickers on top, or whatever.

Margaret Cho: Yeah.

Tim Ferriss: It’s usually, I think, for a lot of people, they do cheat day, they get to a point where they’re like, “Holy shit, I am about to explode” and they look at the clock, and they’re like, “But it’s 10:00 p.m., I have two more hours to go.

I can’t let cheat day end without giving it one last ‘Hurrah’”. It’s that last extra serving, or that last Guinness or whatever, that takes them from about-to-explode to complete insulin-coma. The slow-carb compliant meal early in the day can help. The grapefruit juice plus caffeine early in the day because of the naringenin and all of that can also help because it will stabilize somewhat your blood sugar, and your insulin response. Those are a few recommendations. There are lots of ways to customizes cheat day.

The most important – I think – the most important thing to realize about cheat day is that you should not feel you are restricting yourself on cheat day. That’s the most important thing. Some people will try to do a healthy cheat day, but then they have a to-eat list of all these things that they don’t want to give up, and they end up cheating on a Wednesday night, or a Thursday night.

Like most people who do that, they say, “Fuck it, I already had one cookie, now I’m going to have the rest of all these Girl Scout cookies because I already fucked up”. Then, they backslide, and they don’t stick with it. As long as you don’t feel like you are – you have secret cravings that you’re not satisfying during cheat day, you can pretty much do whatever you want.

Margaret Cho: What’s interesting about the diet, or just the way it is in my body is that I don’t have any cravings. I just don’t. I don’t actually care. I do the cheat day because it tastes good, but it’s not out of craving. I just do it because it’s going to help my overall process. I think

that's what's the best thing about it, for me is that I don't have that need for pasta or bread that I did before.

Although, it still tastes really good when I have it – that's just the need for it. The things that you think you can't give up before you start it, and then you start it, and your idea about food changes.

Tim Ferriss:

Definitely. It's very much a combination of biochemistry and psychology. You have a certain shift where I think the biochemical changes and the physiological changes precede the psychological realization that you don't need certain things. You have a certain chemical dependency, just like getting off of prescription medications. You have a certain chemical dependency which could be related to the types of refined carbohydrates that people are accustomed to eating for breakfast, which sets the stage for the rest of the day, and makes them fall asleep at 1:30 p.m. or 2:00 p.m. When you start to add in the protein, the fat, and fiber, then those types of dramatic glucose swings start to level out.

As your pancreas becomes re-sensitized, or at least you've developed some degree of insulin sensitivity again, your body stops having to work so hard, and it prevents a lot of the roller coasters. Then, like you said, about a week into it, or two weeks into it, you're like "Wow, I don't crave those foods I thought I would crave forever". It's really fascinating. The entire diet is really designed to have the highest compliance rate possible. I think this is sometimes lost on say, paleo, or vegan purists who want everyone to convert to a very inconvenient diet on Day 1.

My point is, the good program you follow is better than the perfect program that you quit. The slow carb diet is a great gateway drug in a positive sense for getting people to eliminate the vast amount of garbage that they consume.

Margaret Cho:

Right.

Tim Ferriss:

Yeah, that's how I think of it.

Margaret Cho:

It's really, very helpful. I think the strangest thing is that I'm really not hungry. It's a weird thing. I was starving all the time, and I'm like, "Why do I...?" Obviously, there's reasons why, but it's like I don't have that. I just don't – I'm never really hungry, ever, even when I haven't eaten for several hours. It somehow sustains my system. It just burns, and I'm not desperate for food.

Tim Ferriss: It's really cool – I think – a very cool realization of self-sufficiency that people do not experience hunger in the same way. It becomes a very different experience. Part of that is you're using things like cheat day, and you're using in some cases, supplements – certainly not necessary, at all.

To change how your brain and your body produce and respond to hormones like ghrelin and all sorts of other things. What's really cool about it, recently, I did a seven-day water fast, so I went seven days with nothing besides water, with no supplementation, no electrolytes, and no anything. Because of this indirect training of the slow carb diet, and effectively readying my system for that type of experience, it really wasn't terribly difficult. I'm not recommending anyone do that without medical supervision. The body becomes very, very resilient. One of the questions that I get before people start things in the 4-Hour Body, particularly the slow carb diet is "What do I eat for snacks?"

My answer is, "If you're eating enough – and you should be eating enough – at your meals, you're not going to be hungry. You don't need snacks". Typically, what people realize is that the snacking is a compulsive habitual behavior; it's not because they are hungry. They're basically feeding their pancreas, not their stomach, if that makes sense because, their insulin response is so out of whack, and once you fix that it's like, "Oh, I want to have a bowl of fill in the blank crap next to my computer because that's my habit, but I'm not actually hungry".

Margaret Cho: Then, it puts into question what it's for, anyway. It's a cool thing.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah, and my – one of the ways to modify cheat day so that it's more rewarding and less disgusting – although, I think that getting people to the "Oh, my God, I'm so disgusted at myself" point is actually very valuable in the first few weeks.

Margaret Cho: Yeah.

Tim Ferriss: When you graduate from that, you're like, "Okay, I've covered the 'I'm disgusted with myself' checkbox. I want to be more functional towards the latter third of my cheat day". You can start to set rules for yourself such as the food either has to be really good for me, or it has to be fucking delicious. The "fucking delicious" part is important because people on cheat day will often just shovel whatever shitty food is in front of them, or around them, right into their – and it gets really gross.

Margaret Cho: Yeah.

Tim Ferriss: I would say, in the same way that you're looking for high quality – if you choose to eat meat – and I eat meat – you choose to try to find high quality meat. If I'm in San Francisco, I'm going to look for grass-fed beef, I'm going to look on for so on and so forth. Similarly, if you're cheating, you can do the same thing. You can say, "Alright, I'm going to have pasta, but I want pasta made from fresh ingredients from..."

I'm going to go to Flour and Water – this is a restaurant in San Francisco – and I'm going to get pasta there. I want ice cream, and I want high quality ice cream. I'm not just going to go to Safeway and eat five gallons of the cheapest crap I can find. I'm going to go to Buy Rite, or whatever. It might be a little bit more expensive, but I'm going to get higher quality raw ingredients. I'm going to have cheat meals, but I'm going to have fewer preservatives and artificial sweeteners, and all that shit. There are definitely ways to make your cheat day a little more regal.

Margaret Cho: Yeah, that's better. It really is – it's a real treat, and a real luxury. I've avoided my last couple of cheat days because it just really made me sick.

The food program [inaudible] when you go to Overeaters Anonymous, there's a very specific – there's two sets of Overeaters Anonymous, and one is called [inaudible], and one is called the [inaudible] group, where it's just a food plan that you cannot deviate from. You just can't ever deviate from. This gave people a lot of freedom from the addictive properties of eating. It reminds me of that in like now, the food is out of the way, and the obsessing about food is out of the way, now I can actually live my life, which I think is really a wonderful thing.

Tim Ferriss: That makes me – it makes my day, it makes my week just to hear that. It's a liberating point for people to reach. What I found is that a lot of behavioral – a lot of systems of behavioral change that have existed for many decades, are completely just scientifically off based. They haven't really been tested. The idea that you can take someone who's accustomed to eating a horrible diet and put them on a strict vegetarian diet, and they're going to adhere to that, it will have less than 10 per cent success rate.

It's very difficult. If you want 500 out of 1,000 people to succeed, instead of 100 out of 1,000, then you provide them with a graduated approach. I think there is an incredible tactical

application of excess. People say, “Everything in moderation” and I’m like, “Actually, I don’t think that humans are good at moderation”. That’s why it’s easier to go a month without alcohol than having one drink a day, if you’re an alcoholic. There are many examples of this, but my mom was cured of smoking at one point because her parents – and I’m not saying this is a great in general parenting approach, but they said to all the siblings, they said, “I found out that one of you likes to smoke.

Well, here’s a box of cigars, and you guys can have all of the cigars, and when you’re done then, you can come upstairs”. They did not touch anything for a very, very long time. Again, not recommending that; very old school. Psychologically, the cheat day for the first two or three weeks is achieving something very similar. I’m thrilled that you’ve been with it for a few months. Obviously, I’m always happy to answer questions. I never get tired of talking about this stuff unlike email autoresponders, and all that stuff in the first book, which kind of bores me to tears at this point.

The physiological stuff is so rewarding because it’s a tangible, visible result. When people go on it, you do get immediate feedback, and it’s really, really awesome. For those – this is particularly true for certain nationalities.

There are obviously genetic differences, but for a lot of women out there who might get discouraged early on, part of the reason for the first 10 to 14 days that some women in particular do not see a dramatic weight change on the scale is because they’re increasing their protein intake, and they’re actually losing a lot visceral fat, No. 1, so organ fat. No. 2, also putting on muscle, which is a very positive thing, in almost every case. Then, they start to see the subcutaneous face, the fat under the skin, which is more visible in the mirror, obviously, start to drop off in Weeks 2 and 3. That’s why it’s so important, I think, for a lot of people to really take stock of how they feel. Like, you noticed the impulse, the desire – the unnecessary hunger going away to take note of those things.

Instead of looking at the scale – because it’s such a blunt instrument, and it can be very mistaken.

Margaret Cho:

I don’t weigh myself, at all. I can see the changes in a way that my clothes are fitting differently, and wearing much smaller sizes. I can tell in the way that – just the way that I look, and I don’t really need to see it. I know that when my exercise – when I’m exercising more, that it’s definitely much more visible. Also, like the laying off – sometimes I’ll get lazy, and I’ll just eat beef jerky or

something like that, which is not [inaudible] of all the stuff in it. When I really take the time to make my own food and stuff, that's when I can really see a huge difference.

When I get lazy, there's like the salad dressings and stuff which probably have hidden sugar in that, I can definitely slack there, but not that much, either. You're not eating anything with breading, or anything like that, or like sauces with flour, then that's not too bad. It can be really – you can actually have pretty luxurious [inaudible] on the program, not even on a cheat day.

Tim Ferriss:

Definitely. Most people, if I go out to a meal with almost anyone at any restaurant, they never ask me about my diet because they don't realize that I'm even on a diet, generally. It's very flexible. I would say to people out there also, who are thinking of going on any type of diet – here's the thing, even if you're not on a diet, you're on a diet. Diet is really in a scientific sense, the foods that you habitually consume, so you're on a diet one way or the other.

But you have to rig the game in the beginning so that you can win. At least, for the first few weeks. For instance, I would like to say that I'm whipping up a Food Network worthy meal every meal, and just slicing and dicing, and it's worthy of recording for posterity, but it's not. I'm lazy like everybody else. If you were to look at my refrigerator right now, literally, I have single serve guacamole, and single serve black bean hummus from BJ's, or one of these discount clubs. I forgot. I've got some left over chicken wrapped up in some plastic foil, and a handful of other things.

Then, I have a few supplements that are on hand like glutamine and whatnot, so I have done no cooking today, and I'm not hungry. That's totally okay. It's totally okay. There are readers who have literally – I kid you not – lost 50 to 100 pounds.

The only beans that they consume – you don't have to eat a ton of beans, but the only beans they've consumed are refried beans. It doesn't have to be fancy. In any case, I'm thrilled that you're making progress, and I'm obviously happy to help any time. Let me ask you on the meal side of things. If you had your last meal, you're on death row, what are you going to go out with? What's your last meal?

Margaret Cho:

I think I would really want to have [inaudible] with salmon and vodka, or the penne alla vodka. It's salmon and vodka, a cream sauce, with pasta. It's so good. Probably that, and maybe some

kind of a bread thing. Not so many sweets, I guess. Maybe a little. I don't know. The pasta is the best thing.

Again, I don't really – I don't crave it like I used to. I used to have to have it once a day, at least. On the salad, or some kind – I think breakfast pasta, that's so – who has breakfast pasta? It's so weird how I just don't have – I don't care. It's really weird.

Tim Ferriss: It's crazy. It's crazy when that type of shift happens. Do you have a favorite curse word? Is there any one sort of curse word or insult that you're like, "I love it". It just rolls off the tongue. "This is really a keeper for me. It resonates".

Margaret Cho: I think the one that I always use is "Oh, fuck. Oh, fuck". That's the one I think I use the most, which is probably the one that everybody uses the most, I think.

Tim Ferriss: It's a very flexible word. It can take many different forms. I think that's part of why it's so useful.

Margaret Cho: It's positive and negative, and then, it can be romantic, which is really funny.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah.

Margaret Cho: It's actually the most romantic thing that you can say. It's totally weird. It could be really the most horrible thing you could say, but the best thing, too. I really love the user-friendly quality of the word.

Tim Ferriss: Of the word "Fuck".

Margaret Cho: Fuck.

Tim Ferriss: There's a wonderful little book called, "English, as a Second Fucking Language" and it talks about all of the uses of the word "Fuck". If you think about it, it's actually very, very particular because, you can say "That's fucking incredible" but you can't say, "That's incredifuckingble." There are very specific ways that you can use it or not use it. "Unbelievafuckingble" doesn't really work, or you really have to – s you've sort of developed a fluency, at a certain point, as a native English speaker with that word.

I find the Australians are really fond of it. Just an observation.

Margaret Cho: It's a great word. It's my favorite. Good one.

Tim Ferriss: If you could – I want to be – I know you have a show coming up, and that you probably want to do some prep for that. Speaking of which – just a few more questions, but if you look at your best performances, in the hour before you go on stage, what are the commonalities? What gets you in the zone? What rituals or routines do you have?

Margaret Cho: Usually, it's just a nice meal. Sometimes, I'll have a book. Sometimes, I'll just be reading back stage, which is a really nice thing to do. Sometimes, it's very busy. You can never really predict.

There's no – I have to perform so much, but there's no way that I can regulate that hour before because it's always a different situation. Different cities, or different social situations, different social settings, or I'm coming from something else, so there's really no way to gauge, but I like to have sometimes a bit of wine, a bit of red wine.

Tim Ferriss: Any particular type of red wine?

Margaret Cho: I like something like a Shiraz, or a Malbec.

Tim Ferriss: Good choice.

Margaret Cho: Something dry, not sweet, just something very hearty, but flavorful, but not like a juice – like a grape juice. I like good, intense wine that'd be nice.

Tim Ferriss: If you're able to read, what type of book would you choose?

Margaret Cho: I love biographies, and so I'm reading right now, "How to be a Movie Star" which is all about Elizabeth Taylor. I think it's really fascinating. I love movie star biographies, and the way that Hollywood was to people like Liberace and Elizabeth Taylor, and these kinds of figures who were very flamboyant and symbolic of a time, but who led pretty tortured lives, too. That to me, is really interesting, so I like that kind of stuff.

Tim Ferriss: Do you know people who are operating at the higher level in Hollywood who are not tortured? It just seems like it's a tortured town in a lot of ways. Are there people who come to mind who are very successful in some capacity, in Hollywood who are not tortured?

If so, why are they not tortured?

Margaret Cho: I don't know. I think that there is a high level of people who are tortured, but then, there's also a lot of – people who have taken measure to help themselves whether it's through sobriety, or some kind of program, or even some kind of religion that makes things a little bit better. I do see happiness out there, I do see a lot of joy in regards to work. Sometimes, the most brilliant somebody is, the more crazy they are, too, so we don't have a really good candle on people in real life. The most well-adjusted person, the nicest, and famous, and successful, was probably Dave Grohl, from the Foo Fighters.

He is the most funniest individual I've ever met, and so generous and kind, and really, one of the most fantastic artists of all time.

Tim Ferriss: He's incredible. Just phenomenal. Why do you think he is that way? Of course, he's seen some dark things, no doubt.

Margaret Cho: He's seen some very dark things. I think he allows himself to just be. I think a part of it is also drummers tend to be very positive people, and I think it's the physical activity. I think it is the high intensity interval training that is drumming.

Tim Ferriss: Definitely. That's a great observation. I never really thought of it that way, but that actually makes perfect sense to me. Interesting.

Margaret Cho: It's very positive. Yeah, get a drum set.

Tim Ferriss: Well, I have some hand drums, I've got to tell you. The difference between the day of even 10 minutes of drumming, and a day of no drumming is very, very stark.

It is, I think, the physical movement, and using the hands for something other than pecking at a keyboard, for sure.

Margaret Cho: Yeah. Yeah, for sure.

Tim Ferriss: On that note, I'll let you get off the phone. Where can people find more from you, or learn more about you? Where can people check out what you're up to?

Margaret Cho: My website is margaretkho.com, and that's where all my tour dates are. I have some blog stuff up there. I have kind of everything: photos, and – kind of an overview of what I do. Then, I'm on Twitter @MargaretCho, and I'm on Facebook @MargaretCho. I

do a bit of Instagram, it's Margaret_Cho. That's all my stuff, and I'm very active everywhere there. I really enjoy that, too.

It's funny how much easier life is when you can verify people on Twitter.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah. Definitely.

Margaret Cho: It's like, "Oh, yeah this is really..." it's like you could really see them. It makes life much easier.

Tim Ferriss: It certainly does. Thank you so much for making the time. Hopefully, next time you're in S.F., we can share a glass or two, or three of wine.

Margaret Cho: Toast to my 4-Hour Body. You will see me, and I think that you will be very excited because from my photograph, from stuff that I've done, you can really tell the difference. I haven't had a photoshoot or anything, so I'll look forward to that so that you can see what things I've done. It's also made me feel a lot younger, too, which I appreciate. Thank you.

Tim Ferriss: My pleasure. Thank you for putting the words into action. I just write about your stuff down on a couple of pages.

It really makes my entire week, and we can decide if it's going to be a cheat meal, or a standard compliance slow carb meal. Either way, I would love to join you for a bite or a drink. Thank you so much for the time, so I'll let you get ready for your gig. Everybody, check out Margaret online, and I'll put a bunch of links in the show notes, as well. Until next time. Thank you so much for being here.

Margaret Cho: Thank you, so much.