

The Tim Ferriss Show Transcripts

Episode 75: Noah Kagan

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Tim Ferriss: Sound check – could you mouth the blue ball for a second and tell me what you had for breakfast?

Noah Kagan: Today for breakfast I had egg whites, onions, chicken, and one slice of bacon.

Tim Ferriss: How much weight have you gained in the last 12 months?

Noah Kagan: 40 pounds.

Tim Ferriss: Why, hello squirrels, chipmunks, and muskrats. Why muskrats? Don't be racist. We welcome everybody here because this is the Tim Ferris show, where my job is to attempt to deconstruct world-class performers and teachers, whether they are investors, chess prodigies, actors, musicians, or entrepreneurs in this particular case. This episode features Noah Kagan. Noah Kagan is a friend of mine I've known for many years.

He was number 30 at Facebook and number four at Mint.com, which was sold for God knows how much money – I think \$100 plus billion and is the Chief Sumo, i.e. co-founder of SumoMe.com, which offers free tools to help grow web traffic among other things. Also a top-rated taco connoisseur – I'm not sure we're going to get into that, but he has most importantly created four products that have made more than seven figures and that is what we're going to delve into in this particular episode: lots of tactics, tools, routines, and so on that Noah has used himself and has helped other people to use.

Noah was also my co-teacher in the Tim Ferris Experiment, Episode: Build a Business, where we led Cindy, a novice entrepreneur into scaling and launching her business in one week. There are a lot of behind-the-scenes goodies where if you go to iTunes.com/TimFerriss – that is two R's and two S's – iTunes.com/TimFerriss I think there is an hour of bonus footage with some really nitty-gritty call script, sales and marketing stuff that I think you will enjoy.

But, this episode by itself – super-strong stand-alone; lots of

takeaways, lots of resources – and if you don't want to write it all down, you can get the show notes at fourhourworkweek.com/podcast, that's four hour, F-O-U-R-H-O-U-R, fourhourworkweek.com/podcast. But without further adieu, here is Monsieur Noah Kagan. Enjoy. Noah, my man – welcome to the show.

Noah Kagan: Thank you for having me, Tim.

Tim Ferriss: I have been looking forward to this for quite a while because every time we talk – and we've known each other for years – I come away with notes upon notes of things that I want to test or try. So I'm hoping and expecting sternly, like an angry father –

Noah Kagan: Yeah – that's a lot of pressure.

Tim Ferriss: That's what I was saying, but for people who don't have too much context, you were number 30 at Facebook, you were the number four employee at Mint, which sold to Intuit for \$100 million and you've created multiple products now that have earned seven figures. What else should people know perhaps as background or what would you like to tell them about as context?

Noah Kagan: I thought that was pretty good, man. I was thinking; whoever that guy is, he sounds pretty good.

Tim Ferriss: Hire that man's speechwriter.

Noah Kagan: The only other thing is like I came out like a lot of people were listening – I came out of Berkeley or whatever – and I worked at a corporate job at Intel sitting in a cubicle and then I didn't really use networking or any of that kind of stuff to eventually go to these cool companies and be able to create my own businesses that gave me the freedom to do a lot of things I wanted to do.

Tim Ferriss: And you are in Austin, Texas – is that right?

Noah Kagan: Yes, sir.

Tim Ferriss: Where did you grow up?

Noah Kagan: I grew up in the Bay Area, about a mile and a half from the Apple headquarters.

Tim Ferriss: So, near Cupertino somewhere?

Noah Kagan: Yeah, I grew up in Cupertino.

Tim Ferriss: The question about why there has been a mass exodus, it would seem, from cities like New York City and San Francisco to Austin is one I've never really heard you answer. So maybe I can just ask you: why is Austin becoming such a hotbed and why did you choose to move to Austin?

Noah Kagan: Yeah, I actually interned about 10 years ago and I came out here and I'd never heard of the place. I didn't even know – I mean in Texas; now it's because of the internet – people know that there are places inside of Texas and they have photos. But I never knew what was about and I came here and I had like sex with this person and I got drunk and it's like; what's the name of that book, *Lord of the Flies*, where it's like the young kids take over an island?

Tim Ferriss: Yes.

Noah Kagan: It's basically like that, but we have a city. So I came here and I was like; how come no one else is here? You're paying half as much as the Bay Area for housing. We actually see grass – a lot of grass – around us. We've got a lot of tacos, which is what I'm known for and it's like one of the capitals for tacos in the nation. And it's like what the Bay Area was probably like 10 years before now. It's just like you're packed and you're paying insane prices. I think also fundamentally that there are a few key things here. I knew also I didn't want to just be around startups talking about their funding all day long.

And so Austin provided a lifestyle for me where it was more affordable, really attractive women, really good outside life – like when I leave the office I have a good lifestyle – it just really fit that balance and that's why I think it's one of the fastest-growing cities in the nation right now.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah, it's one of my favorite cities. I almost moved there after college actually. It was between Austin and SF and I didn't make it to the final round of interviews for Trilogy Software, so that made the decision for me. So I came very close – I could have forked another way and ended up in Austin.

Noah Kagan: Did you get like flown out first class and the limo experience with Trilogy?

Tim Ferriss: I don't think I made it that far. I think they recognized a terrible potential employee very quickly and decided that I would be more

trouble than I was worth, which is probably accurate.

Noah Kagan: You know what's funny about that? Like I got a job offer – I've applied for Google twice and I've been rejected twice – and I'm like; is Google really good or am I that bad? Or is it just that I'm meant to run my own thing. I remember when I did my interview at Google I couldn't remember how to do division –

Tim Ferriss: That makes it hard to get a job at Google I would imagine.

Noah Kagan: I was like; I've got to use my phone. Do you mind? He was like; uh, yeah. So I did not get the job. He's like; if you can't do 12 times 12 Noah, I'm sorry – I have some bad news, unless you want to interview for our cafeteria jobs. Multiplication I'm good at – it was the division, man. Anyway so Austin, coming back to it – it was just more of; after being in the Bay Area and engineers and stuff all life I wanted something a little more affordable; women and outside and just kind of like a slower lifestyle.

I would say for younger people I would actually recommend going to these busier cities because you're surrounding yourself with like hungry, hungry people –

Tim Ferriss: What age would you say that is?

Noah Kagan: I'm saying up until 30 I would stay in like a really populated city personally and that's what I did, because you're around people who are hustling and it's really inspiring and it's motivating and there's a Meetup every day. We have that in Austin, but it's nowhere near the level of the Bay Area or New York. And so I would say if you're younger I would want to be around that and get connections to that and experience that. If you look at Austin, like how many big companies have come out of Austin, Tim? Like name two.

Tim Ferriss: Dell and blank – I'm sure there are others. Willie Nelson biofuels –

Noah Kagan: What did you say?

Tim Ferriss: Willie Nelson biofuels.

Noah Kagan: Willie Nelson, dude – I mean I was going to say like a weed joke – but name two that came out of the Bay Area. You could go on for days. Right, yeah. You have a density in SF that you don't have in Austin. Namely what I mean by that is you have the peninsula in the Bay Area, but just within San Francisco you have – let's just call it 700,000 people very densely packed in so getting to events,

meeting new people, bumping into the icons or billionaires you want to meet is as easy as going to a handful of different coffee shops whereas in Austin in my experience having gone to South by Southwest so many times, it's more spread out, much like Los Angeles, so those types of serendipitous moments are a little harder to come by here.

I mean, the funniest one for me was I was walking in San Francisco a few years ago and I'm talking about Paypal with my friend Boris and I'm like; oh my God, literally the guy walking in front of us was Peter Thiel. And I was like; Peter, we had a question about Paypal. Do you mind if I ask you?

Tim Ferriss: That's the co-founder of Paypal for people who are wondering, who was also like the first money into Facebook and actually another guy still to podcast as well. The place I'd like to go next – and I think maybe working backwards makes sense here – I'd love to experiment with just front-loading this episode with a lot of tools and tactics that people can play with as soon as they listen to this episode. What are some of the tools – whether they're apps or otherwise – that you are really into at the moment or that you find extremely useful?

Noah Kagan: Yeah – so I'll give you like my top things that I use and that I think everyone should literally use right now and go do these things. Number one – and it's not even an app or anything; it's speeding up your mouse pad – it's the number one productivity hack because you're on your computer almost all the day. Go to your settings, speed up your mouse pad; double where you're at. It takes a few minutes to get used to but you realize that; holy crap – speed up your mouse pad and everything will get faster. I really love that one because any time I'm on something slower I'm like; wow, it's so slow. Is your computer broken?

Tim Ferriss: So, you just go to System Preferences and then keyboard, and then mouse/track pad? It's one of those three I'm sure.

Noah Kagan: Yeah – you click on track pad and then you go to your tracking speed and move it to basically almost the fastest and then your keyboard, the way that you get around your computer is significantly faster.

Tim Ferriss: Got it.

Noah Kagan: Let me just go through a list of things that I love. Other things on the computer: Alfred app – if you're not using Alfred app it's free

and basically instead of even having to move your mouse you can just hit a launch bar and then type in whatever app you want and it will automatically load it. So, if I wanted to open Firefox I can just hit command space bar and type FI, hit enter and then it's loaded instead of me having to move my mouse anywhere on the screen.

Tim Ferriss: Now, I've heard of Alfred before. I use I guess its Spotlight just built into the OS.

Noah Kagan: Oh, Spotlight is way slower than Alfred.

Tim Ferriss: It's just a lot slower.

Noah Kagan: It's way slower, and with Alfred app you can do contacts; I can do math with it sometimes when I need help – a lot of times, okay? When I have to use division so Alfred app is an awesome one especially for getting around your Mac; I don't know if they have a PC version yet, but who uses PC? I don't know. Do you ever feel bad when someone is using either Hotmail or PC I feel like saying; Bro, is everything okay?

I'm going to go more because I want to get to the meaty stuff. So, let's get into apps like web and other things. This is one that's a killer one: it's a Chrome extension called Facebook Newsfeed Eradicator, and this one is amazing. And I used to work at Facebook and I know all of us – you have this weird thing where you're so used to going on Facebook you just type in FA and you can't even control and so in Facebook Newsfeed Eradicator you go to Facebook and it blocks your newsfeed. And then you get there – and I probably do it 10 times a day; I go to Facebook – and I get there and there's nothing there.

And I'm like; well, I guess there's nothing for me to do today. Everyone's asleep. And I go back to my work. Because I think people are looking for so many different productivity apps I just try to focus on the big ones that are really helpful and that one is huge. Go on Facebook; nothing's happening – go back to my day and get the things done I want to get done. I used Schedule Once –

Tim Ferriss: Yeah – great program – me, too.

Noah Kagan: You use that, too?

Tim Ferriss: I do, yeah. It was introduced to me by Andrew Warner of Mixergy who's done thousands of interviews and as soon as he booked me using that, so I was the one using that –

Noah Kagan: He met you doing that? He met Tim Ferriss on that?

Tim Ferriss: I don't blame him though –

Noah Kagan: That was so nice.

Tim Ferriss: And it prevents so much confusion. Do you want to just explain how that –

Noah Kagan: Sure – it's so good. The reason I like it – they have a \$99 per year plan. Make sure you find that one because they have all these different options, but you can get in there and get the \$99 a year one I believe and the nicest thing about it is that it's such an annoying thing – so like if me and Tim were to meet I'd be like; Tim, are you free next Tuesday at 4:00 p.m.? You would have to come back and say; no – how about Wednesday and blah, blah, blah – with Schedule Once it connects automatically to your calendar and when you send it to someone you can set your preferences. So like; I have very specific preferences.

Like; I don't do meetings on Thursday. I don't do meetings before 10:00 a.m. I don't do meetings during lunchtime. I don't do a meeting after 5:00 p.m. And I only do meetings for 15 minutes because really if it's longer than that, like we need to figure out why it's going so long. And then basically I send that to you and I say; hey, Tim let's talk for that time and period and it makes it really easy for you to just compare that to your schedule, choose the time and it auto-goes into my calendar and we're done.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah – and one of the other benefits that I noticed is; number one the first thing someone will see when they click the link to grab a time is it'll say; set your time zone. And that avoids all of the confusion like; oh, sorry. I thought it was 4:00 p.m. CST and not PST and then you have to book it again. It avoids all of that and it sends reminders to people. I've been using it for instance if I'm doing – let's just say recording; and I don't typically do this – but if I were recording five podcasts in a day or I had some type of batching like that I would block out an entire day in say one hour increments or two-hour increments and then have everybody just pick the time that is remaining and available.

Because it also happens that if you're emailing separate people competing for a certain day – let's just say – you'll book one person and then the other person will want the same time and it's just a huge headache so this thing saves just dozens of hours of

headache. It's just totally, totally worth it.

Noah Kagan: Other ones – oh, excuse me.

Tim Ferriss: No, go for it.

Noah Kagan: Other ones: Follow-up.cc. This is one of my secret weapons. I basically never forget anything. It's like I call it my Jewish mother in my inbox, because my mom never forgets anything. She writes everything down and so what Follow-up.cc does is like if I'm emailing Tim, like we do from time to time, I'll email Tim and in my B.C.C. I'll put when I want to remember it. So what it does is I'll put one day at like Follow-up.cc and in a day it will email me back and say; hey, here's the email that you sent and the reminder about it.

So, you can do this for people and be like; hey, I'll check in with you in two months or I'll follow up – you know. Even for things that you want to do as a to-do, like let me do this in two months or let me check this email in a week. You can either forward it or B.C.C. it and it will automatically remind you and I've just found that it basically helps me never forget anything because sometimes you just keep it in your inbox and I personally don't want anything in my inbox if I can. And this will renew anything I want to remember or anything that I want, so I highly recommend that.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah – automating follow-ups – super cool.

Noah Kagan: Yeah, it's just so nice and there are email tracking tools for open this and stuff like that. I just find Follow-up the lightest and easiest way for me to use. Other tools that I've been using a lot: I've been using Perch.co. It's totally free for everyone who's doing – I know a lot of people are either starting or running a lot of business and Perch provides free people-to-people like webcams so we have four people that work remote and it's kind of weird because they're like; what the hell are these guys doing in the office, and we're wondering what they're doing sometimes. And so Perch gives you the chance if you have two iPads or two phones to see each other.

And so it helps for communication and also just being like a part of the team versus like a random remote person.

Tim Ferriss: Very cool. Yeah, I hadn't heard of that one.

Noah Kagan: I really like that one. I like My Fitness – so I'll go to a few on the

phone and web; they're kind of mixed. I use MyFitnessPal.com almost – well, I use it every day. I use it because if you really want to lose weight or gain weight, which we can talk about it a bit. I've gained 40 pounds in the past four months and now I'm losing 40 pounds in the next five months or six months.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah, just so people understand what's going on here – how much of the 40 would you say is muscle versus fat?

Noah Kagan: Well, I don't know the exact – I probably should know more –

Tim Ferriss: If you had to estimate, how much of that is muscle?

Noah Kagan: Probably like half and half maybe. I don't know the exact number.

Tim Ferriss: I think it's a bit more, honestly. So, just we'll come back to this, guys but Noah sent me a picture of himself. I hadn't seen him in about six months and could not recognize the guy. Now, granted you were hitting a bicep pose in the gym – no, I'm kidding – but it was a shot from the gym and I'm just like; what the hell did you do to yourself?

Noah Kagan: It was a naked selfie, dude. It was Tuesday.

Tim Ferriss: Naked selfie Tuesdays – that's kind of our routine. So, we'll come back to that, but what do you use MyFitnessPal for?

Noah Kagan: So, I use MyFitnessPal and I track every single thing I eat. It's not so much that I want to be OCD and obsessive about; oh, I have to track everything and I want to count everything, but it gives me – if you really want to accomplish something and this is a tool that if you want to lose five pounds it'll say like; eat this amount of calories and this much macros and in four weeks you'll hit five pounds. And so it's like; well, why wouldn't I do that? And it just makes me more accountable to help me hit the objectives of what I want to hit.

And so it's like; am I under my macros in the amounts I want to be hitting today or not? And it just makes my life so much simpler to be able to figure it out. Over time you start knowing what your – you know much more about the food you're actually putting in your mouth, like how much protein does a chicken has versus steak, versus like a Quest bar, which is one of my favorite protein bars.

Tim Ferriss: No, definitely – and for those people wondering what macros are,

that's just referring to macronutrients, so what percentage of the food you're eating, calories you're eating are coming from fat, protein, or carbohydrates generally – and when people refer to micronutrients, those would be say the trace minerals and so on and so forth: vitamins. There we go. I'm experimenting with some somewhat unusual macros right now, which are about 80 percent fat calories, 15 percent protein, and 5 percent or less carbohydrates; typically less than 30 grams a day just to optimize for brain function as opposed to body function. It's working pretty well.

Noah Kagan: What have you noticed about that?

Tim Ferriss: I've noticed that when I hit – and I'm using a device called the Precision Xtra with Xtra for tracking ketones at a very precise level – that you would hope because it's called the Precision Xtra. It gives you a readout in millimolars so instead of peeing on keto sticks – these things you can buy at Walgreen's or wherever to indicate if you're in ketosis or not – you can get a concentration. So, I'll prick my finger and check it and it will say; oh, you're at 0.7 millimolars or 1.5 millimolars and for my optimal mental performance I've just noticed that I perform best at say between 1.1 and let's just call it 1.7 millimolars.

My belief up to this point – because I hadn't had a good tool; that was a nice Quest Bar burp – up to this point has been the deeper the ketosis the better my brain will perform because the brain likes ketones. But for me that doesn't appear to be the case so I've been able to get super-specific and sort of use the food that I put in my mouth like a sniper shot for mental performance, which is awesome.

So, that's been the primary benefit and along with that I've noticed for instance that all of my morning fatigue, for say the first half hour of the day is completely gone, 100 percent gone. I wake up and I'm ready to go, which has never been the case when I'm carb-dependent.

Noah Kagan: That's interesting – it's funny, I think we don't think about how much we eat and how much sleep affects us. When we sleep more it's better. I actually used to work in bed sheets at Macy's.

Tim Ferriss: Wait – you worked in bed sheets like you were selling bed sheets or you'd wrap yourself up like Casper the Ghost?

Noah Kagan: No. I sold bed sheets to old women on commission.

Tim Ferriss: How old were old were you when you did that?

Noah Kagan: That was in high school.

Tim Ferriss: All right –

Noah Kagan: So, I learned about like bedding and I also worked in towels but one of the things I was going to suggest is like we're talking about apps and tools – I think a lot of people don't think about their physical tools, so I've tried to optimize my bed. I think I've done a pretty good job. So, I use a company on Amazon; there's one I actually tried a week ago that I'm going to be offering. It's called Tuft and Needle, so it's like this hipster guy out of Arizona has done a really nice thing and they have like this super comfortable mattress.

And then I found there's a guy who literally is like in the Midwest and he looks like your uncle and he created a thing called My Pillow. Have you heard of this?

Tim Ferriss: No. I haven't but I've heard of Tuft and Needle though. That name has come up a couple of times among friends, so I have to take a look at those guys.

Noah Kagan: Yeah – I can put you in touch with them. I went and slept on it and laid on it like a few days ago and it was great. I'm open to that and I use a pillow called My Pillow, which is like tri-foamed. I don't even know what he does, but it's really good. Because what I realize is like the more that I'm comfortable in bed I just feel better and I wake up feeling pretty damn good every morning. I use a company called Parachute for the bedding and so those are the kinds of combinations I've been using. I'm like; damn, I'm feeling really good when I wake up in the morning from all that stuff.

Tim Ferriss: Just to come back to two things or a few things: the nightly rituals – what are say the last two hours of your days typically look like and when do you go to bed, when do you wake up, et cetera?

Noah Kagan: My night varies a bit more, but what I do at night is I try to put myself to sleep by reading. I notice I try to watch shows or anything like that and I just get stimulated so I'll go to bed and I won't always have to read a business book – which my brother always kind of gave me crap about – like there's other things besides non-fiction. So I've been reading like Jack Reacher books. I don't know if anyone has suggestions for books that are fiction that I would like. Like; *The Martian* was probably one of the best

books of the year.

Tim Ferriss: Jack Reacher – those are graphic novels or what are those?

Noah Kagan: It's a movie Tom Cruise was in that was surprisingly good last year. These are what I've been starting to read and they've been putting me to sleep versus stimulating me. Like I would watch shows like *Big Love*, which wasn't that good or now I'm watching *Daredevil* but basically I realize like if I watch this stuff in bed I don't go to sleep. So now I just do books instead and I've been doing that for a little while.

So like *The Martian* was an amazing fiction book. It's probably one of the best in the past year or two.

Tim Ferriss: The whole story of *The Martian*, what's his name Andrew Weir or Weir – something like that – the whole story of how that was I guess self published or a very, very small to start with and just developed a massive cult following. Then the audio book was a huge, huge blockbuster and it's taken off and I think it's now being developed into a movie or made into a movie. And I love that type of a story.

It's just like *50 Shades of Gray*; everybody turned it down and it became a viral sensation on its own which then led to it becoming a blockbuster like *Go the Fuck to Sleep*, the children's book. That was leaked as a PDF among people in the publishing world and became this huge buzz item and then became a bestseller.

Noah Kagan: That's awesome.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah – what time do you typically go to bed and when have you found that you perform best or how do you perform best in terms of going to bed and waking up?

Noah Kagan: One thing I do is I don't keep a phone in my room. I think that's a common thing. We wake up and we have the phone right in our room and we just get all stimulated by that. So I keep my phone in a separate room always. When I go to sleep varies. I think when I'm excited, like remember that guy Steve Paolino, from like five to ten years ago? He had really good content?

Tim Ferriss: Sure – yeah.

Noah Kagan: He was very strict about wake up at this time and don't wake up at this time. So I've changed my routines in the past year and it's

helped me where one, I sleep in darkness now, so I don't sleep with natural light and I don't really use an alarm. And I notice I wake up a little later now, but when I wake up I don't need coffee and I feel more refreshed and that's just what's worked for me.

I used to wake up at 7:30 a.m. and I'd have to go to like do my old man pee – do you do that at all?

Tim Ferriss: Well, I am a bit of a water hog, so I usually wake up also in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom, which I've had my prostate checked. I loved the experience – just kidding – but no, I've checked out all that stuff. I just drink too much water, so yeah I get up and I do the old man pee once or twice probably.

Noah Kagan: I just found that I slept better, so I moved my bed to dark and I know Tucker Maxwell, a mutual friend does that as well. And then when I wake up I try not to just go get overly stimulated with like my phone and everything already happening. And so in my morning routine I actually find that the days of not having coffee in the morning I'm like; oh, I slept better. When I've been sitting in darkness that's been happening – and then I try to stay away from my phone for the first hour of my morning, so I spend my first hour of the morning ideally making the same breakfast every morning. I generally will rotate every three months.

And so like; now my breakfast is one cup egg whites, two eggs, with two percent cheese so I'll have that in the morning for breakfast and then I'll read for the next 30 minutes.

Tim Ferriss: And you just scramble all that up together?

Noah Kagan: Yeah. Actually you recommended in one of your early interviews where you microwave it –

Tim Ferriss: Oh yeah – the three minute, low-carb breakfast.

Noah Kagan: Yeah. I was like yeah; like you can microwave eggs now like you microwave everything. No, but I've actually find that it's like relaxing and I like that I'm eating the same thing so I don't have to think about it because sometimes actually when you have to think about dinner or lunch or breakfast it's kind of tiring. It's like; oh what the hell am I going to do and then you have to process all of this extra energy that I don't really want to. And so then I try to create a routine where it's like breakfast is first thing and then it's like reading a book – whatever I'm interested in at that time.

Tim Ferriss: So, I'd love to dig a bit on the books because I know you've read a lot and you've mentioned books to me before like – well, there are many but I think one of them I found very helpful and have recommended to my startups which is *Who* – and maybe you could explain or introduce that book and some of the others that you found very helpful for business and just for designing your own style of business.

Noah Kagan: Sure, one thing before I forget, Tim. I always think it's interesting to try and understand like what are the fundamentals of successful people like you and other people that it's like; oh, what are they doing that regular people aren't? And the two things that I've noticed is one; I haven't really met any super-successful people that don't read. I don't know if you've noticed that –

Tim Ferriss: Yeah – it's very unusual.

Noah Kagan: Yeah. I've never met anyone and they're like; oh, I don't really read anything. I don't really do anything. And the second thing is; this is one that everyone can do today and I do it every day. I even do it in hotels, which it's not something perverted.

Tim Ferriss: It's not exclusively something perverted. Let's be clear.

Noah Kagan: I make my bed every day. I don't know if everyone else does that, but I've always noticed that it's just like a great way to my wind in the morning. And some other people I think have mentioned that, but that's like – I do those things: I make sure I read every day, I make sure I make my bed, and those are kind of like two wins in the morning that I'm always like; that's a pretty good day.

Tim Ferriss: Not to interrupt, but I actually want to reinforce that for people, because I never made my bed. And then two things happened: I saw a commencement speech by a war hero who – just a highly, highly decorated veteran who had also come back to civilian life and just done incredibly well in the private sector. And he said; you can't always change everything in the world you want to change, but start with making your bed in the morning.

And I was like; what? Huh – but then it stuck with me and then met a monk – I think his name is Don Depandi; I might be messing up the pronunciation – in any case he said; if you want to have a feeling of calm control over things – and I'm paraphrasing here – start with making your bed in the morning so that when you come back to it, it's not complete chaos and you feel like things are in disarray. And I was like; well, that sounds kind of silly but

whatever – I'll try it for a week.

And it's had a huge psychic impact, an incredible psychological ROI so I do that every morning as well.

Noah Kagan: Yeah – I mean it's funny; I was talking with my team about similar kind of things like what are things that you can do today and you don't need anybody else and you could make yourself a better success? And two things that I've noticed are; one, this is kind of a tangential one, but it's organize your dollar bills. I don't know if you do that.

Tim Ferriss: I'm not sure. You mean like by denomination?

Noah Kagan: I do it by denomination and I do it in the same order so they're all front-facing in my wallet.

Tim Ferriss: Huh – okay.

Noah Kagan: I think it's a Suze Orman thing that she said like 10 years ago or so but I've done it and I just think it's like a respectful thing for the money and it kind of makes you like; okay – money is good. And the other thing is that with the bed thing and things in my life in general – I don't know who told me this, but it's hard for me to let it go – which is like, just do it now. And so if you see something that's broken or it's on the floor if you have a dish, just get it over with. For some reason I can't let that go when there's things like that. It just helps me get that kind of stuff done and it's relieving.

So I do that. Do you have mantras like that or anything mentally that you do?

Tim Ferriss: I do – or reminders that are just sound bites that I've picked over time. One of them that I thought was really profound in a lot of ways was the advice that I got from this mother – I stayed with an older couple and their family in Panama at one point – and they were a real power couple. I mean the wife had done a ton when she was focused on career. The husband was a huge player and had like bought and sold some of the biggest companies in Central and South America. And they were both really, really content and accomplished so those two don't always go together.

They're actually pretty rare. And what she said to me was; you should make sure you always have an incredible bed and at least one incredible pair of shoes, because if you're not in one you're going to be in the other. And I was like; huh – and so I had always

bought kind of the cheapest shoes to get around and I was like; ah, it doesn't matter. I viewed my shoes like a car almost, which is how I view cars. I don't need a Ferrari or something. I just need a car to get me from Point A to Point B. Like, give me the crappiest thing, the cheapest thing that'll do the job.

And I viewed my shoes in the same way and I didn't realize how many physical problems I'd created until I actually started investing in better shoes. You don't need a lot; you can have one pair, just like one pair of very good walking shoes. What I tend to prefer these days – not necessarily the Five Fingers or anything like that because I don't think those are great walking shoes because the human foot is not designed to walk on concrete or asphalt – but rather what you would call zero drop shoes; so, shoes that don't have an elevated heel but do have some protection for the bottom of the foot.

So, you could spend say \$20 to \$40 on good pair of say; Chuck Taylor's or Van's. I have a black pair of Van's for instance that can double as dress shoes. Nobody notices. I've had people compliment me on the shoes when I'm at like a business dinner. Like; oh, those are great shoes. What are they? And I say; Van's and they're just astonished. So that tip, having a high quality bed and high quality bedding and then at least one pair of high quality shoes is something that stuck with me.

Noah Kagan: I think that's so – you know one thing you were saying that was cool was like when you tell stories it's so much easier to remember. So, in like two weeks you can be like; yeah, Tim was like in the jungle in Panama with like some guru and they told him shoes and a bed and it's so much easier to remember that versus you were just like; yeah, have a better bed and better shoes.

Tim Ferriss: Oh yeah – it won't stick, right? The only reason I've remembered that is because the context was unique.

Noah Kagan: It's interesting about what we remember. It's funny; there's this music artist and I'll talk about the book *Who*, but there's this music artist named Stitches. I don't know if you've ever heard of him; he's kind of like off the grid. He's Florida-based, but the guy is insane. Like he talks about doing drugs – he doesn't talk about it; he does drugs on stage. Like, he's got stitches tattooed all over his face and it's very extreme. Maybe it's a fad and maybe it's for now, but it makes me think about marketing and business and being remembered. It kind of made me realize that you don't get remembered in the middle.

Tim Ferriss: No, you don't. You don't get remembered in the middle and you need to – that's why I recommend; look, it's not a perfect book, but it is a very helpful book at least for me – *The 22 Immutable Laws of Marketing* – the old version. Like don't get the for-internet one that's like from the AOL era. Get the old one which is like airlines and imported beer and all of these case studies, but it really points out that if you want positioning – whether that's for a product, for a point you're trying to persuade people to accept or a negotiation – you have to, it's not enough just to be better. You have to be different.

No one will have a chance to realize you're better if you don't have their attention first. So, just thinking of positioning in that way as basically better as necessary but not sufficient I think is super-critical.

Noah Kagan: It's fun though, because we're like trained as humans to follow orders and raise our hand and stay in line and I always try to encourage people, myself included to break a rule. And so I'm like; not every day but I'm like, okay can I run this light? Which, obviously I'm not trying to run lights and kill people but it's like; all right – it says do not enter this way, but maybe I should just enter it. One thing I'd recommend to people is like the coffee challenge.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah – I was going to say –

Noah Kagan: Have you heard of the coffee challenge?

Tim Ferriss: Well, I have because when we were filming *The Tim Ferriss Experience* together you actually forced our student to go do this, which I thought was fantastic. So, maybe you could explain that to people, because certainly the Jason Bourne style of going the wrong way down a one way is probably not what I would suggest people to do, but the coffee challenge is something I would suggest everyone do. So, maybe you can explain that.

Noah Kagan: Yeah. Well, it's funny. So I told my brother to do the coffee challenge and he's like; I'm a doctor. I'm the man. I can do anything. And so we went to like some random place in Arizona where he lives and so the coffee challenge is; you have to go up to the counter and you order coffee and if you don't drink coffee order tea; if you don't drink tea, order water. I don't care. And then you just ask for 10 percent off.

And everyone listening – I know you’re listening right now and in your ears you’re like; oh, that’s stupid. Noah is stupid. Tim, I’m going to pause this podcast, because it’s so easy. I’ve been doing sales 20 years. And I told my brother to do it and he’s like; are you kidding me? I’ll do it in a minute. So it was on his birthday last year and he goes up to the guy and he pauses because he’s scared. And I filmed the whole thing and he’s like; uh, could I have 10 percent off? They’re like; why? He’s like; because – and I do believe they ended up giving it to him.

The coffee challenge sounds kind of silly, but the whole point is that in business and in life to not necessarily be on the extreme, but you have to ask for things and you have to put yourself out there. That’s the hard part. And for anyone who hasn’t done the coffee challenge, once you go do it you learn just a ton about yourself; nothing that you could read in a book or that you could do even just hearing. So next time today that you’re at a place where you’re buying something ask for 10 percent off – tell them Tim sent you –

Tim Ferriss: Don’t do that. Do not do that.

Noah Kagan: Okay – tell them Noah sent you. I’ll take it – it’s fine – tell them to come to me and see what you learn about yourself because you realize that it’s harder than it is but once you get over it, and we did this with our monthly 1K product, where it’s like; hey, go figure out that asking for money, asking for things isn’t as hard as it seems. And now you can start asking for things where it’s like; well, now I want you to buy something of mine or a service or a product that I really believe in versus just asking for a discount, which is more of a practice.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah – there are a couple of things that are important to underscore there. The first is a lot of the limitations we feel we have are completely self-imposed and if you look at say the coffee challenge or a comfort exercise like one from the *Four Hour Work Week*, which was going into a coffee shop – and I would suggest probably doing these two in two different coffee shops – just go in and lay down on the floor for like five seconds. And don’t say anything and then get right back up like nothing happened.

The worst case scenario is so trivial – do you know what I mean? It’s just a little bit of discomfort, but it goes to show you how many rules we follow that may not be serving our best interests. The coffee shop rules are just an easy-to-break so it’s a safe experimental lab. And people are like; well, I can do this or I can do that. And I remember asking Matt Mullenweg, the lead

developer at WordPress who's now the CEO of Automattic, which is a billion dollar plus company – I asked him a question at one point. I was like; well, is it this or is it this?

His answer was; that's a false dichotomy, meaning you're asking me to choose between two things that are not mutually exclusive or there are other options. Like, what is the C option? What is the D option? And there's an expression – and I'm paraphrasing here – it's a quote actually from Thomas Edison who said; when you've examined all the options just remember: you haven't. And it's like; huh – interesting.

For example, with the *Tim Ferriss Experiment*, with the TV show when the division at Turner went out of business and everything got shut down everything got shelved – almost everybody basically said like that's game over. All right – let's all move on with our lives. We had a good time and that's it. You can't get the TV show out; you can't get the TV show back or anything like that. It took a year of looking at what if I did this absurd thing, what if I took this absurd approach; like how do I craft a deal when even if I were to get the show back for Turner it's a rounding error on pocket change for them. There's not really an incentive.

Like, how do you figure out the deal structuring and so and eventually found a way to do it, but it took a lot of poking and prodding and rolling out hypotheticals; like taking a piece of paper and saying, okay – I'm just going to freehand flow and write for 10 minutes and what are the most absurd things I could do to possibly get these things back?

And not judge, right? You're going to throw out really stupid things, probably some illegal things, probably some dangerous things, probably some completely self-destructive things and then you look through it and you're like; okay; now this is interesting. I heard a story from a comedian once, a standup guy and he said – how did he put it – he said; generating good ideas is like orchestrating a room full of people in a fire emergency. If there's a fire you can't have everyone rush for the exit at once because they'll get blocked in the door.

You have to let each one out at a time and then you can organize it afterwards. You can like group them into whatever – stupid, good, and mediocre ideas after the fact. And so just doing that type of freehand idea generation for solutions I find to be super-helpful. But I know we've messed around a little bit, but –

Noah Kagan: Yeah – we were supposed the *Who* book, but you know what’s funny, Tim – because obviously me and you are a little more known on the internet and we’ve done some things that people will be like; well, you’re Tim Ferriss. And that’s actually what I hear a lot and so you’re Tim, so it’s easier for you. I don’t think they have – I don’t think a lot of people have the realization that like everyone has an opportunity.

Tim Ferriss: Definitely – for instance I had something I was doing online recently and this guy responded on Twitter and he said; well, it’s easy for you. You’re Tim Ferriss and you have a blog with one million plus people. And this other guy, a well-known blogger Darren Rose – or it might be Rowse, R-O-w-S-E – a pro blogger who’s a very, very savvy content guy with a huge audience. He said; we all start at the same place – zero readers. And it’s just like; rather than dismissing other people as having achieved things that are attainable, recognize that they started kind of like naked and alone in the world without any skills.

They had to develop that. You and I have a lot the same challenges even still today, I assume. I know we’ve had some pretty deep conversations about challenges we’ve had that everybody else has. And it’s like; you don’t get rid of those problems, you just kind of trade up.

Noah Kagan: That’s to preach – ooh, the sermon was good right there. I’m like nodding and I’m like nodding and I’m like; yeah, Tim. One thing – especially because I’ve started a few businesses and what I feel like most people don’t realize is that every major company: Facebook, Dell, Microsoft, Google – all of them started with like one dude or two dudes or two women with no customers. They all started the same size as everyone else. It’s; start there, get that one customer and build up and that’s how you get to become the size of those companies or have a large site or whatever it is that each person wants to accomplish.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah, absolutely – I mean Amazon in the early days, their desks were; I think they were just doors, just cheap wooden doors from Home Depot across two file cabinets. Like those were their desks.

Noah Kagan: You know what I think about, Tim especially like with you – I met you before even your first book came out and I always think it’s the funniest thing. I emailed you – I think I email/interviewed and I got an auto response that was like; hey, I’m surfing in Costa Rica. And I’m like; who the fuck is Tim Ferriss? He auto responded that he’s surfing in Costa Rica? Hey, I’ll be back in two weeks. I’m

like; all right – I don't really want to meet this guy.

But I think what separates out a lot of the winners versus losers is that it's not only that you got the book out there, but you've been doing it consistently for 10 years. It's the same with Zuckerberg at Facebook is that; it's easy to get a hit for a week or a month or two months, but Zuckerberg has made decisions for 10 years. You've done your stuff for 10 years. Like I assume you've been doing it for five years; like some of those things are now a seven-figure business but I made \$12,000 myself the first year. It's like; yeah, you're making good money now but it starts small and you've got to keep going. You've got to persist with it.

Tim Ferriss: Definitely, and you have to choose good teachers and for me because I was on my own so much and probably for you, books were a lot of those teachers for me.

Noah Kagan: I love how you brought it back. Do you see? Did everyone hear that right there? That's an interviewer. All right – so we're going to do the *Who* book. Look, do you mind if I just rattle them off and then people will just buy them?

Tim Ferriss: Rattle them off and then I might ask you to dig into some.

Noah Kagan: All right – so here are the books. I can give you the list for everyone about every book I've read. I catalog every book and movie I've read. I'm just going to give you the seven-ish ones that are business related and personal that I think are just super-super helpful. My favorite one in the past year has been *Essentialism*. And it's basically just – the whole book literally is just; say no to everything that's not important. So I learned that at Facebook and that book was a great reminder of it.

And even with our main product SumoMe.com, like we have one goal which is to hit a certain revenue target and every decision we do is either; does it help towards it or not, and we say no to everything else. The *Who* book, and feel free to interrupt me – I'm sure you will anyway –

Tim Ferriss: Yeah, we've known each other long enough. I'll jump in if need be.

Noah Kagan: Perfect. The *Who* book is; there's a longer book called *Top Greeting*, which I wouldn't read because it's thick. It's really thick. The *Who* book is like a condensed version of it and I learned it at Mint, where the founder was using it. And so *Who* basically helps

you create a framework for thinking about who you want to hire, the questions you want to ask, and then how you filter, find them and then get down to making sure you have the right person.

Matt's interview was great because he makes people audition for the jobs. I like that, but I also use *Who*, which helps you have some really basic questions that you could standardize so you can compare people.

Tim Ferriss: *Who* has some really solid chapters that lay out exactly the series of questions that you can ask at different points in the process. It's really solid.

Noah Kagan: What I'll do, Tim is I'll email you – after this I'll email you my – I'm so weird. I write book reports on every book I read and so I'll email you the book report on *Who*. You know it's funny; because if I make you read it you'll get more out of it because you have to keep reading the same message. Most books are one page but you repeat it enough times that you'll remember it. And so yeah, I'll send you the book report afterwards so that people can get the condensed version.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah – I'll add all sorts of goodies in the show notes.

Noah Kagan: My two other – my favorite sales and business book of all time, which is one the underground ones and I think you might know Amanda Holmes but it's from her father and it's called *The Ultimate Sales Machine*. This book is like an underground – I had it on my shelf for six months – it was one you kind of skip over. Like, I have books on my shelf now and I skip over them. I'm like; ah, I'll get to that one later. I finally got it for an airplane and I get on the airplane and I open the first page and I'm on the introduction and I'm like; all right – rabbit ear that page. Next page – rabbit ear; next page – rabbit ear.

Like the whole book was folded over and I finished it on that airplane ride. It's one of these books that not enough people talk about, but everyone who reads it is always like; oh, I'm really glad I read that one.

Tim Ferriss: You must fold your pages like origami masters do, because I usually hear dog-eared, but rabbit ear I kind of like.

Noah Kagan: Yeah. I'm actually even trying to carry a pen when I read certain business books because I just find easier to come back to the specific sections I want to write about in my book reports. Other

things – an old school book that if you're looking to do service type business, *Million Dollar Consulting* is great for how to raise your prices and how to actually start your own service or consulting-based business. I really like that.

Right now I'm really thinking a lot more about sales, especially since with SumoMe we're growing that product. So I read two books recently that were really strong on sales. One is *The Sales Acceleration Formula* and that is more around SaaS based selling but it can still be good for how to be good for –

Tim Ferriss: SaaS is software as a service, like the SumoMe's or the Dropboxes of the world.

Noah Kagan: Wow, you've lumped me with Dropbox? Thanks, bro.

Tim Ferriss: No problem.

Noah Kagan: The SumoMe's, the Google's – so it was basically like how to filter through people on LinkedIn – the specific text of how to ask for a referral. You don't email someone asking to hire them. You email them asking to refer someone else and that's generally a good way to get to know and possibly get a referral.

Tim Ferriss: Well, it's like raising money. People say if you want money ask for advice. If you want advice ask for money.

Noah Kagan: Actually, one thing that I think Shane – do you know Shane Snow?

Tim Ferriss: I do, yeah.

Noah Kagan: Oh yeah, he's been on your show –

Tim Ferriss: Yeah, he did a bunch of experimentation with Soylent when it first came out and then wrote the first kind of review of two weeks of being on my blog, which caused all sorts of firestorms. But yeah, I do know Shane.

Noah Kagan: I love Shane and I went to check out his book *SmartCuts*. It's a really good book too, but that wasn't even the point. Shane told me one of the great ways you can get a mentor or meet anyone you want to meet is just to interview them. So, that's something actually for me; there's companies I really respect like Taco Deli. It's my favorite Taco in the world in Austin. It's just like you reach out to people; it's like hey, I just want to promote you to my audience. Tim maybe you and me can even possibly later show

people how to get their own audience live, right in the show.

It won't be live; it will be recorded and you do it instantly when you listen to it on your phone. And so Shane was like; yeah, interview people and it's like a chance for you to meet and connect and it's the best way to get a hold of someone versus normally you would just ask in an email. You'd go; hey, can I just have something?

A few other books that I really enjoyed; *Spin Selling* really shifted my mindset about how you are going to be approaching customers and really thinking about like the formula, which is situation, problem, implication, and then like natural solution or needs solution. And it just really helps you transition people to be like; hey, what problem do you have, and thinking about if you're really helping them and saying; well, if you're going to need this help you should probably use our solution.

It's a great way to think about yourself as an advocate, which is like; what's your situation? All right – what problem do you have? Well, if we can solve it how would that make your life better? Oh – well guess what? We actually have that solution for that problem that we just solved for you that sounds like it was really important for you.

Tim Ferriss:

Yeah, absolutely – and this applies in more places than people might realize. So for instance, I had someone ask me recently why do you think people take action when they read your stuff? Like; it seems like there's a high conversion rate compared to most books. Like people actually take action and I'm like; well, I'm not sure if that's true, but I hope it's true.

And if it is true I think it's because in each of my chapters – let's just say in *The Four Hour Body* I basically just take that spin-selling approach of establishing the problem first and combine it the story arc of like the writer's journey or Joseph Campbell's stuff and tie it into a narrative that people can remember. So, it's these types of mental frameworks that apply to more context scenarios than I think people might realize.

Noah Kagan:

I mean it applies to everything. I mean I don't think people realize that the two most important things – I don't know if it's the most important thing, but two very important things – are copywriting and selling. And I think that and personal finance are three of the probably most under-valued or under-recognized things that people should spend more time learning.

Tim Ferriss: What have you read that has helped you most with copywriting?

Noah Kagan: The number one thing and it's completely free is the Gary Halbert letters. Do you know Neville? I'm thinking of my good buddy Neville.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah, we've met.

Noah Kagan: Yeah – Neville wrote a copywriting course and Neville got me in with him and his writing is just so fluid. Obviously it's practice, which I always hate because when you hear cliché things like; I know it's practice, but I want tips. And so the Gary Halbert letters; he wrote these things called The Boron Letters, where they were to his son while he was in jail. And they're just phenomenal copywriting pieces about how to sell and how to think about things. We can link to that. Those are totally free and great.

There is the other stuff like *Ogilvie and Advertising* is a really good book –

Tim Ferriss: It's so often recommended but so few people actually read it. It's a really good book.

Noah Kagan: Do you know what I did? And this is not a joke or you or your audience – like I in college; I in college, obviously that's a great sentence – in college I was in English as a second language.

Tim Ferriss: What?

Noah Kagan: I'm American. I was born in San Jose, California. My parents speak English, so I'm just trying to give you an idea of how bad of a writer I was and maybe still am.

Tim Ferriss: Wait – are you serious?

Noah Kagan: Yeah, dude – I was in English as a second language. It was me and a bunch of people who couldn't speak English.

Tim Ferriss: You took ESL courses?

Noah Kagan: Well, I didn't want to; I had to.

Tim Ferriss: Did you like crash the course or was it recommended to you?

Noah Kagan: No. It was a requirement at Cal because my English was so low. I wish it was like a joke; oh, bro – yeah, I couldn't speak English.

It's like dude; I'm from America.

Tim Ferriss: You know, it's funny you mention that because I remember looking at TOEFL, the test for English as a foreign language and people generally don't actually understand the mechanics of their native language very well, but you forget that and you think you're like; oh, I'm a native speaker. Of course I know English and then you look at the test and they're like; what is the difference between anything and something? And you're like; uh – I would totally fail TOEFL if I had to take TOEFL to get into anything. I absolutely would probably flunk out.

Noah Kagan: Yeah, and so I think that probably helped – and actually you know one thing that's not really a book but really probably changed the game for me at writing besides writing a lot, was getting an editor. And that's – because I would write something and I'd be like; this sounds great. I can't believe how good it is, and then I would show it to Neville or Anton at the Sumo team and they'd be like; this is garbage. Once they started reading it and giving me the feedback it changed. I'm like; okay, now I'm getting why it's not as entertaining or how I can improve things like photos and bold and how I shift around my sentence grammar and structure.

Tim Ferriss: How would you suggest people implement that for themselves? If they're asking someone to proofread something what are the instructions that you give someone or what type of person are you looking for?

Noah Kagan: Well, working backwards I'm looking for someone who I like their writing. And also I'll tell you what I did last year which was really helpful. I created an inner circle and it basically was people that I really enjoyed their writing and I said; hey, I'm going to create a small group of people – I think there's about five of us – and anytime we're putting out an article let's send it to the group and you could leave comments in the Google doc. Everyone could just leave a comment so it doesn't change the writing, but it can give you feedback about that type of writing.

And it also, when you finally finish the article those people would help promote it, which is a whole other marketing tactic.

Tim Ferriss: So those people then; you would upload a new doc to say a shared folder and then just invite those people via email? Or how do you guys –

Noah Kagan: Exactly – well, if you create a Google doc; so I go to Google docs

and create a file, just any file – I would share it with them so I would share it with you. And then on that file you can have it be just comment only. And so they would go in and leave a bunch of comments. I would go fix it and I'd be like; wow, that was actually a lot better and then subsequently even my writing gets stronger. And I would do it for them when they would have their articles.

Tim Ferriss: Got it –

Noah Kagan: I don't know about you, but I'm still at even though my blog has thousands of readers and gets a decent return I'm still scared of my writing because it's just like – and that's why I like having an editor because there's probably like tons of grammar that's going to get ripped on. It represents me and I want it to look good. So having an editor and my peers being able to edit my things especially with Google docs; I know a lot of people use like Hemingway or what is it, draft?

Tim Ferriss: Yeah, Draft I've used – it's pretty sweet. Draft I like; I haven't used Hemingway. I like the name despite the guy's somewhat unfortunate end.

Noah Kagan: Ah, but those are two ones for like group editing. So for writing those are the stuff and then the two ones I would say coming back to like selling stuff – *Spin Selling* I just mentioned; *The Sales Acceleration Formula* we've talked about and I'd say lastly there's a book called *Small Giants* –

Tim Ferriss: *Small Giants* is a great book. I'll let you describe it. It had a huge impact on me, though when I read it.

Noah Kagan: What was the impact, seriously?

Tim Ferriss: Well, I assume we're talking about the same book. It's Bo Burlingham – I think the subtitle; what is the subtitle? It's something like *Companies that Choose to be the best, not the biggest* or something like that, but the idea that size or growth does not have to be the measure of success if you're an entrepreneur. It's just a very conceptually uncommon thing to hear. That's one of the books that kind of put the finishing touches on convincing me that selling, trying to find price insensitive people to sell to is just a complete game changer. Or, making something that is so good and so over-delivers that you can charge a premium price – those are a few of the things that I took away from that. What about you?

Noah Kagan: That's very along the line – I think people that are listening that are

not in Silicon Valley, I don't think they understand like how – I don't know exactly how to share it, but everything is about if you're a billion dollar company and if you're going viral and if you're getting a lot of funding and if you're not you're a nobody and you're nothing and everything is pointless. It was refreshing to hear these pretty substantial companies like Cliff Bar or I think there's a beer company in San Francisco that were doing great things in big companies, but just doing it in their own way.

It's very empowering to realize that like yeah; you can do your own thing and it can be big and you don't have to compromise on those things. Like my favorite taco shop here – they've been around since 1999 and they have five shops, but our common notion is that you have to go viral – not viral, but you have to scale – so 10 shops and 20 shops and they're going at a pace that's comfortable for them. They don't have to be Starbuck's. They're just doing their Taco Deli thing and that's why I respect them and talk about them so much.

Tim Ferriss:

Yes. I think it can be a really profound awakening for people when they start to – when they sit down and really try to assess what would add value to their lives and more joy and excitement. That's very rarely money for the sake of money, because the money you exchange for an experience or interacting with certain types of people or any number of things and there are other ways to get those things besides scaling a company and making a bunch of money that you can trade for those things.

For instance, you mentioned the taco shop; you could look at other examples like Jiro from Jiro Dreams of Sushi and his like 12-seater, three star sushi restaurant in Tokyo. He has no desire to scale that, you know what I mean? In fact it's kind of antithetical to his entire personality and mission for perfecting his craft, right?

One of the examples from *Small Giants* is that there was an Eddie DeFranco example, but then there was another example which I thought was so awesomely niche and so just fantastic – and I'm pretty sure I'm getting the book right – it was Leather Pants and specifically the person who made leather pants for Cheryl Crow and they became hugely famous because she has nice legs and ass, but also the pants were really cool and I think for Aerosmith and so on, but it was one of these examples.

There was like this guy I bought a hunting rifle from, he makes 20 rifles a year and they're customized, they're just incredible. He'd done me a bunch of favors and I wanted one of his guns but it was

also just to say thank you. And they have no desire to scale and how that dramatically improves their quality of life and ability to optimize other facets of their live when you remove that as the sole objective.

Anyway, I'm really glad you brought that book up because I actually have it on my book shelf literally in my living room positioned in a way that any time I sit down on my couch I can see it face out right next to a handful of other books like *Zorba the Greek* and *The Magic of Thinking Big* and a few others.

Noah Kagan: Have you read Richard Feynman's book?

Tim Ferriss: Oh, *Surely you must be joking – Mr. Feynman?*

Noah Kagan: Have you talked about it on this show?

Tim Ferriss: I don't think I have, but that is actually another one of the half dozen books that's up on my shelf. Why don't you talk about that book for a second because it's one of my favorite books of all time.

Noah Kagan: It's one of these books and I have it, so if you ever meet me in person I have an extra copy because it's just that amazing. This is a guy who won the Nobel prize I believe. He helped create the atomic bomb.

Tim Ferriss: Yep, he worked at Los Alamos and also helped identify the o-ring that caused the Challenger disaster.

Noah Kagan: And just the amount of stuff he's done; you're like okay – this guy has got to be weird and he's just so greatly weird and he talks like a human. I think the biggest thing that I took away from the book is just this curiosity to life and experiences where he would just start like; oh, one day I just thought drinking wasn't fun so I stopped drinking. And he walked out of a bar and never drank again or he wanted to pick up – was it bongo drums?

Tim Ferriss: Yeah – bongo drums – he also wanted to learn how to pick up women, so he would go into bars. He just didn't give a shit what other people thought, too which was amazingly refreshing. He decided he wanted to learn how to safe-crack, to open safes. And so he would prank people in Los Alamos where they were building the atomic bomb, so he would take out confidential papers and like put them on the desk of somebody he wanted to freak out.

Noah Kagan: So, the Feynman book and what I loved most about it is that it just

makes you curious about the world. I was mentioning briefly like my brother's kid is touching grass and I was just like; I've seen grass and touched grass and like whatever, and this kid is like touching grass and feeling it and experiencing and it makes you just kind of appreciate all the things that are going around in life in the world. I'm like; yeah, that's really great and I think that book just inspired me that and that's why I highly recommend it.

Tim Ferriss:

It's a must-read. And also the fact that when he was on his last legs towards the end of his life he was still doing things that he – that challenged his belief systems or his skill set. So he learned how to paint very late in his life. As a scientist who was a super diehard engineer who really felt like the romanticizing of say people who would argue that the scientist takes the magic out of something like a flower because they deconstruct it in scientific terms. His argument was that it's entirely the opposite. We can appreciate so much more that you can't see, but felt compelled to trade best practices with a friend of his who was a well-known painter and become a white belt again and suck at painting.

I don't know if this was in his book. I think there's actually an interview with Richard Feynman. I'll link to this in the show notes at FourHourWeek.com/podcast, but there's a YouTube video that I'll link to called "The Pleasure of Finding things out," and I think in that – it might be somewhere else – he would go to strip clubs to paint as like an old dude and just was really not affected by public pressure. That's something I admire so much especially in times when I feel defensive, like I have to protect something that I've created or anything like that.

The fact that he was willing to seemingly throw it all away by doing things that would negatively his reputation when in the end they never did. Nobody cared. They were too busy thinking about themselves.

Noah Kagan:

Exactly – and to add to that, Tim I think you're right on the money. One thing that I started doing is that I try to notice when I'm feeling really good, or like what happened to make me feel really good? I was noticing that reading and studying and learning and reading Feynman's book made me feel really good. I notice that as you get older that you schedule your day around all the work stuff you're doing. And so on Tuesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon I schedule nothing but learning.

So every Tuesday – it's on repeat – and that's one of my tactics is that I put things on repeat on my calendar, so 10:00 a.m. to 12:00

noon every Tuesday and my friend Neville again got me into learning from YouTube videos. I'm like; YouTube videos? And so I go on YouTube and I bookmark specific people so Feynman videos are amazing and then Elon Musk's videos are just as phenomenal. I was like; wow, you can learn from YouTube. I never really thought of intentionally going to find things to listen to and watch.

Tim Ferriss: How did you choose that time on Tuesday?

Noah Kagan: Monday I do team meetings. I kind of would be tempted to do it all day, but Monday is kind of like my organization day. We can talk about it afterwards; I do a specific thing that really helps me on my Mondays. So Tuesday is the next day that I'm available to start thinking about things because most of your good stuff doesn't come when you're doing; it comes when you're thinking.

And then I'm starting to incorporate on my Thursdays trying to do like a 5:30 like disc golf, so like on Thursday afternoons or Thursday mornings 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon I'll try to go out and play disc golf or go for a bike ride or something where I just have time where my mind is like a little more free.

Tim Ferriss: Do you have your activities clustered by day? Like what do you do for instance – you said team meetings on Mondays – is there a certain focus on Tuesdays aside from the studying? Like Wednesday, Thursday, Friday – do you break things out and categorize them that way?

Noah Kagan: I don't batch – the way I look at my week is on Monday mornings I basically have three categories that matter to me, which is like work, work-out, and personal. And then I label three things for each one. In work-out I put four, because I work out four days a week. So I have three things for work, four things in work-out, and three things for personal and then I put those in my calendar during the week about when I want to batch those tasks. Like I want to do my work-ins this time during these days, and then I leave the rest of the calendar open.

And I learned it from Mark Andreassen. He was like; certain things are going to be more important certain days. I'm not going to try to block it out for something else. So then I just focus on the three that I commit to doing during the week and every Monday I review my calendar with my friend Adam from MyBodyTutor.com. We share what we say we're going to do, see how we did and then –

Tim Ferriss: What was it called – MyBodyTutor?

Noah Kagan: Yeah – have you heard of MyBodyTutor.com?

Tim Ferriss: No – B-O-D-Y-T-U-T-O-R?

Noah Kagan: Yeah – we can stay long and talk health and fitness, but he basically has helped me get ripped abs and now he’s helped me bulk up to 200 and he’s helping me get back down to bulky and ripped at like 175. I’ve been working with him for a little over four years and he’s one of my best friends.

Tim Ferriss: What are some – I’m sorry, go ahead.

Noah Kagan: Well, I was just going to say that’s how I organize my week around Mondays. I email him a review of the previous week using FollowUp.cc because it reminds me and I think if you don’t review what you’ve done it’s hard to know how you’re progressing and then I commit to what I want to do this upcoming week. And so everyone should get an accountability buddy. So Adam emails me and he’s like; yo – why didn’t do this last week or; how come every week you’re doing the same crappy thing that’s not doing anything? You should think differently about it.

So I think for side products or full time businesses I still do it with him and I’ve been doing this with him for a few years now.

Tim Ferriss: Very cool. I want to pick a little bit at some of the tips you have for people who might want to gain muscular size. Before I get to that I want to add a few other resources. So you mentioned MyBodyTutor, which is great – I hadn’t heard of it, so that’s definitely going to go in the back of my mind on the list. A couple of others that people might like for finding accountability partners would be Coach.Me; it used to be Lift and I advised those guys and have had fun running experiments with them.

There are two others actually: Stickk.com – S-T-I-C-K-K.com where you can put money on the line that you can lose if you don’t hit certain milestones, which is very incentivizing for people as a consequence and then one that is very strictly money-related, which is DietBet.com. So if you want to lose weight you can put together a betting pool basically and make that work.

For gaining muscular size, I as you would imagine get a lot of questions about this, but what were the biggest – if you had to give

someone advice, say a guy who was your size before you started bulking up, for gaining 40 pounds in six to 12 months. Let's just say most of that should be muscle. What would be the advice? If he said; I've never been able to gain weight, man – I think I'm doing everything that I could possibly do – what are your tips?

Noah Kagan:

Well, I would start with a foundation. So, I wouldn't actually even recommend this to most people because it is challenging once you hit that goal to come back down because you get comfortable eating like nachos and you get comfortable drinking beer. Obviously some people do clean folks, but I do a mix of it so what I would actually recommend is get a foundation of being able to eat healthy consistently in maintaining or losing your weight – probably maintaining I would say for at least six months to a year.

I had been doing a consistent diet for two years before I even tried to bulk. So I don't think that unless you have the mental capacity to be able to control it I wouldn't recommend it because it's very easy to kind of get lost with it. And that's how MyFitnessPal and Adam were so helpful because for two years I was eating very consistently and losing weight and gaining the body I wanted. The one thing that was actually fascinating, Tim was until I started doing MyFitnessPal I was going to the gym like three or four days a week but I was staying tiny. I'm like what the heck is going on? It was because I wasn't eating enough protein.

Tim Ferriss:

You can say fuck.

Noah Kagan:

Uh, frick? Dude, I don't know – I was on Pat Flynn's podcast and he's just like; I had to edit half your interview. And so I've been watching *Big Love*, the Mormon TV show, so I'm just all Mormon about it. Anyway, so basically for a long time I wasn't eating enough protein and that's why I wasn't getting bigger. That's what made me a little more curious about it so number one I'd say try just maintaining or losing for a year so that you're comfortable with it.

The big thing with gaining weight – so I went from 160 to 200 in a few months – so number one I would say plan your calorie intake and how much you actually need to be having each day because otherwise besides that you're just blind. You're just like; well, I should have this many and you don't really know. So, if you want to hit a certain weight just work backwards from how many calories you need to be eating every day to get that amount. I'd say the big things for me were; one, I had a buddy who was doing it at the same time and that was a game-changer because he's doing it

and he's gaining weight and I'm like; well fuck I have to do it, too.

It was just much more helpful to have someone supporting me. It was one of my best friends, John Ross who's local and we're both gaining. Secondly, I did use WeightGainer, which I haven't looked at it and there's tons of science but it does help you gain weight and get the mass that you want. It does go away a little bit because of the creatine wall, which I don't know it super well but that really helped me significantly gain weight.

Ultimately you kind of have to look at; all right – you get tired of eating. You get to a point where like; I am sick of eating so much – what is the cheapest way to get as many calories and as much protein in my body to help me gain this weight?

So in the morning it was like; how can I do protein shakes, Quest Bar, egg whites, eggs – whatever I could take – and basically doubling everything I was already currently doing. So whatever you think you're eating eat double, but basically at some point where you have to figure out – and what I started doing – is what is the protein ratio of food and just eating the highest protein to highest calorie food to really put on as much weight as possible.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah – the working out isn't the hard part – it's the eating by far.

Noah Kagan: And you plateau, man – I hit like a 170 plateau, 180 plateau, 190 plateau – and you know what's funny? For last night I wanted to hit it by March 1, the 200 pounds and I was at like 197. My girlfriend was like; it was like 10:30 and I'm like, ah, I'm not going to hit. She was like; you need to stop being a bitch and start putting some food in your mouth. And I ate and drank and ate and then before midnight I was like Cinderella – I hit my 200. There was one other thing that was helpful, Tim and I don't know what tool you use. I use Withings' scale –

Tim Ferriss: Yeah, Withings – the automatic sort of WiFi or Bluetooth-enabled scale that automatically creates graphs for you.

Noah Kagan: So what I do is I have a Withings scale and you can embed your weight chart online so I embedded it online and I shared it with Adam. He would check in with me every day to be like; you're skinny, you're fat, you're fat, you're doing well, why aren't you gaining more weight, and so forth. And it's very counter because most people want to lose weight and so when you're trying to gain weight – and especially me; I'm like the guy you never wanted – before I would say I'm the guy you never wanted to eat with,

because I'd be like, egg whites? Can you separate the cheese particles? Can you put no butter?

I'm like; God, do you want any of the food that they're serving you? And so it wasn't shifting me but then having Adam and then I have a Facebook group where I was posting my weight. I think the more people that you have that care about you and that are checking in on you on a regular basis the more it was easy for me to accomplish that.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah – the more you get people invested in your progress – that could be a Facebook group that you create – or just promising to put Facebook status updates once a week for instance and making that commitment publicly is extremely helpful. A couple of points I'd like to underscore: the first is the fact that leaning out first will help you bulk faster.

There are a bunch of biochemical reasons for this and also neuroscience-related reasons just in terms of regulation of leptin and grellin and all of these things where if you lean out – even for two to four weeks; it doesn't have to be that long – but certainly getting to the point where let's just say hypothetically you choose this low-carb diet from FourHourBody, you're already at say 14 percent body fat, you drop two percent to four percent in four to eight weeks, then you will have developed probably a very good degree of insulin sensitivity.

Insulin is an anabolic hormone. That's why body builders sometimes inject insulin – competitive body builders – which I would never recommend because you can kill yourself.

Noah Kagan: Hmm – what does that do for them?

Tim Ferriss: It allows them to store more calories ingested in muscle tissue and elsewhere, but it's a very, very dangerous thing to do. You can mimic that a little bit with say low doses of alpha lipoic acid and there are other things that act as insulin on the medics, as they would call them, but if you lean out – if I really, really want to get big for whatever reason – I haven't done it in ages because it's just such a slog. I mean you feel like a co-baby beef cow just being fattened for slaughter. I mean it's really – it's so laborious. Oh my God.

Noah Kagan: Like I got to where I didn't want to eat – at first it's hard to do – you're like; ah, I shouldn't have egg yolk even though I know fat is good and all that stuff. But then you have egg yolk and then it's

like six egg yolks and then you're like; fuck eggs.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah, exactly – but you do have your kind of your Supersize-Me moment where you're like; hmm, this is amazing. Yeah, baby and then a week later you're like; can I stop please? I want to tap out, please on the eating. On the training I'd be curious to know what your biggest mistakes were that you'd been making from a training perspective.

Noah Kagan: Totally – I mean the number one thing was that I wasn't eating enough in the beginning – so even like last year when I wanted to start getting bigger muscles I just was eating so little food. I'm like; well I'm supposed to eat light like egg whites and these things and Adam was like, don't you want to get bigger? You need to eat more food and stop being a bitch. And so I started eating the egg yolks and Tucker Maxwell always gave me shit for it, too. He was like; dude, you've got to stop being a bitch, and I guess maybe that's been a common theme.

And so you do that and you realize like bigger dogs eat more food so if you want to be bigger, you need to put more in. So, that was number one and then I started just doing heavier sets and less reps.

Tim Ferriss: So, what were you doing and what did you change it to?

Noah Kagan: There are actually a few different programs. There's a guy named the Online Coach and he does a thing called the SHUL program. It's like something hypertrophy –

Tim Ferriss: Scholl, like S-C-H-O-L-L?

Noah Kagan: S-H-U-L – that's a different program that I was following. So I followed his program and a lot of his program was like super-heavy weights, five sets, and then I would focus on just core movements. So, I'd break my thing out into four days a week. The biggest mistake was that I was doing super-high reps with lighter weights for a long time. Now I just wanted to get bigger and bulkier and it's funny, because when you saw me you're like; holy shit – you're huge. And it's like; one, I ate a ton and I monitored it and I lifted a ton heavier versus the lighter weights which in my opinion just gave me more of the definition.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah, or just make you more injury-prone depending on how you do it. Certainly there are a lot of folks who do high-rep, high velocity, which is just asking for all sorts of issues. Now, is the SHUL program, the Online Fitness Coach, was it a sort of five sets

of five reps type of situation?

Noah Kagan: Exactly.

Tim Ferriss: Okay – so it’s very similar then. There’s a book that’s become very popular among engineers oddly enough in Silicon Valley called *Starting Strengths* by Mark Rippetoe. And Rippetoe knows his stuff. He has a very pragmatic approach to this stuff. He actually has a second book and probably more, but one that I really enjoyed – which is a lot denser and probably not the right one to read first – but called *Pragmatic Programming*. It’s all about medium-term and long-term planning of training and how to cycle it and so on, but I think that’s biting off more than –

Noah Kagan: Which one should we start with, the *Starting Strengths*?

Tim Ferriss: *Starting Strengths*, yeah *Starting Strengths* or for simplicity’s sake I think a lot of the protocols that Pavel Tsatsouline – some people say his name Tsat-sou-leen, but it’s Pavel Tsatsouline who really popularized kettle bells in the United States. Some of his programs are just amazing. There’s one called – if you search Easy Strength and Pavel’s name – a lot will pop up. It’s very simple and my podcast interview with him went really deep into a bunch of his approaches for strength and endurance and flexibility. Pavel knows his stuff.

Also, a great example of finding the minimum effective dose that produces the largest disproportionate output or outcome – yeah, *Starting Strengths* is hard to go wrong with.

Noah Kagan: You know, two of things that I would say really helped me during that whole process of trying to gain strength and fitness – you know it’s funny – as much as we want less input and more output which I think you’ve done really well because you figured out how do I get the maximum for less, but part of it is consistency. Which; I’m not going to spend a ton of time on because you have to go. That’s my point, because in my calendar if you looked at my calendar today, Tim; Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday there’s gym in there automatically. I don’t even get to choose. It’s just there at a certain time and I do it every week.

So, consistency has been big and then secondly this is kind of more of a hack one – it’s not really a hack, but just something that motivates me – I follow fitness people on Instagram. A lot of people use Instagram for all their friends that post stupid photos and I don’t really follow any friends. All I follow is rappers and

fitness people.

Tim Ferriss: What is your Instagram?

Noah Kagan: NoahK@Instagram.

Tim Ferriss: Got it.

Noah Kagan: But I follow like this online coach guy. He posts great workout videos. They post things – like there are a couple of people I follow – like his are great and what’s awesome about it is that they just post all of their different workouts, what they eat, motivation and so on. During the day when I’m on the toilet or I’m feeling lazy I go on the Instagram and I see that their bodies are ripped –

Tim Ferriss: And what was your recommendation? We’re going to come back to look at ripped bodies while sitting on the toilet, but –

Noah Kagan: Well, the two things I was going to recommend are number one; I basically went and upgraded our router to like an Aces RT86 Dynex Dasher, but basically focus on the things that are the highest levels of the funnel. I notice my router is the first thing that my internet that affects all of my work. And so we went in and I don’t know – this is like a \$200 or \$300 router, so if you’re at home and you’re working and your internet matters, like go and invest in that, because that’s at the top of the funnel. And optimize the things where you get the biggest results downwards.

Tim Ferriss: Definitely – so you said two things – what’s the other one?

Noah Kagan: Oh, no – it was the router. The router and then Instagram –

Tim Ferriss: Well, let’s come back to Instagram – so, looking at ripped people – I wanted to; I thought I was a weirdo maybe on my own, but I actually do the exact same thing. I’m trying to get better at gymnastics and more body weight calisthenics-type movements, so almost all of the people I follow on Instagram – and I’m just Tim Ferriss with two R’s and two S’s on Instagram –are like gymnastic bodies or maybe gymnastics bodies.

It’s incredible – there are a couple of very impressive Parkour athletes and acrobats including a friend of mine name Travis Brewer, who competes on *American Ninja Warrior* and was actually one of my Parkour teachers for *The Tim Ferriss Experiment* when I destroyed my entire body, but like a really fantastic and just an incredible, crazy athlete. And I’ll do the same

thing – when I am feeling rushed or inclined to skip training for whatever reason I will go on Instagram and check those folks out.

Noah Kagan: Yeah – do you follow calisthenics teams or?

Tim Ferriss: There are a number of them. There's like Calisthenos, I think is a Greek guy. There are a bunch of them. I mean there are so many of course. There are only maybe six to 10. There's a guy – I want to say his name is Trevor Blackwell – I'm also following some Olympic weightlifters or guys who do Olympic lifts who are beasts just because that's another thing that I'm kind of focused on at the moment, but that's a much longer story.

Let's flip gears a little bit and talk about some of your business rules or guidelines. You've mentioned before I think the 411 and I'm just hoping you can elaborate on that and maybe talk about some of your other guidelines or rules that you have.

Noah Kagan: Yeah – so coming back to some of the business things that have worked really well – I mean, what I've learned and I've noticed my brother is starting his own business and Neville is a guy I've mentioned earlier who's trying to get certain things organized and I realize that like simple rules are actually the easiest way for you to be successful. And so the 411 is specifically for AppSumo and you can apply it to yourself, but we basically were like; how many deals do we need to do a month to be successful?

And then we can just follow that rule, so for AppSumo it was 411, which was just like four deals a month, one free deal, and one promotion of an internal product every month. As long as we do that, we're successful. That's for us, but for yourselves listening – how can you create simple rules like; once a week I have to do a blog post. Once a week I have to make a sales call – and do the one, one, one thing which every week you do that one activity. I've just noticed that the more we have simple rules it just makes it a lot easier for us accomplishing those things and then we check in one them.

It just makes life a lot easier and a lot more effective and likely that they'll be accomplished.

Tim Ferriss: Do you use a Google spreadsheet or project management stuff, like a Base Camp or a Sunna or Trello or whatever? How do you actually keep on top of that stuff with your team so that it doesn't just get written down on a piece of paper and lost along the way?

Noah Kagan:

Exactly – so I call the Susan Soo formula or the Angry Asian Mother formula depending on who you’re talking to. So, Susan Soo is the five foot nothing Asian chick who’s like one of the most badass chicks you’ll ever meet. And so she came in on sales for us for about a year two years ago and what she did and we do it on the sales team is that they check in every morning and every evening.

And so, Susan Soo would be like; what are three things you’re going to get done today? And at the end of the day it’s; what three things did you get done? It’s definitely a lot of work but I’ve been doing that with – like Neville was trying to grow his email list and every morning he’s like; here are the three things I want to do, and at the end of the night he checks in with me and he’s like, here’s what I got done today and here’s my progress.

What I recommend for most people though is I do a once-a-week check-in with everybody personally and I find that to be the most helpful. If you want to be Susan Soo level do it daily in the morning and evening and that’s insanely effective because it’s like; here’s what I’m going to do, here’s what I got done, and you get that stuff moving forward for sure.

For me at AppSumo at a higher level I check in every week. Generally I just check in on a person and we have a dashboard that we check in on every day.

Tim Ferriss:

Is the dashboard in Google Apps or what is the tactic that you’re using for that?

Noah Kagan:

The dashboard? You’re going to be pretty surprised. It’s literally something we made. It’s just one number. So, I’ll tell you; for SumoMe our goal is to make \$1 million revenue business this year so that’s our goal for the business and so we have a target of how much money we need to make a month, which is \$83,000. And then we know how – so the website is just literally what is our revenue against that – it’s literally one number. And if you ask anybody in our company, like I’m actually curious to ask them; well, I don’t walk through it on the interview – but I’ll ask them in our team chat right now, what is our team goal for the year?

And this is something I learned from Zuckerberg in terms of how to get things organized. I don’t try to organize everything. I try to focus on what’s my number one goal and that’s what Zuck did, which the number one goal for him was growth. I don’t know if I mentioned this story to you before, but I went to Zuck trying to get

him to make money. Did I ever tell you this story?

Tim Ferriss: No – I'd love to hear it.

Noah Kagan: I went to him and I was like; dude, Facebook needs to be a real business one day. Let's make some money. Don't you want to stay in business and make a lot of money so that we can be a company one day and really profit. And he's like; Noah, does that help us grow? I'm like; no, it won't help us grow but it will help us make money and it will help the business. He's like; does it help us grow? No.

And so what he did that I've applied in my business – and that's all I ever do now – is that I pick one very specific goal and I check on it on a regular basis. So, as an example let me just break down the SumoMe one. Our goal is \$1 million a year. I have a spreadsheet that breaks out how much money that is each month. And then we have our dashboard that shows it every day, about how we're progressing towards it and then every month on the first of the month I just check how we did against what I projected that we need to be doing to hit our goal. And so everyone is focused around that one goal and nothing else.

Tim Ferriss: I love this and this is something that when I'm say, interviewing people and trying to obviously pick up lots of things that I can use myself – and this is not just for publication; I like talking to people like you so I can pick up new book recommendations, tools, approaches – and this is very consistent when you look at the very top, top performers. For instance we mentioned Peter Thiel earlier, who is not only a billionaire but he's done it several times over in different ways. I mean that's very, very hard to do.

He was famous it turns out and this could be apocryphal – I don't know if it's totally true, but I think it is – that at Paypal he gave every person one top objective and it was a measurable objective. If they came to him for an office-hours type of meeting or pulled him aside to ask him a question about why don't we do this, or hey I need some help with such-and-such, he would ask them; how does this contribute to your number one priority – X? How is it driving the numbers forward? If it was not related he wouldn't talk to them about it.

Noah Kagan: That's exactly right. That's what we do at AppSumo. For the SumoMe.com product I ask our team on our team chat; what's our goal for the year? I was joking when I said; 100,000 monthly recurring Potatoes. His nickname is Potatoes so that's what he calls

money, but everyone on the team knows everyone is aligned and for AppSumo in the past it was like last year it was like one billion people seeing SumoMe.com. We hit it about a year before and it was \$1 million with Monthly1K.com, which we did. A year before that it was 500,000 email subscribers.

The point is not that wow, Noah gets everything done – it's just that I don't do anything else.

Tim Ferriss: And that comes back to the essentialism book that you were mentioning earlier, which really kind of drives that point home.

Noah Kagan: Yeah – obviously you have your high-level things and you break it down so like I was telling you right now we're struggling with two customers: we have small, medium business self-serve and then we have enterprise. And so I have to come back and look at; all right – which helps us accomplish our goal better? That's what I have to go and spend time solving to then say; all right – what will help us faster and easier hit that number one goal and then focus just on that. And then kind of keep on going through that process; right now I get interview requests probably every two days. They'll be like; hey, come and talk to me in an interview.

I'm like; will this help me get to my goal faster than doing another activity? And it won't, so I don't do it. That's the sort of thing like this interview; I'm like yeah, okay. A few people have heard of Tim Ferriss and a lot of people will check this out so it will be significant enough and worth my time to really help me accomplish my goal. Everyone on the team is aligned with that.

Tim Ferriss: So, speaking of goals I think a lot of people have goals. They're like; you know, yeah that Noah guy has been talking a lot about building an email list. Yeah, I know he's helping Neville. I should really do that – and they have these should-do-that's and that's as far as it goes. Maybe they take a note, maybe they put into their notes on their iPhone or whatever and that's where it lives forever and it never gets implemented. So you mentioned earlier that you would do a demo or basically give people something they can do now to punt the ball down the field a little bit and make some progress and I think you mentioned email subscribers.

Correct me if I'm wrong, but what is that exercise?

Noah Kagan: Yeah, so SumoMe.com has free tools to grow [your website, so how to get a bigger email list, how to get more shares –

Tim Ferriss: And just for people who are listening I use that on my blog and it's

not because I do love you, but it's not because I love you.

Noah Kagan: Oh, Timothy – so, here's what we're going to do: I think that one of the things that people love about you and what I respect about you is that you're about getting shit done. Like, for workers how do I get things done, how do I do less work to get even more things done and you really understand the elements of those things and you're very curious and very specific about that.

So, I'd love for you to listen to notes, but anybody who does what I would teach them to do – the highest-result person – we're going to do a giveaway and I'm going to pay for it where I will fly you to hang out with me in our office and put you up in a room in a hotel – that sounds a little creepy – and you can work with us on any project you have for a day. We'll get you Taco Deli for the person that actually takes action, because I know for you that's really important, Tim and I don't want you to just listen to this interview and not do shit.

I want you to listen to this interview, take action and make your life better. That's what would make this worth it for me.

Tim Ferriss: And just so people have a context here – what is the deadline for doing this?

Noah Kagan: Well, I'm going to give you things that you can do in real time, so I will say a week from when this goes public because you should be able to do those things within that day and right now as you're listening. So, I would say if you have a week that's already long enough.

Tim Ferriss: Okay – got it. So I'll just say for guys to obviously avoid where prohibited, blah, blah, blah – you can't be in the military, you need to be over 18 years of age, you can't be whatever.

Noah Kagan: Dude, you could take over *The Price is Right*, man.

Tim Ferriss: Blah, blah, blah – and no purchase necessary and all that shit.

Noah Kagan: No, none at all – it's totally free and what I want to teach people is how to start a business or how to share your message with the world instantly even if you don't have anything right now.

Tim Ferriss: Cool – and so the person who does the most, you're going to fly them to Austin and show them a good time and perhaps free cuddles.

Noah Kagan: Well, I'll always have those, dude – bro hugs. Let me just start with how we did this monthly 1K product, Monthly1K.com, that shows people how to start a business with 5,000 plus people and I've been able to help a lot. A lot of people are just like; how do I start? I think the two things I want to say is; either if you want to start a business or if you just want to get your message out there, start it now so that whenever you want to do it in the future – I know Tim I actually was studying your popular interviews to figure out what stuff your audience would want to hear – and you actually said; hey, I wish I had an email list sooner.

So, if you have books or things you want to promote or get out there you can have direct communication with your audience. I would specifically show how anyone listening right now can get 100 people on an email list for free so that when they have a message they can get it out instantly.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah, let's rock and roll.

Noah Kagan: All right – so whoever gets the most on their email list within a week from when this goes live I will fly you out, pay for food, pay for hotel, and help you with whatever business stuff you want to be helped with. Here's what we're going to do: you have a phone and you're listening to this podcast. Is that how most people listen to the podcast, Tim?

Tim Ferriss: I think a lot of people are listening on their phones – maybe not exclusively but on whatever device – but let's just say you have a phone handy, sure.

Noah Kagan: All right – so if you're on your phone, I'm speaking right into the microphone. Come back to your phone or if you're on your computer come back to the computer and hang out. So I want you to grab your phone and here's what we're going to do: I want you to get 100 subscribers and I'll just say it again because I think it's important. If you want 100 subscribers it's so that if you ever want to start a business or if you ever want to promote something or share your message even, start it now so you can do it whenever you're ready instead of waiting until later and not doing anything, which will piss me off.

So, if you want to get 100 subscribers here's what I want you to do. Choose any topic you're interested in. Like Tim, let's actually – I'll do it live right now as well – what's a topic that you're interested in, Tim? Like something recently that you've been

thinking about or are reading about or are curious about?

Tim Ferriss: I'm interested in the ketogenic diets, like the Atkins –

Noah Kagan: Oh, the keto thing?

Tim Ferriss: Yep, I'm interested in that. I'm really digging deep into that right now.

Noah Kagan: Okay, so do you do a certain newsletter?

Tim Ferriss: I am – I thought I had my hands full already –

Noah Kagan: I think you're a little bit busy. All right – I will do the keto topic newsletter. I will get 100 people right now on it so that I can share that message with other people and then maybe I can say that Tim likes the keto diet. So, choose a topic that you're curious about and interested in and that you want to talk about to certain people. Here's what I want you to do: Tim, do you have your phone on you?

Tim Ferriss: I have my phone off because I didn't want it to interfere with what we were doing here.

Noah Kagan: Okay, so to pay attention to me – that's good. So for whoever is listening, here's what we're going to do: I'm going to take a photo of myself – hi! So, take a photo of yourself. Now I want you to go to your social networks –

Tim Ferriss: And I'll post all this stuff in the blog post also, which I'll give people info on, but continue Noah.

Noah Kagan: And here's what people are going to say; well, Noah and Tim have followers – fuck, who cares about followers. Even if you 100 people don't worry about that – it doesn't matter if you have 10, 100 or five. Take a photo of yourself. Now, I want you to post it on your social sites: Facebook and Twitter. You don't even have to sign up for a service – no; I don't have an email list – guess what's an email list provider – Gmail; that's a great way to start your newsletter.

Just to give you context: AppSumo is a high, seven-figure business and 90 percent plus just comes from an email list, so just to give you context about how the email list can create large businesses. So, post on your social: I am starting a newsletter and then attach your photo. You're going to see my photo on Noah Kagan. And then say: email me and then put your email. So I'm going to do

mine about keto, because I'm curious about keto. Email me – I'll put keto@OKNoah.com and this will go to my inbox and now I will get a list of people who will be curious about keto.

So, it didn't cost me any money and it took me about two seconds. So, if you're on your phone take a photo of yourself. Go to your Twitter and I'm going to go to my Facebook and just post it socially: I'm starting a newsletter about keto. Email keto@OKNoah.com. So I just tweeted that and now people are going to start emailing me about keto. That's one tactic, so we're going to do two more and then you will probably actually have 100 if not more people interested in what you want to talk about, so if you want to sell them something or if you just want to put out information ...

One thing that I've noticed Tim is that – one tactic that I do is in my OKNoah.com newsletter I have an auto reply when people join where I'll say; what's one thing I can help you with? And then they tell me their questions and that's actually businesses. People say; hey, Noah – I want help with this, and basically you just look for the pattern of what the kinds of questions that people keep asking you and you say; hey, email list – I'm going to create a book about this. It's \$10 – you pay me via Paypal and I go make it. And this is what taught to 5,000 people and they do it and they get businesses.

The problem, Tim is that people are like; it can't be that easy, because they're looking for some magic bullet or some golden trick or something more complicated, but it's not. It starts with one customer and helping one person and this is a way you can actually start it while you're listening to the podcast instead of waiting eventually to start your business.

Tim Ferriss: Definitely – and there are people out there like Neil Patel has done some very similar stuff. He's like; pay me this and then I will add you to this email list. It's so simple and makes a ton of money. I mean it doesn't have to be complicated. In fact, if it is really complicated it's probably not the right answer. So, you said there were a couple of other things that people should do?

Noah Kagan: Yes. So, I posted mine on Twitter and then post it on your Facebook and have people email you to subscribe. That's number one. And they just email you – you don't need any software; you don't need to sign up for [inaudible] which is free, but that's complicated. Just keep it really simple.

Secondly, go to your email signature. So Tim for you on your settings, on your phone – so if you have an iPhone; I don't know about Android – who uses Android, but on iPhone go to settings, mail and scroll to the bottom, to your signature. On your signature say reply to me if you want the latest tips on keto. If you already have a mailing list make sure you update your signature on all of your accounts on a regular basis. On my personal one it says; come eat tacos with me. People click it all the time and it's like; oh, you should join my newsletter.

Basically what I try to recommend to people that are just starting business is to keep it as simple as possible and don't spend as much money as possible and importantly, leverage the assets you already have available. What most people don't realize, Tim is that they have at least access to 250 people minimum on LinkedIn that could be potential customers. But they think; oh, I've got to do like a Facebook ad which is going to cost you money.

And I want to discourage that and so I'm trying to say; how do you already have assets? Do you already have a church group? Do you already have a Facebook or do you already have your colleagues that you can use as your customers to join your newsletter and eventually make a business out of because you could say; hey, I'm creating something and you should buy it and guess what? Now you have access to these people via your newsletter. Is this connecting? I can't tell if I'm talking to myself a little bit.

Tim Ferriss:

No, no, no – this all makes sense and I want to give just a quick text suggestion for people who might be like; oh my God, but I don't have – let's just say your name is Bob Jones – so I don't have a BobJones.com domain or I don't know how to create a keto@BobJones.com email address. A work-around for that which a lot people don't know about and it's so simple – I couldn't believe how useful this is when you figure it out. If your email address is let's just say BobJones@gmail.com. If you create BobJones plus anything you write at gmail.com your email will still get delivered.

So you could put on Twitter; hey, I'm starting a keto newsletter. Email me at BobJones, plus symbol, keto@gmail.com if you want to join. People email that and it then allows you to search by that email and then sort. You don't have to set up anything new. You're just using a plus sign and some kind of identifier before the @ symbol. It's super, super useful and expedient.

What you can also do for this is if you're signing up for a new

service or anything – a newsletter – you can put “plus” and then some identifier. So it’s like if I sign up for whatever – superunderoos.com and I’m like; you know, I wonder if these guys are going to spam me and I want to know if they do or if they sell my information or anything like that. I want to be able to automatically send to trash without giving them my real email address, right?

So BobJones@gmail.com, that’s valuable information. I don’t want to be getting shit from all sorts of people potentially if they leak my information. So I’ll put BobJones+Underoos@gmail.com and that way I know if my information has been leaked and I can just junk that email address and have it all go to spam for instance. So that plus approach is super-helpful.

Noah Kagan: I don’t think enough people know that one. The other thing I would add is that if you have a plus filter do that and in your settings create filters. So, what I would do for all these people in Gmail – I don’t know about these other services and most people use Gmail – but in labs, of Gmail, in your settings lab turn on canned responses and enable it. Then what you do is create a filter, and you can do this in the search box really easily. So I said keto@OKNoah.com or I could do my email address which is NoahKagan+keto@gmail.com which is what Tim was suggesting to you.

And so what you do is you search to@keto@OKNoah.com and I’ve already got two people emailing me for the newsletter.

Tim Ferriss: That’s fantastic.

Noah Kagan: And so what you do here is you click the little down arrow and you click filter messages like these, and you create a filter like this. Now it says; create a filter with this search and what I would do here is I would have a canned response of; look, I know you haven’t created any software, so set the canned response and the canned response would be when I create it, it’s like; hey, what are you interested in learning about keto? They would just tell me what I should be creating for them and possibly even selling them in the future.

Tim Ferriss: Definitely – and again I want to point out just a couple of things. Actually, before I do that are there any other steps or recommendations, and then I have just a couple of observations that I think might be helpful for people who might still find this intimidating.

Noah Kagan: Yeah – well, what I want to do is if you have a phone you can do this right now. If you’re listening to this podcast you don’t have to go anywhere else. You don’t have to pay for anything and you could start your business instantly, which I’ve never seen anyone do before, but you can do it with the technology we have available for free. So number one, post it on your social, post it on Facebook and Twitter – I put a photo because it’s a little more apparent. Maybe you want to put a little more text, and just give them the email address to email you to join.

On your signature – I wrote this, Tim and I think you’ll appreciate it – it says, for all my signature on my phone it says; reply to me with a hell yes if you want the latest keto news.

Tim Ferriss: I like it. I like it.

Noah Kagan: I’ve actually used that in some of our sales collateral and it works really well because people are like; oh really, hell yes? Sure. And so now I’m going to do it – I do it for sales but you can put in your signature and now that’s done – so in every 50 emails I send every day on average I now have probably about two to five of them be like; oh yeah, cool – hell yes. I’m like; what are you even hell-yessing about? But set up your filter and they get the reply and then now you have the questions to be answering.

The last thing I would say that is really cool is Tim, do you have favorites on your phone?

Tim Ferriss: Yeah, I have favorites.

Noah Kagan: I’m actually really curious. That’s fascinating. Who is on your favorites, man?

Tim Ferriss: My phone is off, so I’m not sure.

Noah Kagan: No, you know who’s on your – don’t act like that – who’s on your favorites?

Tim Ferriss: No, no – I’m not sure. Honestly I’d have to look at it.

Noah Kagan: I know I’m not. I don’t talk to you that often. Like on my favorites it’s just like my brother, my girlfriend, and a few other people like my co-workers. Go to your favorites because it’s the easiest one not to have to have to think about and just click on their names and then text them; hey man, can I send you information about keto?

It's cool diet information.

I want to go back to that point that was critical and I thought most people would probably ignore is that; just go to the people that already like you. If they won't even buy from you or are interested in hearing from you it's only going to get harder. It will not be easier, and what I want to do is you tipped your assets, you used it, you set up some passive things like your signature; and text the people that are your favorites and if they don't know someone then you ask for a referral. Hey man, do you know any person that's like a fattie or anyone who's like crazy into health that might be interested in keto news?

And this is just basic – obviously we can get more fancy and complicated, but this is the way that it starts. This is how you get that first customer. This is how you start the Facebook or Google or Amazon or Microsoft.

Tim Ferriss: No, and I just wanted to interject – I just want to say to people a few things. Number one is keep in mind you can always abandon the project. I think a lot of people are like; wow, but I don't know to run a newsletter. I don't really want to commit to another part-time job. Oh my God; like what happens if blah – what happens if this, what happens if that? It's like look, you can always just send an email to these people and be like; hey, I had a huge fire pop up. The keto newsletter is going to have to wait. Sorry, guys. I might have more news later, and then you're done. It's not a major life commitment. You're not getting married to the newsletter in like an Irish-Catholic family. I mean it's like you have options here.

Noah Kagan: It happened to me, Tim. It happened to me six months ago. I started an events business to show people how to start an events business where I sold tickets and then I made events and then I was like; I kind of don't want to keep doing events because I'm trying to run AppSumo and SumoMe. And so I just refunded the difference to people. It's very straightforward and always with integrity and just letting people know the expectations.

Tim Ferriss: And just to actually add another example, so I've done this many, many times. Sometimes things don't work out or you don't like it and you quit, so I tried to make a membership site – a very inexpensive membership site – as an experiment ages ago for \$10 a month or something like that. It turned out that at least at the time I didn't like managing it and the technology wasn't great so the experience wasn't perfect. I was like; you know, I just don't want to do this anymore. It's too much psychic drain and it's not worth

the trouble.

So I refunded everybody and there were several hundred people probably. I refunded everybody everything they had spent and just shut the thing down. You almost always have that option. But there are other things like the podcast – I was like; you know what? I'm not sure if I'm going to like this. Internally I'm going to commit to doing six episodes as an experiment and then I'll reassess it and I might ditch it and that will just be like my miniseries of podcasts. And it worked out so I kept on doing it.

So to bring you back to the competition then, for those people who are listening and go; hell yes, I want to compete: guys you can find the blog post for this episode at FourHourWorkWeek/podcast and I'll spell it all out. And in the comments you have to leave your results. And you have to leave your results just to make it easier for everyone on my side to manage you're going to have to put #Noah at the top of your comment. If you can't follow that set of instructions, we're not going to look up your comment, so do that: #Noah at the top of comment. And what should they include in their comment, Noah?

Noah Kagan: Yes – so, two things. There's going to be – there are definitely people in your audience. Like, your audience is awesome. I've met a lot of these people and they're all over the world. They're like; yeah I love Tim and now my life is changed from it, so I know that there are already people who are kicking ass and running successful businesses. They're like; well Noah, I already have a successful business. I'm in Australia –

Tim Ferriss: That was a great Australian accent.

Noah Kagan: Was that pretty good? That was my Australian and Kangaroo British accent. So, I'm looking more for the people who are taking action. So if you already have a mailing list, take action on really significantly growing that on the seven days. I'm looking for people who are going to have the biggest results either from zero to 100 or from 1,000 to 100,000 and so what I really want to see is; what have you really done to really grow your mailing list in the next seven days from when you listened to this?

And for the people, just to remind you: if you don't have a mailing list or if you don't have a business or if you have a business this is the best way to communicate with your customers whenever you want to sell them something or even if you just want to share your message with the world. You have direct access to something that

– how often do you check your email? I know how often I check mine. It’s a lot, especially if I’m on the toilet. I’m like; oh, email. It’s toilet time. Ah, I got an Instagram.

The second thing I wanted to mention, Tim; number on, #Noah at your comment and show me what you’ve done in this week and there will be full expenses to fly in from anywhere in the world, hotel, and you get to work with us for a day. The second thing is if you already have an email list – I was talking with Tim about it – we’ve put together on our side like a free no-upsell, cross-sell, down-sell free course for you guys so go check it out. If you have an email list already, that is email 1K.com/Tim and it’s fully free. There’s nothing to sell there. I’m sorry. If you want to give me money you’re welcome to, but not with this.

And that will be – it’s 10 experts that will show you how to grow your mailing list on more advanced tactics if you already have one.

Tim Ferriss: Very cool – and I will put this in the blog post as well, guys which will have show notes and links and all sorts of other things that we talked about in this episode. But, just to recap: in the comment if you’re going to do this #Noah your results and what you did, quantify it whenever possible and then I want you to end with the most important lesson that you learned in doing this exercise, so that the comments themselves become a very useful resource for everybody.

Noah Kagan: Good stuff and I just want to see people take action and then do it and then get results, because you can do it from your phone. There’s no excuse.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah. No, there’s no excuse. So, let’s do this now – you’re actually making me think of all the things I want to do now. And I know you’re running a company but –

Noah Kagan: Yeah – we’re going to go do a flotation. I’m taking my girlfriend for a surprise flotation. Have you ever done the flotation tank?

Tim Ferriss: I have done the flotation tank. Actually I was introduced or finally pushed to try it by Joe Rogan. And you’re talking about like a deprivation tank, basically?

Noah Kagan: Exactly – yep.

Tim Ferriss: Have you done it before?

Noah Kagan: I have done it before. I’ve actually done it on a first date, which I

don't recommend but I've done it many times.

Tim Ferriss: First date is a very – that's an intense, creepy kind of *Silence of the Lambs* kind of first date.

Noah Kagan: Dude, getting in a box naked in someone's house; it's not the idea of –

Tim Ferriss: Oh – you have a flotation tank at your house?

Noah Kagan: No, no – in Austin a few years ago there wasn't a public so we had a private one at some lady's house.

Tim Ferriss: That's so creepy.

Noah Kagan: So I was like; I swear this legit. I'm not just trying to get you naked. I just need you to get in this box naked and I'm going to close the door on you. And I'll tell you – on that experience I was actually really scared because that was my first time so I had a panic attack.

Tim Ferriss: Wow – that's no good.

Noah Kagan: But subsequently I've gone to larger ones that are like super-clean and legit and I do it like once a month. I generally bounce between that and Chinese massages, like the reflexology because they're only \$35 and it's like a secret that white people don't know. So I don't want all you guys going to do this now, but reflexology massages are \$35 or a Chinese massage – there's no happy endings – and it's the most affordable, effective massage I've ever found.

Tim Ferriss: Huh – yeah, I need to get on my reflexology action. I use something called a Rad roller, R-A-D; it's like two lacrosse balls melted together to roll out my feet each day. So, it's like these kinds of like nugget-sized recommendations I think are really fun. So let me – if you wouldn't mind – just in sort of wrap-up I'll ask you a couple of rapid fire questions. You don't have to answer super-super concisely, but just to the extent possible we'll try to do short questions and short answers and we'll do a couple of them.

Noah Kagan: No, it's like; hey, can you speak shortly? Not long – just do it. I'm like yes, less words – use my ESL skills.

Tim Ferriss: When you think of the word successful, who is the first person who comes to mind and why?

Noah Kagan: Evan Williams.

Tim Ferriss: So, for those people – he is the co-founder of Twitter, blogger, medium – all around baller. Why is that?

Noah Kagan: It's easy to do a business once and be successful. I think when you can do it multiple times you're a badass. And success is very relative to how you define it, but if it's money or if it's whatever it is you want to be, I think from a business creation and making society better Evan is very interested in communication. It's pretty big that you did Blogger; I think most people who do Blogger tap out. It's like Elon Musk: he did one thing. He sold a company and then he did Paypal and then he did another one. It's like him and Evan Williams are just like; holey moley – you don't just do it once, you do it many times.

It's easy to hit a home run once, but to do it consistently – I think the consistency of it and dedication is what's really impressive to me about that.

Tim Ferriss: No, I agree and what's also impressive and really inspiring about that is generally speaking the guys who have that type of consistency or gals and do it consistently are doing it for reasons other than the money because they already have more money than God in some of these cases. It's really about the mission and I think that's partially why some of them like Evan have spent time with us and he comes across as a happy guy. You know, it's not –

Noah Kagan: Why does that surprise you?

Tim Ferriss: It's incredibly surprising because the type A personalities that I usually run into who have hundreds of millions or billions of dollars are so driven that they have trouble appreciating anything that they have and I don't feel like that's the case with Evan. So, it's all the more impressive to me that he's able to maintain that type of perspective.

Okay – do you have any favorite movies or documentaries?

Noah Kagan: Yes – my favorite movie immediately is *Commando*. It's a horrible Arnold Schwarzenegger movie from the 80s.

Tim Ferriss: That's so amazing. Oh my God.

Noah Kagan: It's great. I don't know – as a kid I watched it over and over on Beta tapes, which you young'uns probably don't know about. Two of the ones that I think are just really well done are *The Count of*

Monte Cristo –

- Tim Ferriss: I haven't seen that.
- Noah Kagan: Oh – it's just such good revenge. If you just want to get revenge, like you have an ex-girlfriend or something and you watch this guy and you're like; ah, I need to be like him. And there's a recent documentary called *The Jinx*.
- Tim Ferriss: I haven't seen that.
- Noah Kagan: Oh, dude – you're going to blow your mind, which I don't think everyone wants you to do or no one wants you to do, but this guy blows people's minds with his gun. And he gets away with it.
- Tim Ferriss: Huh – it's a documentary?
- Noah Kagan: It's a documentary about Robert Frost, which you probably have read his name or seen his name somewhere, but like they get you and the ending is just insane. Go watch *The Jinx* and thank me later.
- Tim Ferriss: Awesome – I'll throw out another one for people who like documentaries: *King of Kong*. Or *Man on a Wire* – you can look at those two and then choose one to suit your tastes. What advice would you give to – how old are you now, Noah?
- Noah Kagan: 33, dude. I'm like dead in the internet zone. I'm like old and a dinosaur.
- Tim Ferriss: Yeah – you are a dinosaur. What advice would you give to your 25-year-old self?
- Noah Kagan: Ah –
- Tim Ferriss: And I say 25 – I've been saying 20, but everybody's a fucking idiot at 20 –
- Noah Kagan: I was going to say condoms – morning after pill, condoms – you know I'd say the number one thing ... Here's the thing; I think a lot of these things people can hear and then they just discard. So, let me just tell you how to do it. So, get a mentor. But you're like; I don't know how to get a mentor. Here's what you should do: email the person that you respect the most that's done the thing you want to do that you know right now. Have your phone and text them or email them and be like; hey, I think you're really like the best

person I know in this space. Can I meet with you on a regular basis?

If they are a person who is too busy for you, ask them who they'd recommend. Like, who do you learn from locally or on the internet or wherever that I could just talk to on a regular basis? And I really wish I would have been more active in securing that and you don't have to go try to get Peter Thiel or Tim Ferriss or Noah Kagan because we don't want to help you. We don't. We're busy doing things that –

Tim Ferriss: Well, we want to help at scale. It's hard.

Noah Kagan: Thank you. That's why we have Tim. He's a monster.

Tim Ferriss: I'll use the ugly word, the ugly S word in that capacity.

Noah Kagan: So, it's not that I don't want to help people – it's just that I don't have the capacity to help as many people as I'd like and so when I was 25 I think I would have spent more time finding someone that's done the things that I want and helping them and having active meetings with them. Dude, hey you've already done where I want to go; why don't I just learn it from you instead of wasting all the time that I had to do.

Number two at 25, I'd work for free so I would go help that person. So email your friend and be like; yo, can I meet with you? I'll help you with whatever you want. If they're too busy ask who they'd recommend.

And then third, I'd really just kind of look at your phone or your internet browsing or in your home and look at the products or services that I was using – today, right now – and go work for those companies. So, when I was 25 – and I did do this and I'm really happy I did this – but I was like; I like Facebook. I'm going to go try to work there. I just love personal finance. I did a personal finance workshop this morning with my team because I just love talking about money. And so I went and worked at Mint.

So, go and try to surround yourself or put yourself in places doing the work that you really want to be doing. The easiest way to do that is just look at what you're already enjoying and then figure out a way you could do that all day.

Tim Ferriss: Absolutely – and some other related bits: I just actually heard this yesterday from someone, an older gent actually. He's not above

asking for mentorship and I usually discourage people from using the word mentor or mentorship because it screams unpaid full-time job, so if you're going to pitch people don't use that wording. But I think the work for free piece is huge and what he said is that he got one of the biggest names in Silicon Valley to mentor him effectively although he didn't call it that because he said pretty much the same thing.

He emailed this guy out of the blue and said; I really respect what you've done with A, B, and C. I've read everything about it. Here are things I've done, if you have something that might be credible. If not that's fine. And then he said; I know you're working on a book. I would love to ask you some very specific questions. For every hour that you spend with me I will spend four hours proofreading your book or helping you with the book pro bono. And that's how he got the first meeting.

And then the guy agreed to meet with him on an ongoing basis for more than a year and never took him up on the proofreading offer even though that was sort of the sugar that made the pill go down. So, that's a really important point. Charlie Hoehn has some good writing on this – H-O-E-H-N on working for free.

Noah Kagan: 100 percent –

Tim Ferriss: Oh no – go for it.

Noah Kagan: His book *Recession Proof Graduate* is just epic for people starting out.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah – or anyone who's starting over or trying to reinvent themselves.

Noah Kagan: You know, there's a thing that you said that was super true. I just want to highlight it for everyone listening to this. Don't email people and be like; hey, I'll help you with anything – because I'm like; well now I have to think about what to do and you're going to be a shitty free-labor person. That's the worst. Roughly how many emails a day do you get where they're like; hey, I want to work with you. Can I hang out with you? Can I have coffee with you – from people you don't know?

Tim Ferriss: At least 100 a day.

Noah Kagan: Holy shit.

Tim Ferriss: It's directed to my team or to me if they manage to somehow spam 100 emails and get one right.

Noah Kagan: Exactly – and so it's interesting to think about like how does the person stand out to actually get a hold of Tim? And so – here's how you do it. One; somebody taught me this yesterday and I loved it – it was called the swipe the one thumb rule, which is, your email should be able to be one-thumbed on the phone. I thought that was a pretty good way of looking at it – the one thumb rule. The second thing is don't tell Tim – you could study Tim all day – all of your stuff is public or most of it that you're working on or thinking about. Go study Tim and do the work and then send it to Tim.

There's a guy, Bryant at videofruit.com and Bryan does this for a lot of people. He emails you and he's like; hey, I did this video for you and did this marketing roll for you. Hey, I did this document for you. Here, I'll just send it to you. I'm not expecting shit; and then you're like damn – this is really good. What else can you do? If you had just said; hey Tim, can I help you? I'll be your free intern just so I can learn and pick your brain.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah, and I don't reply to any of those, number one because I don't have the capacity and I think for a lot of tasks like that that are – and make no mistake, that's a task – I have to do that instead of something else. A piece of advice that I got from someone – and I'm blanking on who said this to me – but they said, I was like wow – okay that is great. And it sort of comes back to your point about doing your homework and they said; if someone hasn't done their homework to determine if something is a fit, I don't have the time to explain to them why it isn't a fit.

Noah Kagan: Ooh –

Tim Ferriss: Isn't that good?

Noah Kagan: Damn.

Tim Ferriss: And I was like; oh man – that is a gem. So when I have ended up doing for instance working with Charlie or whatever is number one, they did something of value that was highly specific and indicated they'd done a lot of homework that was very helpful and they didn't expect anything in return. But they did such good work that I was like; huh – wow, what else can this guy do?

Or maybe someone is like; hey – this is not an example; please, I

don't need 1,000 of these sent to me from you guys – but here's a summary of Podcast X. And I thought this would be useful for you to use as a PDF.

Noah Kagan: It has my logo all over it.

Tim Ferriss: But if they're like; hey if you want me to do a few more of these, like I have some dead time between now and blah –let me know, but if I don't hear back from you, no problem. I think another mistake a lot of people make is they – and I've been guilty of this in the past and I look back at some of my behavior when I was just getting started and I cringe because in retrospect I'm like; no fucking wonder I didn't get any responses. If you send emails like any of what we've described today and you don't get a response, don't take it personally.

That's easy advice to say, but I would take it one step further and the way you don't take it personally is assume that the people who don't respond have excellent reasons for not responding. Maybe someone in their family is sick. Maybe they're trying to take care of their kid who's having trouble at school. Maybe – fill in the blank – just assume that they have a good reason for not responding.

There's another expression. God, I wish I could remember who told me this, but don't attribute to malice that which can be explained by incompetence, but I would modify that and I would say; don't attribute to malice what can be explained by incompetence or just busy-ness, right? So, just because someone doesn't get back to you right away or just because someone sends you a short email and misses something don't immediately assume that it's because they're trying to fuck with you or because they don't respect you.

I see so many people get wound up and they're like; oh my gosh – I said blah – and they shoot themselves in the foot. I've been guilty of that myself. I think that I'm pretty quick to anger and very impatient, so it's taken a lot of effort to try to sand down the rough edges, but just one last tip is for finding mentors. A great way to do that is to volunteer for local business organizations that host events. That's what I did when I moved to Silicon Valley. So you can volunteer at events where they have local icons or business leaders coming to speak and you get to interact with those people.

If you're volunteering somewhere by the way, it does give you license to do a shitty job. Most people think that's true, so you can

stand out just by doing twice what you're asked to do as a volunteer. That's how you get to know people. Like I did – I got to know Jack Canfield, who co-created *Chicken Soup for the Soul* and many years later he introduced me to the guy who became my agent and he sold *The Four Hour Work Week*.

Noah Kagan: That's pretty cool.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah – all right, so Noah, next question: what is the purchase that you've made in the last say six months for \$100 or less that has had the greatest impact on your life?

Noah Kagan: Purchase in the last six months – I purchased it around that time but it's my Nutri-Bullet.

Tim Ferriss: I don't know what that is.

Noah Kagan: It's the Magic Bullet's bigger brother.

Tim Ferriss: The Magic Bullet, which is not a sexual device. It's a blender.

Noah Kagan: I guess it could be in some weird ways, but the Nutri-Bullet is basically like – I like smoothies and I like my protein shakes and I like blending up things. But it's always a pain in the ass to clean. And this you can just blend, drink out, and wash out and there's no cleaning. This is like the gift I give to the most people and I'm like; dude, if you don't have Nutri-Bullet in your kitchen you're missing out. It's just really effective for blending anything and getting it out. Like I have a Vitamix, which is like a \$500 blender and I just don't even use it anymore.

Tim Ferriss: That's a lot of cleanup for that thing.

Noah Kagan: Yeah – it's like I have to get a cleaning lady to assist me to clean that thing. And with the Nutri-Bullet you can do it in 20 seconds or less and it's just been a really effective – it's like one of those things that like, if you don't have it I just buy it for people because I know it's what they need.

Tim Ferriss: Very cool. Well, action-packed – I love how many things we were able to cover and yeah, I'd love to hear what people think and also the competition: people could check it out, so go to FourHourWorkWeek.com/podcast to check that out. One more thing I'm going to mention for folks is that you and I both were on an episode of *The Tim Ferris Experiment* and coached someone through launching their business and went through a lot of

information that we weren't able to cover in this episode, like creating call scripts and tons of challenges like the coffee challenge and so on.

So that I think people would enjoy checking out. But where can people learn more about you, Noah, find you online et cetera?

Noah Kagan: The number one thing for my personal stuff is going to be OKDork.com, O-K-D-O-R-K.com and business-related for the tools and a lot of the things I was talking about, it's going to be at SumoMe.com. That's a lot of the business that we've building and recommending for most people.

Tim Ferriss: Awesome – anything, any parting advice or thoughts that you'd like to give to folks?

Noah Kagan: I would – two other things; this is kind of the thing like I think there's a ratio of how much you invest in something to how much you get out. So if you're sending cheap emails to people like Tim or a customer or anybody you want, if you're sending a quick email you're probably not going to get a response because you're not investing that much. So I invest in researching shows and comments to see what is going to make this the most popular episode ever and that's what I wanted it to be with the number of comments.

So, make sure you comment even if you don't do the challenge. Two other things that a lot of people were asking about – we did morning ritual, but you guys asked what do I listen to while working out. And I want to share some of my favorite rap artists.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah, let's do it.

Noah Kagan: So your audience, if they want to get punked up I listen to like a lot of hard-core rap and I get mix tapes from DatPiff.com

Tim Ferriss: How do you spell that?

Noah Kagan: D-A-T-P-I-F-F.com, so I'll send you my Spotify list from my workouts, but the guys I listen to a lot lately are like Travis Scott and Wale's new album. Those two have been going really strong. So if you're going to work out, go check out Travis Scott and Wale.

Tim Ferriss: How do you spell Wale?

Noah Kagan: Uh, W-A-L-E.

Tim Ferriss: Uh-huh – Wale. Do you have any music that you listen to that you're embarrassed to admit that you listen to?

Noah Kagan: Mostly Emo, which is just going to be like Promise Ring. It's kind of like crying stuff. It's like; oh, I'm a little bitch. I'm a little bitch. So that's number one. I listen to Promise Ring; a lot of their stuff is good. The other thing, Tim is you guys talked about alcohol and people seem to like alcohol recommendations, so if you're a tequila fan, Casa Amigos is affordable and delicious.

Tim Ferriss: Hmm – I'll have to check that.

Noah Kagan: It's George Clooney's tequila and it's phenomenal. I drink the Raposado. If you're a little more expensive, which is the best for the price it's called Clase Azul and it's \$100 or \$89 and it's a porcelain white bottle and it's insane if you like tequila.

Tim Ferriss: Is that what you order when you walk into a bar?

Noah Kagan: Ah, it's normally \$20 a shot, so it depends on my mood. I'm like \$20 a shot? I have the bottle at home. I could wait. I'll just get a soda water. If you're a whiskey fan Balcone's single malt – anything by Balcone's – it's the number one whiskey in the world. It's a Texas whiskey.

Tim Ferriss: Balcone's, B-A-L-C-O-N-E-S?

Noah Kagan: Yes, sir.

Tim Ferriss: All right, Noah – well, we will have some tequila and tacos in Austin soon.

Noah Kagan: Oh my God, that sounds awesome.

Tim Ferriss: Thank you so much for the time, man. And everybody be sure to check out all the notes and goodies and links and recommendations, Spotify play list, et cetera at FourHourWorkWeek.com/podcasts.