

The Tim Ferriss Show Transcripts

Episode 140: Shaun White

Show notes and links at tim.blog/podcast

Tim Ferriss: Hello Ladies and Germs, this is Tim Ferriss and welcome to another episode of the Tim Ferriss Show; where it is always my job to deconstruct world class performers, to tease out the habits, routines favorite books, toothpaste, whatever it might be that you could apply and try in your own lives. This particular episode comes from a fun event, my first live podcast, which was at the iconic Troubadour in LA, I had a blast. I was nervous, but you guys sold it out in thirty minutes through the email newsletter so, thank you, thank you, thank you. And if you haven't signed up for the email newsletter, you should check that out, it's free. Just go to fourhourworkweek.com/friday, all spelled out and you can have a taste.

There were quite a few amazing guests at the event and we are going to divide them up into a few different episodes. The first is a professional snowboarder and skateboarder, you know who this is. Two-time Olympic gold medalist, Shaun White. Spelled like Shaun of the Dead, S-H-A-U-N, @shaunwhite on twitter and so on. He holds the X-Games record for gold medals at fifteen as well as the highest overall medal count at twenty-four. I believe he is also the only person to win gold at both the winter and summer X-Games.

Shaun has earned the number two spot on business week's list of the top One Hundred Most Powerful and Remarkable Athletes and he has created an incredible business and life for himself. He has made a lot of smart decisions where many athletes, particularly those who peek at a young age or become famous at a young age, make mistakes. And Achtung for those near LA and are willing to travel, Shaun is hosting an incredible event called Air and Style this weekend. Think of it as X-Games meets Coachella, where you can listen to world famous bands and musicians like Incubus, Chromatic, one of my favorites, then see jumps off of a sixteen story ramp. That's not a joke, sixteen story, among other excitement. So check it out at airandstyle.com, all spelled out. For twenty percent off, whether that's general or VIP admission, you can use code: TIMFERRISS, spelled properly with two R's and two S's. I don't get any cut and I bought it myself at full retail; four tickets for myself and friends. The code is only good until

midnight Pacific on February 19th. That is Friday, February 19th, so jump on it. Once again that's airandstyle.com, and without further ado, please enjoy my conversation with Shaun White.

Tim Ferriss: I thought we could start at the beginning.

Shaun White: Mm-hmm.

Tim Ferriss: So a lot of people are not familiar with the conditions with which you came into this world, the very beginning, the birth –

Shaun White: The very beginning?

Tim Ferriss: – of Shaun White.

Shaun White: Let me take you back. No, it was actually a little bit of a sad story, or just a bit of a struggle in the beginning. I was born with a heart defect, it's called Tetralogy of Fallot. I don't know too technically what happened, but some of the valves in my heart were leaking and I had to go in and have multiple open heart surgeries in order to correct this. I was known as what's called a blue baby, actually my skin was turning blue because I wasn't getting enough oxygen. My mom sent me in there, multiple operations, they said, "you're going to have a sluggish heart, he won't be very active."

You should be ready for these things and then sure enough I was like, I want to do that, I want to jump off things and run around. I only had a couple of incidents where I passed out on a soccer field once or I did something where I over exerted myself and I just wasn't ready for that. I don't know, my parents never really told me I couldn't do anything, which was I think the reason why I was never fearful. So I always went out, I would do sports, I would do whatever. The only thing I was told I couldn't do was scuba dive.

Tim Ferriss: Scuba Dive?

Shaun White: Scuba dive, I don't know why. It was like an anomaly or something about the air bubble getting caught, I don't know.

Tim Ferriss: Okay, got it. That was per doctor's orders.

Shaun White: As a little kid you're not really encountering a lot of scuba. It's like, ah, that's whatever. Now as an adult it's a real pain. You're floating on the surface and everyone's down there.

Petting sharks.

Tim Ferriss: Riding right, surfing sharks.
Shaun White: Yeah, it's heartache.

Tim Ferriss: When did you first meet Tony Hawk?

Shaun White: Man. Tony Hawk. I was – man I was probably like five years old or something like that. He would come to the local skate park. I was just lucky enough to grow up in Del Mar, was the area and he skated at the local YMCA in Encinitas. So I would go there and he would just be there. So I got to kind of like say hi and watch him do his thing. You know it's one of the best ramps in town. He grew up skating Del Mar. I wasn't of the age group that got to skate the cement park that they have, but there's a very famous skate park at Del Mar and so I ran into him all the time. I was a little fearful to talk to him, I mean it was Tony Hawk, so I never really said much to him. I just wanted to impress him enough with my skating that he would come talk to me one day. So yeah, he finally came to me and I was just like, "Yes!"

Tim Ferriss: Do you remember what move or what attempt at a move got him to finally break the ice and come over?

Shaun White: I can't recall, it was probably doing a McTwist, which is a trick invented by a skate boarder named Mike McGill, and it's like a front flip while spinning a 540. So 540 is degrees of rotation, you know, if you take a full circle is a three sixty, so they keep adding up.

Tim Ferriss: That was at age five?

Shaun White: No, that was later.

Tim Ferriss: I was like, man, I already felt badly about myself.

Shaun White: The stitches were healing and I was ready to go, my mom's like get out there.

Tim Ferriss: Just a fetus with a helmet on.

Shaun White: Yeah, yeah, showed a lot of promise. So I started to learn and he owned the company, Bird House Skateboards, and so it was my dream not only that once he'd then talk to me; in my mind, he was then going to ask me to ride for his skateboard company.

I had it all worked out. So he finally came up to me and we became friends, and he invited me to come do some demos with him, because he was doing these, you know, “Hey we're going to show up and we're going to skate and sell skateboards for Birdhouse and things like that.” And I was kind of the token little kid on the ramp, but I was learning at the time better and better tricks. So I slowly became a really, really good rider – skater, sorry.

Tim Ferriss: Is it fair to say, and I mean you might have even used this word already, but that he was a mentor to you? I mean you've known him for a very long time, or is that not the right label?

Shaun White: You know he really, he was and he wasn't. I mean, that's the funny thing, is he never really kind of like sat me down and gave me certain advice. It wasn't like, “Hey you should –”

Tim Ferriss: It wasn't Yoda imparting.

Shaun White: Yeah, you should make your own video game or you should do this. It never really was him telling me what to do or advice or anything.

He was just actually the only guy going through everything that I was just about to go through. I mean, his video game came out, he just landed his 900 at the X-Games, and he was world famous and people would approach him. And I was just sitting stand-by witness to all of this. Like well, how did he talk to his fans, and like, oh, he's still a normal guy. He's eating dirty ice out of the limousine mini bar.

You know what I mean? He's like. “I don't care, like whatever.” Like he was just the same guy. I was like, “Oh that's cool.” I was eating the ice, I was a kid I was like, “All right, that's cool. It's good.” So, you know, I was a kid, I was just like looking up to him and he was doing it. But he was great, he was a family man at the time and so that's something that really kind of allowed us to become friends. At least in my eyes, because he was this like untouchable figure, and then he asked me to come to demo once, or to go on the – actually it was the Tony Hawk Gigantic Skate Park Tour.

Which I was just like baffled to, I was just amazed he asked me to go on this. I remember getting to his house, he had this big house and the gate opened up and my mom's like, “Just go in.”

I'm like, "Okay," and I wander in there and he had a couple nice cars, and it's like back when having a TV screen in your car was just the craziest thing ever. And he had a play station in the glove box. And, you know, as a kid I was just like, "This is just incredible." And all I remember is I go to grab the remote controller and it was just sticky.

And I was like, "What the?" There's like jelly on it and it was like... and then there was like, then I'm looking and I'm like, "Wow, there's chips buried in the seats." And I was like, "Oh man." There's was like a car seat and I was like, "Oh this is a dad, he's a dad."

Tim Ferriss: I was wondering where that was going.

Shaun White: Yeah, no.

Tim Ferriss: Another Tim Ferriss Show exclusive.

Shaun White: It was sticky and so – you twisted group of people.

Tim Ferriss: I'm a terrible influence, it's true.

Shaun White: No, it just brought him down to reality. I was like, "Oh, he's a dad, he's gotta deal with kids and these things." And it allowed us to become friends; I took him as a person rather than as this like untouchable guy. So that's how he really influenced me growing up. He never really kind of steered me in any direction; he was just someone to be observed at that time, at that young age.

Tim Ferriss: He is – I haven't spent a ton of time with Tony, but we were in Ethiopia for a brief period of time for Charity Water.

Shaun White: Hmm.

Tim Ferriss: And he was just the most down to earth guy, and similar to David Blaine, the Illusionist, he cannot stop doing magic. I mean if he goes on a plane ride, if he's walking through a hotel lobby, like he can just not stop performing magic for people.

Shaun White: Really, really?

Tim Ferriss: Like at any dinner party, it's great. But he just cannot stop. Tony would walk around, and this is rural Ethiopia, and he would carry his skateboard everywhere.

Shaun White: Oh, I thought you said, Tony was doing magic, I was like, damn, Tony is holding out on me.

Tim Ferriss: You were like. “Wow, this skill set never ends.” No. No.

Shaun White: Illusions, I'm like, oh my god.

Tim Ferriss: No, I clearly need, I need [inaudible].

Shaun White: I'm like, I haven't seen Tony doing a piece of magic in his whole life.

Tim Ferriss: No. All due respect to Tony, I'm not sure that's his game.

Shaun White: Okay, yeah, I'm sorry, so David Blaine's doing magic.

Tim Ferriss: David Blaine. And David Blaine had the skate- no, David Blaine didn't have a skateboard.

Shaun White: Yeah, Tony had the skateboard everywhere.

Tim Ferriss: Tony has his skateboard. And this is like the middle of nowhere in Northern [inaudible] Ethiopia, and he's carrying it. Any time he found a patch of any kind of anything approaching asphalt or rideable –

Shaun White: Yeah.

Tim Ferriss: – he would get out of the car and he'd want to introduce kids to being on a skateboard for the first time.

Shaun White: Oh, cool. Cool. Cool.

Tim Ferriss: It was the coolest thing. And he did this like fifteen, twenty times. But a very down to earth guy.

Shaun White: Yeah.

Tim Ferriss: I mean for all of the fame and all of the attention.

Shaun White: Took you like three hours to get back to the hotel.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah.

Shaun White: The car kept stopping.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah, exactly.

Shaun White: He's doing it again. He got the skateboard.

Tim Ferriss: It's gravel guys, this could be a while.

Tim Ferriss: What did your parents do?

Shaun White: My Mom was a waitress and she worked at the Hilton Hotel at Tory Pines, it's now the Sheraton. No it was the Sheraton, it's now the Hilton. And my dad worked for the City of San Clemente and the Water Department. I don't really know what that means. I'm pretty convinced he was the guy that like had the road map out and was like actually sleeping behind it. You know what I'm saying? Like he was like fixing main breaks and all sorts of things that were going on, but we always, whenever I asked my mom she's like, "He's sleeping. He's sleeping on the job." It was kind of like, "Oh, wow, that's pretty harsh. Okay."

Tim Ferriss: Do you have siblings?

Shaun White: I have an older brother and an older sister. I have actually two older sisters and an older brother, so I'm the youngest. But the two, so there's my sister Carey whose one year older than me and my brother Jesse, who's a half-brother, who is seven years older. And then I have a sister named Jessica, who I don't see as much, so she's kind of the one that's like – that's why in the beginning I was like, "Oh I got a brother and a sister." So she's a half-sister and she's great, but we don't see much of her.

Tim Ferriss: Much of her.

Shaun White: Yeah.

Tim Ferriss: When you started to get attention at such a young age, and I'm looking at these notes, tell me if these are accurate because I know there's a lot of inaccuracy on the Internet. So Burton sponsored since seven or a relationship with Burton since seven?

Shaun White: Yeah, seven years old.

Tim Ferriss: And then of course that continued then after that. Did your parents do anything or say anything in particular to keep you grounded or from just going off the rails, right, because a lot of people who get attention that young end up kind of flying off the rails.

Shaun White: I don't know, it was a strange circumstance because like I was sponsored by Burton, but it wasn't the biggest. I mean it was a really amazing thing, but it was a circumstance of just the right place at the right time.

Burton Snowboards was actually coming out with a whole line of kid's products and they needed kids to ride their boards. So they were like, "Oh, we got a local kid here and he'll ride your stuff." And then a local kid there, and so I was part of the development team. We were testing products and doing all these things for them. But I remember the encouragement was they're like, "We'll give you this free snowboard. You keep riding; we'll give you another one." And so it didn't really like, I mean, as a kid like that's all the motivation you need. You're like, "Oh I'm getting this nice snowboard." But I lived in San Diego area, there's not much snow. I mean if you were a yeah, I mean like I was.

Tim Ferriss: I'm no geographer but...

Shaun White: Yeah so.

Tim Ferriss: That doesn't make sense to me.

Shaun White: What I'm getting at is like I had my whole life on the mountain and then I'd come home and I'm like walking to school like everyone else. I was doing homework and walking the dog, like doing normal things. So I never really got to have my head blown-up, because I never lived in the mountains where I guess the kids who knew you were sponsored would think that was very cool and that was very whatever.

Tim Ferriss: Right.

Shaun White: It wasn't till I got older that I got a really big head.

Tim Ferriss: I'm not sure if you mean literally or metaphorically, this is a lot to compete with, I hope I'm not –

Shaun White: No, I just had a lot of hair.

Tim Ferriss: I have a lot of forehead. I tried to deglaze it for you guys, I hope I'm not blinding anyone.

Shaun White: They were cool. I mean your question was about me letting it go to my head, I guess. My parents were really great at making sure I just had a normal childhood in that sense. Like, you know, I was

doing the snowboard stuff, which was cool and all, but they were like, “You gotta do your homework, you got to do –” you know. They were encouraging with the snowboarding, but they kept me in line when I came home.

Tim Ferriss: Looking at your career, it strikes me and there's a great profile, for people who haven't seen it, Fast Company did a while back.

Shaun White: Mm-hmm.

Tim Ferriss: But you've made some very smart decisions that have allowed you to have a lot of longevity and to avoid a lot of the pitfalls that I think athletes, but just general people in the public eye fall prey to.

Shaun White: Mm-hmm.

Tim Ferriss: Can you talk about how creative control and those types of approvals came to be.

Shaun White: Yeah. No, it's a great question. I feel very fortunate that I was able to grow with my success within the sport. It started here with the free snowboard, then it became, “Hey, we'll give you a travel budget to get around to your competitions.” And then I actually started getting paid to snowboard and went pro and these things and – sorry I got a little lost, what were we talking about?

Tim Ferriss: Oh no, I do this all the time. The getting lost part.

Shaun White: Yeah, I lost it; I've had a really long day today.

Tim Ferriss: When did you realize you needed to make decisions on the creative control?

Shaun White: Approvals, yeah. No, I'm sorry. So I totally got lost there, excuse me. No, so what happened was, you know, I was growing with the success and so sponsors were coming to me and asking me, “Hey we want to do this ad; we want to put you in this commercial spot and these things.” And I'll never forget the day this kid came up to me and asked me to autograph this poster for him. And I'm looking at the poster and I'm like, I look horrible in this photo. It's just terrible, like the worst photo ever. I was young; I was super sensitive about how I – you know, you're insecure about how you look.

Tim Ferriss: I'm still pretty sensitive and insecure about it.

Shaun White: I was like the only redhead around. I was like, oh this just won't work. And so all I remember is I signed this poster for this kid, and I'm thinking, "Now he's going to put it on his wall, all his friends are going to see it, this is just awful." And so – but the product in the shot was amazing. I mean this thing, you could just snatch it off the page and drink it. It was just, it looked so good. So I'm like, this isn't fair, like, you know, I want to change this. I want to be able to approve these things. And I asked my agent at the time about it and my parents. I was like, "What's up with this?" He was like, "Oh, you want the right – you want to look through all these and actually approve them?"

I'm like. "Yeah, I want to be a part of that. I want to know what's going out with my name on it." And that was like my slow intro into having more control of the imagery and my likeness and all of those things that come out that I'm endorsing, I guess.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah, I remember somebody told me a while back, like it takes ten to twenty years to build a reputation and just one bad decision with that type of thing to completely torpedo it.

Shaun White: Yeah.

Tim Ferriss: What are some of the – who are some of the business mentors that you've had, or career mentors? Or role models for that matter?

Shaun White: I was really fortunate when I was younger to come across an agent named Mark Irving at IMG, and he was a really great guy. I mean, we worked together for probably eight years or more, but he was really someone that I looked to and he's like, "You know, we could do these things and we can work with these companies and we won't even do the deal until we have the approvals." And kind of like we put ourselves out there to where we wouldn't even get the deals unless we knew they wanted to work with me, not tell me how to do what I do.

But he was a great mentor in that space. And it was funny, because my mom – I mean when he tells the story it's pretty good, because my mom asked him to represent me and he said no. Because he was really busy, he had all these other big clients. And then I think he went back and checked me out online, he's like, "Oh, this kid's – well, he might be on to something." And he came back to meet me and he said he didn't want to meet with me and my mom, he just wanted to meet with me. He's like, "I'll never forget it, I realized how young you were because you sat down and ordered a milk." I was like, I remember the last time, I was like, "I'll just

take a milk.”

Tim Ferriss: On the rocks, on the rocks.

Shaun White: Just a hot day in San Diego, it's like, “Give me that milk.” Yeah, so he was a great guy and he taught me a lot of important lessons and things along the way. And I don't know, I feel like I always had a bit of an excitement about it. I always wanted to know more. And my mom is definitely someone that's influenced me probably way more than anybody you can imagine. I mean she was the one that was driving. Obviously my father as well, but my mom was, at the time she was my mom, she was my business manager, she was kind of my agent, she was, you know, making sandwiches, she was doing everything. So I'm really so thankful that she was there at that pivotal, you know, that important time in my life.

Tim Ferriss: What has been – and you don't have to name names necessarily, unless you're comfortable with it – but what have been some of the hardest opportunities to say no to, that you're glad you said no to?

Shaun White: Oh man, bobble heads.

Tim Ferriss: Bobble heads?

Shaun White: Bobble heads. Yeah, can you imagine, it was just like. That was a real one I turned down, I was like, “I don't know, this could be cool.” But then I saw someone else's bobble head and I was like, “Damn!” The one that got away, you know. I don't know. It was a – I'll probably end up doing this in a year, which we'll all look back at this and laugh.

Tim Ferriss: Well, you can have different versions of the bobble head now.

Shaun White: But there was – I was like sixteen and like, “We should do this Shaun White Fragrance.” I was just like, “What? Is it winter fresh? What are we going to like, what is this going to be?” And I just didn't – and I was blown away at the amount of money they were willing to offer me. And I was just like, “Man, like Pad Sweat, what are we going to call this?” Like, I don't know what to do. And so I remember – I remember turning it down and that was a crazy time. Because I was like, well, I don't think I'd ever – could have even in my wildest dreams imagined turning down this amount of money, you know.

Yeah, I mean as a kid growing up and like my family and I to make ends meet we would camp out in this van at the mountains.

My mom and dad bought a van and then they took it down to Tijuana to get it reupholstered because it had like crazy amounts of fleas, it was used as like a lookout car for like the police.

Tim Ferriss: Wow.

Shaun White: I don't – these – I can't even make this up, this is real. So they took it down to Tijuana and had it reupholstered and flea bombed it and then this was our home. We would go up to the mountains, and now all of a sudden I'm just turning down this massive amount of money to not do a fragrance. But, you know, those were important things and I feel like at the time, you know, as many things as I said no to there was a nice list of things that I was currently involved with. And I was like, you know what, for every one of these there's probably a couple more down the line that are the real deals that you want to wait for. And, you know, if it was meant to be it would have made sense.

Tim Ferriss: Is there any particular reason you said no to that? Or any particular thinking as to why that didn't make sense for you at the time?

Shaun White: Yeah, I just was like I can't picture it on the shelf; I can't picture me standing in front of a crowd like yourself trying to like, "Oh, look it's great!" I mean I can – the dog loves it and the people, like how am I going to promote this? And how – it doesn't really, you know, I didn't even use deodorant at that time. So it's like –

Tim Ferriss: Right.

Shaun White: Let alone a fragrance, you know. It's like, "What's B.O.? What? What?" Oh, excuse me. Was that me or it might have been you, I'm blaming you.

Tim Ferriss: Might have been me, heavy breathing into the [inaudible].

Shaun White: But yeah, so it just didn't make sense and I had to really ask myself, "Is this something I can pull off? Is this something that's gonna kill my cred?" And think about it, I mean, the world of snowboarding was a very core group and at that time especially, it was a very touchy scenario to be in, to be doing big endorsements with corporate America, so.

Tim Ferriss: If you were looking back at say at Torino –

Shaun White: Mm-hmm.

Tim Ferriss: – and when it seems like you’re just suddenly thrust in front of the largest audience and had the greatest awareness compared to previously. what advice would you give yourself? What advice now would you give that Shaun White?

Shaun White: Oh man, that’s a tough one. I would say it’s a tough one because I’m a firm believer in the fact of all those mistakes that I made at that point got me to this place, and I wouldn’t really have learned my lessons in things. I would have told myself to just kind of like enjoy it more. I was a really – to be honest, it was one of the hardest times in my life. I mean I had just won the Olympics; it was an amazing like, we did it, you know, in my family. You know, in the community that we lived in, you know, I had a – someone yelled Bob Burnquist earlier. Over here? Here we go.

You know, there's a skateboarder Bob Burnquist, and I had crashed into him during a demonstration. I fractured my skull, I broke my hand, I broke my foot. I had to go to school, you know, immediately after this like crazy accident. And the teacher saw me and like cried at the sight of me. And I'm like looking around and like – I’m like, “Why does everybody look so nice; this is crazy.” Everybody was dressed up. It was picture day. And I was like, “Okay.” Like I had these huge black eyes from the head trauma and all these things.

Tim Ferriss: So wait a second, this was like school photo day?

Shaun White: It was picture day.

Tim Ferriss: So did you do one of like junior high, one of these with massive black eyes?

Shaun White: Oh yeah, in the photos. I had to do the full on like the side turn. And I just had these – and I'm in a dirty T-shirt, yeah.

Tim Ferriss: Just look like a victim of a mugging? Oh, wow.

Shaun White: Yeah. Sorry I got a little lost somewhere I was going with that. What was the original question?

Tim Ferriss: Oh no, I was talking about advice to –

Shaun White: Oh, advice to myself when I was younger.

Tim Ferriss: I kind of liked where that was going.

Shaun White:

I still don't know where I was going with that. Oh okay, I got it, yeah. We were talking about the community that I grew up in and they didn't really understand what I did. They're like, "Okay he go – yeah that's cool, he goes up to the mountains." And like, you know, they asked my parents, "So do you smoke weed?"

Like, my mom, like, "What are you talking about?" "Well you snowboard, you gotta smoke some weed, right?" And like, you know, people in the community just didn't really understand. So there's a big difference between holding up an X-Games medal and a gold medal from the Olympics. I mean everybody understands that and can recognize that accomplishment. So it not only kind of like took the people that said I was going to be nothing and that I was never going to make it in this sport, and the teachers that didn't support me and all those, it really meant that we had succeeded.

And so I don't know, it's kind of, what do you do next? You know, I'm nineteen, I just like did it. And now what? I'm like, "Do we try to do it again, I guess?" Like where do you get that same fight? You've won the fight and it's like, what's next? And so I had a really hard comedown from that. I didn't know what to do with myself. I had an undefeated season when I won that year in 2006. I got second place at the event. The following season I was like, "Well, this year's already not as great as the last one." And, you know, I was really hard on myself. And so that was a time where I would look bank and tell myself to just obviously, you know, let things happen and refresh.

Now that I'm older and I've competed at the Olympics, I know what that comedown feels like, I'm prepared. Like this last Olympics I was like, "Win or lose, I'm going to go play some music with my friends." Like that's what I really want to do. But at that time it was really tough and I was dealing with the new success and fame from the Olympics and endorsements and money and what to do.

]

I was nineteen, I mean, like normally you move out of home when you're eighteen you go to college. I was still at home with my mom. Like okay cool, like now what? I was like, "I guess I could buy a house. That would be cool. Let's move out." Well the plot thickens, because the house we were in I actually owned. But I was like –

Tim Ferriss:

She's like, "Go to your room." You're like, "No, you go to your room."

Shaun White: I purchased the house as an investment, you know, and when your eighteen you can't actually even – uh, I'm sorry before you're eighteen you can't actually even own anything. You can't like write things off on your taxes, you just get slammed. And so my parents like – it looked shady in the beginning, but they took the money, they bought the house, and then they put it back into my name under a trust and things. It was complicated, but anyways. As I got older I was like, “You know what? I love you guys, you did such a great thing by supporting me my whole life, I just won the Olympics, like you just stay in this house and live here. I'm going to go get a new place.

And that was a whole new, you know, like just growing – just growing up at that time is tough, and then to add all those extra things on top of it was even more overwhelming.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah, you mentioned enjoying it. I remember hearing an anecdote from Neil Gaiman; he's one my favorite writers, and he became very well-known from Sandman. But I don't know if anyone here had seen the comic book or the graphic novel Sandman. It's amazing, and so just sort of reinvented the genre of the graphic novel and he was doing this long signing at one point at about the first peak in his fame, and Stephen King was like, “Enjoy it.”

Shaun White: Yeah.

Tim Ferriss: He was like, “Yeah I didn't. I just didn't enjoy it; I was too overwhelmed by all these new factors.”

Shaun White: Yeah.

Tim Ferriss: So you seem like you've done a very good job of educating yourself from many different sources. I, in the course of trying to prepare for this, heard that you are a fan of the Andre Agassi Autobiography.

Shaun White: Yes, yeah, yeah.

Tim Ferriss: That is an incredible book, I recommend it to everyone. Why are you such a fan of that book?

Shaun White: It was incredible. I mean, well, I was a fan of Andre Agassi just anyways. I had read an interview that he didn't stretch before competitions. I never stretch before competitions. Like I just loved him, just thought the guy was so cool. He had the white

Lamborghini with the headband and just like.

Tim Ferriss: Cut-off shorts.

Shaun White: He was just awesome, yeah. I just remember seeing that as a kid and going, “This guy is – he got something right here.” You know it was like, “He’s doing it right.” And I just thought he was so great and I remember after the Olympics we got a phone call from Steffi Graf, and my team manager for the company was like, “Dude, I just got off the phone with Steffi Graf. Like Andre’s a huge fan, he wants you to come out and have a hangout during his birthday and go snowboarding.” So we became friends after that, it was really great. And so he went me the book when it came out. And I was like, “Oh this is great.”

I read the book and then I really enjoyed the book, it was so amazing to hear his story and his struggle of not enjoying the sport and then finally finding his love for it. And I don’t know, it was just an interesting way he told the story, and I compared so many things of that to my life. I think the part that I enjoyed the most was that once he realized that his life wasn’t tennis and that it was his family and it was his foundation, he actually played better. He stopped – he got that little bit of like, “I don’t care, I’m going to play my heart out, I’m gonna go home to people that love me and people that care about me.” And that was something that I’ve always felt my whole life, is that I snowboard, for sure. I love it, I do it, but that’s not my life. My life is many things, it’s one great amazing facet of my life but that’s, that was something that I was really like wow. I really related to that cause when I come home I have a whole different world of friends and things that I’m interested in; music, art, and all these things.

And so I really enjoyed that part of it, and how open and honest he was about everything. The ups and downs and yeah, it was really cool.

Tim Ferriss: I’ve never had so many people come up to me when I was reading a paperback and want to talk to me about the book I was reading.

Shaun White: Oh, okay, yeah.

Tim Ferriss: Just like airplanes, restaurants. You mentioned in a sense him not letting tennis be his entire identity and then playing better. Remember this master negotiator said to me once, “He who cares less wins.” But there’s a really fine line, right?

Shaun White: Mm-hmm.

Tim Ferriss: Because you have to be driven, you have to take it seriously, but if you have all your chips kind of in one area and you have an off day, then it like destroys yourself self-worth.

Shaun White: Yeah.

Tim Ferriss: What have you done when you've lost some of that enthusiasm, but you're still in, say, competition mode? How have you resurrected that or addressed it?

Shaun White: Referencing the book, he has an amazing quote, which I'm going to probably butcher right now. But he said, "the feeling of winning doesn't feel as strong or last as long as the feeling of losing" and – I nailed it, wow! That one was for you Andre. The pressure was on.

No, but it's very true, it's very true. You could win something and be like, "That was great. Well, what's next?" But when you lose something it's just like this – it just weighs on you and everything isn't as shiny and bright. Everything is just kind of weighed down by this and you won't let it go. It's amazing, and so in my mind I've always twisted things in my favor. I always made it to be what I wanted it to be. So if I would show up at a competition and win, I go, "Okay great. I'm exactly where I need to be. This is what I'm doing and if I didn't win I would just turn it in my favor. Like well now you know exactly where you need to be. You've seen what the best are doing and you need to know one up that."

And, you know, if you look at something and kind of try to see that other side of it, you know, I would get motivated from that. I would use it in my favor to go compete, and go get better, and do all those things. So that's what got me through it I guess, but I just always had this will to always win to be the best. I mean, and a lot of it stemmed from the fact that I was told even with the heart condition and all these things that I wasn't really gonna amount to much. So it wasn't so much of an "I want to do this." It's like, "I have to do this."

There was an amazing situation where I was in Japan at this competition called the Toyota Big Air, and I was like a wildcard entry. So I was paying my travel to get there. My mom flew out with me. We're paying for the hotel; we're paying for the food, all these things. All the other riders were invited. So when they got there they got paid per diem, money to show up, and then there's a

big prize purse of fifty thousand dollars.

Everyone went out that night and partied like crazy, and I was a kid, so I was at home – you know, at the hotel with my mom. They show up hung-over to the event and their like, “You know, the jump’s just lame, it’s not –” you know, because they’re snowboarders, so. “It’s lame, it’s not cool, and we don’t want to compete today. We’re just gonna do a demo and we’re all going to split the money.” And like I’m doing the quick math and I’m like, “Man, this doesn’t even cover our flights out. And so I was like, “I don’t want to do it, I don’t want to split the money.”

And they like hazed me and were like, “Oh your all about the money, and blah-blah-blah.” And I just sat there like, “I’m riding really well today; I’m not doing it.” And you know, they had like a big picture of all the riders’ faces and they’re drawing dollar signs on my eyes. I was like fifteen, man, like that was intimidating. It was like my heroes making jabs at me, and man, I won.

Tim Ferriss: Good for you, good for you.

Shaun White: I won. Yeah, it was fifty thousand dollars and a car. I was fifteen. I was like, “Oh my God! What do we do?” It was in Yen too.

Tim Ferriss: [Inaudible].

Shaun White: There’s a photo and it’s the best photo in the world, because I have it all laid out on the bed because I thought it was so cool. I was like, “Look at all this fake money, look at it!”

Tim Ferriss: You were just Scrooge McDucking in the –

Shaun White: Yeah. And my mom – and it’s the best photo ever because I have a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. So I was like, “I did a good job.” But I’m like eating my sandwich. But that’s, you know, one of those things where – I don’t know, that was just one demonstration of like me being confident in my riding, knowing what I was there for and I wanted to win. I mean people wanted to know, “Like why you didn’t get pulled into drinking and drugs and all these things?” And I just didn’t have time for it, man. I wanted to win, I wanted to be the best, and nothing could really get in my way.

Tim Ferriss: What do you think the sources of that strength and in the face of that type of peer pressure? I mean, that’s unusual for a fifteen-year-old. Especially when you’re being faced by your idols who are suddenly throwing darts at you.

Shaun White: Yeah.

Tim Ferriss: Did that come from your parents? Or is it just something internally that you've always had or is there a different answer?

Shaun White: I think it was both. I'd put in the work, I'd put in the time, I felt like I was the best rider, and these guys had their travel paid to get there, they were all doing, you know what I mean? I just felt like, you know what, this is my day and I'm not going to let them ruin it. And I'd worked toward this goal. You know, I usually set goals. Every single season I set a goal. It's either like something very serious and it's usually two goes. It's something very serious and something funny, something stupid.

Tim Ferriss: Like what? What would be an example of each?

Shaun White: You're going to – you're going to – it's ridiculous. One of them was to win the Olympics, and then one of them was to see how many cars I could win.

Tim Ferriss: How many cars?

Shaun White: How many cars. Because at the time the automotive industries, they were just like handing out cars. So I was like, "Okay, I got my car in Japan, that's great." And so I was on a roll. And I think by the end of the run I had like nine cars. And some of them they weren't – there was like a Suzuki Sidekick and this Volvo, and a Jeep, and these random cars.

But that was one of my goals, was like, "How many cars can I win?" I ended up like donating them at the end, because, you know, I had to pay taxes on them and all these things. I was just like all right, like somebody can just have the Suzuki.

Tim Ferriss: Here you go, here's a Suzuki, sorry the steering wheels on the wrong side, enjoy.

Shaun White: Yeah, just take it, there you go.

Tim Ferriss: Do you still do goal setting like that?

Shaun White: I do, yeah, there always random, man. The Vancouver Olympics – I can't believe I'm telling you this – I had – my goals were, again, win the Olympics, and then the other goal was to wear these pants.

And the pants that I had made were these American Flag pants – just follow me. I saw this photo of Axel Rose wearing something similar. They were probably a little more snug and shorter. I was like, “I can’t pull that, but I can make some pants like that.” And yeah, it was just this stupid goal. Like, “Man, if I won, like maybe, I don’t know, like I can get on the cover of Rolling Stone or something like that.” I had been on the cover when I first won the Olympics and had this like ridiculous nickname that I had been given, Tomato and all these things. I was like, “That’s so not cool, like I gotta, if I win again what if they put me on the cover and what if I’m in American Flag pants doing some Axel Rose type something.” And so that was my goal. I had the pants made and then tailored up at the Vancouver games, and I won so I could wear the pants.

Tim Ferriss: Did you wear them while you were competing, or was that just a celebratory pant thing?

Shaun White: No, it was just celebratory pants for after. These are all true stories. And then I got on the cover of Rolling Stone wearing those pants.

Tim Ferriss: That’s amazing.

Shaun White: You visualize the dream and the goal and then you make it happen. But that’s what’s fun, is it takes a lot of the pressure off of it. Winning the Olympics is a very big goal, it’s a very stressful goal to have, you know. So it’s nice to have something else to offset it.

Tim Ferriss: Offset it.

Shaun White: Oh man, like obviously if I won all these cars that meant I was going to win the Olympics because I was winning all the events. If I get to wear the pants, that means I won the Olympics. It kind of downplays the whole magnitude of it. So that’s kind of why I do it.

Tim Ferriss: did you come up with that yourself?

Shaun White: Plus, they were cool pants.

Tim Ferriss: Did you come up with that yourself, or did you come up with that yourself or with someone else together?

Shaun White: Mm-hmm.

Tim Ferriss: You did.

Shaun White: No, just kind of like, everything was so serious at the time and, I don't know, that was just my way of dealing with it.

Tim Ferriss: When you're getting ready to compete, and I was just watching some of your video today and it struck me how relaxed you seemed and even in the landings in particular I was paying attention, and what are you saying to yourself, if anything, when you're up there kind of at the gate, about to be released for your run? What is your internal dialogue?

Shaun White: I don't think there's anything that can be repeated in such polite company.

Tim Ferriss: Oh, these people aren't polite. Trust me. They're my listeners, they're not polite.

Shaun White: No, I don't know. Usually I'm not really thinking about anything and that's the beauty of music. They play some music at the top, you start singing along and then I go down my run and I'm usually just kind of like humming along to the song, and the goal is to like, you're completely focused and then there's that bit of like not caring. And that allows you to then just do the tricks.

Like you've practiced, you know what to do. You're your own worst enemy at that point, because if you overthink it, you know, you're going to – you know, like a couple questions ago, I was like where am I going with this? And then I forgot what the question was. You can't let yourself get in the way of what you're trying to do. So I always describe it like I'm thinking of each wall. So I'm doing my flips and thinking about the next trick. So that's a way to avoid over-analyzing this landing or something like that. The tough part is, is the last hit, because there's no more hits after that.

There's a really funny video of me at some competition. It's really cold out, and you can see my first hit I do my big trick and there's this big puff of breath, because it's so cold out you could see my breath. Then the next trick comes and I'm doing my thing, puff of breath all the way down at that last hit there's no breath. I was holding my breath trying to make sure I land that last trick, you know, and it's always that flow you get, that kind of like one hit to the next.

And I really can't pinpoint one specific moment out. And usually at the top I'm just kind of like, I don't know, I'm usually there – I don't know. I probably just say a little prayer. I think – I say who cares. I do, I go who cares, like what's the – in the end of the day

who cares, what's the big deal? I'm here, I'm going to try my best, and who cares. I'm going to go home and my family's there and the Andre Agassi reference. I mean, who cares, I'm gonna go on from this, you know, even though I am so – my whole world's wrapped up in this, like who cares?

Tim Ferriss: That's very stoic in the most positive way. It reminds me also I was interviewing Triple H, the professional wrestler, Paul Levesque. And he's friends with Floyd Mayweather. Before one of Floyds championship fights, Floyd invited him into the locker room where he does his warm-ups and stuff. He goes, "Well I don't want to –"

Shaun White: Mm-hmm.

Tim Ferriss: "I don't want to interfere or bother you while you're getting into your head and getting ready to fight." And he goes, "You're not bothering me. Like if I'm not ready, I'm not ready."

Shaun White: Oh wow.

Tim Ferriss: He's like, "If I'm ready, I'm ready. There's nothing I'm going to do in the next ten minutes that's going to make a difference."

Shaun White: Oh man.

Tim Ferriss: Are there any other books that you particularly love or have given to other people?

Shaun White: The book I've given the most, it's called *Fifty Shades of Chicken*.

Tim Ferriss: Are you serious?

Shaun White: It's a cookbook on chicken, it's delicious.

Tim Ferriss: Okay.

Shaun White: And it's got this like – I love chicken and I love this book. And it's got this chicken all tied up on the front like, just begging to be, yeah; besides that, *The Outliers*.

Tim Ferriss: Malcolm Gladwell.

Shaun White: And I can't quote the whole book, because I kind of – I'm sorry mom, but I read half of it, just my attention span wanders. But I kind of stopped just because I really – I was reading it and I really

enjoyed the book and actually just left it on the plane and that's why I stopped. I should have just bought another one. But – and then Harry Potter came out. You got to do what you got to do. The chicken book came out. No, so I was reading the book and I was amazed about the story about the hockey players in this kind of anomaly in the system. I started applying that to my own life and I was like, "Wow. Well, people would think I was at a disadvantage growing up in Southern California." I was like, "Well, I don't find that as a disadvantage at all. It was probably sunny and nice out majority of the year or the winter season." You know, our winters aren't like somewhere in Colorado or Vermont. So the amount of days I could actually go ride was probably, I don't know, double or triple the amount of someone growing up somewhere else.

And then at the same moment, the person that was building the parks at Bear Mountain and Summit, Snow Summit Resort. It was like this small mountain, so they were like, "Oh yeah, do what you want. You snowboarders, go do what you want." And this guy was building these amazing jumps, this amazing half pipe. He now builds all of the courses for the world's best events. That's where he got his start, at these mountains.

Tim Ferriss: Wow.

Shaun White: You know they weren't going to let him go to Aspen and like tear up the groomer trail or whatever. That happened and then another thing I compared to my life is that the half pipe that they had, had a T-bar, like a tow rope on it. So I was thinking, "Wow, the amount of days now that I'm riding because it's sunny and the amount of runs I'm getting because I don't have to unstrap and hike back up." I would just do my trick get back on the chair and go back up. I was like, "Wow, I'm packing in months of training in these small windows compared to someone else that lives in Vermont or something where it's like below, well below freezing and they are hiking the pike, they're tired."

You know, when you're cold it's frightening to go, "Okay, I'm going to try this flip." "No, you're not." Like it's super intimidating now, like it's cold, you want to go home and get warm. I was in these conditions where the snow was soft, I got some guy building the best terrain around, and so yeah there's a lot of fun things that came into play. Especially Burton Snowboards just happened to come out with a snowboard line, so a lot of fun things that I was able to apply to my life from that book.

Tim Ferriss: How was your physical training? Since we are talking about

training and practicing, how has your physical training changed or evolved?

Shaun White: I'm actually doing it now.

Tim Ferriss: You have physical training?

Shaun White: I'm serious. Yeah, no, it's strange, I consider what I do a sport. I consider myself an athlete, but I never really treated myself as one. Especially when you're sixteen, you know, you just bounce back. Like or when you're younger you try these tricks, you don't have to work out. I'm like, "We're taking the chair lift, we're going down a hill." I'm not like going up against someone that's twice my size and I got to deal with that. It's definitely like an individual sport and it relies on the element of being creative.

You know, I could come up with a brand new trick that no one's done before and be the best in the world. Where it doesn't matter how hard I hit the gym I still have to be inspired and then have the guts to go do this trick and perform it and master it. But recently I watched a documentary called Seven Days in Hell, and I was like, "Oh this is funny. This is really great." But bellow that was an actual doc – it's a mockumentary with Andy Sandburg and one of the guys from – Jon Snow from Game of Thrones. I'm sorry I don't know [inaudible].

Tim Ferriss: Kit Harrington.

Shaun White: Yeah, great actor. And so really funny film. Right below it was an actual documentary, Björn Borg and John McEnroe. And I was like, "Oh, I gotta watch this." And I'm watching and Björn had his trainer wake him up, somebody was hitting balls with him. The other guy is stretching him and I was like, "He's got his whole team. This is amazing." Like, why don't I have that, why don't I do that? And like this was probably like a couple months ago. And so it's like, I got on the phone I was like, "Okay, I need a trainer and I need this girl to travel with me and help me stretch."

Tim Ferriss: Swanya, yeah.

Shaun White: "You know, get my back fixed from the plane." And it sounds so ridiculous to me now that I didn't do it before. My eyes were just opened by Seven Days in Hell, which is pretty funny. But yeah, so I was like, what I did before is I would just show up in the city and I would just roll the dice and be like, "Hey, do you know anyone that's good at physical therapy or massage?"

And you get the one that's like, they're just not, they're not doing anything. You know, you're like, "Oh, that was great thank you." Or you get the one that's like, "This is Shaun White. Like I got to impress this guy. In one session he's just like –"

Tim Ferriss: All elbows?

Shaun White: Yeah, I can barely walk after the thing. I was like hesitant to even get training and I was like, "Well, you know, my back is so locked up its really helping like me stick my landings." Yeah, it was crazy. And so I just recently decided, you know, wow, why don't I take this into my own hands and obviously I'm getting older and yeah. it was something I really wanted to do, and it's made it so much easier. Surprise. But yeah it's something, I don't know, I just didn't really think about it. And, yeah, I'm 29, I was like, "Oh, I should probably hit the gym or something."

Tim Ferriss: Is there any particular type of training or piece of that training now that you that you feel has helped you the most?

Shaun White: Yeah, and when I say I didn't train, I mean there were moments when I was like, "Okay, like I'm going to make sure for this month I'm really like hit the spin bike or I'll do this." Or there was various trainers where I would meet up with them and then we'd hit it for maybe a couple of weeks and then I'd fizzle out because I would go on trips and things. The only really time I did go to the gym was after injuries. I hurt my knee and it freaked me out. I was like, "Wow, I gotta hit the gym. I gotta really protect my knees and my things that are going to keep me in the sport."

But the training that I find now that really helps is balance and core and to visualize my runs and things. To picture myself. I'm very visual. Like I know what I'm going to see when I hit the jump; I know what the landing's going to look like. I know who's going to be waiting at the bottom of the run to high five me, you know, good job. Like all these things I visualize everything down to the pants I'm going to wear. Literally it gets pretty involved.

And so, you know, I feel like the training when you're thinking about those positive outcomes and you're thinking about what you want to do, what you want to achieve while training, is a very powerful thing. And yeah, just simple things that I should have probably been doing for a long time now.

Tim Ferriss: When you're coming up on an important competition and not at

the gate, but in the hours preceding that, what do your rituals look like or routines?

Shaun White: I don't know man, my mom's super – very superstitious. And so like I wasn't in the beginning and now it's slowly rubbed off on me. Because I would come home or I'd come back to the hotel after the event, my whole room was packed up, my whole bag was packed up. I was like, "These maids are really going for that extra _"

Tim Ferriss: The extra tip.

Shaun White: "Yeah, they're going an extra mile here. Like what's going on?" And so she was like, "Oh, if I sneak in your room and pack up your bags it means you're going to be safe and you're going to win the event." It's just like, "All right, lady." Like, "Lady, you're scaring us."

So I remember I won and then I won the next one and then I'm like, there I am packing my bag. I don't want to break tradition. But nowadays like the things I do is I tend to eat a steak before I compete, the night before. Some skateboarder told me he does it. I tried it, I won. Now I have to eat a steak.

Tim Ferriss: Now you're locked in to steaks.

Shaun White: Yeah, which is pretty crazy, because I didn't eat a steak before Sochi.

Tim Ferriss: Really?

Shaun White: Yeah.

Tim Ferriss: What you – oh, you did not eat a steak.

Shaun White: I did not eat a steak.

Tim Ferriss: I thought you meant that's when you picked up the superstition, kind of like your training.

Shaun White: No, well, it adds to the superstish. But, yeah, so there's like a bunch of things like that.

Tim Ferriss: Did that mess you up before Sochi, not having a steak?

Shaun White: Totally. There were like five of those things that I'm talking about

that all took place before the event. It's not because I didn't want steak. I didn't all of a sudden be like. "You know what, I'm going vegan. Like, no, I was just like – you know, they didn't even know if they were going to run the competition, you know. Leading up to the event we had three days of practice and the half pipe was unrideable for three days. And so the meeting that night was to decide if they were even going to do the event the next day. Which is a very tough scenario as a competitor, because you're like, "All right, tomorrow we are going to... maybe do this." You know, you get all psyched up and it's like this big maybe.

And so the meeting went till 2:00 AM, and my coach at the time is the one that cooks the steaks. And he's just like, "We're in Russia. You want me to find you a steak right now?" I'm like, "I'm not one to break tradish, but you want to do it tonight of all nights?" You know, and so anyways that story aside but – yeah there's things were I get a song that's played and I have to hear that same song [inaudible].

Tim Ferriss: What's the song?

Shaun White: It depends. For 2006 it was AC/DCs Back in Black. One was Communication Breakdown by Led Zeppelin. One was a Black Keys song. What was the song? I think Howling for You. All right. Yeah, so they're strange things. I was sixteen I went to my first concert ever, it was the Oz Fest.

Tim Ferriss: Oh yeah.

Shaun White: Yeah, I went with my parents. I was like, "Oh, this is incredible!"

Tim Ferriss: Also, my first concert.

Shaun White: Yeah, and I bought this t-shirt that said "The Prince of Fucking Darkness" and it was Ozzie in flames and I was like, "This is great." And I started wearing it under my jersey every competition and I was winning. Ozzie was like helping me out. And so, you know, just random things like that. So there's like select t-shirts and songs and things over time that, you know, I kind of –

Tim Ferriss: So you mentioned and this could not – I couldn't have planned this, you bringing up the Ozzie Osborne, what was it, the Prince of Fucking Darkness?

Shaun White: Yeah.

Tim Ferriss: Okay, so did you design a jacket called the *Most Unholy Jacket Ever*?

Shaun White: Yes, I did.

Tim Ferriss: Can you explain that?

Shaun White: Well, it was amazing. Like at the time I was really young and I was slowly gaining this popularity and so Burton Snowboards came to me and they're like, "We want to do a pro-model snowboard boot." I was like, "Wow, okay cool." I have no idea what to do. So I ask my older brother Jesse and he was always very artistic, and we came up with this really cool quilted print and it sold out, it was an amazing hit. We came out with another one and that grew into boots and a board and helmets, and then it became a whole clothing line at Burton Snowboards called the White Collection. And basically I had free rein to do whatever I wanted. He was like, "Whoa, it would be hilarious if the tag line was super long." You know we had the tags for the Jackets at the store that was just like this long, like a foot long. I was like, "Oh yeah, the most unholy jacket ever, that would be great."

So that was pretty much why we named it that, it had these really long big obnoxious tags on the jackets.

Tim Ferriss: Were there any other names that are particular favorites?

Shaun White: Oh man, I can't recall. There were some good ones, but it was fun. We would always do these strange things. I was always about the little details, so. There was a pass pocket that you have in your jacket that you flip up and get scanned to go on the chair lift. There was always this lame photo of Jake Burton. He's not lame, just the photo was lame, no offense. But I remember thinking like, "Oh they print this out and they make it, why don't we do something really funny in there?" So we turned it into this – like my brother figured out how to take one piece of paper and fold it into like a little comic book and we would like display these bizarre pieces of art and sayings and things; hairy armpits and just weird stuff. It was all about those little details, but people appreciated it.

You know, when you bought the jacket you were always discovering fun things. In the unholy jacket we had this one pocket that you would flip up and it would say the most unholy jacket ever, and on the other side it was these people dancing in flames and things. It was just fun and I really enjoyed doing it and that

was my introduction into designing. I just like getting the right of approval in my ads and things. There's a natural kind of progression and story to all of these things that I'm involved with now. I didn't wake up like, "Oh I need my own clothing line." No, it was my brother who is an amazingly talented artist, we had this great opportunity, and we enjoyed doing it. We would make the drawings on napkins. The samples would get made in China, we'd bring them back, make adjustments, and then you see somebody wearing your jacket. It's incredible. It's this fulfillment of like, "Wow, he stood in front of this huge wall of clothing and picked my jacket. Like that's so cool." You have that connection there.

Tim Ferriss: You have, I mean, this is part of the reason why I wanted to invite Shaun and everyone who's been here so far. Is that you have – your good at several – many different things, and I'm always curious about how things transfer. So for instance music, can you tell us a little bit about the music; but and then I would like to hear if anything that you have learned through competing in sports or practicing sports translated to music.

Shaun White: Music was a strange one, just because no one else in my family is musical in the slightest, especially my sister, she cannot carry a tune to save herself. I don't know, it was just one of those things where I turned it into a competition, to be honest. I won a guitar at a snowboard contest and I was like, "Wow, what if I could just be at a party somewhere and played one song, and one song turned into like, okay, I'm now training to be a guitar player." And at that age my world revolved around like, I'm going to be the best at this, like I don't care, I'm going to be the best at this.

You know, one other thing I do besides set goals for myself is I just pick these battles that just do not exist. There is like the sweetest kid at the skate park. He skated for Birdhouse and I was just like, I have to destroy this guy.

Tim Ferriss: How old were you when you decided you needed to destroy?

Shaun White: Right when I knew he was on Birdhouse. I was like, "He's gotta go, he's going down." I just built this in my mind and like he was the sweetest, nicest kid ever. This like tall blonde kid. And I was just hell-bent on destroying him, in my mind. I didn't want to hurt him or anything.

Tim Ferriss: Just dethrone him.

Shaun White: Yeah, yeah, like he had my spot and I wanted it. I wanted to be hanging with Tony and doing the demos and stuff. So at the same

time I was learning guitar, there were two other kids in the neighborhood that were learning guitar, and I was like, “They gotta go, they gotta go.” So I would sit on the plane and I would stretch my fingers, because I couldn’t reach all the frets.

I was like, “One day these things are it’s going to pay off.” So I would stretch my hands out, because it’s difficult to reach all the frets. And then I was on the plane and I would take my guitar pick and I would, I couldn’t upstroke at the time so I would play the side of my pant seam.

Tim Ferriss: Your neighbor must have loved you.

Shaun White: I’m serious, I would sit there and listen to music and I would strum the side of my pant leg to the beat of the song, and the rhythm of the music and to get my wrists acquainted with that motion. I was serious, man.

Tim Ferriss: I hope we have video, that could be a hell of an animated gif.

Shaun White: Yeah, so I remember like the one day I show up and the one kid had been playing guitar and it was very unfair. I mean, he had been playing for ten years or more. And I’m like, “He’s got to go.” And so the one day like I got my fulfilling moment where it was like Metallica song and he couldn’t play that one riff and I could, and it was just it was so sweet.

Tim Ferriss: Do you remember the song?

Shaun White: It was *Master of Puppets*, pretty sure, yeah.

Tim Ferriss: First metal album I ever bought.

Shaun White: Yeah. So I picked these battles and it’s –

Tim Ferriss: *Master of Puppets*, that’s a hard song.

Shaun White: It’s very hard, yeah. I was just going for whatever and at the time you know, any kid who picks up guitar I guess. My friends were all listening to Metallica and its very guitar riff driven. So it was nice, I was always picking out the leads and things. I didn’t know any chords or why it made sense. I just learned from guitar tablature off the internet. You know the numbers that represented the frets and which strings, and I would just sit there for hours like, okay, number two all the way down to fret five. I would like for hours and hours; stretch the fingers, getting ready.

Tim Ferriss: Just digesting.

Shaun White: But yeah, it was fun and deep down like anybody that picks up a guitar is like, “Man, what it would be like to play on stage and do this.” And from that young age I was very self-aware, I didn’t want anybody to take a photo of me with the guitar, I didn’t want to play for anybody or let anybody in that world, because I wanted to just show up all of a sudden and be really incredible at it. So that was kind of like how I do things. I’d rather go and train in private and then show up and, “Oh yeah, whatever.”

I do that with a lot of strange things. So that was kind of my way of practicing, keeping it fun and it’s nice. You make these like, I don’t know, it really got me to be good at guitar. I had this competition and I had these things going and it really helped me.

Tim Ferriss: Is the performing different from competing in snowboarding? Obviously physically it’s different, but is it emotionally, psychologically different for you?

Shaun White: It’s, yeah, it’s way different. I mean the feeling is the same, because it’s like that instant gratification of like doing the big air do you hear the crowd here?

Tim Ferriss: You have played to some large crowds. I mean this is, these aren’t like high school graduations, and these are big operations.

Shaun White: We had some pretty amazing opportunities. I play lead guitar in a band called Bad Things. It’s composed of mostly friends of mine from the neighborhood I grew up in and some amazingly talented guys I met in LA. We started making our own songs and we got offered some gigs and things and there was one moment where we got invited to go to Lollapalooza. And I was like, “Man, this will be heavy.”

Just wait, it was for the kid’s stage. So I was like, “You know what it would be so punk rock if we just go and play that kids stage. Like, because I don’t think I should be on the main stage. Just because I’m in the group does not mean that we should be given these scenarios.” And so we show up and we did our thing, we had a really great show for the kids. And then the most amazing thing happened. It was like out of a movie. The main act on the grove stage at Lollapalooza decided they weren’t going to play. They put a big sign out that said, “Our art will not be displayed here.” Their fans completely demolished their gear and all this craziness

ensued.

They looked around, they're like, "We need a band to play the main stage." I was like, "We're a band." You know, like literally like, "We're a band." It was crazy. They were like, "You, come with us." So there we were, I was like, "Oh my God, this is our moment, like we gotta do this." And they're like, "Okay, you ready for this set?" And so we played one of the most incredible sets we've ever had. We rose to the occasion. We had this amazing set and just like anyone that picks up a guitar and dreams of being on stage, you dream of that moment you're walking off stage and everyone is cheering for one more song. And the best moment of that is I look at my buddies, they're just like, "Do we even have another song? Like we don't have another one." He's like, "Play the first one again." You know, and so we go back up there.

Yeah, like it was incredible, it was an incredible moment in time, and yeah, so that got us a lot of credibility in that space that we actually owned the moment and we played for people and they enjoyed it. And that got us a lot of credibility, so then we got offered to tour with Jared Leto's band, 30 Seconds to Mars, and there we are in Romania for ten thousand people, you know. It was incredible to open up for them.

And then we did a run through the US with a band called Phantogram. It was just great to be playing on stage doing something different, and that excitement and all I'll say is that you're out on the stage with your friends; it's not all on my shoulders, you know. I can kind of like miss the pedal or something can happen and go wrong and it's not the end of the world in that sense. The show goes on, you have time to make up for it. Obviously I'm a perfectionist, so nothing can go wrong, I have to have it perfect. But it's just great to be out there with everyone. Really a combined effort, it's not all up to me.

If I play a perfect show, you know, the drummer probably didn't hear the mix in his set and it was a terrible show. So everyone has to come together to have an amazing performance, so that's something different.

Tim Ferriss: You have some very exciting stuff coming up soon that is yet another sort of branch of Shaun White Enterprises. Can you explain for people what's coming up?

Shaun White: Yeah. It's really incredible; it's an event that's called Air and Style. It's coming up here in Los Angeles, February 20th and 21st at

the LA Coliseum at Expo Park. It's a sports and music festival that started about 20 years ago in Austria. I was a competitor at the event, I then became the host of the event, and then some interesting circumstances led me to being the new owner of the event. My dream was to take that passion for music and touring festivals and obviously my knowledge and experience and love of snowboarding, and combine those two. So down at the Coliseum we built a 16-story big air jump.

Tim Ferriss: What is an air jump?

Shaun White: Big air jump is just one big jump.

Tim Ferriss: Sixteen stories is – I can't.

Shaun White: Sixteen stories tall, yeah it's massive. Sixteen stories.

Tim Ferriss: So is it like a ski jump, one of these?

Shaun White: Yeah, it's just like one big hit and so basically the world's best are coming to compete on it, and then you mix that with an amazing music line-up. We have J Cole, Incubus, Haim, we have Action Bronson, even Cascade will be there, which is very exciting. Yeah ASAP Ferg, Rudimental, real amazing bands. All Time Low. And so the idea is you have this mash up. I mean obviously my world of sports is so close to music that it's just nice to see everybody come together and experience these things. And it really represents the culture behind the sport.

So we have art, fashion, technology, all these things you would find at a festival. But the amazing part is that it's a tour. So this actually takes place in Beijing in December. We just had a stop in Austria and Innsbruck. So this is the final stop of the tour. So all of these snowboarders have been competing this whole entire time and we crown the winner at this last event in Los Angeles and we make this really cool championship ring. So yeah, everybody is trying to win.

Tim Ferriss: I feel like I have never been in person to the X-Games, I've never been to Coachella; this is my chance to just kind of do both at once.

Shaun White: Exactly, that was the goal. And it's cool, I mean it's like one of things that like why didn't this happen before, you know, combining the two? I mean if you're watching a tennis match

wouldn't it be cool if half way through –

Tim Ferriss: Ozzie Osborne bites a bat's head off and starts –

Shaun White: Can you imagine, like, yeah, all these chicks came out and rocked the show. I mean, it was really cool and it was an opportunity for me to do something brand new. And you know, after the last Olympics I didn't win and I was sitting there and normally you're kind of flooded with these offers. "Hey, you can get some easy money by doing a deal with so and so or doing this and that.

And, you know, I was getting offers but it definitely wasn't like what you get when you win. In hindsight it was the perfect opportunity for me to sit down and go, "What would I like to do and actually put my own money into it and build this thing that's been my dream?" And it's really something to be seen. We did it last year; it was a total blow-out. We had Kendrick Lamar play and it's really my vision came together. It became real when my mom showed up. She was just like, "What did you do? Like this thing is massive, its sixteen stories."

Audience: [inaudible] tickets?

Shaun White: Tickets?

Tim Ferriss: Yeah, how do you get tickets?

Shaun White: Yeah, you can go to airandstyle.com, or you can go frontgatetickets.com. And it's great. \$75.00 will get you in the gate. And then what's really cool is kids under ten get in for free.

And the whole idea behind that was you can come to the event, watch the professionals do their thing and there's a whole learn to ride area for whoever wants to ride. Bu, you know, hopefully kids will try it out, fall in love with it, then go up to the mountains and it kind of refreshes the sport with the youth and all that. That's how I got my start, I was introduced to it, so I can only hope that somebody comes to the event and becomes the next so and so because they got their start trying out snowboarding. But yeah, hope you guys can make it, it's awesome.

Tim Ferriss: It's awesome. Yeah, check it out guys. [Inaudible] bunch of cool events coming up too.

Shaun White: [Inaudible].

Tim Ferriss: I'll ask just a couple more questions then we'll wrap up. I'm sure we can talk for hours and hours and hours. I think we will do a round two sometime. But when you think of the word successful, who's the first person that comes to mind?

Shaun White: Successful. And I can only pick one person.

Tim Ferriss: No, you can pick multiples, fine.

Shaun White: Multiples. Donald... Duck. I was waiting, I was like what is everyone gonna say. Man, I don't really know. I guess top of my mind right now would be Andre Agassi. He's got the kind of success that, besides the money and fame and the things he's got a family, he's got people that care about him. If he was in a troublesome scenario he could call somebody that would come help him out with that. I mean I measure it in that.

Tim Ferriss: Who do you rely to tell you when you're wrong or give you tough love, that type of advice?

Shaun White: My brother, definitely.

Tim Ferriss: Jesse?

Shaun White: Jesse, my brother Jesse. I wanted – when we put out an album with the band and I wanted to thank him in the credits because he was, because he told me I couldn't do it. He was like, “What are you going to be. Kevin Bacon?” I was like, “Well, I'll show you.”

And it really helpful. It drove me to actually complete the album and things, but he'll give me the straight on everything. He will come in and tell me what he really thinks.

Tim Ferriss: How does he deliver that?

Shaun White: It depends, you know, he's either like he'll just make fun of me until I like, you know, ow –

Tim Ferriss: Until you relent?

Shaun White: Or he will be very sincere about something and want to give his input. But he was the one always doing the new tricks, he introduced me to the sport, I always wanted to do what my older brother was doing. So he's the guy that has always been that one I go to.

Tim Ferriss: So you mentioned new tricks, people always talk about coming up with good ideas in the shower, I've never had that experience. Maybe I just don't take enough showers.

Shaun White: Yeah.

Tim Ferriss: When do you tend to come up with new tricks?

Shaun White: It really depends, usually it's by mistake. You go in, you're like, "Okay, I'm going to do the two flips and then I'm going to come out and this is exactly where I'm going to be." Wrong. Completely wrong. You end up doing something new and then you can go, "Wow, that actually worked out, you know, I'm going to actually build upon that."

Now you got a brand new trick that no one's ever done before. Or – I don't really dream about it or something like that. I had a friend call me once and told me about a trick that was a possibility, and I completely disagreed, but it got me thinking about another scenario. Do you know what I mean?

Tim Ferriss: Definitely.

Shaun White: It always comes from something different, but that's usually how it happens for me, is by mistake or I'm just in the right mood and I want to try something.

Tim Ferriss: Is there any historical figure that you have enjoyed meeting?

Shaun White: Man, this is tough.

Tim Ferriss: It is. We can also come back to that.

Shaun White: Yeah, we'll come back to that one.

Tim Ferriss: Hit pause on this one.

Shaun White: Okay.

Tim Ferriss: So if you could have, let's see, we'll go with the billboard again.

Shaun White: Okay.

Tim Ferriss: If you have a billboard and you could put anything on it that's not an advertisement for anything that's coming up immediately soon, what would you put on it?

Shaun White: Sitting here trying to promote an event and I can't even put it on the billboard. No, I don't know, put on the billboard. Man, probably my dog.

Tim Ferriss: Your dog?

Shaun White: I'm like that guy that's like. "My dog is the best looking dog ever." You should check his Instagram account, its gaining in popularity.

Tim Ferriss: Does he have an Instagram account?

Shaun White: Yeah.

Tim Ferriss: What is your dog's Instagram account?

Shaun White: Yeah, Mayor B, M-A-Y-O-R-B. It's pretty hilarious, my sister runs it. You're in for a treat if you check it out.

Tim Ferriss: Got it, so this would be, the billboard would be for your dog's career.

Shaun White: Yes, yeah because he's, he's got it going.

Tim Ferriss: Is there any ask aside from checking out obviously the event, suggestions for people who are here listening to this? Just something to take with them to ponder or to do?

Shaun White: Yeah, I don't know, I really kind of – I based, this is just some advice for me I guess, and it's served me very well over the years. It's the simple lessons that you could look out for. Like when I wanted to learn a new trick that was really difficult or like in the beginning of my career I could ride what's called switch. The natural way I ride is left foot forward, it's called regular. And if I was right foot forward it's called goofy. So I'm regular. And when I put my right foot forward that means I'm riding switch, it's my unnatural way of riding. It's like if you're going to hit a baseball and you have to go the opposite way that you would normally do. I couldn't do it, it was super hard. I made myself do it all day every day until it just became easy. It was the simple thing of like, "Man this is – I'm just going to do it until it becomes so easy that it's not hard anymore." And that really paid off for me in the long run. It's kind of like if you can get past that boredom of like, "Wow, I'm not good at this, this is hard." I mean, I don't know if anybody's broken a hand before, but you would be amazed at how quickly you can learn how to use chopsticks with that other hand.

By really just forcing yourself to do something that you're not good at until you're really good at it. I mean that simple lesson, the simple thing of learning what not to do. People want to know how I learn tricks, I'm like, "Man, I try them, and I try them, and I try them until it becomes something that's so easy for me when the world's watching, I can do it." It's the simple things I take and then I guess just keeping your eyes open for what's next. I mean, a guitar fell into my lap and I was just aware enough to be like, "Wow, I should try to play this. I should try to become great at this." I pick all sorts of fun hobbies for myself and definitely set goals. Set a fun one though too.

Tim Ferriss: Can't be all serious all the time.

Shaun White: Yeah, you can't be serious all the time.

Tim Ferriss: And wear yourself out, where you get the big stuff done. Shaun, where can people find you on social and still on, find out more about what you've been up and you can also mention where people can get the tickets for the event.

Shaun White: Yeah you can go to airandstyle.com and you can get tickets for the event. If you can't make it to the event. it's going to be streaming live on Go 90 its Verizon's new app. It's really cool, you can download it and then you can not only check out the event coming up, but the past events to see what the riders are doing and where their rankings are at. I'm Shaun White on Instagram, check it out.

Tim Ferriss: Spelling for everybody.

Shaun White: S-H-A-U-N W-H-I-T-E. I have the same on Facebook and I'm shaunwhitesnap if you want to get down with the Snap Chat. What else, yeah. Check it out, I mean, it's an amazing event and I'm really proud of it, and it's something that really speaks to me, the sport and what I'm all about. So I hope you enjoy it.

Tim Ferriss: Awesome, well, Shaun White everybody. Thank you so much for the time.