

The Tim Ferriss Show Transcripts

Episode 7: Stephen Dubner

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Tim Ferriss: This is Tim Ferriss, and welcome to another episode of the Tim Ferriss Show. [Spanish] Happy to have you guys. This episode is an experiment. The guest is Stephen J. Dubner. You may recognize his name. He's an award-winning author, journalist, radio-TV personality, best known probably for writing, along with economist Steven Levitt, *Freakonomics*, which was a massive global best seller. Along with *Super Freakonomics*, they've sold more than five million copies in 35, probably plus languages at this point.

This is the first episode where I attempt to interview someone I've never met before, never spoken with before. And it's amusing, and perhaps instructive for some of you, and maybe entertaining because you'll notice it takes me a good five to ten minutes to find my footing. I'm very nervous. I've never done this before. And Stephen is very gracious. But there's a clear difference in the beginning of the interview, the middle of the interview, and the end of the interview

We delve into some very deep stuff, and my goal, because Stephen's been interviewed dozens, hundreds, probably thousands of times, was to ask questions perhaps he had not been asked before, and to take him places perhaps he had not been before in interviews like this. I think it was a success. I'm very happy with this. I had a blast doing it. And I hope you enjoy listening to it. Without further ado, here's Stephen.

All right, well, Stephen, thank you for joining everybody on the Tim Ferriss Show. This is an interview I've been looking forward to for some time now, so thank you for making the time first of all.

Stephen Dubner: Hey, thanks for having me. This is – I'm delighted to talk to you.

Tim Ferriss: And this is – there's a connection to *Freakonomics* at least that most people are probably not aware of, which was I looked at the storytelling – the combination of storytelling and facts in *Freakonomics* multiple times when I was putting together *The Four-Hour Body*, which was my second book, to try to figure out how to deliver something that has historically been very

intimidating for people – often there’s a mathematical component – in a way that is really easily digested. And I thought *Freakonomics* just knocked that out of the park. And I’m sure a lot of people would agree, and certainly that’s spoken to by the number of copies sold. What is it, five million plus in 35 languages? But I just wanted to thank you for that. It served as a really useful model.

Stephen Dubner: You’re welcome. I think it worked out pretty well for you, so whatever small part we played in it, I’m glad it worked, yeah.

Tim Ferriss: And I’ve consumed a ton of your material, and the first question, just as a writer, or someone who would like to think of themselves as a writer, I’d love to hear a little bit about – and I think the – at least in my particular case, the way that I’ve approached books has changed a little bit over time as I’ve had more success and more resources and things like that. So the question I wanted to ask is how do you collaborate with your co-author on many of these books? Stephen, what is the process for getting the material together and then threading it into the narrative?

Stephen Dubner: All right, so you asked, I’ll answer. But I’ll warn you, it’s a – probably not very interesting or useful answer. I don’t know, maybe it is. But so, yeah, the way this works is I have this great phenomenal co-author named Steve Levitt, who’s an economist at the university of Chicago.

And what Levitt does mostly is empirical research; find a scenario where he can find some data or maybe you find some data first, or you come up with a question. You go hunting for data. And he writes academic papers. At least this was what we did pretty much for the first two books, *Freakonomics* and *Super Freakonomics*. And in some cases, it’s pretty simple. He would have written an academic paper that I would then take and essentially translate into common English. And then, you know, we would talk it through certainly a lot, and sometimes I’d have to ask him to explain parts of the paper, especially the theory parts.

But then in addition to just translating it, one thing that I always try to do in writing is tell a story. So you can have a conclusion, a set of data that reaches a conclusion. We talked about the economics of selling crack cocaine for instance, or you know, the data seeming to show that Sumo wrestlers, for instance, collude with one another to manipulate their rankings. So the data in and of themselves are a good story.

But most people don't really assimilate data or theory, or rational argument the same way that they do a story. And I think that the power of a story is just unbelievably strong. And I don't think I'm saying anything that people don't know. But I think that a lot of really smart people, when they're trying to get a point across, or when they're trying to persuade someone of their point of view, they forget why stories work so well. And they work so well, I think for a number of reasons, one of which is that we're all narcissists to some degree, and so when we're hearing a story, we maybe even subconsciously insert ourselves into the narrative to kind of see how we'd play, like man I wouldn't have gone for that deal selling drugs for only eight bucks an hour, whatever.

So the collaboration honestly takes many, many, many forms because not all of our work is so neat as having an academic paper. So I would say that for every single story, every single page really in any of our books, there's kind of a different iteration or version of how the collaboration takes place.

Sometimes Levitt will have done a lot of heavy lifting and produced a story in data, that I then translate. Sometimes it's something that I go out and do a lot of reporting on, and then write a narrative; then I'll throw it to him and see what he has to say with it. He lives in Chicago; I'm in New York. We don't work together physically all that often. And honestly, there's only one kind of work together that is practical at all, which is basically brainstorming, where it's nice to have the tight in-person feedback loop.

For all other forms of collaboration, reading, editing, critiquing, saying this sucks – we threw away hundreds of pages on *Think Like a Freak*. However long this book is, we definitely threw away many more pages than we ended up with. So, you know, there's a lot of that back and forth. And honestly, I think it's great.

I mean I think one of the hardest things about being a writer is critiquing your own work, and that's why any writer who's had a good editor knows how valuable that is. So if you have a collaborator who thinks like you do, but with a different angle – he's the economist, I'm the journalist – I think it helps make it stronger. So that's the collaboration.

Tim Ferriss:

No, I love digging into the process, and I have a few related questions. The first is – and I want to get to your background in a little bit – but having come out of music, I'm really fascinated about how that came to be. But let's start with something very

granular, which is how do you make a good story? What are the elements of a good story for you? And secondly, when you're brainstorming with Steven, what types of things are you brainstorming, and what's the format for that?

Stephen Dubner: Alright, so I'll start with what types of brainstorming. So for this book, it was really different. For *Think Like a Freak*, we had this idea. We weren't sure we were going to do a third book. We didn't want to do a book if we thought it would be redundant or bad. And so we struggled with ideas for a while. We came up with one idea that we thought was great. For about a week, we thought this was the best idea ever. Then it turned out to suck also.

Tim Ferriss: What was that, just out of curiosity?

Stephen Dubner: That was a book that was basically in a way, a kind of big professional version of the idea that became *Think Like a Freak*. In other words, *Think Like a Freak* is meant to be a sort of a guide for people who want to solve problems, whether it's minor life hacks, or major global reforms, right. But before we got to that, we were like deluded and wildly over-ambitious, where we thought we would actually describe and try to solve some of the world's biggest problems. We had this whole research agenda that we thought we could really make some headway. And then we realized we were just out of our minds, and that wasn't going to work.

So once we came up with this idea, the brainstorming was what are the kind of concepts that are – that go into thinking like a freak? And we ended up with a book that has I think nine chapters. And within each chapter, sometimes there's two or three ideas. So let's say there are roughly 15 principles, right, of thinking like a freak. In the brainstorming periods, which went on I would say for months – not constantly for months, but whenever we'd see each other – I think we probably came up with like 120.

And some of them turned out to just be not so interesting. Some of them turned out that we didn't really believe in them. Some of them turned out to be maybe interesting and true, but they didn't have any data or stories that really illustrated them. And some of them we collapsed into others. So that was a really – it's a really involved process. It's like the other things I've done in my life before I became a writer all the way, writing music, and like even doing some carpentry, you know, I think any time you're making something, whether it's building with your hands in wood, or

writing music, or writing words, you learn different ways of how do I know if this is a good idea or not?

And it takes a lot of experimentation. And so that even became kind of part of the message in this book, is how to experiment, how to fail, how to quit things that aren't going well. And so our brainstorming was about let's come up with as many ideas as possible, and then put them under scrutiny, and basically try to kill them off. And if they were unkillable, then we'd keep going with them.

In terms of what makes a good story, so this is really – I've always loved storytelling. I would argue that most people love storytelling, even if they don't really think about it. And the way that I got interested in economics actually originally, was because of the work of Danny Kahneman – Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, right.

Tim Ferriss: I was one of Danny's test subjects way back in the day at Princeton, in fact.

Stephen Dubner: Oh, you were. What kind of project?

Tim Ferriss: Not that he would remember me. It was some excruciatingly boring – I think it might have been called the – I'm blanking – a T test. It was a cognitive test where you had to click a button every time a certain square or circle appeared in the corner of a black screen for hours.

Stephen Dubner: Yeah. What was he looking for?

Tim Ferriss: You know, I don't recall because at the time, I didn't think of him as Danny Kahneman in the way that he's thought of now. This was prior to a lot of the fame and attention and awards and whatnot. But oftentimes, also as a subject – I mean I've been a subject and an experimenter – or really an assistant to an experimenter – at UCSF in their Sandler Neuroscience Lab with Adam Gazzaley. And in many, many cases, more often than not perhaps, you're not actually telling the subjects the true purpose of the test, so I don't recall.

Stephen Dubner: Of course.

Tim Ferriss: But I'm sorry to interrupt.

Stephen Dubner: No, no, that's interesting because well, Kahneman – I mean look, he's a good – Danny's a – he was a very good scientist for a number of reasons. The reason that I was so attracted to his work – and look, I was hardly alone – he did go on to, as you say, become very well known, rightfully so. And his partner, Amos Tversky, who died young – you know, Amos would have won a Nobel with Danny.

Danny went on to win the Nobel in Economics, even though he's a psychologist. And what made their work so fascinating to me was it was trying to explore how people make decisions, right – incredibly basic, but incredibly important. But the way that they explained the ideas were in the version of stories. And so you'd say, you know, there's a military commander, and he's got 500 men, and if he goes route A, there is a 100 percent chance that 80 of them will be killed.

And then you take the same story, and you flip the numbers so that it sounds like a lower probability, but in fact, it's the same exact outcome. And you ask people which would you prefer, and this is how you learn about risk aversion and loss aversion, and all kinds of great valuable ideas. So like I said, what appealed to me is that they weren't just recitations of theory and data. They were stories.

So I followed that work. It got me into economics generally. I found Steve Levitt. We started to do this Freakonomics work and so on. And then years later, I got to know Danny Kahneman a little bit. And once I said to him that the reason I got into his work so much was because of what I thought was the power of stories in his research. And Danny said, "Oh, stories are terrible. You should never tell stories. Storytelling is the worst."

And I said, "Oh, great. Why? What do you mean by that?" And he said, "Well, stories don't contain any data, and they don't have any time. They don't have a time series attached to them." And I realized that Danny kind of – Danny thought I was talking about – was not so much what I think of as a story, but what I think of as an anecdote. An anecdote would be – like let's say we're talking about like drunk driving, and the actual data, and the numbers and so on.

And I can tell you that the data seem to show that if I'm a drunk driver versus a sober driver, I'm 13 times more likely to get involved in a fatal crash, right. So that's what I tell you the data say. And then you say, "Well, you know what, I've got an uncle, or my uncle's accountant drinks every night at the tavern and

drives home and he's never even had a fender bender." That's an anecdote. That's like the anecdote, which is often the story that kind of disproves the rule.

But to me, what a story is, is it's got the narrative, but it does include the things that Danny Kahneman said you need to include, which is data, right, and time series; so data, because you need to know the magnitude of the story, is it really important; and time series because you need to know if it was a kind of blip, or if it really persisted. And that to me are the elements of a good story, is data, a time element, a time series, and a narrative with characters that people can identify. Oh, and by the way, it needs to all be true.

So, you know, I'm a journalist by training. I'm a non-fiction writer. And I believe that the best kind of storytelling is where you've got real reporting, real numbers, and you can make an argument that acknowledges my argument is not perfect, it's not meant to be, but it's compelling because it is true.

Tim Ferriss:

No, definitely, and the – I'm sure a lot of listeners have heard the expression the plural of anecdote isn't data. In the self-experimentation world where N equals one a lot of the time, it's been very fascinating just to watch the quantified self movement, for instance, where I was one of the first attendees. I was at the very first Quantified Self Meet-Up at Kevin Kelly's house in Pacifica. And it's been very interesting to see how much good science has come of that, if people are able to actually rationally look at the amplitude of the delta and the changes in various things, but also how many correlations are thought to be causation, and how many spurious connections there are, and how it's so easy to manufacture those if you want to find them.

But I want to come back to stories for a second because your background – and I don't want to – we don't have to go line through line – line by line, rather, through your entire upbringing. But one thing that struck me as very fascinating, thinking of you as in many ways a sort of hyper-rational person. I would love to hear how you chose your own religion, and to give people a little bit of background.

And correct me if I'm wrong, but you were raised sort of devout Roman Catholic, after your parents had, it appears converted to Catholicism, but then chose to – as yourself, as an adult, practice Judaism. So I'd love to hear how you made that decision and why you made that decision.

Stephen Dubner: Great, yeah. So first of all, I appreciate you thinking of me as hyper-rational, but I'm probably not really. I mean even though a lot of the *Freakonomics* stuff has been about trying to apply rational theory to things, a lot of it is also about understanding that we've all got these biases that kind of make us human and make us different, which I think is good. So the idea is not – I would say the idea is not for all of us to strive to be purely rational. The idea is to strive to achieve the greatest collective and individual good we can, while acknowledging that many people often do things that don't seem rational.

So I would just add that caveat. So yeah, so my – so I came from a really weird and wonderful family. So my parents were this pair of Brooklyn-born Jews, kind of typical first-generation Jews here, who before they met each other, they were both – my mom was I guess – they were both early twenties, early to mid-twenties.

Before they met each other – this was in New York during the Second World War, they both ended up converting to Catholicism, for very different reasons and under very different circumstances. My dad had been – was a soldier in the Second World War, so he'd been overseas and had a kind of a realization that he needed a big change in his life. My mother was a ballerina, very serious, kind of becoming successful at that here in New York. And she fell under the tutelage of a mentor, a dance mistress who was a Roman Catholic.

And so the two of them, like I said, before they met each other, both converted. And this was, as you can probably imagine, a pretty big deal in their families at that time especially, but that caused major, major, major trauma within their families. Then they met at a Catholic church, as these two former Jews, who had this huge thing in common. They happened to fall in love. They both became and remain very, very devout as Catholics. And they really started a life over.

We talk a lot in *Freakonomics* about quitting, and the upside of quitting. My parents, I mean I sometimes think I've been a little brave in the stuff that I've quit. My parents quit everything. They quit their religion, which meant quitting their families. They left the city, the only city they ever knew. And they were city people, and they moved to the boondocks of Upstate New York on this little kind of broken down farm, where my mom – I mean my dad was a wonderful human who had a lot of health issues and died quite young, when I was a little kid.

My mom was just this incredibly strong forward-thinking productive person, who just picked up the whole family on her back and carried us on. So there were eight kids. I was the youngest, and dead father, kind of middle of nowhere, no money, and very, very, very, very Catholic family. And all that said – all that said, which might sound like bad stuff or tough stuff, was – I was very happy. It was a great experience. My family was great and I felt loved, and I felt encouraged to do stuff that made me happy.

So years later, went to college, started a rock band. The rock band was my life for five years. We took it very seriously, got a record contract with Arista Records in New York, which led me to move to New York. And at that point, I kind of decided, having gotten some exposure to some people who had been really successful in rock'n'roll, you know, just getting to meet, often for a really short time, to talk to someone like Bruce Springsteen about what life was like, and REM, who we knew a little bit more because we were from the South, and they were from the South.

And I realized that that dream was awesome, but it wasn't the dream that I really wanted for my life, to live that kind of life on stage and traveling. So I quit the band, and then here I was in New York, and I decided to pursue writing full time. And living in New York, I started to – I was exposed to a whole world of Jewish-ness and Jewish thought that I'd never really encountered. And I knew my parents had been this thing called Jewish, but I knew so little about it, Tim, it's like comical and embarrassing now.

Most of what I knew about being Jewish came from Woody Allen movies, which is not necessarily normative. So anyway, I began to study and explore, and to make a very long story relatively short, I decided that I – it was gradual and slow – I decided that I was going to return to Judaism. And even though I'd been brought up in a very devout setting – or maybe because I'd been brought up in a devout setting, I didn't have a lot of appetite for being very observant.

So I did what I think of as return to being Jewish – return because my parents had been. My entire extended family, most of whom I didn't even know about, I'd never met until I started to seek them out. So I returned to that, and became – you know, now I'm just another typical upper west side Jewish New Yorker, not particularly observant, but very, very, very appreciative of a lot of

the traditions in Judaism, as well as a lot of the traditions in Catholicism and in other faiths and so on.

And you know, to me, a religious way of looking at the world is not the dissimilar from whatever, an economic way of looking at the world, a psychological way of looking at the world. In all these – religion, I always think of the word comes from a Latin version – I think *relegere* I want to say. And it means to bring order from chaos.

And I think no matter what you and me and people like us, people listening to this, no matter what your avenue or your actual mode of doing this is, we're all trying to figure out how to make sense of stuff, how to be productive, how to get what we want while treating other people with the right kind of balance of respect and all that. And so I don't religion and science as being anywhere near as contradictory as some people do.

I think there's just a lot of value in a lot of systems for looking at the world, seeing how people get to where they get, how they make decisions, and yeah, that's the story.

Tim Ferriss:

Was there something – what drove you to explore re-embracing or embracing Judaism? Was it for instance, simply the social environment? And I think that's not a bad reason, certainly in New York.

I mean that opens up a lot of conversations you wouldn't otherwise have, a lot of relationships you might not otherwise have; or was there some type of longing for something that you didn't have, or hadn't experienced that led you to that, or something else entirely?

Stephen Dubner:

Yeah, that's a great question. I would say definitely those two things, and probably another four or five things. It's funny, my co-author Steve Levitt sometimes talks about when he realized that he was born to be an economist, or at least a certain kind of economist. And it was in college, and he was a very smart kid, super, super smart kid. And he ended up going to Harvard. And he got to Harvard, and as Levitt tells the story, he was really bad at math, and had always been pretty bad at math.

And so he didn't thrive in a math setting at Harvard, but when he took Econ 101 or 10 or whatever it's called, he said, you know, he would come out of class feeling as if everything that had been said in the class was the most obvious thing in the world. It wasn't the math that clicked with him; it was a certain way of looking at the

world and feeling like you intuitively got it, identified with it, appreciated it, and it got you excited. And that's when he decided that econ was the way – the kind of lens that fit his eye.

And for me, when I moved to New York after quitting my band, I just accidentally fell in with a bunch of people. I had a girlfriend at the time who was studying to be an actress. And she had this acting teacher, a guy named Ivan Kronenfeld, who became and remained for many years, and still to some degree, one of the most important people in my life.

I'm 50. I'm guessing many of your listeners, if not most, are quite a bit younger. I can't stress enough the value in finding real people to be mentors. I just think there's – as a kid who grew up kind of without a father, I never wanted to find like a substitute father. That just seemed cliché. But I did have a series of men in my life who were incredibly generous and wise in teaching me. And sometimes, some of what they said didn't resonate at all. You have to be your own editor. But Ivan Kronenfeld was this guy who was not religious really at all, but had a deep, deep, deep well of learning and wisdom that had been informed by Judaism.

And that extended to culture. He was an acting teacher. This wasn't about religion per se. It extended to culture. It extended to sports. It extended to politics. And it resonated with me the same way that for Steve Levitt, studying econ at Harvard resonated with him.

And I just thought, "Man, this feels substantial to me, feels interesting, feels productive. It feels worthwhile. And by the way, this is the tradition in which I was meant to be born, but wasn't." And so that's kind of – it was very accidental. I was not looking to make any kind of – I was a very happily lapsed Catholic, and planning to stay lapsed. I wasn't looking to reinvigorate my religious life. But I feel into, like they say, a kind of a tradition, and a set of ideas that really resonated for me.

Tim Ferriss: No, it's been – I love that story, and it's been fascinating for me to witness some of my close friends who have re-embraced religion, most often Judaism. One who comes to mind, you may have bumped into him at some point, is A.J. Jacobs, who –

Stephen Dubner: Oh, sure, yeah, I loved his stuff. Yeah, he's great.

Tim Ferriss: So he described his relationship to Judaism up to having children as – I think he said, “I am to Judaism as the Olive Garden is to Italian,” was the way he put it. And it was the children – having his first child that really brought about the question, how do I raise this being? And I wanted to sort of segue in a way to *Think Like a Freak*. Obviously, there are all these principles – and I’ve really enjoyed the books – that help one to test assumptions, uncover biases, become a better thinker, ideally get better results.

And those include learning to so I don’t know, putting away your moral compass, thinking small. I want to revisit a few of these certainly, but what are the – if you could choose one or two of these to – from the book, to instill in your children – you have children, is that right?

Stephen Dubner: Yeah, yeah.

Tim Ferriss: Which would they be and why, if you had to kind of choose the one or two, what you would view as force multipliers, or otherwise for your kids. What would they be?

Stephen Dubner: Yeah, so it’s interesting you ask that question because my kids – look, I think parenting is the most awesome science experiment ever. So you’ve got an N of one or two, or maybe three or four these days. And what’s so interesting, among many things, is how different two kids from the same gene pool can be. So I will say this. In answer to your question, I would have a really different answer for the two kids.

So my boy is 13. His name is Solomon, which was my dad’s name before my dad became Catholic and became Paul. So Solomon Dubner is my son, and was my original Jewish father. And Solomon is – I mean I love my kids to death, but my feeling for him is like very, very deep in a way that is – from an angle that is just really different from my love for my daughter.

And it’s because he is attracted to things and thinks about things just in a very different way from my daughter. And so I think a great virtue in a human is when you are yourself in all circumstances, right. I love the idea that you meet someone who’s let’s say, well known, or at least you really admire their work. And then you meet them, and they turn out to be as substantial as you thought.

Meanwhile, it really depresses me when you meet someone who you think is like this really great whatever, public servant or

whatever, and then you see them tearing into somebody and being a real shit, you know, that bums me out.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah, the hero with clay feet experience is pretty horrible.

Stephen Dubner: Yeah, yeah. So I very much value the idea of a human being who is consistent across circumstances. That said, I realize that to be a good parent, I feel like I need to be really different with the two of my kids because they've got a totally different set of likes and dislikes, talents and flaws, and curiosities and so on. So with my son, he really wants to be like a soccer journalist. That's his dream.

And so with him, I try to teach him a lot of the kind of rules of Freakonomics, which is – and I have to say, he really picks up on it really quickly. So like today, this morning, at like 6:00, we both get up early, and he came in and he said, “You know, ever since I bought that Juan Mata jersey, Mata's been on a tear, and he's scored in like almost every game.”

And then he looks at me with a smile and says, “I'm sure it was my buying the jersey that caused him to score all those goals.” And then he says to me, “Correlation does not equal causality, right Dad?” So I love that. I love that he finds – obviously it's a simplistic version of a mistake that we all make, but I like that he's kind of thinking that way.

So that's the kind of thinking I talk about with him. With my daughter, what's really interesting is in our world, at least living in New York City, girls I find, once they get – and I didn't know this, having not been a girl. But my wife, having been a girl, knew this, that girls, the social circle pull thing is so intense, like in middle school. And what I see that doing on young women and girls is that it puts a lot of – they seem to care a lot more about what other girls – and occasionally boys – think of what they're doing, than getting just organically excited about they're doing.

In other words, the boys seem to just charge off and say, “I want to do this, I'm going to do this. I may be good, I may be bad. I'm doing this; this is what I like to do,” whether it's Karate or writing or whatever. And with girls, from what I've seen – and this is not scientific at all – in this circle is that there's a lot of social comparison and stuff like that. So with my daughter, I'm just always talking to her about thinking on your own and what it means to really figure out what your preferences actually are, and whether you're choosing a preference because it's what everybody

does and it's kind of conventional and convenient, or whether it really turns you on, because I just think that if something doesn't turn you on, you're not going to want to do it very much. If you don't do it very much, you're not going to get very good at it. And then in the end, you'll be unhappy for it.

Tim Ferriss: No, that makes perfect sense. How old is your daughter?

Stephen Dubner: Twelve.

Tim Ferriss: Twelve, oh, got it, all right, so they're – are they close? Are your kids close to each other?

Stephen Dubner: Yeah, they're very, very close. I mean they fight sometimes like all siblings do, but yeah, they're kind of weirdly like this little old married – when they're out of sight and they don't know we're around, you see them, they look exactly like a married couple.

And he'll do things for her. She'll do things for him. She'll complain about the food a little bit. And in many ways, they're total, total opposites. He would be very happy eating nothing ever, ever, ever, except for meat. And she became a vegetarian at age nine. So that's the – do you have kids?

Tim Ferriss: I do not. I do not. I think about kids a lot. I do want a family ultimately. I've got to figure out the sort of girlfriend-wife component first.

Stephen Dubner: Yeah, that can help.

Tim Ferriss: That can help. Although I live in San Francisco, where all formats are possible, so who knows.

Stephen Dubner: Right, yeah, yeah.

Tim Ferriss: But I don't have kids. I think about – I'm trying to dig my wells before I'm dry in the sense that I'm trying to do as much research and talk to people who appear to be good parents.

You know, the anecdote that you brought up about your son and the jersey and saying causation doesn't – or I'm sorry, correlation doesn't equal causality, right Dad, reminded me of a friend of mine, Kelly Starrett. He's one of the top athletic coaches in the country. He works with Olympic athletes, top Crossfit games athletes, etcetera. And his kids are – really know all of his

principles. They've embodied them all, so for posture and whatnot.

And he was having – it was 60 Minutes, or somebody was over at his house, and the woman who was interviewing him was having a lot of trouble doing performing a dead lift, with no weight; just picking up a box off the floor. And he goes, “Well, let me show you some good technique. We can pull in a professional athlete.” And he pulls in his five – he has like five or six-year-old daughter, who can explain exactly how not to pronate your feet and everything.

Yeah, but I don't yet have kids, but I am thinking about it a lot. And the question of how much you can form someone versus – how much of it is nurture versus nature. And what's been so fascinating to me, as many of my friends have kids, is that – as one example – this isn't always the case. But I went to – grew up on Long Island, then went to – transferred to a boarding school, went to Princeton. The women that I've spent – and the girls, the women I've spent a lot of time around tend to be very well educated and sort of power women in a lot of senses.

And a good portion of them, up until the point they have two kids, boy and a girl, tend to have very sort of nurture focused views of gender stereotypes, if that makes sense, like well, you know, like men and women, maybe they're different on some levels, but a lot of it is socialized. And then they have a boy and a girl. And they're like, “Oh, my God, these two could not be more different.”

And I'm curious to know if you were trying to form someone who is – help form someone who is a little bit older – let's just say that you're the mentor in this case. And I was very fortunate like you, to have, as I traveled around and was away from home, a wrestling coach. I can point to very specific people who had tremendous impact on me and other boys around me. So if you're the mentor, and you have let's say a boy, to keep it simple, or just I mean in context for me, who's in say 10th, 11th grade, and you're trying to improve their thinking, all right. And this relates to a lot of what you've written about. What are some of the sort of key – if you were going to lay out a curriculum for them to try to train their brain, train their behavior, what would some of the first steps look like?

Stephen Dubner: Wow, that's a really, really good and really hard question.

Tim Ferriss: It's a tough question. It's a tough one. It's easier for me ask it than for you to answer it.

Stephen Dubner: No, I like it a lot. That's the kind of question that I would like to have thought to ask someone much smarter than me to see what they said. So I'll tell you – I think I'm going to have a hard time coming up with the actual curricula. But here's one thing I've noticed that I think is really valuable.

So I think one – I don't quite want to call it a mistake, but one bias or blind spot that I think a lot of people have is they try to pattern their success after people who have been really successful. And the problem is that most of the people that have been really successful are anomalous for one reason or another – or maybe for ten reasons.

So like if there's a kid out there who says, "You know, I like design and I like technology; I would like to be Steve Jobs, so let me read everything I can about him, and try to do everything he did. That should work, right?" And I think that's A) prima fascia, a spurious idea. But beyond that, when you – whenever you're dealing with anomalies, people who have been super, super, super successful, you have to appreciate how rare that is. And there's a counterpoint to that, which is this.

And I learned this when I was studying writing, so after I quit playing music, I wanted to – I didn't know exactly what kind of writing I wanted to do, whether it was academic, be a professor, or write journalism, and so on. So I went into graduate school, and I got an MFA in Fiction Writing at Columbia, which was a great experience for me.

And I learned there that among many other things, is that it was a lot harder, at least for me, to learn writing from great writing, than it was to learn from really shitty writing because when things are really good – you know, if you read a great book or listen to a great piece of music, or even look at a great athlete, there's a kind of natural inclination to want to copy it or mimic it. And like I said a few minutes ago, all the forces and inputs that went into producing that, there are A) a lot of inputs, and B) some of them you're not going to have, and C) there are these elements of randomness and luck.

So if I read a novel that I think is a great novel, it's Dostoyevsky or Philip Roth, or whatever, Donna Tartt, whatever I think is this great book I've read, and then say, "Oh, this is my model; this is what I

should pattern myself on,” there’s just all kinds of reasons that can’t or won’t work, including the fact that it’s going to take you away from being your best natural version of yourself.

On the other hand, if you read really bad stuff, and you look at failures, I think there’s a tremendous amount to be learned by failures. So first of all, we do try to celebrate failure to some degree in this new book; not failure, [inaudible] failure, but because it’s an experiment. You need to fail and move on to know what’s going to work. But with something like writing, or with sports, or with just patterning your life on somebody else’s, I think if you can look at the mistakes, the things that don’t work, I think it’s a lot easier to not do the terrible things than it is to try to do the amazing things.

So that’s what I would – that’s one kind of very, very narrow part of the gospel I would preach if someone was foolish enough to come to me as a mentor.

Tim Ferriss: No, that makes perfect sense. I mean the more I think about it, the more sense it makes because you have for instance, these savant-like performances on the soccer field, just to bring up soccer again. And it’s very difficult to dissect that excellence, like you said, because of all the inputs.

Whereas, if you’re even a mediocre writer starting out, and read something terrible, there’s a good chance you could pinpoint a handful of the things that make it terrible, at least for you subjectively. And no, that makes a lot of sense to me.

Stephen Dubner: And never do them again.

Tim Ferriss: And never do them again. One of the things that popped up in this new book, and I underlined it and starred it for myself, was the origins of the word sophisticated. I thought this was so fascinating. So the footnote, I’m just going to read this – and it says – let’s see here. The sentence leading to the footnote is da, da, da, because they don’t pass the smell test or have never been tried because they don’t seem sophisticated enough.

And then it goes down to the footnote, which is it’s not even clear that sophistication is such a worthy goal. The word is derived from the Greek sophists – you could probably tell me - itinerant teachers of philosophy and rhetoric who didn’t enjoy a good reputation, which is hilarious. That’s in quotation marks. One

scholar writes they were, quote, more concerned with winning arguments than arriving at truth, end quote.

And I have just encountered – and I’m sure I’m guilty of this as well – so many people who seem to waste their intellectual horsepower on winning arguments, as opposed to arriving at truth or getting results. And how would you suggest that someone try to cure this? I think it’s a huge problem. And there’s just the cognitive surplus of smart people who waste their innate horsepower on just nonsense, kind of mental masturbation. I’d be curious to know how you – if it’s possible, and if so, how to just help someone overcome that tendency. Let’s just assume that they kind of want to fix that. Do you have any thoughts?

Stephen Dubner: Well, you know, what we advise – I mean what you just read from is a section where I guess we’re talking about the advantages of thinking like a child.

Tim Ferriss: That’s it. That’s the section.

Stephen Dubner: Yeah, so I mean you’re right. It’s both very, very, very hard, but really simple. But the simple and the hard are not the same category of option here, because what I mean is it’s hard because you understand why people want to appear sophisticated, right. We have reputations. We have egos. Depending on what circle you’re in, if you’re in an academic or a high-end business or tech circle, there’s a huge – or finance, there’s a huge – the coin of the realm is appearing to know a lot. It’s appearing to know more than other people. It’s appearing to know the kind of thing that other people may not know. And it’s appearing to have a clever, quote, take on something, right.

And all of that is good. All of that can be great. I don’t mean to downgrade any of that. The problem is if that is your MO constantly, then you’ll often miss a lot of the lower hanging fruit, which are simple, clever, more obvious points that can be just as fruitful, if not more so.

Tim Ferriss: Right, the [inaudible] type of stuff, yeah.

Stephen Dubner: Exactly. And I very much agree with you that it’s a drag to see these people with huge mental CPU, either doing – thinking about something or working on something that’s just not very whatever, fruitful or productive for a lot of people; or just as often, especially in the – in the realm of public intellectualism and media and stuff, just people totally preaching to the choir.

So that's a – I mean look, pick a media outlet, any media outlet just about, that features some kind of public intellectual, whether it's an op-ed page in a newspaper, or a cable news channel with the talking heads and so on, and what you basically find is people on either side of the aisle, who present themselves as extraordinarily sophisticated, making arguments that are absolutely never going to actually persuade anyone. They are totally – they sound super, super, super, super smart and sophisticated, but they're doing nothing more than preaching to the choir.

So you can say, "Well, okay, that's a way to make a living. That's fine. Who am I to judge that?" But if your goal is to actually persuade anyone of anything, or to actually enlarge society in any way, I think it can be a real detriment to act as if sophistication is a goal in and of itself. And so that's why it's hard.

There's a lot of incentives to appear that way. The reason it's easy though, or why it can be easy is all you have to really do is stop faking it and stop BS-ing and pretending you know everything, and you know, think a little bit more like a child. Follow natural curiosities. If you acknowledge what you don't know, you can start to, like you've done, you know, I want to do X better, whether it's cooking or working, whatever, how do I do it? I have a head full of preconceptions and old ideas and conventional wisdom. Are they true? Maybe some of them are, but if I want to find out what's most true for me, I can experiment. I can get a lot of feedback. And I can figure out what's actually true.

And so look, I think the problem is for someone like you, Tim Ferriss, per se, you know, these tendencies aren't so foreign. For a lot of people – for a lot of us, and I'm sure for you in some circumstances, too, it's just so much easier to kind of get in the – to stay in the main flow of the conventional wisdom, where you want to look like the smart guy who has all the answers, even if the answers are not true.

Tim Ferriss:

No, I mean it is the easier path, right. And I was looking at the new book, and at some of the principles, and what struck me, living in Silicon Valley and being very heavily involved in tech, is that if I try to dissect the failures and the successes within my portfolio of startups, right, when you look at the – Uber, the app, for instance, which has just exploded. And I was one of the first three advisors – three to five advisors [inaudible] money to Uber, and –

Stephen Dubner: Well done.

Tim Ferriss: Thank you. I mean it's a lottery ticket to be sure. But on the other hand, people think of Uber as this ubiquitous service, and you start to – I can draw these examples from my own experience – be willing to think small, right. I mean Uber started with two or three – well, certainly one car. I remember testing the prototype, you know, driving around San Francisco, when nothing had really been figured out aside from the market opportunity and a basic minimally viable product.

And then you have, you know, appreciating the upset of quitting, I can point to serial entrepreneurs, who have been successful I think in large part because they've known which projects to quit, which to put to bed. And perhaps the one that really jumps out at me, even more so than those, is you know, make sure you're asking the right questions, solving the right problems. So solving the right problem, it doesn't matter if you get the right answer if you're solving the wrong problem, or a problem that is not worthy of your talents.

And this is a continual question among venture capitalists, is you know, are you guys solving the right problem? I will back you guys, but not for this company because you're choosing the wrong opportunity. And what I'd love to know is like you said earlier, you'd come up with 120 or so principles. Which were the last to go? Were you like, "Oh, these are my babies; I don't want to kill them. I love these; I really want to put these in." What were some of the principles that didn't make it in the final cut that you're like, "You know, in an alternate universe were there a version B, these would be it."

Stephen Dubner: Yeah, so the single most prominent example by a long shot is one that didn't quite not make the cut but went from being about 30 pages to maybe half a page. And that was this idea – like I said, this book was a real struggle to get started right because it was – it needed to be a fairly sequential thing, which might sound like of course books are sequential. But ours are usually not really.

Tim Ferriss: No, that makes perfect sense because my books are modular in the same way as your first book.

Stephen Dubner: Right, right, but this one we wanted to be sequential, and more over, the biggest thing we wanted it to be, like the tone and pace and weight and all that stuff had to be right because we didn't want

it to feel preachy, right. We didn't want it to be like hey, you should want to be like us, and be like us like this.

And we also didn't want to be hey, you should think like a freak because you can fix the world and this and that are wrong, and you'd better get out there and do it. We didn't want to be that. So this one idea that we had, that we felt was really, really important, but we couldn't pull it off in the original form, was this concept that we called first put away your moral compass.

And so it did survive in literally like maybe a page in the book, but this was like maybe a 30-page chapter that began the book. And the whole idea was that if you want to solve a problem, you almost certain – any problem that you care enough about to want to solve, you almost certainly come to it with a whole lot of ideas about it; ideas about why it's an important problem, what is it that bothers you exactly, who are the villains in the problem, all these kinds of things.

So like if you're an environmentalist – if you're an environmentalist and you believe that really one of the biggest tragedies of the last 100 years is people despoiling the environment, the minute you hear about an issue that kind of abuts the environment, whether it's honey bee collapse or something having to do with air quality, your immediate kind of moral position is well, I know exactly what the cause of that is. It's caused by people – human beings being stupid and careless and greedy and so on.

Now that may be true, but it also may not be true. Our point is, if you operate – if you try to approach every problem with your moral compass, first and foremost, you're going to make a lot of mistakes. You're going to exclude a lot of possible good solutions. You're going to assume you know a lot of things you don't. You're going to assume you know a lot of things, when in fact you don't.

And you're not going to be a good partner in reaching a solution with other people who don't happen to see the world the way you do. And so we wrote reams and reams and reams and reams about this with all these kinds of examples, and it was just terrible. It was some of the worst writing I'd ever done. And I think in retrospect, it was just because that's not the kind of writer – we try to be kind of the opposite of preachy. And we couldn't help it get out of being preachy. And then I have a friend – a dear friend named Jonathan Rosen who is a wonderful writer and editor.

And Jonathan I brought in towards the end of this book, and I asked him to read some chapters and just give me some feedback. And I gave him this unwieldy version of this moral compass chapter. And he's very sweet, so he didn't say like you know, "Dubner, this is terrible." He just said, "Yeah, kind of meanders and it a little bit da, da." And then – so I killed it. I totally, totally, totally killed it, threw it in the trash.

And then, like three days later, he calls up, and he says, "You know, I was thinking about your moral compass idea, and it reminded me of how sailors hundreds of years ago, when sailing ships first started to become really reliant on a ship's compass. It worked out really well most of the time, but then they found that sometimes it would get thrown really, really off course by following the compass, and they couldn't figure out what it was. And it turns out that they were using more and more metal in their – they were carrying around swords and tools, and even metal buckles on their clothes. And the metal was throwing off the compass and they didn't know it."

And he said, "So as a way to fight that, they had to like isolate the compass, like sometimes they would build a big lead box for the compass or something, or just have like a no-metal zone." And he said, "That is actually really what you're talking about, is don't throw away the moral compass and don't be preachy about it but learn to protect it so that you can whip out your moral compass when you need to, but that it doesn't get thrown off course."

And once he gave me this unbelievably beautiful metaphor that I think I used – I wrote maybe two sentences about that to kind of place the moral compass idea in the book, then it felt like we could sort of rescue it. So that was a long unwieldy explanation for your much better question about what it was that bit the dust. It didn't quite bite the dust, but it was resurrected only by the intervention of a friend who had a better way to help frame the argument.

Tim Ferriss: Oh, man, I would love to chat with you another time, just about writing, honestly.

Stephen Dubner: Anytime. Honestly, it's my favorite subject, and most normal people couldn't care less about writing.

Tim Ferriss: I love it. I love talking about it because it's talking about crystallized thought. It's talking about refining thought, and what

could be more interesting, to me anyway. I just find it so fascinating.

What I'd love to do just in the last few minutes, because I want to be respectful of your time, and I know you've got a lot on your plate right now, is to just ask a couple of rapid fire questions. And of course, I'll have links to your books and so on, the podcast, and everything else that you're up to in the show notes for everybody, so that will be very easy. But I'm just going to knock out a couple of rapid fire questions, and we'll see where they go. So the first is what is your favorite movie or documentary, or two to three that come to mind and why?

Stephen Dubner: So I would say the Seven-UP Series of documentaries by – is it Mike [inaudible] I think is his name. So this is a series of documentaries of a whole bunch of British kids from different socioeconomic classes, and every seven years, they updated it and checked in with the kids. And it is an unbelievable – it's incredibly – it was like reality TV before there was reality TV.

It was done incredibly well, incredibly sensitively, incredible candor, but it is – if you are at all interested in any kind of science or sociology or human decision making or nurture versus nature, it is the best thing ever.

Tim Ferriss: I love that. Okay, fantastic. I need to go out and watch that immediately. It's reality TV that is reality with the quotation marks removed.

Stephen Dubner: Exactly, yeah, but you know, even just the way it was produced and created and culled, will be – it's really great, interesting.

Tim Ferriss: Awesome, all right, that is a keeper, and I will be checking that out. What does the first hour of your day look like? What is your routine, if you have one, for the first hour of your day?

Stephen Dubner: Yep, so that's pretty – so I like to get up early in part because I like the energy of the body and the mind in the morning. So it takes me a while to get going, but I really love that first hour and a half. And because I have young kids who get up relatively early, too, it's kind of an arms race, so I've had to get earlier and earlier. So now I usually get up usually around five a.m., and you know, need some coffee, and I bring the – I sit down with coffee and the computer. And on the computer, what I will do is usually start to read a little bit, start to write a little bit, and try to do the kind of writing however that doesn't require the full brain.

So it's dealing with emails and stuff, and really planning the day. And I'm a little bit spatially and organizationally challenged in certain ways. I really need to understand the shape of my whole day to have a successful day. So I kind of use this as a kind of throat clearing hour and a half to get a little bit of stuff done, but mostly, it's almost like a mental physical warm-up, so that then whenever I do whatever I do next, which is maybe go for a run, or if I can get in a little golf practice, which is my new addiction and obsession, then when those hours come, I usually try to keep a nice, big, big block of totally unbroken time.

I have no obligations or commitments, so maybe it's going to be from like 8:30 to 4:00 p.m., or maybe it's from 10:00 to 5:00, where then I know that I'm going to have those many hours to sit and think, and read and mostly write. So it's about as boring as it gets, but I love it actually, that early morning sit with the coffee, computer, then the kids come in and the stuff starts to happen.

Tim Ferriss: I've found if I just provide a buffer of that type of throat clearing space for an hour to an hour and a half, by waking up earlier otherwise for each day, my – it's usually boring stuff like [inaudible] my self-reported wellbeing, my happiness is so much higher consistently, just to have – instead of dodging bullets when you just first wake up.

Stephen Dubner: As opposed to jumping right into the heavy stuff you mean?

Tim Ferriss: Yeah, or just jumping into anything hugely reactive, I guess would be the way to put it.

Stephen Dubner: Yeah. Also, you know, if you get up as early as I do, you never want to send like the angry email to somebody that's postmarked 5:15 a.m., because now not only are you the jerk who's writing the angry email, but you're doing it at 5:00 a.m. in the morning.

Tim Ferriss: You're the lunatic.

Stephen Dubner: Exactly, right.

Tim Ferriss: So does – random question. Does the clothing you wear affect your mood or attitude? Why or why not?

Stephen Dubner: Oh, yeah, definitely, oh, yeah, hugely. So this is one of the ways in which – yeah, I'm oversensitive to my like environment and

surroundings, so I'm not like Howard Hughes-ish quite, but I need things lined up.

Tim Ferriss: No bottles –

Stephen Dubner: What's that?

Tim Ferriss: I said no bottles of urine lining the walls or anything.

Stephen Dubner: Not yet at least, but – so this is one reason I became a writer. I like to control my environment. I'm talking to you today now from an empty office in my publisher's building where the temperature isn't quite right. The light is definitely not right. There's these hums coming from the wall that I don't know what they are, and I don't like them. And so one reason I became a writer is so I can control my environment.

So like when I watch golf now, like Bubba Watson, I'm transfixed by Bubba because plainly, he's really, really affected by the circumstances, by the crowd, everything. He'll say, "Man, this course does not fit my eye at all," etcetera, etcetera. And I really identify with that. I need to – so yeah, absolutely, something as simple as clothing – I notice this when I play golf.

If I'm wearing a particular set of shoes of pants, and when I'm looking down in my setup, and if I look to my eye like a, quote, golfer, then I play better. I'm going to swing better. So I think that people who think that you don't derive feeling or confidence or whatever from something as quote, silly as dress or whatnot, I think they're really underestimating how – I wouldn't say how fragile our brains are, but how complex they are. So yeah, I think all that matters a lot.

Tim Ferriss: Okay, as a side note, I have a friend – this is part of why I became fascinated by clothing, when I never really was before. I just kind of threw on whatever I had – is I have a friend who is a little bit older than I am, massively successful real estate guy. And he, somewhat like Men in Black, he has the same – he has about 30 pairs of the same khaki shorts, and 30 pairs of the same black shirt, and 20 of the same hat, and literally, that is his uniform that he wears every single day.

And he's one of the most – I mean I'm not going to go that far, but he's one of the most effective, calmest people I've ever met.

Stephen Dubner: Alright, just remember though – just remember my son’s Juan Mata jersey lesson, okay.

Tim Ferriss: That’s right, no, understood, understood.

Stephen Dubner: So uniform is not necessarily responsible, but as you say, it may in some part be, absolutely.

Tim Ferriss: What are your favorite – what are some of your favorite sources of information, or just guilty pleasures with reading? So you mentioned waking up and reading. What are your go-to sources, if you have any, or how do you curate that?

Stephen Dubner: So I probably have a pretty typical media diet in a lot of ways. I read a lot of New York Times, read a lot of Wall Street Journal. I read a lot of other papers and blah, blah, blah. I read Marginal Revolution, economics blog by Tyler Cowan, and Alex Tabarrock, which is great. I love The Browser, the guy who puts together The Browser, I can’t recall his name at the moment. But it’s just a great daily, I think, or maybe a couple times a week compilation of good stuff from around the web. I love Jason Kottke, if you know Kottke.org. Again, I’m not naturally a great visual person. My wife’s the photographer. So she is, but I love people who do astonishing things with – whether it’s design or whatnot, and even – partly it’s because when I look at it, I’m just astonished that someone could even think of that, much less execute it, so Kottke.org, I look for.

I find it really inspiring, and I love sports, so I read a lot about sports. And like I said, my son has gotten really into soccer in the last couple years, European, MLS, of course upcoming World Cup, and so partly out of my devotion to him, but also because I’ve always like soccer okay, but now because of him, that’s been the new reading passion, both with books and journalism and whatnot.

Tim Ferriss: Have you ever read *Levels of the Game*?

Stephen Dubner: Yeah. Oh, God, *Levels of the Game* is one of my very, very favorite books ever.

Tim Ferriss: It’s so amazing. For those who are not familiar, this is John McFee’s book about a single tennis match, ostensibly, but I actually was very lucky, and I don’t –

Stephen Dubner: Oh, did you have McFee?

Tim Ferriss: I had McFee for the Literature Fact Seminar in school, which was just a mind blowing experience.

So I'll ask you just one last question, and then I'll let you run. Hopefully, we can have a round two sometime. This was really fun.

Stephen Dubner: I would love to, yeah, because this was a blast.

Tim Ferriss: Actually, I lied. There are two questions. One is a sort of substance question, and then the next is a where do we find you question. But if you could provide your younger self – and I know this is one of those questions, but I'll ask it anyway – with one or two pieces of advice – let's just say yourself in college or high school, what would those pieces of advice be?

Stephen Dubner: I would say it's pretty simple. Don't be scared. I was just – there are a lot of things I did not do, a lot of experiences I never tried, a lot of people I never met or hung out with because I was on some – in some form, intimidated or scared.

And look, I still deal with that all the time. And so that would be it. And like I said, it's not like I've solved that problem, but that would be what I'd go back and say to my younger self is that almost always the thing that you fear is ridiculous, and it also plays into what psychologists call the spotlight effect, like everybody must be caring about what I do. And the fact is nobody gives a crap what I do. So that's what I would say, don't be scared.

Tim Ferriss: That is excellent advice. Well, I'm going to give some advice to everybody listening, and that is check out everything that Stephen has written. I've really been a fan for a long time, and have looked to you as a virtual mentor in many respects with the storytelling and so on. It's informed my own writing and therefore, my own thinking.

For those who haven't seen the new book, *Think Like a Freak* is very much a fantastic companion, if you've read – for instance a lot of you are already readers of *The Four-Hour Body*, *Four-Hour Work Week*, *Four Hour Chef*. It's a guide to better thinking. And what better tool could you possibly want or have, so I'll recommend that. Stephen, where would you like people to find you, more about you? Obviously, they can find everything related to the books on Amazon or elsewhere, but where do you spend your time online? Where can people find more of what you do?

Stephen Dubner: Yeah, so Freakonomics.com is I guess the best single compilation. I don't really do a lot of personal writing or Tweeting or anything. But Freakonomics.com and Freakonomics on Twitter is where we kind of write what we've got going on in our work life. And so that will lead you – and it's one of those websites that will lead you ten levels in if you really want to go. And you can find a lot of stuff about related projects, etcetera, etcetera, most of which are not very good, but that's okay, we try, we try and throw a lot of spaghetti at the wall for some of it to stick.

Tim Ferriss: Wonderful. Well, this has been a blast. I will let you get on with your day, and hope to chat with you soon, maybe see you on the East Coast.

Stephen Dubner: You, too. It was really fun, and I would love to talk again in any circumstances. I really appreciate you having me on, Tim.