

**Intro: 00:01**

Hi, I'm Rock Thomas, the founder of M1. The tribe of healthy, wealthy and passionate people, also known as fulfillmentaires. You're listening to the I am movement podcast where we believe words that follow I am follow you. Join me and the world's greatest thought leaders as we discuss the power of transformation and making success a part of your identity.

**Rock: 00:33**

My next guest is Nick Huber, who is a very fascinating entrepreneur who started his entrepreneurial journey while he was in college when he came across the problem and he decided to solve it. Today he services over 10,000 students every year on 30 college campuses around the world. He's financially free and he's living a life of purpose and passion. And welcome to the call. How you doing Nick.

**Nick: 00:58**

I'm good.

**Rock: 00:59**

So listen, um, we have a very diverse audience and you as a young successful entrepreneur I think is going to have a very interesting perspective for some people that think on some level that it's difficult to do what you've accomplished. So why don't you tell people a little bit where the birth came from and, and your story a little bit. So they can get a feel for maybe how they can replicate what you've created.

**Nick: 01:24**

Absolutely. Thanks. Thanks so much for having me on Rock. Um, I'm all about doing, starting small. I'm doing a local business, possibly. Basically how, how I built my business, which is called Storage Squad. Um, I was in college, um, I leased, uh, I put my apartment on Craigslist trying to find somebody to rent it over the summer and um, everybody else did as well. Um, I was headed home. I needed to help pay the rent. After about three weeks on Craigslist, I realized I wasn't probably gonna get anybody. I got a phone call from, um, the mother of a student at Cornell. It said, Hey Nick, um, I know you're looking for a longterm tenant, but I just wanna store my son's stuff in your room. He used the company in Ithaca last year, didn't have a very good experience, can you come pick it up and store it?

**Nick: 02:08**

So I drove to his, to his apartment and made a quick deal for about 150 bucks. Spent about an hour lugging boxes up and downstairs. And the next thing I knew, his stuff was in my apartment and I could no longer lease it for the summer anyway cause it stuff was in there. So, um, I did what any um, you know, open. I get, I guess passionately curious person would do and I got super excited about it. I put um, advertisements all over campus. I reached out to my network, um, in sororities, fraternities. I was pitching at their meetings, um, basically saying I am the new storage provider. So I ran around in my 1999 Cadillac Deville, filled it up with stuff over and over again during finals week and um, filled my apartment with a, with storage and ran out of space

very quickly, needed more space. So I went to a room in a college town where I was moving next year with my now business partner, best friend, best man at my wedding, Dan. And he had a 1997 Buick that was even larger than my Cadillac. So we were match made in heaven. We got super excited, ran all over college campus sweating, picking up and storing boxes for students when they went home for the summer. So that's how we got started.

**Rock: 03:22**

And tell, tell everybody what that's led to. And, and you know, what I like about that is a problem becomes an opportunity when the entrepreneur shows up and you have this kind of problem fall in your lap and you said yes, and then you thought to yourself on some level, what, how can I, what was the thought process after you put that stuff in there? So a light bulb must've gone off.

**Nick: 03:49**

Yeah, it was, um, I'm not afraid to work hard. I came from a small farm town, um, but I was at an Ivy league school with a lot of kids from all over the country. And I said, okay, this could be kind of big. Um, I'm not just gonna do what most people would do, put this in my dorm, go home, buy some beer, have fun, do whatever. So I got super, super excited about it and we worked to grow the business. We got, um, a couple of our, um, cousins and friends at other colleges to launch the business in those cities. And fast forward, um, almost eight years later now we service, um, 10,000 customers a year. We do almost \$3 million a year in, in revenue. And we're in 12 States at 23 college campuses doing pickup and delivery storage. Um, I have, I have, you know, it's been an incredible journey and the big takeaway here is that what I did and what my partner and I did was nothing new.

**Nick: 04:45**

There were 20 companies out there doing exactly what we were going to do. We just thought, okay, this is something that we can do with very little upfront investment. We're not taking a big risk at all. We already have the cars. We already have the apartments. We're just going to in our network and spend some time doing this. We completely bootstrapped the business. We were never in any significant debt to start the business. And, um, yeah, it wasn't, it wasn't a new revolutionary idea, but just trying to get out there and do things a little bit better than the competition was doing it. We were able to carve out a piece of the pie and build an amazing life for ourselves.

**Rock: 05:19**

So what happens to your container is when kids are back in school.

**Nick: 05:23**

Yeah. Seasonal business, we get paid once a year, right? We're, people always ask me like, Nick, what are you doing December? What are you doing January? What are you doing in February when there's absolutely nothing going on? And, um, I always say that's when, that's when we're planning. That's when we're revamping our training processes. That's when we're building our business. That's when we're really adding value to what we're doing. Like when the

busy season comes. Yes. It's crazy. Yes, we're working long hours, but that's kind of just putting the plan in motion that we've worked on. So yeah, we pick up the stuff, store it in a warehouse over the summer. When the students come back in the fall for the start of the next year, we take all the stuff back to them wherever they move.

**Rock: 06:02**

So you provide pickup and delivery?

**Nick: 06:04**

Provide the pickup provided delivery. Literally you can sit in your dorm room, push a button on your computer and we will handle all of your storage. Um, just like that. So that's our, that's our ties.

**Rock: 06:13**

Anybody else do that?

**Nick: 06:15**

Absolutely. Yeah. We have a lot of competitors doing basically the same thing that we are doing. And that's why I kind of have a unique viewpoint on entrepreneurship because I don't think it's, I get kind of frustrated by the Shark Tank, by the Facebook, by this Silicon Valley mentality around entrepreneurship. People think that they have to have a new idea, they have to risk it all. They have to invest years and hundreds of thousands of dollars to start a company. And I look around me, Rock and I look at the people that mentor me. I look at you, I look at everybody that I know personally that has been successful.

**Nick: 06:49**

I'm not talking about Steve Jobs, I'm not talking about Mark Zuckerberg. I'm not talking about these guys that we read about these idols. I'm talking about the real, the millionaires in our society. The people that have their time, the people that have freedom, they all did very similar things. They all started a business that was low risk. They all invested their time at first. They very few of them had new ideas. They just found a way to do something common uncommonly well and they were able to carve out a piece of the pie. And, and that's, that's what I love about entrepreneurship. I think entrepreneurship is not necessarily a zero or a one. It's not necessarily all in or all out. Right. We started our business while we were graduating from school while we were in, um, you know, doing track and field. While I was building a relationship with my wife, I had so many other things going on.

**Nick: 07:36**

You don't have to drop everything and start a business. So that's my, that's my whole, um, if I could, if I could let people leave this conversation with one thing is that entrepreneurship doesn't require that new idea. It doesn't require that venture capital. It doesn't require all of that risk. If you look up from your computer screen and you just look around your town at what people are buying everyday from businesses that are already out there, you'll realize that a lot of those

businesses are ran like it's 1985 with the fax machine, with without a website, without efficient processes, with a secretary sitting in there full, big office. There's just so many opportunities out there.

**Rock: 08:12**

Yeah, I like that. You're you're basically saying, look around you, look where there something could be improved and then have the wherewithal to do that and then you can carve out a piece of the pie, which makes a lot of sense to me.

**Nick: 08:24**

Absolutely. It's, it's like you said, passionate curiosity. Um, you know, passion has, I have very mixed feelings about passion. Some people say like starting something that you are passionate about is, is the golden ticket because you'll work harder. Um, you'd be more likely to succeed that way. But the way I think about it, if, if, if I'm passionate about it. So, you know, I think about what I like. I like cycling. I like music. I like sports. Um, I like electric cars. Like there's hobbies that I really like, but those are all so incredibly competitive because I'm not the only passionate one. Right? So I think that if you can just have, be passionate about business, be passionate about entrepreneurship, be passionate about, um, exploring and learning. You can find opportunities and things that are not necessarily flashy, not necessarily new, not necessarily revolutionary. But if you can look at it and in a non-emotional way and you're not emotionally tied to what you're actually doing, it can be.

**Nick: 09:19**

It can be amazing. Nobody else at Cornell or the Ivy League school wanted to sweat nonstop for 18 hours a day, lugging boxes up and down stairs and the unairconditioned going, no one else wanted to do that. Right? That wasn't fun. It wasn't a hobby of anybody's. So we said, okay, let's not look at it. Let's not look at what's fun to do. Let's look at building the life that we want to have five years from now. What steps can we take to get financial freedom, to not have a nine to five job, to not have a commute each way and have somebody else control my life, right? So to be playing defense and be at the whim of a boss or a layoff or a market economy, we said, what can we do? What simple way that we can do as students with nothing. We had nothing. We had no money, we had no knowledge. We said, what can we do to start to work towards some of those things and we got after it rock, we just got after it.

**Rock: 10:12**

I love it. I love it. I, and you know I teach two things is passionate curiosity, which means you're learning all the time. You're looking for opportunities and a really great work ethic, which you mentioned before and coupled with those two things, you're going to be able to beat out somebody at something and then add to that. It doesn't have to be sexy and flashing. You don't have to be Christian Dior or something like that, or Michael Kors. You could do something like make staples or make paper bags. Just do it a little bit better than somebody else and carve out your piece of the pie. I really liked that as well. Most people are are, like you said, turning come up with this amazing new idea that they're going to invent in their garage and it's going to

change the world and they don't realize that most people actually make money off to distribution and Amazon has proved that, right? Amazon doesn't create any products. It just distributes a whole bunch of products and the guy who spends 14 years creating the next cool wallet gets pennies on the dollars for that wallet that's sold, but he thinks it's his cool idea that he may become a millionaire. I disagree with that. Most people that have the ideas don't get paid much. Most authors don't get paid much on their books. They think they will until they get into the business and then the whole self pub publishing has happened, well, let's just talk,

**Nick: 11:29**

For them it's all about sales, right? All about sales.

**Rock: 11:31**

It is totally. So let's talk a little bit about your identity. So you grew up in a, in a very stable family with, you know, parents that encourage you and supported you and gave you a great opportunity. Where in it did the birth of this desire for financial freedom come other than the traditional route of the education you were getting?

**Nick: 11:51**

Yeah. So I, I had a middle class family, you know, our, we lived on a farm. We lived in a very, very, very small town. Um, I wouldn't say that I was born into wealth and I had just had a silver platter laid out for me. But I had a loving two parents that told me that I could do anything I wanted to do. Cool. And, and they taught me resourcefulness. When I came to my dad with a problem, when I came to him and said, dad, you know, this, this is going wrong for me. He'd say he would, instead of solving the problem for me and just saying, this is, this is how you do it, get on my way. He would say, what would you do, Nick? And he would ask me a bunch of questions and it would drive me nuts. I'd be like, just help me.

**Nick: 12:29**

But he refused. Right. And that taught me to do some problem solving and these are the things that I was not taught in school, in school. I was reading the books and I was studying what to do and I was asking questions and I was memorizing. There was no, there was no real open ended problem solving. So my dad actually set me up with a lawn care company when his boss owns several real estate, uh, properties in our, in our small town. And uh, the guy who mowed these properties had a heart attack and he was okay. His doctor just said, you cannot get out here in the hot sun in Southern Indiana and mow these properties anymore. So my dad gets into the office one Tuesday morning and says, it goes up to the bosses or when the boss is in a bad mood, he says, you know, the lawn chair guy can't mow anymore.

**Nick: 13:10**

He's, he's unhealthy and he's, the grass is getting tall. I don't know what to do. And so my dad did what any average person would do and he volunteered his seventh grade son to take on his 12 hours of commercial mowing a month. And he sent me down to the kitchen table and he said, Nick, this is how you run a balance sheet. This is how you're going to need to bill. These

are going to be expenses. We already had the truck, we already have the trailer, we already have the mower. I'm gonna set you up on leasing schedules for those. You're going to be required to bill the company. And, and he said, and you might want to look at these two jobs. The guy wasn't really charging enough for these two jobs. So he made me go in and having a formal meeting with the boss and ask for more money.

**Nick: 13:45**

Like he just, he just instilled these skills that I was uncomfortable. I was scared. Right? This is for a seventh grader. I was, I was totally out of my element, but that just instilled a sense of resourcefulness in my, in my, in my life, when, when the truck broke down or when the mower was having a problem, there was no way to call. I was the boss, right? I had a couple of employees that would call me with the problems. And you just learned to solve problems and you learn to make good decisions and you learn to think about things logically and you wanted to keep your emotions and your anger and your, um, all of these things that can cloud your judgment. You've learned to manage that. And um, and so that kinda just set me up on the trajectory. But when I went to college, I wasn't necessarily an entrepreneur.

**Nick: 14:24**

I wasn't, I wasn't saying I'm going to be an entrepreneur. I don't know what business I'm going to start. I think honestly, if I would've made that decision, I would've been trying to tech start up or next social media thing. And I have been trying to get venture capital and right now I'd be working a job in a city because entrepreneurship culture right now is so messed up, passionately curious about business. I walk into a restaurant and I would think about, Oh the rent, how do they, how are they paying the rent here when this place is empty on Friday night? And this is not normal thoughts for high school kid. I was just curious about business and I could have a mind to kind of think about how business works and how to spot opportunities.

**Rock: 15:03**

There's a lot of great stuff there. And what's interesting is your father and my father had the same strategy. I'd always come to him and I said, dad, I can't think the whole, there's a rock. He'd say, what do you, what would you do? What would you do? Forced me to search for the answer. And that's what grew the creativity. So we both had fathers like that, which maybe helped the entrepreneur within us because we started to look for how do I find the way right where a lot of other people, if they don't see it right in front of them, they haven't, they haven't, that muscle developed. They may be default to the way we were taught in school, which is, well it must be in a book that I could copy or rephrase and put it over here and get a result called, you know, 72% on my exam. So I noticed you used the term passionate curiosity a lot. That's something that, that you've used most of your life. Coz it seems,

**Nick: 15:43**

I'm the kind of guy, I'll buy a guitar and three months later I know how to play 10 songs on the guitar. I'm the kind of guy who I want to get into fishing. I'm, next thing I know I got a really nice

fishing kayak hanging in my garage and I'm, and I'm learning how to chase the fish in the pond because I want to be good at it.

**Rock: 16:00**

Right.

**Nick: 16:00**

Right. So, so absolutely. That's exactly what, um, what I've done in one more thing I'd love to leave your audience with on the entrepreneur side of thing side of things is very soon build building the service business. I realized that I was the bottleneck. All the problems came to me and you as a business owner Rock, you figured this out as well. So we had to pass on that resourcefulness to our employees.

**Nick: 16:21**

And the way that we did that was the same types of things that our fathers did to us. When when an employee called me with a problem, it would have been really, really easy to just solve the problem and take over the problem and say, you know what? Get out of the way. I can do it faster. I can do it better.

**Rock: 16:34**

I'm the man.

**Nick: 16:36**

Yeah. And our first two years in business, we did that Rock and we were answering customer service calls at 2:00 AM sleeping in these grody warehouses, working around the clock, taking showers with wipes in a McDonald's bathroom. I mean, and we realized that we are never going to build the life we want doing that. Like we had to delegate and that's when we started sinking. Okay. Which employees have some potential? Which employees can we teach to solve some of these problems? And the way to do that is instead of answering the question every time they call, you give them the tools to think about it and try to.

**Rock: 17:05**

Right.

**Nick: 17:06**

Transfer your mindset to that person and so that they can think like you. And I think that was the key in business that really allowed us to go from, you know, making \$500,000 a year and at \$50,000 salary to building a healthy, scalable service business.

**Rock: 17:22**

So what's your goal? You have now 10,000 clients and 3 million in revenue. What was your vision for that?

**Nick: 17:29**

So about four years ago, I stepped away from that business. Um, I took myself out and Danny and I realized that, um, it's, it's a business that we're excited about and we're going to continue to grow it. But it started to kind of run itself. We started to see that there was some limitations on the potential size of that market and we wanted to get into real estate. So I we did. I cut it, I got the cord on my TV, I stopped playing video games and I did exactly what I did with my guitar when it came to self storage.

**Nick: 17:58**

So every evening I'm on LoopNet looking at properties. I'm looking at hundreds of deals a year and this is way before I had any money. This was way before I learned done anything or even had a plan to how to get into the business. I'm just studying the market and I'm looking at what they're charging for 10 by 10 units in this city and we're analyzing every city East of the Mississippi or the right opportunity with self storage and where can we get our competitive advantage with self storage. What about the self storage business? Can we do a little bit better? And we thought, Oh, you know what? They have a full time manager and all these facilities and we go and visit them. They're \$11 an hour employees. They're not that good at sales, they're doing 20 jobs. Um, this is, this just doesn't make a lot of sense.

**Nick: 18:36**

Let's automate this. Let's take that manager out. Let's get a really good trained salesman to handle the sales. Let's get a really good billing collector to handle the billing. Let's get a cleaning company to do the cleaning so that they can all be really good at what they do. So as 25 year olds, we hit, I hit the road with my partner Dan, and we pitched a bank to finance a development and investors to put up the money to build a storage facility. So we built that in Ithaca, New York 2017. It's been a great success. And um, and over the next couple of a years, um, we have a, a, a plan that we love in place to turn that one facility into five, six, seven properties and kinda grow, um, the self storage business.

**Rock: 19:17**

Very cool. So using the model of, you know, learning from other people, et cetera, et cetera. Do you know many other people that are in that business? Do you mastermind with them? Do you talk to them or are you kind of just figuring it out on your own?

**Nick: 19:31**

So finding people that are in this business and forward thinking and on the tech side of it is, is tough. I, but I do constantly surround myself with really good decision makers with people who can look at a decision and think about, Nick, this is your blind spot, Nick. This is what you could be missing. Nick, this is the big risk factor when we do this. And these are other people who are in real estate, other types of real estate, just people that I've, that I've met over the last five years that I just know are really good thinkers and they can analyze on, I can simplify it in a five minute conversation, my plan and my vision and they will instantly bounce things off of me that just, I didn't, I didn't even think of it, you know, I didn't think of that risk factor. That's something



that really needs to be analyzed and this is the real problem. And uh, you know, it's been awesome. Yeah. So the people, obviously I was a 25 year old, I, I had no idea what I was doing. So if I would not have had open ears, uh, it would have been a long road.

**Rock: 20:27**

So I think Tony talks about the three different personality types you have. Um, you have the entrepreneur, you have the manager and you have the artists and the artist is the person who is more like, you know, the salesperson, the manager is the person who keeps things going and the entrepreneur is the one that with the vision that wants to expand everything. Where would you say you, you are mostly, are you a really great operator or do you see yourself more of the visionary?

**Nick: 20:54**

Yeah, luckily I met a very good partner. His name's Dan and he is a manager. He is a manager artist. He is the one steering the boat and I'm the one in the back of the boat shoveling coal into the engine as fast as possible. Getting up in meetings and getting people fired up, exaggerating things. And Dan is the one saying, Whoa, Whoa, Whoa, Whoa, Whoa. How are we going to do all this? How are we going to do all this? So our, our personalities mesh so well. Um, but yeah, I'm, I'm the entrepreneur. I'm the, I'm the run through wall kind of guy. Like let's do it. This is the five year plan. This is exactly how we're going to do it. Let's go. And then I, luckily I've surrounded myself with the other types.

**Rock: 21:33**

So as you know, this is all about the I am movement and people bringing consciousness to the way that we see ourselves describe ourselves showing up and how do we tweak that? So when we go forward and as you're saying that, you know, I'm a guy runs into the wall, I'm shoveling coal into the fire, I'm the guy and then I'm being held back. So you're doing the I am statements with your conscious of it or not. So what would be a way that, that you got there consciously or unconsciously, and how could you even further develop that so that you, you fix your part of the role, you hold your end of the bargain and then you add team players that will further drive your business forward.

**Nick: 22:14**

Yeah. So going forward, something that I'm really, really working on is, so I've always been good at the, I can do it. I'm a gladiator. I am, you know, I am empowered.

**Rock: 22:25**

I've always got a brother from another mother.

**Nick: 22:27**

My dad taught me that. Um, I've, I've just not given a shit what people think.

**Rock: 22:32**

Right?

**Nick: 22:32**

And so now I'm working on something that Ray Daleo, I don't know if you've read his book,

**Rock: 22:37**

Prince of Principles. Sure

**Nick: 22:38**

Radical open-mindedness.

**Rock: 22:40**

Yep.

**Nick: 22:41**

And I've always had the mind, I'm right. Everyone else is wrong. Get the heck out of my way. Right? And now I'm, I'm really getting a lot better at sitting down and saying, okay, I'm confident. My logic is telling me one thing, but let's listen to everybody with a radical open mind so that they can point out my blind spots. They can point out things that I'm doing wrong and change my opinion on a moment's notice.

**Nick: 23:04**

I used to be so stubborn, right? It used to take three, four meetings for Danny or my coworkers to say, make your wrong, let's do it a different way. And now I'm getting really good at backtracking and changing my mind and saying, okay, the information now that supports my opinion is not as strong as the information that is. Um, you know, against my opinion. And I don't know if you read Ryan Holiday either. He has, he's a philosopher, you know, modern day philosopher, he talks about stoicism, he talks about emotions and ego. And the ego is also the, the Achilles heel of the entrepreneurs. Somebody like me, the ego really gets in the way. And just understanding that the ego is there and understanding that it can cloud your judgment. The overconfidence can really cloud the judgment. So moving forward, I'm really working on identifying my blind spots and just like you said, with the eye movement involves getting people around me that I trust, that I know are good decision makers and can help me spot these things.

**Rock: 24:00**

Yeah, like Ray says, triangulating people with merit so that what your plan is is bulletproof. And this is something that we made really popular in our mastermind groups, is to continually have the courage to present your idea so that people can, you know, in a loving way, poke holes in it. Then you bring it to the business world versus trying it out in the business world with things that you haven't seen. So I love the fact that you have that openness.

**Nick: 24:26**

So many entrepreneurs they have what their vision of reality. You got understand that reality is just your vision of it, right? So you don't know that it's correct. And so many entrepreneurs, they get so entrenched in an opinion and what they want to happen. And I think this is another one of those businesses, these dangers of starting a business that you're passionate about. If you're starting a business that you're passionate about, that passion cloud your judgment and can put in those, those blind spots that you're not seeing in your filtering information based on what you want to hear, right? You're filtering information based on what supports your opinion.

**Rock: 24:57**

Yeah 100%. You seek and ye shall find you, you, everything's blue if you're looking for blue. I agree with you, but I do like what you said before about you can start your business part time and I, and I want to second that and I'm going to also second the fact that I don't think you have to be passionate about something. I have a very, very successful real estate business and I was very excited about it at the beginning because I wanted to make a lot of money. I didn't love the business, but I love the results of the business. A little desperate after my father died, but it's still now as a good business for me, but I've been able to use it as the platform to have more choices. And I think you, you kind of alluded to that is if you're willing to do something, maybe dirty work, two, three, four years, then you might be able to have a basis that covers your, you know, your rent and your food and some choices. And now you look around and you go, you know what, I ha I can afford to dabble there. I can play with that. I could mess up over here. Does that make sense?

**Nick: 25:52**

Yeah. Oh man. Now, now I'm doing a podcast because it's my passion. Now I'm racing my bicycle because it's a passion, right? And I'm making business decision based on supporting my life. And the other thing people don't realize about businesses. You cannot be a technician in your business forever. So if you're passionate about your business and you really like making shoes, you're going to be the bottleneck forever. And you're never gonna be able to grow that business. Six months in to starting my business, we were no longer driving the trucks. We were no longer answering the calls. We were sitting behind a computer managing. And that's the way any business is going to be. If you're going to grow it, right? So, um, just a second, you know, it's all about the five year plan. It's all about something that can get you to where you can then get passionate about things. And then if people always say, you know, I want to start a business that changes the world and I say, that's awesome. Start a power washing business now, then start a business that cleans entire parking lots, then start a business that and cleans entire shopping centers, then sell that business for \$40 million. Now you can change the world.

**Rock: 26:55**

I agree with it a few, 100%. And I think it's an entrepreneur solves problems. Solve a problem and the experience you'll get from that, whether it's sweeping the floors at McDonald's or whether it's power washing the side of a shopping mall, you're going to learn something about work ethic, timing, you know, wasting saving, uh, cutting corners and doing a good job and good

customer service, et cetera. Let's talk a little bit about goal setting and how important that is for you. Is that something you do? Do you do it in writing? Are you conscious of it or do you kind of just get up and take action?

**Nick: 27:28**

Um, so you can't always set goals. It comes to a point where you got to do it, right. Um, but every month I sit down and I do outline the goals and every year I sit down and I think about the five year plan. I sit down with my wife, I sit down in my business partner and I think about where do we want to be in five years, what's the trajectory that we need to be on? And we, we revisit that almost monthly and definitely yearly because it changes, right? And new opportunities come and you say, okay, well that plan was great, but look at what we're learning out there. Look at what information is coming in to change that. So absolutely a goal setting person actually got him really, uh, a serious hobby habit of writing, journaling in the mornings. And that, that changed my life.

**Nick: 28:12**

Rock. Because what I do is I, I go to bed, I set up for my morning routine in the evening before I go to bed. I put a problem that I'm having on a Google document or a, uh, a Microsoft word document and I look at the problem, I look at the problem and then I put my computer on airplane mode, no internet, no nothing. I close all other windows and then I go take a shower. I meditate through the shower and then I fall asleep and I wake up first thing in the morning. I chug 32 ounces of water. I have a cliff bar and I sit down at that computer and I just, no distractions. I don't check my phone, no input. And it ends up, sometimes it morphs into a two hour session where I'm totally revamping the business in my mind and I'm setting new goals and I'm revamping the new plan of action.

**Nick: 28:56**

Sometimes I'm solving problems that I have and um, new ways of thinking about those problems. And it's just, I think in a, in a, in a day and age where this is a connection to you as a person, right? Your, your phone is just an extension of you. It's so easy to get so overwhelmed with input, input, input, input, that's really hard to be creative. So taking a step away from the phone and just going at, um, going at it problem or a topic, anything that I'm interested in learning more about it, put at the top of that page and I'll write on it. And the results are unbelievable.

**Rock: 29:29**

I love it. I have a thing that says, tell me what you do before eight o'clock in the morning and after eight o'clock at night and I can predict your financial future for the rest of your life. And you really summed up a lot of what the most successful people do is they use that, that time when you know, your brain is still in a creative mode in order to, I have the problem solve, find new ideas, etc. Time for visioning, time for quiet time, time for you to receive information from the universe. So I love the way that you are doing that actively and you're seeing and it's enjoyable. You enjoy that time?

**Nick: 30:02**

That's what, that's what birthed my podcast and my blog, my, um, all my thoughts on entrepreneurship. That's why I'm talking to you Rock. And that's why I'm in the VIP club is because of that. Yeah.

**Rock: 30:13**

I love it. Now, a technical question as you have, you're married. Yes.

**Nick: 30:17**

Married. Yep. Just had, um, we have a two year old and we just had a uh, a new baby three weeks ago. We were just blessed with a new baby boy. Both happy, both healthy. Everybody's um, happy enough. And I got to say that journaling, you have got to do it in the morning because the rest of the day is totally unpredictable. If you wait,

**Rock: 30:35**

That's my question is how, how early do you have to get up to do that? Because there will be times when there are demands from your family.

**Nick: 30:43**

Yeah. So I, my wife is with the new baby now. She gets up with him, she sleeps in with him and I, the two year old is now my responsibility. So I actually set my computer downstairs and get up with my son, get him breakfast and let him play while I journal now. Um, but still no input. Still no phone checking, still no email checking, still no nothing that can, you know, get my, get my mind. But after, after 8:00 AM or 9:00 AM is too late, I, I'm up at six because that's when I can have uninterrupted time. I'm not getting Slack messages from my coworkers. I'm not getting problems sent my way. Any habits, any longterm habit. And the secret of success, as you know, is over time. Consistency, consistency. Over time. You cannot build a consistent, um, anything after noon or people who work out after work because things come up after work, right? You got to go pick up a sick kid, you've got to go call this problem, you've got this meeting. So the mornings are absolutely critical.

**Rock: 31:40**

I just wanted, you know, and thank you for pointing that out because people, people will have that come up as yet, but I got kids. Yeah. But you know, my wife wants to spend some time with me. So you actually have found a way to to marry the two together and make it happen while still staying present, which is really, really great. Yeah.

**Nick: 31:55**

I had to make some sacrifices. I don't play fantasy football with my friends. I always used to do that. I do not watch TV. I watch just enough sports to keep up a conversation with my friends. I looked at my life and I and I made a list of everything that takes up my time and I said, what 20% of these activities generate 80% of my happiness? Where am I getting my results from? Everything else on the list. Got it. Got across because it just wasn't that important and time. I

realized that time when you have a family, when you have people that are depending on you and relationships are important and building personal relationships moving forward. I had to start crossing off a lot of things on my list, so I don't watch TV. I don't play video games. I exercise and I spend time with my wife and my family and I socialize with friends, which is not always easy.

**Nick: 32:43**

I think even for extroverted person, you have to work at that, right? You have to work to build friendships. So a lot of people are like, my network's not growing, my network's not growing. Well, are you doing the work to make it happen? Are you emailing Rock Thomas and saying, will you come on my show?

**Rock: 32:55**

Right?

**Nick: 32:56**

You've got to do it.

**Rock: 32:57**

Yeah. You've got to get in there and you've got to invest and where attention goes, energy flows and results show and you're doing that obviously. All right. As we're wrapping this up, um, you read a lot, you absorb a lot. Um, what's a book that's impacted you recently?

**Nick: 33:11**

Yeah. So, um, you mentioned that Ray Dalio Principles, you all study. Um, The Ego is the Enemy by Ryan Holiday. He talks about, he, he puts a modern twist on philosophy. He studies Sinica those philosophers that, and if you're not familiar with philosophy, it's, it's the, it's the act of recognizing emotions, but realizing that nothing is good or bad and you have a choice to react to a situation.

**Nick: 33:34**

So something happens where most people get angry, they get sad, they make a rush decision. The person who is, um, working on stoicism and it's so hard is gonna re that little time between an action and a reaction. There's that little space where you get to choose how, how you, what you're gonna make of a situation. And Ryan Holiday's book talks about that. The Obstacle Is The Way as well. The obstacle is the way is kind of more on everyday life making better decisions. And the ego is the enemy is talking about, okay, you've had some success. Okay, you're in a position of power. How are you going to manage, um, making sure that your ego is not clouding your decisions. So it's a, it's a thing that I've worked on and I've worked on and I've worked on and I'll never stop working on because it's so hard, right.

**Nick: 34:18**

To deal with your emotions all the time. But um, but yeah, those two books are phenomenal.

**Rock: 34:22**

Beautiful. Um, are you teaching people anything?

**Nick: 34:26**

Yeah. So I w my little brother is starting a lawn care business and other sweaty startup. Right. And he's having a great time with that. He's using his five year master's degree in business to start a lawn care company. And the success that he's having is, is phenomenal just because he's putting a new twist on a business where the competition is not that strong and he's doing a lot of things better. So I was mentoring him about six months ago and um, and he's like, Nick, you should, you should like record these calls like this. This would be really good. So then I started that writing habit in the morning that I was telling you about and, and I'm a podcast and a blog and in a community has formed around that called the Sweaty Startup.

**Nick: 35:06**

And I'm, I'm all, we're all about starting local sweaty businesses that can lead to the next opportunity that can lead to the next opportunity doing common things that everybody already does do them uncommonly well. And you can really, you can back the nine to five, you can get your time back, you can build a better life for yourself. You can spend your thirties, forties and fifties doing things you want to do instead of things that you have to do. So that's my new, um, that's, that's my new thing.

**Rock: 35:35**

The sweaty startup that's people can find you. Right?

**Nick: 35:38**

It is, sweatystartup.com we have a, um, and then the Sweaty Startup Podcast and reach out to me, Nick. Honestly, if anybody wants to talk, reach out and [nick@sweatystartup.com](mailto:nick@sweatystartup.com).

**Rock: 35:50**

All right, fantastic. I really appreciate you sharing, you know, very transparently your journey and congratulations to your success. And uh, any plans on being a billionaire?

**Nick: 35:58**

I don't think so. It might happen, but, um, I'm looking at the power of real estate and realizing that who knows where I'll be when I'm 60 years old. But no, I, I am all about staying humble, being I like, I enjoy frugality. I enjoy, um, you know, I, I I like the ride.

**Rock: 36:15**

I'll give you, I'll give you a name that you, or a word that you might add to your I am statements and recently we're throwing it around, called fulfillmentaire. And rather than being a billionaire or a multimillionaire, it's about being wealthy enough that you can do the things that really matter and being fulfilled along the way. So having a great family, being healthy, and then maybe contributing to whatever causes that touched your heart, which ultimately creates the ultimate

fulfillment, but not at the sake of being broke and being one of those people that, you know, I worked this charity, but you know, in tattered clothes, it's like having the full life, the fulfilling their life. How about that?

**Nick: 36:56**

Rock, you're making a big difference. I can't thank you enough for the message that you're spreading, the cause that you're chasing and the hundreds of thousands of lives that you're impacting. So thank you so much for all your work. Keep it up, man. Keep getting up every day. Changing lives. Really appreciate it.

**Rock: 37:13**

Yeah. Well, right back at you. And thanks for reaching out because it's people like you that have the courage to ask that create new relationships like this. So, um, let me remind the listeners that the words that follow, I am follow you. Choose them wisely. Be intentional with the words. Maybe you want to add, fulfillmentaire, or I'm sweaty, startup person, whatever it is, but add that to your identity, create the guardrails for your behavior, and then watch those results get forced into your life. Be intentional and we'll see you on the next call.

**Nick: 37:46**

Thank you so much Rock.

**Outro: 37:48**

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