

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 that the 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 Thomas (00:31):

Today's guest is a certified scrum agile master, human behavior consultant, and bestselling author, mentor, and evangelist for project management. His appetite for knowledge and passion for the profession makes him an internationally sought after speaker, delivering keynote presentations for conferences and events around the world. He holds so many designations I can't even mention them here, but he is also a director for the John Maxwell team. Rick founded R2 Consulting LLC and has worked for organizations such as GE, Xerox, and CA and has consulted to numerous of clients in a wide variety of industries. He's got over 100 implementations of the P&P and agile systems. He has three previous books, The Everything Project Management Book, The Second Edition, and The Project That Works. So if you're looking to improve your project management or to drive teams, lead teams, this is definitely the podcast for you.

Rock Thomas (01:29):

His latest book No Day But Today is an Amazon number one bestseller, and he's collaborated on the Amazon number one bestseller Agile Almanac Two. He appears on his weekly radio show live called Work Life Balance on The Voice of American Business Network Fridays at 5:00 PM Eastern or 2:00 PM EST. I'm a guest on one of his episodes as well. So we're doing a little bit of back and forth.

Rock Thomas (01:58):

Rick Morris is an active member of the Project Management Institute, graduate of the PMI Leadership Institute Masters Class. So he's got so much depth in this area, it's crazy. But the cool thing is that at the age of 11, Rick was a Walt Disney World performer. In high school, he worked at MGM Studios on various projects, including a new Mickey Mouse Club. Taking the experience of his youth and blending it with the knowledge he attained throughout his career. So you never know what your past is going to do to make your future better and taking that experience has helped him be a really, really great motivational speaker, inspire others, mentor people, and project managers. And therefore his blend of real world experience and down to Earth delivery style makes him and his passion for the profession contagious.

Rock Thomas (02:46):

I'm really, really thrilled. You're going to love this interview. Super, super intelligent, personable, fun loving. He's passionate about the workforce and creating value for each organization and working on and helping people have work life balance. He has an I am statement that says, "I am an influencer." And today, you're going to hear why exactly he's an influencer and the skills

and tools he uses to influence other people to come to the conclusion to make the decisions that are going to impact your life and make it epic.

Rock Thomas (03:16):

So please help me welcome my guest Rick Morris to today's I Am Movement Podcast.

Rock Thomas (03:24):

I'm so glad that you're here today, Rick. Welcome to our podcast, the I Am Movement.

Rick Morris (03:29):

Thank you so much for having me. I'm super excited about the opportunity of this conversation.

Rock Thomas (03:35):

So for those of you that heard me introduce him, he's got one heck of a bio, and we're not going to have a chance to get through every thing today. But I'm going to ask you to take a deep dive and talk about some of the things that really matter and some of the things that are near and dear to your heart. We're going to start with the fact that you have an I Am statement that says, "I am an influencer." And I want to work my way backwards. We're going to talk about your upbringing a little bit. But why do you start with that, "I am an influencer," what does that mean to you?

Rick Morris (04:01):

So most of my career I was a project manager, and project manager is told one of the greatest lies ever told. Every companies got a project manager. Every companies got too many projects, not enough people, and they bring you in and they go, "You own this project. It's yours." And all of us believe that. It's the greatest lie told to a project manager, and then you start to realize well, none of those resources report to me. I have no say into their upward trajectory in the company or their development. I can't write a check. I can't just determine my own budget, and it wasn't even my idea to do this project. So the only thing I had to rely on throughout my entire career was influence. And I read a phenomenal... I was thinking of quitting project management right around the dot com burst, right around 2000. And I read an incredible book by somebody who's now became my mentor called Radical Project Management. It was all about influencing up, and as a project manager, you're so focused on do I have a task plan, what are my resources doing, are we on time, on budget, what percent complete are we, so on and so forth. But we don't take that message and influence up to the executives that can really make a decision that can make or break the project.

Rick Morris (05:13):

And the moment that I made that transition and switch in my career is when I really started to obtain success in the industry. So the only thing I can develop to become a better manager and better project manager is my influence of those people around me.

Rock Thomas (05:26):

Well, that's fascinating. I've never heard that influencing up because we often talk about leadership as obviously doing the right thing and then influencing those that are within our management or influence down. So when you say influencing up, is that talking about vision, about looking at bringing solutions and suggestions? Tell me a little bit more about that.

Rick Morris (05:47):

So it's really solutions and suggestions. So I'll give you a typical thing that happens in our career. One of the biggest things I'm known for teaching. So normally projects are selected in the beginning of the year. There's a budgetary cycle. People say, "What projects do we want to complete? How much is that going to cost?" And then all of a sudden you throw it to a project manager. Well, those dates and budgets have become hardened, but there's no plan. We don't know if we can do it. We don't know if we have the people available. But then everything comes about the plan versus the journey or the vision of the project itself. So for instance, when I'm given a mandated date, they'll say, "You've got to have this project done by October 31st." I'll go, "Why October 31st? I don't understand." So I go through that, but the thing that I do... And let's play along. It's probably been a while since you've driven to an office, is that fair?

Rock Thomas (06:34):

Pretty much, yes.

Rick Morris (06:35):

All right. So let's talk about getting the airport because I assume you travel a lot.

Rock Thomas (06:38):

Yeah.

Rick Morris (06:38):

So how long does it take you to get to the airport?

Rock Thomas (06:41):

15 or 20 minutes.

Rick Morris (06:43):

Every day, every time, right?

Rock Thomas (06:45):

Pretty much, yeah.

Rick Morris (06:46):

What's the longest it's ever taken you?

Rock Thomas (06:49):

Well, from here probably about 20 or 25 minutes. There was an accident.

Rick Morris (06:53):

Sure. So about 100% increase in time there. So I'll do this with an executive. I'll say, "How long have you worked here?" They'll say, "10 years." I'll say, "How long does it take to get to work?" They'll say, "20 minutes." And I'll go, "Every day?" "Yeah." "So what's the longest?" "Oh, an hour." "Well, what happened?" Just like you said, an accident. And I'll go, "Okay. So how long's it going to take you to get to work October 17th next year?" And they don't know. I say, "Well, you just gave me a 300% variance. You've been here 10 years. There's 200 workdays in a year. So you've done this 2000 times. Now you want me to put 40 people in a room that's never done this before, and I got to tell you the exact day. What if we came up a range, and then I can ask you this question. How long into your drive on October 17th would you take to commitment to how long will it take you to get to work? You get passed the accident points, you get passed the weather, car started, all those things."

Rick Morris (07:40):

So I'm doing the same thing. Instead of saying October 31st, what if we said between October 1st and November 15th, and then when do I have to know the exact day so that we don't tell everybody that they failed. So that's a huge example of influencing up. It's still their decision. I'm just bringing a real world example as to why that that's a negative consequence to the 40 people working on the project.

Rock Thomas (08:01):

I love that a lot because what you're doing also is you're showing that you have experience and that you're bringing that experience to them so they can make a decision where everybody wins versus what I would assume is a lot of people living under unnecessary stress for fear of not making a deadline that was just choosing out of the sky.

Rick Morris (08:18):

Right. And for no reason. I actually experienced that at an insurance company. I was putting in a system, and contractually we had to be done by March 31st. When we did our plan, it was like around April 20th. It wasn't bad. But still it's 20 days beyond what they wanted. Everybody was freaking out. When I asked the CIO, "Why March 31st?" He goes, "I don't know. It was the end of the quarter. Sounded good to me." There was no reason. But all these people are losing sleep, and so through those experiences I've become a warrior for the people doing the projects. We have two people in this scenario, the project sponsor and the project manager that are determining the outcome and the stress of hundreds of people. So I became the voice of the hundreds of people, and that's when my career shifted.

Rock Thomas (09:05):

That's really cool. I mean, it's not any different than a plane that's flying from New York To LA with the anticipation of arriving the 5:23. But it doesn't know the cross winds yet. It doesn't know

things that might come up, and throughout the flight, it gives updates. And the captain actually comes on, he goes, "Ladies and gentleman, we're hitting a strong head wind. Looks like we're going to arrive seven minutes late." So new information creates the opportunity for a new decision without the stress of having to hit some fictional timeline.

Rick Morris (09:36):

I like to use the airplane example as well talking about end to end promise or end to end process for people. So for instance, let's say you were supposed to land at 5:23, and you actually land at 5:03. But now there's a delay because the gate wasn't ready for you. So you got to get the people in...

Rock Thomas (09:53):

Right.

Rick Morris (09:53):

So when you say 5:23 in your mind, you're thinking, "It's six o'clock. I'm walking out the door with my luggage, and now it's 6:15." If you go back and look at the flight, the flight will say it was early. But you as a customer was late, and that's end to end process. We don't care about who's fault it was. We care about we had an expectation, which was explicit, and you missed that.

Rock Thomas (10:18):

So you have a very keen sense because you actually at the beginning of the call said you probably haven't driven to an office for a long time. So I'm having this feeling of an intuition for people. And I want to ask you this question because a lot of people listening to this podcast are solo entrepreneurs. So they may not have a big project, but they may put some factitious dates in for themselves to create an end goal. So I need to sell X by X date without all the information of cross winds and accidents and et cetera that can come up in the business. How would you coach them on not being over stressed with just choosing some date out of a random number?

Rick Morris (11:00):

It's a different question just because of what you said earlier is intuition of people. There's actually four real types of communicators. We're not talking about Meyers-Briggs. But I'm a huge believer in DiSC and DiSC profiling. So what I did is again through influencing people, I need to learn how to communicate where they are. I don't want to communicate above them or below them. I need to communicate to where they are so I can get them where they need to be. So I started an intensive study on how to deal with people. What's funny is in your bio as well, you said you owned a restaurant. And I came up and kind of matured through a restaurant running Bennagin's if you can remember. And I learned so much about people through that experience. So for me, I don't care if I'm a project manager or if I'm a car salesman. I actually sold lawn and garden at Sears. If you know people and if you know how to influence people, and let's be clear on that word. It's not manipulation of. It's not taking a technique to manipulate somewhere they are. It's influence to get them what they want. And if you satisfy what they want, they're going to like you and they're going to follow you. It's a very simple pattern.

Rick Morris (12:08):

So I had to learn how to shut my own brain down to meet them where they are. So that's where the intuition comes from is I'm a naturally high I personality, massive ADD. And I used to miss all kinds of things. So I had had to have trained my brain to slow down and observe everything around me, not just what the person saying, what their mannerisms are, what's going on behind them, all that stuff. And so that's where that intuition comes from is from studying people in a way that I can help them achieve what they want. So then to answer your question directly, there's some people that have so many tasks that get overwhelmed, and so when they get super overwhelmed, I tell them just get one thing done. Be happy with the one thing you got done. Because I have a great friend that I talk to all the time and she'll be like, "Well, I have 80 things due, and I got all this..." What did you get done? Tell yourself the list of what you did get done that day.

Rick Morris (13:05):

So to answer your question specifically around plans and DiSC profiles, if you're a high D, I coach them to make bullet point lists and see those lists get crossed off. If you're a high I, you get overwhelmed by the things you didn't do. So for instance, you got 30 bins of clothes that you want to organize and you got one done, you're actually upset that the other 29 didn't get done versus being happy that one did get done. So it's depending on the person and the intuition I have, but there's a lot of different tricks that we can use to feel that satisfaction of a job well done.

Rock Thomas (13:38):

So let's go back though and shift gears here a little bit. Let's talk a little bit about your upbringing because one of the things that I like to talk about on this podcast is we were all given labels by our caretakers, the people that influenced us while we were growing up, our teachers and primarily our parents if they raised us. And we get these labels. And I tell this story of this cute little freckled kid that was told many, many times, "Oh, you're so cute. You're so cute." And this young boy learns how to take advantage of that, manipulate that and get his way until later when he's 16 years old, the freckles turn into pimples. And he was no longer the cute kid, but he was pizza face. He was the type of kid that didn't feel like he belonged. We have many of these labels. You're too old, you're too young, you're too fat, you're too skinny. You're what have you. And it goes to these many women who are very, very beautiful who are insecure because they're afraid now that their beauty won't last.

Rock Thomas (14:38):

So tell me a little bit about the effects of labels for you growing up and the relationship it had maybe with your parents.

Rick Morris (14:46):

Everybody likes to complain about parents and their upbringing. My parents instilled a belief in me that I can do anything. That started young. I was 11 years old. I was taking dance lessons. Within four months of that, there was an audition for Walt Disney World, and I got selected as

one of the 12 kids that got to do these seasonal shows and be on TV, all that stuff. But I remember when I was going in for an audition the next season, I went in saying, "I don't care if I get it or not. I'm fine." And I was the last person cut, and that just crushed me. But the reason why is they were holding onto me, the directors of the show pulled me aside and they said, "We love you. We wanted you, but you're just too tall. You're actually taller than some of the people that are going to be playing your parents in the show. We hold onto you as long as we possibly could." So they said, "When you're 18, you can come back and work for us." Well, for me, that's six years away. So I gave up on that dream.

Rick Morris (15:46):

But I just had this restless spirit. My parents allowed me to... Whatever it was that I focused on, they said, "You just have to focus on that. Just go on that path." But they didn't really direct me on what that would be.

Rick Morris (15:59):

What's interesting to me though is my dad did have a dream for me, which was to take over a company that he started in '78. They were the first software company to automate an insurance claim on a mainframe. The company's still around called USSI, and there were three guys that started it. They each had sons, and their dream was that the three sons would take over the business and keep running it. And I rebelled against that so much. So I got into entertainment. I actually worked on the Mickey Mouse Club. I got to tour with bands and all this stuff. And when my dad got sick, I blew town. I lost all my connections, just got into real self destructive behavior. Why I tell that story though is I got into restaurant management, and then I fell into IT. And I worked in help desks. And I remember I'm putting together a speech, and I am a project manager for an insurance company in the software division. I remember the realization just smacked me in the face of as much as I tried to rebel against my father's dream, I naturally fell into exactly what he wanted to do because he was the project manager of the software company. I was just like, "Wow did I show you dad?" I was like, "Oh, boy. Look at that."

Rick Morris (17:12):

So that-

Rock Thomas (17:13):

Long way there.

Rick Morris (17:14):

Yeah. So that I showed you dad became kind of one of my labels. And so early on it was showing him that I could be a productive member of society because I wasn't in a good space when he passed, and then I could be successful and I could start my own company versus chasing my dreams of fulfilling my destiny. So the tone in which I say it used to be, "I showed you dad," and now it's with pride, "I showed you, dad." I'm here.

Rock Thomas (17:44):

Yeah. Yeah. That's beautiful. It's interesting how the... My father was a management consultant, and I ended up becoming a coach for businesses as well. So even though consciously I didn't follow his footsteps, I started in multiple businesses. I ended up in a very similar beam also. So you wonder how much we're affected by osmosis just being around people and the conversation, the thoughts, and then taking them on.

Rock Thomas (18:15):

So tell me a little about when you dad got sick and how old were you and how long did that kind of interrupt your life?

Rick Morris (18:23):

So he was diagnosed with lung cancer on my 18th birthday and was gone before I was 20. So I had left school, come home to take care of the family. I remember at 19, he was in hospice care at home. The hospice worker told me that I had to tell my dad it was okay to die. And it wasn't okay with me at all. But he was holding on for us. He's a very, very strong man, probably the strongest influence in my life. So I had to look my father in the eyes and say, "It's okay to die." And the next morning, he was gone. So again very angry. I'm Italian, so just got so angry. So my mom chose this song called If Tomorrow Never Comes for the funeral, and I was furious at that. Music is such a huge influence in my life, and I was furious that we chose that song because tomorrow's not coming for my dad. So I went on this path of self destructive behavior, like I said. But through connections and that kind of stuff.

Rick Morris (19:27):

I've worked with Joey Fatone quite a bit, and he had booked this play called Rent on Broadway. So several of us came up to see it. I didn't know anything about the play, and then in this play, there's an underlying theme called No Day But Today. And there's a beautiful affirmation that says, "There's only us. There's only this. Forget regret or life is yours to miss. No other path, no other way, no day but today." And I had that realization, and I remember going backstage and talking to Joey. I was like, "I got to find a guy who wrote this. This is gorgeous. This is beautiful." And turns out the guy who wrote it, Jonathon Larson, to make a long story short, had always wanted to see his play make Broadway. And he died before opening night of Rent, which has become the sensation. The 20 year anniversary tour is going on right now. And that's just everything hit me at once. That was the day I felt If Tomorrow Never Comes shift to No Day But Today, and I needed to start living my life.

Rock Thomas (20:27):

Wow. Wow. That is beautiful. Goosebumps, oh my gosh.

Rick Morris (20:32):

It was my calling. That's right when I decided, "All right. I'm going to be a public speaker, motivational speaker. I'm going to get out and tell stories." All with I can't do anything about yesterday and tomorrow is not guaranteed. So all I have is today.

Rock Thomas (20:44):

So I want to break down a couple of things for the listeners there is obviously you had a strong relationship with you and your father, and it led to a lot of passion, a lot of energy. And we even culturally have labels. So you said, "Well, I was angry. I'm Italian." So we are bred and raised to believe that certain cultures and nationalities, it's justified to be a certain way. And I'm not saying that's right or wrong. I'm just saying for people to take note that we relate that way. And then you go on to talk about an affirmation, and this is another key part of what we keep on telling ourselves is what we become, in my opinion, and that affirmation certainly rang with you. But it also kind of sewed everything together. And would you say now that you live your life a little bit more in the present because of all of those events?

Rick Morris (21:40):

So I took all of that passion and everything else, and then I got into project management. I merged the two together. So I started thinking about... When you hear these inspirational stories, Inky Johnson is a friend of mine. He got hurt in college football, paralyzed. He was going to be a first round draft pick. He's one of the best motivational speakers I know on the circuit. But when I hear these motivational speakers, they had gotten sick, they had a tragedy and all that stuff. And I started to look around and say, "I'm not going to wait for a tragedy for me to realize that life is golden." And I wanted to start teaching from that.

Rick Morris (22:20):

So what I did was develop a system, and I actually based it on No Day But Today. But I developed a system that says, "What do I want my loved ones to say about me when I die?" It's a morbid thought, but we're all going to get there. We're all at some point going to be on our deathbed, and there's going to be a funeral. So I started thinking about the roles in my life. I'm a husband. I'm a father. I'm a brother. I'm a business owner. I'm a friend. So when I break those roles down, what are the words I would hope they would use about me? So for my kids, let's just go directly to that. I wanted to be a present father, and anger was an issue for me, as we said, as a label. It was something I had to overcome. But as kids, I was very angry. So I wanted to be a happy and present father. So I sat down and interviewed them. What does present mean to you? And it changes over time, and I was surprised at the answer. Because what we think we're doing for somebody, could be generating adverse results. It's okay to ask. I want to be known as a present father, what does that mean to you? And then fulfill that.

Rick Morris (23:25):

So knowing where I want to be at an eventual area allows me to direct my behavior today. What can I do today to be present for my son? What can I do today to be present for my daughter? And it becomes now a routine that I can think through and ask these questions and answer them in order to fulfill my life's purpose.

Rock Thomas (23:47):

You are speaking my language brother when you say I am a father, I am a businessperson, I am a public speaker. And this is the whole thrust of this I Am Movement is consciousness

around who you are because we have this desire to remain consistent with that description of ourselves. And if you make an agreement with your business partner or with somebody you're going to speak for or for your children or your wife or as a son. For instance, I bought a house for my mother. I wanted to be like you a great son. I wanted to make my mother's life, who she went through the war, as good as it could possibly be. She did birth me. But until you decide what that definition is for who you are, you might end up randomly behaving in a way through the, you talked about at the beginning, your DiSC model, just how you are wired. You think, "Well, everybody else wants a list and they want to check that list off quickly even if they are a high I and they don't want to do that. But you think they do because you don't have a consciousness around that until you've done the work that you've done." So I really salute you on that. That's amazing.

Rick Morris (24:55):

I want to hit you on that word you just said though consistency. So in fact, I'm going to be speaking on your Monday night group around the art of ethical influence. And one of the six principles that Dr. Cialdini writes about is consistency. We have an automatic response to wanting to appear consistent. So if you look at it from a marketing perspective, they did a study where they just randomly asked people if they wanted to try a new soda, and they baselined the results. But by asking a question that makes people feel like they're being consistent, so they changed one thing and it was like a 300% uptick on people that tried the soda. They asked the question, do you consider yourself an adventurous person? Well if you say yes and they go, "Great. Would you like to try this soda?" Now you have this inner conflict of consistency, and those are even the little subtle automatic click word kind of responses that we have in our brains about appearing consistent.

Rock Thomas (25:53):

Yeah, that's beautiful. I like to say that everything's framing. When you frame it, that you suggest that they're, and you as an influencer know this, you suggest that they're adventurous. And it opens up a new possibility for them. That's really part of the skills of leadership. And then that segues nicely into you work with John Maxwell or lead part of his organization. Tell me a bit about that because John is a such a prolific writer and influencer and leader. So tell me a bit about that.

Rick Morris (26:26):

Yeah. It was really one of my lowest points. So I had started my company. I had been speaking. Several books that were out. And I hit my leadership lid and didn't know what that was at the time. But I almost lost everything. I almost went bankrupt. I had to really kind of decide who I wanted to be again and go after it. I got a request to look at this John Maxwell team. When I joined, we were probably 3000 strong. And we're 30,000 now around pretty much every country in the world. There was a quote that he had given me, which is, "You can be successful, wildly successful by yourself. But you'll never be significant without a team. And once you taste significance, success will never satisfy." That just spoke to my heart because I was doing

everything on my own. I wasn't really empowering my people. I wasn't really trusting the process. So therefore that leadership lid had hit.

Rick Morris (27:24):

So I kind of went into Maxwell a little selfishly at the time because again it was like, "Wow. I can align with John. I can probably leverage some of that content. Put a spark into my speaking career." And when he taught me servant leadership, he just awoken my servant heart. So we've gotten a chance to travel to Costa Rica together and Guatemala together. He's on a kick of transforming nations through teaching values. So yeah, I'm on the President's Advisory Council for John. And then was tapped to be the chief interviewer for the Transformational Leader Podcast, which we interview the people that we're about to give the John C Maxwell Award to that we do every August. But John's been a significant influence in my life. But that team has been a significant influence in my life. I now have literally 11 coaches in every phase of my life that just I'm sure like you.

Rick Morris (28:16):

I've got a business issue, there's somebody I call. I'm upset at my daughter, there's somebody I call. There's a problem with my heart, it's heavy, there's somebody I call. So yeah, but the John Maxwell team has been transformational and very, very important in my life.

Rock Thomas (28:29):

I love that, and I agree with you. I think last time I counted I have 14, which includes of course my golf coach and swimming coach and... But I think a lot of people have, and let's talk about this a bit, building your team. Having the right accountant, the right lawyer, the right psychologist, the right therapist, whatever it is, it's really like maybe John pointed out, it's a concept you have to wrap your head around for maybe two reasons. One is a lot of people I talk to just don't believe in pouring money into themselves. And number two, they have to admit that they're not where they want to be, which people struggle with. They're not vulnerable. They're not willing to say I don't have all the answers. So what are your thoughts around that and how did you get yourself past that point to construct the openness to get other people's perspective? Because I believe coaching is helping people see a different perspective.

Rick Morris (29:28):

So what was interesting for me was a transition from project manager to coach. So project management is one of those professions that anybody thinks they can do. Donald Trump used it on the Apprentice. You're a project manager. It used to make me mad. I'm like, "No. I'm a project manager. I trained my whole life to become one. You can just wake up one day and declare it." But I think that happens in coaching as well. So when I'm talking to people about coaches and coaching, the first question I tell them to ask is who's coaching them? Who's coaching the coach? Because if we really believe in the process, then if I'm going to coach you, I need to have coaches that are coaching me. I need to believe in the process and believe in that piece. So when they go, "Oh, no. I'm not getting coaching right now," then run away. Just run from that person because they don't believe in the process.

Rick Morris (30:19):

For me, I remember I got a free coaching session through an organization I was a part of, the Leadership Institute Master Class for the Project Management Institute. We got a free hour with this coach. And at this time, my business is soaring. It's booming. And I'm like, "What is this guy? I mean, come on, dude. He doesn't even know me. What is he going to do in an hour?" So I blew off the call six times. I had to do it to be in the class. I get on the phone, and this guy blew my mind and I still utilize him as a coach. In one hour by asking questions and the best quote I've ever heard is Christian Simpson who teaches the Maxwell Method of Coaching, he said, "If you give somebody the answer, you rob them of a lifetime of learning." And the answer's always within, you just have to bring it out of them. That's what a great coach does is just make you sort through your thoughts and come up with your own decision. If I give you the answer, you're going to act on it for three days and then stop. But if you come up with the answer, you're going to act on it for a lifetime. That was such a huge shift for me.

Rick Morris (31:24):

So I started just asking questions, and I'm brutal until I decide that somebody can coach me. But then I'm loyal from that point forward.

Rock Thomas (31:33):

I want to point that out because I absolutely love that. I've never heard it put that way. A great coach helps you sort through your own thoughts and come up with the solution. I think it's absolutely beautiful because so many people are so busy telling other people what they need to do. Of course we know a great coach asks a lot of questions. But to put it that way really sums it up nicely. You have a brilliant mind. I get to interview a lot of people, and I can see that you're definitely in a high, high level coach.

Rick Morris (32:02):

Oh, thank you so much.

Rock Thomas (32:04):

Yeah. Yeah. Very nice. Let's talk as we're wrapping up a little bit about a couple of things. I'm going to ask you to recommend a book if you have one that maybe struck you in the last year or so or one that you're reading now. And then let's talk just a bit about life and work balance because a lot of people think that that's something to shot for. I have my opinions on it. But I'd love to hear yours.

Rick Morris (32:25):

Sure. So books, if you're an entrepreneur, The War on Art, Steven Pressfield. Beautiful book talking about resistance and all the different ways. Super fast, easy read. My other favorite go to book, I can recommend any Maxwell book. I think I'm contractually bound to recognize that. But Positive Intelligence is just... That one was groundbreaking for me. Talking about a judgment brain, how we beat ourselves up and how to stop that from happening I think is just a beautiful book and scientifically based. The final book would be Influence: The Science and Practice of

Persuasion, which is by Dr. Robert Cialdini. Those three are, I read them all the time. And then you can go to the ultimate go to, which is Think and Grow Rich. I mean, we've had it. I use that in my seminars.

Rick Morris (33:18):

When I kick off a seminar, I start by saying, "Let me tell you why this seminars not going to work. There's like 30 million copies of Think and Grow Rich that's been sold, but I don't know 30 million millionaires. So what type of person are you? Are you the one that buys the book so it's on the shelf, or do you crack it and start to read it but you don't do anything with it? Maybe you read it and didn't apply it. And then there's those few that read it and apply it and it's the defacto step-by-step guide on how to become a millionaire." So that's that piece.

Rock Thomas (33:45):

So let me stop you on that before you go to the work life balance because I was going to ask you that question anyway. Why is it that so many people read books and fail to absorb and develop the new habits? They get excited for a day or two. I remember reading the Art of Not Giving a (Bleep) this year, and somebody asked me how that was three months later. Candidly, I consider myself I am an excellent student, and I like that book. But now I couldn't tell you one thing about it.

Rick Morris (34:17):

I think there's a season in your life in which it has to speak to you because I've read a book and it had no impact. And I read it again, and I was open to it. So there's certainly where you are in your life. But I think it has to ignite that inner passion. Change is hard. And again our brains will automatically go to what's consistent, which could be poor habits. When I talk about the seminar, I say, "Some of you are going to be fired up, you took notes, but where are the notes going to go? And what are you going to do with them when you get back because they'll end up on the corner of your desk. You'll get involved in work, and you'll forget all about it." So it's making sure that you schedule time each day to feed that mind and feed that passion. And be harsh on yourself. Go, "Golly, I was so super excited, and why haven't I done it?"

Rick Morris (35:07):

I'll give you an example for me is exercise. We all want to take the pill at night and wake up and lose 40 pounds, but there's a simple formula. Eat right, exercise. It's a no brainer. But for me, exercise was always an issue. So instead of just saying, "Well, I'll never exercise," or, "I'm always going to be 30-40 pounds over weight," I started to dive in as to what is it about exercise that's driving me crazy? And what happens in my brain is I'll go hit an elliptical and 10 minutes into it, I'm already thinking of 30 other more productive things I should be doing. So I stop. And so what I learned to do was bring exercise equipment into my office so when I'm board on a conference call or something's going on, I can hit resistance bands and do all that other kind of stuff. So it's determining the why I'm not passionate about it as much as what I should be passionate about.

Rock Thomas (35:56):

Yeah, well said. Well said. So let's talk a little bit about the work life balance and how does one manage that?

Rick Morris (36:04):

So I happen to have a radio show that I've done the last four years, which you're going to be a guest on on January 3rd called The Work Life Balance. To me, there's all these different definitions. I think that it blends. I think that when work is naturally supportive of your life, you have the balance. There's no real, "Well, eight hours a day I'm doing this, and two hours a day I'm going to do this. An hour, I'm going to do this." It's when work becomes fulfilling your purpose in such a way that work is continuous with your life. It's something that you're doing every day, even though you don't know that you're doing it. So coaching would be one of those things. I mean, I can be at a grocery store talking to a friend and asking them a question what they're doing. I'm working but I'm also fulfilling life and life's purpose.

Rick Morris (36:55):

So I think the reason why I called my show The Work Life Balance is one just to bring awareness but two means I can talk about any topic I want to and get away with it on the show. Let's just be honest, work and life. If I want to have a songwriter on there, that's great. If I want to have a CEO, that's fine. But in reality, work and life, the balance has to become with I'm not sacrificing my life for work. I really think that's where the balance starts to come into play.

Rock Thomas (37:27):

Yeah. I would agree with you. I think it's cliché, but at the end of our life, we all say that I shouldn't have spent so much time at the office. But if your work is passion driven like yours and mine is where it has to do with helping other people, there's a very fulfilling part to our work. So it's not like we are pulled to it versus working just to pay the bills and come home and make our family's lives better. So I would say that it also has to do with, in this day and age, hopefully people can... One of the things I help people do is get out of the rat race, and I work a lot from home. I work a lot on the road. I go to Asia for a month. I live a lifestyle of 6-4-1-1. Six months in Arizona, four months in Canada, one in Europe, and one in Asia. And I do that because I can because I created that kind of a balance and created that kind of a lifestyle. And I think if people think in terms of what's possible, then the work life balance doesn't become such an issue because you get to do things like that.

Rick Morris (38:28):

Well, and then the focus on what you're working on or working for, you work hard so you can do 6-4-1-1, right? I work hard because I want to do the country transformation trips with John. So it's fulfilling my purpose. The fact that I can take two weeks and go to Costa Rica and give my time willingly without coming back and worried about work piled up on the desk or not being able to pay bills, that's that achievement of work life balance for me.

Rock Thomas (38:55):

That's beautiful. So let's end today's call with a little bit of your consistent identity. I like to ask you who are you? How would you describe yourself? And you can choose all or different parts of your life to say that.

Rick Morris (39:10):

I'm an evangelist for passion and purpose driven life is the easiest way to do it. If you ask me what I do, I'm a project manager, I'm a consultant, I'm an agile coach. I work in the entertainment industry. I'm constantly on a certification journey of some sort to expand my mind. So those are all the what's, but the why is just to really make sure that I'm equipped to help others live their best life. You've been doing this a long time, so I'm sure this has happened to you as well. But when you get that letter unsolicited from somebody that said, "I heard you speak three years ago..." Like you with your Gold Cast and somebody comes up. The fulfillment that I receive from that... When somebody comes up and says, "Your words, your experience changed my life, and I'm so grateful. And I do this because of this," that to me is the greatest repayment or form of repayment that anybody will give. And you were just sharing your story. At times, you don't even feel it's that exceptional. It's just this is what I've gone through, this is who I am. I've been a creature of necessity and somehow have arrived here.

Rick Morris (40:15):

Now we all know there's coaching and there's a plan, all that. But there's time that we feel that way about ourselves. And when someone validates that we have provided significant value to them, there's no greater feeling on the Earth. So I'm in constant chase of fulfilling others so that I can be self fulfilled.

Rock Thomas (40:33):

Well, that's fantastic. I love it. It's been a real pleasure and an honor to have you on today's podcast. And I want to remind our listeners that the words that follow I am follow you. So describe yourself with intention so you can live that purpose driven life, like our great friend Rick Morris has shared with us a lot of his... You can just feel his wisdom and passion, and that doesn't come from practicing this art of caring for people so much, but it comes from doing it consistently day in and day out. So Rick, thank you so much for being on the show.

Rick Morris (41:09):

Thank you so much for your time.

Outro (41:12):

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