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[Intro: "Everywhere You Go" by Tim Houlihan]

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Welcome to Behavioral Grooves. My name is Kurt Nelson ...

...and I'm Tim Houlihan. Kurt and I talk to practitioners and researchers of behavioral science about the mother of all questions. Why do we do what we do? But before we get to that question, I have a question for you. Kurt.

Sure – is it about my mother? It's not about the mother of all questions. I thought it was going to be by my mom. No, I love my mom by the way.

Yeah. Yeah. That's good. Okay. That was really sweet. But no, it's about your business. Oh, okay. So you have a lot of very successful clients. Uh, and many of them are multibillion dollar firms and in order to keep growing, they need to do a lot of things, right. Right. They need to innovate. Right. So of the companies that you work with that are doing really well, what role does innovation play in their success?

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Well, I think it's pretty huge, right? Um, I'm not sure that without continuous innovation that most of the successful companies I work with would still be here today. Obviously product innovation is key, but what I also see is that really good companies regularly innovate lots of things like how they communicate with their customers or their employees or the ways they motivate their, their team or the process they use to develop their strategic plans. I mean, it's easy to imagine the companies that rely on the same old way of doing things, I. E. the status quo year after year keep doing the same thing. I'm pretty sure that those have all faded away. Yeah, and that's the point that our guest, Adam Hanson makes in his book outsmart your instincts. Adam is a professional innovator by trade and has successfully applied behavioral science to the realm of innovation throughout his entire career.

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His book with co-authors, ed Harrington and Beth stores reveals the ways companies can leverage behavioral science principles in a bunch of innovation rich areas like ideation and product development. Our conversation with Adam was fun, engaging, and really thought provoking. Adam also gets a trophy for the longest speed round we've ever had, even with him knowing what the questions were in advance. All right. We discussed the role that common biases play in keeping us from innovating some ideas that you can take to work with you tomorrow morning on innovation, including the tremendous power of yes and, and we're going to add a twist to that as well and the need for a behavioral revolution. Wow. But did you say behavioral revolution? Behavioral revolution. That's what we're going to talk about. You know, uh, Adam thinks we're on the verge of something huge with behavioral science and that is going to have a revolution that takes over the world.

[\(00:02:48\):](#)

God, I hope he's right, at least within ethical boundaries of course of, well, I mean that's behavioral group's thing. So I also want to say that I found Adam's comments in our musical discussion to be some of the most fun ever though we did go down a little bit of our musical rabbit hole with the major thirds. You, I recall, you instantly got that. A major third. What it sounds like when we're talking about the monkeys, pleasant Valley Sunday, like you totally got it. That was cool. You know, I still have no fricking clue what a major third is. Right. And and I, I mean I know who the monkeys are but I can like come to

pleasant Valley Sunday for if it had to save my life. So no, no link to it in the show notes so you can check it. All right. I will link for it, but I still know I'm not going to figure out what a major third is.

[\(00:03:34\):](#)

Anyway, we want to remind you that one of the ways behavioral groups find new finds new listeners is through search algorithms. A key factor for search engines to serve up a podcast is the number and quality of ratings and reviews. It doesn't even take a full second, as Tim would say, to leave us a five star rating. So please take a moment and leave us a rating. Yeah, it is super, super easy. Just jump down to the bottom of your app and you'll see those five yellow stars just waiting to be filled in. Just lonely. They are so lonely and waiting to be filled in all five stars. Right? And you don't want to leave three stars with two cause that just feels incomplete or for, Oh no, you got to give all five stars because otherwise it's incomplete. If you just touch your screen with those five stars, then boom, boom, it blows up.

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You get a big hit of dopamine in your brain. Oh good. And just so you know, if you've not left us a rating, you know because you're shy. Well guess what? Ratings are anonymous. So don't let that stop you. Also, if you like this podcast, be sure to check out weekly grooves. Our new weekly short form grooving session podcast that puts a behavioral lens on a hot topic in the news or in our minds because anything that's in our minds is hot topic right now.

Always, always. So it is now up on Apple podcast as well as most other pot services. So after you leave a five star review for behavioral grooves, go out and subscribe to weekly groups. You won't regret it. And with that, we will ask you to sit back in your favorite podcast listening chair with a big cup of major thirds because for all I know, it's a new-fangled drink and enjoy our conversation with Adam.

Adam Hansen, welcome to the Behavioral Grooves podcast.

[\(00:05:30\):](#)

Gentlemen, thank you so much. This is fantastic. This is seriously more fun than a barrel full of poorly socialized monkeys.

[\(00:05:39\):](#)

Although a Tim and I are kind of four. We socialize monkeys. [inaudible] you just got two of us. We start with a speed round. So Tim, coffee or tea?

[\(00:05:52\):](#)

Uh, depends. Uh, yeah, I, this is going to be tough because I, I shoo hard for him answers a lot, but this is the speed round. It's context dependent. Uh, man at the right moment of good T really hits the spot. Okay.

[\(00:06:09\):](#)

All right. Adam, you understand the concept of a speed. All right, here we go. We're going to, we're going to give you another chance. We're gonna have you go here, a bicycle or unicycle.

[\(00:06:22\):](#)

Uh, always intrigued by those who can pull off the unicycle, but, uh, unique but not relevant. So I would say that, you know, an innovation, we're always focusing on the intersection. I got to go with bike.

[\(00:06:33\)](#):

All right, well there you go. This is the longest speed run. I think we've ever ready guys. Get ready. It's going to get worse.

[\(00:06:40\)](#):

Would you, would you prefer to give up your mobile phone or a laptop for a year?

[\(00:06:47\)](#):

Oh man. Yeah. And I know these questions too. And, and, and knowing them didn't really,

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exactly. We asked. Those questions are kind of pretty, pretty common though.

[\(00:06:59\)](#):

I think. Uh, I'm kind of gaming this cause I see the direction things are going. Uh, I think the answer, no, no, no. I don't know. I'm overstating that. So I'll say, uh, I gotta go with laptop. Alright.

[\(00:07:12\)](#):

Yeah. You can give up your laptop for a year. No, no, no. I need my laptop. I'd give up my,

[\(00:07:18\)](#):

so actually pay attention to how the question was phrased. Is that the idea? Yeah. Okay.

[\(00:07:22\)](#):

Yeah, that's the test. All right here, the last speed round question and then, and then we're going to have to wrap it up because thank you very much, folks. All right.

[\(00:07:33\)](#):

No. A cognitive biases, blessing or a curse when it comes to innovation,

[\(00:07:39\)](#):

uh, net curse. Uh, but I mean, just like everything else, um, you know, few things have an inherent valence, um, when, when conditions are such that that match, uh, the con, you know, match the conditions under which these cognitive biases evolved. It's great to be able to recur to them. Great. Awesome.

[\(00:08:03\)](#):

Well that was about your best speed run answer yet from a timing perspective. Just a type tone.

[\(00:08:13\)](#):

All right, well, well, Adam, we have you on because you, uh, along with, uh, Edward Harrington and Beth stores, did I say her name right? Uh, it's written a new book called called outsmart your instincts, how the behavioral innovation approach drives your company forward. So we want to talk a little bit about that. Um, but, but just for our listeners, give a little background. Who, who are you, why, you know,

what got you into this behavioral world that we, that we talk about on this? Why write a damn book about it? Yeah,

[\(00:08:47\)](#):

right. Uh, uh, yeah, there's some self-flagellation going on there obviously, but, um, I would say so just quickly, I'm, um, was always a creative kid. Um, you know, uh, I got some idea maybe, you know, timing, you know, I got the idea in the early eighties that Hey, it'd probably be good to go on and get an MBA. Uh, had some sense that innovation would be part of my career based on what, who knows? I don't know. Things I'd read seemed interesting in grad school. Took my first new product development class. The professor made the case you could do your whole bloody career in innovation, which was news to me. Uh, and I thought, man, if you could do that, why wouldn't you? And so I really got that. I really had that light bulb moment and a great professor who became a great mentor and friend and with whom I still speak at least a few times a year. Um, and so then kind of, yeah, my whole career has been in innovation over, you know, 30 plus years now. Spent the first, uh, it was half at one point, but now I guess it's about third on the client's side. Lastly, as innovation director at Mars, the candy company, so I got to be Willy Wonka for a few years.

[\(00:09:57\)](#):

Oh, that's pretty sweet, right? Yes. We Jerry.

[\(00:10:01\)](#):

Yeah. Yeah, yeah. And my kids thought I had the coolest job ever. Uh, I became a client of the company I'm with now, the consulting firm ideas to go while I was there. And then I knew at some point I was going to join the dark side. Uh, and so I've been with ideas go now for about 18 and a half years. Um, I'm a geek and, and so have you heard that the, uh, the idea that people who are good at innovation are T-shaped? So there's this great breadth, a lot of, you know, high level dilettantism but kind of, you know, interest in a lot of things, a lot of things across the top of the T, across the top of the T, and then at least in one area, a descender, you know, it comes down. Um, and so, you know, kind of what comes down for me really is innovation.

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And I've been fascinated with the innovation for even before going into grad school and have just read a lot about it and just seem like it's such a cool capability that we have. And it seems like there's so much that can be done there. And the thought of constantly innovating innovation itself that kind of seemed to be kind of fairly self-evident. Not to hate on any of the competition, but I think too many people are just using the same old tried and true ways to innovate and kind of go, well, you really like innovation. You know, like what's the

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right because isn't the idea of innovation to innovate, not just to use the same old thing, not to give into status quo bias.

[\(00:11:35\)](#):

Yeah, it's met. It's absolutely, and so as part of that, I really started reading a lot. I don't know when Conaman you know, first got on my radar, but it was probably probably at least 12, 13, 14 years ago or so. Just started reading more and more. And then I started seeing some really obvious parallels with

what we were doing. We were already doing things to mitigate a certain cognitive biases without necessarily having that framework in mind. Because, you know, humans, I mean we're still just dealing with, uh, and we noticed that there were some propensities that humans had that were non-conscious and weren't particularly helpful when trying to do innovation better. And, um, I'll, I'll speak, I think all of us, for all of us that ideas go, this is true. It's certainly true for me. I just absolutely love innovation. And the thought innovation would in any way be a drag for someone is just to me, just seems absolutely tragic.

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And so we just started thinking about how do we make, how do we just clear the brush? How do we get rid of those non-conscious gremlins that add no value and are making innovation unnecessarily difficult? Uh, so then people can apply their, their care, their concern, their forces and everything to the real fights. It's still are going to need to be fought, but you just get past all the, you know, kind of the, the non-conscious stuff that just is really unnecessarily, uh, keeping you back. And so that's, I mean, quickly seeing, you know, finding out the term negativity bias and all the research that had been done on it and everything, then that's really critical to the work that we do. And so I started using the term negativity bias about a dozen years ago and then, Oh, availability bias. Yeah. Well we do something for that too. We do creative excursions when we go into kind of these, these, um, opportunity areas for ideation.

[\(00:13:26\)](#):

Uh, and the, the purpose of the creative excursions is to get you thinking about that topic in a non obvious way. So you don't just go with the stimuli. They're the most, you know, available just immediately, um, available to you with, you know, with all the bias that can, can come with that. And so it's really, it's just kind of bit by bit. Then we started noticing, Oh, conformity bias. Yeah, we know what that is, you know, so it really was kind of the stepwise thing until we finally said, Hey, this, we might actually have something here, so let's, let's formalize it a little bit more. Maybe we actually go to the extent of writing a dang book about it.

[\(00:14:01\)](#):

Yeah. So you codafide it, you put it in the book. So help us understand the [inaudible] the book is laid out in a really interesting manner. You want it, you don't like explain a little bit how you guys structured the book, uh, both in, in the ideation process and then also in the, in the extra eristics the, the, the biases were there.

[\(00:14:20\)](#):

Yeah. Yeah. So we, so as we started to look at these various cognitive biases, we thought, well, okay, how far does this go? Like, how much attention should we place on, uh, various cognitive biases, which ones ultimately are really accounting for most of the mayhem in the, at the front part of innovation. Uh, so at one point, I mean, I, I was playing with a list of, you know, 20 plus, uh, with the idea that Hey, we're going to win all these down and everything. Um, so that's kind of the, the working on the cognitive biases. We got down to eight, uh, and quickly negativity, availability, conformity, confabulation uh, curse of knowledge, confirmation bias, a status quo bias, errors of framing. I might've missed one, but those,

[\(00:15:09\)](#):

I think you guys, I think that's it. Yeah, those are most of it

[\(00:15:12\)](#):

at this point. I should just be able to rattle them off like that. But um, in terms of then kind of the structure then, so we go, each chapter is a bias. Know we have the setup, but then the bulk of it is each chapter is one of the eight, one of those eight cognitive biases. Uh, and then we walk through the chapter kind of in chronological order of the, of the innovation process. So first is opportunity area finding. How do you even know where to play? How do you find the right kind of strategic arena to play in, in everything. Biases affect how you do that. And you can, you can do that better. You can do that worse. And we see, uh, we see that, uh, evidence of that all the time. Um, so being attentive to which of the biases, like what's going on with conformity bias in opportunity area.

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Uh, Connie, you know, and so kind of being attentive to that, looking for where we could help people again, get past some of those, the next stage. Um, once you know where you're gonna play, we do ideation, brainstorming, plus, you know, um, and that's then once you know where you want to play hockey, you come up with lots and lots and lots of good ideas with the idea that, um, Linus Pauling said, the best way to get good ideas is first to get lots of ideas so you can start having ideas that you never would've gotten to otherwise. You never would've had the reason to get to otherwise. Uh, and then it's that back and forth. It's that collaboration. It's hearing one of your colleagues or someone else in the team say something and go, Oh wow, I had never thought about that. That just cracks open something for me and now I can generate, you know, I can generate seven to 12 ideas just based on that kind of aha that just got a, so ideation is really critical.

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Uh, and then from ideation, the next step is then, um, we call it concept development or just kind of what's your next step? How do you actually get into, how do you, how do you converge on these ideas? Bring the best ones forward and flush them out in a way that you can actually go into testing and see what's rising to the top. Uh, and so kind of throughout what we're driving for is the intersection of uniqueness and relevance. It's gotta be both. If it's just unique but not relevant, you go, Oh, that's really cool. And then you try and go, great, I never need to do that again.

[\(00:17:28\)](#):

If it's kind of like listening to this podcast for

[\(00:17:33\)](#):

both your Jen's, if it's only relevant, you can barely have a business. You have to throw, you have to support it so much and try to cut through the clutter and everything. It's me to you. You certainly can't charge any kind of premium. It's hard to be if you're only relevant. And so what you really want to do is find that intersection of uniqueness and relevance. The research shows the best way to get there is to solve for uniqueness first and then get to work on, get on the task, then a beefing up with relevance.

[\(00:18:03\)](#):

So then why is negativity bias such an important thing for you to address? Cause this, this is a central theme in the book. Why is negativity bias at the heart of this?

[\(00:18:12\)](#):

It's the first bias we talk about because for the kind of work we do, it's effects are outsized. Um, and so we're wired to, um, it was adaptive for our ancestors to, uh, identify all novelty. First and foremost is threat, not as opportunity. There were enough who got the opportunity part as well and thank God because they could open up stuff for it. But overall, if you heard a different rustle in the bushes and what you're used to, uh, it just made sense. Get the hell out of there. Uh, and, and those of our ancestors, colleagues who were the more inquisitive, those more like me, uh, would have gone, Hey, there, there's just something different enough to that, Russell, that, that I'm gonna see if I can figure out what's going on here. Uh, when they didn't put as much distance between them and the Russell as possible, their genetic state took a certain, uh, you know, statistical hit.

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No, no more DNA that tree ended. So yeah. So it's really fun.

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Fair to say, playing that all through is that we are the descendants of the savant of risk aversion.

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[inaudible]

[\(00:19:29\):](#)

so the people were very, the very best aid going, no, I'm outta here. Whoa. You know, we're the ones more likely to stick around long enough to pass on your DNA. And so we still have this in us. We don't need to blame ourselves. You don't need to blame each other. And we come by it very honestly. But the great news is that we can do something about it. And so we just need to be aware of it. Um, some of the other great research, I mean, there, um, two women in particular I think have done a beautiful job of really flushing out the opportunity, um, of being more conscious about negativity bias. Uh, Teresa Amabile at Harvard wrote a really great paper called, uh, uh, Oh, what was it now? Cruel, but Oh, brilliant, but cruel. And it was an analysis of, of managers who reviewed employees and those who are more negative.

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Uh, when you first hear it, you go, man, that's really smart. That sounds so adult that's so responsible and so businesslike. And so your response goes in that direction and negativity appears more profound than it actually is. When you go back and you reflect on a little bit, you might realize that the quality of that input wasn't really all that stellar. Uh, but because you know, the MIG, you know, kicks in, you know, you go, Oh yeah, wow. Of course, of course. That's right. I, I, I've seen enough evidence that can support that. Um, and so being just, it's not that we can never focus on problems, it's just that the most reactive way of doing it is rarely the smartest way of dealing with the problems. Uh, and then just the idea, I mean, we all know too many people. Um, my experience is many of us know people throughout our careers. We bumped into the people who dine out on this idea that negativity seems smarter than it actually is.

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Yeah. I'm looking at myself [inaudible] yeah,

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I do it to some degree, but I would love to, I would love to figure out ways to, uh, call that out in, in as face-saving a way as possible. But I would like for that to become increasingly unseemly for, you know, for people to do, be aware of what the issues are. Yes. But it's not sufficient merely to point out that you don't like it. That that sucks. That that isn't working. I have no more information. I don't know what to do if that's where it stops. So they take that great identification of an issue and go, okay, great. Then what are some steps forward? What do you wish for? How might we then get to work on that? And, and even negative feedback if used generatively can crack open even more opportunity. Um, what's great about this when you use it well is that it can shine specific light on opportunity instead of just kind of leaving you with this vague unease about how an idea might not be all that fantastic.

[\(00:22:33\)](#):

Well, and you had in the book, you also talk about, uh, the yes, but versus yes. And you know, the, the classical improv component. So bringing that out into the world, right? So you can address some of that negativity bias by looking at things and saying, all right, so instead of saying yes, but which is a way that we do it, right, we come, we approach things. Yeah. But you know, I don't really think that's going to work and bringing in that component of saying yes, and now you're being generative, right? You're, you're adding to the conversation.

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And so what happens there is it's all too easy to go straight to what isn't working. And so, um, we do throw the baby out with the bath water and we really want to avoid that. We're where we go is even a step beyond ESN to say first affirm what is working in the idea. Great. So what do you for what are you really for in that idea? What do you like, what's the potential that you see there? Even with a really weird idea if you actually consider it and play with it, you can say, how does that start getting me thinking differently? In a way the idea itself might still actually blow but I can use it, I can be mercenary with it and now I can, I can use a one facet of it to open up a whole new area of inquiry and kind of exploration for me.

[\(00:23:56\)](#):

Uh, and then where I think we go beyond yes and is yes and often just ignores entirely what the problems are. We say even use the problems in a generative way because we're going to take it on. Good. Say said. Yeah. I mean you're not just trying to be a Debbie downer. There are some issues there. This is not an exercise in Pollyanna writing a unicorn. Uh, you know, so, so even use those negatives but using language like I wish for, I wish to, how might we, what if we even use the negatives to come up with more ideas instead of using the negatives just to make the idea go away. In which case you actually, you got, you extracted no value from the idea at all.

[\(00:24:36\)](#):

You know, in the book you talk, uh, there were a couple of things that really caught me. One is a uniquely human traits, creativity, metacognition, love that, that you bring those forward. It almost sounds like in general you feel like people are undervaluing metacognition and creativity.

[\(00:24:56\)](#):

Well, I think so. And maybe some of it is just, you know, I, I guess I gotta look at the Google end gram viewer or whatever you like. You type in a term, you see how often it gets used. Uh, my guess is still a lot of people aren't familiar with the term. Uh, I think most people get the concept when, when it's first



explained to them, but what they probably haven't heard is why it would matter to spend much time dealing with it. And, and so the thought is metacognition is just thinking about thinking and it's being more conscious about where going on. It's, it's being able to step away from automaticity, right. And say, okay, some lot of things just happened. And then we confabulated and come up with a really smart rationale for why we did what we did.

[\(00:25:41\)](#):

Thank goodness we do because that saves my life.

[\(00:25:44\)](#):

Yeah. We all, we all have to w we have to be able to do that. Uh, but we have to be able to do more than just that as well. Right. Uh, and so, um, just being more aware, trying to like be maybe a little more curious about why you arrive at the places that you do, you know, why do you make the decisions that you do? Um, and just being, I think curiosity is so huge. Um, it wasn't that long ago in our, in our culture that curiosity was still seen as a very naughty thing. You know, kids were taught that curiosity was bad, curiosity killed the cat, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Uh, and again, in harsher times, that probably made a whole lot of sense and that was a very safe and responsible approach. It's, it, I increasingly, I believe it's irresponsible, uh, just to lapse into that and not to be able to go, okay, let's think about this.

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Let's, let's play with this. Um, let's, let's see where things can go. So metacognition is just being just more aware of how we think and then realizing that, you know, as, um, uh, Frankl, Viktor Frankl said, you know, there, there's a, there is a gap between, there can be a gap between stimulus and response. And in that gap is where humans can do things that other animals can't. Uh, and so not to be able to, to, to do that more often. It seems like such a waste of capability not to do those things that only we can do as humans places. Is that at no advantage over those life forms that can't do that. Right. So we, we have some of those better abilities. I think the world needs us tapping into that more.

[\(00:27:26\)](#):

So to be, to be fully human. That's what, that's what behavioral science does, right? Yeah. We're looking at that idea of how are you thinking about something and what is that gap as Viktor Frankl said, you know, stimulus versus response. What happens in that gap is what behavioral science studies. So we'll go ahead. Well, I also like in the, in the book you, you are a fan of Kurt Lewin. Oh yeah, absolutely. You know, and you talk about his, his model for progress, university of Iowa. There you go. Of course, of course. Um, but you, you know, you talk about this, this finding the balance, right? That, that that Lewin talks about, you know, the drivers and the restrainers, right. You know, and ultimately finding a balance, but that progress happens when the drivers actually overtake the, the restrainers to some degree. Right? That's how we actually get progress. You do this with your clients. You, you find a way to take things out of balance, right?

[\(00:28:25\)](#):

Well, yeah, we do. I mean, we, so, um, I don't know if you're familiar with any of the, the, uh, high Zangle work on, uh, homo Lutens or the, the playful ape, right? Um, and this whole concept of the magic circle, anytime we play a game, we're stepping into this magic circle where all the outside rules and everything don't necessarily apply. We have our own set of rules here. That's what our projects are. You're stepping into a magic circle. You're, it is a, uh, it's a twisted form of reality. Uh, and we still want

to be able to tap into really rich insights and everything from your audience, from your audience and everything. But then we, we kind of suspend the normal way of being and we say, look, we're just going to, for this part right now, we're going to bracket some of the normal things that we do.

[\(00:29:16\):](#)

And it is, it's a little unnatural. And some of our language is almost deliberately, um, contrived and, and frankly dorky, just to kind of draw attention to it and help. It does help. It really does. Yeah. And I remember some of the first time I heard as a client, the first time I heard some of ideas to goes a contrived language. I, you know, I, you know, I'm sure I did a little bit of an eye roll, but I've come to understand why it's helpful. You're actually stating, Hey, we're going to do this different thing now that it isn't as instinctive. Again, talking about outsmarting your instincts. And so as part of that, we're actually going to try get you to start practicing some things that might be able to become new instincts for you, which

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yeah, you're trying to break the, the system one automatic response and say, no, no, no. We're going to push into something that you want to be a little more thoughtful and that's going to take a little effort. So, yeah, my past, this system one, right?

[\(00:30:15\):](#)

I think the point we wanna make, uh, because you know, um, as you know, as we who came up resistance, uh, is often tied to a lack of clarity, not to just be an obstinate, you know, so we want to make it, yes, a little bit of effort. The great news is to mitigate these cognitive biases. We talk about as little as three minutes of work can do a lot for you. So if you're trying to think of some new things, grab, grab anything, grab you know, grab a book, you know, uh, randomly turn to page 54 and read a paragraph and go, Oh, okay, now how do I smash smash associate? What I just read there with what I'm working on. And the, the brain is this wonderful associative tool that will somehow figure out how to stitch those two disparate items together. And so that's, so availability bias can be solved as quickly as three minutes.

[\(00:31:21\):](#)

So page 54 of talk about insight mining category crashing trend tech search. I get, got a punch. Underline. Good page. Good page.

[\(00:31:36\):](#)

Well thank you for going with that as my plant. Kurt,

[\(00:31:40\):](#)

you knew exactly what page,

[\(00:31:43\):](#)

no, but so you're bringing in these different concepts of saying, all right, so let's look at, let's do these exercises to, to put us in a mindset that is going to allow us to, uh, bypass some of these, these heuristics, right? And so that we're getting to the point where we actually can do the work that we want

to do in a more effective way. Um, so what are some other hints? What are some, what are some things that, uh, our listeners can do to be, to maybe, um, be more innovative in their thinking?

[\(00:32:15\)](#):

Excellent. So one thing we'd have you all consider every now and then to ask yourself, where are we in the process? Like what are we doing? What's the task that we need to perform right now? And there will be other tasks that we need to perform later, but for them to intrude on what we're doing right now is, is a little bit of a category error. So let's not do that. The headline I have for that is early on when you're doing this kind of work, worry more about learning than launch considerations. Uh, it's too pretty good for doing new product innovation or even a communications campaign, whatever it is. We're good business people. So we're constantly thinking about what this is going to look like when we actually put it out into the world. Um, but if those concerns supersede this, this, uh, need to explore and see where things can go and, and matters of practicality, scalability, launch stability, all that come in too early.

[\(00:33:15\)](#):

You're not doing the work you need to be doing then. So learning not launch. So when you go to like when you take, um, prototypes or concepts into testing, your first and foremost consideration should be what kind of a learning vehicle is this? What is this going to set me up to learn that I hope my competitors won't even want to bother with? Um, and then from that, after you do all that testing, you can actually, you can actually even forget what the concepts or prototypes that you took. And you can actually just step back and say, okay, these benefits Rose to the top. These insights seem to resonate the most, et cetera, et cetera. And you could almost then just kind of reconfigure from that learning what then would make the better launch vehicles. Right? And so it's just really being clear on what's going on.

[\(00:34:04\)](#):

Um, the, the question that should haunt you in ideation, in opportunity area identification and everything is, are we going far enough? And the metaphor that we love to use is that when you go fishing, uh, your odds of really getting all the fish you want are better if you cast your line way out there and slowly reel it back in to find the spot where the fish are biting rather than, than just dropping a line over the edge of the boat and hope you happen to be in the right place unless you happen to know that you're in the bass hole. Well, yeah, I mean, and if you have the fish finder and, and all those cheating, and then that, then you're not really fishing anymore. You're doing something else, which this is really unfair.

[\(00:34:48\)](#):

Yes. It's all wait, wait, wait. Is bass hall an actual thing? No, no. It's not.

[\(00:34:57\)](#):

Get the tee shirt folks.

[\(00:34:58\)](#):

Yeah. Right. It'll be, we'll, we'll, we'll, we'll have it available in our next episode.

[\(00:35:04\)](#):

It's great because again, it goes, it goes back to that lens Pauling thing. Yeah. The best way to get the good ideas to have lots of them. Yeah. So you have to, you have to cast far. Yeah. And you, and as soon as possible, you want to have these ideas come in and you're just going like, wow, man. Never would have thought about that before. That's really interesting. And then why not? Never to be too literal, being really mercenary with ideas. It's not, and like don't fall in love with ideas too early. Just be mercenary and go, Oh, that's really great because it can then crack something for me to think up 12 more ideas.

[\(00:35:40\)](#):

Right. Which I think is really important because it is so many of our tendencies. Uh, most people that I observe are willing to fall in love with the first idea or something close to it.

[\(00:35:54\)](#):

You guys are great and it's hard not to, but even there go, okay, well we, we have that captured. So right at the moment I, my time isn't all that well-spent to build an altar to it. Uh, let's, you know, the more you can use ideas early on as vehicles to take you to yet better places rather than as in destinations in themselves, the better off you're going to be.

[\(00:36:17\)](#):

Yeah, yeah, definitely. And I'm sorry, I'm searching through the for the book cause I had underlined some things about um, you brought in this idea of lateral thinking and, and not having like the difficulty of actually bringing consumers in and customers into the process because as we were just saying, you know, we tend to glom onto that first idea or we can't see beyond, you know, I use the product, I drink Coke like this. I always put it in a glass like this and this is exactly how I use it. You're asking me to put it on a backpack and suck it through a straw. No. Why? What are you doing? You know, whatever. That would be bad example. I know, but what is it? What is it about that, you know, bringing in that that customer, what, what are some of the drawbacks of, of doing that?

[\(00:37:03\)](#):

Well, it's again, it's asking yourself where are we in the process? So when you get into testing, you want to bring in pretty representative. You know, you don't want to bring in savant, you want to bring in dumb people, but you want to bring in, you know, kind of the center of gravity of your audience.

[\(00:37:21\)](#):

They could bring us then we can be the survivor. No, we can be the dump people. I wouldn't say that I'm terribly well qualified, but I'd love to volunteer for this event. What's true in

[\(00:37:33\)](#):

any population though is that you will be able to find those people who are more imaginative, who are more articulate. And so we actually have a panel of what we call creative consumers who are people who are really nimble with metaphor. They're very articulate. They, and not just nimble with metaphor, but they can even really go to weird metaphor, like unexpected metaphors and, and both come up with them and then show you how you extract value out of them. You know, and so our panel of creative consumers, uh, these are normal people. They're not marketing people or advertising people cause we don't want to expertize them in that regard. Uh, but, and they are, you know, at least pretty loosely representative of who the client's target is. But they have that additional capability. And so they can

really help you with both the uniqueness and the relevance, uh, because they have that imaginative capability, but then they're also, you know, pretty close to the, um, who the consumer, the, the client's target is. And so having people with more of those capabilities early on can be helpful. And then you go and build, you create your concepts, your prototypes, whatever. And then for testing, go back to the, um, what we, one of my colleagues calls the, the normals,

[\(00:38:45\)](#):

the normal noodles. Well, you bring up another, uh, example in the book about salad dressing. And the very first thing you say, you know, just think about salad dressing and come up with some innovation ways of, of thinking about it. And he said, normally if you just do that right, all of a sudden it's like, Oh, chocolate salad dressing or various different things. But it still was in this concept of salad dressing. But if you, you laid it out then of saying, what are the concepts that you have of salad dressing? It's a liquid, it comes in a bottle that's refrigerated, it's all these other things. And then you start taking some of those things away and then you can get really innovative in how you think about that. So, yeah. So what, what does that process, what do you call that?

[\(00:39:28\)](#):

We call that assumption busting. And it's the idea that um, many of the assumptions we make about a particular topic item, whatever are so baked in that we're not even aware that those are just decisions that someone else made at some point. You know, they're not, you know, as Ilan must says, as long as we're not aggregating the basic laws of physics, you know, we probably have carte blanche to go do some exploring. And so assumption busting is just trying hard to list like what, like what are all the assumptions, what are, what are the non-conscious limits I'm placing on this? You know, the, the, the, the whole idea of functional fixedness, you know, it's hard for us to imagine using something, doing something in a way other than under, which it was originally intended and most experienced with it is, you know, lies within.

[\(00:40:20\)](#):

Um, and so just really saying, look, some of those assumptions are, or maybe there for a reason and they're going to be hard to get past, but just playing with it, even if he can entirely get rid of the assumption, you might be able to soften your, weaken some of its toughest constraints, open up just a little bit of freedom. And so what, what does, what do things look like on the other side of that assumption? You know, and so play there and then you still might have to come back into the real world and say, okay, we still have to deal with this. We still have to deal with this. But now we have so much more that we're armed with steel to drive uniqueness and relevance that, uh, that's, it can be particularly helpful.

[\(00:40:57\)](#):

Do you think we're on the verge of a behavioral revolution?

[\(00:41:02\)](#):

I, I don't want to get too grim. I think we have to be, I, I think, I think I would wish overall for, uh, some more urgency around this. I just think I look, I suffer from confirmation bias as much as anyone. I mean, that's a, that's a fact about the cognitive biases. We need to be humble and realize that we all are buffeted, you know, but by these gremlins. Um, so I'll cop to that. And then I'll also say, just because I shoot everything from the behavioral lens doesn't mean that it isn't the right thing to do. Uh, and, and I

think the great news in all of this again, is it doesn't, I don't think it takes that much to get people going. You know, you can really mitigate some of the harshest effects of these cognitive biases with just some really simple things.

[\(00:41:55\)](#):

It just like, are you interested enough, you know, do you actually want to try it? You know, how do we make it easier for people to play and to explore and everything. But I mean, just pick any of the big issues that we face. I mean, just like, good Lord what we've been going through politically. I don't want to, I don't want to divert too much here. Anything. And regardless of where you net out, I think most people can agree. Uh, this is bro, this is bad. That's broken, you know? And so, yeah, I mean, just even there, if you could STEM the effects of negativity bias, if you could help people understand confirmation bias, better, uh, conformity bias, you know, and everything. I just think, you know, uh, there's something you just occurred to me just like within the last month is a, it is a weird overly fancy term that I'm, I'm trying to explore. It's the notion of personal creative sovereignty and I want people to figure out why that would matter to them. We need to give enough of a damn about what we're doing, where we're going, what contribution we're making to the world and everything that, uh, I wish people were a little more independent of just kind of like the most partisan impulses be that politics or whatever.

[\(00:43:16\)](#):

Yeah. You take it out in, in fashion and you look at at a junior high or a high school and you can just imagine the conformity of, of dress. I, I look at my son, right? And I'm like going, why are you wearing a hoodie and black black jeans, you know, and jeans only came in like two years ago. Before that it was always sweats. Right? You wouldn't get me in, in that, cause that's not what people wore. And there's this idea of like that sovereignty over your own creativity, you know, is that really who you are? If it is great, but it seems like it's that calm, you know, conforming to the social norm. And we do that in a variety of situations. You see politics because we need to wait.

[\(00:44:03\)](#):

We have 200 smart, we want to show that we're reliable team teammates and everything. Uh, but we, we overcompensate, we go, we go a little too far and I would hold out like how can we help more people understand that more often than we suspect the better team move. The better contribution I can make to my team is to challenge it a little challenging, not challenge it too much. He can really go with the um, you know, of the antibody, you know, metaphorically here you don't want to, you don't wanna you know, get the, the immune system, the, the kind of the cultural immune system, you know, ramped up to 11. But, uh, you, you want to figure out a way, how can I introduce some new thoughts in a way that can actually be heard, played with considered, et cetera. And, and yeah, I think that's, I think that's important. I just wish more people cared about bringing their thing to the table.

[\(00:45:03\)](#):

Yeah. And I think it's hard because both from a DNA perspective that we've talked about, that was, he evolved out to a certain degree. And also it has been reinforced too, going back to the, the junior high thing, you know, if all of a sudden you show up and something that's, that's different and way out there, you are not necessarily that right.

[\(00:45:30\)](#):

Unless you can create a clique around that. Right. But that's, and so we are the people who do that. Yeah. It's hard to do individually. Of course

[\(00:45:41\)](#):

it is. But there's, there's that part in. So we just talked with, uh, uh, uh, Steve Martin and, and Joe Marks who written this book, messenger, and they talk about, you know, the messenger, um, being more, having an influence on how people perceive the content and various different things. And you can think, right, the messenger that is, is, is wearing that new outfit. If they're perceived as somebody you want to aspire to, you can to then they get it more like they follow it, but it's for the normal people, as you said in that, you know,

[\(00:46:13\)](#):

it's harder to do so. Absolutely. So Adam, you and I have talked about music in the past and I know that as a Grammy award winning producer, maybe that was a different, let's, let's talk about what you like to listen to. Oh my goodness. So here's, you thought the speed round was tough. Um, early on, very quick background. I was a really good artist as a kid, visual artists and man, all my energies went into that. I was a better artist at age 11 than I am now. Uh, because at age 12 music came into the picture and then I just threw all my attentions into that. My first, uh, training was on trumpet. So I play all the brass instruments. Uh, cause you knew that the trumpet players get all the girls. That's primarily it. Yeah. I mean there's, there's no way, like electric guitar was going to be better than that. Um, then the next step was then at age, the year after that, a bunch of us got together and said, Hey, let's start a band. And, uh, the instrument you ended up with is what you could most quickly place your hands on. And so my family had this cheesy old honer Oregon with 180 pound Leslie, uh, Leslie cabinet. Wow. I became keys guy. And our first practice was just essentially the, uh, the central rift in Anegada Devita for about two hours. Uh,

[\(00:47:42\)](#):

and so why did you stop at two hours? That's pretty much the end. I gotta Devita

[\(00:47:50\)](#):

I had very patient parents and we were down in the basement and it was all good. Um, but,

[\(00:47:56\)](#):

and when we talked about this, I just have to say that was my first experience playing with the band as well, to get five guitarists, a drummer, and a keyboard player to do the, the riff to in a guy to Devita for hours. And that was all we could do. There was nothing.

[\(00:48:15\)](#):

Absolutely. And then we, of course, we followed the expected, um, expansion of the repertoire. And so the next on was smoke on the water. Uh, and then at some point, excellent point. We actually figured out we could do China Grove by the Doobies. Uh, and so, so we, the great thing was is that we all sucked. We all kind of sucks more or less equally. But this, so my take on this like yeah, I'm not bad musician now because I've been at it for 44 bloody years, you know, and so it's just really kind of the triumph of brute force, you know, applied love and really loving doing it. You know, you just gotta for any new for talent, talent acquisition is just loving something long enough to be willing to suck at it. Right. And just going [inaudible].

[\(00:49:02\):](#)

Okay, got it. Got it. Got to think about that one. I'm actually just thinking that that's how I am at the point I am with everything in life. I'm just thinking behavioral science and you know, I loved it enough that I sucked at it one time. It's still there, I guess,

[\(00:49:21\):](#)

but it's all, it's all about trends. So trend matters more than snapshot, right? I am not great, but I know I'm better than I was two months ago. I mean, that's,

[\(00:49:30\):](#)

it's Teresa Amiibo, right? Progress principle we talked about. So it's, it, you know, showing that progress and keeping improving and improving and improving.

[\(00:49:39\):](#)

So, so then, anyhow, so with that as background, let me get into it. So what, I'm really eclectic, I just love thoughtful look, you can tell good stuff in any genre, right? I mean there's, there's, there's crap everywhere and there's brilliant stuff everywhere. Uh, I will say that I was kinda shocked when age peers as early as their late twenties. I had too many aged peers were totally dissing rap. I'm going long ago that your parents were, they seemed quite rock and roll, rock and roll there. And so, um, I won't say rap is my lead Gianna, but I mean, certainly I love, um, like I did, I did run the jewels and killer Mike. I just think killer Mike is absolutely brilliant. Uh, I don't with him on some things thoughtful. He's doing something different. Right. Um, I will say, let me just take a step back and, and um, Tim, hopefully you'll appreciate this overall kind of big picture. I am a sucker for musical or like harmonic gadget plays, right? So, uh, the major third chord instead of the minor third chord in the right place and T, I don't know, there's something going on there, uh, hormonally, neurologically, whatever that is, just that can be such a cool move and it's kind of inspiring and everything. The smart use in country and, and sometimes in some other, you know, Americana, some folk, the smart use of the, the two seventh resolving to the five instead of just the two minor, you know, so any idea?

[\(00:51:26\):](#)

Yeah, I am. I am. I'm sitting here with like lead dry leaves and the wind going well over my head.

[\(00:51:37\):](#)

So I refer to these as, as harmonic gadget players. I mean, they're there, you hear them often enough when you hear him. I just kind of go, Oh, that's, that was cool. That was it. It didn't seem gratuitous and makes all the sense in the world. Whatever. A steely Dan and don't take me alive. Do this thing where they do, um, they do B minor with the E minor base C with an F base and D with a G base. So essentially going to go into the fourth of that chord. And in in some ways it's probably just a major ninth but it doesn't have that effect. It feels because of the voicing, it's just cool and it just sounds different enough without it being, it somehow still works. So it's kind of pushing the boundary. It is unique and relevant. I mean it's really [inaudible]

[\(00:52:22\):](#)

that's what I was going to get it. That's right.



[\(00:52:25\)](#):

Boundary. It's almost like if they just even tweaked any of those a little bit more, it would probably fall apart. But

[\(00:52:33\)](#):

is there a tune where, where you feel like the major third is played particularly well? Like, like, like that, that change to go from the root to the major?

[\(00:52:41\)](#):

It's, I, I mean I think you hear an awful lot like in gospel stuff. So just, you know, if you start on C and then the next move is, uh, E seventh, there's just something about it that is, I don't know, to me it is inspiring. I have, I have no way of understanding why. I'd love to understand the neurology of that, that the, the, the, uh, uh, Cousteau neurology of major third,

[\(00:53:07\)](#):

give you an example. Pleasant Valley sun.

[\(00:53:09\)](#):

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[\(00:53:11\)](#):

So, uh, the monkeys plus w, which was written by Carol King and Gerry Goffin.

[\(00:53:16\)](#):

So yeah,

[\(00:53:17\)](#):

hang in there Kurt. So w when it goes to the chorus, it, cause it's, it's actually written in C or it's written in a, but, but it moves the major third, you know, uh, when it, when it goes from C to a T and that's, that's just a perfect example of wow, that, that is, it feels good. It just has that

[\(00:53:35\)](#):

really good. There's something there. There's something deeply rooted in us that, you know, it's, um, it just, it reliably triggers, I think, a very similar response in most of the listeners. So there's that. So now who do I love again? Still? Um, I love overall, you're familiar with the term blood harmony. So we're siblings like the BGS,

[\(00:53:58\)](#):

Oh. Osmonds

[\(00:54:00\)](#):

nothing about the quality of just like even their, their instrument, their vocal chords and everything that's similar enough yet just slightly different enough. It's almost like a cool, like actually beneficial uncanny Valley, uncanny Valley of sound, you know, so that, that always sends a chill down my spine. I

mean, that's, that's just reliably just kind of, Oh man, that's awesome. That's that shit. That's just so cool. Um, but then some groups are so dang good they can, they can get really close to that without being relatives. Uh, and so one of the last times I heard this or I thought, okay, I've got to figure out what this song is, is, uh, Ricky Gervais' had this series on Netflix called afterlife and great series. The concluding scene is the group, the thorns singing their song, um, among the living. I'd never heard this, had never heard the song before, but those harmonies kicked in. It was just, Oh, it was just so, Oh, it's so great.

[\(00:54:59\):](#)

Those guys had had that unique blend. They really, I think they got lucky, but that is Matthew Sweet and Shawn Mullins and one other guy. Yeah. And I think Shawn Mullins was the X factor in that. I feel like he was the voice that actually just pulled it out and just kind of like Crosby stills and Nash this magic. And it was Crosby. That was the X factor in that. Absolutely. And so really you didn't bring young in the meal for other reasons.

[\(00:55:29\):](#)

I'm a, I'm a huge fan of power pop. Uh, I think it probably stems from, um, my siblings are all a little bit older than me and so I don't remember life without the Beatles. So, uh, at age, my earliest memories of life involve the Beatles. Uh, and so I think the Beatles are really are, you know, like the Tigris and Euphrates of, of modern music. And I think any album from rubber sole on, you can take any one track and you can, you can, I think you can make the case for anyone tracks bond as sub genre then afterward, you know?

[\(00:56:04\):](#)

Yeah. I mean, great songwriting, great production.

[\(00:56:07\):](#)

I happen to think that revolver, revolver is my favorite Beatles album because I think rubber sole, uh, is to revolver as, uh, John the Baptist was to our, our Lord. [inaudible]

[\(00:56:20\):](#)

wow. I love, I love that. Oh, he smokes.

[\(00:56:24\):](#)

Well, okay, we're going to take all that and um, and we're going to have some show notes that are just going to be absolutely outside the normal notes.

[\(00:56:33\):](#)

I'll give you one more at my funeral and not to get grim or anything, but there will be three songs and we played at my funeral. One is a crowded house and song don't dream. It's over. Which I think is, if you read the lyrics, it's a modern Kim.

[\(00:56:49\):](#)

It is. It's a gorgeous song. I actually, I know a song.

[\(00:56:54\)](#):

Yeah. I mean, Neil Finn is God, you know, um, and then go with God. The second song will be God only knows which to play. I mean, Brian Wilson, obviously the genius that he is, I think his genius is no better represented than the chords and the arrangement and the production of that song. It's just, Ugh. Harmonically. It's absolutely. And then the final one is we'll be a group say along, everyone's going to sing. Yes, we have no bananas.

[\(00:57:27\)](#):

Who actually, who was the original artist on that

[\(00:57:30\)](#):

into the twenties I don't think anyone has it. The version I'm most familiar with is the Louis prima one.

[\(00:57:36\)](#):

That's, that's when I'm thinking of it from the, from the fifties or sixties

[\(00:57:39\)](#):

yeah, yeah. No, it goes back to the twenties. It was the depression era or even pre depression era. It's, yeah.

[\(00:57:48\)](#):

Alrighty. With that Adam, thank you so, so much for joining us. This has been so fun.

[\(00:57:56\)](#):

Sky, thank you so much. I uh, was, could not have been more delighted to spend this time with you.

[\(00:58:09\)](#):

[inaudible]

[\(00:58:09\)](#):

welcome to a grieving session where Tim and I groove on what we learned with our behavioral group's discussion with Adam. Have a free flowing conversation and whatever else comes into our yes and, and I wish for both. Yes. And, and I wish for, I wish for you to be better at this. I wish the same thing. I wish I was. No, I wish I was better at it too. No, no, no. I'm the one who needs to actually improve your, you got it down. Oh yeah. Oh yeah. This podcasting thing like that. I'm just Joe podcaster. In fact, people call me Joe.

[\(00:58:46\)](#):

I've never heard you be called Jovi before. People are calling me that all the time. All right. It's your short for now. And that's going to be your day no longer Tim Houlihan is Joe podcaster. Okay. So what's up with this? Yes. And, and I wish for this was a big, this was a big part of, uh, Adam's discussion to kind of get beyond and by the way, yes. And is a powerful tool. It is. It's a great tool to not overlook that. I mean, the Neha Gandhi talked about it when we talked with her. Um, we've, we, you know, uh, uh, uh, Sweeney, John Sweeney. Oh God. Yeah. It's one of his favorite tools ever. Exactly. Yes. And is a huge

thing in improv, but it also allows us to be not stopping that thought process, that conversation, because you, you normally stop when you say no and bring in a, but so yes.

[\(00:59:37\)](#):

And helps in doing that. What Adam does though is he brings us into this innovation realm and adding in, I wish for, which is a unique little way of taking yes. And I think to another level of getting people to think yes, and here's what I want out of this. Yeah. The, the I wish for is futuristic. It instantly implies that there is something, uh, it implies two things to me. One, it says, w I'm not satisfied with the status quo and there is something in the future that I think could be better. Right. And I love, love that. Yeah. And I loved how he talked about, you know, he's not trying to be Debbie downer that this isn't an exercise in Pollyanna writing and unicorns, you know, although I love, I love you to corn, so I wish he could have do like Pollyannas too.

[\(01:00:27\)](#):

Who is it? What is a Pollyanna, like a straight lace? Do you know? Always play by the rules kind of person. It is. I didn't see, I learned something new right here in this grooving session with you, Joe podcaster. Yeah. Just call me Joe. That's your name from now on. Joe. Yeah. So the, the I wish for aspect is a really important, uh, place to amp up your brainstorming and the way to think about your own product innovation. I think that that was really a cool point. What else? What else struck you? So obviously we talked a lot about negative negativity bias. Oh yeah. And I think it's really key to point out how pervasive negativity bias is, particularly as we're thinking about trying something new as in innovation, that the idea of going beyond the status quo is something that for many of us, we get bogged down with this negativity, negativity bias.

[\(01:01:26\)](#):

God, I can't talk. I'm sick and can't talk. It's all just crazy though, man. You're doing great for not being well. All right, well, sorry folks for my nasally head, cold, not thinking straight things, it's going to add to the vibe, the vibe. All right Joe. So here we go. So this negativity bias is got lots of great support in the psychological community, right? Since it was, since it was kind of identified. I mean, we, we've seen, uh, you've, you've actually recently noticed a New York times actually, uh, talked about, uh, quoted Jonathan height and Roy Baumeister, you know, these, these towering figures within the behavioral science community about, um, about how important, how foundational a negativity bias is. Right? Right. So in that New York times article that will, will show on the air, we'll have in the show notes, it was, um, Jonathan height said the mind reacts to bad things more quickly, strongly and persistently.

[\(01:02:21\)](#):

Then two equivalent good things. Yeah. So think about that. It reacts to bad things more quickly, strongly, and persistently. Then two equivalent good things. And Roy Baumeister was saying, it's evolutionary Lee adaptive for bad to be stronger than good. It is so important for, to stay alive. But we're not the, the trouble is we're not living in a world. It's not, I shouldn't say the trouble. The fact is we're not living in a world where we have to worry about the twig. Snap being a tiger. And so negativity bias doesn't play as a, it's not as, uh, evolutionary adaptively. Uh, it's not necessary. It's not necessary. Thank you. Holy crap. It's just not necessary anymore. And, uh, at least to the degree that it was 40,000 years ago, 80,000 years ago, a hundred thousand years ago, 250,000 years ago. And you think I listened to things in the past. This is a part of the problem, right, is that, uh, our brains are not yet fully adapted to deal with a world where we don't need so much negativity bias,

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right? And, and this is something, uh, neuroscience has even gotten into this. So there was a, uh, an article in psychology today, uh, John, uh, Casio OPO, and I'm sorry if I screwed that up from the university of Chicago. Uh, he showed pictures to people, uh, had them hooked up in an fMRI. I showed pictures to people, um, about positive things like a Ferrari or a pizza, or then he, uh, showed them pictures of things that stir up negative emotions, right? Negative feelings like a mutilated face or dead cat. And then also just kind of neutral ones, right? Ah, a plate or a hairdryer. And he, he recorded the EEG electrical activity in the brain cerebral cortex. Um, and so when he did that, it he found that negative stimuli, uh, had a higher reaction on that, uh, had a greater surge in electrical activity. Yeah. So, you know, our attitudes are more heavily influenced by downbeat

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beat news than good news. And we know this, right? In the absence of, of good communication within a company, what do our brains do? We fill in the worst story. Yeah. Oh, they're not, they're not communicating with us because, and then the, the what, what comes after because is negative. Yeah. You know, that, that that's just the way that that were built. And what I love about Adam's work is that he's trying to say, let's get beyond that. Let's create environments where we, where we're not pandering to the negativity bias. Yeah. And I think again, as he was talking about innovation, we can't get bogged down in the naysayers because if we do that, it limits our opportunity to really explore, absolutely come up with those innovations that are going to really be transformational. Yeah. We've got to get into the sand and into the, I wish for that.

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That's where, that's where he's, he's urging us to go. Well, and he talks about, you know, about creativity means stepping out. Oh, right. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Which is exactly what we're just talking about right here. If you get bogged down in that negativity bias, you can't step out. You can't go beyond. And that's really an important thing. He brought up one of your heroes. No, Kurt Lewin. Yeah. University of Iowa. There you go. He was there for like one year or something, wasn't it? He did some great research while he was there for that one year, you know, but I'm not trying to disk Kurt Lewin. I love his work too, by the way. You know, and, and, and Kurt Lewin has this idea of change, right? Where we're frozen into, uh, habits and our routines and our behavior. And then in order to change that, you have to unfreeze that, right.

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And then you have to change the behavior and then you refreeze that behavior in, it's that freeze, unfreeze, freeze component. Yeah. The image that appeals to me in the, in the drivers and restrainers story is that they find this balance and that the drivers and the restrainers are basically opposing forces that are equal. And that the way that we get them out, the way that we move forward is to have, is to either reduce the restrainer or increase the driver. Right? Right. Yeah. You know, to, to unfreeze means we have to throw things out of balance. And, and I love that. Again, this is part of Adam's a whole thesis and in his life and I just think it's terrific. And you go back to Roger Dooley and our talk with Roger Dooley had talking about friction, right? And so, you know, we have those friction points in the way that we look at things.

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And if you reduce that friction, then that behavior is more likely. And then you have the, the drivers, it's that fuel that, that brings that up. So that's another important piece. And you've got to change one of those two, right? If you're going to be getting in, stepping out. So in that discussion about creativity and stepping out, he talked about the homo Luton story by Johann [inaudible]. Okay. That whole playful ape thing was new to me and that was just really cool. Um, uh, to be introduced to that. I thought Adam, uh, had, uh, had a great introduction to that and, and, and certainly plays into the, it matches up exactly what John Sweeney, his whole whole thesis of, we've got to be playful and when we get into play, that changes the way we, we think and act. All right, so we'll link to that article or to to that in the show notes. Right. Definitely. All right, fantastic. So can you explain to me what a major third is?

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So you've got the root. Okay. So you've got, let's let, it's a tree. Now we're talking about a tree. So the root of the, so let's say we have an a chord or an a note. Okay. And the root is a cause. We're in the key of a, right? So if we go up a third, a, B, C, so if we go a being one B cause cause no one's going to order a, B, C, D, E, F, G, you know. Yeah. Got it. Got that. Okay. So if we go ABC, we get to see that's the third one, two, three, a, B, C, C is the third. And the major third would be the major, a C chord, a minor third would be a C minor. Okay. So the major third is what we hear in pleasant Valley Sunday when we go from the verse into the chorus.

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So it's the shift going from an a to a C. that is what he was talking about. Right. It's the, that's what he was liking. Okay. Yeah. So it's not like, cause you don't go a to B to C, you go a to C, a to C exact. So you skip that B. yup. That I I'm still don't really quite understand but that's okay. Cause you know, maybe our listeners do now. Well you'll you hear it. You know, the thing is that it's, we're exposed to all those different sounds and major sevens have different sounds. Uh, sevens have different sounds, blues sounds like the blues because of the seventh. Okay. And so the major third is something that is characteristic of a particular sound that once you get attuned to it, and when you're in pleasant Valley Sunday and it goes from the first two lines of the course of the second two lines of the chorus, it shifts from CDE. And that's you're going to, if you just pay attention, then you go, Oh, that's what it sounds like. And for some reason, Adam loves that sound. I really, really, you know, uh, floats his boat. I'm not sure why. Well, I don't know, but that's very interesting. And thank you for the,

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you got it. I actually feel like I was useful. So I learned a couple things I learned about Pollyanna and I learned about major thirds. This has been a great grooving session, so, yeah. So, uh, so please listeners, thanks for uh, thanks for hanging in there and uh, check out our bonus track which is coming up very shortly. Kurt's going to do our bonus track and if you haven't checked out weekly grooves, go out and give it a give it a listen cause we're really excited about this whole new podcast channel that we created. Thank you.

[\(01:09:55\)](#):

[Interstitial Music: "Cold Turkey on the Neighborhood" by Tim Houlihan]

[\(01:10:01\)](#):

Hey everybody, this is Kurt with a Bonus Track. I just want to start with a quick thank you to all of the listeners who have given us positive feedback about this. The bonus track, as we've mentioned before, it was an idea served up by one of our listeners and we're glad that you continue to help us make behavioral groups better. Keep those cards and letters as Tim would say, coming. And thank you. In this episode, our conversation with Adam Hansen focused mostly on innovation and ideas from his book *Outsmarting Your Instincts*. First, Adam discussed the prominent rules that negativity, bias, confirmation bias and availability bias play in our lives. Needless to say, Tim and I couldn't agree more. It's much easier for humans to assume the worst than to imagine the best of all potential outcomes. And that has its roots in our ancestors experience in the world.

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Even though we live in a world where we don't have to worry about the same life-threatening experiences our ancestors did, our 21st century DNA is still informed by what was going on 100,000 years ago. We need to do, as Viktor Frankl said, is separate our response from the stimulus. In other words, think about the context we're in before we react. Life would be a lot less stressful that way. Second, the most underutilized tool we can take to work and use every day is yes, and and tying that in with, I wish for bringing a new idea to our status quo workflows could be, could be the greatest thing we do for our careers. That is, unless you're an accountant, maybe if you're an accountant, just sticking, stick with the status quo. All right. The point is every company needs to innovate in order to grow and you could help innovate your area of the workplace by using.

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Yes, and an I wish for a couple of times every day just to see where that lands. That leads us to the third point we want to recap. Creativity means stepping out of the boundaries of your current job and into what Adam referred to as the magic circle that needs to be playful and a safe space. In order to innovate. We want to encourage each of you at your work to create safe and playful spaces where you and your colleagues can innovate safely. So now we get to the groove idea for the week, tomorrow or today. If you're listening to this in the morning, go out and do at least three purposeful yes and let us know how that goes. We'd love to hear. Lastly, want to thank all of you for listening and would be very grateful if you leave us a rating and a review as soon as you finish listening to this episode. It helps us show up in search results for people like you who are interested in the application of behavioral science or rating. Takes no time at all. Just scroll down in the app, click on the five star button, and you're done. And a review takes only a few seconds to write how much you enjoy listening to behavioral groups. With that, thank you. And keep in touch

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[Outro: "Everywhere You Go" by Tim Houlihan]