**Flow Interview**

[00:00:00]

**Cody McLain:** Hey there folks. And welcome to the mind hack podcast, where we uncover the experiences, mindset, and routines of successful people. Whatever that field may be. In this episode, we're chatting with Rian Doris, who is the co founder of the flow research collective, which is an organization dedicated to understanding the neuroscience behind flow States, which are a feeling of total immersion in an activity.

Ryan has worked intimately with some of the world's leading experts on peak performance from the founder of positive psychology, Dan Siegel to reinstate business partner, Steven Kotler, who happens to be a New York [00:01:00] times bestselling author with books, like the rise of Superman, bold and stealing fire. In this conversation, we cover a wide range of topics that start with flow, but quickly digressed to other areas of psychology, including attachment styles, the importance of finding purpose and much more.

So without further ado here is Rian Doris I want to jump right in and talking about your experience that you had when you were young and you almost, I don't know, did you, did you almost die? What happened with her? The Waterslide.

**Rian Doris:** Sure. Yeah. So when I was 13 I was on a family holiday in Croatia, which is a country towards the East of Europe. And myself and my brother were essentially going to explore a waterpark and we ended up. Going [00:02:00] and going up to the highest slide on the waterpark, which was about a hundred foot vertical slide.

And we were going up, climb up the ladder, and then going down the slide repeatedly with no issues at all, unless you gotta put that five or six times. And then on my fifth or sixth term, I attempt to do a somersault off the bottom of the slide. And again, this is a hundred foot high. Vertical slide on a semi rotated, and then hit the top of my head off the bottom of the concrete pool, which was only three to four foot deep, which resulted in extremely severe impact.

And as a result of that, I spent the next year bad with chronic fatigue amnesia, unable to remember the name of my. Favorite band, unable to remember the name of some of my close friends. I then, it was about five to six years after that. [00:03:00] So my whole teen years essentially of recovery required to actually get back to fully fit and healthy and vital.

So it was a and intense experience.

**Cody McLain:** Would you say that was the most traumatic experience that you had as a kid?

**Rian Doris:** That's a good question. it's the most, obviously from that experience I've had, there may be other experiences that at the time I perceived as more traumatic, like for example, being left alone as a baby or things like that. So it's definitely, it's the most obvious traumatic experience. That's what I would say.

**Cody McLain:** So, so you mentioned being left alone and earlier in our conversation before we started recording, you mentioned the book never eat alone. Is that, is that related , this other experience.

**Rian Doris:** And not necessarily know. So, Dr Dan Siegel is work relates more to this kind of experience. So doctor Dan Siegel is a [00:04:00] professor of psychiatry at UCLA. He's written a ton of New York times best selling books, and he's founded Hey, hole framework. Called interpersonal neurobiology, which is a fancy way of saying relational neuroscience, and that that whole overarching framework of academic study has led to a number of other researchers going on and studying what actually happens.

instance, very early stages of life. I ran. Interaction with their primary attachment figure, primary care giver, and how that can impact brain development and then help we see as a downstream effect of that, how it can impact personality, behavior, tendencies, et cetera. So it would relate more to dr Dan Siegel on his books.

Rob keeps book, but, uh, more than happy to the dive into Keith's work as well. Of course.

**Cody McLain:** Right, that that's based on [00:05:00] attachment theory. Right, and I remember they had a study where they put babies in a room and then they looked at the reactions of the babies when the mother left and came back. And , you had the, I forgot the exact term, but like stable

**Rian Doris:** Yeah, exactly, exactly. There are different attachment styles, so there's, you know, there's, um, disorganized attachment. There is a, it's insecure attachment, but essentially is a number of different attachment styles, which then tend to correlate into different States of wellbeing on different degrees of mental health.

Later on in adulthood, and I believe it was dr ed Tronick at Harvard who to up to the study that you're referencing as well.

**Cody McLain:** Yeah. Yeah. And how the, the attachments , that we tend to correlate with our parents when we're young, they tend to stay with us through adulthood and they can affect our relationships and the happiness and satisfaction we derived from those [00:06:00] relationships. especially if you're an insecure attachment now, I would say I'm certainly insecure.

And to, to be able to recognize what are those symptoms and then to try and actively change that. Do you know what your, uh, what your attachment style is.

**Rian Doris:** It's a good question. I think it's fearful avoidant, although. Again, that they change. I mean, the attacks themselves tend to change a little bit alongside the research, but there's the secure attachment, there's anxious attachment, there's avoidant, dismissive, and then, um, avoid fearful. So I definitely know what the results of whatever my attachment style, uh, is, have been, but yeah, I think it would be, um. It would be avoidant, dismissive, or, yeah, something, something similar to that.

**Cody McLain:** Hmm. And, and I'll, I'll link a book. I know [00:07:00] that there's a, there's a lot of great research on the attachment styles as well as even a link to a quiz so you can take it yourself, but it's, it's very useful information. But, but on that, uh, Ron, you said that your parents were also very supportive, that you were lucky to have that.

So. Do you think that contributed to your, your current success being the co founder of, this other successful company?

**Rian Doris:**  Yeah. I mean, I think you know, any woman who says that they are fully, fully self-made alone, I think you may be one of the very, very few exceptions to that. Based on what you told me that your own driving, it sounds pretty credible, but for the most part, you know, I ain't going to claim self-made status.

Is underestimating the impact that external Sayers or factors tend to have on an individual. And, you know, maybe societal factors and someone being born into a first world country that has, you know, free access to wifi and internet and things like that. Um, that also [00:08:00] may be big born into a family, you know, loving parents who prioritize education and are supportive, foster growth.

Within their child.

**Cody McLain:** Hmm.

**Rian Doris:** So yeah, the massive impact, and it's like discounting the talk to that. It would be arrogant of me and inaccurate.

**Cody McLain:** Right? And we always have to acknowledge the impact of others. And I know that there, there's a quote on on work and that all existing work, all of ideas are built on top of other people's ideas from the past. And so we always build upon each other. And it's never right to fully claim something as your own because it's all shared knowledge in some respect. And. So you see, you're the co founder of the flow genome Institute, which is a, a company I believe, that focuses specifically on teaching people how to enter a state of flow, which I find [00:09:00] fascinating. And you ended up co-founding this with Steven Koller, who is a pretty famous author nowadays, at least in the world of nonfiction.

Uh, as he in some ways helped to pioneer and popularize this concept of flow, which as I understand was, was the concept that was created by, Csikszentmihalyi, if I'm saying his name properly, and can you tell me about how you founded. This flow genome Institute, how you were able to enter this and become the entrepreneur that you are today.

Because a lot of people look at that. You know, they look at your success and their, you know, that they want to, they want to be that. Right. So what, what, uh, just tell me about how you got to where you are.

**Rian Doris:** Totally. Totally. Yeah. And it's probably like flow research collective just for folks who are listening. Um, I know it's a little bit of a clunky name, so no worries. But yeah, it's flow research collective. And so we were talking again a little bit offline about house. [00:10:00] The idea of, you know, hustle at an early age and reach out and connect him with mentors and first step.

I think in getting to this point, and again, I don't want to overemphasize the points are currently at or exaggerate the current level of success that I have, but let's just say the process of getting to whatever this point that I'm currently in is the gun with. Getting extremely, extremely clear, sure.

About what I wanted to actually do from a professional standpoint and from an impact and mastery standpoint. So you know where I want to develop deep, deep knowledge and skills. How long in fact the world, and always say. As an overarching umbrella of that. You know what? I wanted my kind of professional endeavors to look like over my life, essentially.

So it was the first step is getting [00:11:00] crystal clear on that. And what I did was a ton of internships. Essentially. Notice the, the process was reaching out within Dublin and Arvind based and, and working for free. For as many people as it possibly could, but couldn't work for free full time because of obviously happened to make money through other endeavors.

I would work for free part-time in the evenings. I went around knocking on the doors of law firms and Dublin thinking that my, my calling or the mission or what I want to do is to be biased. Or at one point I worked in a law firm and was able to write that off the list. Freaked out. That's something I didn't want to do.

But I continued that process essentially working for free for different, keep going within different environments and different sectors and gradually was able to clear or write certain things off the [00:12:00] list as definite. Don't want to do. Which then as a byproduct of that resulted in a narrowing of focus, even though it wasn't necessarily getting clear on what I did want to do.

I was definitely getting senior from the, I did not want to do. And so that just by default resulted in a narrowing of focus. And over about two years of doing well over a dozen different kinds of internships and casual, you know, work agreements, gigs, I was able to spot some underlying patterns. Within what I was actually passionate about, what I was enjoying, what I was going at, and I arrived on the conclusion of what I then called leadership development, which was this idea of, of using a certain knowledge base.

So knowledge around peak performance, in our case, the flow research collective, potentially knowledge around, you know, team performance, collaboration and communication like Keith Ferazi uses. [00:13:00] Or just some, some form of knowledge around something with respect to human capability and then teaching and training individuals within the workplace with that knowledge to improve their performance in the workplace by helping them perform better.

Again, the flooding, we're consistently communicate better. So that was, that was the, the conclusion of the field that I. Landed on that I wanted to get into was leadership development. And then from there, I research. That's fast way to do that. But what it actually looked like, and that involves, you know, hustling tons and tons and tons and tons of people who were consultants within this space or businesses within this space, thought leaders.

And then this sort of overarching States. I'm getting on calls with them, trying to figure out what the hell it actually looks like with the different. Yep. Possibilities within leadership development that are, whether to go into it as a [00:14:00] consultant and speaker and author, whether to go into that as an entrepreneur, what way to attack it.

And then from there, that resulted in me reaching out to some of the folks that we've already mentioned. So dr Segal , and obviously Steven as well, and then getting connected with them and being able to work with them, which has been amazing.

**Cody McLain:** How old were you when you, when you determined this path towards leadership development?

**Rian Doris:** I think it was about 18.

**Cody McLain:** You know that that's a pretty incredible young age. I think a lot of people would have to say like, how did you develop this level of self confidence within yourself to try out these different strategies? Because so many people that I've talked to, you lack that self confidence to even reach out to those successful people because they feel this anxiety, this fear, even in their presence, and they feel like, Oh, I can't, I can't.

Touch them, you know, they're all the way up on this level. How did you achieve that self where you just naturally [00:15:00] self-confident? Or did you develop this some other way?

**Rian Doris:** Yeah. That's a good question, man. So well, the first thing that would just said, the side note to anyone who does feel a sense of. Anxiety or reluctance or lack of self confidence about reaching out to someone or you know, feels insecurity in the presence of someone who, who they deem greater to themselves.

If that person that you feel insecure around is actually judging you is actually going to be negative towards you or unjustly critical. of you. Invalidates Eddie greatness that you think they have, or at least that's the way I like to think about it. So from that perspective, I just, I don't think that,

**Cody McLain:** Okay.

**Rian Doris:** I think that.

Ideally just just remembering that everyone's just human and that if they are thinking of you negatively, then you know that's a negative thing, which then makes them less great than you think. They're great, which then decreases the degree to [00:16:00] which you should be insecure around it. In the first place, that's a side tangent.

**Cody McLain:** and everybody has so many problems that you know, maybe they spend a few seconds thinking about you, even if you have a negative interaction, but the majority of the time, people are just thinking about their own problems.

**Rian Doris:** Totally, totally. And if someone's not, if someone's thinking in depth about, you know, has some young person aggressively email them, then they're probably not someone who you should aspire to be like, or follow up with anyway. So it's sort of when, when, when I respect, um,

**Cody McLain:** was this a thought that you had when you were 18 that allowed you to start reaching out to these people, or was there something else around this self confidence factor that you had.

**Rian Doris:** Yeah, no, this is more recent realization. When I was 18 I think the first thing that led to self confidence was clarity. So getting, getting extremely clear about what the hell to do, and then what led to say the clarity was, I love, love, just obsession, determination, persistence [00:17:00] and restlessness. I felt very uncomfortable, existentially not knowing what I want to do.

It was like a really unpleasant. Almost unbearable. Sounds very extreme, but there was actually almost an unbearable nature to it, uh, to not knowing that I want to do, you know, I felt like I had all this energy out of list, drive and desire and not having a clear lagging to channel it down. Sounds very unpleasant.

So that drove me to get clear. And then the clarity by default. Increases confidence significantly, and then from there there was the provider or whatever you want to call it, to reach out to people who were definitely way above my pay grade.

**Cody McLain:** And so, so it seems that you've always been able to go outside your comfort zone, even with the internship because certainly those, those [00:18:00] things in the, in the jobs that you had were not very comfortable and you're doing things and areas that you had no prior expertise. And then you went from doing those internships and then you found that you had some level of ambition that you wanted to, to do, and you found this, you know, not, not meaning, but you found a purpose presently at 18 that was centered around wanting to teach and, and do growth in some respect of that nature.

And though, and so then your strategy, the one that you formulated was to start reaching out to successful people. Can you tell me more about the strategy that you had.

**Rian Doris:** Tell you what, that's a nice summary as well. So what I would do, I, thankfully I got into, again, this is somewhat local. I did study like a, like a maniac, but I got into my first choice university in Ireland. College, Dublin and my rationale, well, actually I've been, I've been reaching out to people a lot before that, trying to determine the degree to which a college course or what you would call an [00:19:00] America major actually mattered.

So I would reach out to people while I was in my final year of high school and get on the phone with them. And then ask them, you know, would you be willing to hire someone for this position if they have this degree? I realized fleet through that process that they didn't actually care that much.

Whether someone has a degree or what the degree is in. So that liberated me from. Being attached to getting into a specific major, which is the way it works in Austin. And then I was able to just choose the university, so I was liberated from the specific major and then able to choose the university. And Trinity college Dublin is the best international reputation of, of any university in Ireland.

So I then was able to go based on reputation rather than based on specific major, which all of a sudden opened up way more options for me that required less, you know, required lower grades nicely. Thankfully I got [00:20:00] the highest points anyway, but they're assigned my highest choice anyway. But. I basically was able to settle on Trendly, uh, well as a university beforehand.

And anyway, the reason I mentioned that is that my outreach strategy involved leveraging the fact that I was a friendly college Dublin students. So what I would do essentially. Yeah, exactly. Exactly. Cause a lot of folks that are in the U S who I was reaching out to would instantly know Trinity college Dublin.

And again, this is in no way to say that if you don't have this sort of. Brand name universities, elaborately, can't do this or other ways, and in, in retrospect, much more effective ways to reach out to people that I would now use. But what I used to do was I would start with, I still actually have all the emails in my Gmail somewhere enough, but it will be something along the lines of, hi, whatever the name was on the X age.

So 18 year old student, a Trinity college Dublin, [00:21:00] uh, I love your work for X reason. I want to help with X thing and I believe I can. And then something along the lines of, you know, what can we do to make this happen? Or how can, how can I help you? So there was always that element of just like tie them up, offering value no matter what.

And then. I D I, I met, I would just compile lists and lists and spreadsheets people want to get in touch with and literally just cold email them and then follow up like crazy, like crazy. I mean like sometimes 30 40 50 emails to that same person until I got a reply and I would get replies from Harvard professors, some of the industry leaders in all sorts of different fields, and obviously a certain amount of those bytes end up materializing into bigger things.

Like what happens with. Steven, Dan Siegel and Keith as well.

**Cody McLain:** Okay. [00:22:00] And during this time you also, so you started doing a lot of speaking engagements at at some point. How did you start going from no speaking, no authority to starting this path towards say, becoming. And influencer and talking about this, this particular topic.

**Rian Doris:** Well speaking engagements came. Actually, I've just done this more recently that I did some speaking engagements within high school and things like that, which were more unrelated to professional endeavors. Another point on that that I think is very important, but this is something that's shifted for me in the last three to four years.

My original goal, you know, what's to become an authority of a common influencer. Become a expert or to be seen as an expert was probably more of the actual motivation to be an expert. I like very much so changed my opinion on that. I think that there are just endless quote unquote influencers, people who have in their LinkedIn bio, you know, speaker, author, investor, biohacker, this, [00:23:00] that, the other, the other, the other, the other.

And so. I personally, this just nothing but a personal preference thing and a values thing. And there's nothing wrong with that Avenue, but I think it's good to focus on substance first and then go the influencer speaker, author, et cetera. Ruth, once you've either done something significant or a mask, significant expertise and knowledge on a subject and matters.

**Cody McLain:** Yeah. That's an interesting point. You know, so you're, you're saying establish authority, credibility, establish, uh, expert advice in a field first, and then you have the self confidence, but then you can label yourself as an influencer. And. But also I think a lot of people are become influencers and then by the very fact that they're selling themselves, they're getting this credibility, they're getting interviews, and then they learn as they go.

What are your thoughts on that?

**Rian Doris:** Well, I would just say that authority, credibility, influence, all of those things are [00:24:00] byproducts. They're not things that actually end for you should aim for something that actually matters. And has substance, and then if you hit that goal, those things will be a necessary or inevitable byproduct by default.

So I think Rob, rather than aiming for that, it's kinda missing the, you know, I'm missing the Mark. I think in terms of prioritization, those things. Yeah, those things are side effects. They're not the actual thing.

**Cody McLain:** Yeah. It's like fake happiness, like buying like materialism that you get a short burst of dopamine, but it doesn't help in the long run because you still have to endure a lot of, a lot of. Shit that you don't really want to do, and that's just a part of that, that journey of success and entrepreneurship.

**Rian Doris:** Yeah. Totally. Totally. Yeah, I think so. And again, you know, obviously no, no judgment for people to just want to go that route, but, but I think it is very important. From a a selfish standpoint and a competitiveness standpoint for for those [00:25:00] individuals who are contemplating what path to go. I think a lot of the folks do not have substance.

And again, substance can come in the form of significant accomplishment. It can come in the form of significant expertise or knowledge or experience, but the folks who do not have or calling substance here. Yeah. Or attempting to go that influencer authority, personal brunt route. We'll just get washed out pretty fast, potentially are getting watched.

I run now with an, you know, this whole

**Cody McLain:** Okay. Yeah. And the ones who, who it's not, it's not necessarily just the people who decide to work on the weekends. It's, it's the, the, the fact that if you do work on the weekend, you're motivated because you have some purpose behind your work that is driving that, that desire to, to go towards this goal.

And I think anything like, I want to be famous or I want to have a bunch of [00:26:00] Instagram followers. That, that is sort of like just one of those, those fake achievements that you achieve along the more genuine, authentic path towards becoming somebody. And you know, I've thought a lot about like my own purpose and I've, I've struggled a lot to try and define this for myself.

Uh, but I, I came up that you can, the, the most genuine, generous thing that you can do is you can either help you, basically help others to some extent. And that is for me. Ben, the Ben, where I've been able to think of in terms of like a finding a purpose and meaning and passion and desire to, to work and do hard things.

What would you say your, your meaning or purpose behind your success.

**Rian Doris:** Totally fine. Yeah. So the first, um, first pull, it would just make those that be, look at the research and the literature within positive psychology. That is the, the common denominator I've made some meaningful work, purposeful lives, is having some kind of contribution or impact to some thing [00:27:00] that is greater than yourself.

And that's the determination is greater than yourself. And again, you know. You can do that through just going straight to being an influencer. Uh, you know, potentially there's someone who has really tough mental health issues, for example, and then just doing nothing more than sharing the challenges they've had and the simple ways that they've overcome those challenges on its route can have a massive positive impact.

I have a lot of people, so I don't want to overly talk down that route, but it, it's just important to just figure out like what the actual thing is and then why it matters to you and others. Go ahead, sir.

**Cody McLain:** Everybody had to endure some level of trauma or problem. And honestly, I don't believe that you've achieved your full potential until you hit that lowest of the low. Until you've, you've been where you were, you're almost out of money and, and you're gonna lose where you're living and you put your last dollar into the business like Elon Musk, where you put yourself or unintentionally even you're in these desperate situations and you found a way to get out.

[00:28:00] And honestly, that's the story behind a lot of successful people behind what's driving their success. And it's, it's rare. And I've met those people. I've met those entrepreneurs who had literally have had no traumatic events that they can recall that has driven their success. Those people are out there, but I think the vast majority of people will have something that's driving them towards this path and it just kind of lights a fire under your ass because you're in this desperate situation.

And it's like, how do you get out? And a lot of influencers and even people who are, who are self made entrepreneurs have that to some extent.

**Rian Doris:** Yeah, totally. Totally. I think if, if you have that. Whatever that is, meaning that kind of inner sense of, again, I described it as restfulness or this sense of it almost being unbearable to not have something to channel that energy to. But upon, you know, deeper examination of my own psychology, I'd realized that it also was the result probably of some kind of fundamental trauma or security around.

No feeling, [00:29:00] feeling insignificant unless doing X or Y thing. So if you, how do you have that underlying sense of whatever from a psychological standpoint and rather than it resulting in, you know, negative behaviors or habits or things that propel you done word. If you can harm a stat and channel it towards building and growth and progress.

That's phenomenal. But also it would, uh, would add as a caveat. Okay.

**Cody McLain:** Yeah.

**Rian Doris:** You do not have to experience drama to have ferocious drive or ambition or persistence. And if you can muster, which I believe everyone can, immense drive and ambition without having to. Go through adversity. That's, you know, that's great and that's fine.

And you shouldn't try and self traumatized or add unnecessary struggle [00:30:00] just for the sake of, you know, becoming wiser at the other end of this or, or believing, I think falsely, that you will become wiser, wiser at the other end of, of some form of suffering. And I think that's a myth. Within the whole cult hustle culture, um, at the moment that, you know, suffering, grind, struggle, pain, blood, sweat, and tears, our necessities for success.

And again, there may be things that are inevitable. They're definitely not necessary. In other words, you meant to produce the result you're trying to produce, potentially requires those things, but maybe it doesn't. And if it doesn't phenomenal, you know, you don't want to add in unnecessary struggle. You just want to get done whatever you're trying to get done as efficiently as possible.

**Cody McLain:** I'd say I'm forgetting his name. The founder of wine.com who was the marketing [00:31:00] agency.

**Rian Doris:** Gary Vynerchuk,

**Cody McLain:** Yeah. Gary, I assume you're not a fan of Gary Vaynerchuk.

**Rian Doris:** I'm actually a massive fan of him in many ways. I find him, I find it very. Very inspiring. I think he gets a very hard time. Four what he puts out, and I think that message is also critical to a lot of people who don't, who aren't taking action for a static. Kind of stagnant and they watch this video, this guy's screaming at them that hustle and grind and working all night, do whatever it takes.

That's phenomenal. You know, to get moving, to develop a growth mindset and believe you actually can create things and you're not hitched to a traditional path, and that work ethic results in, you know, results in results. But there's a certain point at which that advice runs that once you are moving, once you are at work, and once you are getting after it, you did.

You know, it doesn't, it doesn't work to just keep adding hustle. Ultimately it just comes down to output. [00:32:00] That's one of the things we talked about, the flow research collective, you know, productivity is nothing more that how much output you can produce for a given unit of input. And that can contradicts with the do more to get more advice from the likes of grant Cardone or Gary Vaynerchuk.

You're doing more to get more, or in many cases, doing more to get the same. You are becoming less productive, even if you're working more as you know, the goal, the goal is to maximize output. For minimal inputs that constantly improve the ratio of input to output so that you're able to produce more, get more results.

For, continually less and less input of effort, of time, of energy, et cetera.

**Cody McLain:** Yeah. so much with that. And that's, that's where delegation comes into play. My, my first business, I was actually doing everything from the design, the marketing, the operations, the support, and it was only once I sold that company that I read Tim [00:33:00] Ferriss's book, the four hour work week, and then figure it out.

Wait, I can outsource all of these things. And that's actually what led to the founding of my current company, is to to incorporate that strategy of delegation so I can focus on the items that do give me the most flow. Because at the end of the day, why, where I think Gary Vaynerchuk preaches is this idea of always be hustling, always be working.

You have no time to be lazy or do anything else. And for me, that, that idea led to burnout. And it was actually years because I started at 15 you know, 18 or. 17 when I started to have this repeated burnout, which you would come and go for weeks on end and I would just be playing video games and it, and it sucked because I wanted to be productive.

I wanted to have an output, but I just felt like I couldn't muster the energy to, to do anything within me. And it will last for weeks on end. And that's burnout. it was the opposite of flow. It's the opposite of what you, what you want to achieve.

**Rian Doris:** Totally man. Totally. That's, that's super, super important. And you know, ultimately you start figuring out what's the thing you actually [00:34:00] want as output? What's the thing you're optimizing for? Is it a business. It's today seven figure business. Like what? What actually is it? And then how do you produce that output?

And what matters is the output or the outcome or the result or whatever you want to call it, occurs. It does not matter that you are the one to make it occur. And especially not that you working incident hours is the thing that make it, you know, the makes it occur. And I think that's where a lot of people earlier, more entry level stage.

Entrepreneurship or whatever it is, get, get caught. I think that, you know, but the output is somehow better if they've, if they've sweated for it and grinded for it and stayed up late for it. But I think that's total nonsense and actually results too much. What sports performance over the long haul and as you're saying burnout

**Cody McLain:** Just off the top of your head, are there any ideologies or methods that you follow that you've read from other people? They [00:35:00] strategies, whether it's like, okay, ours, whether it's the EOS system for entrepreneurship or say that they're getting things done by David Allen. Anything that you've read that incorporates whether it's goal setting or how you prioritize your day.

Anything that you've read that you, that you incorporate. Okay,

**Rian Doris:** Sure, man. So all of those systems. In certain respects and the fan of, I think David Allen's getting things done system has, has some good points, where what it misses is an accountant's for, neurobiology and physiology. So he focuses on tactics and strategies, but he does not take into account, at least from what I've read and seen the degree to which your physiology impacts your.

Performance. And I've put some, for example, one of his big things is, you know, the whole idea of an intro email, getting everything out of your head, writing it all down. And I think that's a phenomenal, the strategy and the reason it's a phenomenal strategy is because of the phenomenon called cognitive load, which is actually [00:36:00] the idea that you can only hold a fixed amount of information in working memory at any given time and after a certain threshold, like cognitive load is going to reduce your cognitive capacity.

And thus reduce the degree to which you could focus on other things. So if you've got 15 to do list items in your head, you're not going to be focused. I mean, you're not gonna be able to focus very effectively on whatever task it is that you're doing. So with strategies like that, because there is an underlying neurophysiological mechanism at play, those kinds of pieces of advice from the likes of deadline, I think are phenomenal.

There are, there are other things like disagreement. Like the two minute rule, I think it's called the two minute rule. The idea that you should just do something if it's going to take you less than two minutes. Because again, there there's other neurophysiological factors that have to be accounted for with that.

For example, the cost of tasks, switching, the idea of attention residue. [00:37:00] So you know, switching tasks and just doing something, even if it's quick and even if it's productive, it's going to decrease your performance when you switch back to doing whatever other tasks it is. And I think personally opinion wide based, it's just an opinion based judgment that some of the more conventional productivity systems dumped, fully accounted for.

The the degree to which you know, your physiology comes into play. And they underestimate that in the advice they give. That said, obviously lots of amazing wisdom from David Allen who's pioneered lots of this field, so I'm assigned his stuff. Okay. Ours as well. John door's book around that. Is is interesting and helpful on a more organizational frontal.

Obviously you can apply. OKR is personally. What was the other one you mentioned.

**Cody McLain:** I just, I just use those as examples. I was wondering if you had any methodologies, but I was, I was, I'm curious actually, have [00:38:00] you heard of Rome research.

**Rian Doris:** Rome research.

**Cody McLain:** Yeah, it's, it's, it's a, it's a new tool that's been out for a few months and it's, it's, it's effectively a note taking tool that tries to replicate the way that we think. So unlike notion where you have various pages to store various information, is that it allows you to create links. And recall information from from other topics.

So if you were to say, if we have a conversation here, I have my notes inside of Rome and we talk about flow, and then I end up writing an article about flow. I can look inside a room and I can see every mention of flow and the, the various topics and kind of correlate. It's, it's harder to explain it.

It's really hard. I'm not doing, I'm not doing

**Rian Doris:** No, I love it, man. No, I hear exactly what you're saying. Yeah. It's basically, it's a tool that's actually built to factor the way our brains work into, into the fundamental design.

**Cody McLain:** And then have you also heard of Tiago fortes, a course building a second brain.

[00:39:00] **Rian Doris:** No. That also sends

**Cody McLain:** Yeah, I'd recommend looking into that. He, he, he created this system, his own methodology called para, which is about how to organize and store information online. And then he created the course building a second brain that, that shows this method in detail as well as the various software and systems in terms of how he's organized his information.

So he's able to recall that. more effectively because I've noticed I have ever note, but rarely do I ever actually look inside of Evernote. Whenever I'm trying to research a topic, my default is always just to go to Google. And yet it's hard to establish this habit of going inside of a specific of a specific system and finding existing notes related to that topic.

And he does a very good job at allowing you to create a habit and a system. We're able to more directly recall this. Just information from the past. And one of the actually great habits that I've had is I still use a Kindle to actually read books, and I use a highlight system, and one [00:40:00] of the things I would do is I would have my highlights sinked into Evernote.

And so every weekend, whenever I was doing my weekend tasks, which is. Basically any tasks I just need to do once a week. And I would actually look through this entire notebook inside of Evernote, of all my book highlights. And I would ask myself, what are the current problems or issues I'm going through right now?

And I would try and find a book that's relevant to that now be able to reread my highlights. And then he also adds a system on top of that, which is a form of recalling information. So whenever you're going through that notebook, so you will highlight certain. Areas within those notes that are specific to you or, or your, your interests.

And then you add another layer on top of that where you go and actually bold some of those points as well. So this very act is allowing you to recall more and more information. And, and we're, we're way off topic, any, any add ons, any thoughts?

**Rian Doris:** Now LA alumni, I'm definitely going to do that. Building a second brain course friend of [00:41:00] mine. Super smart. Guy has really caused a knowledge base, so on personnel and space. So essentially every time he learns anything, he takes it down in notion, actually, although I should refer him to this tool you're mentioning, it takes it down and as literally everything he knows and everything is learning in real time.

Built out in notion. So every insight, every piece of knowledge he wants to recall is all now as a second brain, as you're describing, which improves retention, recall, et cetera.

**Cody McLain:** Yeah. You know, I've had an issue where we're off topic, but I don't care at the moment I'm inside of notion. So notions is really cool. Kind of Wiki software in case you're not familiar with it. But the problem I've had with it is that it's a software that effectively you can use it for everything, for, for task management, for projects, for calendar, for, for writing.

And it makes it hard to actually. [00:42:00] Associate all of these items with that. And I found it's actually easier to associate a specific task with a specific problem or a specific app because our brains are association machines. You know, we are subconsciously influenced. Every time we enter a room, and I've gone to the detail where my, my home office, I have lights that change color throughout the day to indicate to my own subconscious kind of what mode I should be thinking about.

Because if we're trying to work in bed, then you know, w we might be thinking about other things or. Uh, we're going to defer to the activity that gives us the most instant dopamine. And I found that to be, to interesting, the, the subconscious, how it influences us. And any thoughts on that?

**Rian Doris:** Yeah, totally. No, I mean, I think how the idea of triggers. Is very helpful. So just having different environmental or behavioral triggers that then trigger a habit or a second behavior. So for example, Josh [00:43:00] Waitzkin, it was amazing learning experts wrote a book called the art of learning, and he talks about the idea of having a song.

That just preps in for game day or Showtime, which is obviously a common idea, but deploying those kinds of triggers where, you know, X equals Y can be very, very helpful. So I have friends as well, you know, it was the wake up in the morning and the first thing they do is clap. And that, that is just a super simple trigger for the day being started.

And then being ready to go. Obviously, you know, they're, they have a morning routine. It's a, okay. Form of longer trigger that primes you for your day. But like, yeah, getting those kinds of triggers started today can be super helpful.

**Cody McLain:** What's, uh, what's your morning routine?

**Rian Doris:** So I tend to actually go straight into work for three hours. As [00:44:00] soon as I wake up my goals through working within about a minute of waking up and then I'll, I'll do my highest priority task three hours. And awesome and that period get done. You know, a really good day's work and just in that three hours.

And then, and the reason for that is that your, your brainwave signature is closer to flow upon waking. Um, let's see. You can, you can get into flow more easily by working very, very quickly before you've even fully woken yourself up. Mmm.

**Cody McLain:** Okay.

**Rian Doris:** So I attempt to do that. I find that extremely, extremely productive, and then I'll do my, you know, elaborate classic self-development stuff when routine and what that looks like is I work as at the moment a homework addicts with pull up bar dipping, bar weights, et cetera.

Then foam rolling, [00:45:00] then stretching, yoga style stretching. I will do a bag, a little bit of gratitude journaling. I tend to read all my longterm goals. I like to do that every morning, and then I do 20 minutes of breath work. Um, and then I usually jump in a whole pool or have an ice cold shower and then, and then, then kick off the next half of the day.

**Cody McLain:** Have you tried the wind Hoffman technique?

**Rian Doris:** Totally. Yeah. I love his app. He's as. Phenomenal. Um, so I think it's just called Wim Hof method, and the bubble breathing specifically is terror.

**Cody McLain:** Hmm. And, and, uh, so I want to zoom out is we just went down a major rabbit hole. How did you end up getting introduced to Steven Kotler and starting just venture.

**Rian Doris:** Yeah. So with Stevens, he [00:46:00] was one of the people that I was a fan of and wanting to reach out to. I didn't actually end up reaching out to them. Funnily enough, or what I did do was lists. I listened to them on a podcast with Dave Asprey, the founder of Bulletproof, and then I just had a tendency, and again, this is just a simple habit that was part of this overall kind of outreach mentality.

Yeah. Add everyone that I was a fan of, whether it's a podcast guest or an entrepreneur, I liked what they were doing or whatever it was. I would just add them on Facebook always. Okay. So I added Steven on Facebook on his personal page. He had like 4,000 you know, nearly 5,000 friend requests or whatever.

So was close to the limit. Okay. Must have connected my request. And then literally by the year after that and moving more, he posted on Facebook asking for interns and I shot him, shot him with private Facebook message. Then he gave me this sort of intern [00:47:00] trial task, which was in version of an interview.

That involved fairly mundane work, pilot's spreadsheets and reworking data and organizing of articles. I did that. Then he gave me more trout tasks that did that, and even more child tasks. I did that and then slowly expanded my portfolio of work with him, and I've been, so the buyer's side now since, yeah.

For almost, what is it, four or five years, uh, and just increasing. The workload up to obviously running, you know, company with them

**Cody McLain:** Now. Now you're the

**Rian Doris:** that's it. Yeah. So, yeah. Yeah. Every time. Yeah,

**Cody McLain:** And what does it and I, I think it's the flow of research collective, right? What do you guys do specifically.

**Rian Doris:** sure. So there's two elements. The company, we have a research side and a training side on the training side, we help. entrepreneurs, usually [00:48:00] entrepreneurs who are a little more late stage and have children usually over 40 to improve their performance, get more done in less time with greater ease by teaching them how to get into flow consistently and within their work.

And on the, on the research side, we are partnered with different universities like UCLA. USC, Deloitte and a number of Stanford number, big universities doing research into the neuroscience of flow. It's having to understand what is going on in the brain and the body wind in a flow state. And then training wise, so we've got four main trainings.

There's one that that's a little more entry level, our first training called Sierra dangerous, and within all of our trainings, you work one on one with a coach. Not all of our coaches are PhD level experts in peak performance and flow. [00:49:00] And so you work one on one with the people from it's coach who has a PhD.

There's tons of contents, you know, writes down all the maps and models of research around peak performance and flow along with exactly how to apply an exercises to apply in your own life. And then there's the weekly group coaching. I mentioned that mainly because, and that's a really important distinguisher or.

Decision we've made, which is too try to build the world's most highly credentialed, the least group, uh, peak performance coaches. Rather than going the route of, you know, online information products and it's not marketing, et cetera. We really want to become the McKinsey of peak performance coach.

**Cody McLain:** Hmm. And, and so everybody enters flow to some extent, whether they're aware of it or not, whether they're playing a video game or whether you're in a basketball game. And so I imagine that your service focuses on, say, [00:50:00] top athletes and executives, right. And so if I'm an executive or I'm a small business owner and I'm trying to build my business.

Is it essential for me to find a flow within that business that I'm building or can I sustain my overall happiness, my wellness by still finding flow and other areas that come more natural to me. And I don't know whether you can find flow by watching Netflix or not, but I know that there's other things outside of say, just work itself that you can find flow.

And does that replace any. Level of stress that you would get within the business if you can't find flow. Because when I imagine flow in a business, it's, it's this level between boredom and stress where you're able to find this right Goldilocks ratio where you're not too bored, but you're not too stressed because you, you have some familiarity with that, that knowledge, and you're able to get a, how would I describe it?

Like a happiness out of it, you know? And it's not stressful by itself. You're actually. [00:51:00] Becoming happier and you're enjoying the work that you're doing versus say, if you're having a business and you're having to work and do a lot of things. Yeah. What are your

**Rian Doris:** So, yeah, not so. So it's important to mention, you know, you can be productive, not in flow. So you can, you can be very productive outside of a flow state and obviously as a result of that, build a business and do whatever other thing is you're trying to do, but you're not going to be optimally productive first of all.

And then. For a lot of people. More importantly, it's not going to feel good. Uh, well, so clip, the beautiful thing about a flow state is that it's the one stays that has this intersection between optimal performance and you know, it feeling phenomenal. It's both. It's both maximum productivity and [00:52:00] maximum enjoyment.

Satisfaction on the back end of the slow state wellbeing as well. So for sure you can, I mean, you can sustain productivity and you can do certain things, but you're not going to be doing the lot of the light. They're not going to feel as good there. It's going to feel like a lot of grind, a lot of effort.

And obviously, you know, you're just, you're not going to be, um, yeah, maximizing your capacity. And then over the longer term, you are also likely going to be more susceptible to burnout, fatigue. And I say that because one of the foundational pieces of research on flow down by Csikszentmihalyi you mentioned earlier.

Find that flow is very, very, very highly correlated. Yeah. A sense of meaning. That's satisfaction in life in general. That means that if you, if you regularly get into a flow state, you are more likely to feel like your [00:53:00] life is meaningful overall.

**Cody McLain:** Hmm.

**Rian Doris:** Even outside the flow center itself. And that obviously makes a very big difference for off floors when they have to endure all sorts of difficult turbulent times and deal with a lot of complexity and chaos.

**Cody McLain:** And so where can people go to learn more about flow? What books can they read and where can they go to learn more from you about what you're doing with the float research collective?

**Rian Doris:** Sure. So the first thing I would mention is flowresearchcollective.com. Which is our website. We've got free content down there. There's our email lists we put out. I use that or every Monday that has lots of amazing free resources in it on flow and peak performance in general, so that'd be the first place.

Then as far as books, what I would recommend is rise of Superman by Steven Kotler. Then stealing fire alert doesn't focus on floats specifically. It focuses on non-working States more broadly by Steven and Jamie. [00:54:00] It was the co founder of flow genome project, and then at flow, the book just called Flow by.

Csikszentmihalyi would be another good one as well. I would also recommend checking out dr Andrew Huey Berman on Instagram. Instagram is Huber lab. Uh, he's on our advisory board. He's a professor of neuroscience at Stanford. He's incredible, incredible mind on all things. The neuroscience peak performance

**Cody McLain:** Okay. Great. Uh, I have a lot more questions, but I know that we're short on time, so thank you Rian, and we'll have all the, all the people, the books, anything is in the show notes, so be sure to check that out. Thank you, Rian.

**Rian Doris:** to doing this man. And again, you know, everything that you've accomplished is just absolutely incredible. So we'll have to, uh. Do I turn the table at some point and I'd love to interview you on all that you've been doing and have done.

[00:55:00] **Cody McLain:** Yeah. Love that too. Thank you.