**Episode 031 - Taylor Jacobson**

[00:00:00] **Taylor Audio:** When you just let go of something that's not quite working, the better solution just presents itself so quickly. That maybe sounds sort of mystical, but it's just, my experience is you internalize some clarity about what you need that allows you to go find that thing really quickly or attract that thing really quickly.

[00:01:00]

**Cody Audio:**

So Taylor I've found focus mate a few years ago and I was really struggling with procrastination. And even as somebody as successful as me and all of my work is when you're, when you are your own boss, it's a difficult thing to always be on top of yourself and to be your own manager. And when you don't have that other level of accountability,

it always feels like it can be overwhelming at times, because not only are you having to create your own.

Pathway towards what does success mean for you? But then you're also having to get yourself to do the things that are not [00:02:00] always pleasant to do. And focus, mate is there was this almost revolutionary thing that helped me to instantly just start focusing and it felt almost like a drug. It was like a wild experience.

And I am so fascinated as to how did you come about and start focus made? How did, how did this come into existence? Where did this idea the seed come from?

**Taylor Audio:** That's there. That is a good place to start. Actually. I really like that. You talked about the, like this, the struggles you've felt too that are connected to that because for me focused mate,

to be honest, I might've had the idea for focus mate for like years. And I say might because the way that I even related to the idea in my own head was like, it was a shameful thing

to.

To need that kind of help that I think I just kept, like, if it would pop up in my mind, I would like bat it [00:03:00] away, you know?

so at whatever moment I was in, in my own journey of self-acceptance, which, you know, is always ongoing. I was, uh, so I was, I was working as a coach and I was talking to a friend who was in a,

a group, like a peer group, a peer support group that I was running.

And he was just really procrastinating. And like, you really successful guy, you know, like outwardly, like no one would, no one would expect that this person procrastinates so much. And he was just starting to freak out cause he had a big presentation coming up

and

he hadn't started on it.

you know, there's just something in this like moment of vulnerability on his part that just brought that out in me.

And I I've, I was procrastinating on something else at the time. And so I just shared with him this idea that I had, that was really a fantasy of mine, basically. Like, so I just said, Hey, uh, you know, Skype was what [00:04:00] people were using at the time. I was like, Hey, let's just get on Skype and share exactly what we're gonna do.

We'll make it really specific because we know that's, you know, that's one of the productivity hacks and we'll, we'll, we'll tell each other exactly what we're gonna do. We'll write it down and then we'll just keep each other company. And as we make progress, we'll update each other. We can set some periodic check-ins to share how it's going and reflect before we get back into it.

and he was just super down. So

we tried it

you know, it was just,

a very, a very night and day sort of it clicked, it worked. We just spent two hours, you know, as planned two hours instantly in a flow state, in a flow state the whole time. And I was like, whoa, what just happened? You know? So,

you know, and I had been on an entrepreneurial journey for a while at that point.

And I would say I had tried many things that didn't click like that I had sort of had the, pushing the Boulder up a hill experience a number of times. So for me, it was just this [00:05:00] moment of like, wow,

found something that people really need.

**Cody Audio:** Did you ever look into, so, so you had this idea, you explored it with this other person, it worked, you entered flow state. And what led you to deciding that you're going to build this product? Like, is it, is it something that you developed yourself? Is it is how did it come about? Because a lot of people have a lot of ideas, but to go from the ideation stage into actually building something is totally different.

**Taylor Audio:** Yeah, that's a really good question. And there's probably multiple threads that answer. So there is the, like how did we build it? That's more tactical. Right. But I think actually the,

maybe the emotional part was really what was more important for me at that time, because like I said, I had, I had several quote unquote failed.

enterprises at that point in time. And I guess had gotten to a point where I was really wary of that, like the [00:06:00] sort of

innocent exuberance the factor had worn off for me,

where I was just tired of like going around the same merry-go-round again and, and doing things that

either didn't work or just, I just found that I didn't really care about somehow that like, it just, wasn't a good fit for me with that project, that idea.

So, I guess in a way I'm grateful for that because I just, maybe for the first time in my life, I took what I thought was a really good idea and I didn't do anything really. I mean, I, I think I, I started talking to people about it a little bit. I, I started pinging people on Facebook and we can come back to some of the steps that I took in a sec, but yeah.

In my mind, I was like, I'm not doing anything on this idea. I'm just going to sit on it. I'll tinker, but I'm not going to start working on it. And, you know, for real,

and that was like at least six months. and it was sort of, it was like drawing back the string on a bow or something where I just, I remember sitting in this conversation, with, uh, [00:07:00] sort of co-worker at the time and, and reflecting on this tension, I was experiencing any excitement I had about it.

And he just said to me, you know, my sense is that if you don't do this, you'll regret it. I think he took a risk in saying that to me, but it just, it just like really struck me in the heart. And, uh, that was just kind of this moment where I was like, yup, that is true. but I'm really glad that I had had that sort of experience of knowing that I needed to be like a full body.

Yes. Because the, what, uh, the energy that I brought to all these past enterprises was just, it was like, there was something a miss there's something awry. Like the reason that I was doing it was me. Yeah.

It was because I liked the idea. I liked the idea of who I would be if I did that thing, it was like falling in love with the idea of a person instead of a person or something. It was like falling in love with the idea of the business instead of the actual reality of it. And, and so I just had this [00:08:00] more grounded understanding that for me, the place that I needed to get to was like, I'm going to be committed with every cell in my body, you know?

And that, that's actually how it's been. If you asked me the other day, like, have I, have I ever like doubted it? And the truth is I have not. And that seems kind of miraculous in a way, but, you know, I, I really credit that to like all the, you know, misfires that I've had. I really love to hear actually your experience of this because you came at it from a different place of like need, right?

You like, you needed to be successful to survive really. But there's, for me, there was this transition where I just got into this like cellular alignment where no matter what, no matter, like, it didn't matter if I didn't know how to do the thing, it didn't matter how hard it was to get past whatever threshold that you, you know, I bumped up against.

It was just like, okay, now I'm going to figure this out and I'm going to figure this out and, and that's. That's made the whole thing really fun because the context is never like, am I going [00:09:00] to, is this where I'm going to give up? Is this, is this obstacle so big that I should give up? It's like, well, no, if I still really believe in this thing.

And so this is just an obstacle, it's not a barrier or, you know, I don't know if it's kind of semantic, but it's not the place where I'm going to be stopped. so yeah, I, if you want, I can dive in more to that, to the actual ha you know, uh, the how, but I actually, yeah, I'd be really interested to hear your experience of that

**Cody Audio:** He has a why to live, can bear almost anyhow, Friedrich Nietzsche each, if I say his name correctly, right? Yeah. I know that so often in my own entrepreneurial journey is even with my last company support ninja, which is this outsourcing company had over a thousand people in the Philippines and I'm super naturally introverted.

I never would have imagined that I would own this huge company with all these people. But I also remember all the times that I fantasize about having this amazing office and having all these people, because there was [00:10:00] some part of me that desired that. And I am always able to look back on all of my achievements and I can remember in some ways, How the idea spawned and I can appreciate the moment and all the times that I've been able to see this, this visualized future version of my success in somehow my subconscious allowed me to end up in that and achieve that various success.

I look at it, I pulled in some ways the idea of the secret, you know, that movie that was produced many years ago, but I, I think it's against it's, it's wrong to think that the universe will just give you what you want. But I do think if you visualize what, what future success in what you desire, then it's quite possible that your subconscious will work to help you achieve that goal.

And I think it often is the case is that's really what ended up happening. And I look back on all of that success. And there was a lot of times that I didn't know what I got myself into. And a lot of times that I felt like [00:11:00] I should pull out and this is probably not something I should go into. And I've had a multitude of failed businesses and I've also spent a lot of money building businesses that ended up going nowhere.

But as soon as I found the spark that just kept lighting, then I knew that's the path that I should follow. And often I even look back with support ninja, which was this, this it's registered like a foreign corporation in a third world country is I was overwhelmed with all the things that I thought I had to know.

And to memorize of, not only do you have to learn how to register and manage and deal with the labor laws in another country, how do you even have a U S corporation own another corporation in another country? And a lot of the regulations require that the majority owner of that other country has to be owned by a resident of that country.

And there's all these possibilities and anxieties that crossed my mind. And what I didn't know at the time is that it was not something I had to learn. Because I would [00:12:00] end up finding the right people, putting them on the right seats on the right bus. And they were able to do their thing and to fulfill their end of the obligation.

And so many people have these ideas, but they let themselves not even start because they just get so overwhelmed. And often I look back at my own success is that I was just really looking at one step ahead of me, even though yes, I had these anxieties. I was always asking myself this question, what do I need to do next?

And just really focusing on that with a hundred percent of my energy, because I look back at the time and I had doubts the entire ride, but if I had let any of those doubts take ride, then of course they never would have had the success I had in the first place. And I go back to your first point about you had this conversation and he said that you will regret if you don't follow through with this idea, And it reminds me of, I know studies, that's probably a fairly popular study now where they asked people on their death bed, what are the top regrets?

And they [00:13:00] always, the number one thing was all the things that they wanted to do, but they were too afraid to do or all the risks that they didn't decide to take. That was always their number one regret. And that's an intuition that grows inside of us. And yet we often fail to learn to that intuition. So that gut feeling, and I think that's a skill that we should all attempt to practice in some ways.

And I love this, this saying by Derek Sivers who's who's, in some ways he's a, he's an amazing human being and he's built a, he has a podcast and his own brand. It is famous for the statement of it's either a hell yes or a hell. No is that you're committing to something full steam or if it's not a hell yes.

Then you know what, I'm not going to do it because we only have so much time and resources in our day.

**Taylor Audio:** yeah. Something I really love about that is like, it's not just a yes or no. Like to me the significance of saying it's a hell yes or hell no. Or what I said earlier was it's a full body. Yes. Or it's like a cellular alignment is, like at least for me, the experience is often [00:14:00] intellectually. Something's a good idea.

There's, it's, there's so many reasons why it should work. and then there's just some like, Non-cognitive but just kind of like, felt sense.

and I think that I have to often, you know, like in my twenties anyways, I, I too often pursued something because it sounded like a good idea. Like it was strategic or it was, there was so many things to like about it yet in my intuition that there just wasn't that spark that there wasn't that like hell yes.

Factor. so I mean, obviously you have to align the intuitive hell yes. With, like you said, like the very grounded-ness of like, yeah, there's the universe. Isn't just going to give it to you. Like you have to step into the ring. but I think that for me is, has made a huge difference to just actually allow my intuition to play. Okay.

**Cody Audio:** No. And, and so I sold my company support ninja a few months ago. [00:15:00] And part of the reason why I sold it is because I was starting to feel depressed is that I had never been as successful as I had been at that point in my life. And that was the staple, the, the Mount Everest mountain that I had been able to climb because my entire life, I wanted to have a, be the top and the leader of the successful company.

But yet I found that once we found the business model, once all the creative stuff was out of the way, it really became, it was a service-based business. We had a sales and a marketing team, and I found that I couldn't utilize my own creativity to influence the company in a positive direction. And it really became monotonous.

I couldn't go to say the head of a, I couldn't go to anybody and ask them to do something because I'd have to go to the manager and then we would have a manager's manager. And so if you imagine a thousand person company, there could be so much bureaucracy that it just became drudgery. And I just didn't want to deal with any of it because I'm this creative person that likes and has an idea.

And if I get that [00:16:00] spark of flow, I need to follow that train all the way as far as it can go, because motivation for me is not just something that's consistently there it's really is tied to. Is this something I can mold and how can I mold it? And that's the fun in entrepreneurship and granted, uh, building a business, you always, you're always going to have to do things that you don't always enjoy.

And that's certainly a part of it. But if you are no longer able to find that flow within the work that you do, whether you're an entrepreneur at the top or just somebody at a mid level manager position, then that is a sign. I think that it's time to move on. And it was definitely a very hard decision for me to sell and to move on.

But I do feel a lot more. Lifted enlightened happier. I I'm focusing again on myself and that is something that I've started to only now appreciate. And I appreciate that you were able to follow your own intuition with, this is an idea, and I liked this idea. It worked for me, it worked for this conversation or this, [00:17:00] this style.

I'm sure you've had, you had lots of other experiences on Skype before you ended up deciding to build it. And now you're even at a point where it probably doesn't generate a lot of money because you probably weren't thinking of how can I make money with this? And you were just thinking out of the pure and correct me if I'm wrong, but you were thinking out of this work for me, it can help other people.

Can you, can you let me in on what was your motivation for then deciding to make that commitment and actually build it out?

**Taylor Audio:** You know, I, I resonated with something you said about there is like, I F I forget if you used the word like spark, but you said there was just like a clear vision that you had of a future success state. And I think if it were my words, I'd probably remove the word success because to me, that's sort of this amorphous concepts that we attach to different things, generally money, but, but you could see what it could become.

And I think the, like the financial aspect of that is [00:18:00] probably implied. If you had this intuitive understanding of all the value you'd be creating and like the business model underneath it. Okay. So of course there's like financial success in that. And in some ways it was like that for me, where even from that first experience that I had with my friend, just the, the vision just started coming.

You know, I wasn't like working on it. It wasn't developing, it just started coming. Like I could just see it, you know, and, and that, I guess there's different reasons for that maybe, but yeah, yeah. Of a chicken or an egg thing, but part of that is because this idea is so it's so like connected to my own purpose and the things that I had for such a long time been so passionate about.

And like I said, at the time I was working as a, as an executive coach, because these were topics that were really meaningful to me. but yeah, at the end of the day, like it wasn't a strategic [00:19:00] decision. the motivation was more just like me removing the barrier to, to just

**Cody Audio:** what the universe presented to you and you had the opportunity to, to take it or to ignore it.

**Taylor Audio:** exactly. Yeah. And there, there absolutely was a decision point. but it was, it was sort of a decision point that was like, all right, I'm going to surrender to this thing that is, is happening. And, but if I'm going to do that, I'm going to do it completely. You know, that's sort of, the decision is letting everything else drop away.

and we, we talked the other day a little bit about like other ideas and it's funny, like I used to have so many other ideas and it's like, my psyche changed. So some somehow like the way people talk about parenting, where it's like their brain change, it's sort of how it's felt for me where, um,

**Cody Audio:** you no longer need to have other ideas of other businesses because you already have something that, that seemingly works. It [00:20:00] connects with your internal values. Your why?

**Taylor Audio:** Yeah, and I think there's an element, you know, you talked about like having this creative life force in you that like needs to be pursued, like, and, and this experience of how crummy it felt to not have a place for that to go. And for me, this, this experience has been, I can channel all a lot of creative life force into this one place.

And one of the ways that I self-sabotaged for a lot of my life and career was, you know, shiny objects, object syndrome, and having too many things going on at once. And so I was also really clear about that at the point, you know, at that point in my career. And so it felt really exciting. To say to myself, this is it I'm going to actively kill all those other things.

And I knew at that point that there's sort of economies of focus, economies of just having that one, that one thing. And [00:21:00] it's been super in life. I mean, it's definitely,

**Cody Audio:** What was your earlier experiences like you, I know that you had some jobs and it seems like they, they didn't connect with you at this deeper level. And then you moved from one job to the next. And what role did like parenting? Like, did you, did your parents influence the thing that they wanted you to become and w what was this?

And I ask a lot of questions, sequentially, so it's okay. If we don't always get to all of them is, is I, I I'm really fascinated at the person that you desired or you thought you, or that you really wanted yourself to become, say when you were younger and what was that person like? And then at what point did you decide to change.

**Taylor Audio:** Yeah, I don't think I have a good answer to the parenting thing kind of off the top of my head. I will say, my parents, uh, were maybe more strict than all of my friends, parents, and I really resented that at the time, [00:22:00] but it, that, and you know, I, I was, I was raised Jewish because my mom was ethnically Jewish, but she was not raised Jewish.

And my dad wasn't Jewish at all. So neither of my parents knew anything about Judaism, but I was. Sort of raised, you raised Jewish, like from a textbook almost as how it felt like it's sometimes. So there was these, there were experiences I had of that. Whereas like, I, I would go to Hebrew school and I would be totally lost and all the other kids would know what was happening and I wouldn't.

but then I would also be made fun of by my Gentile friends because I was Jewish and that was generally lighthearted thing. But, that plus the like, why are my parents such jerks compared to everyone else's parents? my parents are like maybe less slick. They didn't come from the same money that my peer group came from.

And so I always just felt, like an outsider and. I think that helped me [00:23:00] has continued to help me keep making choices that have taken me further and further off the beaten track and in some ways, and because I never had the luxury of sort of like feeling like, feeling like I belonged. So like why not just keep being more different?

**Cody Audio:** Yeah, that's interesting how being outsiders, it gives us a perspective. And I know that you, you mentioned to me the other day when we did our pre-interview is how myself being this kid that was bullied in school is I'm 99% sure. I'm the most successful person in my graduating class. And it was also partly what sparked the new, the current journeys that I'm on with my existing businesses is I know what it feels like to not belong so I can empathize with the person that doesn't belong in the group.

And I can see from perspectives that you may not be able to see from when you're always part of a group.

**Taylor Audio:** Have you connected the dots between that and running a support company?

[00:24:00] **Cody Audio:** Okay. Well, the dot that I made with support ninja is I, at, at that point I had only had web hosting companies and I was going to build another web hosting company, but I did the math and just the economics didn't make sense because it was really becoming more of just a service-based industry that was just competing on price.

And, you know, you're putting your prices lower and lower and lower, and it just doesn't help you make money. And I was dealing with this imposter syndrome of, oh my God, I, I'm not a programmer. I can't, I don't have enough money to hire somebody. I don't really have any solid ideas. And all of the ideas I've done, including support ninja, they were, they were ideas that were already validated, but I simply found a niche within that market.

And I had this realization one night of wait, I've been, I've been answering angry phone calls and from, it was. It was from 10:00 AM to six o'clock every day. Since I was honestly like 15. If taking phone calls, answering support, tickets and emails. So I've taken thousands of phone [00:25:00] calls and emails and, you know, built my own support desk and, and created different rules.

And I understood what it meant to provide customer service. And I didn't realize up until that point that wait, that was a value. That was a skill set that I didn't know I had. And often we have skill sets that we don't know are actually skill sets. And so we really think about them. And then I realized the connection that I wanted to work with startups, but I didn't really want to be a startup because there's so much risk involved.

And I thought, well, every startup needs to have customer support. And I found one company that was doing it. They were working with Airbnb hotel tonight, et cetera. And I saw, well, this one company, they just validated the idea and there can definitely be more than just one company in the market. So that was the connection that I made.

And that's, as far as I've been able to make a connection is I was in the position. I was also running out of money. So the fear of, oh crap, I have to make money again was a huge motivator. And then the fact that I had a skill set of providing [00:26:00] customer service and, oh, look, I found the cool niche that seems to jive with that.

Do you have any other, do you have a theory about a prior existing connection?

**Taylor Audio:** oh, it just, I thought, you know, somebody who's felt like an outsider, like they didn't belong. the sort of intuitive ethos around being able to provide good customer support. I think,

Somehow seems connected to that. I mean, at least that's been my experience in our, in our team, the individual on our team, Nathan, who kind of spearheads that he's just so caring.

Like he said to me one time, you know, sometimes you can write what I consider like too long of a response to, for customer support and it can take them longer to get through a volume of them. Then it would take me. And he just said to me, you know, every single person that's writing in to get help from us is an influencer.

You know, it was like this attitude that he had, that was so obvious to him that an influencer isn't, you know, maybe capital I [00:27:00] influencers like somebody with a lot of Instagram followers or something, but for him, he was like, no, everybody's an influencer. But anyways, I mean, that's a, that's an aside, but point being like there, I don't know.

It just sort of seemed like there was something there for you that, you just knew. From feeling like an outsider, what it would feel like actually to be really supported or included or some of the things that I think extraordinary customer support do, it's like really enveloping you in some sort of embrace or something like that, but I'm just kinda making that up.

**Cody Audio:** that, that ties me into this other point of, you talked a little bit about your current Headspace and how you've been studying tower ism and being more connected with yourself on a spiritual level.

And I'm curious about, can you tell me a little bit more about that and then also how it connects to focus mate, if at all,

**Taylor Audio:** well, I'll tell you a little bit of the story of how I. Kind of came to resonate with that, but that was, [00:28:00] um, I, um,

my relationship was just in a really difficult place and it was like, I saw its potential and I had been really leaning in and working at it. And my partner, at times was not, you know, it wasn't, wasn't responding to that. And it was sort of like the only tool that I had in my tool belt was to just like lean in harder.

Cause I just really believed in it. And, I was talking to my therapist at the time and she recommended this book called a guide to the eating. it's like a 5,000 year old ancient Chinese texts. that is, it's sort of a blend of Dallas and Confucian. And some of that, I'm not, I'm not an authority on this.

but yeah, I just started reading this and kind of one of the core philosophies in it is basically it's like, non-doing, it's just [00:29:00] like allowing what is, uh, there's this one headline I remember the path of least resistance is non-resistance and there's a lot of teachings in it about how to relate to people properly and kind of not going more than halfway to meet people and sort of withdrawing when somebody is, kind of behaving badly, quote unquote.

And for me that was, it was just a really terrifying concept to like sit back and do nothing and just allow this relationship to unfold without. Like throwing it on my back and charging up a hill to like victory, you know? And, and yet it was so obvious that that wasn't working. And so I wouldn't say I gave up, I just stopped doing anything.

I just kind of let it be how it was, it kinda let it be broken down and fallen apart. And, and that was incredibly hard and excruciating for me at times, but [00:30:00] it was just like such a huge transformation in myself because I just, what. The fear that was driving me before it was like, I'm not going to be okay if this relationship doesn't work.

And it just forced me to like, process that fear and just be okay, you know, and get to a place where I was. I was going to be okay. No matter what. And, um, and my partner, you know, went through her own transformation and needed the space to go through her own transformation. And so I just saw the power of letting things be, you know?

**Cody Audio:** is it, would you consider it to be something like not non-attachment.

**Taylor Audio:** definitely. Yeah, definitely. I think they go hand in hand. I mean, to be, to let things be, you have to give up your attachment and just allow things to unfold, to just see what unfolds when you stopped doing.

Uh, a very top of mind example, uh, another where I'm really curious what your experiences are, is when you have team [00:31:00] members that aren't quite right working out. And my experience anyways is when you have a team member, that's not quite working out the, the lived experience of it is this person is not always right, but they're really smart and they're really hardworking and they're really caring.

And I like them, and there's, there's a lot of things that are going right on the surface. And yet there's just something that's, that's not working. And, sort of my, Hmm. Default orientation might be to just keep working at it, to keep trying to force it, you know, to like, what else can I do? How else can I be responsible to make this work?

What else can we try? you know, maybe the not resisting and just saying, I'm going to actually not work at this at all. I'm just going to let it. Let it fall apart. or in this case, like part ways with somebody and my experience, you know, we just, we're working on a rebrand and, my experiences, like when, when I, or when one, lets go of [00:32:00] something that's just not quite right. It's like all this new possibility emerges and like it just makes space for something that really is right to happen. And I think often the fear that I have is like, oh, it's going to take so long to find a new person.

And you know, it's just easier to, to just, let's just keep making a few tweaks and sh you know, one more, let's try one more thing. You know, that's going to be way easier than, oh my God, it's going to be a huge project to let this person go and then find a new person. And it sounds like it's gonna be a huge process, but actually the path of least resistance is non-resistance.

It's like. When you just let go of something that's not quite working, the better solution just presents itself so quickly. And that's, again, that maybe sounds sort of mystical, but it's just, my experience is like you sort of, you internalize some clarity about what you need that allows you to go find that thing really quickly or attract that thing really [00:33:00] quickly.

**Cody Audio:** Right. It's like, so you, you have a problem, your intuition notices, you know, maybe this person's not working out. And then you have this attachment to a person just like we can have attachment to things and our creations in life. And then you, we end up expanding all of our mental energy, trying to see how can we make.

This piece of the puzzle that I really like and I'm attached to, and still make it fit. You know, we try and turn that piece of the puzzle and we just have the same problems over and over. And I know I, myself, I have, I know that I have this problem where I am constantly split between this empathetic side, that that deeply cares for people.

But then when you run a business, you have to make decisions that are in the best interest of the business. And if you know that somebody is not working out, it's detrimental to you and the business to keep that person on. And I've been in that situation more times than I can [00:34:00] count, I was. Too afraid. And I was too scared to let this person go because not only did I feel for that person and I could feel what they would be feeling when I decided to fire them, but I've also had enough experience to be in situations where I would have employees blackmail me.

There was one instance where I had web hosts, a web hosting company, and this person that was doing billing tickets. Cause I knew he was aggressive. And you had maybe he had a hostile temperament and you could, you couldn't upset them because then you would just go off on you. And I knew I needed to get rid of them.

But I was deeply afraid. He would sabotage the company and there's, and I actually wrote an article on this and I I've had so many different entrepreneurs come back to me and say like, wow, this is my experience too. I'm in this crappy business relationship. How can I get out of it? And there is this thing that a, executive coach told me about called the drama triangle.

And I didn't see it until he mentioned it and I researched it. And the theory is that you, you, you have a victim and [00:35:00] aggressor and a rescuer. And so I was, I was seeing myself as the victim, my business partner was the aggressor. And then my lawyer was trying to be the rescuer and the mediator. But once I found the circle, it was like, we were just going in this loop.

I know it wasn't solving anything, but once I saw, oh, crap, like this is the drama triangle, this totally describes the situation. As I realized, the only way you can get out of that situation is you need to change your position within the triangle. And so I decided that, you know what, this is enough is enough.

I'm not going to be the victim anymore. And I changed my mentality and I decided to end the relationship and things were able to grow and get better from there. But I just can't imagine the amount of times I've been stuck in that same old triangle. And I didn't realize that this is, you know, even though it was a psychological theory that somebody else created it, it seemed to apply so well to so many previous situations.

But I, my, my mind goes to this question of, have you heard of attachment theory?

**Taylor Audio:** Well, I'll say [00:36:00] my primary style is securely attached, so grateful for that. And, you know, I think, I think it's dynamic, right. So I, I, since I am quite securely attached at this point, but, my, I think my primary fear based strategy or attachment style is, anxious. Is it like, it's not,

**Cody Audio:** It could be anxious. Ambivalent, anxious, avoidant.

**Taylor Audio:** yeah. Anxious, avoidant, maybe, the sort of like a people pleasing type of approach or like, uh, you know, conciliatory, try to try to work things out rather than like go right. You know, go right at the conflict, so to speak. Yeah. about you?

**Cody Audio:** Yeah, definitely in the, in the insecure anxious avoidant, probably as far as it can get, because I've had so many, had so many people. My, my family friends I've been screwed over. And when I was growing up [00:37:00] my eye on average, I had. A family member die every two years growing up. And so I definitely have a lot of attachment wounds and it definitely still connects to me to this day, but I've also been blessed to have enough experiences of getting outside my comfort zone of realizing that personal growth.

You have to take responsibility within that. And I've met way too many 40 and 50 year olds that is viewed themselves so negatively because they still view themselves in the same way that they, that they were taught to view themselves in high school is we end up having so much of our childhood affects who we, who we become as adults.

And unless we actively decide to take charge of this, idea of who we think we are, then we just write out what society has told us that we are. And we embody that at a very young age. And so I had to step outside that thought of who w who am I. Uh, because I thought I was stupid and I would never achieve anything for so long.

[00:38:00] And maybe you would see like, wow, I can't believe you actually thought you were stupid. Or because you're, you're, you're clearly so smart. But for the longest time I thought I would never achieve anything that I was so stupid. And that was what school taught me. And so I had to overcome so much to get to this point where I'm able to take entrepreneur risks and be out on my own, but also be able to comfort myself because there is a lot of pain and trauma within that.

**Taylor Audio:** Yeah, I think I, I mean, I had a lot of luxuries that you did not have, and yet I still, you know, walk out of my emerged from my childhood with serious attachment wounds. And I, you know, my sense is all of us have them and it's just a matter of, you know, what's the perfect cocktail of triggers for you.

But, you know, I definitely have, I, last year in particular I encountered, it was like the perfect storm of things to happen to, you know, to trigger some of my attachment wounds and, and I'm, I am actually, you know, when I shared that I feel securely attached. [00:39:00] I, I actually feel like it's thanks to having been triggered so deeply and kind of gone so far into it.

It can really abject terror. I think experience of having a attachment were really, really nailed, because, and this is, this is what my therapist relayed to me. It's like, you know, all of this stuff is grounded in a stage of our lives when we are literally helpless and, you know, losing the care that you need is attached to the fear of death, you know?

So, yeah. It's, I'm glad you brought that up.

**Cody Audio:** Do you feel like it's solidified what focus made is, and that it does mean something.

**Taylor Audio:** I think, well, actually what I was referring to is really, working through the attachment wound and, um, and coming out on the other side of it with just an ability to be with much even greater levels of uncertainty and sort of groundlessness and [00:40:00] feel like I have the space in myself for that, like, I'm okay.

Like, you know, whatever's happening. I'm okay. And one of the things that, you know, and, and, and just to paint a little bit of a picture, like I was having panic attacks on a regular basis and, you know, really feeling terror. Right. And, Being presented with that situation. It took me down this road of learning, learning about the nervous system and learning how to self-regulate and basically just developing all these new life skills to, to deal with uncertainty and to deal with change and to deal with loss.

And, what has, come on the other side of that is this under, just embracing of, you know, like a couple of years ago, if we would have talked about focus, maybe I would've been more sort of calculating and how I described described it, almost like, you know, an MBA type of approach. Like here's the, here's why it's a good [00:41:00] business.

You know, that's kinda what I was more focused on because I thought that's what people wanted for me almost, you know? And, and so in this. New experience of myself as just, I'll say more secure. I'm really willing to actually go all the way into the like crazy big visionary, like highfalutin. I don't even really, I, you know, I'm at a loss for words, but just like wildly aspirational vision without feeling like it's crazy.

I'm just like, you know, that's yeah. For focus me. And, but it's actually bigger than focus, man. I mean, focus made is like the vehicle. but it exists inside of this, you know? And to just give you a taste, like, I think we live in a moment where we need a paradigm shifts in the workplace, where, you know, in American culture, anyways, we're so obsessed with production with, you know, more is better and. you know, I was just interviewing a candidate who works at Oracle and he's looking [00:42:00] for a new job because they're basically taking advantage of, you know, different circumstances caused by the pandemic and other things to just work him 16 hours a day.

And I just, I don't understand. I can't see a good reason why Oracle, like who benefits from that really? I don't see anyone in Oracle's ecosystem that is, you know, living or dying on the basis of this person working, you know, that's 16th hour.

**Cody Audio:** I live right across from the work. I can actually see the Oracle campus from where I am literally right now. They're their headquarters in Austin, Texas. And I can't say I've met anybody who works at Oracle. That is, is in some ways. Like that, where they feel grounded. It does feel like there is this, this high paced anxiety.

And you talked about your nervous system before. And so we have our sympathetic and our parasympathetic nervous system. Whereas our parasympathetic is really that fight or [00:43:00] flight mode. And I didn't realize for the longest time, that was really what gave me my drive as an entrepreneur was the fact that I was always in this fight or flight.

My parasympathetic nervous system was always in this red alert. And that was really what drove me. And so to try and like calm that down and tell myself internally that it's going to be okay. That was a huge step and a huge milestone for me, but you're right, is that there are these corporations that take advantage of people straight out of college is I've.

I've went to UT and I gave a talk in front of a lot of graduates for it that are programmers getting their computer science degrees and they ask questions and they were going to work for these huge, huge corporations that were going to pay them like next to nothing, just so that they would, because they were taught that, oh, I need to go work at Google, apple, a big corporation.

They, they absolutely dismiss any idea of wait. Maybe I can work at a smaller startup. And maybe that would actually be a better experience for me, or is [00:44:00] entrepreneurship an option. So, yeah, there's a, it's interesting how we are in a society where you've got these corporations take advantage of people in that you write on the product too.

I'm going to stop talking because it seems like you have something to say

**Taylor Audio:** well, I mean, Oracle is actually feeding into and feeding on this like scarcity based mentality. Right? So it's like, we, I would say Oracle and others, like Oracle attach some kind of status to, you know, to that kind of pathway, to like, feed that. Engine. Right. and I, and then like, and then we all buy into it and we kind of get onto that treadmill and we just, and we actually grind ourselves.

 So yeah, I mean, just to kind of like finish the thought, like, to me, the paradigm shift that is needed is like totally flipping that on its head. And, you know, when somebody is in a fight or flight state, they are scared, there is some sort of safety and scarcity orientation that they have.

yeah, I would love to flip that around and [00:45:00] actually what kind of work do we do when we feel profoundly safe? And we feel like we have enough. I think we start to work in a way that is sustainable, not just for ourselves, but also for the planet. And I think it kind of proliferates out from there.

**Cody Audio:** So, so I have to, I have to ask, so you are the founder and you've created a tool that enables other people to be more productive. So how does that tie into the acknowledgement that we live in a society that really almost really re warship productivity? so do you feel like you're enabling that by any means?

**Taylor Audio:** That's a great question. I, for me, the way that we navigate that is like, yeah, we absolutely want to follow through on our highest intentions. And we don't always do that because of myriad reasons. Or we could go into that. but really the intent with Focusmate is to provide people the [00:46:00] support to do the things they want to do.

And we can certainly wrap that inside of a container that is very. Fear-based it's sort of part of that paradigm of more and more and more. but our intent is to create a culture and a community, you know, culture in focus, mate, that is, is actually about self acceptance and it's okay to be how you are.

And we're here to just support you in becoming whoever you really want to be. And that doesn't, you know, you, you shared your experience of being quite different from that and sort of, mapping your own, you know, drive and into focus me in an unhealthy way. And, and that's something that we, you know, continue to have to navigate and figure out how to serve people like you better.

And so it's like, how do we map that underlying ethos of actually self-acceptance such that there's nowhere you have [00:47:00] to get to focus, mate. Isn't to fix something that's broken about you or your life focus made is to just help you become your best self. Okay.

**Cody Audio:** Hmm, uh, this different philosophy for this app called centered.app. That's their URL centered.app, and it's a mindfulness, but also a to-do app. So it's, it combines the idea of mindfulness awareness into having a to-do list and to putting in specifically what you're going to do when you're going to do it.

But it also incorporates mindfulness in this really interesting way, especially after you do a task, it will change the screen. We'll have a little dong or a bell that it will ring, and it asks you to feel this moment, feel what it likes to complete this task. You know, a feel that appreciation because I know, especially I look at my to-do lists and all I feel is the sense of overwhelm.

And when I check off a task, it doesn't feel like anything just like the day that I've sold multiple companies now. And I will get a lot of money [00:48:00] deposited in my bank account, and I will always be asked multiple times. How does it feel. It doesn't feel anything different. It doesn't feel like anything it's just another day.

It really doesn't change anything, honestly. And it takes a long time. It's taken me months so far to really effectively realize the change in that moment and how important that moment actually was. And I know things like Tim Ferris talk. I don't know if he was, when he invented the idea of the gratitude jar, where anything positive happens.

You write it down a little sticky note and you put it in the jar and is trying to teach yourself to be more mindful of those positive moments because our mind just goes to okay. Check off what's next. And there's never any time for appreciation and gratitude.

**Taylor Audio:** Hmm. Hmm. That's that's cool. I literally signed up for the centered weightless today, so I'm glad to hear. Yeah, I'll look forward to

**Cody Audio:** Okay.

**Taylor Audio:** what that's like.

**Cody Audio:** There is a separate question around this idea of [00:49:00] what focus mate is. And I'm also curious if you're willing to share about the future and what you imagine it to be. But I I've had this experience many times. I've had several hundred Focusmate sessions by now, and there was one Facebook post. I remember a while back where somebody said that really, it feels transactional.

Because a lot of the times you end up having the session with another person and I've had some great sessions with people where I feel the connection and the drive and that the empathy from them. And we can have a really interesting conversation that leaves me feeling tingling and just really good all over because I connected with the person in a way that I otherwise would not have just trying to do this work solo.

And I think that's the brilliance in what focus they can allow people to do. But more often that is the time is I start a session and it's like, okay, what are you doing? Okay. This is what I'm doing. Okay. Mute your bike. Uh, thanks. And then you go to work and then at the end of it, it's like, okay, did you get.

Get this done. Did I get that then? I don't know. Maybe I did, [00:50:00] but in some ways it does feel transactional. Right. And so I'm sure you've had those experiences too, but do you have any thoughts on that in terms of your desire to build a community, but also the fact that we all have an ego and we all want to do what's best for ourselves.

And so people wouldn't be a part of a community if it didn't benefit them in some way. And so I think that there's a lot of aspect of this transactional, like doing this session with you because it's going to benefit me. And that's kind of where I draw the line.

**Taylor Audio:** that's interesting. Yeah. You know, I've had both kinds of experiences and I will agree, you know, when it does feel transactional, it's, it's a very different product, frankly. And so that's why we've, it's why it has been such a central focus of, of ours to create that culture because it's like culture that just affects.

Culture is behavior. Right? And so the things about your behavior that, we can't control what the product, that, those, those three non culture. Right. And, [00:51:00] and so a really central theme of the product vision is how do you productize culture? And I think a great, really simple example of this, you know, people talk about how slack beat HipChat, and one of my favorite hypotheses about why slack beat HipChat is that they had these like loading states when you would log on to slack, which is a team messaging app.

And you'd just be waiting for slack to load, but it would say, Hey, you look nice today, Cody.

and it would make you smile, you know, when you were logging in and that's, I think it's. Easy to underrate how like super powerful that is. And so, I mean, this is a dead simple example, but, but really like, we want to make you smile as you're joining your focus made session.

Right. we want to give you prompts that, actually guide you down a path of having a non-transactional experience and, you know, [00:52:00] part of what works really well about focus made is focus made is essentially acting as a facilitator. It's not a human facilitator, but it's basically, you know, the focus made a saying, all right, Cody, all right, other person, let's sit down now.

And we're going to think about what we're doing and we're going to share it with each other, but it's the software that's doing that. Right. So, How can we, so, so that's one aspect is how can we make you smile? How can we make you feel gratitude? How can we make you, uh, you know, at the end of the session, take a moment to pat yourself on the back more enthusiastically, how can we take time to celebrate more?

celebration is a huge, huge facet of what we do as a team internally. And, and we have yet to really productize that you see it a lot in the Facebook group where people will come and say, oh my goodness, I just finished my PhD. I've been, I took me 800 Focusmate sessions and here's a photo of, you know, the, whatever, productizing that, right?

So that, people who maybe don't feel comfortable coming in posting that photo of their success in the, in the group, that were just. We're doing that for them really. [00:53:00] I mean, I think everybody wants to have that experience of celebration, so that that's a huge, a huge aspect of it is, bringing people, joy, bringing them a sense, a greater sense of their accomplishments, you know, at every step along the way.

And then, you know, another facet of is just, you know, like you talked about just having a certain Tingley feeling with certain partners and we're just, we're animals, you know, like, my dog at the dog park, like he will play with like one out of 20 dogs, the rest of the dogs. He just doesn't want anything to do with them, but that one dog it's going to be like the best party of all time.

And, uh, you know, so we're kind of leaning into that as well, which is like, how can we, what parameters do you want to be matched on? what kind of work are they doing? Maybe what communities are you both part of? Hey, let's match you with other podcasters. And then, and then actually letting us know, Hey, I loved working with this person and you know, us being able to, curate your experience in that way.

**Cody Audio:** Yeah, I was finally happy that you finally came up with that friend feature, because that was like the [00:54:00] number one. I feel like the number one requested feature because I would have these great interactions with this person, but then there was no way for me to find them on the calendar and see you connect with them.

And I even had issues where I was so excited about focus made. I would bring people onto the platform and then we would try and connect and do the session. But then it's like, it was actually really problematic because they would schedule a session and then I would have to log in so that I would get it to before somebody else would get to the session.

And then at some point we just gave up, we were like, why don't we just do a zoom session? I was like, well, I don't know. There's some, there's some aspect about that, about the structure and the, the software. Just like, there's a lot of research saying that you shouldn't do anything other than like in your room.

That you should only have sex and you should, you should sleep because our brain associates, you know, locations with specific activities. And I also feel the same true is like, is with software applications where I see people who will actually have different user accounts on their computer, because they will have a different wallpapers or they'll have different workspaces because that actually creates these different little [00:55:00] triggers that in some ways are not, we're not always aware of them, but I do feel like with focus mate, you, you create the strong association with work.

And so it's different than zoom, which is always just conversational. And I never associate that with work, but I'm curious where you see Focusmate right now, where do you idealize it being in the future? Do you, do you vision that it's, it's helpful? Like how many people do you have in a platform and really, what is your goal with it and what do you think, where do you want to take it?

Yeah.

**Taylor Audio:** I'm sorry, I'm laughing because I feel like the headline for this podcast, when you publish it should be, you know, in your bed, you should only have sex. I think that's the get pearls of wisdom with Cody and Taylor. Yeah. So, you know, we're doing, uh, about 180,000 sessions a month right now. but I would say, yeah, we're just, we're just getting started.

you know, where are we going? And we talked a little bit about product vision, and you talked about, you know, booking sessions with people that, you know, and like, and we're just getting started with that feature [00:56:00] set. so there's a ton of product to be built and, and, you know, like, How do we deliver a great experience, for, education use cases for business use cases?

you know, I, I really actually see, like, whether you work at a company or you're a student, or you're a freelancer or an entrepreneur or whatever, uh, actually being able to have a, sort of an integrated experience where, Hey, these are some of my favorite, coworkers that I want to co-work with. or maybe we actually do like small, you know, team experiences on focus mate.

But actually I there's like 30 other people that I've met along my journey that I love to work with as well. Here's, you know, on, on Fridays, my favorite, you know, Knitting instructor like gives a three hour, you know, coworking event. And I love showing up to that to like wrap up my week. so, you know, there's a little bit of a, like a discovery, and curation facet to it.

But, you know, beyond that, we do, we [00:57:00] do have, you know, aspirations of scale. And, and for me, this is, you know, for whatever reason, the number of hundred million people, it just feels like this, this tipping point at which if, you know, if we can serve that many people in this way of supporting them to be their best self, I, I think when, when we are able to follow through on the things that really mattered to us, we just, we not only do better work, but I think we experience ourselves more positively and we become better. People, you know, better parents and friends and whatever. And so that's, you know, that's my grandiose aspiration as to touch that many people in that way.

And, and, and hopefully the world through that.

**Cody Audio:** That's admirable. I know part of my own trauma is my happiness is really based on my productivity output and it's something I'm trying to change because I just never feel good enough. And every day it's this battle against my, my internal self of, I have to be productive. I [00:58:00] have to create something because otherwise it doesn't matter how much money I have.

It's I will feel like I'm not the person I meant to be, or that I want to be. And there's this internal conflict and focus made is, has helped. And I see it as like a tool like anything else is that it's, it's something that. You can utilize moderately and properly and it can help you achieve your goals.

And I think that's a brilliant aspect and no doubt you've already changed the world and, you know, butterfly effect, so to speak right in ways that we will probably never know about. But that's, that's a, I think something so aspirational, a lot of entrepreneurs would desire of like to be able to build a product that has such a global impact.

And I think you're definitely doing that with focus mate. So you on behalf of hundreds of thousands of people. Well,

on that note, I guess, I think it's probably time to end and I want to thank you again for your time and maybe we can do around to

**Taylor Audio:** I would love that. Thank you for [00:59:00] having me.

[01:00:00]