

How to Prepare for Anything and Crush Your Next Big Opportunity | Jimmy Pitaro

You're listening to part two of my incredible conversation with Jimmy Pita the chair of ESPN. If you haven't yet listened to part one, be sure to check that one out first. Without further ado, here's part two with the amazing Jimmy Pita. When you joined launch, it was very well funded prior to going public, its investors including Intel, GE, and NBC. And when it went public on April 23rd, 1999, it raised \$75 million in an IPO led by Hamburg and Quist, the boutique investment bank that JP Morgan acquired four months later, but well funded does not mean job security. We can look at the sexy companies today that have raised billions of dollars in the past few years. And now we're going through massive layoffs: coinbase just laid off 18% of its workforce and Robert Hood just laid off 23% of its workforce. One of the most frequently asked questions that I get from people, which I know you probably do too, is: should I go work at a startup or a more established company, or should I leave a big company to work at a startup? What are your thoughts on this? And does your advice differ whether you're graduating college or graduate school, or have been in the workforce for a few years or are mid-career? Wanna try something new, and as part of this, where do passion, money, and learning fit into the equation? And what are some of the other factors we should be thinking about? I'll start with the money. Uh, I've never taken a job for money in my life. And uh, you know, when I took the job working for launch, I think I cut my pay, uh, by 60 or 70%. Yeah, I had upside because they were offering me stock, and I didn't have any stock obviously when I was working for Wilson. Ser, but you know, my guaranteed pay went down significantly. But my advice to folks is, is subject matter again, I'm a broken record here. Follow your passion, do what you're most passionate about, just bringing this back to ESPN. Uh, our head of PR, and I always talk about how the folks who are most successful at ESPN are the folks that are most passionate about sports. It's really hard to fake it. And and and and so if you get a job at ESPN and you're not a real sports fan, uh, I guess you can get by, but it's hard and it's hard to advance. It's hard to truly excel, and and and and so that's a long way of saying that I think folks have the best chance of being successful by following their heart and doing what they're most passionate about. And and if you can find a job that pays well and is connected to your passion area, fantastic. You know, if if you can't, and to my point earlier, and you end

up you know taking a job to get started that's that's ok too But don't lose sight of of the the the the subject matter that you're most passionate about and and constantly focus on figuring out a way to get there That is what I did My my career has been meandering and that's an understatement But the the the common denominator the consistent thread there has been my my my focus on ultimately ending up in in the sports industry And I've been fortunate in that I've able to I've been able to get there after launch went public You briefly had a market value of more than \$400 million but things didn't go so great after that on June 28th 2001 only 26 months after its IPO and 18 months after you started Yahoo acquired launch for only \$12 million in cash at the time Yahoo had 100 and 92 million customers and Terry Semel who had run Warner Brothers for 20 years had taken over as CEO only two months before after the acquisition you joined the Business Affairs Group in Yahoo's Media Division And a short time after that the head of Yahoo Sports left and your boss asked you to run that group At that point you had never managed a profit and loss statement and you went from managing around a dozen people to managing over 1000 people You were at the right place at the right time That was your big break and the reason why you initially stayed you ran Yahoo sports website for six years which rode to fame largely from NBA insider Adrian Wary After six years you were promoted to Yahoo media which encompassed this new sports and entertainment divisions and were among many other things you led the \$100 million acquisition of the college sports site rivals dot com in search of excellence How important is it to be at the right place at the right time and get a big break And what's your advice on how to get one Is there luck involved in this or do we create our own luck Obviously it's both I know it's cliché but uh it it it's both a couple of things you mentioned it before when you were describing launch dot com Yes launch dot com was Spotify Pandora and Vivo But as you alluded to timing is not everything but almost And if if launch dot com we were just early uh we we were uh personalized radio uh customized radio uh music on demand whether it's audio or video uh the royalties that were required by the record labels at that time were so significant that it was impossible literally impossible to make a profit And and so we were burning through a ton of cash and we had to make a very very tough call you know do we go out and try to raise more money um which was tough at the time or do we sell the company to Yahoo And Yahoo did make you know forget about the financial side of it The the opportunity for launch to take over the Yahoo music vertical was incredibly exciting to

many folks at launch So that is really why ultimately I think we did the deal Uh But yes uh in that regard the timing was awful if launch had survived through that tough period And if it still existed today I can't imagine what the valuation of that company would be I really can't But again timing is everything and the timing was just so awful Uh We were way ahead of our time in the music industry and as a result we had to make a decision that uh uh we otherwise would not have made or we weren't planning to make I should say Uh So that's an example Randy of uh timing not working out well for me or for many of us but the opposite end of that is what you described before in terms of my opportunity to to run a business So yes when launch was acquired by Yahoo uh Dave and Bob decided to leave Yahoo but I stayed and I stayed because I I saw a path to Yahoo Sports So again this is a recurring theme here II I was aware of the fact that Yahoo Sports was an up and comer uh and and and investing heavily in their fantasy business uh in their news reporting uh breaking news uh not just aggregating content from across the internet but really trying to build out a unique voice And so I saw an opportunity to maybe figure out a way to end up over there and follow my passion and long story short I I was doing some deals on the music side and the guy who was running Yahoo media took a liking to me He thought I was doing a good job on these deals and yes right spot at the right time when the person who was running Yahoo Sports left the company at that moment the folks above me knew that I was really passionate about sports because I had been clear that that is where I wanted to end up I didn't necessarily think that there was a chance that they were gonna ask me to run it Uh but they did uh and they asked me to run it because I think they wanted a AAA deal guy a relationship guy uh in charge But yes it was a stretch assignment for me And that's an understatement I went from managing I don't know maybe 5 to to 12 people I can't remember how many lawyers I was managing or business affairs people I was managing But I went from that to managing hundreds and hundreds of people engineers marketing sales business development and and and and so it was baptism by fire for me my advice is first off just be clear Uh So then when opportunities present themselves uh you are top of mind Uh for example with your managers which is what I've done I've been very clear with my managers on where I wanted to land where I wanted to go next And then yes as a part of that uh there's a little bit of luck and timing the opportunity the jobs have to open up have to present themselves But if you've been clear in terms of where you wanna go and you've done a good job you've worked hard uh you've

delivered for the company for your managers When those opportunities do present themselves you'll be there and ready to go Just as a little aside here on the personal side being at the right place at the right time has not only been an important part of my career it's been a huge part of my personal life when nearly 10 years ago I happened to check in with my friend Madison who was lucky to have it had broken up with her boyfriend the day before and I was the first person to know well before she told her friends and word had gotten out and knew that timing was everything So I flew to New York the week after that to take her to dinner We got engaged three months after that Now we have two beautiful kids almost 10 years later So I think it also applies to your personal life as well By the way I think Randy I think all the time about what my life would be like if I didn't go out to the Westhampton bar and grill the night that I met my wife But thank goodness I went that night Well fast forward to 2010 you knew Sheryl Sandberg because she had been married to Dave Goldberg Sheryl had joined Facebook as coo in March 2008 and had joined Disney's Board of directors the following year And Sheryl suggested that you meet with Disney Ceo Bob Iger about an opening to lead what was then called the Disney Active Media Group which at the time was one of five major segments of the company Bob knew who you were Yahoo sports competed against ESPN He woke up every day trying to beat Disney You were very happy at Yahoo But when you met Bob you immediately realized that he was someone you wanted to work for he hired you and over the next eight years you were promoted many times You started as co president of Disney Interactive which including Disney dot com And you later took over Disney consumer products and interactive media during these eight years While you kept getting promoted you often told Bob that you were interested in a role at ESPN Then on December 18th 2017 John Skipper who was then the president who had spent 27 years at Disney resigned to seek treatment for substance addiction At that point you had the pleasure of working for Bob for eight years and he knew you very well You and Bob had a high level conversation about ESPN when John left and then had many conversations over a three month period to actually talk about it You knew the company very well You'd had the benefit of sitting in senior staff meetings for eight years with John and his predecessor George Bodenheimer You weren't at ESPN on a day to day basis Instead you had a good foundation and the luxury of understanding the successes and challenges for the company from your time at Disney and previously at Yahoo Sports So you're here a lifelong sports fanatic and in a position to

possibly become the CEO of ESPN which leads us to one of my favorite topics the importance of preparation One of the main ingredients to where I got today is that I'm always the most prepared person in the room If someone spends one hour preparing for a meeting I'll spend at least five to get my job at Sun America I spent more than 40 hours for my first interview there This isn't regular preparation It's what I call extreme preparation How important has extreme preparation been to your success And as part of this can you tell us about the three hour hike with Jeannie and your dogs every Sunday rehearsing the interviews with her that you were going to have with Bob and different people at the company the six interviews that you did have with Bob the materials you presented to him and whether you were of the mindset that you wanted to be or had to be better or more prepared than anybody else who was interviewing for the position You and I have a lot in common Randy I I know that there are uh many people better than me many people smarter than me but I don't want anyone to outwork me and I feel like that's my advantage It always has been uh since I was a kid The the process uh at Disney on the ESPN side was arduous I'm not gonna I'm not gonna lie I had been working for Bob Iger directly Uh He was my boss starting in 2010 I was very fortunate in that when I left Yahoo and joined Disney I was immediately reporting to Bob and and and so people spend um years decades working up the corporate ladder Now I had spent many years working up the ladder at Yahoo But at Disney I was fortunate in that when I joined the company II I had a seat at the table the leadership table So I had an opportunity to get to know the rest of the leadership team uh including the current Ceo Bob Chapek I got to work very closely with him over the years and just really got to to know and understand the company And when John Skipper resigned end of 2017 uh I'd be lying if if if I told you that I didn't think I was the the leading candidate Uh And that's because again every single year when when Bob and I sat down for my annual review 90% of the conversation would be ESPN uh often times throughout the year when we would get together Bob and I would talk about ESPN and me somehow ending up at ESPN A And so when when the opportunity presented itself I said to myself OK here's another time where because I've been clear about what I wanna do uh It's gonna it's gonna pay off and it ultimately did but it was um a three or maybe even four month actually three month process where I had I don't know 56 interviews uh specifically with Bob I met with several members of the Disney Board of directors I met with several people at corporate and it was it was a tough process and I spent a lot of the time

preparing with my wife My wife is fantastic in terms of helping me present myself again That's what she does for a living Uh although it's not presenting herself it's it's it's um presenting publicly speaking publicly Um Christmas uh uh making sure that you know what the message is uh when you walk in And so my wife and I went on hikes every single weekend Yes with our two dogs uh in Runyon Runyon Canyon uh in the Hollywood Hills And we would go on several hour hikes and she would interview me we would do mock interviews and she would drill me on on various aspects of the sports industry various aspects of ESPN And I would I would use it as a rehearsal for my interviews with Bob and with others And it was incredibly valuable to me And as a part of that I put together my vision I put together what I thought should be the core strategic business priorities for ESPN And I presented them pretty uh pretty thoroughly to Bob and others during the process And then when I ultimately did get the job my first town hall at ESPN thousands of people most I didn't grow up at ESPN as you as you know and as we've talked about many people were like are you nervous this is this is a big moment one chance to make a first impression And I'll be honest with you Randy I was not nervous and I was not nervous because I had spent so many months putting together my thoughts and I was actually excited to speak to um this large group of people and and convey to them what I thought the vision and the priorities were so and that was because of my over preparation just like you sometimes people will come into my office for a meeting and they'll just look at my website And the first question is what's my dog's name If they don't know my dog's name is Karma The meeting's pretty much over because it just means that they didn't even read my website But what's your advice to people who really will think Why should I spend 10 hours or 20 preparing for a job interview when I may not even get the job that there's 100 other people who are competing for that same job or if you want to work at Goldman Sachs there's 1000 other people who want that job but that's why it's fiercely competitive and you just you have to outwork the next person If you really want something you can't you can't miss any opportunity to to impress and you know there's no topic or no item that's too small Nothing that that's too large You can't you know if you're gonna er err on the side of over preparation not under preparation Again this goes back to our our bar classes where we just studied for months our bar prep courses where we studied for months And you know it's kind of you walk out of that bar exam frustrated because you're tested on 5% of what you learned Well it's no different with a job interview You wanna you'd

rather walk out of that job interview having gotten everything right and feeling like ok maybe you you could have cut out 50% of that prep time then walking out saying damn I wish I had I had prepped more I missed a couple of things that that that that would be a shame And so you know just to use the sports analogy um you you gotta sprint to first base you gotta be good at the easy things right If you can hit a 99 mile an hour fastball you gotta to sprint to first base That's the easy part And so my advice to to anyone who asks would be just be good at the stuff that you control and you control how much prep you put in to an interview And you know if you if you over prepare what's the worst that's gonna come out of that Ok Maybe you lost a few hours of you know watching the game of Thrones prequel I don't know But but my my advice is always to over prepare You mentioned the bar exam I'm a terrible test taker even I I do well academically because of my work ethic and I'm never the smartest person in the room Nor do I want to be the smartest person in the room I think if you're the smartest person in the room you're probably in the wrong room But I was very nervous about the bar exam Uh just because I didn't do well in my boards for college or law school But I did get into great schools because of my grades and some of the other uh the other things that I had done But I studied like a maniac In fact I used to hide in the Northwestern Law Library in the stacks where the guards wouldn't find me Eventually I'd get kicked out every day and I had to find a new place But when I went into the bar exam I took it at the Moscone Center in San Francisco And I remember looking at the woman next to me and she was a complete mess Uh she hadn't gone to a good law school which who cares It didn't mean she wasn't going to pass but it was clear she hadn't prepared She told me that it even made me no more nervous But once I got going 10 minutes 20 minutes 30 minutes I think I nailed every question I don't remember how many questions I got wrong but I was never for a second nervous that I didn't pass And again another example of preparation especially there I was I was petrified I wasn't gonna pass and not be able to practice law I wanted to chime in there real quickly on on the experience that I had I felt really good when I was taking the exam also But I remember walking out and hearing some folks talk about one of the essay questions and uh I literally almost passed out because I completely got it wrong They were talking about the direction that they went in and what they wrote And I went in a completely opposite direction And that was a brutal experience for me because I then spent at the time you probably remember Randy we had to wait months before we got the results And II I remember being certain I I did

a 1 80 I walked out of the exam Feeling great felt great during the exam when I pens down pencils down I felt great Then you know one of I don't even remember how many essays But I I felt like after I heard those folks talking I got one of the essays completely wrong I would get whatever I would get zero out of however many on that And I'm like OK I failed so that those next two or three months waiting for for the results were agonizing I went to Europe after the bar exam with five other guys all who went to Harvard all Michigan friends and this was the most annoying anxiety provoking thing They went over every single multiple choice question I mean the memory was ridiculous but I was sitting there thinking why are we talking about this And it was no that was a that was c that was D um just just was not a good thing to talk about Uh As we were going around on a year all past as we had no money sleeping in couches on very loud trains and staying in youth hostels with 90 people in your room We'd go to the beach and we're talking about the boards is kind of crazy So the preparation worked on May 5th 2018 3 months after John Skipper left you were named the eighth president of ESPN and the co-chair of Disney Media Networks And 2.5 years later on October 12th 2020 you were named Chair of ESPN on February 7th of this year you signed a new 3.5 year contract So it looks like you're gonna be there for a while You have what you call four North stars at ESPN Four main priorities direct to consumer audience expansion quality storytelling and programming and innovation and everything you do is connected back to these You identify these during your job interviews with Bob you're constantly discussing them with new CEO of Disney Bob Cha You talk about them in your weekly meetings and you're personally evaluated on them in the 4.5 years since you took charge you've done an excellent job on all of them But the one I want to focus on and which I think relates to all of my listeners and viewers is innovation When I think about innovation in the sports world the big ones that I think about are two developments that have changed the way how fans watch sports and are designed to give more access to players and coaches which is something your viewers especially your young viewers want Monday night football with Peyton and Eli and putting microphones on baseball football and basketball players When I look forward to the future of what's coming to our everyday lives in the next 10 years I think about two big ones artificial intelligence and virtual reality which is one aspect of web 3.0 which really has the potential of giving your viewers an incredible experience next to players and coaches as you map out the next 10 years do these figure into

your future And if not can you share with us what does the next 10 15 and 20 years look like in a search of excellence to either be successful or stay successful How important is innovation Thank you for calling out the Manning Cast We we take a lot of pride in that and we're just about to kick off season two here So uh it should be pretty exciting I have two teen teenagers and one thing I can tell you Randy is they are very interested they are much more interested in watching a game when they feel like they have a we're giving them access to the players in real time live And so yeah on Sunday night baseball this year we're having two way live conversations with players in the field which has been groundbreaking and and and baseball loves it The players association loves it And most importantly our fans love it and and and so you can expect to see more and more of that in terms of what's next the next gen sports experience That's how I spend half of my time right now thinking about how ESPN can continue to lead in this new world And obviously we have ESPN Plus that's doing incredibly well for us Um That's our direct to consumer platform what's next for ESPN Plus beyond just live streaming And so if you think about the holistic kind of Uber sports experience obviously sports betting will be more of a component of of of the the the live stream Um the social aspect uh will be a bigger component of ESPN Plus and the ESPN app going back to my friends and and and to me growing up we would we would celebrate we would commiserate well should ESPN uh be providing the platform for that uh for that celebration You know if my friends and I wanna watch a Monday night football game together Uh We should be able to within the ESPN environment uh merchandise Um for looking at ways where we can incorporate um the buy component into the ESPN sports streaming environment And then yeah you mentioned virtual reality augmented reality We have a team at ESPN uh dedicated to this area It's called ESPN Edge Um And they're they they spend all of their time focused on the next gen sports experience Uh We're not necessarily uh using the word metaverse at at ESPN but in that vein and that capacity what we're thinking thinking about is is there potentially an ESPN environment where you're you're as a fan navigating through it and there's a component or there's a room where you can you know live stream watch your live events watch sports center watch first take Um There's another room where you can interact uh with like-minded fans There's another room where you can potentially um place a bet through AAA third party There's another room where you could potentially um make a purchase So it's it's a lot of the the the the the topics that you're

hearing about when folks are talking about metaverse we're starting to think about that from an ESPN perspective and how we can create you know that next gen sports experience But last thing I'd say here is we don't want to be a solution looking for a problem right Like whatever we deliver we we wanna make sure is is meeting a customer of fan need And so as a result we're not quite there yet in terms of what we're what we're going to be investing in in that metaverse capacity in general in search of excellence to either be successful or stay successful How important is innovation It's one of our four priorities at ESPN and I would say it's as important if not more important than any of them because it's the uh it's the common denominator We talk about direct to consumer We talk about audience expansion talk about quality storytelling and programming innovation cuts across all of them And I don't think you can be successful in this new environment not just sports environment but new media environment without constantly innovating investing uh in new platforms Uh not being as I said earlier not being afraid to fail I had a colleague when I was working at Disney Interactive we were responsible for the Games Group as well at Disney and he was responsible for what we call vertical games We actually had engineers that were creating our own games And when he would have a a game that had a successful launch he would have a party with beer when we had a game that was a failure and we shut it down He would have a celebration with champagne And that was his way of saying to his folks it's OK like we tried this didn't work we're gonna learn from it we're gonna get better Uh And we're gonna take all those earnings into our next initiative our next game and that next game uh is gonna have a better chance of success because of this failure So again incredibly important you know you gotta be fearless You have to create a culture of of of innovation And as a part of that you um you have to have some some appetite for for failure Let's talk about the elements of success Derek Jeter has this thing There's always going to be somebody better me but no one should outwork me I subscribe to that and think that work ethic is the single greatest determinant of our success And along with extreme preparation has been one of the hallmarks of my career As I know it has been to yours as well as you mentioned you have a sign outside your office with with words you've received from one of your mentors work hard and be nice to people When my son Charlie was seven years old he wrote Be Nice on a little post it note and taped it to my phone where it's been in my office for the last 12 years before I did my research on you I had never heard anybody specifically say or identify that being nice to people is an element of success

or that people should focus on this as one of their goals What are the other elements of success And where does being nice to people rank among them I think be nice is really be respectful Uh It's hard in in these jobs as you know Randy It's hard to be nice all the time because usually when things hit my desk it's it's because decisions have to be made and if a decision has to be made uh it usually means that some people are going to be happy and some people are going to be unhappy with with the call that you make but it's not just what you do it's how you do it And so I try to do the toughest thing uh of my day first thing in the morning And you know uh that that um I've been pretty consistent with that I actually got that from my father-in-law many many years ago Uh But again sitting down with someone uh being direct with them being authentic even then when you even when you're giving them information that they don't want And you know that going into these meetings again it's a huge part of my job Uh It's it's it's in part how you deliver the message giving people Um First off being accessible giving people an audience with you We've talked about this this has been a recurring theme Uh You've mentioned it a couple of times I saw it with Dave and Bob Um over and over again you know being accessible uh not having someone else deliver the bad news Uh when when someone was late for a meeting with you they came out and and and and handled it themselves and apologized to you that in my perspective is part of being nice or treating people with respect Uh And so I try as as as as hard as I can to treat our employees to treat our partners even to treat our competitors um with with with respect And I I feel like ultimately this is a marathon not a sprint and and what comes around goes around and you know there are times where we have we have really hard days at ESPN and I'm looking for a friend And I feel like you know because we're consistently focused on uh this culture of of of positivity of belonging of treating people with respect when we do face hardship and have these challenging times Um We can we can expect to to to to be treated fairly and respectfully in return my ex-wife used to work for Ron Meyer who's one of the founders of CAA and who ran NBC Universal forever And she worked for Ron for almost five years And she said number one I've never heard anyone ever say anything negative about Ron Meyer And he's just one of the nicest guys I've I've met him only a few times but I know hundreds of people that know him and she knows him uh obviously very very well And she said that when he has such a skill of being nice to people that when he fired people that people almost thanked him which is crazy to even think about But it's it's something that I think

should be more important in the workforce be nice and treat people nice because like you said it it is hard sometimes when you're in a position of responsibility or or not you do have to make calls and like you said some people are gonna be happy Uh And and many people won't be won't be you just can't make 100% of the people happy Uh All the time Let's talk about courage which is something we don't often hear about when we talk about the uh elements of success I want to talk about fear which is sort of like the first cousin of courage and something we all experienced many thousands of times in our lives Can you tell us about the relationship between fear and courage and the night you were watching the live action version of Cinderella with your family and the conversation you had with your daughter Josie about the scene where the mother is dying Yeah have courage and be kind Uh She and I still talk about that all of the time and you know it just goes back to work hard and be nice to people Have courage and be kind It's pretty simple It's pretty straightforward and it resonated with me Uh this is these jobs are are really challenging They're they're they're um they're demanding Oftentimes they're they're um around the clock I wake up in the morning and sometimes I look at my calendar and I say to myself ok I got this uh and then the day is never what I thought it would be Uh but I do wake up every single morning and I say to myself I have to earn this like I'm I'm pretty fortunate I get to work in sports every day I get to work with some really really talented people Uh And so I have to earn this and part of earning it is making courageous decisions and and and dealing with the ramifications We've we've just bringing this all together here Randy you know in the spirit of innovation like we've tried many things that have not worked and we're ESPN and and and people don't have a lot of tolerance for for ESPN getting things wrong We're the place of record Uh When something happens in the sports industry people turn to us and we need to get it right And when we try new things and present new ways of of broadcasting a game for example if folks don't like it we're gonna hear about it Uh So making these decisions trying new things innovating it takes courage Uh But again if you're if you're constantly treating people without fail If you're treating people with respect if you're being kind I I ultimately believe that you're going to have you're going to have allies when things do not go well when you make these decisions when you take chances Uh and and and they don't go your way um you're going to you're going to survive and be able to move on learn from it and move on because you've built up all of that equity by treating people Well now don't get me wrong I'm not naive If you fail fail fail fail they're

gonna replace you and they're gonna find someone else to do the job Uh so you you you you gotta get you gotta get things right a lot of the time Uh but if you make courageous decisions informed but courageous decisions and you have the right North Star which is treating people respectfully Ultimately things are gonna work out Let's talk about pickleball which is the fastest growing sport in the United States There are 4.8 million pickleball players in the United States A number that has grown 39.3% over the last two years which compares very favorably to the 21.64 million tennis players in the US Where is pickleball going to be five years from now And will we see pickleball tournaments on ESPN I've read that it's the it's the fastest growing sport in America Uh I'm getting a lot of calls on on Pickle Ball um from folks outside of of ESPN our our programming team When I say programming team the team that's responsible for both acquiring rights to live events and then programming them on our networks and on our platforms including digital that team is is engaged on pickle ball They're looking at it real time right now Uh I'd be surprised if ESPN was not in the pickle ball business at some point in the in the near future Uh again growing sport great momentum Us as ESPN as the place of record people are gonna expect ESPN We serve sports fans anytime anywhere and and that includes a sports fan A pickle ball fan is a sports fan So you know we we we we have a responsibility here um to uh pay attention to what our fans are uh are craving and deliver it for them I highly recommend you get involved now because the sport's blowing up I know there's two rival leagues and they're fighting against each other but the RS would be very very cheap I'm sure they'd be happy to have a long term deal I think the most successful pickleball players today are making \$100,000 and that's with uh sponsorships So every single person I talk to who's played the support it becomes our new favorite sport The interesting thing about pickle ball is you don't have to be a great uh athlete to play the game is played at the net It's strategic Uh and sure I mean you if if you play really really well you're hitting the ball very fast but I don't know anyone that's played who doesn't love it In fact uh Jimmy Dolan was dating one of my wife's best friends and during the all-star game uh basketball game a few years ago um he happened to come over and he had never played before He has bad knees but um he loved it and I hear he's playing a little bit even though he's not the best athlete Not not quite sure that that was really fun for me by the way because as a uh sports craze fan as well it was very interesting for me to see you know talk to him about the teams he own and the state of the league But I'm inviting you over to our house We

built specifically a pickle ball court Uh We're not very good and we don't play as much as we should But if you want to play you have an open invitation we can follow up on that after but I promise you you'll be a convert after Uh you play for the first time Let's talk about work life balance You're running a massive company that has 4000 employees It earned a billion dollars of revenue It's valued somewhere between 25 and \$50 billion You have two kids Josie and Sean and your wife Jeannie is a very successful actress whose latest movie was playing Val Kim's wife in Top Gun Maverick which has grossed more than \$1.3 billion and is the ninth most successful movie in history You get hundreds of emails a day Unlike me you live by the unread email icon and respond to everything and you also read media in tech newsletters every night in search of excellence What is the right work life balance I really do prioritize my time with my family I have two teenagers and yes I have a wife who works Uh and so it's really important to me that when I'm available I'm available and I'm there I was playing golf twice a week before my oldest was born He's now 19 years old I have not hit a golf ball in 19 years Uh because I made the decision that I'm working so hard when I'm not working I need to be present available I can't be on a golf course for five or six hours you know and I made the decision 19 years ago that when my youngest was in college I would pick the game up again I miss it Um but I'm so happy I did that because it was a big part of my life and I but I've I've I've spent all of that time that I otherwise would have on a golf course with with my family That's just one example But what I focus on Randy is you know working really hard being completely invested in present when I'm at work and then when I'm home and and and not working with my family I try to minimize the distractions You can't eliminate the distractions You just can't in my job Uh but I try to really minimize them and not look like when we sit down at the dinner table I'll turn my iphone for a half hour on do not disturb So I don't even feel the vibration Uh and that's just that's just one little example Um But I'm I I do I do realize I realized years ago that sometimes when I was present with my wife and Children and I would glance down at my phone I would see them see me do that like they noticed and it those were those were wake up calls for me that oh yeah I don't want my Children you know in 10 years to think back on this time and the image in their heads to be me looking at my phone I just don't want that And and so that doesn't mean that I'm I'm working less I'm busting my my butt uh at work But when I'm when I'm there with my family it's it it it's family time And so we we we can and by the way we convey this message to our

employees regularly at ESPN again at town halls team meetings over on our on our uh our company website uh our internet we're very clear that that we expect we expect folks uh to take their time to take their vacations and do the best they can to disconnect because it's it's important I mean mental health is incredibly important and I'm so pleased with the fact that that athletes are now um speaking very publicly coaches are speaking very publicly about mental health and their own personal challenges with mental health I think that's incredibly healthy and it it it it it enables and helps um Children younger people feel like they're not alone So we try to get behind that and amplify those messages coming from athletes as much as we possibly can But yes as an enterprise and as an as an individual as a human being um we try to communicate back to to our employees Um the importance of striking that balance Do you have any last advice for those listening today Do what you can to give back uh you know try to try to um take time to uh to pay it forward to contribute back to society Um If you don't have time to sit on uh to sit on boards or you don't have the resources to contribute financially um try to make time uh to contribute however you possibly can Uh whether that's your time in connection with the charity that you're passionate about uh whether that's as we discussed before mentoring helping others uh taking your learnings and and sharing them with others That would that that's my hope for my Children that they dedicate a significant and Randy I know that that I'm preaching to the choir here I know your background and I know how active you are in terms of philanthropy and and and giving back and paying it forward And that's what I could hope for from my Children that they that they dedicate a significant percentage of their their time to uh to giving back to society You've been somebody I've admired for a very long time You've set a tremendous example to others with your humility and dedication to your community I'm very grateful for your time today Thank you so much for sharing your story with us Randy Let let me just say I am blown away by how prepared uh you you are Uh You were for this for this interview I've I've done many of these and I've never I've never been interviewed by someone who shows up so prepared and it's it's it's wonderful It's it as we've discussed it's something that I pride myself in over preparation and the the level of detail I think I learned a few things about myself uh here But the level of detail the the level of preparation is just incredible and I I definitely appreciate it I think I think it really helped our conversation So thank you Thank you