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Oral History Conversation with Joon Han (Better San Diego)

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ORAL HISTORY CONVERSATIONS WITH CHANGEMAKERS

By Students in PHILOSOPHY 332: Business Ethics | Spring 2017

JOON HAN (BETTER SAN DIEGO)

with Akira Bannai, Gabi Guevara, and Lacey Hartin

Joon:

Well right off the bat, I'll say so the context is business ethics and like you were saying like in cases it's easy to see like the company did the wrong thing, right. But the problem is that, ethics, not just in business but in any any part of life like ethics are incredibly inconvenient. And they become inconvenient in like situations that are not black and white so something like Enron, it didn't happen overnight, right, what happens is. It is as leaders I guess the more you are leader of a larger organization the very few peers you have in the world. I mean if you think about most people in the world they work for somebody. So there is very few people who are in charge of like creating jobs for other people and when they do that they become increasingly isolated because there's no one else to talk to other than other your peers of other big companies but then sometimes you're in a competitive environment right especially if you're a publicly traded company you don't want that company to know something about you and they can then talk to, I think the stat is like the Fortune five hundred C.E.O.'s right most of them share at least one board in common with another Fortune five hundred C.E.O. So then as it gets to the top of the C.E.O. like the fortune like twenty companies I think they all have two boards in common and in the last one is I think the top five fortune you know Fortune C.E.O.s, they have four boards in common and so what I think the average person doesn't understand is this is how ethics becomes tricky. In that the four of us are all Fortune five hundred C.E.O.'s and we are the top five companies in America probably the world, right. And when it says we sit on boards together what that means is two or three times a year we go somewhere nice like Palm Springs or Orlando or Hawaii or whatever and for four days we hang out and our families hang out and it's all paid for, right. And by and large we just get paid to do that job as well because we're an adviser to the overall company.

It's to fight the isolation problem that the C.E.O. has right but of those four days there's only like six hours worth of work happening on those four days but it's legally required that we get together and there's the minutes that says you were present, you were present, you were present and then we voted yes or no whatever but for the rest of the three days three and half days we're there we're just around each other, right. Now you have a business, you have business, you have business, and I have a business and now we're just hanging out playing golf or at some amusement park with our kids. And we say, "Hey, you know, Akira what's going on with you guys? You know we have this new product that no one's going to buy because it's just like our competitor's killing us and they're like a number ten fortune five hundred company. So you know what we're looking to save money on our new telephone system you have the telephone systems not selling very well why don't we make it a win-win, right. And so what that's going to be able to go back to your company and say listen we just got this huge deal from this other fortune five hundred company so that makes it look like it's very popular right but I have to go back to my company saying we got these at fifty cents on the dollar because they're not selling very well but we both from appearances we did our job, right. Now when you have that it's like social setting and there's very few people who are in our space who's telling you

what's right or wrong, it's you or me. Or someone else in our like Fortune five hundred like cohort right and if one of them like is kicking our ass in business and they're like the goody two shoes that following all the rules we hate their guts, right. Now if they're below us we want to keep that competitive advantage again it's just there's not a large peer group like there's not a lot of leaders in that space saying this is the way you got to do it. Because there's only five hundred of those people in the world of Fortune five hundred C.E.O.'s, right, there's only five hundred of them. And they're all afraid they're going to get kicked off that list because the company's not doing so hot so when you're in that environment it's extremely hard to know who's the leader here and who's the moral compass. And you know the cynical part of me will say of all Fortune five hundred people, there is someone from your and my perspective, there's not a single person that we think is one hundred percent ethical because they made decisions that are like I don't know if I would have done that. Because you can look at environmental ethics you can look at you know like economic ethics or you know diversity ethics and there's all these different things that can happen right. Or like we chose to move a plant from California to this other state because it's cheaper but we screwed over all the California families, where is the ethics in that? Maybe there are tenth generation you know farmers but we now moved it to somewhere else. It's just for the people in Kansas but it's it's unjust for the people in California. So that's what's hard about ethics is what is the true north in a situation and I think that's the realm of like philosophy right like you know what like what's a just war.

You got that kind of stuff, those are ethical questions, right. And so I think the larger question of what's ethical in business I would argue as a C.E.O. the average person the street has no idea what's ethical in my context because they have no idea what like for me I might do something that just absolutely screws over like a third of my company but it helps two thirds of my company have jobs forever. Right you know or you know that my family is a charitable organization that gives to the poor like over the board like just is known for doing that but our company cut some corners when it comes to environmental regulations or things that aren't even regulations but we know should we should do. Right, like right now in you know our political climate we have all these companies that are saying Donald Trump even though you're going to roll back all these environmental laws we are we're going to sue the U.S. government for creating a competitive disadvantage because we're doing all these environmental laws that were good under the previous administration and probably be good when you're gone and and you know so there's like seven hundred companies of these companies and it's like a Google and Facebook and you know Starbucks are on this kind of thing, right. But they're doing something that you would say is ethical but it's actually kind of screwing over their bottom line so they have to lay off some people or they have to use maybe cups that are not fair sourced right so it's what is the absolute ethics I think is really really difficult, you know. And again it's largely because you know even though I'm not running a Fortune five hundred company there's very few people in my world like if I look at my friends and family all of them work for somebody. I can point to maybe two people that know what it's like to have to fire somebody that you really like, that you brought them on from college, you raised them up professionally but they're not a great fit. Like very rarely does anyone ever have to fire somebody, right, and hiring people is hard enough but then having to lay them off, you know, I try to do the right thing by giving them a better job with one of my friends or what not but what if I can't, I can't. There's very few people know it's like to be that guy or that woman right and so when someone says well that's just flat out wrong like well I can tell you five reasons why it's probably right. You know, so you know I want to believe that there's an absolute moral good for most things but when it comes to something that has like ten different factors associated, what is the absolute correct thing to do. Is it to do the least amount of harm? Because if that's the rule then you'll have a lot of weird

business decisions that screw over like a lot of things, right. Because basically you're saying it's OK to screw over a minority in light of the majority and so that's like genocide and stuff like that, it's all justified under those kind of things. Anyways that's just my two cents on ethics so I think it's really difficult so I'm glad that you guys are taking a class. You know what I'm saying right, is just what's hard is like someone's like well why would that person think that that's OK, I'm like well why wouldn't they? Who's telling them not to or you know where did they learn? They probably I don't know for MBA. classes, every MBA program I know, you don't have to take an ethics class to get an MBA., right. You also don't have to take an ethics class to become a doctor or a lawyer either that's part of your professional oath but you don't have to. Anyway.

Akira:

So I think it's really interesting you talk about more of a broader framework of ethics. But could you give us a few examples of at your company Better San Diego, where you've kind of had to make these tough ethical decisions. Like a story or an example or something.

Joon:

Well you know I think an interesting like moral ethical question and this is you know one of my mentors talking about this my first couple years of business is that I think generally like people that are like decent well-meaning people have a hard time promoting themselves right because you just sound like you're you're like that douche bag that's like I'm the best thing in the world, right. But you know a mentor of mine, she said Joon, how many companies that you know of that are in your space so by the time someone hires us, their company is in trouble. There's only two kinds of people that hire my company for strategy or process consulting. It's they're either way ahead of the competition or they're like in trouble right and so it's about eighty twenty. My favorite clients are the ones that are like way ahead of the curve because for them money's not a problem and they're like they're like super smart and they're going to do great things that I'm going to get credit for that I maybe may not have helped them with. So it's awesome, right. But then the people in trouble you go like whoa because where it becomes like a really serious part of business is these people only have so much money to get help and so they have one shot at a kind of getting some help, right. So my mentor's like so, in that in that kind of landscape are there are other companies you know out there that they're taking people's money and not really helping them. Like of course there are, you know, I can name like five or six competitors right off the bat and she knew that too. And she's like OK, so right now their marketing is better than yours so if you're trying make the world a better place and your marketing sucks you are, you're being unethical to your own values because my values, were trying to help as many people as possible right, and we're the, we're the honest people, and we're the people that do a good job. And she said well right now, she's and she said that's fine if that's your value but I don't know how you go to sleep at night cause your marketing is so bad that when people wake up tomorrow morning all the unethical competitors that you listed, their marketing is so much better than yours that all those people going to find them and they are not going to find you. And so you know, in the, what is like in the Bible, Jesus says when you have a lamp you put it on a lamp stand, right. Is the point like if it's a light you're supposed to let people know it's like a light. And I think it's the truth of the city on the hill for a reason that is everyone can look up and go like that's the ideal city that's the way it should run. But I think you know people that grew up, especially in the religious context, believe in a version of humility that means like I just can't say that I'm very good. And because that means I'm better than you as a person, whereas there's a line where you start to say the most ethical thing is for me to make an ethical claim is that I am the best at what I do. That does not make me better than these people as human beings

but it makes me better at my job and you start marketing to that to that extent, right. So that's that's an interesting, I mean that's not an ethical dilemma that most people struggle with, right and no one's going to ding them for being unethical in that situation but if you really care about trying to make the world a better place which most social entrepreneurs are, then the question is will you be excellent at what you do even violating your own like humility standards so that your business affects more people than the other competitors who are evil, right. So you have to win, basically like everything you do in business has to be better and you have to win so that those bad companies don't get their share of the dollars that are out there. So you can get on to do more good and more good and more good. The, I think the hardest ethical situations that come up in business is when you know something personally about someone that if you bring that into the business realm would give you an advantage, right. So an example would be me and another firm are competing for a bid with mutual friends of ours, I mean professionals they all kind of know each other. And I happen to know this C.E.O. is going through a bitter divorce and it's going to like it's going to drain their company and it's hard on him in the first place. That's not really fair game I mean maybe you know each other because we're in the same church or like our kids are in the same Little League whatever but I found out about it through not that person telling me, right. So it's information I know and this is where you get insider training with stocks and stuff like that, that's how this happens right. Also because when you sit on the boards together, insider information comes up a lot. So then I know that and I basically say listen we're going to be neck and neck in this proposal stage but I'm just going to tell you what that guy's life is just in the shitter right now and so he's going to be distracted well that obviously that helps me win. So the question is do you win based on merit? Or is that fair game because technically that's true. I'm advising, I could rationalize it by saying we will do a better job because that person will be distracted and we can honestly say we we don't have any distractions.

Although who can foresee any tragedy happening in our lives, right. You can't really predict that kind of stuff to prevent it. So I think the average business person would say that's fair game to use that information and and I think there have been many many times that we that we didn't use that information it wasn't even a struggle. It's like no there's got to be things that are sacred. There's got to be some things that are off limits. But what that means is me not playing with that kind of information means that I am specifically disadvantaging myself in a competitive environment because I know other people have no problems using that kind of information at all. You know I take a lot of stands on like social justice issues so sometimes competitors will say like that guy is so outspoken for these kind of issues that right now politically are not popular or super popular depending on which side you're on, right. And they'll say like you want to go with us because our C.E.O. doesn't say anything, you know it's just really just milk toast and tows the corporate line.

And so I'm assuming we've lost clients for that. I'm assuming we didn't even get to the stage of being able to pitch our business because someone's like that guy is so outspoken on social issues. And then I assume like I assume karmically that the businesses we're losing, maybe we're gaining more businesses that actually like that in a person. But there's no way to quantify that right and so the safest thing to do in business that's why like when you talk about corporate things it's all very buttoned up and very neutral because you don't know if you're winning more business, if you're losing it, like you just don't know, there's no way to quantify that. I have some friends that have tried to quantify that when they leave their companies but there's really no way to know what business you've lost. There's no guess, you can take historically like oh our sales were down from last year but you're like well they might have gone down anyways. You don't know if it's because you're taking this political stance you know and

so it's an unanswerable kind of thing right but that's but again that's the kind of stuff that no one like it surprised me some business people I think where business gets the same kind of like reputation as like lawyers and stuff, is that some people just don't think twice it's about winning. It's about winning and you know we're and this is just my you know my own values might betray me at this point, it might be that I inherently believe that the ends don't always justify the means like how you do it counts, right. But that's like what team sports taught you like it's good to be a good sport even though you won you know or you lost, you're still having fun and being a good teammate and stuff like that. But most people man, they just like they justify it as like this helps me put money in my bank account which helps put food on my table. And all the all my stakeholders and everyone that works for my company, we need to win, we need to win at all costs, right.

What I would argue if you win at all costs eventually you're going to lose because some of that might catch up to you but there's no way to guarantee it's going to catch up to you. People like to say like oh what goes around comes around. Like not really, there's there's plenty of examples I can show you, at least in this temporal life that we have, that it never comes back to bite some people in the ass at all. So you can't like I think people like to make that like a moral that we all live by. Like there's too many examples where that's not true all, right. I mean like what's traumatizing with our current president is that while he's going through this campaign cycle we're telling all these kids like, don't worry someone like that would never become our president because in the end decency wins, in the end like the president has to be smart and know how to do stuff, right. And so you know my youngest daughter she thinks we're all full of shit because she's like when we watch the Republican debates she's like is this guy going to be our president and we all said I mean every single adult in the room said there's no way he's going to make it to like the final cut. And then he becomes the nominee and so then she's like you guys obviously don't know what I think you guys know because you said he didn't have a snowball's chance in hell of becoming a candidate and then he won, right. And so that's the ultimate like now we can't say that, we can't say that like no you can just be a total you can be a total like racist misogynistic douchebag and you can still become president of the United States. We used to not be able say that, right. But now you have proof, right, and you can argue going forward that might be the only way to become president, is to be that polarizing. Because most people are in the middle. People in the middle, they don't vote. And so if you're polarizing you're getting all these people rallying behind you to vote. And so that, I don't know if those are specific enough, those couple scenarios.

Akira:

Those were some great examples. Do you guys have any questions? I might have a follow-up.

Gabriela:

You can go.

Akira:

You mentioned a couple times, I'm getting the sense that you run your business, as far as like the competitive landscape goes, you approach it as from a more traditional perspective as is kind of like you have competitors in the landscape, like you said you're marketing to take business away from them, not just to take business away from them but to help more people.

Joon:

Right, right, right.

Akira:

I've seen a lot of or I've heard some talk in like the social entrepreneurship space approaching competition more from a cooperative standpoint because a lot of social entrepreneurs have similar goals similar missions, they're all about creating kind of social value.

Joon:

Right, right.

Akira:

And they see it as if they can pool resources then they can have a greater impact.

Joon:

Right, so I would say there is probably like two ways to look at that. One is the social enterprise world so like when I start my companies, that term didn't exist. So if you look at Better San Diego is like a for profit company but what I spend my time doing is I run these nonprofits pro bono, right. So technically they could be in one company but in my model there's no like one for one like TOMS Shoes kind of thing. So you know what where we're considered a social enterprise is that like if you look at what I do with my life, it's mostly you know I live in City Heights which is refugees and poor immigrants, we run you know two foundations that are you know, I work for free and what buys my time there is all the business that we do. And I run five other companies on the side. But I'll say in general I think social entrepreneurs like to say that because there really is like you know they all need each other, they're all on the same team is because they're so small. But eventually what happens, what's going to happen when like like you know there's some really, I mean there's some really famous social enterprises right now that were some kind of first to go in and if you're first you don't necessarily have to be good like you just to have to be first and then if you're second or third you're going to be good, right.

But this, a couple of these C.E.O.'s by and large are just like not great people like their staff hates working for them. The campaign is so great and you know a lot these are like huge like name brands in the social enterprise space but like you know I'll use an example. I don't know anything about TOMS Shoes, I don't know anything about that. However I don't know where their shoes are made. And in the countries where they're helping those kids get shoes are they helping some of their parents get jobs at these places to make shoes? Are they is their whole supply chain virtuous? Because if it's not then I'm not going to collaborate with that company. Now I'll say probably ninety nine point nine percent of social entrepreneurs you interview, they don't feel like anyone's competitor. Well they sure as hell better be competing with the name brand that's not a social enterprise, right. Like if you're TOMS Shoes you better be doing better shoes than all these other shoe companies, right. Now within the social enterprise space, yeah I think because the number is so small, I think everyone feels like they need to be on the same team and be collaborators, right. But the reality is some of them are so small you can't really help each other. Like you know usually like there's two kinds help, there's a big brother that helps like a little brother, little sister out or there's two people that are growing so rapidly but they're growing with helping each other.

So an example would be like the Sriracha, you know the Sriracha sauce company, right. That guy comes over here, meets a guy and he says I have a sauce I want to do but we need a specific kind of chili pepper that doesn't grow here. So this guy says that's the only chili pepper I'm going to grow so in the whatever twenty years they've been running the company they are only each other's customers. So the problem is if one of them goes down the other one is

screwed. Right? So for a while like the city of Irwindale was gonna shut down the sriracha factory because people were complaining, it was just because they didn't want to pay taxes and all that kinda stuff. But, the guy who is growing the peppers is like "Holy shit, this is like, you know, for the last twenty years this is like, this is this is what we do. We just grew all this stuff we are about to harvest all this stuff, you are about to be shut down. Now, they are good friends and they made a lot of money so they are not really worried about it, right? But, so I think social enterprises tend to adopt that model, like you can help me and we can grow together but the reality is most of them can't help each other. So they're with each other like in spirit as far as moral support and what not, but I would argue the problem is they don't actually see the competitive landscape because they see themselves as social enterprises so they grade themselves against other social enterprises.

Akira:

In like a silo?

Joon:

Right, and so they should be grading themselves against Wal-Mart. Right, you know like if you are TOMS Shoes who are you grading yourself against? Grade yourself against Payless. Right? Grade yourself against Zappos, grade yourself against those people. Well against those they are like dwarfs, right, they are doing nothing. Although TOMS I recently saw are at Costco right, so they are doing better, right. But you know so you look like companies like American Apparel which has a virtuous like vertical right they're trying to keep everything with integrity. Their marketing is a lot of people would argue is unethical whatever but when you don't have a marketing budget you've done a very good job marketing with very little money, right, so and they do that they could argue like well the reason we don't have a marketing budget and we have to do scandalous ads is because we're trying to keep all your manufacturing in the United states so isn't that ethical, right, isn't that good? You know right but so you look at American Apparel now they have to they I think from whatever their C.E.O. They are trying to compete against other name brands not just competing against other like these like you know small places that make clothes you know from Rwanda or baskets from they're not competing against a social enterprise space, they're looking at who's a big brand that we can go head to head with because that's our competition because they're manufacturing overseas and their manufacturers are just polluting all kinds of shit we need to take them down, right. So I think within the space the collaboration makes sense but it really is I'm not sure who's helping who because none of them are big enough to really. Like yeah like in the old days like you know if you're like the reason there's like mafia godfathers is they can make you, they can help you have a great life if you got that blessing, right. There is no kingmaker in the social enterprise space and so I think they should always and I think just the kind of people that call themselves social entrepreneurs value they don't they don't see the world as black and white like that they really see it more harmonious. But then I would argue they're probably not taking on these bigger brands that are not virtuous, that are not doing great things right. So does I don't know if that makes sense.

Akira:

Yeah, no that definitely does.

Joon:

Yeah yeah yeah so I definitely think within your community like I don't think anyone I mean in the social enterprise circle everyone just sees me as a mentor and an investor that's all they see

me as. I'm not competing with anyone in a social enterprise space and we shouldn't. You know like on the way here I gave that one gal a hug right we all know each other. But they should take more seriously the big bad things out there and that's I think one of the problems is that they're grading themselves against themselves which is like a low standard you know or it's a small, I don't want to say low, but it's smaller kind of competition so yeah hopefully that makes sense.

Akira:

You mentioned earlier, you referenced the Bible, and kind of one of the things we wanted to get of these interviews is kind of where you got your kind of ethical lens, your social motivation, your desire to make this impact because you know obviously this is a Catholic university so you know there is obviously Catholic values and we're all taught this but I think some people internalize those more than others, some people act on those more than others. Maybe you can talk a little bit about some events, your childhood.

Joon:

Yeah, you know I'll say so you know it's interesting so I grew up I grew up the child of Korean immigrants who I did not know this at the time until years later that by the time I was born both of their visas had expired. But so we moved around every six months like this is just the way I thought that was the way everyone does things right so we finally stayed in the same city, same school for three years and then one day we were arrested our whole family by immigration services. And so that's when I find out I'm I think I was a ten and a half years old I'm like what's going on like oh you know your parents are here illegally. So we got deported as a family but my brother and I were born here so we're citizens. We are what they call the anchor babies all the things that people, Republicans hate, so we're in Korea for two years and we're clearly Americans. My parents did whatever they could so they sent us back to live with complete strangers who so we grew up mostly living in ethnic enclaves because that's where you kind of you know just ethnic community especially immigrants they stick with each other. Well when we come back we're living with complete strangers but it's two white people it's their second marriage and we're living in an all white town and both of them are entrepreneurs but my Korean parents are entrepreneurs too. But entrepreneurship from an immigrant perspective is very different than like a white Caucasian point of view. And so I would say my parents worked both sets of my parents worked really hard but my Caucasian parents knew how America worked like how credit works and how like insurance works and how like you know investing and all that kind of stuff works.

So you know coming into that context just being aware like I basically saw a different America from that time on I when I came back to live with my Caucasian parents and in an all Caucasian world and sort of understand like well the world just America is very different place for depending on like your entry point. And then I think what it was is you know so I went to college and then when I graduated I worked for a nonprofit, a faith based nonprofit. It was very like donor related, grants you know and I remember thinking like and I was a science guy so most of my friends in college were all like engineers and doctors and lawyers and that kind of stuff. And then but then the industry I was in was mostly like humanities majors and you know all this kind of stuff and so I realized when we were doing fund raising talking to donors like I had friends that made so much money. But very quickly by only being in the nonprofit world for about a year the way I talked about things was like completely foreign to them so that started me thinking started thinking like wait a minute like like by the time you are in high school you kind of know if you're like a people person or not. Like if you just like math or like computers or stuff or you like hanging out with people right all that kinds of stuff.

You realize you are going to be popular socially or not right somewhere in high school. And so then I'm like in college, those people like like a business person just reinforces what they're learning right or building stuff and then the person that's like a social person cares about stuff and they what they spend their summer break doing is like volunteering in orphanages or camps and stuff like that. Where as like the engineer works on stuff where the business guy is like starting a business in the summer. So by the time in four years those people might as well live on a completely different planet because their worlds will never intersect unless they happen to get married into each other something like that. They're in their completely different worlds. Where this world thinks thirty thousand dollars is a big deal because it can feed a whole village and keep them from getting sexually trafficked right and this person thinks thirty thousand dollars is a good signing bonus on top of my first year salary and doesn't have any idea that this stuff is happening. And I think that's changing now with a younger generation that sees more stuff, more socially aware right but the whole matter is like you grow up in an industry you're very different from these other people and so when I came out of that world.

The reason I came out of that world is like you know you know we lived in San Diego and a friend of mine started this nonprofit called Hope in the City that works with refugees and immigrants. And so I was one of the first volunteers, donors of this thing and you just listen to their stories you know like holy shit man if I was born in that village I probably be dead, you know. It's like the very first population we're helping is a Sudanese kind of, we had a huge influx of Sudanese and you know like a kid these kids at like nine or ten or ten years old like had these straight scars on their forehead and we're like, what is that? He's like well this is our like they call it like their king ceremony. Like what is that, you know? Like what is that about, you know? And these are like real people that like you know like just a year before were running around like half naked like you know hunting down food like they were like you know like they weren't in like in a civilization. And so they're saying like in their tribe it's a very egalitarian system where like you know there's a caste system, but every boy when he's nine years old can win their way out of the caste system they're in. And what happens is like so basically every boy when they're nine and think about it like nine years old like I don't know what I could do when I was nine, right, my youngest is ten, I don't think she could do this ritual, right, where they throw them out in the jungle by themselves and they basically by themselves, all nine year olds, like there's no adult. They're all nine years old and if they're crying whatever, it's like if they cry on the first day they come back and they're stuck on that low, so you can actually, you can't get demoted you like you stay in your caste you can go up.

So that's kind of a cool system you can't go lower right but you if you make it through the whole week and you're like you have to hunt your own food and all this kind of stuff. The last ceremony at the end is they basically and there's usually a couple kids that make it right and they put them in this ring of fire, this whole thing is on fire, and while it's on fire, all the other kings who've made it through the ceremony have like sharp objects and they're throwing it from outside into the fire, into the fire at these kids, which you can't see because it's like fire, right. And if they flinch, they're out. It's like the ultimate dodge ball right, if they flinch they're out. They just sit there and they take it and like stuff's cutting them and hitting them in the head and they just sit there and take it. And I don't know how long it goes for I mean from their point of view it sounds like a went for an eternity I don't know it's probably like you know twenty thirty minutes long or an hour. It just sounds horrible, right, but if you make it past that then the last thing you do is they just get this jagged rock and they just cut these lines in your forehead and they let it scar over because you made it, right. So like this kid you know this eleven year old kid is telling me this story and you're like OK so your childhood is a little different from my childhood, right, it's slightly different, right. And then lot of these kids were

what they call the lost boys, see a lot of these people were parentless so and so I just I didn't know anything about that and back then not a lot was documented like in ninety six, ninety eight. Now a lot of other stuff, now you can find lots of movies and books about it right. And he's like well what it was is like they all knew that the U.N. was setting up these refugee camps in Ethiopia so they all knew they just needed to get to Ethiopia but I mean these are little boys taking care of other little boys. Because their villages got separated, they're running the middle of the night, all this kind of stuff. And he said the craziest thing was like so they know there's like Ethiopia is right over there but the people trying to kill him know that so they're just lined up right on that border with guns and tanks and jeeps whatever right. And so you know a couple the older kids like twelve, you're talking about twelve or thirteen year olds come up with this plan, they're like OK listen, we're pretty dark skinned, there's no lights out here, we're going to wait until night time and then we're just going to spread out like as far as we can from each other and everyone just run. They can't shoot all of us. Like you know I'm trying I'm trying to like what would be a better plan like I don't know what's a better plan because the next day if they're there they're going to get killed because you know they need to either go or run far away because they're all there, right. And they would like waves of boys would do this and some of them would make it through and some of them wouldn't, right. So you're listening to all this stuff going holy crap man like you're thirteen years old you've seen way more shit in your lifetime than like I you know I've had a pretty crazy life but I've never like it's not that crazy right. Or you know or families that got smuggled through with a coyote from Nicaragua. You're like their life is crazy. In like six months of a life was like more trauma than like average person gets in like ten lifetimes, right. So you look at that and then go what's the difference between me and that person though like I didn't I didn't have any power to choose where I was going to be born and I think of that even historically, if I was born like fifty years ago I wouldn't get to do half the things that I get to do, right. If I was born in this country fifty years ago, for sure right.

If I was born a hundred years ago like I'd have to be like a good like fighter dude or else I'm screwed right. You know so so in us is all these answers to those great things to survive but you think of like today what separates us is this kid was just born in the wrong place at the wrong time right. Like I look at my mom my Korean mom she's like this great pioneering entrepreneur woman, she was born the wrong era. Like if she was just born twenty years later she'd be running like an empire or something of some kind right but she's born the wrong era. She was the first she's the first of her class to graduate from an all male university because her parents petitioned for her to graduate from there because it was a better university. Well no one has to do that anymore, you know. And she had to deal with all this shit for being like one of, you know she had seven classmates that were women and she's the only one that finished out because it was just that hard. So if she was born in any other era she would be like she'd be phenomenal right. But there's a whole bunch of stories like her that are never going to be told and not amount to much because they're born in the wrong era. So when we look at that you go OK so I have these two things I'm juggling, one is like people that have means like separate into like the people that care about other people and people that care about doing stuff, making money, building things whatever. And these people try and save the world and what they're trying to save is like people that are just born in the wrong place at the wrong time and by no choice of their own right. And the resources they need are over here but these people don't often think that way they think off in the world of hugs and backpacks and tutoring so they're really taking care of like what we call front line kind of needs right whereas oftentimes business people and engineering people are looking more like well we don't want to fix just a symptom of this problem if we're going to build a solution we're going to get the root of the problem right.

So that's where my skill set comes in is we do strategy development and a lot of the stuff we're doing like in our neighborhood there's a lot of what we call frontline organizations, give kids hugs, tutoring programs, backpacks, all that kind of stuff, right. But no one's working on the systemic issues of why they're pretty much fucked for I mean they're better here than they are in whatever country they were in but it's not going to go well for them because they don't know how America works right. Like in our neighborhood Vietnamese immigrants figure get don't live in our neighbor more than one generation because in Vietnam they actually have a version of our capitalism even though it's communist. They have banks and they have like entrepreneurship and they have like loans and things like that right. Cambodia and Lao, they don't, Uganda no, you know, it's like in Uganda most of the families were subsistence farmers so they're used to if you keep something long enough it declines in value or it rots. So you've got to trade and get rid of it right away well that's the exact opposite of the way you build wealth here in our country with compounding interest and stuff like that right. So it's hard to teach a fifty year old how to switch that, their kids are the hope. But so when we started our company we're like there's all these systemic issues and the reason I went from a nonprofit world to like the business world is that I realized there's all these business people that have the solutions for what we need they just don't have a friend that gives a rat's ass about this kind or even knows like some of them might care but they don't know where to start because they like they're very good what they do so they don't want to look stupid like hey I don't want to sound racist or I don't want to sound ignorant, like how do I even get involved? Like dude you don't know there's like seventy thousand refugees like the average San Diegan doesn't know that San Diego's a city of refugee and we have been for like twenty years and we will continue to be because the reason we're a city of refuge is that you find any San Diegan and say hey do you know that we're the global capital for refugee resettlement, like we take in more, we take in more refugees than any city in the world and they would say I didn't know that and the reason and because they say they don't know that means San Diego is not being affected by all those refugees so it continues to become a city of refuge. Like LA used to be a long time ago, Seattle stopped being one like in the eighty's because their infrastructure couldn't handle all these refugees coming, right.

So there's all these systemic things and so you know the reason I started my company was saying there's these two worlds that don't naturally intersect. And you can even argue majority minority culture don't intersect and even if they wanted to it's like everyone's afraid of being clumsy, right. Like you know if I'm a minority person I've had a tough life like someone needs to coach me on how to take some of the anger off of what I need to say but my life sucks so I need to be able to say that but in a way that doesn't make a white person feel guilty. Because you get a guilty person with a vengeful person you put them in the same room like bad things happen. That's not like a model for you know and so I can say that maybe my initial orientation to the world comes from a biblical point of view but then after that it's just looking at like what makes me better than this kid that had to go through all this shit at nine years old like. Like I didn't do anything to get born where I was born, right, you know. And some of my best friends from college they're like you guys have fucking charmed lives, right, but it's not like it's not really their fault. They were born into like a really great situation. Who the hell's fault is that? Right you know. Now when you start to get mad at people is when they act like they had some to do with that. Like you know you didn't have anything to do with that. Your parents worked their ass off, you didn't right, you know all that kind of stuff. So I think it initially starts from like and I think I think inherently if you look at every major world religion even like the pagan religions there is a sense of humility about who's born where, right. Now the reincarnation ones, sometimes like well you did a good job so you came back as like a rich white man. I don't know if that's the way to believe in it right, you know. But it's like you did a good

job your past life you know you've got crapped on and now you're doing OK you know. But the at some point in time all those religions have a view of like listen there's got to be a basic sense that we're in this together. Like that no matter what I did I might have got an unfair start right and I think what I love about social entrepreneurs is that they are people with this skill set but they're addressing it from over here.

Now my critique for most social enterprises is that is their business really targeting root causes or is it really just doing like cover stuff. Because there's a difference between giving someone a band aid versus doing surgery when you need to, right. And so you know most nonprofit organizations are doing band aid kind of stuff and that's my critique and that's why only a few of them, there's very specific ones that I'll give money to because I feel like those are more like surgery, right. But the general person I don't think cares like oh they're doing good things, right, and I think those frontline people are doing good things and they need all this money to do that but there's a group of people like me that like we were put on the earth to address some of the more surgical things and the problem is there's no like cool video I can show you that I was in court for eighteen weeks in a row just to advocate for our neighborhood. That's not a cool like ALS bucket challenge like, hey come with me, come with me to the city council meeting where you hear all these really old irrelevant people talk about how they're spending money on behalf of our neighborhood but we don't have a single refugee person on that committee. Why? Because they didn't know how to get on the committee and I'm not gonna be on the committee because that's like death, those things are horrible to sit on, it's like so boring right.

But those are systemic things because those are how things get the decided right. Well who's going to do that right there's got to be a group of people that says we're going to do this it might take a whole generation and you know I'm only moving the piece this much, someone else is going to move it this much, maybe a hundred years from now it'll be fixed, right. But you know those few of us but I think those of us that are strategic, what we really do is that we are bringing a lot more of our contacts. Like the thing is we had to be good in business to have credibility in this world. So that when I say listen I think we should really care about these people and they're like man you're more successful than I am, maybe I should take a book, out of a page out of your book. When you suck at business these people are like yeah that's fine you're helping those people you're more like a charity than you are a business so there's like a dismissal almost. And I don't necessarily agree with it, but I understand it, I understand the credibility piece and so when I start my company I'm like I need to just be really good at what I do and in my free time I can help you know do all this other kind of stuff but in my business stuff it's got to be something that's credible to other business people because they don't have friends that live over here. And these people don't have friends over here.

There's actually enough money in the world to solve all of our problems it's just that the people that have the money don't have a friend over here. When they do meet someone over here all they feel is guilty. Oh my gosh you and your privilege and blah blah blah, you don't care about this stuff. Like well I was kind of going to care, that's why I took a look, but now that you treat me that way now I don't care. And you see what happens. But it's comical but it happens all the time right and then this person tries to hang over here but they don't have the language or the skill set or they actually, like the best nonprofits in the world, are harder to run and lead than an actual business. They're actually more difficult to run because the inputs and outputs are way more complicated but they don't know how to, they don't know how to say that because they're still talking to these people about I need your money. This person's well if you're really awesome at what you do, why would you need our money, right? And that's why I think the social entrepreneurs are like listen we have these solutions that will be birthed by our

own sustainability and so if I don't need someone else's money to make this good work happen then we can probably have a shot of eradicating this because not all of us are going to be a Bill Gates that amass like billions of dollars to eradicate something, right. Some people are like if our business is eradicating this and as long as we're making money we can actually knock this out. You know? And that's the hope of most social enterprises is that they're figuring something like that out.

And I don't think every social enterprise meets that criteria but hopefully more and more will as they go forward because I think your generation in particular feels like they want to have their cake and eat it too. Like I don't want to feel guilty for making a lot of money and having a nice life so how do I not feel guilty being successful. Well as long as it's got a social bend to it, then I don't have to feel bad about it. Right? And you know most social entrepreneurs I know in San Diego, they don't live where I live. Right? Because they say well its dangerous and I'm like, it is dangerous, you know? But you know most of them won't live there. And then they can say whatever they want but I'm like yeah but you know I think living among people makes you a better social entrepreneur because it makes you see the issues from the perspective of living there versus like wow, this really sucks, this sucks every day. You know? Whereas like from the just someone doing great things you don't maybe see all the issues you pick and choose because of confirmation bias the things that you see. And then what really happens is you think that's the solution but you don't see the root issue. Right? But when you live somewhere you're always like, why does that happen? Well I guess that happens because of this. Man, why does that happen? Oh, man it's because we don't have anyone on the city council. Oh well fuck, you know? So, you see the root issues at that point. So yeah. That was a really long answer to what I feel like was a short question.

Akira:

That's fine. I feel like it addressed multiple points.

Joon:

I mean its just how I got to where I got, how I got to where I am. You know? And you know, I serve on the board, I'm on the advisory board of the Changemaker Challenge and then I'm just starting on the board for the Kroc School, right. And it's interesting because I serve on those in order to meet more people like me that are a little more business-y than we are social entrepreneur and so, but we are interested in like, I'm interested in the Kroc School doing great stuff that's going to be more systemic in its nature rather than just like window dressing. I mean, I love it. The band aid stuff, it is, you're helping a kid like get food for today, right? But someone in the world has to look at, how do we make sure they have food forever, right? And that's just the minority but I think most people like me sit on boards like that to meet other people like that and then again like, in the corporate world, I told you the unethical sides, like they're all making deals whatever. The same thing happens on the virtuous point of view. We're all on these boards together and we will make things happen that wouldn't have happened because we just didn't know each other, right? So like I bring like 800 connections to the board. Another person brings 800 connections to the board and we start talking about stuff and we're like you know what? I know two people that would be interested in that. Let's get them all together in a room and so we're doing the same thing that you know like corporations are maybe doing on the down low or on the unethical side but you know the more of us that get together on the success side of things, like you know. Because usually you get invited to a board because you have money. That's really what they are looking for. Like, oh you have money, you know? But so we're all successful but we all are successful with a specific kind of moral lens to what we do and you

know so that's why usually you know even if I don't sit on a board, I usually visit and get to know people on a board. Because it's just those connections that like we can synthesize a new solution for stuff because we're using, that's where those people kind of aggregate, you know, because we're all kind of all over the place on our own. But those are the only places we meet each other, so yeah.

Akira:
Was that our timer?

Gabriela:
That was for 45 but he said minimum and then we can...

Akira:
Minimum, ok.

Gabriela:
So, up to you.

Akira:
She's got a question. She's itching, itching to tell it.

Gabriela:
I guess I was just a little more curious about like the family aspect because like for me that's very important like what they contribute to like how you grow up and stuff like that like I know you talked about different families and stuff like that...

Joon:
Right, right.

Gabriela:
But I feel like the family, your family now. Like...

Joon:
Like my kids and stuff like that? Yeah.

Gabriela:
What is their role? Do you think like in, how do they shape your way of thinking?

Joon:
Well, I mean I think, you know, its, and this where I'm just an asshole, so like. So I think every parent in the world, if you ask them, hey, would you do anything for your kids? And they would say, absolutely, I'd give up an arm and a leg for my kid. And I would say, really, would you? Right, and most of them would, no. Oh that's just a, you know, that's just a whatever, like, right? So, you know for instance, like my oldest just started college but when she started high school, I said, listen, you don't have to do this, but my whole career is mentoring other people's kids when they become adults so you know, if you want, we can have lunch together every Friday. Her school has an open campus and my office is pretty close by. And you know, I remember doing that and a lot of dads are like, dude, I wish I could do that. I'm like, why can't you? So

you're telling me that you've been working at your company for like 15 years and you can't like work a little bit longer on a Thursday and then work a little bit longer on a Friday so you can take like instead of a half hour lunch, like an hour lunch. You know? And so its like little things like that, like people say they love their kids but what do they really do? Right, and so like for me, I feel like, you know, my oldest she had some health issues that it was not, she didn't have cancer but when she was like little, it got treated in the pediatric oncology department. So and we knew she was going to live and it wasn't those kind of things but she had to do chemotherapy and all this kind of stuff. But we're sitting in these waiting rooms and there's like a, you know, there's other kids, and they look really sickly, right? And so, you know, by the time those kids are doing that most of them are not going to make it. Right, and you can just tell like the way they look. You're like, that kid is not doing great. And so, we had to teach our daughter like hey, that's not weird, just play with them. You just don't sneeze on them and stuff, you know, like don't share your germs and what not. And it was really crazy because you know, their moms are always like, oh that's so cool that your daughter will just play with them.

Well they're all kids, they're all just sitting here, right? But my daughter was initially startled because like you know they have no hair and they're like ashy and they look like frail, right? And so here my wife and I are in these waiting rooms. It's mostly me, my wife is a full-time teacher and she has always taught in these underserved areas and so she has a Masters, and a Doctorate now. She's the most overeducated like inner city elementary school teacher that I know of, right? And eventually with those many degrees, you should start your own school, so I don't know if she has thought about that but she'll probably think about it in a couple years. But so we're in these waiting rooms and I'm looking at this other mom and this dad and I'm like, they're going to lose their kid sometime in the next 18 months, right? And again, like it's not like they did something wrong, it's not like we did something wrong, right? Life is just shitty like that, right? Its great and its horrible. And so I'm looking at that, going like, you know, and sitting there at the time, I was working for another organization, and I was just feeling like, man, like none of us is guaranteed tomorrow, right? And I think we all know that subconsciously but it freaks you out if you really think about it, right? And so I remember, like I was in this job for a couple years and it was a place where I could influence a lot of people but I remember thinking like I had to wait my turn to become the guy in this organization. And I probably have to wait like, because I'm not like a political backstabbing guy. If I did that, it'd be like two years before I could ascend to the throne, right? But then I was going to wait, so I was like well if I'm going to wait, its going to be like 15 years for this. So I remember thinking at that point like if I want to make the world a better place for my kids, I don't know if I have another day, like I don't know if I have another day.

And this is where you know you got to worry about burning out, and like, I'm like, you know what, everyone that's like, I understand there's things you got to do to like self-care and stuff like that, right, but you do self-care because you're working so hard the rest of the time, right? And so like, you know, our wife when we had all three of our kids, our value was that one of the two of us would be home while they were like little, right? And then my thing was like, I wanted to get all my businesses successful enough that if my kid is going on a field trip, that I would be able to take the whole day off and go on a field trip, you know. And so, I think most parents will say they'll do anything for their kids, but they won't work hard enough, they won't work like crazy, so that they can go on a field trip, right? And some of them do and we're always like this is fun, this is all the parents that can help out, right? I'm usually the only dad though, for any of this kind of stuff. And I remember last year we went to Europe for like a month. Most people cannot leave their businesses unattended for like three days much less four weeks, right? And at that point it was a little bit of an experiment for me because the longest I had left my

business unattended, all five of them, was about 10 days because that's usually how long I take a vacation. It takes me like two days to like settle down, right? And when I'm on vacation, I'm not checking my phone or anything. It just takes me two days to like forget, to like get all the stuff to slow down a little bit so then I have a proper vacation, and then that last day I'm kind of like, ok, what am I doing now? You know, I got to figure out what I'm doing so the three days off the sides are taken off. But I remember when we were there, you know, my other friends joined us for a week of that trip. But you know, they joined, they could only join us because they work for other companies so they only have so many vacation days, right? But you know my kids missed two weeks of school because it was over spring break and we were able to do that and a lot of people when we came back were like, man I wish we could do that. And I'm like I'm pretty sure you make a good amount of money. I think you could do this like if you cut back your spending.

So one of the blessings of living in the inner city is we actually can't have nice things or else it makes us a target for like robberies. Not from our neighbors, like everyone in our community knows that I run a nonprofit and so there's kind of like an almost like a don't mess with that guy because he's doing good things, right. But, the who would rob our house is someone who doesn't live in our neighborhood who's just looking for opportunity. And so we can't have nice things. We don't have nice cars, you know. We don't outwardly make our house look like it has a lot of valuable stuff. Although on the inside there's probably more electronics in our house than in our whole neighborhood put together, you know, because we've got three kids and you know my wife and I. I have like five computers just for work and stuff like that, right. So I think I think family should be the fuel. And I think its a specific situation with my oldest daughter that it led me not to take life for granted, right.

And so I'm not really worried about burning out so much as like what is that saying like don't die with the song still in you or the story still stuck inside, right. And just like so I would love to reach a day where like man I think I've been as useful as I can be and I got nothing now, like I got nothing else to do. But the reality is that's never going to happen, right. But so at that point when she was going through all that I spent about two years working for this other organization, that's when I said you know what I think I have a better chance of influencing more people if I just go on my own. And I've never done that before but I'll start my own company and from there I started other companies. But I'll start this company to help as many people as possible and then to raise as much money as possible. Like we give away more money than we keep, you know. I'm not a Bill Gates but like if you think percentage wise, like we give away a good chunk of our money. And you can only do that if like you have a good budget, you know. The reality is our budget is so low that my wife's very meager teacher salary covers all of our expenses. So that means everything else we can give away which is my companies, which we make a lot of money, right. And most people wouldn't do that. Because like you know I think the one thing entrepreneurs that, for better or for worse, like we don't necessarily need to save for a rainy day because we feel like in a rainy day I can figure out something to make money at that time. Because for me it's like you can either do the Bill Gates thing, it's an interesting ethical question if you think about it. Which is better, to one day, like to save up for thirty years and then have like two billion dollars worth to help the world, right. Because in the meantime, in those twenty years, a lot of people died and a lot of people needed medication and stuff, their dead right and they're not coming back. Or over those twenty years to have just donated whatever money and time you could of right. And save people in the meantime.

Now I would argue like if you know you're not going to be a billionaire you should probably do whatever you can today because people are counting on it right. But if you know for a fact you can be a billionaire, you going to give away ninety nine percent of your wealth, then do that. Right, there's not enough people doing that, you know. Although they have the giving

pledge list that they have, of the world's billionaires and right now like a third of them have agreed to that pledge, right. And so you know I don't know what I'm going to be long term but I was like well there's no guarantee I'm going to be a billionaire so I got to do what we can right now. And it's also because I do have friends that work in front line organizations. Like listen five hundred dollars really rescues this woman from ever being trafficked ever again, like two hundred dollars helps us like dig a well so they don't get shitty water, literally water with shit in it, like you know so I have too many friends that are in that realm to like not help them out, right.

But I think it really comes down to, I think the general, I don't want to say just America, the general human being and maybe its more of Americans than other people because we are a little more comfortable. Places that we don't exactly have integrity with what we say we are about, right. Because again if everyone said, I would do anything for your kids, I'm like well then maybe you should care about the environment, right. Maybe you should care about, if any of your kids are daughters maybe you should care about fair wages, right. But they don't right and so again that's why I'm an asshole because like you know I don't tell the parents. I don't tell the parents like you're a horrible parent in my estimation because you're not sacrificing for your kid. All I'm trying to do is my parents are immigrants and they sacrificed for me and so all I'm trying to do is my version of that for my kids. And I've heard from other kids, especially dads, like we just feel guilty hanging around you because you make us feel like we're not doing enough. Well then fucking do more. Don't don't don't feel guilty, do more, right. You're going to die eventually. You know, when I was like in junior high, my mom did the, this is my Caucasian mom, she has a PhD in clinical psychology. We were around middle school, I don't know why she did it but she would take my brother and I to these convalescent homes near our house and she would just drop us off to volunteer. But like we didn't have any skills so it's not like we're doing anything. Like so they would say well just hang out with this person and so my brother got assigned this one lady and I got assigned this lady named Trudy. And we would just sit there and talk to them for like two hours while we're there, right. And they were so nice and everything, and the whole time I'm thinking like why, so I remember talking to the nurse, like hey why did you guys assign me to Trudy. Like well Trudy has been here for years and she doesn't ever have any visitors because her family lives like somewhere else.

So then I started asking like well why don't they come visit her. She's like well that's the million dollar question isn't it. That they love her enough to pay her bills but not enough to move her to somewhere close or whatever. So something happened in their relationship right. And specifically with Trudy like she you know, and this is where I think of my mom, like I don't know why you did this? Because it was around like October, we invited her over for Thanksgiving and for the first time like in ten years she came to Christmas Eve like candlelight service with us right. She's with our family and then she died like three days later right so here's me like getting to know Trudy. She's like the grandma, you know, like a surrogate grandma. And she then she dies after like two and a half months, and you're like that is a horrible thing to do to your kid, right. But I'll never forget that like she really did have like the best Christmas in a long time, right. But I remember thinking like yeah that's so messed up because where we grew up is really expensive so like they didn't like kind of love her like they loved her enough or were obligated enough to like fork out like you know ten thousand dollars a month for her care and but then not enough to like again not enough for her to live with them. I just thought it was so weird and again I never got to meet the family or something like that. So like right around that same time all my dad's friends were self-made entrepreneurs and they were like retiring. And every single one of them, every single one, it was like an old white guy holding his kids and his wife or whatever and all of them said like yeah so I'm so glad to retire

now and you know I'm going to try to make up for all the lost time with my kids and I'm looking at their kids and their kids are like grown ass men. And some of them I knew and like your kids are like thirty two years old and he hates your guts because you worked all the time, right.

And so now the good news is they're probably going to be great grandfathers because they're like they're so regretful over how they weren't there for their own kid, right. But I remember thinking, I never heard one person, it was like a series. I remember it was horrible because like every, almost every like week, we had to go to this really boring retirement party. Its like adults and they're drinking but you're kids you can't do anything, right. And there was never one person that said you know back in '88 I wish I closed that one extra deal, you know, because we'd have a bigger house right now. All of them said you know my only regret I guess is I wish I was around more when my kids were little, right. So I pieced together those two stories and I didn't I didn't come up with the theory of my life back then, like when I was in junior high. But it was when you know my wife and I were expecting our first daughter and I was like holy crap like you know how do you do this thing, how do you do this parenting thing. My dad worked like a hundred hours a week, you know. And I just remember and then for some reason those two things because they were around the same age in my life, I remember thinking, like well that I don't want. Like I don't want to be put in a home somewhere where they feel like they love me or are obligated enough, or my trust fund is big enough that they're paying for my bills but they're not going to visit me.

And I don't want to ever say, like hey you know what, what I really wish I could go back in time because you can't fucker. You can't go back in time, right. You know, and so, you know so, I always feel like at that moment, like you know when you're looking at anything from a strategic point of view there's a term called reverse engineering, right. It's like you know you can undo people's recipes by going like what's really in the secret sauce. You know, the KFC recipe is in a vault. It's like the original recipe is in a vault. And it's like you know, it's like a secret, right. And you're like really? You know, and then I'm like no man I can figure it out, but you try, because there's probably some weird accidental thing that no one would think of like gunpowder or something like that. But no one would think of like gunpowder, right, its weird stuff, right. And it's also how they cook it and everything. But you know so when I look at that, those retirement guys and Trudy, I'm like well how do I reverse engineer not becoming that?

Right, and so that has influenced the kind of work I do so like when we first started our company, there was a friend of mine from college. He's like hey Joon we have, we have a lot of money, we really need your help. And I'm like OK well what's your company, right. And they're like well its Babes Gone Bananas. And I was like that sounds like porn. And they're like well it is it's like Girls Gone Wild but it's just more of a general theme, right. And they're like you know we already have all these investors, we're going to make tons of money. Like that is actually going to make a lot of money. I have no, and I haven't looked it up recently so I don't know how they're doing, right, but I remember thinking like at some point in time if they become really successful, they're going to do an interview and they're going to say that I helped them, right. And am I OK with my mom, my friends, my children, knowing that I helped that in that business. The answer is no, right. And you know where I say ethics is inconvenient. That was a moment in the first two years of our business that we could have really used a really good client. They would have paid our bills for probably three years, right, instead of struggling to get clients. So that's where I say ethics is inconvenient. So like you know, my wife is always like, what new clients are on the horizon. I'm like well there's one like we could literally become like multimillionaires because we would get an equity stake and all this kind of stuff. And she's like why don't we do it? And I'm like because you don't want to know what they do and if you don't want to know what they do I don't think I want to know or I don't want to tell you what it is

they do, right. But it was incredibly inconvenient. Because we had real bills, we had real food that we needed, we had real things that we needed at the time and that could have solved all of it. And I could have easily justified it as like, hey I was young, we needed it, right.

And I don't think anyone would begrudge me of that but the fact that I have to explain it, is like maybe it's not a good thing for me. So yeah I mean that's how family has influenced me. It is more like a motivator but also tells me like what decisions I should make going forward. And that really is why I do a lot of like, I'll mentor social entrepreneurs for free because they're, they are trying to put all the chips on the table saying I'm trying to put all my smarts combining with my heart to try to make the world a better place. And so they need all the help they can get. You know, they don't have money to hire our company but they're making the world better for my kids so it's in my like delayed indirect best interest to help them succeed as much as possible. And sometimes that means I hold them to a standard that's a little bit higher than what they're comfortable with. Or and sometimes I say things and they're like man that really hurt my feelings and I'm like well that's fine, you know, cry about it and then tomorrow fix it, you know. Like you know I don't know what to tell you. We can be friends forever and I can give you hugs. I'm not a hug guy but you know that's those things. And I think sometimes they are so positive, people in the social enterprises are so positive, they won't dole out what I call tough love, of like everyone knows there's one thing wrong with this company's problem, this company but no one's going to tell her, no one's going to tell him, right. Like yeah your company's great, you're an asshole, like no one wants to help you, like you need to fix your stuff. Right you know like things like that. Or you're very condescending, you know, like things like that. So I don't know, does that, is that a good answer for family?

— End of Transcription —