



Titans as Teens

Transcript: Marc Weinstein Episode 10

The podcast is here:

<https://www.titansasteens.com/marc-weinstein-investor-and-podcaster/>

[Theme music]

Brody [00:00:07] Hey all, Brody here with the new episode Titans As Teens, a podcast where I have detailed conversations with interesting people from all walks of life about their teen experiences and the knowledge, they have for teens today. Today, I have the privilege of speaking with podcaster Marc Weinstein.

Marc [00:00:23] We are in the end, kind of to this point of success, we're human beings. We're not human doings. And so, I think we often fall into this trap of judging our lives and our self-worth by what we've done lately. And really, at the end of the day, I think it's important to constantly remind yourself that you are worthy just by being you.

Brody [00:00:42] That was Marc Weinstein. Marc is the host of the Look Up podcast but is extremely active in many other places. He's an angel investor, a startup advisor and a yoga teacher. He's also the founder of Satya Management, a company dedicated to supporting entrepreneurs, however possible, and is the VP of business development at Stewart, a company that helps people invest in sustainable farms and farmers to steward them. I wanted to talk to Marc because of how much I enjoyed listening to his podcast and wanted to know the details behind his back story in parties and the Fyre festival. I asked him about his role in Fyre and this was his response.

Marc [00:01:18] Yeah. So, I was hired as a consultant for fire about four weeks before the event. My second startup company, 90sFest was being sold at that time and a friend of mine was interested in investing in Fyre. He knew I had experience building companies and producing festivals, and so he thought I would be able to help them with logistics. I flew down to the Bahamas probably the first weekend in April, last weekend in March. The event was the first weekend in May and immediately I kind of could recognize that it was really messy.

[00:01:56] But being invited in under the pretext that I was trying to fix it, or one of a few folks that were invited in to try to help fix it, I was, you know, not too disturbed by just how bad things were when I when I arrived.

[00:02:15] And then over just a few weeks' time, it became really clear that it was not going to happen or certainly not a version of the festival that had been promoted. And you know I'm in the Netflix documentary and I had a conversation with the director for that documentary for like four and a half hours. And I think he does he does a really good job kind of highlighting a lot of the challenges of the festival and what went down.



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Brody [00:02:41] Tell me about the worst mistake you made that seemed awful in the moment, but actually positively impacted your life in the future.

Marc [00:02:48] I think the worst I mean, the Fyre festival mistake is probably the best publicized mistake that I've made but had a positive impact on my future. I mean, you know, it was clear to me that it was a mess. I didn't have the best feeling about it. I went against my intuition and did it anyways. I wanted to leave about two weeks in and spoke to some of my mentors and realized, you know, maybe I should stick it out. And I should have also trusted myself in that moment because they were in on the ground seeing everything that was going on. But having participated in that actually is one of the reasons why I'm here speaking to you, you know.

[00:03:26] And so I now have this platform through the podcast that never would have come about without Fyre and the documentary. And it's kind of opened up this whole new world of work, which I've only started to realize just how much I love. You know, creating content, writing, sharing these ideas with other people. And all of that was possible because of my participation in Fyre festival, which in the moment felt really painful and really stupid.

[00:03:53] And there's a lot of people that early on were like feeling bad for me. And I found that that reaction to be quite interesting because honestly, it's been it's been nothing but positive for me in the end. And I've had the opportunity to give back through that work as well to the people that were negatively affected by the festival and to others through the work that I'm doing, speaking at colleges and universities to graduating classes about failure and how we can change our relationship to failure.

Brody [00:04:27] The crazy thing to me when I'm like hearing all this is what I'm thinking is, I don't know...How many participants did Fyre have?

Marc [00:04:35] It wasn't even that big. It was like I think the first weekend we ended up with maybe three thousand total, including staff and press and all that.

Brody [00:04:47] Yeah. So, like if Fyre negatively impacted three thousand people, there's no way that you haven't already positively impacted way more than that. So, in the end it worked out so.

Marc [00:05:00] Oh thank man (laughs) and I appreciate that. And then I would also call out that, you know, that poses an interesting question about equity as well, and justice, you know, is three thousand positive, cancel out three thousand negative. Is it possible that one positive might have a one positive effect on one person listening to your show might have a huge ripple effect, might change the world and you'll never know?

Brody [00:05:29] Absolutely.



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Marc [00:05:30] I like to think so. You know, so it's possible that that not all goods and bads are created equal.

Brody [00:05:37] We've all heard of the butterfly effect.

Marc [00:05:39] Yeah,

Brody [00:05:40] You never know. So, you mentioned when you were talking about your mistakes, a lot of pain and regret. So, we're going to talk about high school now because I thought that was connected...

Marc [00:05:52] (laughs) Pain and regret in high school...

Brody [00:05:53] For a lot of people at least.

Marc [00:05:55] Not for me no.

Brody [00:05:56] Really?

Marc [00:05:57] Well, when I was in it, I might have had a different opinion. So now that you're in it, we'll have to we'll have to discuss.

Brody [00:06:02] Rose colored glasses.

Marc [00:06:03] Oh, yeah.

Brody [00:06:04] Yeah. So, what was your social life like when you were there?

Marc [00:06:11] I was really social. I later became the social chair of my fraternity. I was like my friend's parents called me the mayor. Her, you know, they said I had a smile like the mayor. I was just was I was trying to be friends with everyone. I was involved in student government. I was involved in sports. I was a three-sport varsity athlete. I don't know my school had. I'm trying to think I think my school had maybe three thousand people total from ninth grade to 12th to 12th grade. So, classes were about like six hundred. I think we might have even been smaller, but yeah, I just I loved it and I loved going out. I loved I loved hanging out in the cafeteria with people. I also was like obsessed with being a good student at the same time. Very, very socially active, I would say.

Brody [00:06:58] I would like to get your opinion on this after I say it, but I've noticed a pattern on my podcast, at least for most of the people I interview, are actually or were actually rather some of the nerds or the people who just didn't really hang out with all the groups. And you're an interesting sort of outlier there, because you sound like you had a great time versus not to say they didn't, but in a different way. So, do you think that experience impacted your future at all or are they kind of separate?



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Marc [00:07:32] Oh, totally. I mean, it definitely it definitely had an impact on my future. You know, like I chose the University of Pennsylvania after visiting. I ended up attending Wharton. And I chose that because of the work hard play hard mentality that everyone who had attended Penn that I met kind of promoted.

[00:07:50] It was like we are an incredibly social Ivy League school. So, yeah, there's the academic rigor, but we also want you to get out and to have fun and to meet people and to build lifelong relationships. Which I have. And I'm still really close with a lot of my college friends.

[00:08:06] So that's definitely had an impact on my life. I would say to some extent, you know, I envy those that walk the path that that you mentioned because I think it provided them with an opportunity to become independent thinkers. And, you know, when you are friends with so many different people, there is the possibility that you, especially at a young age, that you haven't really leaned into what you like. What makes you excited. You know, because it's easy to get swept up in group think. And I think that that's why you often hear of successful people having been nerds, quote unquote, or introverts in high school. It is because it gave them this opportunity to realize, you know, they were not part of the quote unquote "in group". And so, they didn't conform to socialization. And I think I think that's definitely been something that led to some patterns of struggle in my life where I oftentimes was chasing ideas of success that others laid out for me rather than what I really, really was passionate about doing or how I wanted to be living my life.

[00:09:16] And I only kind of started to break from that as I was leaving university. And I realized that I wanted to be an entrepreneur and start my own companies and walk off the beaten path of finance and private equity and hedge fund that most of my college cohort were interested in participating in.

Brody [00:09:37] Along the same vein, this reminds me of a conversation I had with Nikolai Bratkovski the other day where he was talking about how, the dangers of idolizing people these days. I think it's very similar to groupthink in a way where he was talking about, how if you idolize Elon Musk and you want to become Elon Musk, you don't want to be similar to him, you want to have become him.t. And a lot of people just try and follow Elon's path exactly to get where he is, instead of thinking about themselves. So, I think that's a really similar connection.

Marc [00:10:10] Yeah. I mean, I recently wrote this for the Look Up! Weekly. I wrote a posts on prescriptions, social proof and its relation to the kind of Covid-19 pandemic. But, you know, a book that I highly recommend for you is called Influence by Robert Cialdini. And it describes...Have you read it?

Brody [00:10:32] Yeah,

Marc [00:10:32] I see you nodding. Yeah. So, it describes as, you know, these kind of, I think it's eight psychological or kind of cognitive biases, let's call them of most people, that that drive us to behave in a way that is that is contrary to our own well-being.



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[00:10:49] And one of them is social proof. So, you know, if you were hunting in the jungle, two thousand B.C., three thousand B.C., whatever, with your tribe and 10 people just start taking off, bolting at full speed screaming, you're just going to start running in the same direction of them, because if you look back to see if there's a tiger chasing you, you're going to get eaten and die. Right.

[00:11:17] And so that's why social proof is so valuable, because it allows us to shortcut our own cognitive load of evaluating all the variables to make a quick decision. But then it can be hijacked so that we do what the group does, or we find important what the group finds important. So that's social proof. That's kind of what I was describing. But then there's also this idea of prescriptions, which Kapil Gupta and Naval Ravikant discuss on their podcast, which is super interesting. I highly recommend it. The idea that, as you said, the prescription becomes the God. So same thing with meditation, right? Somebody tells you to meditate, all of the sudden you get attached to the meditation and it's like, I have to meditate. I have to meditate. I have to meditate in this way because someone told me to. But each of us are individuals. And in general, things, certain behaviors can be beneficial for us. But we also have to figure out what works for us. And Kapil describes in that episode just basically how successful people, when pushed, will go back in time and try to explain their success. But they often just give you the highlight reel. And even if they personally had followed that highlight reel from start to finish, they never would have gotten to where they are. It's just impossible for them to understand the nuance and complexity around their own success. And it was unique to them.

[00:12:45] Like if I tried to be Steve Jobs, I would fail miserably. I can only be the best version of Marc, and that has to do with just really...and that's not to say that we shouldn't have role models. I think we can have role models and we can learn, we can learn ideas and behaviors that work for people. But we have to kind of like a buffet, pick and choose what works for us, what tastes good, what we think is healthy.

Brody [00:13:18] That idea kind of reminds me of a little thing Malcolm Gladwell touches on in the first chapter of Outliers, where he talks about how we just kind of see people go from nothing to the best musician in the world. And we don't get to see any of their process. We just get to see them go from there - this nobody - now they're Yo-Yo Ma. Right. We don't we don't get to see what they did in between. And we think we can replicate that, or they're sort of Gods. Yeah. Just because we don't know.

Marc [00:13:48] We just don't know what's going on behind the scenes. And we're also quite we're all just coded differently.

Brody [00:13:55] Is there a certain story from your high school that you think can sum up or pretty well who you were as a person back then?

Marc [00:14:03] It's a good question. There's a lot of stories. Of course, the ones that the ones that immediately come to mind are the most dramatic. And I'm not sure they sum up my whole my whole high school experience. But, you know, I've always been someone



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that struggles with authority and taking orders. But I also am someone that's been driven from this internal curiosity and ambition to thrive and succeed. And so, in high school, kind of those came out in in a couple of ways. When I was accepted into Wharton, I started not lashing out, but acting out. You know, I threw a big party at my house when I was a senior and there were like hundreds of people there. And my house is not even that big. I don't know how we fit people in the backyard, but I hired two guys to manage the door, quote unquote, which was like the driveway. They collected ten dollars per person. And I had a friend who was basically running caravans for anyone that drank to make sure that they didn't drive. And he was doing that kind of for free, just taking shuttling people back and forth to their not forth, but back to their homes if they needed to leave their car. My parents obviously didn't know about this. They were way I think they were visiting my sister in college.

[00:15:30] And then there was a fight that broke out at the party because I lived in the burbs on Long Island and there was always a fight at every party. You know, the police came. Everyone left and then I was asked to come down to the precinct with the police to have a conversation with them, and of course I was freaking out. My friends were like, we're going to follow you. We're going to see what's up. I didn't get put in handcuffs or anything, but I was brought to the police station and I'm sitting with the with the police officer. And he's like he's like, "What, what did you do? We had no complaints. Your neighbors, apparently..." I went to the neighbors that day and told them I was going to have some people over. It might get noisy and to contact me if they were upset about it and I'd send everyone home. No complaints from the neighbors, no drunk driving. Everybody was getting shuttled home by a friend. It was super orderly. "The only reason that we even knew about it was because somebody called about this fight, like, why? What's the story?".

[00:16:24] And I think it was just, you know what? I wanted people to have fun. I wanted to build community. And that's, you know, maybe a precursor to my work in festivals. I loved hanging out with a bunch of people. And I've kind of outgrown that in some ways now I like to spend time with smaller groups. But anyway, so I made like twelve hundred dollars, but then the whole school found out about it because we have a small world, you know, in the suburbs. And I basically got kicked out of an organization I was a part of called Athletes Helping Athletes. I was the president of my class and I was supposed to give a speech at the graduation, and they told me that I couldn't speak. And then I was told they couldn't be the captain of my lacrosse team, even though I was definitely the one that was supposed to be the captain of the team.

[00:17:14] And, you know, so what did I do? Well, thanks to my parents who have been phenomenal guides in my life, the money was not mine to keep because it was earned in a way that was not responsible. So, it was donated to the organization that kicked me out, Athletes Helping Athletes. I put my head down. I worked harder. I played I played lacrosse and was invited to step out on the field as a captain in the middle of the season, the coach decided that it was appropriate for me to do that because I was a team leader. And when graduation time came, I took my time and I spoke. (laughs) And I gave my commencement speech, you know.



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[00:17:56] And I think I think that kind of highlights a couple of things for me about my experience in high school, which was: I worked really hard. I was involved in a lot of different organizations. I cared tremendously about achievement and grades and success and getting into the best college possible because that's all that was hammered home to me. But I also really cared about socializing and having fun. And I had this desire to be a little bit of like a bad boy, you know, like to not just be like a quote unquote nerd. I wanted to be a cool kid, too, even though I probably would have been better served just being a nerd. And so, I don't know if that was that was the experience. It was an interesting one.

Brody [00:18:41] It kind of sounds to me you probably won't get the reference, but it kind of sounds like you had a Hannah Montana life just sort of half on, half off with everything.

Marc [00:18:49] OK. Yeah, I mean, that's true. That was definitely true of what I was doing. I was like going out on the weekends to parties, you know, I had a girlfriend, so it's been one night with her. And then I'd go out with my friends and you're in the suburbs. So, it was always house parties. That was the only way to go have fun. I wasn't the best behaved.

[00:19:06] But then when it came to getting my work done, it was like, you know, six thirty a.m., I'm awake, I'm in class, I'm participating. I never skipped class. Get home, two p.m. sports. Get home at five. Homework. A bite to eat, maybe a TV show back to bed, do it all over again. I mean, it was like a militaristic lifestyle, if I think about it. Which I kind of find is like one of the things that I find really bizarre about our current educational system is that you go from this like Prussian style high school experience for most students, especially in public schools, where it's like very regimented, regimented. Your schedule is decided for you. It's like boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. This is what you're doing. You have to participate in all of these activities just to even have a chance to get into college. And then you finally get into college. And then all of a sudden, it's like you're responsible for your own schedule, you're responsible for your own time. You have a ton of free time. Nobody's holding you accountable and you have just unlimited freedom.

[00:20:07] And then from college, you need to get a job and then you go get a job, which is a nine to five, and all of a sudden, you're back into that Prussian lifestyle. So, it's almost like high school prepares you better for the work world than college does. And college can have this effect where it actually turns into like a vacation and helps you build bad habits, which was my experience. Because I had this newfound freedom rather than good ones. But that's another conversation for another day.

Brody [00:20:35] Yeah. I've heard that a lot from people who go to prep school, they're like, "Man, I mean, high school was a grind. I worked my ass off so many all-nighters and then I got to college and it was the easiest shit". Like they all say that.

Marc [00:20:51] And that's that was my experience. Like, Wharton was challenging and really competitive. But you cram for an exam for midterms and your finals for a week each. And if you had the ability, you did just fine. So, I guess, you know, I know this is about high school. Like, my biggest regret about college was not actually leaning into more to what



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the university had to offer. The extracurriculars, the communities I played club lacrosse, I was in student government, but there was there was more that could have been done.

[00:21:21] And also, like, really following my curiosity and taking different kinds of classes. There was this one class called the Philosophy of Space and Time, which I was dying to take. But the only available time to take it was at eight a.m. on a Friday and in college at Penn Thursday night, the big night out. And so, I really didn't want to do it. But in hindsight, I'm like, I wish I had taken that class, you know, I wish I had completed my East Asian languages minor. Instead of saying I have enough credits to graduate a good grade and a job.

[00:21:52] You know, I think when people look back at - high school is different - but when people look back at college, I think the biggest regret is not having taken advantage of that time to truly lean into learning. I was still in the mentality of the high school mentality that I had adopted, which was get good grades and then go have fun. You know, it was still about the grades. It wasn't actually about learning. And now, I mean, I love to learn. It's what I spend most of my time doing is learning new skills, learning new ideas, reading, listening to podcasts.

[00:22:26] So it's just kind of funny that I was in this place where you have unlimited resources and access to the most incredible knowledge available and people that really want to help you. And I just all I wanted to do is get the grade and go have fun with my friends.

Brody [00:22:41] What is your one most radical idea that you, if you could, would implement to change the way, it doesn't have to be American, but the education system in general.

Marc [00:22:51] A book that I love is the Glass Bead Game by Herman Hesse. And there's this character in it Joseph Knecht, who I think represents the ideal teacher. And it's more a teacher as a guide, a teacher as an example, rather than a teacher as a disciplinarian. I think that the education system would really benefit from a movement towards that kind of mentality around teaching.

[00:23:19] If I had to, if I had to, to make a radical change to the education system in America, I would make learning self-directed. I would I would have a teacher that's a generalist whose responsibility is to teach students how to learn. And then I would leave the students to be responsible for what they learn. I think that to me would radically improve our education system. We learn we're forced to learn so much. I think a lot of the kind of ADHD, you know, medicated student body, is because you're just the topics that you're learning in most public schools today in the states are just not relevant, not useful when you're older. And if you had the ability to actually truly follow your curiosity and self-direct your own learning with the teacher as a guide, not necessarily like the knowledge expert, I think that would be incredible. And I think what will guide that is I believe that will all have kind of like I call it, a Joseph Knecht in your pocket. So, I mentioned Joseph Knecht earlier, but I think all of us will have our own AI in our pocket that will help guide,



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that will be kind of growing and learning with us and customizing our own experience around how we learn and what's best for us to learn. I think anybody with a mobile phone will be able to have that. And I believe that, of course, for underprivileged communities, for black and people of color communities, if we're being frank, that's what the word underprivileged really covers up, and I think that's relevant to say at this time. You know, access to Internet, access to mobile phones, that's extremely important. Every school district should have that access, possibly for free, probably for free. And then this kind of self-guided learning could pop off, could take off like that.

Brody [00:25:07] Is there any way that students could do something really similar to that right now or just in school in general, or do you think it's not possible?

Marc [00:25:15] Ye ah, I mean, I think I think there are electives, so I don't know. In high school, I remember I had a couple of electives. I just took the easiest class I could because the rest of my classes were so hard. It's just hard, you know, and I remember the life that you're probably living. It's just it's regimented. It's all day. You have nonstop work. You're competing with really bright kids for limited spots in a small number of schools, so you're just so focused on the execution that it's hard, it was it's hard to follow the curiosity. But if you're you know, like if you're not playing a sport, there's three hours after school where you could be doing anything. You could be going to learn how to code. You could be going to learn how to make films. You could be making films. I think learning by doing is also a fantastic I mean, you have the Internet at your fingertips. You have unlimited access to the world's information and catalog of knowledge and how to videos on YouTube. You could be learning how to how to start a regenerative farm in your backyard, you know, teaching yourself those skills.

[00:26:20] And I guess my other one regret, if I had one regret, it would be that I was invited to a computer science program through Cisco in high school that I didn't participate in because I just didn't want the extra work. But, you know, I can't code. And I think that a lot of people that I really respect say that coding is the new literacy. So, if you don't know how to use a computer, if you don't know how to code, I think that's something that I would definitely invite high school students to learn, because then you can create. You can just create so much in this world of bits if you know that language. It's something actually I've been thinking about because I love language. And, you know, I as an adult, I continue to learn. I don't actually believe that you stop learning in your adult life. It's like what keeps me motivated is learning and improving. So, it might be time for me to learn how to code. I just don't know if it's the best use of my time right now because there's so many other people that can do it. But it's something I'm considering.

Brody [00:27:19] Is there any hobbies and interests you have off the side that you wouldn't count as work really?

Marc [00:27:26] One, I love languages, so I'm currently studying French. Something that I do in my free time really has nothing to do with work, it has more to do with my personal life. I play music, guitar, piano. I love to snowboard. I love to run. I love hiking, going out in nature and practicing yoga. I also love writing. Right now, I write for the podcast, I do it



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every week, but I love to free write and just share my thoughts, journaling, things like that. So, I have quite a few hobbies.

Brody [00:28:01] More than me. You mentioned you were a yoga teacher earlier, which is so cool and question I always wanted to ask a yoga teacher is how do you deal with students who may seem like they're struggling or not having a good time?

Marc [00:28:16] Yeah, that's a great question. I think that it's important for yoga teachers and yoga students to understand that at the end of the day, we are responsible for our own practice. And so, something that was really interesting for me when I became a teacher was having been just mostly on the other side as a student. You know, the instructor walks into the front of the room and there's this immense amount of trust put on this person who you've never met simply because they are the yoga teacher. And when I finally got to the other side after my two-hundred-hour training and I was the yoga teacher, it was really interesting to feel through as I'm standing, walking the class through postures, my own nervousness and my own feelings of imposter syndrome while I was up there. Or hearing that voice in my head saying, oh, you said the wrong limb first or oh, you said that wrong or whatnot, what I would call kind of the critic.

[00:29:25] And so that was really interesting for me, because oftentimes, you know, you walk into a yoga class and at the end of the class, you want to thank the teacher like, oh, that was amazing. Or if it doesn't go well, you blame the teacher. But in the end, we are really responsible for our own practice. One thing I was taught that it's important when students come up to you at the end of class to thank you, that you remind them that it was them. You know, you didn't do anything. You were just there to guide. And so, for students that are that are struggling in practice, I invite them to one to remember to breathe, because oftentimes we're struggling in a posture. It's super challenging and we forget the breath, which is the most important part of the practice. It doesn't even matter if you decide that you just want to drop down into child's pose for the entire class and just breathe. You know, that would be in and of itself a practice.

[00:30:22] Yoga is, according to the first Yoga Sutra of Patanjali, Yoga Chitta Vritti Nirodha: yoga stills. The patterning or the fluctuations of the mind. And so that is the practice. Asana, the physical practice is just a very small piece of that. So, I actually also would say that struggling in the physical postures is all a part of it. It's getting it's finding ease through discomfort. So, I remind them of that. I remind them to be kind to themselves, not to try to force anything, especially if they're feeling pain, because I would say most of us default towards the mindset of, I'm not doing enough or I'm not worthy or I'm not good enough rather than the opposite, which is I have done too much. And so, I think as a yoga teacher, part of my responsibility is to help counteract that voice of the critic and to be kind to my students.

Brody [00:31:18] So how long have you been meditating?

Marc [00:31:20] So I've been meditating on and off for, I want to say, eight years now. You know, I wouldn't say that I've successfully meditated every day during that time period, but,



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Brody [00:31:30] What counts as a successful meditation?

Marc [00:31:32] Well, just sitting, you know, just actually sitting and meditating or if you have a walking meditation, but just in a certain amount of time, setting the intention that this is a meditation and nothing else. Once you're there, that's for me is successful, even if it's just a minute. But there is a lot of days when I feel too busy to meditate. And that, of course, is like the classic. If you're too busy to meditate, that's when you need to meditate the most.

Brody [00:32:00] And what practice do you do?

Marc [00:32:02] So I do a variety of practices similar to my working life. I just follow my curiosity. And sometimes I'm doing a Vipassana practice where I'm just sitting and observing sensations as they arise in my body, observing my thoughts.

[00:32:17] Other times I do breathe work, Pranayama practice. It's called Pranayama, Prana being the energy that flows through all beings and it usually rides on the breath in the yoga tradition. And the breath is really cool because it is an unconscious bodily function that we have the ability to take conscious control over. And so, in that way it connects our mind and body through the breath. So, if I know that if I'm feeling anger, my breath will shorten and become more rapid. And it's basically a psychological sensation having a physiological impact on my body. I also know that the opposite can be true. By intentionally lengthening my breath, I can create more of a sense of calm in my body.

Brody [00:33:12] How old were you when you started meditating?

Marc [00:33:15] So I'm thirty-two now, so I was twenty-four when I started meditating. I mean, I had I had done meditation practice in college, so around like 20. But yeah, it wasn't, it wasn't a regular - I want to meditate consistently- until about the time I was twenty-four.

Brody [00:33:32] Do you wish. I mean obviously the answer is yes, do you wish that you had started meditating when you were younger and if so, when, when is the exact point that you wish you had started meditating?

Marc [00:33:44] So I don't wish that I had started meditating younger,

Brody [00:33:47] Really. OK,

Marc [00:33:48] Because I think like everything in its right time, you know, I found it when I needed to. But what I would what I would offer, and invite is, is starting meditation at the youngest possible age I think is, it's an incredible tool to use to better understand yourself. And when we better understand ourselves, we can make more sense of the world around us. And I think that's a really important, really important skill that we cultivate a lot of rote memorization in our schools. But why not give students the opportunity and space to



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practice self-discovery? I think it could start immediately, like from you know, from the time that you're basically self-aware.

Brody [00:34:33] And you actually totally corrected me there where you said you would prefer to meditate. And it's that mindset where anything that happens to you is happening for a reason and it's all for the best. Eventually, I assume you're of that mindset?

Marc [00:34:47] Yeah, I mean, I would be lying to your listeners if I if I said that I don't go through times when I reflect on the past and think, what if what if I had done this differently? What if I had chosen that other path? But at the end of the day, that exercise is actually just a waste of energy. It's the practice of fantasizing on a reality that doesn't exist. And so, I choose to channel that energy, which requires a lot of energy. I choose to channel that energy into the practice of creating a future that I desire and appreciating the present that I have.

[00:35:22] And so when those things come up, I try to redirect. I try to say, OK, but what about that "what if" is teaching me something that I actually desire. And then if I desire that, what can I change in my present to get closer to that? So, might be, oh, I wish that I had made this business decision because I would have made more money. Then I'm like, OK, so maybe I'm feeling a little bit like I don't have enough right now. What can I do to change that reality for myself? Or what can I put a gratitude practice in place that reminds me of everything that I do have. And I think the reason why people say they wouldn't change a thing is because they have an appreciation for where they're at. And we just don't know, like we're here on this blue ball being hurled around a flaming ball of fire, all of the billions and zillions of micro interactions and transactions and serendipitous contacts that had to happen for us to even be in this space speaking right now, it's like who are we to say that that should be any different? And you just don't know what? I might not even be alive if I had changed any of my past.

[00:36:38] So that's not to say I don't get into nostalgic times when I'm like, oh, I really wish I had done that differently because I do, you know, and I think we're all human. And that's just like human nature. But and I also want to add, I don't I think it's actually quite important to reflect on mistakes. I think people avoid, we avoid kind of what I would call shadow work, which is like we make a mistake and then we don't actually evaluate what happened and how we can do better next time.

Brody [00:37:02] Absolutely. Yeah, I've marketed a lot of this as "successful people". And, you know, I always do air quotes when I say that. What does success mean to you personally?

Marc [00:37:15] Yeah, it's something that I think a lot about. It's something that I think is a life's exploration. And it's a it's a moving target. It will continue to change over time. You know, I think it's easy to succumb to the external pressures and the validation that comes along with achieving success monetarily. You know, that's, of course, the classic definition of success in our Western culture. And I don't have any problem with making money. I think it's important to be able to sustain yourself in life. But for me, I. I would I would



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measure the success of my life as laying on my deathbed, surrounded by people that I love, who love me, even if it's only like four or five or two. With zero regrets. With complete peace moving on from this life, knowing that I did my best, knowing that I loved and was loved, knowing that I cared.

Brody [00:38:16] Would you say you have any regrets right now?

Marc [00:38:18] Yeah. I mean, we talked about this, right? Like I mentioned, not learning computer science, the failure of certain, you know, companies, not having achieved that financial level of success that I would have liked at this point in my life, as some of your other guests might have. But I have to constantly remind myself that that's not what it's about, you know. There's focus on what I have done. And we are in the end, kind of to this point of success. We're human beings. We're not human doings. And so, I think we often fall into this trap of judging our lives and our self-worth by what we've done lately. And really, at the end of the day, I think it's important to constantly remind yourself that you are worthy just by being you. That you are the best version of Brody that can exist on this planet. There's no other Brody out there, at least in this dimension. So, nobody can do it better than you, man.

Brody [00:39:16] So let's say not the best, because that's always hard to think of. But what for you is a really important character trait that you think everyone in the world should have.

Marc [00:39:30] I think compassion there's a word in Sanskrit called Ahimsa, it's part of the basically yoga tradition has its own Ten Commandments. They're called the Yamas and Niyamas. They're not so much commandments as they are invitations or values. And they guide your action, your individual action, and then your actions and behavior in relationship to others. And Ahimsa is compassion.

[00:40:04] And I think if you are able to bring compassion into all that you do and I and I intentionally avoid the word empathy, because one can be empathetic but not compassionate. The reason why I think compassion is important is because we are in a world where tribalism is being accelerated and exacerbated by social media, where narratives are being pumped, and it's very challenging to make sense of what's true and what's not. And so, we need to compassionately hold space for where each one of us is at. And that compassion, mixed with patience, can allow us to get through any situation. And you can turn that compassion inwards as well, you know, when you have a quote unquote "failure" or when you are experiencing pain or suffering, Oftentimes the Buddha described suffering as the second arrow. So, if I were to kind of pull back the bow and shoot you with an arrow, your response would probably be to break the arrow and pull it out as effectively and painlessly as you could. Your response would not be to take an arrow out of your quiver and then to stab yourself with the arrow. Right?

[00:41:30] But in our emotional state, in our minds, we have this tendency when something doesn't go right for us, to then start to beat ourselves up over it. And that is suffering. So, if we can cultivate compassion for the mistakes that we make because we're human and it's



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inevitable that we're going to make mistakes, then we can live a healthier life mentally, a happier life. And we can apply that to other people and our relationships as well.

Brody [00:41:58] So if I'm understanding correctly, the difference between compassion and empathy in your mind is empathy is understanding other people and compassion is loving them for it, no matter what, even if you don't understand.

Marc [00:42:11] So compassion is not I wouldn't go so far as to say that you have to love everyone. It's something that I kind of wrestle with still, like there are some teachers in yoga that say everyone is everyone is a reflection of yourself. We are actually all one. We're connected by this universal force called the Brahman or Atman. Some people call it God or Spirit or universe or whatever. There's all different traditions that have different names for it. And so, when I'm looking at you, I'm in fact looking at me and therefore I should love you as I love myself. And the root of all the root of all hate is actually self-hate. There are some teachers that go as far as that, and maybe that's true.

[00:42:55] But there are other teachers, Thom Knoles in particular, who recently was saying, like, you don't need to love everyone, but it's important to be able to understand that they're living their own experience from their own perspective, with their own pain. And I don't know what it's like to walk a day in their shoes. And so, if I can have compassion for that, I don't need to embrace them. But I can at least I can at least protect myself from the pain of trying to change them, because I think the only thing that we have within our control is our capacity to change ourselves. We don't have the ability to change other people. So, when you have compassion is just a reminder of that. It's a reminder that they're having their own experience, they're having their own trip, as Ram Dass says. And so, you know, let them have it.

Brody [00:43:51] If you could teach kids right now to be successful and compassionate, what would you do?

Marc [00:43:59] If I could teach kids right now to be successful and compassionate?

Brody [00:44:04] What would like what kind of routine would you give them books to read?

Marc [00:44:09] Yeah, I mean, I would invite them to start taking notice and paying attention to themselves. So, if I could do anything to offer, you know, I would I would invite them to practice yoga. I would invite them to read the Stoics and the great philosophers in the West and the East. You know, Laozi (Lao Tzu) who wrote Tao Te Ching you know, recent philosophers like Emerson and Thoreau, the transcendentalists, and remind them that philosophy is or, the spiritual path, because I'm actually not an expert in philosophy, but the spiritual path is really about practice. And so, it's not just about learning these concepts, it's about applying them to your everyday life.

[00:44:57] And through practice, you know, whatever practice kind of draws you in, follow your greatest charm. Like, if it's if it's physical yoga practice, great. If it's sitting for 20 minutes in meditation, great. If it's a walking meditation, awesome. You know, all of those



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things are powerful tools. But I think I'd emphasize self-discovery and self-awareness over a collect collecting external knowledge because that will help you in all that you do in life.

[00:45:27] That was Marc Weinstein. If you want to hear more from Marc, please consider checking out his podcast, Look Up! On Spotify or any other streaming platform. Thank you so much for listening to this episode of Titans as Teens. If you want to learn more about the podcast or the other episodes, visit [TitansAsTeens.com](https://titansasteens.com) for tons of information and further reading.