



Jake 00:16

Thank you, Shreyas, for joining me on the podcast today and taking the time, I really appreciate it, you have worked as a product manager at stripe and Twitter, Google and Yahoo before that after starting your career as an engineer, you're also a startup advisor to several companies and angel investors and many more over the over the last decade or so. And you're also now teaching a course, through it, you've coached over I think, 2000 product managers after doing a lot of one on one coaching. Before that, I was listening to a podcast you did with Shane Parrish recently. And you defined your definition of success as basically having optionality with your time. And you know, asking yourself the question, if are you able to spend your time in the ways that you know sort of align most with your priorities at that given time. And so I'm curious, I think an interesting way to start the podcast today would be to talk about you know, how you've spent your time in 2023, and how you might like to spend it and 2024 if there's any differences and, and how you're spending it versus the past, and, you know, ideas for the future.

Shreyas Doshi 01:17

Yeah, thanks for having me, in terms of my time, I am now in the next chapter of my career. So the first chapter was really about working as an engineer and a product manager, product leader at various companies building products, mainly, and trying to make them successful. And then in 2021, I decided to embark on this next chapter of my career, which is not about operational role. And it's more about kind of almost synthesizing a lot of what I've learned over the years, and then helping others with it. And so that has taken the form of, let's say, if we take 2023, and I look back on sort of just merely the workflow, and I've spent 20% of my time advising startup founders, it's usually growth stage startups spend 60% of my time this year teaching, and about 10%, writing, and about 10% on business operations, because I now run a very small business. And there's a lot of operational tasks that need to get done. And I tend to, you know, deprioritize them as much as possible, they can, but they kind of need to get done. So I end up spending about 10% of my time on that. And, overall, I still work at a fairly fast pace, and usually work all seven days of the week. But that said, I have heard of scheduled flexibility. And I think that has been just an amazing experience to



have that flexibility with my schedule. So for instance, I can travel when I want to, although I actually don't travel all that much. And I can spend time with my teenager, wherever he's in the mood for that. I do a lot of pickup drop offs and handle most of the logistics for him with him and get to spend just a lot of time with him, then that's been a great gift as well. Looking forward to 2024 I expect it to be largely more of the same. So roughly the same type of time allocation, really. But there are perhaps a couple of differences I'll call out. So On the work front, I'll be offering a couple of new courses in 2024, including a course on product sense, and how to make better and more correct product decisions, and perhaps even run on communication and influence and some other possible courses. On the advising front, some of my formal advising is ending in 2023. So I'll be taking on a couple more advisory roles in the next year. But one other important thing I want to call out is that I'll be spending a lot more time in 2024 on my health. And so, as you're aware, like you know, we had to postpone the recording of this podcast a couple of times, mainly because I had doctor appointments and other things. So you know, I've had like, you know, not major health issues, but at least a couple of kind of health reminders over the past couple of months which are really made me realize that I gotta focus more on my health. And it isn't that I wasn't really health focused. But it's more of got to do even more of it. And so I do expect looking at 2024, I'll be spending more time on health and nutrition.

Jake 05:19

Right, yeah, I know, from my own experience, I've had like, sort of some chronic back and like sort of neck pain. And for me, it was like this catalyst to, you know, continue to try to do better and better on a health front where several years ago, you know, coming out of college, I had never really prioritize my health. And then I sort of took it one lever at a time starting with, you know, my nutrition and doing some intermittent fasting and things like that, and then getting into running and then more recently weightlifting. And it's just sort of been like stacking one thing on top of the other. And it still hasn't really solved the the original, you know, driver, which was like the back and the neck thing. But it's, like you said, I think it's not like a huge thing that prohibits me from doing what I want to do. But it's just kind of like this driving force. I'm curious, is



there any sort of levers that you have in mind for 2024, that you want to hold on to try to sort of increase the prioritization of health or I'm still figuring that out? Well,

Shreyas Doshi 06:16

as it turns out, I also have been suffering from some back pain, lower back pain. And in my 20s, it was mostly like, minor pain that I started feeling just before I caught up in the morning, and then it would just, you know, take care of itself go away within 1020 minutes of waking up. And so I asked doctors what to do. And their standard advice was like, oh, change your mattress, and it's like, No, I already have a pretty good mattress, and many of them weren't quite sure, they would just say, oh, yeah, go to physical therapy or something like that. But a couple of years ago, it's actually almost exactly two years ago, December of 2021. When I got a very scary back spasm, and basically was debilitating. It's the I told my wife that, as a male, this is the most pain I have ever experienced. And it was just excruciating. And I couldn't move, couldn't move, couldn't do anything. For almost a week, I had a couple of talks that I had to then postpone, unfortunately, and even though it's more than 1000, people that sign up for those talks, like I just had to postpone because I couldn't sit. And so, you know, I just started playing tennis, or I picked up tennis again around that time. And so I thought, oh, it's the tennis. And when I do play tennis, I'm like, you know, I go pretty hard. So. So I stopped playing tennis and went to the doctor. And it was the same recommendations as before, like, oh, go to physical therapy, and et cetera, et cetera, rest your back, blah, blah, blah. And so I tried all that was like properly doing a PT for a while. And then the back spasm happened again in three months afterwards. And again, I was just completely, just couldn't do anything whatsoever. So at that point, you start, like, first of all, you're really scared, like, which is like, what's wrong with this core part of my body? And second, will my life ever be the same again? So I was gonna go into those thoughts. And luckily, at the time, you know, I speak with Jim O'Shaughnessy, every once in a while. And I know, he's been on the podcast, and I was talking to Jim. And Jim asked me, when I told him about back issues. He said, Well, have you heard of Dr. Sardos work? And, and then as I wasn't aware of his work, and after that, I read his book, Healing back pain. And as I go, as I was



going through that book, in March, as I'm suffering from this back spasm, and just completely immobile, he lays out some criteria for, you know, people who suffer back pain where there's actually nothing physically wrong with their body. And it turns out that the pain is real, but it's actually initiated by your mind. And it happens to highly conscientious people who are very ambitious and who have a very high degree of emotional regulation. And so he had a bunch of criteria in the book of like, it typically tends to happen to, you know, folks who exhibit these kinds of traits and I'm going Check, check, check, check, check. It's like you are literally describing me. And so that's when I realize that oh, perhaps there is some value in this. And since then, I've realized that like my back pain is actually not a result of anything that's really wrong with my back. But rather, it is TMS tension, my own neural syndrome. And the wonderful part about all of this is like that the knowledge and recognition is the cure. So and the first thing they say is stop doing physical therapy, stop going to pt. So again, this is not medical advice, but I'm just sharing my experience that, you know, I realized that basically, a lot of my back issues are mainly a result of, you know, repressed emotions, feelings, repressed anger, and other things in my mind, which then manifests in the body.

Jake 10:51

Yeah, it's interesting, I remember, I read that book as well, like, maybe a couple of years ago, and it was refreshing because it takes like a very contrarian view versus most, most of what you would assume is sort of the issue if you have back pain. And for me, I guess I wasn't really able to apply it. I haven't noticed any, like meaningful improvements since then. But it's maybe worth a reread, because I do think it's very similar for me, certainly, some people do have actual physical issues that, you know, this is not going to solve, but for people like you, and I think probably myself, it's a great place to start. So highly recommend the book for those who haven't come across it yet. One more thing, and then I want to sort of dig in on this course that you've started and sounds like you've got more in the pipeline as well. But just in regards to how you've spent your time, you gave like various kind of specific percentages, I don't know if those were estimates, or if you have sort of a methodology or process by which you kind of track your time more consciously. So curious if



there's anything interesting there. And then, secondarily, to that, you mentioned sort of working seven days a week, but having that total flexibility, I'm curious if this is sort of an adjustment from previous sort of workstyle, where, you know, maybe when you were at stripe, or whatever, it was more of like the five days on two days off, or six days on one day off, sort of thing, if that's like sort of a new way of living for you to kind of treat every day the same and, you know, insert freedom to travel and flexibility to work out or pick up your kids where you want to, or if you've always been like, sort of seven days a week,

Shreyas Doshi 12:30

definitely not a seven days a week guy in the previous chapter of my career, definitely worked very hard, sometimes had to do very long hours. But at the same time, I was mostly able to be very productive, certainly, especially in the, you know, the last decade of my chapter one, I was able to be a lot more productive and effective without doing absolutely crazy hours, even when I was kind of leading, fast growing businesses and teams. So I have done my share of weekend work in the past. But what I'm doing now is very new to me. And, and it really stems from not even a decision to do it, it really occurs because of natural desire to do it, and particularly because, again, I run, you know, my own very small business, the way it really manifests is just this idea of like, Well, I'm excited to do this work today, whatever that might be. And plus there is also the if I do it, I will very clearly see XYZ benefit of doing it, whether it's additional revenue, or some kind of additional help or impact on others. So being able to see that very clearly. And usually, for the kind of work I do, the feedback loop is actually fairly tight. And so I think those are factors that cannot drive this, you know, tendency to work all seven days a week now in this new chapter of my career. More so than kind of the rational factors or some intentional decision that I'm going to do this. So I really think it's it kind of goes back to when when you there is deep degree deep interest and just overall innate passion for something. You just end up doing it because discipline, discipline is good and one must use discipline on a regular basis. But you can't just get by on discipline because there's only a finite amount of it and and you will tend to run out of it as, as I used to run out of discipline back in the first chapter of my career, where, yeah, sure,



I'll do weekends, you know, at times, but then at some point, I kind of like, you know, did not have the energy and the discipline to just like, continue doing that all just 52 weeks of the year.

Jake 15:21

It's interesting, there's a lot of parallels between us. I just recently, coincidentally, like, I have a whiteboard in my office where I put, you know, Monday through Friday, every week, and I kind of put like the big things that I want to get done on those days and sort of like prioritize that way, just so it's like, in my face throughout the week, and literally, like two days ago, I think it was I added Saturday and Sunday, because I just started to realize, like, you know, what, Saturday and Sunday, I don't need to treat them exactly the same as like a Monday, but there's no reason to, like not have priorities on those days. And just trying to view it more as a seven day week, because similar to you, like have my fair share of, you know, weekend work in the past, but like I came from an investment banking background, and so like Monday through Friday, you might work like or Monday through Thursday, at least in my work, like 10 to 10 or whatever. And then you really need that weekend to kind of, you know, unplug and you have some work, but it's not nearly the same as like a Monday or a Tuesday, I'm now that I'm sort of more in control of my time, like you are, it's like, well, you know, I have this work that I kind of want to do, like, there's no reason to restrict myself to Monday to Friday, I can spread it out over the course of the week. And if a Wednesday seems like the best day to take off that week, I can do that. And just, I think it's all aligned with the general trend, since the world kind of went remote through COVID that people can, for some people, I think, you know, they like to just have the routine of going into an office and maybe having, you know, being told what to do a little bit more. But for those who really enjoy and appreciate the autonomy over their time and the ability to manage their own time, it's like the greatest gift ever to a be able to work remote and then be if you do have the flexibility, sort of like do your own thing to just decide, you know, how and when, and, and where you want to do that. So moving on, I know, you you mentioned the course earlier, and I want to talk more about that. I understand you had actually, like been thinking about teaching ever since you were a kid. And obviously like sort of didn't act on that immediately in a huge way in terms of



your career, but I think you did TA for a little while. And that sort of confirmed your interest in teaching, he really enjoyed that. So what finally, like, triggered you to go and actually build this course, I think you're doing it on Maven. And it's basically targeting product managers, not people who want to become them, but people who already are them and how to sort of level up in their career and things like that, it's actually more focused on sort of career improvement than improvement as a pm in particular. So I'm curious sort of how you decided to actually start that how you decided on, you know, the subject matter for the course. And ultimately, it's, I believe it's the number one course on the platform on Maven. So huge success so far, and curious, some of the elements, you sort of brought into building that.

Shreyas Doshi 18:06

So when I in 2021, I decided I'll go down the unconventional path. And, you know, kind of start this next chapter of my career, I mainly started with advising. And, and by that time, mainly because of COVID, I had also started writing in 2020. And so, you know, I was spending my time advising and writing. And as I did that for about a year, I realized that there was a piece missing, in my, let's just say overall approach and strategy. And so the realization was that my advising was very deep. But with very few people, just by definition, you know, it's only going to be with a few founders and a few companies. But it was very deep and very high impact for that individual company. So that was one end of that kind of spectrum. The other end of it was the writing whose impact, you know, probably is not as deep for every individual who gets exposed to the writing. But over time, it became incredibly broad, with like, hundreds of 1000s of people kind of following my writing. And so the observation was that like, Okay, so I've got these two covered, but there is something missing in between, where I asked myself, What is a way for me to create more impact than my writing. But to do so with more people than the number of founders I can possibly advice. And so that's when I realized that Oh, Okay, the answer to this will be to teach. And the approach I took very early on, as I was thinking through it is, well, how will my teaching be different? And how will it? How will I differentiate myself? And so the answer for me was that I wanted my teaching, to feel like coaching, right. So while I cannot possibly, you know, Coach people



one on one anymore, I mean, I do good, some people, but it's very limited, I really wanted my teaching to feel like coaching, right, so for it to have the kind of deep impact that coaching does, but also to be able to do it at a reasonable amount of scale. And so, I use that as the guiding principle in designing my course. And, and, yeah, it's been really fun. You know, we've run nine cohorts of this course, already another cohort, the next cohort is coming up in January. And the current course is about managing your product career. So it is for PMS, product managers, but turns out, you know, hundreds of engineers, designers and other folks who work in, you know, work with products and work on products, have also found it very useful. And, again, really, the approach I take is, yes, it is about actually managing your career. But the section we spend the most time on, especially on the first day is about growing and increasing your competence. So, so you know, that is the core principle is that like, you know, the best way to manage your career over the long term is to become really great at the job. And then we talk about, you know, it's not possible to cover every single product skill over a weekend course, but we talk about ways in which unconventional ways in which, and structures with which and with which, and habits with which and frameworks with which you can intentionally grow your competence. And that just one of like, seven or eight core sections that we cover over the weekend. And, yeah, it's been really fun. On the second part of like, you know, how it ended up, how it has ended up being, you know, successful. You know, here's one observation. You know, after I started teaching, and the course started getting some traction, you know, folks have come to me, instructors, teachers of online courses. Might ping me, and they might ask for marketing tips, like, how do you market your course. And I've also seen, I'm part of some forums, you know, of folks who can teach courses. And I just sometimes will look through comments and questions. And most comments and questions from instructors are about, well, how do I market this thing? Right? I'll tell you, I don't think there's anybody who has sort of approached me and asked me shares, how do I build an amazing course? Right, so So I think there is something there, where I think what a lot of people start with, is, how do I market this thing? How do I sell this thing? And, you know, early on before, before I started teaching the course, by the way, I had no idea what teaching an online live cohort based courses like. So, you know, I partnered with the folks at Maven, and, you know, I talked to,



you know, the founders at Maven, who were incredibly gracious in sharing their perspective. But, you know, in, in those early conversations, my main questions to them, were just about, okay, so how do I make this great? Right, tell me, I want to learn how to make this great. That was the focus, right, not the marketing. Right. And I do think there one mistake that many people make is they kind of put the cart before the horse, and they're fixated on the marketing. And, you know, I will tell you that most courses can be significantly improved. In fact, even after nine cohorts, when I get together with my course team, to plan the next cohort, you know, the core thing we discuss is what are we going to improve in the next cohort, right, and what are we going to add? What's What are some creative new things that we're going to add and experiment with this time? What are some things we are going to drop? I'm not talking about content, I'm talking about the creating that experience of the course in addition to content, obviously, you know, content is always under work and in progress. But just like from an experience perspective, what are we going to create? So, so I do think that there is something there. And one last kind of thought I'll share on this topic of, you know, teaching a course and doing it in a way that really resonates with students and meaningfully improves their lives is, you know, go back to that cannot George Bernard Shaw, quote of like, those who can do and those who cannot teach? Right, and I think he wrote this in 1903. And, you know, perhaps, it was true, or it has been true. But I'll tell you, it is not true in this internet era. And here's why. Here's why. I do think that the best teachers will be also the best practitioners. So if you, if you cannot do the thing, right, or you haven't been able to do the thing, or if you had average degree of success, with sad thing. Odds are extremely high that in the Internet era, you are going to struggle, right now, you might still succeed, but you will be more that exception than the rule. And, and there is a reason why there is a logical reason why this is the case. And the reason is that, you know, if you take the average product manager, the average software engineer in almost any part of the world, like when I say average, I mean, the median, let's take the median product manager or the median software engineer, in almost any part of the world, they make a very decent income, luckily, right. But if you take the median online instructor, okay, the median online instructor, or if you take the median newsletter writer, that person



will make nearly \$0. And that's because when you're teaching online, there are no physical constraints. Right? So naturally, students will gravitate to the best two or three teachers out there in any niche, right? So even in a niche, students are going to gravitate towards the best two or three teachers out there. Right. And those teachers, those instructors, will make very good revenue. Right, but because with the internet, there are no physical boundaries, right, like the rest are going to struggle to sell seats for their online course. Right? So you see, students are not stupid, right? They can tell whether an instructor is actually great at their craft, and really knows their stuff. Right. And again, they're going to gravitate towards, you know, instructors who are great at their craft, they know their stuff, they've done this before, they're not merely teaching with some academic understanding of this thing, right? So I think it's important to like really recognize that, you know, if one is going to aspiring to be a teacher, or an online creator, etc, etc. And, you know, looking back, one thing I've found useful as one is kind of thinking about this, which is like, okay, so how do I build a great course, like, my recommendation is build your course, like you build a product, right? Build like, and for, particularly for product people, you already know how to hopefully you already know how to build a great product. Well, of course, is no different, right? Think of it like an experience that your students are going through. Right. And as a teacher, you are responsible for crafting that experience, right? So, you know, think intently about how you want them to be ready to learn. At what points in your instruction, do you especially want them to pay attention? And what are some hooks that you're going to create so that they pay attention? Right? How will you engineer moments that build confidence in your students at the right time? How will you engineer moments where perhaps you create some internal conflict and really get students to question that pre existing programming? Right, so so there is a lot of art to kind of building a course and again, the kind of core principle to follow is build your Lotus like you would build any product and try to make it successful that way.

Jake 30:04

So I think it's really interesting to the deliberate approach you took to, to creating it in the first place as well, where you just got like, some people might just be like, you know, hey, course, creating



courses seems to be like a thing now, and people are doing that, and you know, I can make some money. So maybe I'll go do that. But yours was very, your sort of, like origin of it was very organic, from basically asking, you know, how can I bring leverage to my coaching? And how can I bring personalization to my writing and sort of meet in the middle of these, these two polls, and hopefully deliver something that's maybe even more valuable, you know, to more people and in a deeper way than the neither of those things are able to do. So it's a really interesting origin story. And sounds like it's worked out extremely well, I know that you sort of have a contrarian view as well on, on writing content, and, you know, building an audience and an online following. And it's easy to like, go on Twitter, and you see these people with 1000s 10s of 1000s, hundreds of 1000s of followers, and you think, Oh, I gotta go, you know, build an audience of my own. And there's certainly a lot of value in that. But I think you have the perspective that, you know, I think even a few years ago, you didn't really have a huge online following. And yet, you were just as successful of a PM, as you know, you were, you know, a year after you started the following, and everything like that. So it doesn't take away from your ability to do great work and sort of build more of a private network. But maybe you could share a little bit about your thoughts on on writing content and sharing that publicly and building online following how people can kind of determine, you know, whether that's something they should be doing, or that they want to be doing, or when the right time is to kind of get started on that journey.

Shreyas Doshi 31:43

Yeah, and the, again, the core principle for that is, first be excellent. So if you're gonna write about whatever topic, like say, in my case, product management, right, like, and building products and leading teams and whatnot, you know, be excellent at it. Because when you are excellent at it, it shows in your writing, it just shows, right, and when you're not. The interesting part is that while you might get some engagement, because, you know, volume is easy, right? But I will observe that the really savvy people, right, the people who are the best in the business, the people who are in the, you know, sort of positions of influence. And the people you really actually want to kind of notice you. Those folks are very savvy. And they can tell, they can tell, just from your writing. That yeah, you may have



written some things, but you don't truly understand the things you've written about. Right? Or you, you haven't actually gone through the experience of what you've written about. So I do think that people sometimes can end up thinking, Oh, writing online is going to be positive for my career. And then yes, maybe you can amass you know, 1000 followers, 10s of 1000s of followers are even more than 100,000 followers. But it's not the volume that matters. It's the quality of your followership that like actually first matters if you are doing this to further your career. Right. And so that's a big if so, you know, folks to come to me and ask me, sometimes, like, oh, so, you know, as part of kind of thinking about my career and furthering my career, how important is my online brand and my online followership? And so I'll share with you what I share in those types of conversations, which is, first, I would say that if this is your passion, if you absolutely love it, right, which is writing online or posting content online, if it fills your life with joy, just do it. Right? No need to ask me. You know, just do it. Because joy is important. And if you derive joy from it, just do it. Now, I'll tell you, this doesn't apply to most people. Most people are typically, you know, feeling guilty that they don't post online enough or they're not really investing in their online brand. And they feel a sense of resistance and they they wonder to themselves like Wait, should I overcome this resistance? Right? So if somebody falls in kind of that category, then what I'll first ask them and and like have them evaluate is are you top 10%? In your craft? In your work? Top 10%? Top 5% Whatever, right? Like, are you really great? Right? And if you are, if you are, say you are a top 5% Product Manager or say you're a top 5% Engineering Manager, then I will beseech you to please write online or put out content online. Right, because we need that I will follow you, right, I will learn from you. Right, and I want others to learn from you, I want the industry at large to learn from you. But let's say that is not the case. Right? So where we are in the decision tree is like, this is not something that you derive massive amounts of personal joy from. And second, you are not yet a Top 5% Top 10% person in in your field. Okay. Now, if you want to think about it rationally, it's a question of opportunity cost. Right? Because any choice we make precludes a different choice we could have made, because your time is finite. Right, so So sometimes people make the logical error of seeing somebody's Twitter thread, about how writing online opened all sorts



of doors for them. And, you know, got them interviews or whatever else, right, like, so like concrete doors, not meaning like actual open doors that otherwise wouldn't have been open. Not just like, some famous person followed them or whatever. But this was actually positive for my career in XYZ ways. Right? And great, like, it's great that, you know, writing online was positive in XYZ ways you got this interview, etc, etc. Or this founder reached out to you and whatnot. But the real question is, at what cost? Did this happen? Right? Where else could you have invested your time, perhaps for an even better return? Right? So again, if we've established that you're not yet top five, top 10% In, in your craft? How might you have been better off if you actually invest the time in actually building competence? And doing actual side projects, like building products or other things, right, improving your product sense, or improving your influence skills, or whatever else? And I think people sometimes underestimate, like, just how much they can grow their competence. And so to me, that kind of last part is about opportunity costs. Yeah, sure. You can post online and amass you know, 1000s 10s of 1000s of followers. And sure, you can show me some case where you got an interview, let's say actually take it further than that, right, which is like, let's say you're looking for a job, and you have a decent online following, etc. And now you got a few interview calls because of that. Let's say there is a company that kind of hired you, in part because they were impressed with your online writing and your online followership, right, like, or the number of your 50,000 followers. So they were, at least in part, it's not the only real only reason, but at least in part, they were influenced by that you like, ask yourself, like, is it a good thing that that happened? Right, because a company that actually had somebody, you know, again, factors in their online following into the hiring decision, is a company that will likely make other such errors in hiring, they're not just going to do this for you. They're gonna make other such errors in hiring for other roles, right? And so is this especially if it's a startup? Is this startup likely to succeed? Right, because if you're a startup, particularly, you should be hiring based on competence and ability. Right in the actual job. So I do suggest that people really think hard about this opportunity cost. And the last thing I'll share here is that sometimes, you know, somebody will say, but shares what about you like you're not being consistent because like you have a very large



following. And so what's going on with that? But the reality is that I did not for four 95% of my product career, I did not have a large following, I was focused on doing the job and making product successful and making teams successful. And in my spare time, again, thinking about opportunity cost, I was more focused on certainly I was on Twitter since 2007. I love Twitter since 2007. But I was more focused on consuming and learning. Right. And there were some times when I came out of my cave and kind of posted some content. So there was a time in 2010, when I did a talk. And then there was another time in 2018, when I did another talk, right, and posted some kind of net new content in the field. But it was only in 2020, after COVID started, and I had like a spare a couple of hours that I actually started writing, in fact, had COVID not happened, like, you know, I wouldn't have started writing until much later. So So I think, again, people don't quite understand, like the order of things, right. Like, perhaps the reason why my writing resonated as soon as I started writing in 2020, is because like, I had had that experience, and that worked on building that competence. So those will be some ways in which you can kind of logically think through this decision for yourself.

Jake 41:21

Yeah, I would even add to the first part of what you said, this is, you know, my perspective, maybe, or maybe not yours, but to the point about like doing it, you know, if it gives you joy, and if you enjoy doing it, then just go for it. Because at the end of the day, you know, that's sort of important enough, and there will probably be other benefits from it. But if you just enjoy it, then just do it, the thing that I would add on that, like an angle, I would add, in my own experience, at least is that also, it's it doesn't need to be even so black and white it can be do it in the way that you enjoy it. So some people might go and you know, post content that, you know, they feel like is the right content that they should be posting or something like that. And maybe that's not enjoyable for them. But if they were doing it in another way, if they were posting a different type of content, maybe that'd be an enjoyable and for me, certainly that's been a large factor in sort of the way that I've chosen to do the podcast where I focus on the pieces of it that I would do, even if there was never going to be a bigger audience or anything like that.



Or even if there was really no sort of return on it, it's the parts that I enjoy doing that I continue to do. And if over time that builds a larger audience, then that's great. And if it doesn't, that was never sort of an implicit part of my agreement from the get go, I'm just kind of doing what I like to do in terms of content creation, what I don't like to do is like sort of spend a bunch of time creating custom thumbnails. And, you know, like creating a Twitter thread based on a blog post that I wrote, because I just like writing the blog post, like I don't really like making it, you know, bite sized or whatever else it might be. And so for some people, the answer to whether or not you enjoy creating content may be somewhat nuanced. And it might be like, well, this type I enjoy in this type, but I don't. And if you can focus on the part that you enjoy, and everything else from what you just said sort of applies, then I think that's, you know, a great reason to go forward. And you can sort of gradually work into it, which it sounds like is sort of what you've done over the years where you started, you kind of dabbled you were mostly on Twitter, kind of consuming, but occasionally you would do something and then over time, you're like, Okay, I'm ready. And it's time to really post a lot of this stuff that I'm writing, and everything like that. So I think it can be it is very much a matter of timing, like you said, and I think, yeah, it's just something that that I keep in mind in terms of my content approach from from the early days. So I know we're coming up on time soon. But we'd love to go through a few concepts that I've learned from you through through your sharing of content over the years. And I think they're just really interesting concepts that I haven't really heard you speak about too much else elsewhere. The first one would be the curse of brilliance. So maybe you could talk a little bit about that.

Shreyas Doshi 44:06

Yeah, so the curse of brilliance is the observation that when somebody highly successful and prolific is analyzing or sharing what makes them successful and prolific. They unwittingly tend to overemphasize the things that they found very difficult. And they under emphasize, they underplay or altogether ignore the important sort of things at which they were naturally brilliant. Okay, so and I'll share a couple of examples to kind of make this concrete because I think as we were talking about content and consuming content, I do think that it is



very essential in the This age of exponentially growing content, that we become more critical thinkers about the content, and what it means and what content to apply, and what content to perhaps take with a grain of salt, even if that content is coming from somebody who's otherwise extremely successful at whatever it is that they did, right. So like, you know, and the way I kind of discovered this idea of the curse of brilliance is, you know, is this code that gets shared often online, and if you share it on Twitter, you're guaranteed to get a lot of likes, which is, it goes something like when art critics get together, they talk about form and structure and meaning. But when artists get together, they talk about where you can buy cheap turpentine. Okay, so this is like one code that kind of tends to get shared. And, you know, apparently Discord is attributed to Picasso. And the point is, like, you know, people hear this, they get impressed. And they conclude that if you want to be great at something, if you want to be Picasso, you should ignore all the abstract stuff, which is like firm structure and meaning whatever it is, you should ignore all that abstract crap. And you should just focus on the tactics that the great ones employ. Right, the tactics being, you know, hey, where can I get cheap? turpentine. Right. And in in the business world, it's like, hey, what's the process for getting this done? Right, or, like, you know, help me understand this tactic, right? Give me tactics, give me things that I can use tomorrow. Right, whatever it might be. So that's like one quote, the other one that had bugged me for a while is this whole. Again, this gets a lot of likes, which is amateur stock strategy and professional stock logistics. Right? And so the idea being that like, well, if you want to be a true professional, you should fixate on logistics and operations, right. And it's all those McKinsey types that just like don't actually do much that talk strategy, and they are amateurs. Right? And so my observation is that these kinds of conclusions are just basically flawed and harmful. Okay. And so, you know, getting into the reason why the reason why, right, like, okay, so why do il seven great artists get together? Why do you think they talk about where you can buy cheap, turpentine? And why do you think they skip over all the abstract stuff, right, like, whatever that ends up being, form structure, meaning, right, according to that code. But the real reason is that these are gifted artists. They have a gift or gifts that very few human beings ever been possess. And yet, because they are artists,



they tend to be poor. And so therefore, they talk about cheap turpentine. They don't need to discuss the form and structure and meaning because they just get it, they are gifted with that. Right. And it's similar with the professionals talking about logistics, because real professionals, they have a deep strategic sense, which is why they even reached a stage where you would call them up on stage and have them speak to you. Right, so what happens to people when they're asked now this is a poor question to ask, but it still gets asked all the time, which is, okay, so what is the reason for your success? Right, so you ask somebody incredibly prolific a billionaire founder, right, like, like, what were the ingredients for your success? Again, very poor question, but it tends to get asked all the time in interviews. Well, here's the reality, right? Number one, say if it's like a billionaire visionary founder who's asked this question, right. Oftentimes, until they are, like old enough and mature enough people don't even understand their innate gifts. that caused them to have that like extreme outlier success. Right, because in order to reach that this person would have had to have, like an especially if they've done it consistently, it's not a fluke, they would have had to have exceptional intuition and instinct, and creativity. Insight. Right. And such a brilliant visionary founder, they can see something that nobody else can see, they saw something that nobody else saw such a brilliant visionary person, right? They take these kinds of gifts for granted. Like they didn't, they kind of don't even know that they exist, because they think everybody operates that way. Right? So that's one reason. And so, what they often will end up sharing are the things that were tough for them. Right. So, they will talk about the grind, right, like and they will talk about the, you know, operations as they were scaling the business, right. And so, they will talk about the grid, right, they will talk about the determination, etcetera, etcetera. And granted, like, all of those things are very vital. Right. But we cannot confuse necessary and sufficient conditions. Right, so, so, that's one thing, the other reason why people end up over emphasizing these, these things, like, you know, they'll say luck. They'll say, grit, they'll say, you know, like, building a great culture, they'll say, you know, building an awesome execution machine are running operations, right? Like, these will be the responses of like lessons learned, or what, like, enable your success or what have you. There's another reason why this all of



these things are being said, right, especially the luck thing, right? Because it is the popular answer to provide. Right? Because like, Look, if if somebody asked you, like, hey, what makes you so amazing? at XYZ? And if you said, well, it was my creativity. Right, or it's my cognitive empathy. Or it's some like skill core skill. In most parts of the world, it's not going to be a popular answer. Right. But if instead, if you just say that it was luck, like I consider myself really lucky, right? That gives other people hope that gives the audience hope. Right? Because if you say creativity, which is actually the truth, right? But if you say that it's not going to be the popular answer. So understand that whether it's unintentional, or intentional, this curse of brilliance, strikes in many, many situations, and in a lot of pieces of content, that gets shared. Right. And and one last thing I'll share here, and this is very unfortunate, we live in, in sort of most, you know, places around the world. We don't talk openly about what we are great at, even if we understand it. And we are doing a disservice to others. Because if people don't understand what the real ingredients of being great at this craft are. And if we keep saying, Well, it's great. And it's like, you know, you know, just working day in and day out on your operations, or it's luck, right? You're kind of miss guiding them. Sure, they love to hear it. But it's not actually helping anybody if anything, it's hurting. Right. So as you evaluate as you review content online, along these lines, I want you to understand the curse of brilliance.

Jake 54:22

Yeah, I think that's a fascinating perspective. I I totally understand, you know, when people are asked, What made them successful, resonate strongly that the answers are very much what you said they are, it's people will say, Well, you know, I got really lucky or I was very fortunate to have these people around or whatever it might have been, because the alternative sounds basically arrogant or, you know, something like that. But I agree with you completely. It's a disservice to those who actually want to know, if for no other reason to determine, do I have what it takes basically to do that thing. But this person did. And if it's just a matter of luck, then maybe I can get just as lucky as the next guy. But if it's a matter of having sort some core competency or brilliance that I just don't have, that's an extremely useful answer to receive, because the opportunity



cost of not having that answers, basically spending your entire life gunning in a direction that you really just don't have the chops for. And so when people respond to that question, with luck, you know, at the very least, I'm always interested in kind of the follow up question of, well, how did you get lucky? You know, it was it, usually they're not talking about, hey, you know, I was born in, you know, California around the time of, you know, the internet or something, which is, you know, that's more of a form of blind luck. And there isn't a real element of luck there. But a lot of what people are sort of categorized under the header of luck, is actually opportunities that they generated from for themselves, possibly from that, you know, brilliance that they have, or some, you know, very specific sort of decisions that they made of, you know, how to what to do with their life, and you know, how to do that, and whatever it might have been, how to apply what they're best at, in their life. So that's, it's a really interesting concept. And I know, I'll certainly keep it in mind. On the

Shreyas Doshi 56:15

topic of on that topic of luck, particularly, when somebody says luck, in a way, technically, they're not wrong. But they're wrong in the way that they frame it. So most people, when they say luck, then they will cite and then interview our interviewer ask Tell me more. And so they cite events. Right, oh, well, this happened. And I was in this building at this time. And then, you know, this person observed me, and then they funded me, or this person promoted me whatever the case may be, they cite events, right? Even take the example of like, well, you know, like, I was lucky because I was born in California during the 80s, or 70s, or 60s or whatever. Right. And I was born in Silicon Valley, whatever the case might be, that is an event. Well, guess what? Millions of babies were born, you know, in that circumstance, right. So why did this happen with you? And not with the other million babies? Right? The actual answer is luck. But not in the way that it's expressed or understood. The the real answer is the innate talents, and abilities, and particularly superpowers. Right, you did not choose them? Really, you did not choose them. You know, for world class levels, I'm talking about world class, everybody can improve their creativity, just like everybody can improve their jump shot in basketball. But not everybody can be Steph Curry. I don't care how



much you practice. Right. So, so I think it's important to understand that like, when they are saying luck, they're right, but not in the way they say it is. Right? It's just that they were lucky enough to be blessed, are born with the right ingredients. And, you know, in terms of events, perhaps they were lucky enough that the environment did not screw it up. Right. And as long as the environment does not screw it up, these people are going to do fine, right? Because they'll find that path. So like, even this topic of luck is so nuanced. And most people don't think about it that way. They just take the oh, this event occurred in my life, and therefore, you know, it led to this grand success.

Jake 58:57

Right, and well, once you know, as well, once once you understand that underlying version of the lock answer, that's actually true, I think you can go and you can ask yourself the more important question of to your point, you know, okay, I might not be able to, no matter how hard I practice, I won't be able to shoot like Steph Curry, but in what area? Are you? Do you have Steph Curry potential? And then, you know, to your point, there is a large luck component to that some people, you're sort of born. I think it sounds like you agree with this, which you know, would be my perspective as well, which is that you're sort of born with some, you know, I personally think everyone is born with tremendous potential. But what that potential looks like is very different. It's not just like one you know, line of potential it's all these different potentials and all these different areas and to be able to identify to ask yourself that question, be able to identify along what lines do I have that Steph Curry potential, then can guide where you spend time in your life getting better at the things where you're seeing The link is, you know, top percentile or top point 0001 percentile in the world. And so it becomes actually an extremely valuable question, ask yourself once you can sort of dig a few layers into the nuance. Another concept that I've come across from yours is this concept of using stack rank. And so could you talk a little bit about sort of how that's been useful for you in, in career and in life.

Shreyas Doshi 1:00:29



So I've observed that when, whether this is in kind of life and personal situations or in business situations, when we start talking about something, whatever the topic might be, we tend to attach a higher degree of importance to setting than it actually warrants. Right. And so I started observing this a few years ago. And then I came across the focusing illusion, which was, I believe, kind of shared and popularized by Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky. And it basically says, nothing in life is as important as you think it is, while you're thinking about it. And when I saw that, I said, aha, yes, this explains a lot of what I've seen in product work, even when we're deciding, so you know, Hey, should we build X. And here's how it manifests, right? Like, somebody comes in, maybe it's the sales team and says, like, very important customer has asked for X feature, whatever x is. And so then now we start discussing X and how we might implement it, and how many resources will require. And, you know, like, how we might get those resources, because we have something else to do, and whether it's even a good idea to do X, right, etc, etc. And in almost every such interaction, what we kind of fixate on is just this idea of x. Right? And we don't think about the other options. Okay. And so, so that leads to highly unproductive conversations, and slower decision making. And bad decision making, right. And so I perhaps share an example of where this idea of stack rank came in, as a solution to this problem. Right, and I'll share two examples, actually, from my experience at stripe. So the first one was that, you know, at stripe, when I would talk to customers, they would talk a lot about a certain feature being really important for them. So oftentimes, I would also see, like, you know, PMs and engineers, and others kind of like then taking that feedback, and then sharing it with, say, the executive team that like, oh, we are really hearing that. X is very important for customers. Right. And so I started noticing that, you know, sometimes then that proposal would get green lighted. And now we build that feature x. And it turns out, nobody's using it. Right, and you go back to the people who said that they will use x and say, hey, now this thing, remember, you asked about this, now this thing is available. And this happened to me too. You know, you go back and you ask them, you tell them, this thing you asked for is available now. So go ahead and use it. And they say, Oh, yes, thank you. Thank you for building this. You're the best. And we are going to use this. But right now we have some operational challenges or some



some other challenges. And so we have prioritized this for the next quarter. Okay, so you say great, let's talk next quarter. So you go back to them the next quarter. And it's the same story, which is, oh, yes, yes, we still have intend to use this thing. But we have some other problem that we are dealing with and that's a higher priority. And so therefore, we are going to focus our efforts there. But don't worry like this is this feature is something we really need. And we hope to use it. And you kind of like in this story should sound familiar to people who, especially for people who build b2b products, business to business products. And so as I personally experienced this, and I saw many product people, many otherwise smart product, people experienced this, I started asking myself, why is this happening. And that's when I realized that like, actually, you know, when, again, it's the focusing illusion, which is when you ask a customer, or when a customer tells you about a certain problem, you are focused on that problem, at the exclusion of all the other problems that the customer is facing. And when you focus on that problem, again, according to the focusing illusion, it will seem important than it truly is. Right? So so then I started thinking, Okay, so what's the solution to this? How do I make better and more rigorous product decisions? Because I know I cannot change every single customer, customers are going to say what they say. Right? So how do I figure that out? So that's when I kind of stumbled across this simple but profoundly powerful tool of stack ranking, right, which is in roughly the way it would work in this situation, is at the end of this conversation about this problem, x, you say thank you for sharing this. And what I'd like to understand is, we've talked a lot about this problem, particular problem, and I have a lot of information now, and a lot of context on it. But what I'd like to do now, and you can even do it on a follow up conversation, what I'd like to do is to be able to have some sort of stack rank of the problems that you or your org are currently facing. Right? So could you could you first describe those other problems to me? Right, and once they describe the other problems, then you ask them to stack rank them, like, which is the highest importance, which is the highest priority? What is the most burning issue? What is the next? What is the next and what is the next after that? Right? So that's kind of like how you can you know, stack rank. And so I call this the customer problem, stack rank CPSR. Right. And what happens when you actually force that



conversation is, you might realize that this thing, this feature x that you know, you spend a ton of time talking about, it's actually not even their number one or number two or number three priority. It is a priority, but it's not the number one number two priority. And practically, what happens for most businesses, is that they barely get a chance to work on their first or second or third party in any given quarter. Right, so So while everybody was being honest, and earnest in this conversation, like without this stack ranking, it is extremely difficult to identify whether it's the smart call to build this or not. Right, and I mentioned this at the level of a feature, but I also have observed, there are so many b2b and SaaS startups that are basically destined to fail, destined to fail. Regardless of how well they execute, they're destined to fail, because they start off addressing a problem, which is never going to be among the top 3456 concerns for significant number of businesses. So then, what chance do you have, like, you can build a beautiful product, and you can do everything right in your execution. But if you haven't really stack rank the customers actual problems. It's not gonna work. Right. So that was one example of like, you know, this was obviously over a period of like, a couple of years, where I kind of then discovered the power of a stack rank. I'll share one other example. That's more related to privatization, you know, and ongoing privatization, which is and this wasn't initiated by me, this was, you know, we had a sort of somebody who was an engineering leader at stripe, you know, in around 2016 or so, and they observed that, you know, there was just too much for us to do. And so, they proposed like basically a simple tool, which I thought was brilliant was this ongoing stack rank, right OSR it used to be called and essentially what it was was like at a certain level set the level of like, the company or whatever, what is the stack rank of projects, right, what is the most important and what is the least important? The reason this was powerful, is that without this, any new thing that came in, used to be discussed in isolation, and then it was a painful conversation and it is never clear, like what the right answer is. And you'd have meetings upon meetings sometimes. And you're still not sure. Right? Or you might end up over committing yourself by just saying yes to it. Right now, with this OSR tool, the ongoing stack rank, when a new thing comes in, the new request comes in, you say, okay, it might be reasonable when to address this request and implement this. Where would you put it in the



stack rank, right? So you explicitly by using this OSR tool, by using the stack rank, as a construct, you're explicitly kind of like preventing falling prey to the focusing illusion, right? Because you do have to discuss the this specific feature or this specific request or issue in the context of everything else. And so oftentimes, you know, most human beings, they're binary thinkers. And so we just like are talking about, is this important? Or is this not important? But the real question is, we got to evaluate how important is this in the context of everything else that's going on? And it's not just about, you know, oh, will we get positive ROI from working on this? It's more about what is the thing that, you know, minimizes our opportunity cost? So again, the stack rank ends up being a very useful tool for that. So those are some couple of examples. But really, the stack rank applies to many things, including even career decisions and life decisions.

Jake 1:11:23

Yeah, it's a great framework for for determining the relative importance of things. And I think I didn't realize that it came from this, the driver that the problem that the stack ranking solution solves for was driven from this, like, sort of focus illusion. And, yeah, it's just a powerful way to sort of get past that very human bias, I feel like and to actually ask yourself, Okay, we've spent an hour talking about this. But, you know, that's actually not even in our top list of priorities, we just the context of the conversation led us down this path. So obviously, we could talk about it for a while. But it can be, you know, very misleading. And a company can exist solely to solve this problem that doesn't actually even it does exist, but it doesn't, it just doesn't make the priority list. So before you go and go head down for days, or months or years on a particular thing, whether that's as a company, or even personally, I think, really understanding why you're attacking that thing versus any number of other things. And going through the stack rank exercise saves a ton of time, in the long run. So I know, you know, I know we're coming up while we're actually over on time. But if there's one more concept we can, we can discuss. It's this power of simulation concept that you've also coined. So maybe we can we can finish with that. And it's been an awesome conversation. And yeah, curious to go on to this one last concept.



Shreyas Doshi 1:12:59

Yeah, for sure. So simulation as an activity is, is I think a key part of product thinking and product thinking applies to many endeavors of business in life, not just when you're building products. And really, the best way I can kind of describe it for folks is if you've watched Avengers Infinity War, you know, in that movie, there is a point at which you know, Dr. Strange is you know, he basically tries to simulate you know, future possibilities of how the Avengers and humanity's war against dinos who wants to basically kill half of all the living beings in the universe. How might it end? Right so so what Dr. Strange does at that moment in the movie, is he goes into this kind of almost trance like state and his friends, including, you know, our Ironman, and others are confused about what Dr. Strange is doing. And so once he's out of that trance, they asked him and so, what he said is a Doctor Strange says is I looked into the future as if he has the Time Stone, so he can do that I looked into the future and looked at you know, 14,000,605 possible futures of how this conflict will end. And so, then, you know, his friends naturally asked him like, okay, and how many did we win? Right? Did we win versus staying? us. And he answers one, one out of those 14,000,605 possible futures. Right. So so that is, you know, that sounds like it's a good scene, you should watch it, if you haven't recently. But that thing that Dr. Strange did, right, it doesn't require any sorcery. And it doesn't require the Time Stone. Right? We are all capable of doing this perhaps to different degrees, but we are all capable of doing this. But we don't do it often enough. Right. So what ends up happening in certainly in life and in business, right, in many, many business meetings, is that people and teams, they look backward, right? Like, and they look at the present, they have a bunch of data, they have a bunch of context, they have a bunch of research bunch of information. And then based on all of that they make a rational decision of what to do. And then they say, Okay, now we're gonna go and go ahead and do it. What I've observed is that, in this process, many times people skip the step of looking forward and simulating the possible futures. Right. And the reality is, you're making changes to a system when you make a decision, right? And the system will often involve people. And so you need to ask yourself, like, as you're making this decision, what is going to happen? What are the different possibilities, right?



And even like, even when people are involved, you cannot think of people, many people make the mistake of thinking of people as one monolithic entity, which is users, how will customers react? Not only that, they make the mistake of assuming that the customer is like them. Right? Sometimes, like I've worked, I've been fortunate to work with incredibly smart engineers, and not all engineers, but like, what I'm about to say correlates with some smart engineers, is that many of them assume that every user would react like them. Right, which is like, Well, clearly, this is the most logical thing to do. So everybody will be logical, right? But that's not how the world works, right? So you cannot look at like even users or customers and people as one monolithic entity, right, you have to think about different segments of users, right? Like segments of customers, maybe your large customers will react differently from your small customers, when you make this blog post announcing this policy change, right, each segment might have different concerns. Not only that, but if you're a large company, you will have other external stakeholders, not just customers and users, you will have the press, you will have regulators, you will have social media. Right? So lack of simulation, or not giving enough importance to simulation is why companies often make suboptimal decisions. And sometimes they make decisions that then they have to backtrack on. Right? Because they didn't really like spend time thinking through how this will work. Right. To give you a more recent example, like the whole, you know, issue with the open AI board, firing Sam Altman, right, like, and putting out that message. Right, like, who knows what actually happened, but at least, it is fair to say that not enough time was given to simulation. Because if you had simulated like how this might play out, like these are all incredibly smart and intelligent people. Right? Then you would perhaps have avoided this issue. Or at least you could have done better messaging around how you would approach it right. Now, one last thing I'll say about this is often people claim that like, all this sounds great, but like we want to move fast. And so we can't like really slow down and do simulation Shreyas. Right. But here's the thing, what you need to understand is that if you build the skill of simulation, which can only build through practice, but the people who have the skills, and I know many dozens of people who like are like basically really amazing at this skill. Once you kind of learn this skill, and once you kind of become an expert, actual process of doing this takes only seconds or



minutes in most cases, and in the most difficult cases, in the most complex cases. It takes at most hours. So I don't care how fast you want to move. You can take a few extra seconds, minutes or just a couple of hours. Okay. And they hear the great thing about simulation is it works at the macro scale. Like it even works at the scale of like, you know, major government policy decisions as an example. So that's the that's like fairly macro. But it also works at a fair, it says works at a very micro scale. Right. So like, one thing I did for many, many years is like, in the morning, before I start doing my work, I would look through the meetings that I have for the day. And I would actually simulate those meetings, like what is going to occur, like, what is the other party going to say, etc, etc, right, like, and I took only like, five minutes to simulate through five, six meetings that I had. But it helped me prepare for those meetings much better. Right. Another example I'll share is like, at some point, you know, when I was at stripe, I was asked to put together an off site for an important strategic topic with, you know, a small group of 10 to 2012 people, it included the founders and a few other kind of like, you know, product folks, and engineers, and so on. And so I was responsible for putting the off site together. And I wanted to kind of be thoughtful about the off site, because a lot of off sites can, you know, you talk a bunch of stuff, but like, they don't really go anywhere. Right. And so I didn't want that to occur with this offset. So what I did is actually simulated many possible outcomes in you know, okay, well, if I change this variable, how might that work in the simulation, right, and then so based on, you know, simulation, I designed the off site in a very unique way. And then after the, it was a half a day off site, and after the half a day that, you know, half a day of the off site, a lot of people came to me proactively, and said, You know what, something about this off site, it's the best offset I've been at, and I've been at, like many, many offsets. And, you know, partly, in large part, actually, the reason it worked as well, is because that simulated many different kind of alternatives and options, and possible futures, and I eliminated the ones that would not have an optimal effect. And so that's kind of how I ended up doing it. So it's a very, very powerful tool. And the only way that you can even like, you know, use the tool is, first you recognize the importance of doing it. And second, you commit to practicing it, because that's the only way to get good at it.



Jake 1:22:27

Yeah, it's a it's a super interesting concept. And I think I didn't really have a name for it. And the, you know, simulation, I think, is a great shorthand just to give it a name of sort of thinking ahead, and how will this How will different people feel about this thing that this action that I'm about to take, or whatever it might be, but I think it's something that I, whether I had a name for it or not, I personally do, I'm probably like, kind of over indexed on it, in a sense, where I like do it a lot. And it does make decisions, more conscious in a way where you're not just kind of doing you're, you're playing out all the different outcomes. And then a lot of people just kind of don't really do that very naturally. And to your point, I think even you know, whether one could do it too much is maybe a different question. But, you know, you don't have to be like Dr. Strange with the Time Stone and play out these futures and know exactly what all 14 million are going to look like. But if you just kind of do the 8020 version, like you said, you, you know, you take a few minutes, and you do your best to think forward as to how these various things will play out like the open AI board, you just take a few minutes, and you think like, well, you know, Sam Altman is actually pretty popular. And our company is actually like, pretty well regarded by the public right now. And you know, throwing a big fork in it might not be received super well. So we might need to sort of proceed with caution here, like, you spend a few minutes it doesn't take much time. And sure, if you spent days simulating things forward and you know, maybe writing out all of the different outcomes you could imagine, that might be overall a net better exercise. But I imagine that most of the value comes sort of in the first few seconds or minutes or hours. And so if you just kind of do a little bit, that can go a long way, probably and one way, I'll just sort of maybe end with this on my end. One way, I think that I apply that personally, like a very simple super quick one is for actually like big decisions in life I love to refer to or remind myself of this concept I learned from Jeff Bezos, which is the regret minimization framework three, basically for these like big life decisions. He talks about this when he's trying to decide to start Amazon leave a hedge fund. He's sort of projected himself to like age 80, or 90 or whatever, on his deathbed. And he's like, Well, if I look back from that point in time, which one



of these decisions Am I more likely to regret like going and trying to be a part of this internet thing or, you know, not continuing on with with the hedge fund then when you project forward and you sort of simulate to use the word and sort of imagine these future scenarios of law in one case you they'd at the hedge fund and in another case, you went and tried this thing. And you don't know, you know, you can't predict the future. So you don't know if the thing is gonna fail or if it's gonna succeed, but in general, you can kind of put yourself in your deathbed and at least do your best to kind of look back on what that was. And if you do that, I think a lot of times, it makes the right decision a lot more clear than if you just kind of operate based on, you know, what you know, from the past and what you're feeling in the moment, and things like that. So, anyway, a bunch of ways in which that resonates with me, those are just a couple. But I have

Shreyas Doshi 1:25:29

another tool that is similar to this regret minimization framework, but you can apply it on your day to day projects, particularly are really important projects, and launches and whatnot, is the idea of a pre mortem. And we can put in the show notes, I have a whole kind of, you know, ritual and recipe around how to perform a good pre mortem. And, you know, but basically, the idea being that, like, you know, you sit down, you know, say three months before a very important product launch as a team. And you kind of state that, like, let's imagine, we are three months into the future, and our project launch has failed. So let's make that assumption. Now let's figure it out. And let's list out the reasons why that may have happened. Right. And it's a really powerful tool, it doesn't take that much time. And it can help avoid a lot of like, really obvious mistakes that many companies end up making. And so it's basically a group simulation exercise. The pre mortem is particularly the great thing about a pre mortem is it enables and creates, by definition, the psychological safety for people to kind of think a little pessimistically. Right. So again, you can kind of largely be an optimist, but it actually helps to, you know, take a small percentage of your time and apply, you know, look through the pessimism lens. And so the pre mortem, is that kind of it creates that pessimism lens. And it helps people be more vocal about concerns that they've had, in a way that they don't feel like they will be ostracized from the group. So it's a really powerful exercise.



I do it for almost every meaningful project that I embark on, including, you know, my course, I've done the pre mortem a couple of times, actually, for the course. So it can be used in all sorts of projects doesn't just have to be a product launch. And so I highly, highly recommend that.

Jake 1:27:42

Yeah, no, that sounds great. Well, I know we've gone way over on time, so I appreciate you taking the time and sticking with me and sharing all of these insights, I think, you know, I know you built your career and in product management, but you're very evidently an extremely eloquent speaker, and I think a great teacher and coach, so appreciate you taking the time. And hopefully, this is a way to kind of find that data, you know, in between on coaching people one on one, and, and, you know, writing to the masses, and finding that in between where it is hopefully, specifically relevant to a lot of people who listen, so looking forward to getting it out there. But just in closing, anywhere where you know, best place for people to go and to follow you on Twitter, or sign up for the course anywhere you want to send people in particular.

Shreyas Doshi 1:28:32

Yeah, I would just say find me on Twitter and on LinkedIn, or on YouTube. And that's really the best way to follow my content and learn more about these things and various other things. So yeah, that's the best place to start. Awesome.

Jake 1:28:51

Well, thanks again for us. I really appreciate it.

Shreyas Doshi 1:28:54

Yeah, thanks for having me. This was really fun.