



Jake 00:16

Thank you, Paul, for joining me on the podcast today really appreciate you taking the time been following your, your work and your your tweets, I guess is the better way to put it for a while and then finally got around to reading the long form version with your book The pathless path. So you're an author of of that book, your podcast, you've got a podcast by the same name, you've got a community going now, but I think putting any kind of title on you would be kind of against the whole purpose of of everything that you're doing the whole theme of it all, which is taking this pathless path. And, you know, getting out of this career that you started in, in sort of strategic consulting in the classic sort of prestigious path. And, you know, I started my career in banking, similar type of thing. And just going and following your interests and seeing what you want to do with your life. So looking forward to diving in a bunch of this. But before we dive too deep on anything, we'd love to just for those who don't know, you, if you could kind of tell your story from his early rule and start to where you are today and talk about some of the decisions you made along the way. Obviously, it's a long winding road, but whatever part you think is relevant, and then we'll, we'll get into it from there.

Paul Millerd 01:20

Well, yeah, so I'll give the short version, which is essentially grew up pretty humble background was always good at school. So sort of fell into a pursuit of achievement, which was natural, and I think over time, led me to become disconnected from the things I think I actually enjoyed. So I tried to break into strategy consulting, when I was 23. And loved it. At first, it was an amazing first few years. And then after a few years, I sort of ran out of moves. And I think that's when it really just became challenging for me, I think I had not done much self reflection or been too aware of my emotions as a dude, like, growing up in the 90s. I think that was pretty common. And, yeah, I got sick started asking deeper questions sort of became increasingly disconnected and distraught by my path, and then sort of quit in 2017. Without a plan. I'll long the way of wandering without a plan over those next couple of years, stumbled into actually liking work, which was very shocking for me, I had this mental model of work must suck. So you got to just deal with it, try to work as little as possible,



etc. And as soon as that I found work, especially writing, among other things, conversations like this really bring me alive. I sort of was stunned. And I was so excited by finding those things that I just became so determined to build the life around those things, regardless of if I could make money or not. And so have really still been doing that for the last six years of a seven year, self employed journey. And it's it's been super fun. I, I love how I'm spending my time, my life. I'm very happy. I feel very lucky. And finally, in my sixth and seventh year, I've started making a little more money, which is also cool.

Jake 03:37

Yeah, no, the money definitely is nice. It makes it sustainable, I think is, you know, having done this a little bit myself, like quitting my job without knowing what's next. And then, you know, working on what I want to work on and sort of realizing that positive relationship you've talked about. I've found myself at various stages being like, wow, everything is really awesome. Right? Now, of course, like not every day is, you know, amazing, or whatever. But there's ups and downs in life. But in general, I'm like, wow, this is awesome. The only problem I have is like, I don't know if this is sustainable, like I don't, I'm not generating the income that I need to cover my expenses, or whatever it is. And so you're like, if I could just do this forever. I'm not like the same thing. But take the same approach to life that you're taking forever. Everything would be great. And there's just that one little problem of sustainability. But then once the money starts coming in, it's like, I maybe I can do this forever. And that must be like a huge relief after you know, 567 years.

Paul Millerd 04:33

Actually, I experienced it really early out. I think the power of even making a few \$1,000 On my own was such a shift. Like I've told people I think making \$1,000 of my own was worth 100,000 of someone else's money that they're paying me as a salary. I think it just told me so early on that it Just keep going. And one of my games early on that I created for myself was just trying to make money doing a bunch of different things. And the more experiments I did, it wasn't even a lot of money. But I just, I'd make money TAing out of grad school, I would make money writing a report is terrible money, but I got paid for



writing, then it was like, Oh, my gosh, now there's just more possibilities. And I think leaning into that mode, where I saw possibility and adventure really, I became a lot more confident. So for me, I knew it was sustainable within a year, because I sort of broke even. And it didn't seem that hard. Well, it seemed, it was hard, it was challenging. It was not painful, in the way like getting through my weeks was in that final year of full time work. And so it was far preferable. And so it was sustainable in the sense that I was basically willing to do anything except go back. Right, I was willing to build a little bit life around earning less money. I didn't care where I lived, it was just so much better. So even within the first year, I was experiencing this, this sustainability with the more money like I actually don't feel much different. Now. I think there are different challenges once you start having success and opportunities and things like that is the trap of how do you avoid becoming an identity? Right? I don't want to become like, I don't care about published author, that identity, and that sort of the baggage that comes with that doesn't mean to me, how I think about my day is I want to write most days, today. And today was a victory because I wrote for two and a half hours this morning. It was amazing. So like, that's it. I love that so much. And I'm really just trying to build my life around that.

Jake 07:06

Yeah, it's interesting. I've, I think it was somewhere in the book or listening to a podcast where you talked about when when people quit, you know, after whatever their traditional job is, or not traditional, but you know, consulting or whatever the job might be tech company, whatever. They they leave their job, but you say something along the lines of like they take their manager with them in their head or something like this,

Paul Millerd 07:30

where I forget to fire the manager in their head. Exactly, exactly. So it's like

Jake 07:35

I can, I can sort of, you know, I've been there. And and I wonder though, like, you talked about writing for two and a half hours this



morning, there's a certain amount of flexibility that you need to keep in your day to day. And this can, you know, you might have a fully empty calendar. But even still with nothing on your calendar, you might have sort of expectations of yourself are things that you're going to do over the course of the day, I'm going to work out at 10am, or whatever it might be. How have you sort of found, you know, it's been years at this point? Do you find benefit in some level of structure where it's like, Well, I do treat Mondays is different than Sundays? Or do you treat every day the same? Or do you go through sort of like seasonal periods of like, Oh, I'm in a writing mode right now. So I'm expecting every morning first thing in the morning, I'm going to I'm going to write? Or is it a constant? I guess on the other side of it with a lack of structure? I find that it can be there's too much decision making. There's there's you know, it's you have to constantly be thinking of what's the best thing for me to do, because it's it's great freedom, but it with, you know, freedom comes responsibility or whatever it's like, What's the best thing to do with my time and he spent a little too much time thinking at least I do about what to do rather than just kind of doing?

Paul Millerd 09:00

Yeah, so yes to all the above. I do think about these things a lot. And I sort of like I would even urge you not to beat yourself about the up about that thinking. I actually think being on your own path requires much more thinking about sort of those things. How do I structure my time? How do I set up my day? What should I be shifting to right? And for me that question always starts with aliveness. And I really, like I did 10 years in the corporate world. I worked at companies like GE McKinsey I went to grad school like I know how to work and a consistent basis and do work other people want me to do or that clients are paying for. I didn't want to do that anymore. So I devoted my entire life to really paying attention what I actually interested in and some days back It's like following a trip Twitter thread, going down a rabbit hole, reading about stuff, watching videos. Other days, it's literally just going for a bike ride and not doing any work. And really just trusting that I would be okay. Part of it was this curiosity of what happens when you actually just don't define yourself as a worker, or build your life around work. And for the most part, I found like I was okay. Right, you do have to spend



less if you aren't gonna make money. But for the most part, you do get comfortable in the different mode. And once I sort of stripped away all the coercive work for my life, I had all these things I was excited by. So until I had a kid, I would pretty much just wake up each day and sort of feel into what I was doing. But even my creative work was below personal time, health, time with my wife, etc. So if it was a sunny day, and Angie woke up and was like, want to go for a hike today, it's like, yes, it has 100% of the time, I said yes to those things. And it was amazing at the beginning of our relationship, because we really built our time around actually exploring, getting getting to know each other. And now that I have a kid, we actually just started doing a little more structure. I have three days a week, and Angie has two days, she's working on a book as well, we're both just splitting off the child character in the week. And the three days are really for us to use however we want. So there's no judgement, we both just want each other to be like the best of like the best version of who we can be, right? So if I go exercise, or even just take a personal day, or go wander, go for a bike ride, meet up with friends, I can use those days for that. We've been doing that for about two months now. So there's a little more structure. But yeah, it's still it's very hard. I'm, I'm challenged with trying to balance it all. I'm probably going to stop doing podcasts. So you're in like the last few I'm probably going to do for a while. I just can't balance it all. It's hard. So I'm really just trying to focus on what am I most excited by, I am most excited by my writing the challenge. And that is that my income for both one of my courses I run and my book are declining now. And so a book is unproven and may not even succeed, it could be something I put out in the future. But to me, like I'm willing to burn a lot of cash and go a lot fly a lot closer to the Sun than I think a lot of other people are. Right?

Jake 13:03

Yeah, it's interesting. I just had a thought what was it? You gonna say that, you know, I'm glad I was able to get in before you shut off the podcast or but you made a point because it's interesting. You know, you talk about this pathless path or your your life basically. And you make it sound great. And having experienced, I think similar elements I really enjoyed as well. But you had this quote, which like it well, like it's not prevalent in your writing, but somewhere I



forget where I found it. You said like most people would hate my life, I think it was maybe in like, on a podcast you were doing or something like that. And maybe you know, maybe I got that out of context or something like that. But when you talk about like, flying closer to the Sun than most people are willing to, like, I can sympathize with this. People think it's like, Oh, you don't have a job. Like you haven't had a job in four years. That must be like amazing, like you have, you know, you've got no boss, you've got all your time under your control. But there is an element of like, you know, both both paths are hard the pathless path and and the default path, the default path, you have to battle that constant feeling of, you know, what else could I kind of be doing or whatever it might be? That like lack of fulfillment, but on the pathless path, it's like this constant like you said, I spend hours talking about like maybe I spent a little too much time thinking about like, what should I do, but like I spend an enormous amount of time thinking about like, you know, these how you spend your time and it's and you know, both long run and day to day and hour to hour at all different levels thinking about like the most fundamental thing possible basically, if you're just like, where am I investing my time and energy and attention and what am I reading and what am I listen to stuff like that? So I guess I would just be curious to hear your comments on like the most people will hate my life. Do you think this is is for everyone or for a lot of people, or for actually a relative few. I'm

Paul Millerd 15:04

making a couple points there. I think one is I would hate your life and you would hate my life, in the sense that you can only sort of live your thriving path unique to your circumstances. Right? I'm a pretty low stress happy person. So that baseline helps me a lot. I also don't overthink. And actually thinking about how to spend my time is a fun use of my time. Right? So you have to, you have to adjust for all those things. So some people might enjoy my path if they could absorb all my like, mindsets and weird genetic quirks. But if they are somebody, like, I get this a lot, like, how can you do your path? If you have like an expensive mortgage, and you have like, bills you have to pay for school? It's like, you can't like you need a different strategy because you need more money than me. Right? And so it, it's really like a long way of saying you, you can only design the your own



game. Right? And but you need to figure out what you actually want. For me, I want a tremendous amount of time working on creative activities, or not having to work day to day for months at a time. So for me that requires building up cash spending less than most people around me are spending. Right? We have a child, what do people do when they have children? They buy a house because they think they're supposed to you should own a home? What are you not going to own a home? Right? We rent, it's fine. It's great. Me and my wife love it.

Jake 17:04

Ya know, it's interesting. And and I think well, I guess one question I have is what as you seek this work that you enjoy. You found writing, you found podcasting, you're optimizing for what makes you feel alive? Are there other things that you've found? Over the years that stand out? That you've then, you know, not necessarily committed to doing for the rest of your life? But what are some other things that you've discovered? Or is it that simple in that fundamental that right writing and podcasting are like two of the big two?

Paul Millerd 17:40

I think it's a mix of things. I think, writing and conversations, conversations are really part of my writing. It's sort of how I mean just talking to you, I'm already thinking of all these ideas, it's making me excited. It's like, I want to go write about that later. And so it's this funnel and connecting with people who are actually on weird paths and learning about what they're up to testing my ideas with them, sending my newsletter like part of this broader conversation and people so I like hanging out online sharing ideas and Twitter hearing from people. I love that sort of in the mix conversational flow of ideas. And so I love writing, I love talking about ideas. I love connecting with other curious people. And so those sort of happen because I liked them so much. And I create space in my life to do it. And then generally, I just like a random mix of stuff. So always sort of paying attention to like, what new things can I try? Generally, though, I do the same stuff. I'm just doing, right. Like, I'm still doing my podcasts, I'm still doing my, my newsletter, I'm still writing books. And that's something I'm thinking about a lot about too is like, should I be changing course? Are there new things to try? I've been feeling like, I want to shift the podcast a bit and



try something new. I don't know what that looks like. So I'm sort of always surveying for opportunities and possibilities and sort of sort of what's possible in tying it back to what do I actually want to do. But I'm very protective of my energy to I if I'm not liking something and not feeling good about it, I quit it.

Jake 19:28

Yeah, and is that you've sort of my understanding is you've kind of like, tried to wind down some of the things that were more enjoyable than your old job, but still sort of money making focus things such as, you know, freelance consulting, stuff like that a little bit more so and ramp up the things that are, you know, more higher up on sort of that giving energy equation. Yeah,

Paul Millerd 19:54

I've been I am pretty good at like playing long. Games and when I say that, I'm good at having a sense for where I'm going over a long time horizon in front of me, and sort of like steering the cruise ship to get there. So I think with the writing, I had the sense, okay, if I don't wit, and I just keep sharing ideas, something interesting may happen. And I sort of like trusted that it just kept going. There was no goal to make money or run sponsorships are things like that I've done experiments, but the goal is basically just to not quit. And then with consulting, I did a couple of consulting projects at the beginning. And they were the traditional, like, project manager, research, drive, meet clients demands, just like, Man, I don't like this. And so then, I did this one consulting gig where I was doing training in an accident like that. And I was moving abroad to Asia. And I realized, Okay, I can't do in person training, how do I put this online. And the idea initially, was just to give it away to people, because I thought it'd be fun to share. And slowly let started to gain traction, about, like, over a year and a half, and I started making money from that. And then companies started reaching out and asking to do trainings, I was intrigued by cohort based courses, and I started designing something for them. And I realized, Oh, I actually like doing these trainings. If I can create something where I become better and better, I can raise the prices, I can create a better experience. And I can do very few of these a year to fund my life. Right. So now I do these multi week cohort based courses, teaching consulting skills,



I actually really enjoy them. They're fun. Would I do them? If I was making a lot more money? Probably not. But like, it's a high income to effort, reward. And so I do a couple of those a year. And then I just work on whatever I want for the rest of the year. So I'm doing a couple now I just wrapped one, I'm wrapping another in four weeks, and then I probably won't take any more. Yeah,

Jake 22:29

no, that makes sense. And it's kind of like you think about these default path jobs tend to be more so like, they're optimized for money, and you just get through them or you know, some people maybe love them or whatever it might be, but like a lot of people are just kind of doing the job. Yeah, you can maximum money. And what you're talking about is more of like a product of two factors, which is the money and the enjoyment. So it's like, it might not be quite as enjoyable as your two and a half hours protected writing in the morning. But it's like not that much less enjoyable, and it makes good money. So the product of that equation is like Bing, bing, bing, like worth doing.

Paul Millerd 23:06

Yeah, and I designed it. So I'm doing the version now only because I kept doing like tests and didn't quit before, right. And I started testing this in 2021 was my first one. And I've probably done like 10 to 15, raising prices each time improving the experience learning. So I enjoy that whole process. And the cool thing is, I can leave money on the table. Now, I'm actually like very passively exploring, finding someone to run that. As a business, it could make a lot more money. It's the most successful thing I've ever created in terms of the demand. But it just doesn't drive me. And I love that you can just choose to make less money. If you're working full time. You can't go to your boss in June and be like, Hey, I'm good. I made enough for the year.

Jake 24:04

Yeah, there's no dial to turn.

Paul Millerd 24:08



Now you can that's sort of what I did when I quit in May. Which was sweet. I was like, this is enough to cover the year, give me to December and then sort of just hang out for a bit.

Jake 24:22

Yeah, so when you pursue these long term, you know, activities where you figure, you know, I write and I write and I write and eventually, you know, maybe I'll get lucky or something interesting is going to happen. You wrote a bit in the book about faith. And to me faith, it's like, of the utmost importance for taking a different path. Otherwise, it's just hard when you're doing something that doesn't look like anyone around you. There's reassurance and looking around and being like, oh, yeah, I'm kind of with the group on this or whatever. And when you're striking out on your own, it takes a lot of faith. Is there anything that you do I don't know? Are you religious or anything from a non religious faith perspective that Have you sort of are able to do to encourage that over time? Or is it just kind of, you know, dealt with them?

Paul Millerd 25:08

Yeah, I think I think there's a bunch of things here, I think, yeah, I mean, growing up in the US, you're sort of automatically religious, we're, we're embedded in like, Christian thoughts of like doing your best and improving yourself and having faith, and I grew up in that world, I wouldn't say I am, like, actively religious. But I think it's, it's definitely those are the only ways I know how to describe these things. Right, we have this rational secular mode, where we think life can be planned, we think problems can be defined, we think we can like, sort of come up with a roadmap and then execute it perfectly. It's like life does not work like that. Life is uncertain. And like unpredictable stuff happens all the time, we're always feeling uncomfortable, our lives are disrupted nearly nonstop. Right, positive and negative directions. I sort of talked about this in the book, we have all these frames of, oh, you get married, you get a job, you have start a family, you get a house, it's like there's like the six points. But the reality is, like, you get laid off from a job too, right? You get a new boss that disrupts your life, right? You get a windfall that could disrupt your life, you need to give, you need to pay a lot of money for something that could be something that disrupts



your life, there are breakups, you start a new relationship, you move to a different country, you move to a different apartment, right? Our life are being disrupted all the time. And so the thing is on the default path, everyone pretends that they're opting into a life which is safe, secure, and predictable. It's, it's a lie. But the only reason you don't have to face it is everyone agrees not to bring it up. And then when you go to work on your own, you're faced with the harsh truth that you can't hide anymore. It's just like, oh, shit, yeah, I'm just back to the base truth here. And like, that's all religions ever telling you is like, you have to have faith you everything is always changing. Nothing is certain. Right? And it's just, I love being on an uncertain path. Because it forces you to be humble, it forces you to stay grounded, it forces you to do all these things that we've sort of lost touch with in our culture.

Jake 28:02

Yeah, I think trying to make this life that TierPoint is inherently unpredictable, full of surprises, you know, unforeseen events, I view that the default path, as you described, it, is basically trying to like fight that as much as possible, where it's like, you know, if you go into consulting, there's like, some kind of career path where, you know, you get this promotion after this many years and this promotion after this many years. And it's like, there's predictability to it, there's comfort. And it's taking this life of surprise. And it's saying, No, here's a path that's predictable. And I feel like going on the path, this path is just embracing the uncertainty that is inevitable in life, and sort of being like, you know what, let's not try to fight this. This is what life is let's just embrace it. And when you do that, I think a lot of cool things start to happen.

Paul Millerd 29:02

Or not, right? Also, like your income might drop like minded 80% You might, like, feel lost, you might face a lot of harsh judgment. You might get made fun of by friends and like it. I don't want to paint over this. Like there's so many hustle bros that are like quit your job, do your own thing, capture your destiny, get your own, like become a millionaire. It's like, but the thing is, it might suck. But it might also be worth it. Because this is the thing that's hard for people to anticipate they only see the costs in terms of what they



think they're losing. But there's often a deeper feeling of like connectedness and groundedness that comes from these things. Like not all suffering is bad. Some suffering might give you meaning. I think the suffering people embrace is sort of the suffering of doing shittier jobs, they don't want to do their I don't know why that has become the preferred mode of suffering, but the suffering of like facing a challenge in terms of going after what you really want, that can be really rewarding. And it's hard to talk about that.

Jake 30:23

Are you open to the idea that there may be something like full time work, that it doesn't necessarily need to be employment, but one of the things that you're working on, you just decide I want to go all in, and you sacrifice the balance and the time and some of the other things that you've had over the last several years? To do that? Is that a possibility for your future in your mind? Or do you think you know enough about what you'd like that that doesn't seem likely?

Paul Millerd 30:55

It doesn't seem likely based on my revealed preference of like, time freedom and wandering, and I just don't work that much I never have since quitting. And I will say, I've gotten better at committing to things and leaning into ambition a little more. And when I say ambition, I think we pair this idea of ambition with like, extreme effort. I think there's an ambitious way to be that is just about deepening a commitment to things. So I could definitely see committing to something I really care about. And if that requires more hours, I think I could do that. Am I willing to compromise my relationship with my wife and daughter? No. Like, the only way those things go on the table is if like, we're really struggling and we need, like, we need money. Right? Right. We're facing a crisis or something. But no, I'm not willing. Like, it's just work. Who like who cares?

Jake 32:01

I'm curious. From your perspective. Sorry. Do you have more there?

Paul Millerd 32:06

No, no. I mean, that's all. Yeah, that that's all I'm saying around that, I think. Yeah, my, I love writing. And writing actually requires



a lot of space for me to do well. I don't know how to do writing with being constantly busy. Like a busy night life does not seem compatible with being productive with writing, right. So I think that's why I like writing too, because it sort of forces this heart constraint of you need to sort of pondered things, read a lot, talk to people, those kinds of things.

Jake 32:44

Yeah, one thing I'll just mention, because you're, you seem to treat conversation as a part of your writing. I think you mentioned earlier, something that I've been doing for the last like, I don't know, year and a half or something, maybe is if you ever take one of those like transcription dictation type apps, and you just go for a walk and you talk to it. You're not in your head. I don't know if you've ever tried this, but it's a it's a really interesting activity that I think you you might enjoy as sort of a part of your process. If you're open to it doesn't replace talking to people, but it's, it's its own thing. Yeah,

Paul Millerd 33:16

I've never done I have a lot of ideas when I walk or bike ride, but I'm not that serious about capturing the ideas. I just sort of let them flow, I have this faith that the good ideas will come back. And sometimes I lose ideas. But there's also a practice in that of just like, I don't want to over optimize any aspect of my life. Like, I think this whole, like capture everything pushed to the end, like, give the book launch your best. Like, I don't know, I'm just skeptical of all of that. I think you just see like on Twitter, it's so funny. You just get to see into people's lives and how they're behaving. And almost undoubtedly, when you see people pushing to the limit, they always eventually they're either doing one of two things. One, they're either like, work is the most primary thing in their life. And like they either have like full time daycare for their kids or like, like work is just the central thing. And they're like, are they eventually burned out? Like there's just so many cases of burnout and like, I don't actually want to burn out ever. Yeah, and so many people are working with the intention that there's this sort of like, okay, you have to capitalize What if you don't capitalize What if you just push



out the winds as long as possible? That's such an interesting question for me, and I I like exploring it.

Jake 34:56

Well, I think it's, it works well with this concept that I keep in the back Mind where people, they think about the future. And they know like, if you ask someone like What's 2050 going to be look like? People are like, oh, you know, AI robot, no idea. Yeah, we have no idea. The world's changing faster than ever, it's just, it's just used to, you know, however, many years ago, you could look and say the world, by the time I die, when you're 10 years old, you can say, When I die, the world's gonna be basically the same as it is today. And now, that's just not the case at all, it wasn't the case for our parents, yeah, or their parents. And it's going to be the least of all the case for us. And yet, we project our lives forward as if they're basically roughly just a little bit different, but pretty much similar to our parents, and we're going to retire at 60. And that's when the 401k hits. And like, you know, all of this traditional stuff, that totally may or may not be the case. And I guess just what you're talking about, you know, doing things, avoiding burnout, I think one of those things that could be very different about the future is that people like you and I could live to 120 years old, we could live to 140 years old, it's a little bit radical, I don't know how much you've gotten into this stuff. But I've had some people into like the slowing and reversing aging field, like people haven't thought about sort of addressing aging directly, trying to slow aging directly they've gone after, you know, can we cure cancer, you know, Alzheimer's, the big ones, and whatever. And there's, it's like cutting off all these heads of the dragon, but you don't actually go for the body. And people have started in the last decade or two going for the body. So I'm like, you know, what's the probability that I actually live to 120 years old. And that's like, 30 extra years of life. That's kind of like, unaccounted for in like the traditional model. And so avoiding burnout and taking your time, and just being a little bit more deliberate along the way, not relying on 120 years. But being open to the possibility, I think is is an interesting way to go about life.

Paul Millerd 37:05



Yeah, I don't even think you need that as a starting point. Like, the models of lives people are following now or just not that interesting to me. I'm gonna go retire and like get drunk at happy hours in Florida somewhere. I don't know. That's not my like, that's not my dream. Like, I want to be engaged with ideas. I want to be writing still, I want to be mentoring young people. I want to be volunteering. I want to be spending time with my kids, if I can I want to be traveling. Like it's just, and who knows if I'll be able to do those things. That's why I'm trying to do those things now. Right? I think so much is about this delayed gratification. And some of that is useful, but I think it's mostly over learned. And when it's over learned, you set up your entire life to delay gratification one day, right? I'm doing this task because it will give me the money. And I think people know what they're getting into. But I don't think people know why that's bad. I think it's bad because you are just trying to avoid feeling certain emotions now. And by avoiding certain emotions, now you sort of recreate the conditions that just keep them going forever. Right. And so when I was trying to escape my jobs, I would jump from job to job. I was trying to avoid feeling like a failure. And what did I recreate for myself, I felt like failure. Like, you feel stupid or 10 years into a path when it's not working, then you do two years into a path. But I had so many jobs and was so deep in it. It's like man, maybe I should just stop trying to avoid my emotions. And yeah, I think a lot of it is that like, I see a lot of retirees now they just like get more jobs because they don't want to feel worthless because in their head, their value comes from their economic value they create that's very hard I don't want to end up like that. So I rather just feel what it feels like to feel worthless now and then I'll have more opportunities in the future.

Jake 39:32

Yeah, one interesting difference between you know, my version of this path this path and and yours is when you quit that was you know like you say you stayed quit basically I went when I quit the first time I like quote unquote quit is not going to not literally quitting but it was taking a gap year after my freshman year of college. And then you know, I tried to like start a company I lived in New York for little and then the company failed. I learned a lot. And I went back to school and I appreciated school way more for it. I was like, wow,



yeah, being surrounded by kids, my age is like, unreal. And like being able to learn is, you know, be taught by teachers who like care, pretty cool after taking that for granted for, you know, 17 years, or whatever it is. So that was like, the first one, even though wasn't really quitting my job, then two years of banking quit my job, two more years of work, employed, quit my job. And in between the work, there's like a year and a half. Now, since my last job, it's like a year or something like that. So I've been doing more of this, like, in and out. And for me, it's, it's a lot of, I think it's related to what you just said in that, like, I had the question in my mind of like, what would I do if I were to be able to retire one day, and I wanted to find out, because otherwise, like, you're just spending your whole life working for this thing, that you have no idea what it's even going to be, or you might get there and be like, Well, that was a fun couple of months. But like, I'm actually just get a job in the pro shop or something. Because, you know, that's, I like golf, and I need to work still or something like that. And so I found similar to you, you know, like, I like writing, basically a lot of things that you didn't, and it takes form and like writing and you know, podcasting, but podcasting sort of sells short, like what that whole thing is about. So anyway, it's like this, this being able to dabble with retirement and check back in after you know, a couple more years work and go back and be like, I know last time I did a lot of writing. But now if I have free time again, is that really still what I want to do? And it's like, well, sure enough, I don't force myself to do anything. And I end up writing a ton again. So it's very interesting to be able to like, whether it's full time for a long time, or even just, you know, I know you recommend like the three month sabbatical as like a first taste. Whatever you can do to see, what would I do if I could retire? I think it's like a very interesting experiment worth running.

Paul Millerd 42:04

Yeah, we we spend the first 20 years of our lives turning is turning ourselves into these workers. And then we assume the goal is to save enough money to retire. So along the way, you see life as a money problem, and a delayed gratification problem. And I internalize this, like I when I quit my job, I just wanted to escape. It didn't occur to me that I could like work. It shocked me so much. Like, I, I can't get over this. Because like, if I hadn't quit, I wouldn't have that



wouldn't have occurred to me until many years in the future. Right? And when I tell people, man, I wish I quit my job when I was 23. Just so I could experience this earlier. And people say, Oh, you can do it. You're you're doing because you have all these experiences. It's like, sure. But did I need 10 years of experience doing that stuff, the last eight, I just felt like I was doing other people's work that I was like, pretty good at. And I just look back. And I'm like, Man, that could add so much time, like, who knows what I would have gotten involved in. I just am so much more confident as a human now in terms of my usefulness in the world. And that's all like work is is like trying to figure out how to be useful to people. But the work of life is how do you be useful in a way that feels good for your own life. And too many people are willing to give that up because of some paycheck or some goal or some identity they think they're supposed to go after. But it's like, you need to just try different modes of life, just to see what actually matters to you.

Jake 44:06

Yeah, one of the I need to bring this up because I took a note from the book and I wanted to be sure to communicate it to you that one of the you know, I've experimented with a few different things in terms of, you know, looking for work that I really love and, and typically in these periods of not having a full time job, otherwise, you can't really experiment that much when you're a full time job. And one of the best experiments that I've run, the best experiences that I've had in the realm of work was just this past winter. I had the opportunity to coach a JV basketball team. So cool. Yeah, it was it was a ton of fun. got paid. I think 1500 bucks for the season, which is insane. That does I mean, I get it because people it's an enjoyable job so I guess you don't really have to pay people and I'm kind of exhibit I have that but it's just like crazy to me how important That position is in terms of the development of kids, like, I remember how I looked at my basketball coach, when I was in high school, and like, that was way more important than any teacher for learning about about life and stuff like that. And so I know, you know, you're a coach in a different context. You know, talking to people about, you know, navigating life and things like this. And I read in the book that you absolutely love basketball, probably more than I love basketball. So



I'm curious, is that something that you would ever consider as an experiment going and coaching a basketball team?

Paul Millerd 45:34

Yeah, I, I'd love to do that at some point. And I think it gets to a bigger point, which is that as a starting point, you shouldn't think of work as something that can be paid for. Right? I know I have a friend who's obsessed with surfing, and he feels so alive and connected to surfing surfing is not really something you can make money doing. But he has decided, like he needs this as part of his life. It is his work that matters. And this is the unfortunate thing is that like, sometimes your work doesn't come with a paycheck. Or sometimes it doesn't come with an immediate paycheck like writing. Right? And it's starting with that and working backwards and say, How can I keep this as part of my life? Right, and that is writing for me. It's still I'm working on stuff. I don't know if I'll make money from but I have to keep that as part of my life because it gives me so much re energizing energy. I don't even know if that makes sense. Re energizing energy, but

Jake 46:37

a lot of energy.

Paul Millerd 46:40

Yeah, so like, I, I have this exercise that people do, do something you did from when you were a child. So I did this, and I've done this many times. And for me, that's just like, go out with a basketball and shoot hoops somewhere. Every time it reignites this, like childhood spirit of play. So yeah, I mean, I have a, I have a daughter. Now, I don't know if she'll play basketball. But it'd be pretty cool to get involved in that it's harder to get involved in stuff like that now, like, I'd rather just spend that time at home. But yeah, I definitely want to get involved in stuff like that in the future, and in my kids lives and hopefully be like a mentor role model to young people.

Jake 47:24

Yeah, it's, it was great. And it's, it's an interesting thing, because it's like, it's something that you do, and kind of like afternoons and evenings, like four nights a week, and once in one season of the year.



And so like, it's not something that I mean, of course, like, you know, there's certain at a certain level, you're, it's your job you around, and it's a full time job and everything like that, but high school JV, it's, it's seasonal, and it's like a few hours a day, or a little more than that, honestly, but you know, for four or five days a week or whatever. And so you can sort of start to when you have all this freedom and flexibility over your time. And you know, you want to write and you know, you want to podcast and you know, you want to coach basketball in the winters like, you can start just building around these different pieces. And like, you find these different shaped blocks that like fit together and kind of interesting ways. So it's just been, I guess that's one example of, for me, personally, one of these experiments that I just felt like I had to do, and having done it is like, well, now I have to keep doing this, because this was just an incredible experience that I can't really replicate the feeling and the fulfillment and everything like that. And a lot of other things that we haven't found them yet.

Paul Millerd 48:41

Yeah, you're just describing a rich life. Too many people are money rich and soul impoverished. Right. And the key to figuring out stuff that gives you energy is just trying a bunch of stuff. But you can't try a bunch of stuff if your entire life is packed to the brim with stuff. Like, busy busyness is awful. Like I don't want a busy life. I want an energize an active and alive life.

Jake 49:15

Do you do a lot of traveling now I know is that important part of your early journey on the path this path? Is that something that you still seek to do?

Paul Millerd 49:24

Yeah, I think we me and my wife still want to live abroad with kids. We're there's obviously a little more to figure out. But we want to explore that. I don't know where that will take us. But we were abroad for four months over this past summer in Taiwan and Spain with our daughter. Now it was amazing. Yeah, I just get a lot of being out of my home country and my wife does too. So yeah, I think that's always going to be an important part of our life. I mean, we're from two



different countries. It's kind of hard to just Live like one life? Not going anywhere. Right? So

Jake 50:04

how do you think about where to spend your time how much time to spend there in terms of like, actual places to live?

Paul Millerd 50:14

We plan year to year. So we're not thinking that far ahead. We don't have a script in our head that's like, you have to have a place figured out. Especially with kids, we're just like paying attention, whatever. What is their daughter need? What's shifting? Yeah, and we're just learning as we go. I mean, there are scripts, like some people have very strong parenting scripts, which is like, you need to have a home base by age five for school. Honestly, I've heard so many different variations on that, though. It's just like, I think for us, it's like, let's learn and actually observe what's going on.

Jake 50:55

Right. So last question for you. I know we're coming up on time. But it's always interesting. I think when you ask people who maybe are doing more of the consensus thing, you might get some sometimes more of like sort of a consensus answer. When you talk to someone, you know, in this case, like living the life the way that you're living it, I find that you can often find pretty unique insights on pretty common sort of happening. So in this case, becoming a father, like people, someone like you strikes me might have a pretty interesting perspective on that experience. You know, what was what was it like becoming a father, whatever strikes you is worthwhile to speak about?

Paul Millerd 51:44

Yeah, I think the thing is, it's really hard to prepare for, it's just so unique of an experience. And it's sort of unfolds as you go. I think the big thing is like, you talk to people, and they have this script about what you have to do for kids, and they're all just modern scripts. And they're much stronger than to work scripts. It's like, are you worried about this? Are you worried about that? What are you thinking about school, right? The reality is, especially in the first year, it's just having folding week to week, they're literally a



different baby each week. And so it just is really unique experience where you get to learn new things. And I think a lot of my experience, trusting the journey on my path has been great preparation for both me and my wife for like, the like, talk about a pathless path like parenting is that you have no idea what next month is like, my daughter could start walking anytime in the next three months. I have no idea what that means.

Jake 52:50

So awesome. Yeah. Well, I appreciate you sharing that. And moreover, just taking the time to come on the podcast, I know you're gonna stop doing these students. So I was glad to get in. While there's still time. But thanks again, Paul. I really appreciate it. Where can people go? Obviously pathless path.com? Is it pathless path and stuff? pathless path.com, pathless path.com. To scale, you know, get the book and check everything else out there. You're doing. But yeah, thank you. I really appreciate it.

Paul Millerd 53:18

Yeah, that's good place. Yeah. Appreciate your curiosity. And yeah, keep going with what you're doing. I'm very intrigued by the subletter thing you're working on. I'm like a target consumer for that.

Jake 53:32

Awesome. Well, thank you. I appreciate it and look forward to keeping in touch. Sweet CEFR thank you again.