



**Season Three Episode Five- released March 2023**

**A conversation hosted by Jeff Dewing, with Vikas Shah MBE**

Jeff and Vikas discuss how giving yourself time to reflect creates value how business leaders and their teams need to meet in the middle to agree not only the company's mission but their individual missions too..

*Knowing your values, and finding your purpose.*

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Hi, and welcome to Doing the Opposite Business Disruptors, the podcast where you get to meet incredible leaders who have swam against the tide, thrown out the rule book, and changed the way their sector does business. I'm Jeff Dewing, bestselling author and CEO at Cloudfm.*

*Before I begin, I'm pleased to announce that for season three, you can now find all of our podcasts in video form on YouTube. Simply search for Jeff Dewing or click on the link in the show notes.*

*Today you're going to meet Dr. Vikas Shah MBE. Dr. Shah is an entrepreneur, investor, and philanthropist. He started his first business aged just 14, and he's now CEO of Swisscot Group a textiles and commodities trading business, alongside being a venture investor in a number of businesses internationally. He's a non-exec board member of the UK Government's Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy, and also a non-exec director on the Solicitors Regulation*

*Authority. Vikas was awarded an MBE for services to Business and the Economy in Her Majesty's the Queen's 2018 New Year's Honours list.*

*Vikas is also a published author. His 2021 book Thought Economics features his interviews with people shaping our century, including conversations with Nobel Prize winners, business leaders, politicians, artists, and Olympians. He has been in a privileged position of questioning the minds that matter on the big issues that concern us all when you listen to his story. This truly brings to life a purpose of my podcast 'doing the opposite'.*

*So, hi Vikas Shah. Great to meet you. Been looking forward to this for some time now.*

**Vikas Shah:**

Thanks for having me

**Jeff Dewing:**

*You are more than welcome. I've obviously done my research, watched your TED Talks, looked at some of the stuff you've been doing, and it is quite a whirlwind story. So I'm fascinated to hear about it. I'm fascinated to probe. And if we can start off perhaps Vikas. Just set the scene. Give us a quick overview, a headline of who you are. What is your purpose in life?*

**Vikas Shah:**

So purpose is an odd thing, right? Because we are figuring that out all the time in terms of what are we here for and why, and, and, and what matters. I think my, my career's always been, I guess in, in the world of business in one form or or another. You know, I've started my first business when I was still quite young in technology, and now I'm involved in, you know, several different businesses based, based here in Manchester. And I think one thing I've always enjoyed purpose-wise is kind of following the thread. So if I see something that makes me curious or interested, I'll just see where that leads. So I think that's, that's one, that's one thing which is really important for me.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*That's fantastic. Although it could in an undisciplined environment, send you down a load of rabbit holes, I guess?*

**Vikas Shah:**

Massively. And, but, but you know what, there's an extent to which that's okay, because you've got to realise that there's certain needs you have to have covered. Like you have to have a core that pays the bills, and you have to make sure that you are, you are financially doing okay. And then it is thinking about, 'well, what else can I fill my life with?' Because there's so much in this world and there's so much exciting work we can do, and there's so much impact we can make. And yes, you can go down rabbit holes, but you have to be very disciplined. 'Where am I making an impact? How am I making an impact? Is this still interesting for me?' And always check in on that. So, so rather than having kind of a big resolve business plan for life, let's say - that tends to be what I focus on is am I still pointing roughly in the direction of travel that I want to go?

**Jeff Dewing:**

*You know, in the absence of, of the new buzzword purpose, that all started off with Simon Sinek and 'Start with Why' and all that sort of stuff. We'd all start with this as sort of just Americanized jargon. But it, it sort of hit me in only in the last 5, 6, 7 years where we're all ambling from stone to stone trying to find our happiness, trying to find their drive, trying to find our motivation in different areas. And sometimes we find ourselves in most people, a lot of people that I certainly speak to find themselves in a rut where they're challenging - 'am I being paid enough money, am I in the right job? Do I enjoy what I'm doing?' Because they're asking all these questions and perhaps it's that ability and that I stumbled across something a few years ago called ikigai, which I dunno if you're familiar with. Which is just four simple circles and it helps you really hone in on, on what's important to you. And, and it's just a four simple questions. You know, what are you good at? What do you love? What can you get paid for? And what change in the world are you gonna bring? And, and that comes back to your saying about 'what impacts am I having? What problems am I solving for people? And when you believe you are having an impact that's not self-serving, it's benefiting a wider audience or a wider community or whatever, that in itself provided you enjoy it and provided you good at it by default, becomes your purpose to an extent which can then be amplified on your journey.*

**Vikas Shah:**

It does. And and I think this is where there's maybe a misconception about the world of business, right? Because yeah, obviously businesses have to make money, but I've yet to meet someone and entre in the kind of world of entrepreneurship who made money because they set out to make

money. Yeah. You know, most of the time they set out to just build something because they were kind of interested in it and maybe the timing was right or the idea was really unique and it made money. You know, it's kind of when I'm speaking to students. I'll often say to them, 'if you wanna make money, go work for an investment bank'. Because you know, that's what you'll do in, in, in heaps. Creating something is kind of like business is that science and art bit combined, right? Where only a tiny, tiny number of artists ever go on to make big money. And it's the same, same is true in business. So finding that purpose is so important because if your purpose in life is to make money and you embark on this journey of entrepreneurship, you might be very disappointed.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Of course there's another saying I love as well, which is Steven Covey thing, which is a 'begin with the end in mind'. So don't think about tomorrow, you know, where, where you know, what is the outcome that you are looking to achieve that will create fulfilment. It's not, you know, you think you want a nice new car and it's the one thing you've been dreaming of all of your adult life and suddenly you've got this nice new car and you feel really excited and three months later you think, 'why am I paying all this money for this car? I don't even want it' because you thought you wanted something until, because you haven't really thought about what does this feel like? Or we, a month two months, six months after having this car and it's costing me 800 pound a month or whatever the case may be. And the only reason I cite that story is because that what happened to me, you know, 20 years ago when I thought that that was the answer to my dreams. Yeah. and it's not until you can begin with the end in mind and say, 'what is it that's gonna make me get out of bed every day? You punch the air be fulfilled with positive attitude where nothing can break me down, I'm just enjoying every minute of every minute.' What do I have to be doing to get to feel like that?*

**Vikas Shah:**

But that requires making time and space to introspect which can feel like you're wasting time, but it really isn't. It's, it's one of those massive advantages of practices like mindfulness and things like this where, you know, it's not about kind of, you know, being a hippie and doing all that, but if you're doing something inherently new, let's say, or creating something or building something, unless you keep inspecting to figure out what it is you want and or indeed what it is that you have to offer you, you're not gonna win. And so, you know, I remember in the early days of my first business, we did a lot of work in, on the west coast of the US and I was always really inspired by that. I was inspired by

how much time those entrepreneurs spent, you know, having a walking meeting or taking time to introspect and be mindful. And that was why. And that, and that's why arguably they, they do the job so much better than the rest of us in many ways.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Yeah. And again, I think that's sometimes we stumble across this stuff, right? So Covid was an accelerator for me. We came out to Portugal for a holiday and ended up being stuck here during the lockdown. And we were lucky enough to have a house here. I overlooked the sea and I see the sunset every day. So we've always got beautiful weather here. So during Covid, when I was at my most concerning point because our business was materially affected by Covid and I had 400 mouths to feed I just found the time each night at six o'clock when I'd finished doing what I was doing and work and contact I and sat in the balcony for two hours. I called it Jeffrey time. My wife wasn't even allowed upstairs. Right. No one was allowed upstairs for that, for that two hours. And every night I just reflected. And the reflection wasn't about, 'oh, I need to sit out here and come up with an answer or, or a solution' that wasn't the purpose. The purpose was just to reflect on everything that was going on around me. And the outcome, the byproduct was I came up with incredible ideas about how to do stuff. When I tried to explain this sometimes, you know, if it's not delivered the right way, will I do some keynotes and stuff. People go, 'oh God, it's all about, as you just said, it's hippie, it's meditation, it's Buddhism, I I'm not into all that stuff'. And I'm going 'it's none of that. It's sitting and thinking that's all it is'.*

**Vikas Shah:**

And then, and there's another way that we can think about it, right? Which is you need to have enough around you that gives you a consistent sense of inspiration, right? And it doesn't need to be big. It could be a nice piece of art that makes you think it could be listening to music. You know, we've all had that experience where songs make us feel a certain way or art makes us feel a certain way. And you know, this is where places like Portugal are so, so lucky because all you gotta do is go outside and, and just be, you know, this is why Lisbon I think is one of the most phenomenal places on the planet. And so even if it's not something that you inject into your life as a very specific practice or discipline, its making sure that you have enough around you that keeps you feeling inspired. Because, because that, that will trigger, that. It'll trigger those ideas. It'll help you solve those problems.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*One of the things that sort of triggered me into this train of thought was like most couples, you know, me and my wife of 36 years. When we're together in a house, you know, we don't stop talking or she doesn't, I'd like to say, but anyway, we don't stop talking. Right? On one particular day during Covid, when everything was sort of getting on top of me, I said, 'let's just go down the beach'. And we walked down the beach and we sat on the sand and we just listened, watched and listened to the waves, right? It wasn't the middle of summer where it was all packed. It was just, it was just literally us two on the beach and we sat on that sand for nearly three hours and didn't speak a word. We just sat and watched the sea. Now, if we'd have done that in another environment, she'd have said, 'have I done something wrong, why aren't you talking to me'? But it was, both of us were in that moment of calmness and mindfulness and your mind just runs away and then you build energy, you build motivation, you build inspiration, you build all sorts of stuff. And that's what got me started on the the evening on the, on the on the patio watching the sunrise every day.*

**Vikas Shah:**

But imagine you gave yourself the, the space to do it without feeling like it was silly, right? There's a lot of people who feel like doing something like that's a bit silly. Like there's almost like a sort of aversion to it in terms of productivity culture, but that kind of stuff matters. It's important. It's one of the reasons why people get so much joy out of pets as well, because the minute you're interacting with your pet, you, you have to be in the moment. You, you are very mindful and present and then it's amazing how much that gives you – not just joy, but also insights into other parts of your life. So part of it is making sure that we, we don't think of things like that as being silly and daft or odd that they are very normal and it's, it's how humans are. We depend on that.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Perhaps it's when people get given permission. It's like when you're kids, you have no fear. You'll try anything, you'll fall off bikes, you jump off couches, whatever. It's not until you get to that sort of age of 7, 8, 9, 10, where your parents say, 'no, that's wrong. You mustn't do that' and suddenly fear comes in and then fear drives out the rest of our life on trying new things. Right. We're frightened to get it wrong.*

**Vikas Shah:**

Correct.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*What we've done in our, in our business is since I've learnt the power of this reflection, I now pay everybody an hour a week to sit and do nothing and they have to diarize it and they have to be accountable to the fact they've done that. And what it does, it makes it okay. It's not fearful. They're not fearful of not being productive. Yeah. Because that's the reason they're doing it.*

**Vikas Shah:**

But, but, but that's also where I think a lot of, a lot of businesses also take a similar approach but also do that in terms of, you know, goo Google famously did their other projects thing. Yeah. But you know, that's a bit of a misnomer cuz they're just asking you for 120% of your time, not 80:20. But you know, a lot of businesses will encourage people to spend time on a creative pursuit or a hobby or they'll make space for that because they realise that actually that's where the really good stuff comes from. And it's not a senior executive thing, it's at all levels in any business because, you know, you can only join the number of dots that you have in front of you. Right.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Well, absolutely. But the reality is we all have to realise that it doesn't matter if you're a telephonist or a help desk operator or a board director, we're all human and we all have the same needs, right? We all have the same challenges to a greater or lesser extent - can't pay the mortgage, husband's leaving me, kids are ill, whatever the situations are. Everyone's trying to balance and spin these plates.*

*If you've got a community, a community being a business and employer or whatever, that is entirely supportive and empathetic to that and says, 'well don't, don't come in then or bring your kids if it's gonna be easier' or, you know, 'don't ask for permission to leave early. It's your kids, you, we'd be disappointed if you didn't go and get your kids'. It's a different mindset and flip flips out of, of a an attitude.*

**Vikas Shah:**

But, but the majority of workplaces and it, and it's not it's not the fault of anyone, let's say, but the majority of European workplaces are still really based on the industrial era. Right. And it's not because everyone's a dinosaur, it's because we had a hundred plus years of 'this is how you build a business'. The structure of the corporation, the, you know, all the governance, everything is really oriented around model A and we don't really have a model B yet. And so collectively as businesses, we're trying to figure it out, right? And so we, we've gotta be kind in ourselves as businesses. It's not about blame, it's not because 'that business is a dinosaur and that one's really progressive'. We're just all trying to figure out based on the restrictions we have, based on the structure, which is built for a different era. How do you adapt? How do you adapt to a world where the employee is now the centre of the organisation, not a machine.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*We could count ourselves extremely lucky because had it not been for Covid, we would still be doing the same thing thinking that was okay and there wasn't an alternative. What covid done was shine a light on the fact - there could be a different way, why don't you try it?*

**Vikas Shah:**

Like it was a shock to the system,

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Right? It was, yeah. And it was, we, we all had to learn very quickly how to deal with uncertainty. We had to learn very quickly on how to adapt because going to the office was now not an option. So those leaders that said, it's imperative you're in the office, realise they had to find another way because the power was taken away from them. So we were all forced to try something new and some of us have embraced it and continued it and created further greater momentum. Others have have sort of fallen by the wayside going 'oh it was much easier doing it the old way'.*

**Vikas Shah:**

Yeah. But, but that requires both sides to meet in the middle because right, for every team member who works at home and is super productive and is great, there's also gonna be someone who doesn't and goes, 'you know what, I'm gonna chill and I'm still gonna get paid'. And, and so it's about

recognising that there isn't one solution, but we have to figure out how do we recruit people who are better motivated? And how do you build company culture at a distance, which is hard but also how do you monitor people in a way which is fair for both sides, but isn't intrusive?

**Jeff Dewing:**

*They're all great questions and they're questions are that, that we've addressed and we think that we've nailed it. Now there'll be challenges and there'll be lessons on the journey that we've not come across yet. But it is all about culture. It is all about how you treat people and people that say, 'how do I know what that person's doing? How do I know if they're not just taking it easy'? And I'm saying it's the wrong question. The question is like anything else, you have to have a structure or framework, whether it's a family thing, a kids, a parenting or a business.*

*If you have a person or team that has a set of clear, concise objectives where we've all agreed what's gonna be done by a certain time, it's not dropped from a great height. Everyone is in that collaborative approach that says, 'yes, we all agree this is what we're gonna do'. And you let them own it or they become accountable and you say, 'I don't care how, when or where you do it, we've just agreed that's the outcome'. When you've got that clarity, it works fantastically well. The time it falls over is when you haven't got that clarity.*

**Vikas Shah:**

Exactly. And but then again, clarity's hard, right? And clarity requires people to meet you in the middle. It requires the participation of your team in agreeing what does that mean? Right? Because it's not about me as a business owner saying, 'oh, you know, this is what I want and that is my, that is my end game'. It's about the team going, well if, if, if this is, if this is the direction of travel of an organisation, how can I contribute? So it's, it's me saying to you, Jeff, what can you contribute to help us get to this? And how do we mutually agree therefore what your mission is? So, and that's a really hard thing for businesses to get around is the fact that you're moving from, you're moving from a company mission to individual missions.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*This is all stuff that we've been learning at pace because of Covid and because of getting intimate with, with staff understanding their bigger, wider world, not just their world in work. We have a very clear purpose in our organisation that is a meaningful purpose that is measurable. And what*

*happens is we say to people, you know, 'do you believe what we believe? You know, if you don't believe what we believe, then you're unlikely to contribute.' You have to believe what we believe and therefore you are there. By default, you have to be selective on the people you're bringing into organisation. But typically our purpose is based upon our values. And our values are just decent human values. And do you have those values? And if you do have those values, then you can go on that journey together up with power.*

**Vikas Shah:**

But here's, here's the kind of sting in the tail of that, right? The degree of honesty requires of an individual is quite profound. So let's say someone in their heart knows that they're just a bit of a nasty person and they like conflict and they're quite aggressive, that's okay if that's who you are, but then make sure that you're going into an environment where that's welcome. Yeah. Right? So become a litigator, you know, for example, right?

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Yeah <Laugh>*

**Vikas Shah:**

Yeah. But you know what, being, being really brutal off it, if you know that's what, that's your value set, then you need to go do that. What you can't do is know that that's who you are and try and adapt to an environment which is completely different. And you see that a lot. And that's one of the root causes of so much conflict in the workplace is where you end up with different personalities clashing.

So the kind of personalities you need on the floor of the New York Metals Exchange in the open outcry, or it's really aggressive and really brutal. It's very different to the kind of people you might want in a tech startup, let's say.

But again, you know, we've talked about introspection for the business leaders, but even individuals need to figure out what are my values? And there's no right or wrong answer. Right? You might just be a horrible person. That's okay <laugh> as long as you know who you are. And then go find somewhere we're being a horrible person is celebrated.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*It's great. Yeah, absolutely. You're bang on*

**Vikas Shah:**

Or get therapy!

**Jeff Dewing:**

*<Laugh> or get therapy <laugh>*

**Vikas Shah:**

So you can be less horrible

**Jeff Dewing:**

*<Laugh>. But again, haven't said that you're absolutely right because you could al you could, you could ask two people in the pub and then you say, what do you think? I'm horrible One. Say, well, yeah, the way you speak to those people is disgusted. And then another person goes off saying, that's brilliant mate. You're showing who's in charge. So it it, there's no right or wrong, it's just who you are, right?*

**Vikas Shah:**

Yeah.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Just try and give me an example if you can, where you've done something that perhaps went against the tide, that was material, not, not sort of nominal, but something where, where some example of where you, something happened to you and you had to pivot really fast and do the complete opposite of what perhaps people would've expected you to do or maybe even expected yourself to do. Have you got an example of when something like that may have happened?*

**Vikas Shah:**

Yeah. And, and, and it was quite unexpected because it wasn't a planned thing. But I remember maybe God like 9, 10 years ago now, I was doing a one of those typical business breakfast talks as a panel and blah, blah blah. Anyway, so I was feeling pretty anxious that day. And the first question

that I was asked on this panel was so, you know, 'what, what are some of the hard things about being an entrepreneur'? And I was like, you know what? Forget it. I'm gonna just be honest and say 'this decade of depression, to be honest', <laugh>.

And and you could have heard a pin drop in the room. Yeah. And the reason I use that example is even a decade ago, the culture of business was still, you don't admit it, you've gotta show strength. And there was a consequence to that.

There was a very real consequence that it could have, it could have dramatically reduced my credibility. I didn't know. But the pivot then was, now the cat's out of the bag. What do I do? How can I own that conversation and adapt? And, and it was interesting because there's an extent to which as a business owner, you're in a position where you can take a risk and be truthful. But you also can't be scared of consequences when it comes to the truth. Because it could have been the case that the business scene, let's say would've been like, 'oh, well, you know, he's probably not fit to lead if he's like that'. But I remember that day I got a message on LinkedIn from someone who said I was sat in the room, their brother had tried to take their own life the previous week. Wow. And they're really glad that somebody had talked about that. And if anything, being really open about it and being more truthful about who you are and what you're going through kind of makes people trust you more because, you know, there isn't the skeleton in the closet then. And I felt that as a skeleton in the closet.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*That's why no one trusts politicians. There's zero humility. Right?*

**Vikas Shah:**

Yeah, I mean it's weird because in a, in a way, once the skeleton's out of the closet, you don't need to be scared of it anymore.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*No. And you've got an opportunity to deal with it because now everyone will collectively try and deal with it.*

*I dunno if you watched the news last night, a good friend of mine is the chief executive of ESNEFT, which is the largest NHS trust in the UK. Nick Hume. He was on the News at 10 last night and was in a board meeting that he that was being videoed for some purpose. I dunno, perhaps the internal*

*purpose, I dunno. But he basically sat up and said, and he's, he's quite, he's quite controversial when he's saying, what's the worst that can happen now all they can do is sack me. And he said, 'hospitals are horrible places. You don't wanna be in a hospital. The food is crap. And no one really looks after you to the extent they should and they wake you up every three hours and stop you sleeping. And I've been in some dodgy hotels, but I've never had to share a bathroom with six other people.'*

*It was that frank and honest. And the point he was trying to make was this not be all fluffy and tell nonsense, you know, 'you don't wanna be in hospital unless you need to be in hospital', was the point he was trying to get across. Which in one regard was being brutally honest and people going, 'wow, that was, that was refreshing to hear someone being honest at that level'. But secondly, his subtle message, his subconscious message was 'don't come here and waste time and, and break the NHS. Come here if you really need it, don't come here any other time'.*

*And it was fascinating because that's another moment of madness where suddenly everyone's going, 'oh my God, he's gonna get hauled before the government and parliament for saying that'.*

#### **Vikas Shah:**

But, but people are honest sometimes, are they like that? Like people are honest and saying, well you know what, yeah, that's what this is like, and it, but it kind of has to be because it's an emergency service and you know, you're not there because you're going for a holiday. You're there because there's something wrong and it needs addressing. And the system was never designed for this many people, so it's going to creek. And so rather than everyone saying, 'well, you know, I demand sourdough in my hospital breakfast', for example, you know, and I'm, and I'm being flippant, but the point is we have to manage our expectations of a service and respect the limitations of that service. This is also about taking ownership of your part to play in that.

And I just don't see that happening enough. I really don't. I'll give you an example that there was, there was, there was one of my clients in our consulting business and you know, they were, they were looking at recruiting, they got lots and lots of industrial jobs. And I was like, 'well, you need to just be honest and say, you know, these, these are hard roles'. But actually there's a lot of people who really enjoy that. And if you take an example from the oil industry, oil and gas industry, they, they're never telling you that, you know, working on a rig is a soft, easy place to work. They're telling you it's is graft, it's hard, it's exciting, it's pressured. But if that's what you thrive on, this is your place.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Absolutely. Yeah.*

**Vikas Shah:**

Yeah. And businesses need to be like that too. Where, where you can be honest to say, 'look, this is a really tough place to work because of X, Y, Z, but hey, if that's what turns you on, come join us'.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*I agree. And it's also about trying new things, isn't it? One of my good friends that's in one of my peer groups runs a manufacturing business, metal manufacturing and raw materials have gone through a roof because of Ukraine and god knows what other things. And he's struggling like many businesses are because of various constraints and contractual constraints. But of course the biggest one of these changes he's got is labour. You know, people now you've got people retiring earlier, so he lost a load of staff cause they retired early and he's now decided to do something materially different. And he's gone out to the Philippines, he's just recruited about 40 metal workers. Who are extremely well-trained, got extremely, incredibly positive attitudes, are prepared to work for a salary that the British public won't currently work for. Or the British workforce won't carry work for. That's not, you know, we're still paying obviously national minimum wage.*

**Vikas Shah:**

Yeah, there are, there are wage differentials that that's, that's normal

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Of course. And the reality is though he's gone to the Philippines not to try and save money. He's got the Philippines to create a sustainable business. With all the various other challenges that are coming. But he's also brought in a workforce that's gonna infect, if that's the right word, in a positive way, a positive mindset and attitude on the other workers around the workforce. So it's about doing, trying new things, isn't it? And not having any fear of that.*

**Vikas Shah:**

It is. And this is where, you know, in particularly with international business, the perception and the reality are different. Like let be very, very clear. Like when you look at fast fashion, fast fashion has

committed, you know, atrocious labour rights abuses in manufacturing. So has the semi-conductor well battery industry when we look at cobalt mining. But the vast majority of manufacturing businesses, if they open a site in Indonesia or somewhere like that, they, you know, they're successful, they're making money, the team are looked after, they'll have a lot of facilities, they're getting paid probably above the median wage in those countries anyway. And that's fine. Like, like even if that median wage is lower than what we have here, you've gotta remember that in some of these parts of the world, the actual cost of living is maybe a factor of 20 to 30 less than it is here. So you've got to make sure that is what you are doing fair, reasonable, and appropriate in that context? Not through your lens.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*No, no, no, exactly. And that's, yeah, and that's a, we're back to a, a, a mindset and a culture of a broad spectrum of viewpoint, aren't you? And again, that's also about understanding first, seek to understand and all, and all the other various things that are important. So Vikas, I've got one last question that I'd like to ask you. Thank you for that, that was brilliant. If you're only allowed to say one thing, what would you say you were most grateful for?*

**Vikas Shah:**

It's gonna sound really weird, but like, think about the likelihood that we are actually in existence and the statistical likelihood of anything existing is really small. The statistical likelihood of biological creatures existing is infinitesimally small. And now go on to think about the statistical likelihood that, that we exist. And not only do we exist, but we're conscious and able to observe and able to do all that. And so, so just that is just, it's just remarkable.

Like, you know, when you think about the context of us as beings, the fact that outside my window over there is a gigantic nuclear explosion 96 million miles away, which is warming me right now. I mean, it's pretty nuts. So the thing that I, I would always tell people is don't forget the sense of wonder every day. And because that gives you a huge tonic for the stresses and strains of life.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*That's a fantastic answer. I love that. And you'll be pleased to know. No one else has ever said anything like that. So that's brilliant.*

**Vikas Shah:**

<Laugh> makes me happy.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*And then finally, as we wrap up what message would you give out to the audience if there was only one message you could offer in this environment of, you know, creativity, doing the opposite, break the rules, whatever. What's the one message you would send out?*

**Vikas Shah:**

You're not as big a deal as you think you are, so stay humble!

**Jeff Dewing:**

*<Laugh>, well done. Humble is humility. Right? Absolutely. Fantastic. Listen, Vikas, it's been absolutely spectacular to your, this could have gone on for 3, 4, 5 hours, so I do appreciate your time. We have overrun, which is not a problem because when you get content like this, we want to hear it. So thank you so much for your time. Really appreciate it. No,*

**Vikas Shah:**

Thank you for the invitation. It's been, it's been a really fun conversation and you know, I think what, what you're doing with this podcast is really great. So thank you for the invitation.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*No, thank you very much. And we'll speak soon.*

*A huge thank you to Vikas for taking this valuable time to speak to me today. Another incredible thought-provoking conversation. I always find it fascinating how great leaders tend to have completely aligned values. The piece where Vikas explained in his view that the difference between true entrepreneurs and other business leaders or owners is that they never do it for the money. They are passionate about solving a problem. Of course, they consider financial impact as they have to create a sustainable business or solution, but it's never the primary driver. And the other golden nugget for me was his final comment on the one piece of advice or message you would like to share. And he said, the wonder of our existence, which really sparked thoughts in my head. And it's about just wondering how we came to be. How the world exists and operates every day. The*

*curiosity that is created from the wonder that will drive a positive appreciation for life and positivity can only be a good thing. Right?*

*I hope you enjoyed the conversation as much as I did, and thanks once again to Vikas.*

*I'm **Jeff Dewing**, author of bestselling book, **Doing the opposite** and CEO of Cloudfm.*

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*Thanks for listening.*