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I'm Lucas Kraus, the president of Real Property Management, the largest single family property management company in the country with over 30 340 offices. And today I want to share kind of my story about kind of unearthing the greatness within. I have recently spoke at, you know, the University of Colorado and the University of Utah. And what I've learned quite often with some of those, speaking out obligations to different student groups, that students have fatigue with some of the lectures and found stories a little more engaging. And what I want to do is really tell you about my unconventional pursuit of a lifelong dream. My dream was to play professional baseball. And what happened from that journey, I took some life lessons away that after I re entered the workforce that fundamentally changed the trajectory of my career. And my personal life as I chased down different ambition. So much so that I went from, you know, an entry level job to the C suite of an industry leading company in less than 10 years. And so, what I want to do is kind of share that story with you, and kind of how that apply. I've applied that to my career, and I've seen others do it to their benefit. If you humor me for a second, what I want to do is go back in time a little and explain why baseball was so important to me. As a child, you can laugh and see I had a nice bowl cut there. But I was a real shy child in elementary school, and my struggle with my grades and so shy that when it was time to go to lunch and eat with my classmates, that I grabbed my lunchbox, and I think it was an Alfa lunchbox at the time. So that probably dates me, I would take that and go to the bathroom, instead of going into the lunch room with everyone and hide in the stall. And it was just because I was just so shy. And I was afraid of the concept of having to like to talk with other people. And fortunately for me, at the age of 10, my parents signed me up to play baseball. And that summer, really changed my life, the sport just clicked to me and I grew so confident, would be able to demonstrate, you know, proficiency in something, we're also kind of broke me out of my shell. And I became very confident and develop

some relationships. And when I came back to school after that summer, my grades skyrocket. And unfortunately, for the teachers have a big mouth, and I couldn't keep that shot. And so I probably got myself in more trouble because I wouldn't stop talking to people in the social butterfly. And at that very moment, I knew baseball was really important to me. And that kind of held it near and dear to my heart, because it really, you know, made me who I was. And I identified with it. And I had this golden dream to be a professional baseball player. And that was my goal for right from there. And it's funny because I had this great feedback. Every at every level, I Excel, and, you know, little league pony league High School. And this is where I made a major mistake. I just assumed that opportunities were going to just fall into place. And what I did was, I just sat back, I was a passenger in my own life. And so what happened instead of going to showcases and college camps, and given myself the biggest opportunity to succeed and get maybe a college scholarship, or even get signed by a



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professional scout. I graduated high school with zero scholarship offers. And that was because I like to be a passenger in my own life. And I was basically a byproduct of circumstances. So if, if the luck broke my way, I might have a chance. But I didn't do anything to shape my environment and create success. And the funny thing is, I see that quite often with individuals in their career. And I will tell you what changed my career trajectory very quickly when I realized that you are in your own business. You are your own CEO, cmo, CEO, CFO, you need to manage your career accordingly. No one is thinking about you developing your skills on a daily basis or strategically how that next job fits into your career aspiration, or even, you know, marketing your skills and talents for other opportunities. And so when we say own it, it really means set a clear vision of what you want. I knew at a young age, I wanted to play professional baseball. And fortunately, I didn't really create my own vision statement mission statement. Why do you think large companies set their own mission vision statement? Think about what Google is right? Google's mission is to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful. That's very clear in guides all the efforts of their teams. You should do the same thing and clearly set a target of where you want to go with your career. The same thing is with your professional development, think in terms If you want to be a sales director or vice president sales or presenter you had requires presentation skills, a lot of your present, you know, your professional development should be geared around developing your skills, so that you can be successful in that arena. So it's understanding what skills you need to be successful in whatever you're trying to chase down, and be very thoughtful and direct your energy towards it. You know, as mentioned, with Google's trying to organize information, understand, they don't chase things that really don't, you know, track towards their core. The other part is I mentioned about having the right fit

means strategic, all too often, where someone will fall into whatever jobs are baby available, and not be as thoughtful on interviewing the company, when we evaluate an opportunity. How does that role fit within your vision and what you're ultimately trying to accomplish? Also, what about that company? Does that company has some panache within the industry that will help you carry weight, and maybe get promoted further down the line with other companies outside of the industry or within the industry, and most importantly, getting the right supervisor, it is important to work for great people who develop and groom talent and build you as I said, you know, when you're going through the interview process, make sure to spend a lot of time interviewing that supervisor to understand do they promote within? What do they do to develop talent? Or are they looking just looking solely for their own interests? If you have to go through an interview process with a hiring manager? You asked them how they develop their talents, and they feel stumped, and they're stumped on how they answer that question. It's probably a good indicator that that's probably not near and dear to their heart about building talent and grooming others for success. And then the last, as I mentioned, is engaging. companies provide a lot of different training, free training opportunities, even subsidies for education, take advantage of every single one of those. And I'd say the last is your supervisor. You know, the easiest way to get promoted because I get this question quite often, when I'm speaking at different universities, I can tell you, it's really easy to sit down with your supervisor, share your aspirations, what you want to accomplish, and then ask the question of what do you need to accomplish to get to that next level or get in get promoted, and clearly document it, write it out, and develop a plan together, and then go work that plan. It's that simple. Because now you have a shared commitment with your supervisor is clearly documented what needs to be accomplished. And you've made it tangible to chase it down. And so, as I shift back to talk about one of the other life lessons I took away from this, I can tell you, self imposed obstacles are reality in all of our worlds. But in my baseball journey, it played a big part. When I graduate high school, I enrolled at Indiana University. And as a freshman, I was a little lost, I had so much my identity wrapped around being a professional baseball player, that it was probably unhealthy. And so when I went to, you know, enrolled for classes, I was kind of lost. I didn't know who I was really. But since baseball was so important to me, the first thing I did was look up where and when lock on tryouts were at Indiana University. And that day came and went. And I didn't show up. When through the whole school year, sophomore year rolled around, like when classes were starting, I looked up where and when walk on tryouts where



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I didn't show up. And the reason I did, I was deathly afraid to fail. Any think about how foolish that is, essentially gave myself a 0% chance of succeeding. Because I was afraid to try. We're all guilty of these kind of self imposed obstacles. As seen in the career arena

quite often, we'd maybe give ourselves negative self talk and say, we're not good at public speaking. And I've seen individuals do that. And so what do they do they avoid every opportunity to their train, and get better at public speaking or even opportunities at work they have others do. And then what happens, it becomes a self fulfilling prophecy because they've avoided so much and now it's been ingrained in their mind that they're not overly effective at being able to present in the public setting. And so, as I look at those kind of, you know, self imposed obstacles, it's so important to realize what we do. Growth is usually outside of our comfort zone. And just like strength training, the biggest gains are outside the edge edges of your level. And so, become better aware at who you are. And taking inventory of that. When do you perform your best? What's your mindset? How do you need to prepare? Whether it be going into a meeting or a big sales call or a presentation? What tendencies do you have that maybe restrict your abilities to evolve? Is it negative self talk, or do you believe that you maybe aren't good at something and you just haven't given yourself the chance to really work through and fail a few times to get better, because the one of the hardest things we have we face today is if we're an instant gratification culture, all too often, you know, with technology and how things have been given to us so quickly, we want immediate results, I will tell you, some of the most rewarding things are come from hard work. And so the way you can take out, you know, take action, and really attack the self imposed obstacle is try some of the things that you maybe think you're not good at, test those limits, challenge some of those limiting beliefs. Take on projects that scare you get well versed. And if fear is ultimately something that restricts your progress, then ask yourself, would you do it if you weren't afraid? Because that's what I had to do. in that journey, my junior year, I decided to muster up enough courage to go to walk on trial. And I played very scared, I was cut from the team. And I will tell you, that was the best thing ever. For me. It removed this irrational fear that was holding me back, I didn't die. I just was told I wasn't good enough. And it was so liberating that I decided to stay in shape and try to walk on as a senior which was really unconventional. And with that newfound kind of freedom, I played loose. And I ended up walking onto the team and making a division one baseball program after not playing for three plus years. And it was, it was an amazing experience when I got there. Practice with the team in the fall. And I started to notice things of individuals who were very successful. And it wasn't always the most talented. It was these individuals who were very confident who believe in themselves. If they had a bad outing or a bad path, they just dusted themselves off and got back in and they didn't compound it and let that failure stick with them and taint what they were doing. And I will tell you I've seen confidence plays such a similar role in the business world, it's important that you portray yourself with confidence that you have great posture, to have your chin up and great body language. And when you know, probably the best example of I've experienced this when I was a young, I wasn't yet quite an executive, but I was sitting in a boardroom with a leadership team with people who are all twice my age. And I was going to present a concept that was to was

going to save us about \$5 million as a company, but it was going to require a change. And I knew there was going to be met with some pushback. And so I practiced how I was going to deliver my recommendation, it was a very short little kind of two minute presentation. But I took the time to not only practice the words I was gonna say but how I said that I was going in on my posture that I had my shoulders rolled back, chest out, chin up,



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and I said it with conviction. And I imagined it I could have done it's so meekly, if I didn't prepare to that point, and said, Well, if we maybe make these changes, there's a good chance, we could potentially save \$5 million. Instead, I delivered it with conviction and outline the changes that need to be made. And if we do these things, we are likely to save \$5 million for this system, and be able to reinvest those dollars and continue our growth trajectory. And just that delivery without using hedging phrases with confidence and tone, I was able to get that initiative push through. And I firmly believe that I needed to overconfidence compensate with that kind of confidence. Because I was young and a very senior group that they needed to believe in me, even more so than probably someone else with maybe a little more of a track record. And so really think about those opportunities, whether whether you're interviewing, or even just you as you work, how you can deliver with conviction, and avoid things like hedging phrases, because they undermined you more than you can imagine. I get that today as a leader of a company. And I can see the difference. And I'm very cognizant of when someone delivers something with confidence. I believe in what they're doing because they believe in it. And it's so important all those nonverbals going on around them. And so, as I saw that firsthand in the baseball world, unfortunately enough for me, when the spring season started, for the Indiana University baseball team, I was cut. And it was the right decision. I was a rusty senior and I had way too much to learn in order to really add value to the team. But I took away some great experiences. And I got a taste for success and what can be done. If you really believe in yourself and you commit to a task. And so when I graduated, I had a choice to make. I was going to either continue to chase this dream down because I believed I could do more or I just would focus on my career. And I really elected to try and chase this down. And what I did was I was working 10 to 12 hour night. But I wanted to make a professional baseball team and I fully believed I could do it and played for years. So I decided to reinvent myself as a pitcher. Because I looked at the landscape and realized there is not really an opportunity for me maybe to be a position player as a first baseman when I played, because I haven't had played in competitive innings, four plus years. And it's really hard to showcase your skills as a hitter in a tryout. But pitching lends itself better that and I happened to be left handed, and there's a premium on left handed pitching. And so for that two year window, after graduating, I was working 1012 hour days, but I had my vision, and I firmly committed to reinventing myself into a pitcher. And every single night, I would

work my routine after work, I'd get home eat dinner, and then I'd go lift weights I'd run. I'd read every book I could on pitching. I even went and got pitching lessons for my former college coach who work with little kids. And think about how humbling it is as you're a 22 year old. And you're waiting for your turn for your pitching lessons. And the coach is working with 10 year old Billy, and 10 year old Billy is working on the same balance and accuracy drills that you're about to. And he's better than you. And yet, that's humbling. But the thing was, I wasn't competing with 10 year old Billy, I was competing with myself to be the best pitcher that I could become. And I can tell you, the most important thing I did was every single night I threw against this brick wall maplebrook Elementary School, because often I couldn't find someone who was going to catch me. And I would just throw simulated bullpen sessions against this brick wall. I'd shovel snow if there was snow there. It'd be cold sugar, Chicago winter. And as I didn't care, and my focus there was about getting better every single day. And that's what was powerful. It's amazing what can be done in small increments. Because I want an a two year window from really a novices pitching to a professional caliber pitcher. And that's so important. As you look about developing your skills and your career. We talked about that confidence and how it's important. competence for a lot of us is a natural, and it doesn't come from just you know, I'm always envious of those who just naturally have it. But for me, it comes from total preparation and knowing that I've outworked individuals.



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But I will tell you the other part of it is humility is understanding that nothing is beneath you learning the basics. And paying your dues is so important to growing and grooming your skills and your career. The other part about it is preparation. It's about putting in the work. And all those things you know, are the really the keys to your success. And you look at it from a career application. A quote my team probably gets tired of they I often say is, it's great to be the smartest person in the room, which you can't control. But it pays to be the most prepared. And that means showing up prepared for whatever's going to be covered in that meeting. Taking notes being present, being engaged, practice what you're going to say, before you say it if you're going to have you know, if you want to raise a comment doesn't hurt to practice. Think about what how well it'll sound that second or third time after you've practiced and tightened up what you're going to say. But on a macro level, it's so important to be curious, always learning. Take time to learn about your industry, read industry magazines, or visit websites, or blogs or outlet. Get You know, go to conferences, learn as much as you can, so that you can add value, cross train, get exposed to other aspects of your company, talk to people be curious about what other departments do. what you will get is a global perspective that will serve you so well. You will make better decisions. And you will very quickly become an individual that people will look to as an individual who can drive things through a business. Next important lesson I

was able to take away was the power of perseverance. As you saw, I was very very committed to developing my skill. But one thing I got really good at was failing and getting back up off the canvas. As I show this picture here, Mom, Ellie because I think it's so fitting. And unlike earlier in my career, I did everything in my power to be noticed by other careers. I was taking full ownership. I went to three major league teams open tryouts, and it's cut from every single one of them. I went to open workout for two independently teams were cut from that. I went to a private workout for the Baltimore Orioles and was cut from that and you add that It was zero scholarships, coming out of high school cut during my junior tryouts and then ultimately cut through my senior year of college, I got really good at getting caught. And it's funny because a lot of us give up all too early on our journey. And, you know, I'll talk about it when, as I close here and what I was taken away, but I want to talk about how persistence really plays. And not only in life, but as in as in careers, it's so important to be resilient and dust yourself off. greatness is just kind of on the other side of a lot of those failures. And then when I've seen it, with, you know, having 1000s of different employees roll up underneath me at different times. I see you know, those who underperformers employees often, when something bad happens, they claim victim status. And they never give themselves a chance because they're just a victim and they have no control of what's happening. And then the average kind of performer ultimately thinks Poor me, but they continue to do work. But their attitude doesn't allow them to take additional swings and make some lead because they're afraid to take chances and just play it. Where the great employees embrace the good, the bad. They learned from those situations and grow. And you know what they take chances to grow and improve themselves and give themselves a higher chance of success. And frankly, just create more luck. And for me, I was going to do everything I can to create more luck. After that baltimorean worked out for the Baltimore Orioles at Camden Yards with a stadium I'm showing here.



21:35

I was getting deterred, I fully admit it. But I fortunately had some friends who encouraged me and one who happened to play professional baseball, who promised to give me a workout. And true to his word. He lined up a workout with the New York Mets. I flew out to Norfolk, Virginia with the Mets AAA affiliate was on a Wednesday night for Thursday morning workout, took a PTO day from my office job and got out there. And when I showed up, it was quite evident that I was an afterthought. It was about 6x Big League guys, I recognize a few of them. They're all like six, five and built like tanks. And I was supposed to be the last one to pitch kind of just added on after the fact. I just sit there for a good hour, hour and a half waiting as I watched these masters of their craft patch. And I'd be lying if I didn't tell you I was getting so nervous. So much so that it was finally my

time to pitch. I rushed my warmup I was anxious, I was nervous. And the three scouts with radar guns, looked at what how fast that pitch was that it registered that I threw dropper has to shake it almost as if to say you're wasting our time. Now I remember this quite vividly. Because this was a changing moment for me. I got the ball back from the catcher and I remember staring down at the pitching robber. And muttering some colorful language that's probably not appropriate to share with the group today. But I also thought about how hard I've worked everything I committed here that I had the opportunity to grasp and I was not going to let this go by. And so I channeled that energy and locked right into the catcher's mitt. I turned and fired and threw a strike. And the scouts started not alone. 25 pitches in, they said I looked great. And I would say my spots sitting in a high 80s low 90s. And the funny thing was, I told him I could throw harder than that. And I've never thrown that hard in my life, you know, miles per hour. But I just believe I could. I felt it because I've tried so many times against that brick wall. I knew there was more of the tank. And so the scouts would love to see it kind of trotted back behind the catcher. And I locked into that catcher's mitt one more time. But this time, I thought about all those times I was cut, and told I was not good enough, and I let them boil my blood. And I turned and fired everything I had into that next pit. And it just cracked the echo throughout the facility. And every single one of those scouts grabbed their phone to make a call. So much excitement around that after about the next 2530 pitches. They ran up to me and said, Okay, that's good. We've seen enough. And they start peppering me with questions on where you've been playing, why don't we know about you? And I said, I have an office job and I gotta go catch your flight. And the best part was the scout said, okay, but don't talk to anyone. And I just kind of chuckled because I'm like, who even knows he exists. I worked in an office job in Chicago, I gotta get back. And so I got that I got to the airport caught my flight. And when I landed, I have three voicemails one from the scout one to the scouting director, and one from the GM. And we talked through terms at evening, and that's when they dropped the bomb on me. They said we need you in spring training on Sunday. So that means I had to show up to work on Friday and quit my job. And fortunately, my boss was very understanding after I played the voicemap messages for and I show up to spring training Sunday morning in Port St. Lucie, Florida. I walked into the executive offices, and I signed my contract. And they walked me into the locker room. present me with my locker Show me. You know, the ute, my jersey, they drew my locker, jerseys, my hats and a bunch of gear. And I realized that guys are getting out and go into practice. And so I quickly tried to check what jersey everyone's wearing, put the right uniform on, run out. And as I'm running out, it's roped off for fam. And as I'm trotting out, kind of oblivious to what's going on beside me. There's fans on to the left of me and I get hit from my side and I look down. And it's a little kid with his hat pushed out and asking me to sign it. Look around as if to say, What am I allowed to do this. And so I very discreetly sign his hat with his Sharpie and give it back and just run. And all I can think about that poor kid just devalued his hat. We did some warm up calisthenics and spring

training and they asked the left handed pitchers to go and throw a bullpen session there was 10 pitching rounds right there. I grabbed a ball in the middle and just working with the catcher about four or five pitches in I need to step back and kind of want to survey the land and take inventory of what's going on. And I very quickly realized that, to my right is our wire multiple time all starting to my left is Tom Glavine future Hall of Famer. And it hits me like a ton of bricks, that I just achieved my dream.



26:34

And I'm just so proud. And it's not about the accomplishments of everything I put into it. And I share the story in these lessons that are taken away, because they really have enriched my life so much. And I believe they can be very impactful for you. Things like being a driver in your life and taking complete ownership of your goal. Conquering obstacles by doing the unglamorous work, leveraging others by tapping in the power of your network resources University, embracing the inevitable failures, by learning each time and getting back up wiser for each each step of the way. So most importantly, having the courage to dream big. Because I can tell you, if you think about it, there's a 0% percent chance I play professional baseball, or even come to the CEO of industry leading company and a relatively young age, I don't fully embrace these lessons. And I can tell you, they've had a profound effect on my life, and I believe they can for you. I know each one of you, everyone you've probably heard in one time or another that you have greatness within. The person told you that was right. But what they did not tell you was that greatness was buried underneath a ton of hard work and mistakes. And for those of you who are willing to dig deep, and show that grit and grind through it, the world is yours for the taking. My challenge to us is to go out there and take it and really create the life that you deserve. So thank you guys for listening to my story. And I really hope that helps you. I know we have a few questions. So why don't we just turn it over to Dan for a couple of questions.



28:17

Lucas, you've got all of us dreaming pretty big after seeing what you were able to fight through and be persistent and really great advice. And quite a few questions coming in. We wanted to start off with a question from Paul. And this gets back to the don't wait lesson. Paul's as typical graduate is just starting his career, and sometimes feels like it's his job as an employee to sit back and wait for the boss to tell him what to do any suggestions?



28:51

I think it's a great question, Paul. And I think what's served me well in my career not only taking control of what my ambitions were and what I want to develop my career, but also being proactive in your one on one meetings and asking, What can I do? Are there other projects, and quite often if you just keep it open in general, they may find something. But even if they if now they keep telling you there's nothing new, they don't have extra projects, go seek it out. I think one of the best things I did one of my first roles, I was running an onboarding process. And I realized that no one was managing some of the vendors in procurement. And I just asked if I could take it because it was being it wasn't being managed and I was awarded with and I got more responsibility to develop some new skill sets. So the key is taking the initiative and simply asking to work but if that doesn't work, dig deeper and find those opportunities and almost create a project if you have to.



29:46

Make sense. So question from Susan, how do you prevent yourself from showing too much confidence? Is there a red line where you need to be careful where you're identified as That new kid on the block, and others are saying, you got to wait a little bit before you speak up at the corporate meeting or before you approach the CEO. How what should Susan kind of be aware of if she's on the more confident side?



30:19

Great question, Susan, I think there's a big difference between confidence, arrogance, and how you balance that with humility. Fortunately, enough, for me, confidence is something that's native. And so to me, it's always about being very well prepared. And so I look at confidence is how you package and present yourself and carry yourself. And at the same time, it's always asking questions and being humble enough to know that you don't know everything that you can learn, before you present, and let's just say you want to present whether it be to your superior or you know, even leadership team member, you're obviously gonna be well prepared to take the time to ask questions and start the dialogue. So there's a gentle way to introduce before you present, so that individuals feel you've taken the time to engage and understand so that you aren't just kind of, you know, imposing your will on and even if you are 100%. Correct. Sometimes it takes time to just warm those individuals up and ask clarifying questions and make sure some of your assumptions are true. Because the one thing you know, it's, it's great. And I think one of the best things I ever learned in my career is early on, I thought I knew everything. Once I

had my three internships I had great, you know, had a great college career. And I realized how quickly I didn't know as much. And there's a lot of wisdom out there. And I became a very curious individual. And so then when I present and presented solutions, people were more willing to listen because they knew I was taking the time to ask questions. I think that's very important so that it doesn't border on what he thinks is insane is about, you know, being viewed as almost arrogant or overconfident.



32:01

Perfect advice. So here's a question from Kim, wondering what's the best way to introduce to a colleague or a boss that she missed a deadline or made a colossal mistake.



32:19

We go deep into it, I actually have done a course on conflict resolution and kind of, you know, frank conversations, and it's really important. There's a you know, there's a nice framework for that. But it's so important to attack the behavior, not the individual and what happened and be very factual. Some of the key things as you go into it is creating a safe environment as you have those kinds of conversation, making sure that you have all the facts, ask questions, clarifying questions of what happened, that you're not jumping to conclusions, you've heard something from some other employee, truly understand and make sure you understand what happened, and where the breakdowns were. And I think what's important is make a collaborative solution. So let's just say a deadline was missed, because they were waiting on a response from another department, and the individual didn't escalate, well, help that employee get that opportunity to understand well, what could have been done differently, maybe they and they, you know, I probably should have taken steps to either escalate with you, as my manager or escalate with the other department had that, you know, those things are so important where it's a collaborative approach. But there will be times maybe where individuals don't have self awareness, you don't have to be direct, but you should always warm up to it. And there's always kind of the logic of, you know, using the sandwich method, where it's, you share your appreciation as something the individual did well on the project, you talk about the opportunity to improve it. And if they do steps X, Y, and Z to improve that, you know, prove their performance. This was how it could result in a better outcome for that. So those are a lot of frameworks and different ways to attack it. It's hard, because I know I'm trying to answer this and maybe a two minute to Two Minute question, but I probably spend usually an hour just talking about those frameworks.



34:07

That's a good framework and solid advice. And probably our last question that we can get in, in this session is from Andy and he, like many of us share that same trait, that fear of failure. Any final suggestions for Andy and the rest of us who are always confronted with that fear of failure?



34:31

Yeah, yes. You know, a few different things I do to try to manage that because that fear of failure was the tough one, especially trying to you know, the baseball won because it was just it was like a pass fail mindset and it wasn't a growth mindset. Engage your logical side. Why are you not trying to do this? And understand what are the repercussions of not trying, if that's what failure is really, you know, holding you back. The key is to understand what is the desired outcome and wait You need to do to get there. And then channel that fear into preparing us as a healthy pursuit if you're really afraid of failing or you're taking on a big project. Use that fear as motivation to work harder and put the time in to create a higher likelihood of your success. And those are things I've done that have helped me kind of channel that into more of a healthy outlet, rather than creating this gating mechanism that prevents me from really chasing down my aspirations.