



SuperFastBusiness presents

How To Transform Your Extraordinary Mind With Vishen Lakhiani

The unique thinking behind Mindvalley, what makes "real" entrepreneurs successful, and how you can be better and happier in business and life



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by SuperFastBusiness



Vishen Lakhiani

James: James Schramko here, welcome back to SuperFastBusiness.com. This is Episode 580, and I've brought along a special guest, Vishen Lakhiani. Welcome to the show.

Vishen: Hi James. It's such a privilege to be here, because I've been following your podcast now for several years.

James: Well it's a super privilege for me to have you here, because I've been aware of you for probably almost a decade, when you were featured in a newsletter that Yanik Silver published in a private group. And I was really intrigued with your strategy of blogging and email marketing. Back then, you were doing a pretty impressive job of building an audience, and that model, I think, is still the core of what I do now.

And I have a huge debt of gratitude to you because I remember when I was in the Dominican Republic at your event, you generously gifted me your speaking spot for a morning session and I was able to share my own blogging technique with your audience. So it's like the karma balanced back out for the show.

Vishen: Well, that's a testament to your brilliance, right, James?

James: Not really. Maybe my persistence the night before, I'm not sure.

Vishen: Well, 10 years ago, I was teaching meditation in New York and London. And you know, when you teach meditation, it's one of the surest paths to going broke unless you know how to get an audience. So I had to rapidly teach myself everything, from blogging to working with email newsletters, just so I could start filling my meditation classes. And now, of course, things have changed a lot.

Now Mindvalley is more of an edutech company. We don't really do a lot of the internet marketing stuff anymore. We focus more on building really great technology, really great apps. And I'm primarily focused on curriculum design. So I work with many great teachers and I work to integrate the learnings and the teachings from masters around the world and bring them to our two-million-strong audience through [Mindvalley.com](https://www.mindvalley.com).

More than a publisher

James: So would you say that you are a publisher as well?

Vishen: I'm a lot more than a publisher. See, publishers might publish a book. They might publish a podcast. They might publish some form of content. We do something a little bit more. What we are really building is a massive global tribe dedicated to self-improvement. And this tribe has its values, it has its

protocols, it has its unique beliefs. And the tribe is based on a platform called Mindvalley. And the platform is both online, through our Quest Learning methodology, our Quest Learning app, but it's also offline through our festivals, like A-Fest, through our universities like Mindvalley U, which moves campuses to a different city every year, to a whole host of other activities which are now happening around the world. Mindvalley is more than a publisher.

A drive for community

I'll put it this way: you know, there's a lot of talk right now about loneliness, loneliness being the disease afflicting modern society in really harsh ways today. They say that the modern Western man or woman is about three times lonelier than we were several decades ago. And things like Facebook, things like Skype, are only adding to that, because as we move from working in an office where you have a tribe to working from home, I mean think about it, right? One third of New Yorkers work from home these days. This loneliness piles up. And so there's a disease of loneliness, and this loneliness also affects a lot of things about your biology. For example, loneliness is one of the biggest causes of ageing, of depression, of heart disease.

And so Mindvalley is dedicated to personal growth, but as we started doing this, as we start building our apps and building online tools, we realized that what really brought our people together, what really made our students super happy, was the opportunity to connect with other students.

So now, we've adapted our business model to include community in everything we do. For example, every online program that you start with Mindvalley, you can't do it by yourself. We have 3000 students start together on the same day, go through it together, cross the finishing line together, and while they're going through it, they're supporting each other in an online group.

So that's an example of how we're merging community with learning. And the results have been astonishing. We're getting 500 to 800 percent better completion rates than regular online courses, because groups come together and people help move each other along. Now we're taking that offline. So, for example, we have an experiment that I really created for my own children. It's

called Mindvalley U, and I wanted to be in a position where I could live in a different city every year. But very soon, I realized that even when I'm doing that with my two kids and my wife, we're going to be lonely.

We have a community here in the city we live in, and we miss that. So I decided, what if I could get hundreds of my friends to move to a city with me? And soon, I realized, well, there's going to be logistical issues. You're going to need nannies, you're going to need classes for your kids, you're going to need events. So I assembled a team and I launched a new division called Mindvalley University.

So now what I do is, every summer in the month of July, I get my family, move to a new city. We rent a massive building, we're doing it in Tallinn, Estonia this year, which is the city with the highest number of startups per capita. We've rented the number one conference center. It's a massive space in Tallinn, and we have something like five hundred to a thousand people joining us with their families for a month. And in that month, we have hundreds of activities, classes for kids. We entrepreneurs come and we teach each other's children. There are dinners and cultural activities and we work out together. And many of the world's top personal growth superstars, you know, like Ben Greenfield, Wim Hof, come and participate.

And so again, it's that drive for community. I found that what really brings me most happiness is being able to be in the presence of other incredible, positive, soulful human beings. And that's kind of what I've built my business and my life around. It is that desire to have community.

James: It's really resonating with me. I took a decision several years ago to take down my single purchase products and put them all inside my own community, and then that's supported with physical live events and local meetups all around the world. I actually had the good fortune to attend Mindvalley U in Spain, which actually kicked off an eight-country trip for me. It was a great catalyst for getting out of the office, or the home office, putting on some shoes and a shirt and actually exploring around a little bit. So it was great to see that magic of putting all these people together and sharing different ideas.

So I think what you're really creating here is a movement.

Vishen: Exactly, exactly. Now, I don't toss around the word, "movement", because you know, it's a much overused word. But what we're finding is that people come into our programs, come into our apps like Mindvalley Quests, because they want to learn. They want to develop a super brain with Jim Kwik, or they want to learn public speaking with Lisa Nichols, or they want to learn leadership with Robin Sharma. And they have incredible results, but we get crazy high MPS scores because of how we infuse community and support in everything we do. And so the student gets this extra bonus. They are not lonely. You cannot possibly feel lonely, because the community is so vibrant, and everyone is there to support you. And then, when you want to meet these people in the real world, there are opportunities to connect.

James: I think that's one of the secrets to communities. The connection. That's what drives retention, I've found that people want to stay. And I often use the metaphor of a summer vacation camp where you go there as one person, you meet all these new people, and by the end of it you don't want to go home. And if you've set up this infrastructure in your business, people don't have to go home. They can always stay a part of it and of course you'll prosper from being the facilitator of that. What do you think the end vision will be for this in a few years from now, in terms of the trajectory it's taking? And also, what would happen if you want to go to the southern hemisphere in winter?

Vishen: Haha. Well, I was just at the, actually, no. I was just at the southern hemisphere but I realized that it wasn't winter. It was winter where those of us in the northern hemisphere are used to. I was just in Antarctica. Not sure what you mean by what happens if you want to go to the southern hemisphere in winter. I love the southern hemisphere. I love you guys there in Australia and New Zealand and now Antarctica and the penguins I'm talking about.

James: I'm just thinking that time of the year gets a little chilly. Although our cold, it's not extreme compared to the cold in the North American sort of regions.

Vishen: Well, you know, my wife and my family is from Estonia, which is pretty up north. It's at the same level as Alaska. So we're used to the cold. When my kid was born, we would walk him for for two hours every day in minus 20 degree weather. It's just an Estonian belief that that's what it takes to raise a healthy baby. So I love the cold.

Where Mindvalley is going to go

James: Nice. So where do you think it's going to go?

Vishen: That's a good question. Sorry, somehow we got distracted by penguins in Antarctica.

So there are two big things I'm working on, James. And the first is, the way people educate themselves in the world is shifting very, very, very rapidly. So as artificial intelligence, as robotics increasingly make modern jobs obsolete, I mean, look at the data, right? Singularity University says that 45 percent of jobs today will not exist in 10 years. And as these jobs disappear, what truly makes a special individual, someone who's contributing to society, someone who is valuable to a company, it's not so much their knowledge, but their wisdom, their attitude, their beliefs. You see, knowledge is going to become more commoditized by 2029.

And I was talking to Ray Kurzweil, Google's VP of engineering. and Ray said, you know by 2029, we're going to have the equivalent of Iron Man's Jarvis on our smartphones. We will have personalized artificial intelligence ready to pull up any fact we need. But what it won't be able to do is give us wisdom.

And so, what Mindvalley is focused on is a new type of education that we call transformational education. Some people call it humanism, but it's the idea that we need to improve ourselves from the basis of our performance as a human being. So our education is about teaching people to eat better, to understand nutrition, to work out in the most optimized ways. Biohacking so that the body is in the best state it could possibly be.

Then we teach people how to tap into their spirituality, how to magnify the powers of their mind with teachers like Jim Kwik. We teach people how to improve their memory, how to develop a super brain with spiritual teachers like Neale Donald Walsch. We teach them that they are more than just flesh and bone, that there is a spirit that you can tap into, that there's intuition, there's advanced levels of creativity, there's altered states of consciousness that you can access.



And then with teachers like Robin Sharma, we teach people how to use these skills to go out there and make a dent in the universe. Because the problem with the world today is not that we can't make an impact. It's that we're often making the wrong impact. There are so many people out there trapped in jobs and they're falling for this cognitive dissonance of their jobs where they are marketing craptastic products that do nothing to benefit the human race but increase short-term shareholder value.

I'm talking about people who might work for big pharma or big food companies. Recently, for example, there was an ad I saw about KFC selling a giant jug of Pepsi, which contains, and I did the math on this, it contains something like 800 calories. But the advertisement was, upgrade your Pepsi to a jug of Pepsi, which is basically 1.8 liters, and we'll donate a dollar to diabetes research.

James: What a joke.

Vishen: And I'm looking at it and I'm thinking, someone actually wrote that ad. Someone actually came up with that campaign. Someone at KFC and Pepsi actually believed that what they were doing was good work. But when you see things like that, you realize that so many people forget that in our world today, we can be – and I used this analogy in my book – we can be humanity plus, that means we can be working in a job or working in a business that is pushing the human race forward, or we can be humanity minus, which means short-term approach shareholder value, don't give a damn about the

environment, but, hey, at least we're going to get a paycheck.

So Mindvalley is about not just transforming people to be the best version of themselves, to have healthy bodies and healthy minds and to be aligned with their soul, it's about teaching people that there is a positive impact that we need to make on the planet. And it means questioning some of our most basic assumptions of what work should be like, what a job should be about, what companies should have as their mission. And that's really what this is about. It's about creating a new type of human being that is at a level of performance, a level of optimization that's really high, but using these super powers to heal the world, to connect the world, to make the world better off for our children and not to look at short-term shareholder value or to look at building companies and ideas that are going to be lowering the quality of life for our future generations.

When it started

James: And when do you think this started with you? You're obviously super passionate about this, and I remember reading in your excellent book Code of the Extraordinary Mind, about an incident you had with your mom and McDonald's and your religion. Was it then, or was it before then, or after then that it busted out?

Vishen: Well, I want to make a confession here, James, to the audience that's listening. I have a neurological condition that I guess many of you may have heard of. I have Asperger's. And when you have Asperger's, you were born with some disadvantages. So I'm on the autism spectrum, in a way.

Now what this means, when you have Asperger's is that I'm very left-brained. I'm very empirical in how I think. A lot of people with Asperger's end up becoming programmers, as I did. I have a degree in electrical engineering and computer science, because, you know, growing up, I couldn't really relate to human beings. When you have Asperger's, you can't read body language as well as most people do. Right? We know 70 percent of communication is nonverbal. Imagine if your brain can't pick that up. And so everything in the world becomes really literal.

And so I became a programmer. As I was growing up as a teenager, I never

dated. I couldn't date because, you know, the girls flirting with you, you can't pick it up if you have Asperger's. I never had much friends, I went out once a year as a teenager. And so I grew up with this sense of loneliness. But at the same time, Asperger's gives you really good pattern recognition. So I couldn't understand why people would say "hello" to each other, why they would say "thank you." It didn't mean that I was rude or anything. I would just analyze all of these things about how human beings behaved.

Questioning the rules

And somewhere, when I hit my 20s, and I was still going through loneliness, I still had never had a girlfriend, I'd never been in those situations before, I noticed that I did have one super power. And that super power was that, while everyone else would often follow the rules, there's even a study on this, it's a study on social conditioning that says that most people when faced with complex choices, rather than make a decision, they simply follow what everyone else is doing. Now in my case, that part of my brain just wasn't functioning right. So I began questioning the rules. And then I started creating my own rules on how human beings should probably connect, should probably interface.

And that led me to creating a company, Mindvalley, here in my home city of Kuala Lumpur, that became one of the best places in the world, one of the best private companies in the world to work at. Because I reengineered the rules of how work should function, about how people interact in the office, about how friendships are formed, about how happiness is created. And then I started applying this to education. And I started rethinking how we should educate our people.

Then I started applying it to university, and that's how Mindvalley University was born. So basically, a lot of this came from me trying to cope with my own deficiency, my own neurological issues, my own loneliness. And while I had those issues, it also gave me a really advanced super power, which is pattern recognition. I could see the patterns of the world around me that people were blindly following, and I could disrupt those patterns. And that's why, you know, I was able to do what I'm able to do. And that's why my book, *The Code of the Extraordinary Mind*, is really about questioning what I call the bullshit rules of society, or as I refer to them, brules.

That story you were referring to was a story about why, at a very young age, I told my parents I couldn't follow their religion, which is Hinduism, because then I looked at the basis in the rules on which it was based, there were lots of good things, but there were lots of also unnecessary things that led to guilt and unnecessary rituals and unnecessary beliefs. For example, I wanted to eat beef, and I refused to accept the fact that because my ancestors didn't eat beef, it was somehow wrong.

So that was just a little story in the book of something I did when I was nine years old. By the time I was a teenager, I had simply created my own religion by stripping away all the bullshit rules of the religion of my culture and adding on to it beautiful rules from my religion, but also all other religions and then spiritual thought leaders.

And so that's kind of how I roll. I don't believe in blindly following. I believe in being able to peer behind the veil of the Culturescape. And the Culturescape is that tangled web of beliefs, of ideas, of rituals that we fall into. But we don't realize we're in. Just like a fish cannot see that it's swimming in water, we often cannot see that we are living a life based on the programming from our media, from our society, from our culture, from our parents.

And my job has always been to unravel this programming, and then, looking at modern science, looking at what's working in the world, looking at studies on sociology and groups and workplace culture, writing my own rules. That's what Mindvalley is about.

A monk and a poem

James: It's very interesting. I mean, one thing that I was thinking about is you, as the founder of this business, as the person who's ultimately responsible, you would tend to feel like you are carrying quite a load, and I imagine you place a lot of expectation on yourself. But what I thought was very interesting was, in your book and subsequently since then, I've also observed this, there are times when someone has come along and intervened with you, tapped on the shoulder and pointed something out to you that's made you change your own viewpoint on the way things are and to have an epiphany of sorts. Two that come to mind – there was one incident with a monk at Tony Robbins's Fiji island, and there was another incident where you got enlightened by an old

poem.

Vishen: Right, right. Yes, well, the monk at Tony Robbins's resort was a long time ago. I'd met Tony Robbins and I'd spoken at one of his events, and he'd invited me to come and spend some time with him in Fiji. I went for a class he was organizing there, with some monks from India who were teaching meditation. And it was a beautiful thing, because when you meditate deeply enough, you start to see your own sh*t. And it was just a story in my book about how a monk helped me see that I was truly insecure, and that insecurity was the reason why I was having issues with my business, was the reason why I was having issues with my marriage. When we're insecure, we become needy. We start picking on other people to fill, because it's a way of filling up our own hole. So it was just a story in my book. That was many years ago.

But let me talk about that poem. So this was an interesting story about a conversation I had with Dr. Srikumar Rao. Dr. Srikumar Rao is a teacher at many phenomenal business schools around the world, right? He teaches at Columbia, at London Business School, and his classes are jam-packed with students. And the reason is because he doesn't teach them traditional MBA work. What Rao decided to do is look at all the philosophy of cultures around the world, strip them of their religious connotations, of their cultural ideas, and integrate them with the modern Western world. Because he thought that how we were training our MBAs is completely wrong.

The problem with business training

And one of the things he once told me is he said, you know, the problem with MBA schools, the problem with business training, is we teach people that it's about the business, and that's not true. Life is not about your business. Even if you run a billion-dollar business and you're the big-time CEO, your life shouldn't be about your business.

So I asked him, what should life be about? And he said, it should be about one thing, and that one thing is your personal growth. You need to dedicate your life to your personal growth. Your business comes secondary. If your business succeeds, great. You've grown. If your business fails, great. You've grown. Your business is nothing more – and I remember these words as if he was with me right now – your business is nothing more than a vehicle for your personal

growth.

And this is the message that he has for MBAs. He's like, it's about you, and it's about your growth. You can fail at a business, you can go bankrupt, but hey, did you grow? And if you did, you're on the right path.

Now Rao goes on to say that the most important aspect of personal growth is your spiritual growth. He said, we are souls here that are here for a reason, and that spiritual growth is that reason. But we forget this. We fall into the rules of what he calls the matrix. I call it the Culturescape, but we are essentially saying the same thing. He says, the matrix isn't something created by some artificial intelligence. The matrix is these rules that society has said you have to abide by. You have to work from nine to five. You have to create a business so that you can get that title and make your family or your society proud, so you have that fancy business card and you can drive that Mercedes. No, that's the matrix. The truth is that you are a soul having a human experience, and what that soul craves more than anything else is to grow and to give back. And when you make that the point of your life, everything shifts.

James: And how do you balance this out? As an entrepreneur, it can be very easy to get caught up in entrepreneurial things. Like there's a few references in your life, you've hung out with Richard Branson and Tony Robbins and maybe even the Dalai Lama. I'm not sure about that, I think so. But how do you do that and not feel like you're getting sucked into the ego side of it that could potentially be a major reason why other people would be doing those things?



Vishen: Well, it's because the people that I have had the opportunity to meet are real entrepreneurs. Now I make the distinction in my book, right? I say, business people do it for the dollar. Real entrepreneurs do it to push the human race forward. And through Yanik Silver, who is our mutual friend, I've been in masterminds twice on Necker Island with Branson, and he's a real entrepreneur. With him, it's all about pushing the human race forward. It's about building a more unified human race. It's about goodness, it's about contribution. It's about truly championing the customer. And that's why there's that magic in everything he does.

And so I make it a real point to stay away from traditional attitudes of business. You know, I don't do what I do so I can get rich, or for the bottom line. I do what I do because I see my students' lives change, and that's essentially what Rao was saying.

The poem that shifted things

You know, you mentioned this poem. Let me read it to your audience, because I think this may also help answer some of these deep questions, right?

One of the things I learned from Rao, one of the things I learned from Branson, one of the things I learned from the Dalai Lama, is the concept of having big goals, but at the same time being in a state of peaceful surrender where you're not pushing, you're not striving, you're not breaking yourself to attain these goals. You have these goals, you put them out there, and then you surrender. If the goal is meant to come true because it is aligned with your greater purpose, it's aligned with what the universe needs to bring forth into the world. You surrender into that.

Now, there was a time about couple years ago, when I was really stressed out, I had my book coming out, Mindvalley was growing, I was a CEO of a 160-person company. And I called up Srikumar Rao and I said, "Rao, I'm breaking down. I really need your advice." And he says, "Vishen, I'm going to read you a poem." And he read me this poem, and it immediately shifted me. I want to read that to you guys now, if you guys have been going through this similar phase. The poem is this, and it comes from a 13th century poet called Rumi, who incidentally is now the most popular poet in America.

The poem is this, by Rumi. When I run after what I think I want, my days are a furnace of distress and anxiety. If I sit in my own place of patience, what I need flows to me without pain. From this, I understand that what I want also wants me, is looking for me and attracting me. There's a great secret in this for anyone who can grasp it.

That's it. That's the poem, it's just four lines. What that poem made me realize is that, when we can tap into ourselves, when we can truly listen, what we want is looking for us, is attracting us. In short, we're getting an impulse. We're getting an insight that's coming not just from our logical mind but from a deeper level. And when we get this impulse, what Rumi is saying is that don't chase it. Take steps right towards it, but don't stress, don't chase it. When you chase it, your days are a furnace of distress and anxiety, but when you sit in a place of patience, recognizing that what you want also wants you, it flows to you without pain.

A quality of great entrepreneurs

Now, I've noticed this quality in many great entrepreneurs. They seem to be blessed by luck. They seem to have this magnificent ease in which their visions come to them. And I've always noticed that it was happening not because they were stressed out, they were chasing it, but because they were in a place of peace. And somehow, and again we can't explain without going into deep metaphysics why this happened, but somehow these visions would come to them faster than ever. Branson is one of those guys. And you know, Branson is one of those guys where he will have big visions, but he's in this perpetual state of flow, taking care of himself. He would wake up every day and spend time in exercise playing tennis or rowing, just so he can be in good shape.

He would sit on a hammock and dictate ideas to his assistant. But he's in this peaceful state of rest, and there's a quality there which I cannot explain, but I know that when I'm in that state, that's what my business seems to grow the fastest. but I too sometimes forget that, and I go into crazy stress mode and that's when the barriers come.

So this is what Srikumar Rao was teaching in some of America's top MBA schools. And I want you to know, this isn't some new age mysticism. This is a new way of approaching business that's becoming more popular. If you guys

want to explore this more, read the book, *The Surrender Experiment* by Michael Singer. It's a book about how a guy built a billion-dollar company by spending a good deal of his time in total surrender and in hours of meditation a day.

James: Yeah, I'm on board with that. I even wrote a whole book, *Work Less Make More*.

Vishen: Yes, absolutely.

James: It's really the product of me surfing every day and it just sounds so counterintuitive, but it is the most soulful, spiritual analog experience that takes you into nature, you switch off all the devices. It's just so hard to explain what it's like walking down to the beach barefoot, surfboard and board shorts and just gliding into that ocean every day. It's resetting.

Richard Branson's success secret

And I guess without the Asperger's I'm a little bit like you, looking at the rest of society, thinking, what are they doing? Which kind of leads me to two things. Before I move to the next topic, I did want to ask you if you'd share with us what Richard Branson shared with you when you asked him about his success secret on the island.

Vishen: All right, let me bring up that quote. Give me one second. Give me one second, I'll just bring up that quote.

James: Take your time.

Vishen: So what happened was, I remember sitting down with Branson one night. It was after a party. And he doesn't drink, so he was like, completely lucid. And I was there with my wife and we asked him, you know, Richard, you've built so many incredible organizations, so many incredible companies, 300, we believe, and you have 50000 employees and you're so at peace. What is it that you do? What's your secret? If you could say it in one or two sentences what would that be?

So he thought for a while, and then he said this, he said, it's about finding people smarter than you and giving them good work and then getting out of

the way. You've got to get out of the way because you have to focus on the vision. And here is the most important thing: you have to make them see their work as a mission. So there's a lot that you can unwrap from that, but it's basically, build a good team, get out of the way, trust them, and keep your focus on the vision, not the nitty gritty. But at the same time, make sure that your team, they are pursuing something that inspires them, that fires them up, that gives them a mission. So that was his formula.

James: Thank you for sharing that. That reminded me of a quote that I mentioned at Spain, at your Mindvalley U. I was talking about Woody Allen has a very similar approach to his actors. He hires the actors and he says, you act. Because it's part of their vision. They want to be famous actors. They're in the movie. And he just gets out of the way and lets them do it, and if it's good enough, it's done, because he wants to pack up and go off to his clarinet for the evening. He's no Stanley Kubrick, you know, with fifty-seven different takes and perfection.

Outside of Mindvalley

So moving on, I was just wondering, like when you circulate in normal society and you bump into a new person, let's say you're outside the Mindvalley world and you're just with a normal person, you know, like a parent's friend or at a family function. What happens when you're interacting with regular people and they're not sort of up to speed yet with Vishen's new world ideas? Do you start the conversation with them? Do you try and help them, or do you just let them stay in their matrix?

Vishen: Well, it depends on the energy that you put out. So, let me give you an example, right? I rarely get into arguments with people, because in everything I do, I come from an approach of love. Even if I know that there's someone out there who is out there to challenge me, to tear down my ideas, I know that there's going to be things we agree upon. And so as soon as we get into a conversation, I don't try to look for the things that we disagree upon. I look for the things we agree upon, and I approach them with so much love and respect, because I see them as a fellow soul. And so it changes the dynamic. So I rarely have enemies, I rarely have people who I debate with. It usually completely disarms people, and then we recognize that we can have opposing viewpoints, but we can still have great respect for each other.

James: Right. That's like the the Amazon philosophy, that we can agree to disagree, but just get on with it.

Vishen: Exactly, exactly.

James: It reminds me of this fantastic quote I saw on social media, which was one guy saying to his mate, Look, I've decided I'm no longer going to argue with people who just don't get it. And then his mate says, But that makes no sense, you stand for something. He goes, you're right.

The constant surprise

So what constantly surprises you, Vishen, as you circulate in life? What do you just constantly think, Wow.

Vishen: Well, I think one thing that constantly surprises me right now is the rate of technological progress. I'm very involved in organizations like the XPRIZE, and I'm on the board as a donor to the XPRIZE. And it's always fascinating to see how rapidly we're innovating, how rapidly technological change is shifting our world. Peter Diamandis, who was the founder of the XPRIZE and the founder of Singularity University, says that between 2016 and 2022, we will see as much change in the world as nineteen hundred to two thousand, and that's astonishing, right? That's seven years, and us experiencing as much change as a hundred years of the industrial revolution. And so it's going to be really interesting to see what's going to emerge in the world in the near future, and how we have to adapt our lives to thrive in this new world.

James: I mean, that figure you dropped earlier in this discussion, that 45 percent of jobs will be gone in 10 years, that is fascinating. My youngest kid is now 15, and he's just approaching the end of school years, and he spends a fair bit of time on the computer, and I don't mind because I think that's where he's going to get a better result than turning up to class and watching a video that the teacher just phones it in on. But having kids, I think, really shapes your responsibility for future generations and I haven't really heard this much innovation in a discussion around business since I was reading Peter Drucker's books, where he was predicting the knowledge worker, you know, back in the 60s. He was well ahead of the idea that traditional education would fail. And

we see business schools go out of business, so that's telling you something, right?

Vishen: Absolutely.

James: And traditional institutions are collapsing on the wayside. So we're really in this transition zone where we can position ourselves for the future. And I believe you're working on not just one book, but two new books, is that right?

Vishen: Right.

James: Because why not?

Vishen: Well again, it's pattern recognition, right? It took me three years to write the first chapter for my first book, Code of the Extraordinary Mind. The final chapter, it took me one day, and that was the chapter that people loved so much, it was turned into a movie and got nominated for an Emmy Award. But it took me one day to write it. So when you can tap into these states of flow, you know, like flow as in what Stephen Kotler speaks about and states of creative intuition, you can produce this knowledge really rapidly, which is why I'm working on two books right now. Again, what seems impossible sometimes becomes very possible when you learn the mental principles or the psychological hacks to make them work.

James: Yeah, I'm totally on board with that. Like, when I paddle out to surf now, I can get 10 or 12 waves. It took me 10 or 12 months till I could catch one wave properly.

Vishen: Right.

James: With your new books, they are really focused around optimizing yourself – everything from sleep through to family and communication, and right in line with the sort of things we've been talking about. So I'm looking forward to reading those as soon as they come out.

By the way, what was the movie, if someone was going to go and watch a movie that was inspired by your first book?

Vishen: It was a movie by Nick Nanton, who's an Emmy award-winning documentary producer. The movie is called, Live Your Quest.

James: Great.

Before you achieve your goal...

You said something in your book about happiness and goals, and I think that would be an important thing as we get close to the end here. You said that it's important to be happy before you achieve your goal, or something to that effect. Can you explain that?

Vishen: Well, the best way of setting goals is to set a goal, and then in the words of Srikumar Rao, and I'm just bringing up Rao because, well, you brought him up and he just happens to have been a mentor whom I had a mentoring call with a week ago. He says, the secret to goals is to set your goal and then forget about it. Set your goal, put your intention out to the universe, and then forget about it.

And again, I want to stress, I'm not quoting a monk. I'm not quoting a spiritual writer. I'm quoting a guy who's teaching at MBA programs in Ivy League universities, and one of the top MBA teachers, right? He says set a goal and forget about it. Again, what he's saying is that, when we get obsessed by our goal, we break our flow. When you set a goal and you forget about it, you're bringing in the idea of non-attachment. You are putting it out there, but you're saying, okay, look: this goal, if it is in alignment with my purpose, I trust that it is going to come and I'm going to be guided onto the right path. If it's out of alignment of my purpose, then I'm cool with that. That's the principle of non-attachment.

Now, that's step one. There's a second step. The second step is, after you set the goal and you forget about it, you must continue to keep yourself in a state of joy, of happiness. Many people postpone their happiness to when they hit the goal. Wrong. You've got to make the journey, and not the destination, happiness.

Now for this one, there is incredible amounts of scientific study. Coming from Harvard, Shawn Achor wrote an entire book on it called Happiness Advantage.

And the basic thesis of the book is that happiness is rocket fuel for your performance towards your goals. Don't wait to obtain your goal to be happy. Be happy before you hit the goal. And he cites numerous studies. Doctors are 19 percent better at diagnoses when they are primed to be happy. Salespeople who are optimistic are 55 percent better at closing a sale. Basically, happiness fuels you towards goals, both as an individual and within a group.



And so, step number one: set your goals by all means, but make your goal a preference, not a command, "I must get this no matter what!" A preference. And this is why you set your goal and you forget about it, trusting that what is right for you will come. And secondly, be happy now. Focus on gratitude. Focus on what you have in your life that you can be truly grateful for. Do not tie your happiness to a future marker.

James: I like that. There's two aspects to that that I like. One is, I've actually even developed my to do list to that point where I write it down and then forget about it. And it's fascinating when I go and check in occasionally, I might find where I wrote down on my impact ledger in my life sheet that I log. Often, I can just delete most of them, that I've actually done them, because they're aligned with my happiness. Or my interest level is very high, so that's really the key for me getting something done is, I'm very interested in it. If I'm not, it's unlikely to happen, so I'm realistic about it.

And the second part I wanted to point out is, it's pretty easy to sort of

benchmark off other people. And I think this might be a great source of unhappiness from places like Facebook, where you see some other marketer putting out a video course, or you know, doing things that you think you are sort of obligated to do or you should be doing. And I think it's when you release yourself from that and let go of it and say, you know what, that's not my goal, it's not important to my journey, maybe that can make you feel a little bit less pressure. Because if you surround yourself with other marketers, it's kind of like an arms war, isn't it, where people are outdoing each other?

Paying to play

Which kind of leads me to my last question for you, and this is a big one, because it seems to be a pattern I'm recognizing with you, and by all means tell me if I'm wrong, but it seems that at some point, you have crossed a threshold where you will pull out the checkbook or the credit card and you will pay to play. And what I'm talking about here is a great barrier for a lot of listeners to this podcast, where they're still playing it safe from the sidelines or not willing to invest in that course or the trip or the expert or the mentor or some kind of step. Maybe it's hiring team or getting an office lease or whatever. They're not paying to play at a bigger level, they're still holding back. What was it for you, or what advice would you have for somebody who's uhm-ing and ahh-ring. I mean, you've obviously had to pay money for a lot of the things that have leveraged you into a bigger peer group, who are doing bigger things, like these real entrepreneurs who are helping people and creating more value and moving the world. What was it? What's the advice?

Vishen: Well, it's super, super, super important to invest in your education as an entrepreneur. Networking groups are a great start. Now, I'll give an example. Next month, there is a one-week period next month where I'm travelling to San Francisco to attend Habits Summit, which is just so I can learn how to design more engaging apps. Then I'm attending a mastermind called Consumer Health Summit, so I can be around other people in the health and wellness field. And then, I'm traveling to San Francisco to take a class by Steven Kotler on flow for writers, so I can be a better writer. All of that in a span of seven days.

And yes, it cost a ton of money and I'm stepping away from a business with now, some 300 employees. But education, self-education is so important to

me. I know the reason I'm able to get where I am is because I invest in my learning, I invest in my growth. I don't make compromises there. So I try to read a book a week. I attend maybe four or five conferences a year. I've created my own conferences and I am part of four different mastermind groups, where I get to learn from peers who inspire me.

James: Well thank you for sharing that. I do remember Yanik talking about how much he spends each year on his own education, and certainly I spend a little bit on air fares and conferences and education and I think it's important. If you want to be at the top of your field, you have to be at the sharp edge of it.

Action for listeners

So that's really been a great discussion, Vishen. We've covered a great range of topics from goals through to souls and everything in between with community and and some predictions for the future. So as we finish up here, what would you think would be an appropriate thing for someone who's listened to this entire episode up to this point? They've stuck with us here for 45 minutes or so. What would you feel the most happy about if someone were to take a particular action now?

Vishen: Well what you could do is go to [Mindvalley.com](https://www.mindvalley.com) I think typically, when I'm speaking in a podcast, the thing that fascinates people most is Mindvalley University, Mindvalley U. You can go to [Mindvalley.com](https://www.mindvalley.com) and there's a link to Mindvalley U. Or you can just just go to /u, and there's a lot of information there about the university project that we're running. And if you download the Mindvalley Quest app, we have several apps, but Quest is our number one app. I've taken all of the courses that I teach and I've made them completely free on Quest, because many of these courses are now being used in schools and universities. So download the Mindvalley Quest app, that's a learning platform, and click on Discover. And there's a program there called a 6 Phase Meditation, which is really all about hacking meditation to become a tool to boost your happiness and help you attain your goals faster, much like what we spoke about. And a lot of the wisdom, a lot of the ideas I shared here is covered in that eight-day program. So you can check it out and it's completely free.

James: Thank you so much. Well, there you go. Vishen Lakhiani from Mindvalley.com. You have been super generous with your insights. And I want to thank you for coming along. And hopefully, when you publish these books, you might come along and discuss them with us.

Vishen: Fantastic. Thank you, James.



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growing your
business?
James gives
one-on-one
coaching

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