Jake 00:59
Thank you so much, George for taking the time. And joining me on the show today. I've been looking forward to the conversation for a while now. You're well known on Twitter for sharing these sort of mental models, you've got this, this clouds and dirt newsletter, which is really interesting. You actually created the vol bot on Twitter, which like goes and resurfaces and evolve raava Khan's tweets and it's got like over 100,000 followers, I think you're on Twitter as almost that much I think like 70,000 followers or something like that. So basically, I've made just sort of made something for yourself out of nothing on Twitter, on a couple accounts, doing a couple different things. And you also have this like marketing agency, I understand. So I want to talk about all this stuff. But I think first best place to get started would just be to sort of hear your story from as well as earlier as you're willing to go back to where you are today. And then we'll go from there. Let's do a man first. Thanks for having me on.

George Mack 01:53
I've listened to quite a few episodes, and I've been enjoying it. So it's quite weird to hear your voice and be able to reply to it this time. So yeah, in terms of the story, English Jackson, born in the UK, just a bit of a weird curious kid just went down a lot of rabbit holes when I was younger, some suitable for the podcast, some not suitable for the podcast. And that got me fascinated by the internet technology ideas, just the amount of information you could get. I went to university to study philosophy. And I realized to the first lecture, I was like this is this is shit. You're not really learning anything. And I quickly began to just use the internet to learn more and more and more, as well as trying to apply more and more and more. That then got me into the realm of like a crossover. my two passions are psychology and technology, which quite nicely fits into like digital marketing. So I was then a agency called social chain doing lots of stuff on the innovation side of things. They're like scaling up like huge marketing campaigns, and huge media companies like just as it was starting social media. And then yeah, do a lot of different things like growth wise marketing for a variety of a few yc companies, a few huge ecommerce companies that are scaling. I just find the internet. Fantastic, man. So that's the that's the loose story so far. But it just means tinkering around and seeing what's happening, an appliance

or the minute the sweet spot, or the Venn diagram between psychology and technology that I love.

Jake   03:35
That's awesome. I like the the intersection of psychology and technology myself and concern, they appreciate wanting to like dive in and applying that to sort of social media or marketing in general. And all of that sort of category of things that did you start on? On Twitter? Was there were there signs before sort of developing your Twitter brand that, you know, other interests that you took on, like a younger age? Or was Twitter like the first thing where you really felt, you know, the quote unquote, internet was really starting to work for you?

George Mack   04:09
Yeah, I'd say I had a very weird hobby when I was younger. So my dad bet me I couldn't do 10 kickoffs with a football. And I took that to a disgusting length of training every day for four hours. And then I was like, in like an added acid where I said, Oh, shit, that was for the internet. Okay, this is really interesting. So it needs to scale. And then Twitter, it was just tinkering around. And that just begins to do anything. But often, it's just naturally just following like, a passion point rather than having a specific plan. So, but that's the Twitter one was the most interesting. It's, I think we were discussing this just before the podcast began, but there's been a lot on online dating, but there's not been much on online friendship and like the likelihood of you meeting somebody as a friend in the real A world quote unquote, that the likelihood of you having similar interest is so slim. But when it comes down to the likelihood online, the affinity is so much higher. So I'm fascinated by the internet in that regard, like the ability to meet friends that have similar affinities and similar interests.

Jake   05:19
So have you seen like, so for me, we, you know, we discussed this a bit earlier, but for me, like, I grew up, and you know, had my friends from quote, unquote, real world and still have these friends. And only within the last year or two, have I really started meeting people on the internet, you know, specifically most of the time on Twitter. And

you're right, there's this, I think it's just basically everyone sort of, based on what they tweet out, or what they write about on their blog, or talking about on their podcast, they put out this sort of signal, which then attracts, you know, people who are down with that signal or whatever it is, whereas in real life, you just sort of meet people based on geographic proximity or friend, a friend or whatever it might be. So I think there is like this tendency of a higher, you know, there's like more synergy on the average introduction basically. Have you seen like, have your, like I said, I'm wondering like a year to end of this, have your, like the people you talk to, on a regular basis, your friends who you like, rely upon or rely on you, as this mix become more like internet based over the last several years that you've been involved this?

George Mack 06:34
Yeah, massively. dug around, there's still a lot of I have a lot of amazing friends from the real stands that you're playing ready. Player One, right? I have a lot of friends from the real world. However, there's certainly a lot more agency that comes to meeting people online, where I was always fascinated by that college experience have, you have somebody called Susan or Graham who sat there with a spreadsheet that decides on who you're going to be in black in the UK anyway, like what accommodation you're in, and just the chance of that spreadsheet, or the chance of so many random variables, that person then ends up becoming your best friend for the next three years. And it's like, realistically, if you actually looked at from a like, if you broke down your individual personalities are you got the best fit, like friend fit? Probably not, but you just kind of rely on chance. But I think the Internet has kind of taken that away, don't get me wrong, it can go the other way you can meet serial killers online, it's a bit of a barbell. However, the upside is, is incredible. One thing I have noticed, though, is that you can't quite build up the relationship online as of yet, or as well as if you have one meeting in person. So let's say you have 100 zoom calls away rather hard, like 100 zoom calls versus one meeting in person and 99 zoom calls, it's like you need that that in person meeting I find to compound as in calls that you all need is one in person meeting. And it makes them a lot more effective. So there's still something to be said about meeting in person. However, once once you've got a few meetings in

person, like, I look at some of my closest friends now, and we've met maybe three or four times in person, but we message every single day.

Jake   08:19
That's interesting, I definitely appreciate like the, you know, the benefit of meeting people in person, but I've never put it so clearly that like maybe just even one or two meetings can really make a huge difference. It's almost like, you know, diminishing returns, not to put it like weirdly, in terms of relationships, obviously, there's people I see every day or you know, all the time for years and years. But for people you meet online, it's not like you need to, you know, force yourself to have like regular in person contact just to maintain the relationship you can actually just meet once or twice maybe over you know, maybe years apart, and you know, stay in touch mainly online, and that can be a really strong relationship. The other question that that sort of leads to is another thing that we touched on a bit before the conversation but basically the concept of especially in this post COVID world, how you know, you and I are both around the same age like in our older 20s I guess that's sort of a you know, oxymoron older 20s but we're young and we have like a lot of time ahead of us I think and I hope and and we're in this sort of like adventurous like exploratory mode. And we both assumed like I think for you London for me, maybe New York respectively that we had to like stay in these, you know, hotspot cities where we have a lot of like built up you know, we have a lot of relationships and friends and everything and there's a ton of jobs and just opportunities and whatnot. And we've COVID with with work going remote and a lot of I don't know about you, but like me personally, a lot of my friends are now they've left New York for one place or another and there's no Like critical mass and one place in particular necessarily anymore. And it's hard to justify, especially when you have to work, you know, not have to, but I like working remote and expect to continue to do so. And I'll probably be working a lot from home. So you want a little more space. So basically, like all these considerations have changed around where to live. And maybe we can have that discussion a little bit, I'd love to hear sort of your thoughts and how traveling has informed them a bit. And maybe I'll figure out where I'm going to spend some of the next few years by talking it out with you.

George Mack 10:35

Yeah, it's a, it's one I've thought long and hard about. As soon as I don't think people have fully thought through the consequences of remote work, I'm always trying to extrapolate a few years ahead. And the first thing that you realize is, if you pause the trouble conversation for a second, the labor market is so much greater. So rather than and that's, that's good, and it's bad. So from an employer perspective, you can hire talent everywhere, or at least certainly on time zones that are relevant to you. the good and the bad. So the it's the best thing ever to happen to very talented people in the developing world. But it's probably the worst thing to ever happen to skill us or maybe I don't know the correct word, maybe not as motivated people in the developed world, because there's certainly going to be a lot more competition. So that's, that's one, one side of it, you've got to consider, then when it comes to like location and where to live, it opens up that way. You don't need to be in London, you don't need to be in New York anymore. And then you go share, why was I living in London in a box paying 1300 pounds, or 13 $100 for rent, when I could just, I could I could go somewhere much cheaper and save a lot of money, or I can get a lot more sun. And it really begins to make you think about what you want out of a location. It then makes you also think that I think people talk about startup cities. And I think it's a good metaphor. But one thing that I think people have missed is New York's and LA is and London's to some regards, are not. They're the big corporates, right, and some of them will continue to survive. And some of these startup cities, probably most of them are going to flop. But if you have the right attributes, I think will win. And I'm, I'm fascinated to see what happens there. I think it's too tough to predict where it's gonna win. I think there's some early candidates, but it's gonna get very, very good for the individual. I imagine just projecting a few years ahead, because you're going to have a lot of game theory that goes on between countries where they're going to compete to bring digital nomads it. So it's going to be a fascinating few years, I think when COVID if it does go back to normal, you'll see a swing back to the office for two to three months. And there'll be a lot of New York Times pieces and box pieces about the office is back. And it's never been the remote works dead. But I suspect once workers realize how long they're taking into commute how much it's costing them. I had a friend the other day who said he, he

got asked to pay for COVID tests when he was returning to work rather than them offering to pay for them. And then people and also you've got so much pent up travel, there's never been as much pent up travel since the Wright brothers started. So that means that I'm pretty bullish on the digital nomadic movement for certainly people who are early on in their life with less responsibilities.

Jake 13:35
Yeah, a bunch of interesting points that I tend to agree with you on the last thing which is basically like, now that people have seen what it's like to work remote, especially you know, during COVID times which had its own set of challenges like you couldn't necessarily go to into our restaurants you know, in New York at least or other places in the US certainly for the last several months are you knows it was harder or whatever. So they're sort of like an you know, your kids if you're an adult like your your kids might be at home all day bothering you while you're trying to work or whatever it is. So sort of like this remote world suddenly, and in like almost like a worst case scenario obviously like there's worse things but you know, a pretty unusual scenario of the pandemic and now coming out of the pandemic people getting vaccinated and everything like that. I think people are gonna realize that like there's a lot of elements if they haven't realized already there's a lot of elements about working remotely such as like seeing commute time, just the freedom of like, you know, you can go for a run during lunch if you want or something like that. Yes, taking advantage of like exercising during the day, rather than like first thing in the morning or after work or whatever. Thank God.

George Mack 14:47
So let's go let's go for a second. Obviously you were thinking about exploring traveling, ignore location ignore anything when they say you're designing your dream location slash locations maybe which is separate for can accomplish What do you want? Like 50 billion from like, first principles? What? What do you want application?

Jake 15:06
Yeah, that's a good question. And it's always fun to to get the interview flipped on me a little bit, but I think for public, yeah, there's a few, there's a few key things like one is, you know,

certainly the weather. And just like the amount the, the hours in the day where there's some sun and some daylight, I don't necessarily like need to be on the beach, I've never really spent enough time on the beach to, to sort of like know what, what that's like, or what I would need to have that as like a prerequisite. But just generally like some greenery and some nice weather. That's like one thing, which is a big thing. Another is like some good food around. And you know, maybe if I could find some friends to live around who can cook really well, that could, that could swap in. But I do like to, like, get a good meal a week or something like this. And other than that, like I don't really care about like stores or anything else retail, I would say just like a couple of restaurants. And I don't need a bunch, but just a couple. So those are like both pretty easy to accomplish. timezone becomes a thing where maybe that's not like from first principles, but sometimes it's like, something that you need that is a little bit outside of your control, right now, I don't really have to worry about that. And then the thing I think is, is a big thing that's challenging, at least in my mind is, you know, I think there's a lot of cities that could be or, you know, towns or whatever, that could be a ton of fun and a really enjoyable place to live, if you have a few good friends there that you're living with, you know, not that you're living with necessarily I can the same place but that live around, just like a good group of people that you'd like. And it's tough to say that that's why a lot of people obviously, you know, they graduate school or whatever, and they end up living where they went to school or living where they grew up. And some people go out and adventure and they sort of go in an uncomfortable place where they don't know as many people but then they meet people and they become comfortable there. But it's sort of hard to get a group of friends to go and relocate somewhere. And that's something that's like, interesting to me, especially when, you know, like you said, meeting people online, you find similar people with similar sort of criteria for where they want to live. And then maybe you can sort of agree amongst, you know, four or five guys or girls or whatever it is, let's go try out, you know, Jackson, Wyoming, or whatever it is, you know, some off the beaten path, town or city, there's a lot of these places that satisfy the criteria I mentioned of like whether a couple of good restaurants and some nature. So that's my short answer. Not like super picky, but

I think people whether like some, you know, a good place to run outside or whatever, and, and some good food. How about you?

George Mack 18:04
Wondering wondering I've always had, is it possible to come true, I guess, with the new trends that I get, I have a friend of mine, he tells me off of this, but I'm a bit of a money Campbell that right. So she's into psychology and denies that you can be a money can't do that. But it's good, it's a good mental model to have what I feel that I have extreme introversion and extreme extraversion. So I can be in the room and be the loudest person but I could also be in a room by myself for three weeks. So and that's kind of reflected in my location choices where I'd love to be right in the middle of like a city center for half the year, and then the other half the year in the mountains with nobody around. So rather than just one specific location, it probably I probably like two locations. Because if you try to get both of those things in one, you kind of get Niva. So I'd way rather have a mix of two different locations and the ability to switch it, I think, because my issue with traveling when I was younger is is really hard to be ambitious and travel at the same time. You'd have to be, you'd have to be in a hostel with a load of people doing copious amounts of drugs, talking about why everything's designed to keep you in a little box. And as a reference from picture if anybody gets that one, so and I just felt there's no ambition there. There's no there's no meaning. But now we've COVID or post COVID with remote work, it opens up the ability to still maintain ambition and be traveling whereas previously UK the usual usual experience would be you'd save a boatload of money go traveling and burn it all which isn't there's anything wrong with that, but it now opens up this type A personalities ability to travel, which I find fascinating. But in terms of the specific location, I probably want one or two locations that I move between rather than one specific load One or maybe one location, I'm in for six months, one location, I'm in for three months, and then four locations I'm in for the other three months. So I don't really look at it as one set specific location, because I find that no location has everything. Because very very definition if a loop is often a strength is sometimes the weakness. So I Stratford a place that New York is the fact that you're in a loud, busy city, but also say the weaknesses, the fact that in a loud, busy city, I realized that most strengths are

directly related to weaknesses. So that's why I'm kind of cautious to say 12 months or a year, one place, I'd much rather split it up. That's when I really began to think about it. There's not that many people discussing it like that, but that seems way more optimal than just one location.

Jake 20:44
Yeah, no, that's, that's a really good point. I agree, not just like to, to appease you, or, like agree for the sake of agreement or anything like that, like I actually have that same, or at least a very similar set of preferences. And it's like demonstrated by, you know, what I've been doing, like, since COVID, I've stayed in four or five different airbnbs for at least a month. And even before COVID, I would, I had like some allergy to, you know, like 12 month leases, basically, I did like a six month and a three month and I think a nine month or something like this, but they're very rare. And it's sort of, I guess, maybe it's something a part of the system that could change. And certainly like Airbnb will probably benefit from people with similar preferences. But Airbnb tends to be, you know, if you want to stay somewhere for like three to six months, Airbnb is like, not a very good deal. I mean, it's, it's fine, it might be better than most other options. And you can get a nice place that's been reviewed and everything like that from like a trusted provider. But it's not the type of economics that you expect from like, a 12 month lease in most cities. So I'll be curious to see, I guess, if, if the world adjusts a bit to accommodate for people like you and I, who might want to live somewhere, you know, in a city. And the other thing, so you mentioned sort of, you know, the trade off between city and rural. Another thing that I've been doing is actually basically chasing the weather, where like, right now I'm in New York, and have been for April in May, which in my mind are like two of the nicest months of the year to be here. But I'm out of here at the end of May, I don't want to be in New York for the summer, just like I didn't want to be here for the winter, when, you know, with the COVID restrictions, it wasn't all that attractive a place to be in my mind, I'd much rather have a lot of space and you know, a fireplace, or whatever it is. So it'll be interesting to see. I think if the world just I'm not aware of of anything, that's like a great hack for for sort of achieving the type

of lifestyle that you talk about. Are you aware of anything, or you're just sort of in the same boat as me hoping it and waiting to see?

George Mack 22:57
Yeah, I don't I don't think there's any specific thing as of yet. One of the things that then becomes interesting conversation, as well as the amount of companies that are that are being born and probably be born that we're not even aware of just yet, that comes about from like a relatively digitally nomadic life. So one of the biggest pain points is a Wi Fi connection, having to rely on Wi Fi is an absolute nightmare. So I would love to get I mean, obviously styling, 5g, etc. If you follow the direction arrows of progress, which is sort of mental model of just following the way trends and new them, you can assume over time, that internet getting stronger and stronger, you're going to get more more remote places. So you then imagine a scenario of a laptop, where there's constant 4g 5g in it with a portable laptop there. And that then begins to reduce the friction of remote work further, one of the biggest things as well is there's not that many that I'm aware of, of like devices for posture while you're doing remote work, when you have a home office, you can get a lot more screens, a lot better setup for your neck, etc, etc. that problem is not being fully solved yet. So it's not just a location specific. But there's a lot of intangibles or working setups that needs to be fixed just yet. However, that market is going to be huge as somebody does a lot will do a lot in e commerce and tech space. I think there's a huge room for a Shopify site on Amazon Marketplace style for just it's purely aimed at digital nomads, and like the amount of tech products that you can come up with the amount of physical products that you come up with. And that market is only going to boom, yeah, there's this. I mean, there's so many nodes of ideas that come about as a result of this.

Jake 24:44
Yeah, I think COVID obviously was, you know, not a good thing. But for guys like you and I, I think there's a lot of elements from the fallout that will sort of tailor the world a little bit towards some of our preferences as like digital nomad, inclined people. I've never actually really like, called myself that but I think I pretty much fit the bill. And certainly like just the needs of rebrand. Yeah, I don't

even know what exactly it means. But I got I got this image in my mind to the people in the hostel like you talked about and that's not that's not really me glad.

George Mack   25:24
Yeah, don't mushrooms for like the 30 days. Is that okay? Okay, interesting but I find that one of the things I'd say this this conference will fork the conversation where my favorite thing because right now, so two of them that come to mind are Balaji and Eric Weinstein and I think more than anybody that I found online at least create ideas or words more than anybody, and it creates something that I've never really fully be able to understand or even explore. However, I use a good example. So there's the word influencer, okay? an influencer has been used for the last five to 10 years. And when people use that word, they're often referring to probably somebody who's been on reality TV now on social media, and they sell Herbalife and they sell shitty products fire it. And as a result, the word influencer began to get a negative connotation towards it. And it meant that pursuing or being, like coming across as an influencer, had all these negative connotations. And all of a sudden, then somebody kind of birthed the word or it began to rock it up in the Google Trends, or the word creator, and the creator economy. And even though most creators, I mean, it's technically part of the, the whole influencer world there a specific almost break off piece of it, where it's a bit more authentic, and it's a bit more about pursuing passions, rather than just doing it purely to sell products, it now becomes a lot more acceptable. And I find that the word digital nomad still still screams of somebody who's Yeah, might be just sat in the hostel, doing nothing, just moaning about things constantly. And it doesn't need, it needs a rebrand. And I find that that's what Weinstein and Balaji do very, very well, of creating words or concepts that then flip the script. And as soon as you then either place a word and have like a positive way of framing it, it gives that behavior a lot more permission to be acted upon. So one of my favorite examples is like, like, Weinstein has a few. So he has one called high agency, which had never been able to describe before, which is this concept of being able to have like a locus control of your life, if people say, No, you try and come home and say yes. And previously, the only word that was used was maybe disagreeable, or stubborn. But it wasn't that

because disagree or stubborn is often somebody who might be it's more of a negative framing of that personality trait. Whereas when you change it to high agency, it's more of a positive framing of that, that what that placeholder that you're trying to describe, essentially. And I think that the need to invent language, invent words, is probably going to be one of the biggest trends, or I think it's a huge thing that not is massively under discussed right now. And if you can create words, the things you can, you can change reality, because all of a sudden, people have placeholders or new placeholders to refer to.

Jake 28:30
Yeah, it's interesting. Obviously, language sort of, is, at the root of everything. I saw a clip, a tweet of the Weinstein, the I don't know if it was high agency, but a different I think it might have been high agency where basically he was talking about, are you writing how he was talking about, I forget the name of the experiment. But basically, there's like four lines on a piece of paper, and there's one line and then the other three are like, you know, the people in the room are asked, alright, which of these three lines matches the one line in length? And it's like, obvious that like, one is the same length, and the other two are just blatantly not. And it's not close, like you couldn't possibly get it wrong. But some people there's like someone who staged in the room, maybe, and maybe you'll correct me if I'm wrong, but there's someone who's like staged in the room to say the wrong answer. And then like a certain percentage of the rest of the people will just copy the wrong answer, because they're basically like, oh, like, there must be something that like, I'm not seeing or something like they literally just don't even trust their eyes to like, look at these two lines that are the same length. And I don't know if this was high urgency or something else. But Weinstein, I think, came up with a word to talk about the person who's like, you know, screw that, like this line is the same length as this line. That's the answer. Right?

George Mack 29:44
He calls it it's, it's within family. He calls it ash negative. So the test was, I think it's by Solomon Asch, or certainly the the name of the the the last name of the psychologist was ash. And yeah, it's just how

you describe if you want a more modern version of My top three Shows of All Time, go on Netflix and watch Darren brown the Porsche. So he's a magician, illusionist in the UK. But he does these crazy reality stunts. And he does an experiment where people don't know they're being filmed. And he slowly but surely in the spaces of 90 minutes gets agreeable people to slowly conform. So he'll ask to begin with for them to the sausage, the sausage rolls there. And they have to do the vegan menu as well. And because there's no, there's no vegetarian or vegan products in stock, they just change the signs over. So they slowly start saying yes to this person. And at the end of the show, he gets them to kill somebody. And it goes to show this slow chipping away that frog in the boiling water. Charlie Munger has that bit where I think the frog in the boiling water metaphor where you throw a frog in cold water and slowly heat it up, it jumps out right, I'm sorry, never jumps out. But if you throw it in boiling water, it immediately jumps out. And he says that's probably bullshit about frogs. I don't think the actual study has been replicated, but it's certainly true of human beings. And Dan Brown shows in that show how you can slowly with somebody who is low agency, or just a human being, you can chip away and chip away Even my phone screensaver. Now, it's literally the person from the show pushing the person off the building, because they slowly got chipped away at. And that is such a useful concept. But it's not taught anywhere. If anything, it's the opposite of being taught both in our I mean, we're not hardwired to do it genetically. And then school kind of compounds on that further, I don't know how you do it in an ethical way. However, I do think they should, before you pass school, or however the future of school looks, you should have to get almost an ash negative score. And if you did that, this I think society would be significantly better. And you prevent, I mean, you prevent a lot of people going along with horrendous horrendous events, people think about it like peer pressure, or like not doing drugs or things like that, which is potentially important. However, when you reframe it, and you think about the societal implications of people being able to think through for their actions and having a positive word to use for that. It's, it's fucking important.

Jake   32:20
Yeah, so this is Yeah, I think you said it was the background on your phone. Does that right?

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George Mack 32:26
Yeah. So yes, I watched it the other night again, I was like, wow, I mean, I mean, this then pauses the conversation, which is background, I have a thesis that backgrounds on screensavers phones and laptops work for about five days, and you get used to them. So I've always worked to design an app that literally changes it between about 100 inches, so But right now, I've only had it for about two days. So I might, it's gonna hit home, and then I'm sure I'll surely get used to it. But every time I pick up the phone, I just see, I don't want to spoil everything is worth watching. But a woman in there yet one of the women, one of the participants entered, or at least it's an actor, who she pushes off and he's attached to a bungee cord. It's all fine. However, it goes on to commit murder. And that, that, to me, is always it's, it's crazy.

Jake 33:10
Yeah, it's funny. It's an interesting theory about the phone background thing. I was gonna I was gonna ask, you know why basically, that was your background, because I was basically projecting like a, an overemphasize maybe, meaning that it might have to, because like for my phone background, I haven't changed in like, a couple years. But it sounds like that's just part of the rotation and a useful thing to remember. And then in three days, you'll be you'll be on to the next one. So one thing I want to get into, you know, you bring up these sort of mental models and this general like first principles thinking, like refresh reflexively, and it's obvious, like, basically, I think it's a great, you know, to keep it so Top of Mind and just to go about life with this way of thinking, I think will, will pay huge dividends in the long term, if it hasn't gotten to already. Just thinking everything through deeply and applying these sort of cross discipline, ways of thinking and mental models to basically everything that like comes in, comes into you, before sort of reacting out a few of the people I think you've you've got the most sort of inspiration from or learned a lot from at least is, you mentioned Charlie Munger, navall raava Khan, who created the ball bot, and others that you want to sort of bring, bring up I would love to hear just like, if you you know, you only had a few minutes to talk about each of them with well

today with the people listening in. What are like the most important things you've learned from these individuals?

George Mack 34:51
Oh, it's a great question. It's it's hard to even I know you've got like a localizer right.

Jake 34:58
Yeah, I know. You've got like a live For each of them, so it's, it's challenging, but but I would love to hear just how you're defining doesn't have to be the single most important thing. But the first thing is that Yeah, maybe it's an easier question. Well,

George Mack 35:12
yes, it's a great question. So what I probably look at to begin with is the similarities between the two. So what I've heard described as disgusting levels of curiosity, and a religious, religious love of clear thinking, is the similarity between the two and number one on there who I know like Charlie and Warren are massively hated in the crypto communities these days. But I've been working on an idea for a while. A Warren Buffett metaphor, which I think the most underrated one, which I'd love to explore with you now, actually. So there's something is that a mental model I've been trying to develop, which I call, I call it Buffett coins, right. So this is the one that I've been thinking about most for last six weeks. And Warren Buffett gave this speech at Nebraska, I think in like the late 90s. And he is talking to other college people never really got picked up the speech. And it's his best his best, his best ever piece of advice or best ever insight I found, which is he says to them, all these young students around at your classmates, and think about who you would invest in. And so you put a little bit of money in and you own 10% of their earnings for the rest of their life. And it's a really interesting, like question, right? I'm sure you begin to think about even now, Jake, if you begin to think about like people that you know, friends or associates, people you've been aligned, who'd invest in? It's an interesting question, Where would you get the best return? So like, one of the things that you'd have to say, who but of interest? Do you have anybody who like begins to spring to mind that if you could invest in you'd get 10% their earnings for the rest of their life?

Jake   36:53
Yeah, yeah, it's a it's an interesting question. I think for me, I would actually, you know, there's a ton of people. And the reason I say that is not because I think it'd be right every time. But I would diversify, just like a venture capitalist, in seed stage companies knowing that a number gonna fail, I think, you know, I could, if I can make a dozen investments, and people that I know, whether it's people from, you know, growing up in college, or people that I've met online, in the last several months, I could put together a list of 12, or I could tell a story of how they become enormously successful in the next, you know, over the course of their lifetime for each of them. And of course, maybe only one of them works out or two of them works out or whatever. But I would love to do something like that.

George Mack   37:44
Well, here's the question, right? So that I mean, I mean, you kind of see in this, like, play out a little bit with like, platforms like big cloud, right? But there's bigger way from the crypto metaphor, and you go into the metaphor of, Okay, let's say for those 12 people that you would kind of loosely have in your head right there, or Buffett. And as he goes, why, so let's ignore all the finances is actually irrelevant. It just gets you thinking, like, why would you invest in them. And then, this has always been the most powerful thing for me, you then begin to look at values that people have, or mental models that people have, or ideas that people have, or operating systems that they have, and you go, that's the reason why I'm investing in them. So it's almost like personality, as a business model. And mental models is part of that genetics is part of that this loaded array of factors. And you've got to assume you're not, there's nobody who's just got a rich father, and there's no great divorce settlements coming up. It's all purely based on merit, and why would you invest in them, and then you begin to go, okay, but I look at, I look at a few people. So I have a friend of mine, a guy called Harry who runs a cool Twitter page called marketing examples. Good good friend of mine. And I always living by him, and I'd invest in him. Because his like level of focus is on like, very few people I've seen before. So go, okay. And then I look at my, my business partner, Josh, he's very, he's very high agency, I always has a great locus of control. And always goes, the

extra mile for people is always willing to put his wallet on the line and pay for things pay over the top help people out. And you begin to do that across your portfolio. And you begin to develop like a variety of personality traits you'd invest in. And then he gets you to flip the script. And he says, Who would you sure? And it's why. And then you begin to look at sort of ideas or mental models that people have in their head or behaviors and patterns, whether it's somebody's selfish, or it's, they're greedy, whether it's they're very lazy, whatever, whatever it is, right? And you begin to piece together the system. And then the crazy thing at the end is you kind of throw out this like money metaphor, and you realize you kind of just establish your values, certainly for making money, and you go, okay, am I doing x? And am I running away from y? I think introspections actually kind of overrated. So even if you look at studies, right, when people have bad breath, it's very hard for them to notice because they're used to it but you can see in other people very, very clearly, the next fork in the argument is okay, but who cares about money, right? There's more important things than money. And the reason why I call it Buffett coins is because it then forks off. So you could almost imagine you were looking at your friends and you go, and there's a weird crypto that comes along which every time they smile, I get 10% of the smile, every time they laugh, I get 10% of their laughs. So you almost own like 10% of their happiness 10% of their joy, who would you invest in and why? And then you break that down again, and you've kind of established your values for happiness. And then you flip the script again, and you go, who would I sure if happiness was according, and you begin to establish your values for being more happy. And then your plan for health you anything that you want to learn. And almost by this looking outwards, you can then introspect, can study a lot of mental models, but when you begin to put things together into your own words, create new words and build on top of them, you begin to understand it a little bit more than just reading farnam Street and be able to quote things very, very fast.

Jake   40:56
Yeah, that's a that's a great story. I'd like a great thought experiment, I think to to run through. I think the point about introspection, being overrated, I think is very interesting. That certainly seems like a valuable approach to sort of find these things

about yourself through looking at the others around you. When I think about those characteristics that I see and others that I value, I can appreciate that it is sometimes hard. Like it's it's hard to come up with things like these these hacks are like thought exercises are useful, because it's hard to just go from like, some ambiguous question to an answer. And then what people tend to do is they just take answers from other people, like you said, you know, you go and you read farnam Street and you say, okay, there's my answer, or whatever it is, I thought it was it's kind of interesting, like, this concept of first principles, I think, I tend to think of things like, maybe, you know, not completely or anything, probably not as much as you but more than the average person. And I've always thought it was sort of funny, the idea of first principles, because you're, like the quote, unquote, first principles that often are spread around, are oftentimes, you know, developed by other people, and they might be good. Like, certainly, I've seen a ton of lessons that are like one that you're obviously super familiar with, is, you know, super familiar as an understatement is like nivas, how to get rich podcast going off the tweetstorm. And there's just some amazing insights in there that like, really, I just like latch right on. It's like, that is brilliant, like, and so simple, like, I'm all in. But if you if your entire sort of knowledge base is built off of these things, it's like how much? You know, how much first principles thinking, are you really doing if you're just taking everyone else's first principles? Not to say again, that they're not super valuable? I think they are. But just sort of an interesting aside on first principles, how do you think about that?

George Mack 42:56
It's quite a meta question, right? Because then you have to think about it from a first principles. I think, the way the way I'd approach is beginning to have various different sandbox in your head. So I mean, there's, I almost have. So this post first principles for a second, I can come back to it, I think there's a valuable exercise of almost having the Chairman of the Board of having a load of different people in head who you ask questions to? And you know, would they approve of this message? Or how would they think of that you isolate that as its own individual exercise, because they still value to that there's still value from learning from other people's mistakes is that

there's so much value is this incredibly amount of value, incredible value. However, when it comes to first principles, and things, I think you almost have to get as near to logic and mathematics as you can. And as near to simplicity as you can, I find it a lot easier to think from first principles, weirdly, when I've exercised a lot before a sauna session, and before long run in my mind is one plus one equals two. And I can really begin to strip away all the excess fat in the thinking through the problem, and really begin to understand it from a simple perspective. So I'd say I think that's the biggest mistake I've made previously, I'm just trying to think my way through to first principles when my brain is blocked, so fixing it to begin with, and then your mind is so much calmer. And it's it has a lot less insecurities and thought processes that are constantly running, then I find it a lot easier to sit down with a piece of paper and almost look at it as If This Then That statements, it should almost be Yes, and those and a series of wise. And if you have that I released when I have that I find them getting nearer and nearer to some form of first principles.

Jake 44:45
Yeah, that's a useful way to think about it. I think for sure. I want to wrap up with one concept that you told me you've been thinking about a lot recently, which is sort of contrasting psychological innovation versus technological innovation. It's a little bit out of left field here. But I didn't want to wrap the podcast until we got to it. So can you tell me just just lay it on me? What what are your thoughts there?

George Mack 45:07
Yeah, this is a mental model that comes from Rory Sutherland that I've been trying to build upon a lot. Again, going back to the start of an obsession with psychology and obsession with technology, the whole concept of the two things are, so everybody kind of knows technological innovation. You I think Peter TEALS definition of technology is the ability to do more with less. So it's the ability to make the laptop, have more memory, make it faster, make the car electric, make it faster, make it more eco friendly. It's very clear what technological innovation is. Over Sutherland has this point where we're so obsessed with technological innovation, which obviously has

its place. It's the reason why I mean, you are living past certain ages. And we're not all dying of certain diseases. So it certainly has its place. But psychological innovation. sutherlands argument is you can reframe things, and fix what would have been the problem. So he uses the example of right one of the things that Rael did incredibly well was having clear time boards have when the trains going to come. So it would say it's going to arrive in five minutes, or it's going to arrive in 15 minutes. And fixing the uncertainty and the human brain, which, which took maybe, I mean, it's still technological, it's an LED board, but it took a 2000 pound or dollar led board, versus 10 billion making the trains go faster. So psychological innovation, is the ability to just simply reframe things and make it better. So even someone says that Uber Ubers, best thing wasn't just the patented technology, it's for the first time ever, you can see when the taxi drivers about arrive. So you're not dealing with that uncertainty. And all of a sudden, you're giving it new life that you would have had to have done by technology. So another good example is, it's all rail at the minute today. But on the train, for example, having in the UK, you have the seats on the left, and you have the seats on the right, and you have a pathway down the middle that people stand up on. And it means there's no real advantage at all to standing in the middle, which makes people fucking fuming. Rory has this argument where if you could flip things on their head, where you could have where people, the seats are in the middle. And if you stood at the outside, you can get a nice view and charge your phone, all of a sudden, you've made the population of the train so much happier because everybody's winning. So rather than having to rebuild massive trains, you can just reframe the system or reframe the flow of things. And you've arguably don't as much innovation as a technological innovation. And I think that's massively massively underappreciated. And there's so much talk about technological innovation, but so little talk about psychological innovation.

Jake 47:56
So the psychological innovations, I can talk about changing the the train car or, you know, like different sort of communal elements like this, and I know, I promise, last question, but I'm curious, is this something where you think, you know, do you think also about not only like, society, sort of psychologically innovating, but on an

individual level, sort of, not just innovating on like, how you, you know, use technology or whatever, maybe that is a psychological innovation, if it's the using of technology, but do you think of psychological innovation as much on a personal level as on like a societal level?

George Mack   48:36
100%, I mean, even goes back to what we're talking about earlier of the, the power of having new placeholders in new words for things, he's almost a technology in itself. I mean, you could argue that language might be one of the oldest forms of technology. And the ability for us to be able to communicate back and forth, is quite a unique human skill. So that within itself is a huge thing. And I think there's a lot to say about an individual level, the ability to reframe things that people haven't even haven't really thought through. So even use like, this is a mental model. It's very simple one, everybody understands just contrast and how powerful the drug contrast is. So I've been I've been tinkering with this idea of it originally comes from Mongo, where you've got a lukewarm bucket in the middle, you've got an ice cold bucket over here of water and a boiling hot bucket of water over here, and you put both hands in the two for five minutes. So you've got 100, freezing water, one in boiling water, and then you put it in the lukewarm water. The one that was in the freezing water feels really hot in this lukewarm water, and the one that was in the boiling water feels really cold, honestly, lukewarm water. And that's always stuck in my mind about the power of psychological innovation where just changing the framing beforehand has completely changed your experience in reality, despite the fact that the lukewarm bucket water is the exact same temperature. So that applies to so many different things. I found that it's a bit stoic. It's a bit dark. But what I'll go back to sometimes when I'm sad or down, I'll watch a Jocko willing podcast where he's reading a book about a Japanese prisoner of war called forgotten Highlander. And this guy is in the worst torture camp ever. He ends up in Nagasaki urashima horrendous things happened to him. And after reading that, even though my life is exactly the same, I'm so much more fucking grateful, so much happier. versus when I'm watching or when I'm scrolling through Instagram and looking at people ball in and just chatting shit. Even though my experience that my actual me in the moment is the exact same person, it's, it's

fundamentally more different. And I've always wanted to, I don't know how to do it in the most tasteful way. But creating I imagine like a YouTube of just fucking content that makes you feel better, not just because it's dark or negative, it could be positive. But there's so much that's what kind of talks about the Lindy library. There's so much small inputs you can put into the system that aren't this need for antidepressants or technology or a new things that can can change things that I don't think we've we've fully explored as a as a society yet.

Jake   51:20
Yeah, that's that's a very interesting point. Contrast, I've heard you talk about this in a number of different contexts as well. Like one great example that you brought up before was like Rolls Royce, I think stop selling at car shows and start selling at at aircraft shows because it was the cheapest thing at the ladder. Whereas the more expensive at the former and it's like a no brainer to, to buy it at an airplane shows. I think that contrast principle, that's obviously extremely different example, then, you know, the water buckets or Instagram, but it's just, it's prevalent in a lot of different ways. Recently, like I was actually talking, I forget who I was talking about this with, but um, basically that this person was like, I don't like watching sad movies. I just don't like sad movies. And I kind of like sad movies, like not, not because they're sad, necessarily, but this person was like, sad movies make me feel bad as like, sad movies kind of make me feel good after you know you because you, you spend this hour, hour and a half or two hours or whatever, in this like, depressing, like situation on screen or whatever. And then you get out and you're like, Oh, my life's pretty good. It's like bad dreams when you wake up from like, a bad dream. And you feel pretty, pretty grateful and pretty fortunate. And sometimes you wake up from a good dream. And you're like, you know, damn, that would have been nice. So it's this contrast, I think is basically everywhere. And certainly an interesting keep in mind and, and maybe an interesting place to leave people.

George Mack   52:52
Yeah. Yeah, just on that. No, it feels that yes. When people's psychology innovations well, that they assume it's for everybody. The

same, the same thing gonna be for everybody. The same way read. It's not fucking everybody the same way Instagrams not for everybody. And I think it's, again, it goes back to the first principles thing I you know, is this constant, these meta blocks of the conversations that we have it, it goes back to first principles thing, really figuring out what form of psychological innovation is going to a work for you be worked for consumers that you might be trying to market a product to, or see what the people that you're trying to interact with to give them the best possible experience of reality. And is it's a form of alchemy, you're turning it into sugar, you're just by simply reframing thing. You're not changing the bits of it, but you've pulled up the hardware that you've changed reality.

Jake   53:41
Yep, yeah, definitely. And it's, uh, you know, I'll, we'll wrap it up there. But these concepts I'm sure we could go days and days. So it's been a pleasure talking with you, Georgia, and thanks again for coming on the show. Where can people where can people go to follow you on on Twitter, you want them to go to the newsletter point people and whatever direction they can go to learn more and follow some of your stuff.

George Mack   54:05
Yeah, just Twitter is probably the best place. George underscore underscore. I don't know he's, he's got it about the underscores as well as the newsletters in the bio as well. So those are the two main resources.

Jake   54:20
Awesome. Well, thank you very much, George. No worries. Keep it on my local you don't