



Jake 02:18

thank you Daniel for taking the time and join me on the show today I really appreciate it and and look forward this conversation for a while you are the founder of Pioneer You're an angel investor, former partner of yc he sold your first company q to Apple back in 2013 where he went on to work on machine learning over there for a while. So that's the very short intro but I would love if you know for those who don't know you if you could start by just sort of sharing your story and in particular, I always love to hear people sort of start as early as they're willing to start out I know for you It all started in Israel and then sort of some of the decisions that you made along the way to get to where you are today

Daniel Gross 02:57

Sure thing thank you so much for having me on Always Always a pleasure open onboard people too much I was originally born in Jerusalem Israel you can kind of picture the old city in in Jerusalem and grew up orthodox kind of around that area and learn to code pretty much at home on the internet my dad dad was a computer science teacher professor but I was really a student of like the web for the most part. And so I started building all sorts of different products and this is before apps, you know, we're popular nomenclature is when you build a proper website or a desktop app, also known as an application and so I did that a lot as a teenager and credit for us a lot. And you know I think I had the prototypical life that a lot of teenagers are around that era had you know getting you know, Windows XP, serial, you know, keys and you know, trading video game cracks and whatnot. And I look I got really transfixed by computer science and the internet and all that kind of stuff. And I started building different products and selling them and throughout high school and slowly found myself attending high school less and less and attended the internet more and more. And I really loved it. And when I was about 18 years old or so I applied to a program called Y Combinator with the project I was working on at the time, and they accepted me to an interview. So I flew out to Silicon Valley from Jerusalem and did an interview there and pretty much bombed the interview actually. And I was leaving Y Combinator headquarters in Mountain View headed back on the Caltrain ready to you know begin the I don't know what 3500 mile journey home and Paul Graham came running After me, this is back when you know why



cons in 2010. So you know, your average Y Combinator batch is, I think my batch was maybe 10 companies or so. So it was very much the, you know, it's very much a family run type restaurant, you know, not the mega franchise that it is today. And anyway, he comes after me, and he says, we think you're really great. We think the idea you're working on is total garbage. And so how about you come here and you work on? literally anything else? Do you have any other ideas. And so throughout the course of my time at yc, I kept on building different products. Throughout the batch, it's a three month program. For those who don't know, at the end of which you have this day called Demo Day, where you get up on stage in front of, you know, at the time, a small room of investors and you present your idea. And I would literally build a prototype of something, launch it, see what the market reaction was, see what people thought of it on Hacker News to TechCrunch. And if it was bad, tore it down and relaunch and they did that a couple of times. So it's a three month process. And towards the end, I ended up building this thing that would become Q, which was a search engine for personal content, that later on, went to raise a series A and Series B, from Sequoia amongst others. And we got acquired by Apple in 2013. So sold the business to Apple in 2013. And that kind of marked the end of first chapter, I guess, my career, what second chapter, first chapter is being a teenager online. And then the next chapter kind of began around searching machine learning at Apple for about three and a half years. And in tandem, I took all the money Apple gave me and invested it in these companies that at the time seemed really small, but ended up becoming really big, like Uber, instacart, Coinbase, GitHub, open door figma, SpaceX notion cruise, you know, and so forth. And, and, you know, I reached this funny point at Apple where you know, that there's the returns that that portfolio is going to make, obviously, we're going to be bigger than anything, they would pay me and I'd love the company, I'd love working there, and I really loved my work. You know, I decided as I phrased it to them to take a either temporary or, you know, indefinite break from working there and quit. So I did that, after building up a pretty large team, to hopefully sustain the work that we started there, which, you know, very proud to say is very much still at Apple running or product turned into spotlight search, and is run by a massive team there. And, and then I worked as a partner at Y Combinator briefly, really, as a way to pay it forward. You know, I thought, the team at Y



Combinator was a lot of fun for me to be around. And it was really, you know, neat for me to find a way to pay it forward to other people, you know, who were also, just like me, you know, from random corners of the United States or the world not really insiders, and bringing outsiders in is something you get a lot of joy out of. And so I did that. And then ended up leaving to start pioneer, which is how I spend a bunch of my time today in pioneer is effectively an earlier version of Y Combinator. So really built for people who are even, you know, before, they're kind of ready to do, you know, an official yc round, and unlike, you know, yc, or anything else that's truly built in software. So instead of a partner, you know, giving you advice, or you having to take zoom calls with particular person, you get a score that is generated by the system for you. And then your goal as a founder is to grow that score week over week. And so it's kind of like a Strava meets startups, if you will. And it's been going for about three years, we have about 200 plus people from about 50 countries or so, you know, the aggregate market cap of Pioneer companies is is decent. I mean, we haven't put out numbers so far, because we really don't want to alarm anyone. But but it it's working well. And, and you know, the main thing, you know, that's interesting to me about pioneer is, I really think no one's tried. Let me say it differently. It is kind of interesting, that venture capital, this thing that is inches away from cutting edge technology like Google and open AI, and you know, and drill is run by software that was effectively built in the 1990s. I mean, ultimately, VC runs on Salesforce. And so the idea of pioneers to try and build something that is slightly more interactive, slightly, something that is slightly more programmatic that selects founders and motivates them entirely in software. And And And anyway, so that's the experiment we're running seems to be working so far. And and that's, that's kind of the quick life story.

Jake 10:11

That's awesome. appreciate you sharing it, I want to start at the end and my take back to a few things. But staying on topic of pioneer, you know, you were focused on remote before the whole world went remote, in a sense taking international founders mentioned like 50 countries. How has COVID? Not to start with like a COVID question, but how is COVID sort of changed the trajectory of Pioneer by sort of accelerating that remote future? And secondarily to that, you talked



about how, you know, you're basically trying to Reek, I mean, this isn't your words, but somewhat trying to recreate a better version of yc. using software instead of people to enable scale, I imagine. What gives you the confidence thus far from like, early indicators that that can be done? In other words, replacing people with software? And what have been some challenges that have come up thus far and in sort of trying to execute on that plan?

Daniel Gross 11:09

Yeah, I mean, just to be clear, we don't view ourselves as a competitor to I see the same way. yc doesn't view itself as a competitor to Sequoia. We just think we're going to meet people a little bit earlier on than they're currently being met. And you may say, Well, why bother doing that? And my answer is, I think there is an unmet need in the market, because I think there's a lot of people that could be founders that are not founders today, let's say, Well, how do you know that? And truth is, I don't have a mathematical equation that can prove it. But I do know that around a lot of the stories of startup Foundation, you know, are is there's like, tons and tons of the the dust of luck, you know, person happened to stumble into someone who happened to tell them about this and happen to do that. And, you know, we look at these companies today that are giant, like SpaceX, striped, and Coinbase, and whatnot, but we forget that all these big things really started small. And at the end of the day, for every one of the matches that did not like that did like there's about 1000, that did not. And so I think pioneer stands to basically hopefully remove some of the luck from the equation, reduce the friction involved in starting a business and honestly give founders who are just utterly thirsty for success, a sense of validation early on, like if you use pioneer, you will find out if you have general product market fit faster than any other product. And that's a very big thing to give to the world. Because I think ultimately, the reason most startups fail is you don't find product market fit quickly enough. And it's not fun to work on something, it's failing. So we give you validation faster. And, you know, I'm the folks that start companies through pioneer, but 40% of them, you know, get follow on funding, which I think is, you know, given where we are today, that metric is significantly higher than what it was for comparable structures in Silicon Valley a decade ago. And yc is one of our, you



know, most common following funder and so we're we're, honestly extremely happy it exists. And so, you know, that, to me, is the biggest indication of success. Ultimately, I think giving out money on the internet is actually pretty easy to do. giving money to the right types of people that go on to raise money at higher valuations is harder, but the fact that the fact that they have almost half of the founders that start companies have already raised follow on round some of them series A some of the large multimillion dollar seed rounds, I think, is a extremely strong sign of progress. In the natural way track is effectively the sum market cap of all pioneer companies, which we kind of keep to ourselves, but is going pretty well. And you know, just to give you some anecdotal sense of who pioneer companies kind of our business called Robo flow, which just raised a series A from David Sachs, the founder of PayPal, but does computer vision as a service is doing spectacularly well started by two folks from Des Moines, Iowa, the business called Atmos which is kind of figma for home buildings raceday large round from from Khosla ventures, which is doing spectacularly well as a business called banana, which is a computer vision platform. Sorry, it's a machine learning platform, which is doing quite well as raised a million dollars or so and so yes, he was sprinkled across our portfolio are a bunch of companies that are really impressive and it is true that we do not have a household name that I can point to, you know, like Airbnb or Coca Cola or Berkshire Hathaway. But that stuff just takes a very long time to create. And you know, I think if you look at the portfolio of any product venture manager, you will find three or four years in it's extremely hard to tell if it's working or not, and that is because the seeds we are planting are Incredibly early. And we sense you know, based on our sequencing of the saplings that we have, that there are redwoods in our future, but we obviously don't know that for certain. But you know, overall, all metrics are green, nothing. None of that soothe is the insecure overachiever in every single team member, you know, in my company. And so we're constantly paranoid that we're failing, but I think we're doing okay. You know, the big numbers for an organization like ours to look at is effectively total market cap and a product that is, you know, how you roughly could start calculating a one. So think it's going to work. I think we are kind of day one of the company, the the intersection of software and startup funding, I think, again, is really rare and doesn't exist, we have a



lot of things that actually that we built over the course of the couple of years that we've been around the three years that we've been around, that don't matter. And the only reason we had to do the circuitous walk through the desert, this kind of meandering through the open space of product ideas is because no one else had done them before. And, you know, we think we found, we found a couple of things that do matter, that are kind of counterintuitive, that are little secrets. And now it's been going well, so far. So we have our fingers are crossed to the future and our hearts of faith, you know, that we're going to go on to be building I think what will become the smallest, most powerful social network on the planet, meaning pioneer, ultimately, and it's fully realized version will not have 10 million users, ever. But I think we can have 1 million of the best people on the planet, on our platform, and hopefully, you know, for our own sake, own equity and all of their businesses. And, you know, I pretty firm conviction that if, if we keep our eyes focused on the prize, we will get there over time.

Jake 16:56

Yeah, it's a, it's a great answer. And I think, you know, you may, it's hard, like, I appreciate your point that it's hard to see like point to objective signs of success, excuse me, after just a few years, just the nature of the business, especially being that you're even targeting like earlier stage than, than yc, basically inspiring people to start companies in the first place. And giving them their first sort of, you know, motivation from day one, and a little bit of capital or some, you know, software and things like this, and expertise and all the like, provided by software as well. I want to ask you what those couple of those secrets were, but I also respect the fact that they're secret. So, you know, certainly don't need to share those. Another question. I'm interested, though related, is, you know, given your background in Israel, growing up in Israel, rather and an orthodox family, I'm sure you're starting to see, you know, the mix of founders coming on board with pioneer you mentioned, you know, people from the Midwest in the US, I know, there's a ton of international founders on the platform. What do you think? Just what do you make, I guess, of this general trend that seems to be inevitable, and perhaps is going to be accelerated by pioneer that the average founder may not be an American who's sitting in Silicon Valley



anymore? What implications Do you think could come from that yourself being someone who grew up in a very different situation than probably a lot of your peers in yc? Not to say that they're all the same, but But Israel, certainly like a unique culture. So I'm curious how you see that sort of impacting the people building the future?

Daniel Gross 18:38

Well, I think look, broadly, the world is going through a shift now and it's going to kind of whip I think, obviously, from one extreme to another, and then maybe settle, not quite where things were before but pretty close to it, you know, and maybe, you know, it'd be 10 15% less physical, you know, colocation and a bit more remote. And, you know, I suspect the way this will unfold is Silicon Valley will be kind of a college town, in the sense that you're always going to want to come out here to get the network to get the sense of how to do things to meet the right people, which are not just be seized, by the way. It is the the true scarce resource of technological process is not capital, or venture capitalists. It is first and foremost founders. And then second would founders really want is executive talent and executive talent still has a large density in Silicon Valley. And those people just take a little bit longer to obviously move or co locate anywhere else, their families and whatnot. And so I think you're always going to end up having this dynamic where founders will always come out to Silicon Valley for some period of time. Now you're right, that the companies themselves may be domiciled more broadly, I think you can hire the individual contributor engineer from anywhere in the world and I think And actually, I think that's a great thing. Because I think the number of truly 100x engineers or Jeff Dean, john carmax, is fixed somewhat. In some odd law of nature that only spawns you know, a fixed number of Earth dishes or Einsteins are oven moments. And it's it's nice that now companies it'll be much more fashionable to you know, to find and hire these people cuz you could truly hire from anywhere else in the world, no need for the person to move be subject to, you know, immigration, visas and whatnot. But I think for executive talent ultimately still need to end up in Silicon Valley. And so, actually think this whole idea of, of everything going remote forever is little bit overrated. Now move remain, I think overrated for the next year or so. I think people will learn fairly, you know, quickly over the course of the next two or three years, it's kind of



the old way of doing business. Again, everything moves in cycles, if you zoom out far enough, is actually really good, both because for two reasons, one is for any age, it increases knowledge and cultural transfer in a way that you cannot get done over zoom. And this is true, both, you know, intra company, and between companies. inter and intra company that is meaning Silicon Valley more broadly and within you know, your startup knowledge transfer is higher if you're physically co located. Secondly, it seems it does seem, it does seem that for the phenotype of say that 20 to 28 year old, being physically in an office is really helpful from a motivational productivity standpoint, and until someone builds a piece of software that mimics the kind of endocrine response you get from being physically near other people, I think people will want that. So, you know, I look on the margin, I think COVID will globaleye or remote ified things a little bit, I do think the amount that it will remotely fi things is really overstated and and and i'm hopeful we find a good equilibrium, meaning a reality where humans never interface in the real world and only communicate over zoom I do think is as dystopian is one where no remote work is possible. And we require everyone to be on the factory floor. And obviously an in between works, you know, well, I do think we may have right now swung the pendulum bit too far and fully remote work, which is an astonishing thing to say for me, given where I've come from, and also given the organization that I've run, but there are benefits to being physically you know, present in the same space. Now, it will say for pioneer companies who are usually early on not really needing that executive talent quite yet, we do need the latter thing I mentioned, which is we do need pioneer companies to like be in a place where other startups are at, because that increases the pace of momentum that they work at. That does not have to be Silicon Valley. Interestingly, meaning that material, if you think of reason about it, from first principles is pretty abundant. And so one thing you know, we're eyeing is in lieu of being able to just plop everyone in Silicon Valley, you know, even for just a week or two, to just get to get a sense of tempo and cadence. You know, could we be having pioneer companies meet up in other corners of the world, and really just riffing off each other's energy. And you know, they may meet up in London and meet up in New York, they may meet up in Mumbai, not everyone necessarily in Silicon Valley. So that I think, is a fundamental change, which will be interesting to observe over time,



which is, you know, startups I think, can scale from zero to one from anywhere in the world. Now, I do think for the one to 100 days, they'll always make a pit stop in Silicon Valley.

Jake 23:30

Yeah, and it's interesting, you're setting up with pioneer, I think this, you know, in, instead of a physical community where you could surround yourself, you know, in Silicon Valley with a bunch of entrepreneurs or engineers, you're least endeavoring I think, to create competitive and supportive at the same time dynamic online, where there's like this leaderboard, and all these different startups can sort of rank themselves within the system. I think that was like a part of your intentional thinking with designing the platform. So it'll be interesting to see, you know, you're certainly not just like, trying to find people from around the world and give them money and say, Good luck. like it very much seems like you've built pioneer in a very intentional way. I like to sort of attack some theses that you have around like, why good startups come to be and how they come to be and how their founders are motivated and how they motivate teams and things like this. So it'll be curious. I think it's like, it'd be hard to compete with pioneer, it seems to me, so good for you. And hopefully, the secret sauce is is one that works. I want to pivot a little bit to something that I found just in listening to you was, was super intriguing, like all of your conversations with other podcasters and some of your writing as well, on sort of how to be a great founder or a great CEO. It all comes back to like taking care of yourself, first and foremost, in order to enable yourself to you know, lead others and motivate others and inspire others. make good decisions and everything like that. And so I want to ask about like a couple sort of health related things, basically like follow ups on things that I've already sort of learned and you know, people go listen to other podcasts if they want to hear that, like the Shane Parrish and Patrick O'Shaughnessy, were a couple of good ones I listen to for anyone who wants to go to listen to some more, but um, one question I have for you is a little bit of like a wild card, I guess. But because I'm going to connect to seemingly like somewhat unrelated terms, but um, you talked about generally leaning on the side of like being frugal, right, and I think that I generally attend there as well. However, I also subscribe to some degree to the concept that like, you have to



spend money to make it and no one who's like worrying about Penny pinching. And I'm not saying you implied this by any means. But people who are worried about like Penny pinching all the time, they're sort of focused on the wrong things. And at the same time, I'm focused on health and I think a very similar way that you are where like, I'm measuring things and making sure I'm sleeping enough, I like I've got a glucose thing on right now, like levels sponsors podcast, I'm pretty far like down the deep end of that type of stuff. But I'm also conscious of the fact that like money, you know, it may be counterproductive, beyond a certain point to get too obsessed with this stuff. How do you think about that balance? Not only financially, but also sort of running with the health analogy? If you sort of take it?

Daniel Gross 26:27

Yeah, it has been interesting for me, you know, I've put out a couple of ideas there. And, you know, I get a lot of inbound in my inbox from various people, you know, throughout the day, it's one of the pleasures of my life is, you know, just being able to converse with 100 different people over the course of the day, and you certainly come across this type of person who, you know, heard this idea of, you know, focusing on physical performance, or sleeping well, and they, that's all they spend time on. And so I do agree with you, you can kind of take that too far. I think you can take anything too far. You can take drinking water too far. It's fine. Yeah, I gave this talk a while back. And I just mentioned to people that are dehydrated, drink some water. And I you know, I get these emails occasionally from people that are, you know, literally hypo neutropenic, because they're pounding water all day. So, look, I think all of these things are the type of thing that, you know, you kind of need to have, but always as a second priority, the first priority needs to be life and doing whatever you're doing. You know, I you know, there is no, I think, I think I think life, you know, loses a lot of meaning and purposes, if all you're focusing on is just maximizing various things, as opposed to actually living life and trying to have an interesting life and make a contribution to society. And so I've actually dialed back the amount I bring that up, just because I think it is the kind of thing that you know, you might want to do kind of quietly in the dark with yourself and not really advertised, I find that people that are



extremely obsessed with productivity hacks are often the least productive. So, you know, I think everything you know, with within good limits and range, obviously.

Jake 28:15

Yeah, it's interesting, because a lot of the content that I was consuming, like preparing for this was a couple years old, I suppose. And it's interesting to hear that you've changed your mind a little bit on some of those things I want to drill in not to belabor the point because you said you don't really talk about too much anymore, but I'm just curious how much water because you run up the water. I'm curious how much you actually drink. And it's funny that you bring up the hypo Nutri MC or whatever, it's whatever it is, because like just as total coincidence before I heard you make the comment, I just started drinking like a ton of water this week, bunch of factors sort of came together. And so I was drinking like 200 ounces are pretty big guys. So that's like, basically my, my body weight in ounces. And, and then a couple days into that, I was like, I don't want to be messing with that. That hyponatremia thing. So I toned it down a little bit. But I'm still I was drinking like 60 ounces a day. And I think that is just like, objectively not enough. So I run a lot so I started drinking some more. I'm curious, where are you? You seem like a pretty well research guy. I'm curious where you landed on on that?

Daniel Gross 29:24

Yeah, I'm gonna be careful in answering that because I do think that you know, the main thing I would love my if my little contribution to this corner of the world would not be any particular specifics and advice. I mean, to your point, even the exact amount that you drink is probably a function of bodyweight. You know, I think that the correct answer for Tony Robbins is really different for the I don't know, someone from Japan. So, um, I think the main thing to focus on is look, I think the main thing people are a lot, I think, you know, with my limited existence in the world. A lot of people are screaming up today as I read all these articles about burnout and you know, people not liking life in general. And, and I think some of it is obviously people are not in great dynamics or situations and you know, they should figure out how to get out of them if they can. And, you know, I'm obviously really blessed in the sense that I can, but I also think



a lot of it is no one teaches you in school to take care of yourself, you know, and your boss is never going to tell you to focus on you know, carving out time for your workout and sleeping well and living well. And that's not the company's job. And this isn't really taught in school, and there's a lot of traps you can fall into. And, and so I think the main thing you need to be aware of is, it's basically the you it's my job as an adult to take care of myself. And that means drinking the correct amount or sleeping the correct amount, and then and then you know, obviously spending the the the smallest amount of time optimizing all these things, and then at the end of the day really getting to work. And I think a lot of people that I don't know, there's a lot of people that I see that are they've Miss attributed maybe some of the things they're going through where they think it's really burnout from the company, but in reality, they're just not sleeping well or they're just not eating well, or they just have someone at work. That's just terrible. And so I think it's always helpful to just like you do in software, have a, you know, RCA brainstorm with yourself root cause analysis, figure out what actually the underlying issue and then fix it and have agency over it. I mean, sometimes I feel like today in the 21st century, we're in an all time low of personal agency, as a global shortage of agency, where people just assume reality is going to hit them in the face, and they're going to respond to it, as opposed to try and change it, either with themselves or or with something with the world. Anyway, I think we ought to change that. You know, we are the most intelligent thing as far as we can tell in this galaxy. So bit of a tangent, to me not answering your question about how much water I drink every day, but it is a broader idea.

Jake 32:10

Now Yeah, that was, I think that was sufficiently more interesting than an answer like 100. And whatever answers so appreciate the tangent. One interesting sort of thing where it's pretty unpopular belief, I think that I hold or at least unpopular to act on it is, I became interested in the longevity field a few years ago, thanks to Laura Deming, who I understand is involved with pioneers like one of the experts. And I think it's, I don't think about this every day, admittedly, but like, I think far more often than the average person



about the idea that you and I being I think you're in your 20s, or are you in your 20s?

Daniel Gross 32:54

I was until recently. A couple of months ago, yeah.

Jake 32:58

Okay, so happy birthday. You're 30 years old, I'm in my late 20s. And I can't help but think our generation has some shot. I don't know what the percentages of living some really old age are in numbers. You know, hopefully, in good health, though. I don't know if that's going to be like 130 years old, 150, or 250, or 1000, or whatever it might be. And I don't know what the percentage odds are of those things occurring. But I'm a little bit hopeful. And I think that unlike any generation prior to ours, or people a little bit older, potentially, it's reasonable to think that that's a possibility today, and that's part of why I focus on this health stuff. It's like, what if I'm right on the edge of this generation that is able to live an extremely long time? I certainly wouldn't want to miss that for like, a she's a poorly timed cheeseburger or something like this. I'm curious how you like if you've engaged with the longevity field at all, through Laura or otherwise, and your thoughts on this field? That's just, you know, very fundamentally exciting to me, and, frankly, a lot of people listening in.

Daniel Gross 34:08

Yeah, I look, I think it's an amazing thing. I'm incredibly grateful to all the scientists that work, honestly, not just on longevity, but on other forms of ailments. You know, I think ultimately, it's hard really to think about this until, you know, you or someone close to you stumbles into an issue with health. But man is truly powerless against the tyranny of nature today, and I don't think it has to be that way. I think we can have power over nature, both in forms of eliminating wildfire, extending human life, eviscerating Alzheimer's, and, you know, things can be much better than they are now. And I'm hopeful that COVID will actually help pull forward this future quite a bit. Laura Efforts are in very impressive. Yuri Milner just started a company called Alto, I believe to work on on extending human life. And anyway, I think there are various efforts here that are all very



interesting. And you know, there's obviously that you have this dystopian future of Well, do you want everyone to live forever and whatnot, you know, the changes in control and power. But ultimately, I think everyone wants to be able to throw a football to their grandchild, meaning everyone wants to be healthy as an eight year old, regardless of you know, that their terminal age, and I'm hopeful that as the first thing we can work on, which is, you know, increasing the number of great years you have on Earth, because when you think about it, you actually don't really have, you don't have too many decades between your education coming of age. And then when you start declining as a person, even though we have extended, obviously, the overall arc of human life, that fit the number of decades, where you're in great shape is actually pretty stable. And so it'd be great to add, you know, another 234 decades to that, you know, I think that would be a wonderful thing for the world. And I personally would love to be able to have more wisdom from, you know, my grandfather, as an example. I think a lot of the interesting causes of hysteria on earth today are really due to the fact that global moral panics are kind of once per generation, if that makes sense. And so it's very interesting, if you look at evergrande as an as an example, because this generation saw GFC evergrande is actually not an issue a lot of banking partners. I mean, today, it's not been a huge issue, banking, infrastructure, prepare for it, people are working on contingency scenarios, had we not had GFC, it probably would have been a much larger issue. But you know, so I say, I think I think these are kind of like, the cycles or once per lifetime, give an example of something that might happen to us, that I think would happen, because it hasn't happened in our lifetime, which is some kind of civil war. Um, you know, I think and so, you know, a lot of this could be avoided, I think, if you could have, if you could elongate the length of the human life, so that he could see the entire sine wave multiple times, I think you'd avoid a lot of panics, a lot of Well, we've seen this before, of course, authors have, and students of history will tell you that this is the main point of you know, their entire existence is to educate the world on prior examples to that, but you know, nothing is as good as the experience. So I think it'd be a wonderful thing. And to me, it's just a small example of how of how we can be working to advance our control over nature, which I think is a very beautiful thing, but also a very harsh thing. I mean, COVID was an amazing study



in this. And, you know, the unintended consequences of a, of a 15 kilobyte organism that is just trying to copy itself on our day to day lives is unbelievable. And it doesn't have to be. So you know, hopefully, that if we can change that during our life, I think that'll be very big, it's quite likely that by the time you and me are in our 80s, or 90s, we look back at the you know, microprocessor revolution as actually only the beginning. And the real thing that happens afterwards is, you know, man's return to dominance of atoms, not bits, the way we were in the 1950s. And 60s, you know, would not surprise me if you're reading the article, now, the 21st century and the 22nd, on Wikipedia, or whatever form of cybernetic Wikipedia, we have then that you'd learn that, you know, we did all this amazing stuff, in the real world to build modular nuclear reactors, we went to the moon went to space, and then we got totally sidetracked with these microprocessors, and we, like stared all day into these glass screens, you know, looking at photos of other humans. And then at some point, we realized, after some type of pandemic, gosh, we should go back to, you know, ruling and conquering the galaxies. With which, you know, hopefully is, is can, you know, can be a way to improve our lives, too. And there's a very famous chart, blanking on the name, very famous chart of the amount of available energy to a human over the course of time. And you can see that it basically grows steadily until the 1970s. And then it plateaus and even goes down. And I think that's wrong. You know, I think we all need more energy. Every single person needs the ability to command more energy that will just improve quality of life for everyone around the world. And anyway, we're on a huge tangent now, but this is something I feel strongly about and, you know, I'm hopeful that the next decade can work to improve and correct Yeah,

Jake 39:57

look, we we love tangents here. I love tangents. I go on tangents if I wasn't asking the question, if I was in your your seat, I'd be doing the same thing. So I'd love to hear it. I'm trying to think of where to take us next, given that we're coming up on time a little bit, but I found a few things. Probably two things from listening to you speak particularly enjoyed your How to Win speech, at yc. And you reminded me of really two things that I had sort of learned before, but let fall out of my head a little bit. And the first was this concept,



which I think you've given, for me a new term, or a new like hook to remember it by that I hadn't had previously, which I think might help quite a bit, which is sort of looking at your self and your life. From the third person perspective. I read a book called untethered soul that was really useful for developing this perspective, for me personally probably introduced the concept. You talked about sort of, you know, you might be able to achieve this sort of perspective. through meditation, it's basically I think you've summarized it as like, you know, instead of thinking, I'm angry, you're, you're thinking like, Okay, I'm feeling anger. And it's just like a very nuanced difference, but makes a world of difference when you stop thinking of yourself as like this powerless thing and just sort of observe what's going on. And I'm curious, you know, you've sort of just gotten on the edge, but not really gotten into it too much previously, about how you can sort of keep this present in your life. And given that some of the stuff I listened to was a little bit stale, maybe, in terms of time, I'm curious, like, is this something you still think about very often? And how do you keep it sort of top of mind?

Daniel Gross 41:43

Yeah, I'll be honest, it's, it's certainly less of a focus than it used to be in my life. You know, I found for me, the big thing that is a helpful form of meditation is ultimately work. You know, I find that being it not everyone is in a position where you know, your work is your hobby, I guess, to being able to have daily tasks that you can work on and grow on, and get a sense of progress. And I do think you have to, like, construct this for yourself. You know, the pianist has skills they can play every day, and they noticed they got slightly better one day, and if they don't sleep, well, maybe they notice they're not as good. And, you know, they hit the third movement of moonlights, nada, and it's just not as fast. You know, in the world of management in the world of software engineering, it's not as clear, but I think if you can build a little framework for yourself about what that is, you know, I at least find it's very helpful. Because I think at the end of the day, maybe not all humans want to compete the same degree, but everyone wants to improve every single day and get better at one particular thing. And so, you know, for me, that is a big aspect of life is, you know, finding some daily structure where I



feel like I'm improving every single day, you know, and is a, I mean, ultimately, we are asset allocators here in pioneer and so watching our a one slowly grow with our companies doing better is great watching the number of companies we can reach out to is great. You know, I'm a little bit of a life just managing some public positions, watching myself getting better at that, obviously, you have a daily scoreboard is is really important, and helpful. And so I think that is the thing to focus on. And I think a lot ultimately, what pioneers trying to provide, actually, to these early stage businesses is a kind of metric and scoreboard. Which, you know, people can use as a form of energy. You know, I always find running such an interesting and pure sport, because it is literally the simplest thing you can do to produce some type of number from an athletic activity. just literally try to get from A to B as quickly as possible, and then work on that day after day after day, you know, until you improve your speed. And, and I think the issue is, with many other activities we'd go through on our day to day lives, there's no sense of time to sleep would be like running without time. How do you know if you're faster or slower, you could look at see what other pace people are running at. But that's not always helpful. You don't always have other people to compare to. Sometimes the people you're comparing to or you know, god awful slow. And so that's not great, either. So what we need is more clocks more time. And I think the more time we have, the more maybe people can measure and improve. You know what they do? And you know, again, I don't think everyone wants to compete against everyone else always. But I do think everyone wants to improve every single day every human on Earth, it's a very basic skill, or in need to desire. So that's what I focus on. And you know, I find at the end of the day, the great founders, the great basketball players guitar players all have this trade in common, you know, a desperate desire to, to be kind of a, an inferno of productivity and just improve x thing every single day, you know, putting points on the board. So that's my philosophy. I don't know, it may be too intense for all for others, but I found it suited me well.

Jake 45:22

Yeah, the running analogy definitely resonates with me, I've gotten into it over the last couple of years. And it's, I found it was helpful just as something to do on the side where you can see that



objective improvement. And for me, I actually didn't really focus on time, so much as distance and just expanding and expanding, expanding week after week, and you get to grow. And then it's challenging when I sort of like, got to a point where I didn't really want to grow anymore, and I sort of wanted to, you know, teeter down a little bit. And it took away the constant growth, like the reliable growth that I had in my life, and I had to sort of try to build that and find that elsewhere. But it was enjoyable while I lasted and maybe now I'm scaled down, they'll scale up again, at some point. somewhat related, I brought up the fact that there's two concepts that that were really interesting to me from your, your talk, the second one was flow, and this idea that sort of happiness is flow at the end of the day. And you talked about how you intentionally try to you keep this concept in mind in sort of the way that you try to design your days. And I'm curious how that sort of takes form. In practice whether it's as simple as sort of like bunching calls together so that you don't have them like sporadically throughout the day or if there's any really useful you know, small tricks This is totally unrelated. Like we have something pretty unusual uncommon, we both have our iPhone set to grayscale and I think even like very small things like that can be really useful for people so I'm curious to hear if you have any sort of wisdom on how you've implemented flow throughout your day to day

Daniel Gross 47:04

look, you know, I think ultimately I would love to be able to organize meetings to my liking sometimes I'm not in total control of my own calendar but for me you know just being able to work on things I really love and really you know to have the majority of tasks that I do be things where I understand ultimately why I'm doing them and believe that if I do them I will improve you know my position in the world someone else's position in the world that I care about that is the main thing you know, I think flow is this interconnect is or kind of an alignment of stars between you have a sense of agency so you believe you can and will do the you know, at the task at hand you have a sense of urgency it needs to happen now or I understand why it needs to happen exactly now and not later and you have a sense of mastery you know you you're there's an enjoyment in a task you'd love doing it. It there's novelty there for you and whatnot and I think if you can get those things to align you know throughout your day you tend to



have you know, those days that feel like everyone has occasionally where you end the day you know like that that old saying you know, a tired dog is a happy dog happy dog is a tired dog but you get the idea. And so you know, I really try to strive for that and I think it's an important philosophy to espouse now because I feel like there's a lot of people I see on the internet talking about how to do less and I am trying to figure out how to do more. And you know, I think it is an important difference in philosophy. I actually think everyone wants to do more to be totally Frank I think a lot of people miss configure their lives to the point where it's not pleasant to do much and then it becomes about doing less but you know, my philosophy is you know build the foundation good health good sleep whatnot upon which I can do as much as I possibly can do you know until until it's time to dream again and then you know, rinse wash and repeat we're only given so many years I think on on this planet you know with even with the help of the longevity folks and so you know, you kind of want to live life in the highest saturation you know, saturation Instagram filter, you can and so that's my philosophy.

Jake 49:39

Yeah, well, I think that's a inspiring place to to leave off. I'll just comment briefly like my you know, it's very admirable perspective, I think and it becomes challenging. I think that those days when the dog is tired and the dogs happy. There's some About the scarcity of those days, that also makes them so great. And so what you know, in principle, I think I do try to attain that like as often as I can and make every day, a great day, etc. But reality sort of sometimes works and sometimes doesn't. And so keep keeping that attitude I think increases the frequency of it all. And hopefully you can sort of have a lot more good days or great days and bad days. And that's the way that I try to do it as well. So certainly think it's a great outlook. I know we're up on time here, but I want to thank you again, Daniel, for coming on. And taking the time it was really interesting conversation. I'm actually looking forward to listening to it back I might do that sooner than I usually do, just because we got into some pretty sort of deep concepts here today. So appreciate you taking the time. Where can people go and follow your progress and pioneers journey, and just stay tuned with all this stuff? Well,

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Daniel Gross 50:59

pioneer, thank you for all of that, by the way, enjoyed it as well. Pioneer has a website, pioneer dot app, that HPP and that links to all sorts of good stuff for you and I happened to have a profile on the social media website Twitter that I'm sure people can find and that should be a good link treat everything else