



**Jake** 00:10

Thank you, David, for coming on the podcast today and taking the time, I really appreciate it. You are the head of investments at Samsung next. And previously, you were SV Angel, long and varied career with Google along the way and some other stops Law School originally, but really interesting story. And I've enjoyed, you know, reading some of your old blog posts and following along a little bit. But for those who don't know, you, I think the best place to start would be just to sort of understand your story from as early as you're willing to start to where you are today and talk about some of the decisions you made along the way.

**David Lee** 00:47

Sure, first of all, thank you for having me. And thank you for digging through some of my blog posts, I haven't looked at them in a while, have really enjoyed a lot of your podcasts with some my friends and other people that are really interesting to me. So for me, I grew up in a suburb of Boston. And I bring that up because I was a huge sports fan Boston, particularly at that time, the 70s. And 80s was this crazy sports town. And so I was huge. And I'm still an patriots Celtics. And it's relevant, because it's probably my main mental model is sports analogies. And if you're around me, I'll probably inevitably use one. But I grew up in a suburb of Boston. And my dad was the first entrepreneur that I knew he got his PhD in engineering, left his job to start his own company. And I bring that up, because it really left an impression on me, in terms of what it takes to be an entrepreneur, like all entrepreneurs, my dad had his ups and downs, he was really focused on building something that people wanted. It turned out to be the first fully automated fortune cookie machine. I don't know if you remember, but the fortunes used to have smiles on them. And he made that machine. And his real vision and his dream was to continue to build and especially now when I see robotics becoming more of more prevalent among founders, and really having a moment with models that are now powering advancements in robotics, it sort of makes me smile, because he's been talking about this for 40 years. He's an engineer and a tinkerer at heart. And I saw just what it took to be an entrepreneur. And I knew it was really tough. And in fact, my mom, who was always supportive of me, and basically told me, I could do whatever I wanted. But the one thing she said, sort of half in jest,



maybe not half in jest, she she would say she'd say, you can do anything you want in life, just don't start your own business. And over time, I just, I realized that that was a life that would, that probably wasn't for me. And I always wanted to be the person who supported the entrepreneur. And I think that's been a guiding light through the career decisions that I've made. At one point, I wanted to be a professor. And then I went to graduate school. And then I had a moment where I got really sick, I actually had stage four lymphoma. And that's that helped me reassess where I wanted to do and where I wanted to go in my life, what I wanted to do, and I realized I really wanted to fulfill that vision of working with builders, sort of behind the scenes. And at that point, it was, I think, around the mid 90s, the natural decision, or the natural choice would, would go to would be business school. But I looked around and I saw that, at the time, the people who were in that role that I aspired to, a lot of them had law degrees. So at the time, Michael Ovitz was running CAA. He didn't go to law school, but that was his. He was thinking about it. And you saw some other people Richard Parsons, who used to run AOL. In fact, when I met Michael Ovitz some 20 odd years later, and we worked on a couple of things together. It was kind of a nice moment when I told him he was part of the reason why I decided to go to law school. And so from that, I became a lawyer. A very bad one probably left awake of litigation as a commercial attorney, and then eventually got a job at Google, working in law always feeling like I wanted to shift towards this place. Have adviser consigliere I didn't know what the job was. But I knew that's the role I wanted to play. And I was very lucky when I was at Google to meet one of Google's original investors, Ron Conway. And that helped propel a career in venture capital. And once I started working there, it felt like home, it felt it was the first time where I really felt like, Hey, this is this fits my strengths. It's what I wanted to do. I can work with builders and entrepreneurs without actually doing the building. And from there, I I invested at SVA angel for I believe, around seven years, and then started a firm called refactor capital after that, took some time off. And throughout this run, I've had executive coaching. And I thought I wanted to do that for the rest of my career. And this opportunity at Samsung came up. And this was around 2020 2021. And I became very interested in a sort of big company job because I'm Korean American. I don't speak a lick of Korean. But there is a feeling that I had that the world was



where Asia and it's not particularly profound, but that Asia is becoming more prominent just in terms of global business in terms of impact and value. And so it was an opportunity for me to learn about the culture, learn about a different way of doing business, and also an opportunity to manage people. And so that's part of the job that I really enjoy, which is managing people and helping them to achieve their goals within the common goal of what we're trying to do at Samsung next. So I don't know how long that was, I may have lost a lot of listeners, but that's probably my life story relevant to this podcast?

**Jake** 06:54

No, that was perfect. And you certainly I don't think you've asked anyone, you certainly didn't lose me, it's a fascinating story, and very well pulled. So I'm trying to think of where to dig in. First, I think, first of all, I just sort of recognize a lot in common between, you know, my interests, and, and yours from sort of using sports as a frame of reference to business as well as you know, the actual role that you want to play in terms of like, you know, use the term like consigliere, and like, it's sometimes hard to know, what exactly that role is, is it, you know, an investor, like you said, is it you know, executive coach, is it a chief of staff, I think there's a variety of sort of formal roles that are all sort of overlapping in certain ways that can sort of achieve that, you know, allow someone to, to, you know, sort of use that skill set or, you know, pursue those interests. And I'm curious, you know, your thoughts? Well, before I get to, I want to know, the sort of the difference between, like an investor and an executive coach, because it sounds like you've, you know, as of even recently, we're sort of considering both pads moving forward from your history as an investor. But before that, even when you first started, you know, getting into the investing side of things, after Google and leading Ron Conway, to us, like, you know, a sports analogy that I've thought about before. You know, you can think of like, investors as coaches, and, you know, founders as players, and a lot of coaches, as you know, you know, were previously players and sort of, a lot of times, they're not like the best player ever, but they go on and they become wonderful coaches. They were maybe we're like, sort of more destined to that, but the playing was sort of a prerequisite in some sense. Do you think that that's, you know, for you, it wasn't



necessary, I suppose. Do you? How do you think about that as like being a player before being a coach? Is that necessary? Why or why not? How did that work out for you? Curious, your thoughts on that?

**David Lee** 09:00

Yeah, you know, I don't think I think there are two sides to this coin, I think the first side, and it's a very credible point of view, which is to be a good investor slash advisor to founders, you have to have gone through it. And you have to have done it yourself, because that is the primary way and in some may think the only way to get onto that founders wavelength to develop that rapport and trust. And the other side, the flip side of that is, you could just look at counter examples, right? Some of the best investors historically don't have that background. And you could also point to examples to use the sports analogies of players who Who, because they were so good, or because they just from a human standpoint, aren't able to step into somebody else's shoes, they're not able to strike that rapport with the founder or in the sports context coach to player. So I think it also depends on the role that you want to play, in terms in the value you want to bring to the entrepreneur, all of us bring different strengths. There's a book that I read during COVID. It's, it has a cheesy title. But I think the theme is really powerful. And it's called, I think it's called the emotionally intelligent investor. And it's sort of a play on, I think it's Benjamin Graham's the Intelligent Investor. But essentially, the author lays out different styles of investing. And he lays out and his hypothesis Hey, for, for certain styles, certain styles, for example, if you want to consider trading as an investor or your trader, you know, obviously, it's a certain type of investor, if you're investing other people's money, that may attract a certain personality type than, let's say, a venture capitalist. And the whole point was, like, understand yourself, first, understand your strengths, and then map that to whatever sector of investing, you feel like suits your strengths, and also suits your interests, and firms. So I think the answer is that I think it depends on the person, it depends on what you want to do. So for example, you know, the way I like to think about it is there are really three phases of a company. Right, they're starting building scaling, or if you read the book, Hamilton Helmers book, seven powers, which is the sort of strategy book on tech, there's origination take off and



scaling. And I think for each phase, you almost want a different type of the founder probably wants different things from the investor almost in this analogy breaks down, but almost in the same way that your child will want different things from you as a parent as they age. And so in the earliest stage, one could argue that being a founder in that takeoff or starting phase, one could argue that actually having done it before, is a real, is a real advantage. Because you're getting in there, you're with the founder, it's more about finding product market fit, what are the different experiments you can run? How do you manage a team under that type of pressure. And certainly, that's something that you it's very hard to add value there as an investor, without really getting getting your hands dirty, and getting in there. Right. And then let's say series A to Series C, you're now in the company building stage, right? And the founder, you know, to use the Paul Graham analogy, you have to make that transition from maker to manager, right. And so and that's where some founders may trip up, because they don't, they either are unwilling to make that transition, or they feel like their company is different. And this is not what their company needs. They're the exception. But every single great company, every single founder, makes that transition. The most public and famous example is when Steve Jobs came back from next, and probably the greatest CEO coach slash consigliere of all time, Bill Campbell is talked about that in terms of the skills that Steve Jobs embraced in order to take apple to where he wanted to go. And so that within that company building phase, it's not clear to me that you absolutely have to be a founder to really add value, because there is, you know, it's just a different function. And then obviously, company scaling is different as well. So to your original question, I think the answer is, it's complicated. It depends on the person. And so I'm always suspicious of any point of view that is so dogmatic that you have to do X. Right. And so, you know, for every founder for every person or firm who says, You have to have been a founder, early stage doctor, and you're just like, Okay, look at Michael Moritz, Fred Wilson, so forth. And like you just the counter examples are there where it's not entirely clear.

**Jake** 14:41

Right? Yeah. No, I think that's a very interesting and nuanced answer. And there is no cookie cutter path to any of these roles, like you



said, and the point about the founder and needing sort of a different set of skills from their investors or advisors, whoever it might be at different stages of The journey is interesting and breaking it down into like three, you know, three chapters. So sort of clear cut like that. And I look at like your track record with SV Angel and now Samsung next. And I wonder how you've sort of transitioned, if you would say like, maybe you can just talk to a bit the different, like, you know, from a high level, yes, you've been like an investor in startups all along. But when you get down to the specifics, I think you're probably investing at slightly different stages across those experiences with a slightly different mandate from the firm that you're investing from. And I'm curious, like how you filled both of those roles, maybe they're more similar than I'm understanding. But if you've sort of evolved in your responsibilities and roles as an investor, if they've sort of grown in a way that suits you better or differently, just sort of inserting yourself into the previous question, in a sense, and talking about it that way, if that makes sense?

**David Lee** 16:11

Yeah, it's a great question. I mean, in that, certainly, so at Samsung, next, we make investments, we also do m&a and corporate strategy. And this is not to deflect the question, but they're so like a third, or two or a little over a third of my job is on the investment stock side, because we're focusing on that, because that's really the engine that drives the other functions. And the whole goal is, let's invest in the best founders, to help our executives, our business units think differently, if you talk to any big company, you know, the executives who are actually doing the work, are they they have tunnel vision, they're just focused on a quarterly goal, a six month goal yearly goal. And it's refreshing to them when they see what else is happening in the outside world. And hopefully, it'll help them think differently in terms of decisions that they make in terms of product initiatives to take on and so forth. And so the, it's different in that it's not entirely returns based, when I was at SVA, Angel refactor, you are measured by one number, which is, in my view, it's like cash in cash out all the funny business of like, Oh, I got marked up so forth and so on, your score comes out after 10 years, right? It's how much? How much cash? Did you give me? How much cash



did you give back. And so when I was at SVA, Angel, you know, we had a, it was a unique place, because you had somebody who probably had some of the best opportunities and access to entrepreneurs than anybody on the planet, and in Ron and the network that he had built out. And so for us to leverage that the idea was, hey, let's, let's pick four or five trends, invest very early, and invest in, let's say, three to five entrepreneurs per trend, or area, and help when needed help in a way that, you know, inflection points, whether it's venture funding, and this was at the time, their model may have changed, m&a, key hires and so forth. But we wouldn't take board seats. And that model worked. Because we had an in, you know, this was back mid 2000 2000 10s, I think we had an opportunity set that was unique. And the the idea was, it's not, you know, oftentimes in venture, they say, well, 10% of your company's drive all of your returns, that's kind of true. It's not 10% of your companies, it's 10 to 15% of your capital deployed. So whether or not you deploy that over one company, or 100 companies that you know, it's a it's a power law. And I think what Ron uncovered and what the Insight was, does it matter if it's 10 companies, or if it's one company that drives all the returns, that model can't be replicated, unless you have certain personalities. And it's really hard to scale that when I started at Samsung next, I wanted to take a similar approach because on the one hand, I believe that you can generate venture like returns. And on the other hand, that approach really suited what I wanted to do and what our team wanted to do, which was to provide unique insights and thoughts to m&a strategy, day to day business. In other words, the more surface area we could cover, the better. And so those are, that's the common theme between the two models. But ultimately, I also know that from a pure venture return standpoint, if I focus purely on returns, it's not clear that I would pursue this model in 2023, or 2021. Or whenever I started, strictly because the time has changed, and there are more managers, more entrepreneurs and so forth. But I definitely thought about when we started at Samsung, next, how do we leverage? How do I leverage what I know best what I enjoy doing, which is meeting a lot of entrepreneurs, and tailor that to what how we could add value to Sam. So

**Jake** 20:42





yeah, what's what's interesting to me about the model that you guys, I understand, sort of pioneered with SV Angel, I think it was called, like a super Angel fund. And that whole approach of doing, you know, writing way more checks, smaller checks, just in way more companies was pretty at the very least unpopular, if not somewhat unprecedented. And, to your point, like, maybe because of Ron, you had to deal flow to be able to execute that were 90 people, even if they wanted to, if they sort of believed in that strategy, that it's not the number of companies, it's the percentage of capital deployed, and the strategy can be viable. They just kind of executed because they just didn't really have the same level of deal flow. I think what's interesting about it, to me is like, it seems somewhat paradoxical that the type of person who would have that level of connectivity and deal flow would also like theoretically, you know, you would imagine that person to have been, like, very established very successful as an investor. And so you wouldn't expect that same person with the opportunity to take this sort of, you know, higher volume investment approach to do so. Because you would think that they would have like, a great deal of confidence in their ability to pick, you know, winners and losers amongst the crowd, rather than to pick a few or more companies in, you know, each thread that I think is interesting for building a big company for the future. And so you guys had, it seems like sort of the deal flow in place, as well as sort of the humility of like, we don't know, that we're able to pick which of these five companies is going to be the \$10 billion 100 billion dollar company. But, you know, we're really confident in sort of this vision for the future that we have and sort of thesis on how things are progressing in various industries. And we think these five or 10, companies are all really interesting. So why not place a small bet on all of them. The most sort of extreme example of that, at least the one that sort of I was able to read about was, you guys made a very interesting call in like, 2011, to just invest in all the companies coming out of yc. I think it was like their 2011 Summer batch, or one of their batches. I think, 2011 that you started this, where you offered? I think in combination with another angel 150k to any company coming out of yc. No questions asked no exceptions. It's available to everyone. And like very founder friendly terms. What gave you guys the conviction? Would you sort of agree that that was like sort of pushing the need, like push pushing





it sort of further on this approach? And how does that, you know, how do you reflect on that years later?

**David Lee** 23:27

Yeah, I mean, that was one of the most formative events, experiences in my career. And let me be very crystal clear, it was like, that was Ron and Uri. And I was there, I was very fortunate to be there. But that was their collective insight. And what I really learned and took away from that experience, is that both of them, like in their own ways. I mean, I haven't seen just, I'll just speak to that moment, because I haven't necessarily kept in touch with them. It was, I think both of them were just willing to just, it was almost like a beginner's mind approach. Like, if you just looked at it, it made so much sense. And I think both of them are just willing to do that and just look at reality and say, why not? Like what why aren't we doing this? And the the whole idea behind start funding, this was a very different time for Y Combinator was you had, let's say, 20 companies, and it spoke to that idea of hey, it's very hard to pick the next you know, Larry Page, you know, name any iconic entrepreneur, but we do know that this YC group is really good at at filtering down the pool. And if you literally just look at the math, it is one company has to do 20x If you have 20 companies to return your money, and given y C's track record, that's a pretty good bet. Right? And then the other companies have to return, let's say, net 3x. Net for or Forex, whatever the at the time the benchmark was for Seed Fund, which was a pretty sound decision in my book. And importantly, and I think the part that was underreported was that each investment had a pro rata, right. So when Instacart came or Coinbase, or DoorDash, I don't know if DoorDash was in that class, you could invest through that next round, because that became a topic of early investors who couldn't get their pro rata right into the documents. And you're absolutely right. I mean, it was received a lot of criticism, a lot of snarky comments. This is an investing, you guys aren't investors. And I'm like, these are two of the best technology investors, that URI was less proven at the time, but he had, or just less, not as well known. But and I don't think it's an accent, he comes from a physics background, where he's just thinking from kind of first principles of like, let's just do the math here. Right. And you generate a lot of goodwill among the founders. It's an opportunity because one thing I've learned as well,



the only founders will meet with you if you invest \$1,000 in their startup. And because there's, they're meeting somebody, in other words, no matter how small or how big the check, generally founders will meet with you, because they're meeting somebody who believes in what they're trying to do. It's just human nature. And, but they're not going to just sit down and have a coffee with you. So you, you establish the relationship, it was an extremely good investment from, if you just look at the numbers and on the back of your envelope. And full stop. It just made a lot of sense. And probably only those two could have done it given just obviously Ron's track record and URI's insight and Yuri's coffers as well, he was a much bigger entity than we were at the time. But you're absolutely right. It. It taught me a lot in terms of and there was a lot of criticism, a lot of sniping. A lot of Oh, you're just spraying and people and there were some who came to me. And then to run, they just said this is brilliant. And I remember those people, because those are the people who just think a little differently. And they don't think like everybody else, because the conventional wisdom was this is not investing. This is gambling. And it couldn't have been further from the truth.

**Jake** 28:04

Yeah, no, I think it's I mean, now it's easy to say, but seems brilliant. And, you know, I think any sufficiently brilliant idea is going to get a lot of backlash in the moment, but time will tell. And I think Tom told him in this case scenario. You talked about, you know, earlier how not this exact model was start fund, but generally SV angels model, you're not exactly applying it with Samsung next today. And you're not exactly sure that it still works sort of like a dozen years later, in terms of higher volume, smaller checks. And maybe I misunderstood you. But if that's the case, I'm curious, what you see as having changed in the world and in the landscape. Is it just that there's many more VCs are, what the specifics are as to why such a strategy might not be as attractive today and again, not start fund in particular, but more sort of the concept of like, a super Angel fund.

**David Lee** 29:08

Yeah, I mean, I think it only works if you're indexing across the right index, right? Like there's only you know, again, I can't speak



for what they're doing now. But at the time, there's only one wrong, there's only there are very few people, very few firms that can do that. Over time, you may be able to do that at a moment in time and what I have observed, I think between 18 2018 and 21, you saw a lot of people trying to replicate that. And it seemed like it could work because everything was up into the right. And within six months, people would just get an up round of 10x and but when everybody but when that stopped, you realize you can only apply By that, if you are getting access to the very best, right, because if you're applying that strategy to even a second to two founders, and you don't have access to that company that could be it has the potential to be 100x. The math just doesn't pencil out. Right. And so what I was trying to say what as it applies to Samsung, is, we and others certainly don't have the reputation of a firm like that. And also, our needs are different, right? So we may look at, you know, I mentioned robotics, or I mentioned, edge computing, we may look at one of those areas that is very relevant to Samsung. But it may not be one of those areas, that is like a generative AI or crypto two or three years ago, that could generate homeruns, we certainly believe that will generate venture like returns. But it's more of an old school venture capital of assessing, you know, all four factors of teen tech product and market, as opposed to, you know, assessing those factors, but also getting access to really a special special team and company, if that makes sense.

**Jake** 31:21

Yeah, and I think it's interesting. The first thing, maybe not the first thing, but I think one of the first things that you sort of differentiated between your experience at SV Angel and Samsung was that SV Angel, the goal was returns and here the goal is not. So black and white, just single focused on returns, sort of the the objective of sort of investing in these interesting spaces that are, you know, parallel to Samsung's business in a way that can sort of serve as almost like a forcing function, it sounds like for the executives at Samsung to lift their heads up for a second and pay attention to some of these founders, and the visions and the companies that they're building, and sort of have a forcing function sort of in the building that encourages executives to take a longer term perspective, when the default sort of setting is very conducive to just looking at the next



quarter, like you said, so I think it's, it makes sense that it would be a sufficiently different or substantially different approach. And it's interesting, obviously, that you've sort of been flexible enough and adaptive enough to, to succeed in both of those roles. And I think so one of the things I'd like to get into a little bit more is, now that you're not, you know, taking more of like the index, the interesting spaces approach now that you're evaluating founders and trying to pick winners a little bit more so not that you weren't doing it before. But you know, I mean, you've been evaluating startups for a long time. And, you know, one of the things you mentioned earlier about, like, Ron and Yuri was that they had sort of a beginner's mind to see, like, you know, just a fresh slate. This just makes sense, regardless of whether it's been done before, or anything like that I've heard you talk about having a beginner's mind is one of like, the very most important things you think about and being able to evaluate founders. And then the other thing you mentioned, was having a prepared mind and sort of like the combination of those two things. I'm not exactly sure what you mean by both of them. So I think it would be, and maybe the audience doesn't know, either. So I think it'd be very helpful to hear sort of like, what both of those things represent to you what both of those sort of perspectives comprise. And then secondarily the, you know, how have you first of all, can they be developed over time? Or are they sort of just like, natural born things? And then, you know, if they can be developed, how can you or how have you developed them over your career?

**David Lee** 33:48

Yeah, so, I mean, for me, when I think about it, a prepared mind in the investing context, I've always thought about it. And you hear investors, even early stage investors, talking about thesis driven investors, right, like they've studied an area. And this is their point of view of what the industry structure looks like today, how that will play out over time, how the industry will evolve in terms of opportunities for value creation and capture, and those are the areas where I'm going to invest. Right, and I think a firm that does that really well, particularly in the last 1015 years, is USV. Like they have a very clear point of view, have a very clear thesis around where they're investing and good for great for them, they write it out, and they basically declare to the entrepreneur, this is what we're looking



for. Right and that I'm not as insightful as they are. So for me, it is more about I'm going to pick an area Maria, let's say could have been crypto in 2018 19. It could be, you know, mobile back in 2008. And I'm going to let the entrepreneurs show me what's possible. Like I have no, I have no idea. But it's almost like surprised me, like, Tell me your story. Why should I get behind you? Like, what is it about what you're doing that has really resonated with your early customers. And there's always going to be a combination of that. Right? Like, I think any investor regardless of whether or not you're purely beginner's mind, you're going to be thinking about the market opportunity. And that is part of the pay, let's pick four to five sectors that we like, right. And so and then obviously, the later stage you get, the more you really have to bring that like all the informations out there. And that's one thing that I did learn from just seeing how Yuri and his old DST folks did it is the amount of analysis and diligence that they would do, even before meeting the entrepreneur was really incredible. And it's because the data was there. And so I think one mistake you can make is, when the data is not there, you can try to generate the data. So for example, if you looked at Airbnb in the early days, you could just say, Oh, the market, small people aren't going to share their rooms and so forth. And you can look at the Travel Market, it's extremely, you know, there are major players, there are certain ways of reaching the customer, it's going to be really hard for them. And that probably wasn't the right question to ask because they were just starting, right. And then I think if you dug a little bit deeper, and you gotten to their story, and you understood sort of the history that, hey, there was a time when people used to stay in other people's houses. Granted, it was a long time ago. But what's happening here that's kind of different and unique. And so that's how I think about it in terms of, I think any investor is going to have a combination of both. And it gets back to my earlier point of picking sort of the the sub sector area of investing that suits your strengths and what you like. But that's how I think about it in terms of having a prepared mind versus a beginner's mind. So and at Samsung, it's been fun, because over my career, I've really focused on more of the beginner's mind approach meeting entrepreneurs, what's new, trying to figure out trying to understand is there going to be market potential here, as opposed to at Samsung, because, you know, we work with our executives and our



business units, we get an understanding for what they want to do, and where they want to go, that will inform what we're looking for, even in an area as hot as generative AI, right, where you could, you know, one could argue that we're at a time where, you know, it's just, hey, let's just pick great founders working in this area, and at the very least, they're gonna get Aqua hired, and we'll get our money back. And that's not necessarily that's not the approach we take, we're going to look and think about what are some of the things that we want to accomplish as a company? And how does that inform what we're going to look for in meeting the entrepreneur, regardless of the stage? So it's been fun to develop that that muscle, if you will, definitely a different lens than what I had done before in my career.

**Jake** 38:31

Yeah, it's interesting, and I respect the, you know, continuous learning and growing and challenging of yourself over time, like, not so many people so late in their career, not not that you're late. But you know, you could

**David Lee** 38:45

say it, I'm not like, I'm a Gen X Boomer,

**Jake** 38:49

your experience, your experience does.

**David Lee** 38:52

That, like you, Jake, I like you, Jake, but not so

**Jake** 38:55

many people would take on, you know, the the challenge of learning a substantially different sort of approach. And I think that's, that's really cool and interesting. And I would love to hear sort of, as they, you know, a next topic, you know, you sort of brought up at Samsung, you know, there's these various threads, and you're sort of understanding them, and it's informing where you're looking and what you're looking for in terms of investments and startups and, you know, potentially even companies to acquire. Can you speak a bit to what those threads are, obviously, Samsung prolific company, more mobile devices around the world than any other company in the world? What are



the various sort of threads that you're thinking about most often the spaces that you're looking in, and sort of the future that you're looking towards, that you're trying to help sort of catalyze for Samsung through the, you know, m&a, and investments in everything.

**David Lee** 39:50

Yeah, I mean, I, what I can say at a really high level is that you mentioned our mobile footprint. We have the largest mobile footprint in the world. We Sell a TV every second. We have presence in appliances, washing machines, refrigerators. So I would imagine, in every household, there's at least one Samsung device. And I think in a world where technology is becoming, for lack of a better term more intelligent, we're interacting with it in different ways. The user behavior is changing. I think that's the really, you know, it's not a particularly profound thought. But the real breakthrough of chat GPT was a potential shift in user behavior in the same way that BlackBerry caused a lot of people to start looking down while they're walking. Chachi btw, can change, a different expectation, a user expectation and how we interact with, it could even be a monitor or, you know, obviously, our phones. And so that is the enormous opportunity in terms of if you think about, you know, they're the devices, they're the developers and the distribution, I think we're what's exciting to me, in working with Samsung are the potential ways that we can tie it together, I think a lot of the things that we have, you know, I think one of the things that I've learned over time, is that there are fewer bad ideas than there are bad timing, than there is bad timing. So you know, we things like, you know, buzzwords, like Internet of Things, or connected experience, or even, you know, I don't know if you remember, but when chat bots were a thing back in, I think, even five or six years ago, and messaging was a big app. And people now are like, Oh, that'll never happen. And it was like, well, maybe it will happen. Maybe the timing was different. And the timing was off enough by let's say, three to five years, were some of the developments that you're seeing in foundational models in new user experiences right now in AI and software, obviously. And then then even in blockchain, maybe that that can create, and actually, let us see a world where some of our devices are talking to each other in a way that is is delightful for the user. And so just having that optionality and understanding the opportunity, for me, that's, that's really exciting. So because I do





think there's, there's, you know, software, obviously, that, you know, saying Software is eating the world, and it's becoming more prevalent and a lot of different devices. But ultimately, a lot of different devices, a lot of different experiences, our phone as this sort of thing, one investor called it a magic wand, very powerful. But ultimately, we interact with the real world. And I think the more those companies that have the hardware distribution, there's an opportunity there. And that's what's exciting to explore with my Samsung colleagues.

**Jake** 43:06

And sort of further to that, do you have any, just in seeing a bunch of startups every day and interacting with the teams at Samsung? Do you have any thoughts on like, obviously, you know, AI is all the hype right now. But, you know, maybe VR is coming sort of out of left field a little bit quicker than people might think. Do you have any thoughts on like, in terms of the future of devices, and it could go actually, sort of either way? Like, is it you know, we're gonna have vastly different phones in the future than we have today. Or the phone is going to be sort of completely, you know, replaced with some sort of AR headset or something like that, that sort of renders the phone, you know, unnecessary or useless, or makes it look sort of antiquated that, like, why are we looking down at this thing, where we could just wear these glasses and have everything we need in our desktop monitor in front of us or whatever it might be. Or on the other side of things, like sort of, maybe not quite as like, quote unquote, sexy of like, you know, VR headsets and stuff like that. But Samsung also sells a lot of just like, I would say, you know, products that are more, you know, they haven't innovated as, like, up front in your face and a while, like, obviously, TVs have gotten like, a ton better over the last decade or two. But, you know, like dishwashers, for example, like, aren't doing our dishwasher are dishing dishes like for us, you know, they're not like, you can put your stuff in the sink and everything's like taken care of. So maybe some of the even like, more mundane products, like I don't know, if you foresee any advances there, but I'm just curious, like, having this very broad view on devices. Like you said, everyone's sort of got at least one Samsung device in their home. I imagine I've got a few you know what, what devices are kind of interesting to you like any sort of out The Money



ideas for what could be coming would be very, very difficult for me to hear.

**David Lee** 45:05

I'm of two minds of this. Well, first, I will say this like I think the metaverse is underrated. And here's what I mean. I think the metaverse has suffers from really poor branding. And because the metaverse, everyone thinks of VR, everyone thinks of avatars. And I think of it as just a proxy for a world where we're more immersed in technology. So if you read, you know, Matthew ball wrote a book called the metaverse and if you read his book, and you took out all the term mentions of Metaverse, it would be just as timely when he talks about the different trends in the developments in hardware and software of this overall trend. of you know, like my daughter, my wife and I are not gamers, we haven't we, we just bought my nine year old. She's in Roblox all the time, to our chagrin, with her friends. And we see some of the things that she creates and how she socializes. That's her way of like, it's become sort of a cliché, but in the same way, I would hang out with my friends at the corner of a drugstore, and just talk and do whatever. She's in Roblox. And I think you're going to just see, these experiences become more immersive, whether it's goggles, whether it's our screens, that will happen. And I think so much of everything around the metaverse has been sort of associated with this idea of virtual reality, that I do think it's larger than that. So that's the first thing. The second thing is, I don't think that in my lifetime, I find it. Like, I'm trying to think of a bigger step change than the mobile phone and the smartphone. Because if you think about at least in the US, if you think about it, around 2005 2006, broadband penetration was I think 60%. And most of that was on our PC, right? Remember, Facebook and YouTube were PC first, and it was PC, it was not a Mac, right? So that means you are online with broadband, maybe two hours a day, right? On average, but with the phone, at maybe whatever 60%. But with the phone, you're in front of the screen, 24/7. And not just that the number of people who are getting online. So you it was it was a extremely, it was literally a step function. And I don't know, like that idea of people coming online for the first time 24/7 I just, it's hard for me to think of another change that will be as significant relative to the prior behavior. So I guess the third thread along those lines is that I think the one area that's exciting



for us as a company is this idea where the technology starts to anticipate what you want or need. And our CEO has talked about this as calm technology where you walk in, and you know, it's all private and secure. But you know, your screen will know what time it is it will know it will be able to take your temperature, it will be able to infer that you're tired, or you know, you may want to do X, you may want to do y and that is I know it's a little abstract. But that is a world where if people have a lot, feel confident that their data is secure. It's personalized. It is a step change, where it's more, as I said, integrated into your daily life. And so I think being everywhere, as a screen as a device as a dishwasher is is an important step towards that world. And I'm excited to explore different ways we can make that a reality. But I do think the idea of that one thing that will have as big of an impact relative to the day before as the mobile as the smartphone, the Galaxy and the iPhone. I'm just I just I can't imagine it. And of course, because I can't imagine it probably happened but it's a way of saying I think just pulling them all together. Other, we're now on this this ramp where all the different frontiers of technology are developing so quickly that, you know, whether it be generative AI, whether it be hardware developments, whether it be hardware becoming, becoming more useful because of the generative AI, that there will be a world that will actually power this world and becoming more immersed in technology. And that to me is is what Matthew ball was talking about and others when they talk about the metaverse so if you wanted a hot take, the hot take would be the metaverse is underrated. It's so it's so down in the dumps right now. And I think it's because of the branding. That I think the overall trend is aundre In the same way that the information superhighway back in the 90s was like a punch line. But in the end, it was directionally correct.

**Jake** 51:00

Yeah, I think if I was really interesting overall as a perspective, I think if I combine like the first point on Metaverse being underrated, and the second point, I'm not imagining a larger, you know, step change than mobile. You know, I think someone could make a reasonable argument that the metaverse, which is maybe a bad term with bad branding, that's not, you know, maybe going to be the ultimate term. But whatever it ultimately is called this world of much more immersed



in technology, sort of a digital first world, one could certainly argue that that sort of was initiated by the mobile phone and that we're not waiting a big thing. Yeah, we're not we're like waiting for some big thing to hit, but like that already hit. And now it's just sort of, you know, the scaling chapter or whatever you want to call it, where things are advancing more gradually. But like we're kind of in the metaverse and to your point, you know, people spend like almost all of their waking hours, certain people don't, but a lot of people spend almost all of their waking hours between their laptop and their phone or whatever else it might be. And it's a very different world than it used to be. So I think that's really interesting. And I know we're over on time, so we can wrap things up. Sorry. Yeah, yeah. No, no, I'm, I appreciate you staying on. So I appreciate you taking the time overall, and fascinating conversation. I'm sure people are gonna love it. Where can people go if they want to sort of learn more about you or follow you or for founders who might want to, you know, pitch Samsung next? Where do you want to direct?

**David Lee** 52:32

I think just, you know, Samsung next.com. You can also email me david.ly at Samsung next.com. And I have the benefit of having a great, you know, working with a great team. And we have offices, and we have presence in Silicon Valley, New York, Israel in Korea. Also have a Miami. And so you know, in many ways, I am almost envious of people starting companies today, because they're, I think, three huge opportunities and AI crypto and bio, but I also think there's a general sentiment that startups have fallen out of favor. So that's usually the best time to start a company. But the problem is that maybe those secular trends aren't there. And so if you are at that, if you are thinking of starting a company, we'd love to talk to you and see how can I support you and your journey?

**Jake** 53:38

Awesome. Well, thank you again, David, awesome conversation and appreciate you taking the time.

**David Lee** 53:44

Thank you for asking me, Jake. I really enjoy your podcasts.