



**Mike Indursky, former CMO of Burt's Bees and President of Bliss World, on breaking the right rules**

[Transcript](#)

**Mike Kearney:**

I know I've referenced many times on the podcast that I have two sons, Tyler and Cayden, and I've also talked about their love of video games. Go back to the GameStop interview with Paul Raines, probably one of my favorite interviews. It's not every day that a CEO of a very large organization calls out his nemesis, pork fat. But that's exactly what he did and I think that was probably one of the highlights of my podcasting career. But you know what?

I also have a wife of 22 years. We met in high school, believe it or not, and we've been together ever since. And I've got a beautiful 15-year-old daughter, Alicia. And guess what? They like beauty products, like a lot of women. And my daughter doesn't wear a lot of makeup. Quite frankly she doesn't need to, but she spends a whole lot of time shopping for it and then trying it out.

I'm personally fascinated, what drives people to love one product over another? Now, I would argue that the beauty industry is probably fairly saturated. So why do women, why do men, why do everyone gravitate to one product versus another? And today, I'm fired up to be sitting down with Mike Indursky. Mike is the former CMO, chief marketing officer, of Burt's Bees, and then the president of Bliss World.

Now it's funny, when I mentioned Bliss, my wife and daughter for once in my life, actually I think, thought I was cool. They love their products. If there is a brand that has a more passionate fan base you don't need to look any further than Burt's Bees. And I'm really looking forward to my conversation with Mike, and I have a hunch after doing a bunch of research that he's one of those creative geniuses that likes to do things just a little bit differently than the pack.

If you're not ruffling some feathers you're not making a difference. If you're not making a difference you're not being different. If you're not being different

you're not making a difference. You have to make a difference. And when you make a difference it's going to change people. And it has to provoke some type of response. Though you like them to all be positive, but they are going to be some negatives too.

Welcome to [Resilient](#), our little podcast where we feature stories from leaders on risk, crisis, and disruption. And when I am talking about leaders I'm talking about CEO's, board members, other leaders, and even folks outside of the business world who I believe have something very valuable to teach us about resilience and we get those stories by jumping on a plane. I'll tell you, yesterday was a pretty bumpy one from San Francisco to New York, and we meet our guests on their home turf.

My name is Mike Kearney, I'm a partner in Deloitte's Strategic Risk practice. I get to question all the time, why did we start Resilient? I will tell you, it's actually pretty simple. When I talk to clients, clients want to hear from the frontlines. They want to hear the stories of people who have lived through crisis, people who have lived through risk events, people who have been disrupted or have disrupted. They want to hear the stories.

While they like to hear Deloitte's perspective they are absolutely fascinated. So it has been my quest to go out and find these leaders who want to share their stories in an authentic conversational manner. We don't script these. Quite frankly, we don't even know how long they're going to go. It could be an hour, it could be an hour-and-a-half, but that's what I want. I want the authentic story from these leaders. And I'll tell you, it has been one of the coolest roles that I've ever had.

The fact that I get to sit there and ask these leaders any question I want, and I have learned so much. So much that I've integrated it into how I serve clients, how I think both professionally and personally. It has been a highlight of my career. And today I am in New York, in Manhattan and actually in SoHo, and what's really interesting is Mike is inviting us into his home. So when I'm telling you that we go and see them on their home turf we're actually going to be in Mike's home today, which is really neat.

And I'll tell you, when I first talked to Mike I felt an instant connection with him. He seems like somebody that really gets it, really gets how you market, and really gets how you puts messages out that distinguish his company or his products from others. So I think you guys are going to enjoy it. Today, we're going to talk to him about working at some iconic brands, Burt's Bees and Bliss. We're going to talk what it's like to be this little offbeat cult-like company to be acquired by the thousand-pound gorilla, Clorox. How a disruptive—and I'm going to call him a disruptive CMO—how he actually thinks. We're going to talk about natural products, some of the risks associated with them, and why the definition of beauty is changing. And then we'll close it out with his latest adventure.

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**Mike Kearney:**

I want to start with kind of a fun little story that you actually cite, and I'm actually really curious if you believe this, but it's one of your greatest accomplishments, and that is winning the Battle of the Bands in 2007, so it's already 10 years ago. And I think you said after hearing eight performances that you indicated we're not going to win. And I think your quote was, and I am going to recite this and I want you to react to it, you said, "Look, guys. We're not going to win on talent. We're not that good. But we will win by playing faster and harder. And remember, if you make a mistake you did it on purpose." You got to tell us this story.

**Mike Indursky:**

Yeah, they had this Battle of the Bands competition in North Carolina, and we were working at Burt's Bees and we decided we should do this. And some of us had never played in front of people before. We had different skill levels. And as the boss you can't handpick people. If anybody wants to play, you let them play. So we put this band together and our rehearsals were horrendous. Our rehearsals were—everyone wanted to do their own thing. One person is playing folk and one person is playing this, getting them to remember the music and practice, that wasn't going to happen. But it just kind of worked out and we looked good. The creative team put together these shirts. We looked like the Ramones, but of course it was the Beemones, because we were Burt's Bees. And we had a big banner behind us, so we looked the part.

We felt really good going in because we took Ramones songs like "I want to be Sedated," but made them be appropriate, so "I want to be Pollinated." Or "Rock and Roll High School" becomes "Rock and Roll Bee School." And we had a lot of fun with it. When we went on we were just brimming with confidence. But clearly we were the least talented of all the people. So I said guys, we're not going to win this on talent, okay? Because we kind of suck, but we're going to have the best time, we're going to kick-ass, and everything you said has happened. And we went on and people who had never played in front of people before were so confident—I mean cocky. And we killed it. I mean we crushed everybody.

**Mike Kearney:**

Is there a deeper lesson there? Because it's one of your best accomplishments. Is it, I don't know, bringing creativity into a situation? The level of confidence or cockiness, like you said? What's the lesson?

**Mike Indursky:**

Everything is kind of a default no. Everything in life is you can't do it, it can't be done, shouldn't be done, and the only person who's going to make it happen is you. Right? You're the only one who's going to say yes to things. So when you have this idea, right away well it's a dumb idea. It's been done before. It failed before. And you have to have the strength of conviction if you really believe in it to make it happen, and that means going through a lot of naysayers. And here it was persuading a bunch of people to do the Ramones, which was, kind of, hard for people because they play really fast. Convincing them it was a great idea,

them seeing it, creating a vision for them, which we did, and they followed the vision and to make it happen. And to realize that I want to win Battle of the Bands, you can win Battle of the Bands. I want to be a boxer, you're a boxer. I want to be a CEO of a company, you're a CEO of a company. The only one that's going to make it happen is you.

**Mike Kearney:** And in many respects, that's interesting because I guess one of my big takeaways wasn't just about how you played. You talked about the fact that just even the Beemones, that's pretty damn creative. What you wore—to a certain degree it was more than just the music, it sounds like it was also the broader experience that you brought to it.

**Mike Indursky:** The whole idea was we really wanted to get into the mindset of what the Ramones were, but in a funny way. The Ramones had Johnny and Joey and Tommy and Dee Dee. We had Buzzy and Stingy and Hively, and we had names like that. I mean we had it down. We actually had a shrine. Joey Ramone had died, I think about three years to the date—bizarrely coincidentally three years to the date of that concert. And we had a shrine for him on the stage. And you try to be Johnny, I was singing and playing the guitar, so I was trying to be Johnny. But I sounded more like Andrew Dice Clay with this really bad Queens accent, you know?

**Mike Kearney:** You say in the quote though, you said, "If you make a mistake you did it on purpose." Is that kind of your perspective on mistakes? Because I actually think you learn a lot more from mistakes than successes.

**Mike Indursky:** Well, it's funny. Any musician will tell you if you are onstage, if you make a mistake and you fixate on it, it can paralyze you. So if you make a mistake just keep going. You did it on purpose.

**Mike Kearney:** So when I screw up on this podcast I'm just going to keep going. That's my strategy.

**Mike Indursky:** Exactly. When you drop the F-bomb multiple times, I meant to do that. I'm trying to add some more character to this.

**Mike Kearney:** This is not your typical Deloitte podcast. Exactly right.

**Mike Indursky:** But I think in the world of mistakes, there's so much to talk about there. But you're going to make them, try to learn from them. Just try not to learn from them multiple times. Learn from them once and act. And at the same time also don't ignore them. In the case of the music you're onstage. You have to keep going. You can't fixate on a mistake. It can also screw you up mentally, but you learn from your mistake, don't do it again, move on. But definitely learn from it.

**Mike Kearney:** Why do you think people are afraid of making mistakes?

**Mike Indursky:** Because it goes against their ego. You have to admit you're wrong, show the right way, and take them there.

**Mike Kearney:** It's funny that you say that. I think actually a superpower of many leaders that I track is when they actually say I'm sorry or I made a mistake. And I actually say with my kids a lot of times, if you just admit what you did it actually deactivates any sense of frustration I may have with that person.

**Mike Indursky:** Absolutely. When you're on top you have the highest level of power. And any sign of weakness could, in someone's mind, compromise that power. But someone who's highly emotionally intelligent and secure and has a good leadership style will admit to it, and that allows everyone to admit their mistakes so it makes for a much better environment altogether.

**Mike Kearney:** So are the Beemones still around?

**Mike Indursky:** The Beemones aren't around, but I didn't realize it was almost 10 years to the day because I think it was about May. So I might have to try and see if we can get the band back together.

**Mike Kearney:** Can I get an invite if you do that? I'll follow up with you on it.

**Mike Indursky:** You might also be the only one in the audience.

**Mike Kearney:** Well I know you showed me another performance that we are not going to get into. I don't think that's going to be true. So let's talk about your youth. I always love starting with kind of what makes the person the person. So you grew up in the Bronx. Maybe if you could just give a bit of your back story.

**Mike Indursky:** Yeah, I grew up in the Bronx. It was not a bad area, but I had a weird situation where my mom worked days and my dad worked nights. My dad was a bartender. He owned a bar in Harlem and that led to just a lot of kind of weird adventures for us and getting exposed to things at a young age that most kids don't get exposed to.

And between getting tied up at gunpoint with you and your mom and dad when you're 16 and literally have a gun to your head saying you better stay down there or I'll f-ing kill you, to having friends killed, and having my godfather shot in the back of the head, and just witnessing a ton of violence, which was also New York back in the late '70s.

If you ever watch movies, like early '70s rather to late '70s. If you watch movies like Taxi Driver and French Connection, that was New York. That wasn't a period piece. That was happening at that time. But the point of it is you're exposed to a lot of really weird situations, you're exposed to a lot of experience that just kind of helps you later in life. But to me that's just kind of my normality. That was life in New York.

**Mike Kearney:** Is there one or two things? Because I was going to ask you about what shaped you, but obviously that's probably what shaped you when you were a kid. But people could have gone or you could have gone one of two ways or many

different ways but it seems like you turned out all right. Were there one or two lessons that you learned or things that you've taken forward?

**Mike Indursky:**

My biggest decision about where to go in life was probably at the time—like in the mid-late '70s you had to choose between either punk or disco. And those were really your two choices. If you were a good looking guy and you thought you were relatively easy to meet women you went the disco version, and if you were kind of unsure of yourself or angry at the world you kind of went the punk route.

So I went the punk route. Thank God new wave came along which put disco and punk together nicely and made everyone happy and dancing and wearing really cool clothes. No, I think my parents always had very good standards and high standards. They were both entrepreneurs and they both did their own thing and they instilled that in me and my brother. It was always going in the right direction. It's just a question of where.

**Mike Kearney:**

I would characterize you as kind of a creative guy based on what I've seen. Were you always drawn to the creative side or were you an artist? Where did it began?

**Mike Indursky:**

Interestingly, my brother is an artist and he's a real super talented guy and he can draw well and paint and all those things. I was never as good as he was, so I always thought of myself as not being particularly creative because it was relative to him and what I realized was two things that the lens you look at isn't other people per se, it's yourself. And also creativity takes many different forms and it's not just the guy who can draw well and paint well. So it took me a lot later in life to understand that I really am a very creative guy, but I didn't know that until –

**Mike Kearney:**

You didn't know that when you were young.

**Mike Indursky:**

No, I didn't know that till much later in life actually. When I was at Unilever they sent the senior managers to this thing called the Center for Creative Leadership.

**Mike Kearney:**

It's in South Carolina, right?

**Mike Indursky:**

Yeah, there's one there.

**Mike Kearney:**

I've been there.

**Mike Indursky:**

Yeah, it's incredible. I went to the one that's in San Diego, but they have two. They do this whole 360 on you, a psych test, and IQ tests and at the end you're learning about yourself and I remember that you speak to the counselor at the end where she puts it all together for you and her first comment to me was, why are you so hard on yourself? And I said, why am I so hard on myself? And she gave me examples.

And then she goes—I talked to her about being humble. And she goes, if you can't recognize what you're great at you'll never be great. You have to recognize what you're great at, embrace it, make that the focal point in your career, and similarly recognize what you stink at, stay away from that, delegate that to other people. And it's okay to stink at stuff.

When you're growing up as a general manager you have to be good at everything. But what I realized was creativity is an incredibly strong suit of mine. Be very proud of that and don't be humble about it because it's not about bragging, it's about recognizing it and throwing yourself into situations where creativity is needed and not shy away from it.

**Mike Kearney:** You know, our firm—and I think I mentioned this on our last interview that I did, but we've moved bigtime to the whole strength-based focus.

**Mike Indursky:** Absolutely.

**Mike Kearney:** It is so liberating because I had a leader that used to call it don't peanut butter it. You can't do everything and the notion that I can actually focus on what I'm good at is empowering and actually I take that. That's quite frankly why I'm doing this podcast. Maybe I'm not good at it but it's what I'm interested in and what gives me passion.

**Mike Indursky:** I think you're fantastic at it.

**Mike Kearney:** Oh, thank you.

**Mike Indursky:** But they've done all these studies about happiness in the workplace and doing and being able to work on the things that are your strengths is one of the greatest contributors to happiness in the workplace. The biggest frustration is if you have a strength and you can't use it. And everyone wants to be cross-trained and cross this and cross that, but at the end of the day say you have a creative ad guy and he has a teammate who is a creative account guy. And he told the creative guy, listen you stink with math.

So we're going to send you to financial courses. And they tell the account guy you're great with math, but you stink at creativity. We're take you to creativity workshops. It's just the worst use of resource. Instead, let the creative guy be the best creative. Let the business guy be the best business guy. Let them be yin-yang together and form a perfect union.

But don't try to do each other's stuff. But not focusing on your strengths is going to hurt you. And all these people take jobs and they take positions that aren't to their strengths, but they think it's going to help them later in their careers. It just makes them miserable in the short term.

**Mike Kearney:** Right. Does it shape you as a leader? And we're going to talk about your time at Burt's Bees and also at Bliss. But did that notion, after you did that Center for Creative Leadership, did that shape how you led the future as well?

**Mike Indursky:** Oh my God, yeah. Oh my God. It was I think probably the biggest change in me because it was the first time I became—a) the first time I became self-aware, and b) it also taught me the importance of being self-aware. The one thing she told me, I remember the last thing I'll mention is 'she said, who are your heroes in life not including your parents or relatives?'

And I said Teddy Roosevelt, Ayn Rand, Frank Zappa, Marvin Haggler. She said yeah, you're the rugged individualist. I said, what? You're the rugged individualist. How have you not started your own company by now? I said damn, that's good.

**Mike Kearney:** This is a good plug for them. That is really insightful.

**Mike Indursky:** It was the best week I've ever had professionally. I think about a third to half the people just broke down and cried because they saw themselves. Can you imagine if you look in a mirror every day and someone says that's not you? This is you. And they show you a different mirror and you see yourself and you look different and you sound different. People think of you differently than you thought. That's a hard thing.

Now here's the challenge. The challenge is you've now been stripped down to nothing. You're naked. You see all your flaws, you see all the good stuff and you go back to the office. Are you willing to accept this new thing that you are or do you go back? And in my observation most people go back because it's just so much more comfortable. Rationalization –

**Mike Kearney:** So what did you do not to go back?

**Mike Indursky:** Rationalization is a great skill to have.

**Mike Kearney:** I agree and I have another question I want to ask you, but before I even get there, what allowed you not to go back to the way things were? If you say that most people do, what allowed you to kind of reach your potential or focus on the things?

**Mike Indursky:** It was for that reason to reach your potential.

**Mike Kearney:** But why you and not the other people?

**Mike Indursky:** I don't know why they didn't. I just think when you've been doing it for a long time and you've been successful and you've gotten to a certain level of hierarchy, you know what? This stuff is good. I've learned a couple of things. I'll be better in meetings. I'll do this or I'll do that. But they're not going go through a fundamental change because what got them there was actually worked.

What they're trying to tell you, Center of Creative Leadership and places like that is that's fine for now. It doesn't mean that you're successful where you are, nor does it mean you're going to advance from where you are. And I was just like, I just want to keep going. Forget about going up. I want to keep going.



**Mike Kearney:** Right, developing personally.

**Mike Indursky:** Developing and growing as a person and growing as a business person and as an individual. So this is great stuff.

**Mike Kearney:** It seems like to a certain degree you found your purpose. Do you agree with that?

**Mike Indursky:** Yeah, I do. I realized what I wanted to do and what motivates me shortly after that. And it's helped give me some type of focus.

**Mike Kearney:** Yeah, the reason why I bring up purpose, probably it's 'cause my favorite thing and I talk about it probably in every interview. But the transformation I went through, and I think it was actually after I went to the Center for Creative Leadership. Mine was something called the Corporate Athlete and they focused a lot on what is your purpose in life. Not at Deloitte or in the work world, but what is it that really gives you juice?

And for me it ultimately was – it's evolving but at the time it was like to do epic stuff. Mine's a little more evocative but I'll keep it clean for now. And that has actually guided every single thing that I do now. I weekly will sit down and say, did I live my life this week in line with my purpose? To me that's way more transformational than like you said I could change the way I go to meetings or things like that. It's kind of more of a life's purpose point of view.

**Mike Indursky:** Absolutely. That is a great way of putting it. And I went through the same thing interestingly, and that was probably in the late '90s. God am I dating myself, but in November of this past year I was invited to a Tony Robbins seminar called "A Date with Destiny." Now I met Tony at the premiere of his movie –

**Mike Kearney:** That documentary?

**Mike Indursky:** Yeah.

**Mike Kearney:** That was a fascinating documentary.

**Mike Indursky:** Yeah, actually fascinating. And I met him and we started talking. I told him that we shared the same ethos. And he said, how? I told him living life of positivity and all these other things. And we went back and forth and he knew my background. He said, I'd like you to come to my Date with Destiny as my guest. So I went for a weeklong and it was –

**Mike Kearney:** Was this the one down in Boca or somewhere down in Florida?

**Mike Indursky:** Yeah, Boca. Exactly, Boca. And it was wild. Absolutely wild. But without going into what happened there, one thing they do, they make you focus on is, what's your mission in life? What are your – he calls it power values. What are the values that you go away – your power virtues rather? What are the values you go towards? What are the values you go away from? And even though some of it was already in my head, to actually put them on paper and recite them every

morning, which I actually do as part of this thing he calls a getting into peak state.

And as trite as it sounds, when you start off the day trying to get into a peak state and remind yourself of who you are, what drives you, what your mission statement is, why it's gonna be such a fantastic day and so forth, it's a very, very good process but also helps solidify and like you said put the guardrails on your decisions.

**Mike Kearney:** Do you mind sharing what your mission is?

**Mike Indursky:** Yeah, my mission is kind of like yours. It's I love to create great things, big things, things that are gonna hopefully change the world and work with amazing people to make that stuff come to life. And to make come to life in such a way that enriches me, enriches my family and enriches the people that it touches. That's what gets me excited.

**Mike Kearney:** That is awesome. So you went to college. Do you want to maybe share where you went to college? What I'm curious of is where you went to college and then where you kind of started your career, a lot of this is gonna focus on your time at Burt's Bees and also Bliss. But I want to find out about the foundation.

**Mike Indursky:** Sure, sure. I kind of bounce around. I was kind of directionless. I went to Stony Brook, which is a state school in New York for two years. Wound up losing my housing privileges there. Then went to McGill University. Lasted there about a semester. That's in Montreal. I was just not in the mood. I was not in the right frame of mind to be in any school and I was taking every major, not really liking anything.

I liked professors and I liked some courses but I couldn't find a major that I liked. Then I took a year off and then I worked a bunch of jobs. And then I went to Baruch, which is a city school and I took a marketing course and that's when I said oh my God, this is it.

**Mike Kearney:** This is it.

**Mike Indursky:** Marketing. And it turns out that neither Stony Brook didn't have marketing courses and I don't think McGill did either. So I kind of discovered it. My whole kind of seriousness in studying switched. I became a super serious student. Of my first two schools I got by. I got by by being a kind of smart guy and getting through with a good grade point average without really trying all that hard. But I didn't really care. Now I cared and loved marketing. And from that point on it was like marketing is what I want to do. Marketing and then building brands and building businesses, that really excites me.

**Mike Kearney:** And that literally flipped the switch for you. Finding that thing that you actually were interested in.

**Mike Indursky:** Absolutely.

**Mike Kearney:** Any advice for kids? 'Cause actually I've got a junior and we're trying to figure out what the hell he's gonna do. But it's hard because you've got to figure that out and to a certain degree maybe you've got to stumble across a few things to come to the answer.

**Mike Indursky:** I haven't been following the advances in higher education so I don't know what colleges do. Friends of mine have kids and some of what the schools do are just incredible. But to me it's when you go to school it's a menu. And don't choose the steak right away. Try everything. Try everything. Even though you're not interested in it try it. Just try it for a semester. Premed, prelaw, business, engineering, whatever those – try everything. You'll get a sense of what's right for you.

Then you can start narrowing it down. But to declare your major so early, we come out of high school I don't know if you've experienced enough. And how many jobs have you had? Take everything you can, take the burden off yourself, don't feel the need I need to know right away. Even if it takes you two years. But once you get a taste of something that works you'll know it right away.

**Mike Kearney:** So then after college you – maybe just touch on Unilever and L'Oréal. You had some great experiences before you came to Burt's Bees –

**Mike Indursky:** Yeah, I loved it. When I got out of grad school, which was the Leonard Stern School for Business NYU I was lucky because I worked five years between college and grad school, which was seen as a real big asset. So I was really kind of on top of the list of people getting offers. So I got all these offers and I chose this company called Chesebrough-Ponds and Chesebrough-Ponds was in Connecticut and they were just bought by Unilever. So I joined Chesebrough.

And what I liked about Chesebrough wasn't necessarily the products because they had Aim toothpaste and they had Vaseline Intensive Care Lotion and Q-tips and Aqua Net and Rave and all this stuff, Ponds. It wasn't that. It was the people. This is another kind of interesting thing. Every other place I went, everyone seemed so homogenous. It seemed like a group of the same person. And Chesebrough is like snowflakes. They're all different. One flake different.

You had assistants who wound up getting into marketing, you had people who were perfume people and you had classic marketers and you had all different types of people there. And it was a very entrepreneurial environment. You had big highs, big lows, but you can get the big highs. It's like a pendulum. But I just loved the variety of people and I said I could fit here. I can't fit in a homogenous group because I never felt in my life I never fit in any homogenous group.

But I always felt a little bit of an outsider, just a very gregarious kind of popular outsider. But in a kind of diverse group I fit right in. You're just another slice in the pie. So I felt very good in there. So I expected to be there for about two or

three years, then I was gonna start my own company it was my guess and 11 and a half years later – I was actually there for almost 12 years.

**Mike Kearney:** So it's interesting you say that. What's going through my mind is, is there value in being that snowflake in that homogenous pool because you can differentiate yourself? First is it sounded like now you were kind of an outsider but you were kind of in a pool of outsiders so maybe you weren't that differentiated. Did that ever factor into your thinking or any thoughts on that?

**Mike Indursky:** Yeah, I think if I was in more traditional companies I probably would always be seen as that wacky guy Mike. I think I was probably seen that way at Unilever too as that wacky guy Mike. But it was more embraced because –

**Mike Kearney:** I see what you're saying. Yeah.

**Mike Indursky:** Because everyone had their own degree of being different and that was a little tolerable.

**Mike Kearney:** Interesting. So then you go to, was it L'Oréal after that?

**Mike Indursky:** Yeah, I ended my career at Unilever as Senior Vice President of Strategic Planning of Marketing for the Fragrance Group – was Calvin Klein, Vera Wang, Trudy, Chloe and Valentino, a bunch of those brands. And it was wonderful. It was wonderful. And I decided I wanted to stay in beauty and I decided that I wanted to actually do more in beauty and L'Oréal in my opinion at the time was the best beauty company.

They were the biggest, they were the most successful, strategically they have the best portfolio of brands across different types of beauty, different channels of distribution, internationally and gender wise in any company. There's perfectly balanced and perfectly smart. So I joined them for three years and I went there originally to be the Vice President of Marketing for Maybelline. And then after about a year they moved me to Garnier.

And Garnier had just launched and they had someone there and it was year two and they wanted to try to up their game a little bit and they moved me over. And it was a wonderful experience. L'Oréal's a very interesting company. They actually do at the time a lot more research than even Unilever did, which was surprising because I thought Unilever was research heavy. They did more research. But what you learn there is the importance of proper execution.

And we would have debates over the size of the writing on the bottom of a tube of lipstick. Where I first would come in and go who the hell cares, they would say that's a difference between having a shelf that looks clean and a shelf that looks sloppy because you have to make sure that the customer and the clerk can put back that lipstick and know where it goes instead of trying to search for it. So you learn everything from some of these practicals that to having what

they call this metche, which is this great understanding of things that are aesthetic.

**Mike Kearney:** Would that impact your creativity though? That seems like a very wrote way of marketing or branding or I don't know. I'm not a marketing guy but I could see you in those meetings probably pulling out your hair.

**Mike Indursky:** There were times where you pull out your hair. Absolutely there's times you pull out your hair and also culturally L'Oréal at the time I thought was a challenging company, was a good challenging company. I really look back very fondly at my interactions with now who's the CEO, Jean Paul Agon, who is just incredible. But at times you can be wildly creative but you need to be able to back up your creativity with fact and data.

And L'Oréal, it's interesting as artistic as – maybe that's not a good word – as they were, it was about the research. You could assert anything but prove it to me. Don't just tell me, show me. That's one of the lines they'd be using in meetings. Don't just tell me, show me. So you learn a lot there. But having said that though, after three years I decided that that's not the place I want to be.

**Mike Kearney:** And then you moved to Burt's Bees?

**Mike Indursky:** Yeah, it wasn't so much a slight on L'Oréal. Again, I was very happy there, I was doing very well there and they liked me very much there. But I went back to again who am I and what do I want? What's my mission? And I also realized that the environment that I thrive most in is an environment of creativity, of high risk, of diversity, of a lot of things like that. And I also wanted to work in – I was very interested in private equity at the time. And I kind of put it out there in the spirit world and I swear within two weeks I got a call from Burt's Bees. It was just like that.

**Mike Kearney:** So let me ask before we get into Burt's Bees, which I'm fascinated by, but you said you thrive in an environment of high risk.

**Mike Indursky:** Yeah.

**Mike Kearney:** And so the question I have for you is, given the fact that you'll ultimately run a company and we'll talk about that in a few minutes, but can you give – well, so let me back up. I come from a risk world, okay? And probably the thing that fascinates – the question that fascinates me more than anything is not necessarily how a risk professional thinks about risk, it's how a business leader thinks about risk.

And my hypothesis – it's not even a hypothesis. I think I'm beginning to prove it is that they are diametrically opposed in many circumstances. Meaning if you're the president or CEO or even a CMO I need to take risks in order to grow this company or to achieve our objectives. But there's a balance. And maybe if you

can just touch on quickly when you talk about a high threshold for risk, what does that mean to you?

**Mike Indursky:**

Well, you know, a high threshold for risk means that rules are getting broken every day. And when rules are broken, rules are reshaped and industries are reshaped by them. You're seeing it happening right now in retail. You're seeing it happen in beauty. You're seeing it in Indie brands versus established brands. You're seeing it in bloggers versus editors. You're seeing it in new types of politicians versus old types of politicians. Rules are being broken every day.

And if you're not leading it, which is one degree of risk, and you're not quickly following it, which is a lower degree risk but still risky, you might wind up being obsolete. And it's shocking that these major SPG brands, about 90 percent of the top CPG brands have lost share year after year in the last three or four years all the expensive Indie brands. So if you're not doing something different you're gonna wind up failing and the world's moving faster and faster. So the people say well this is the rule and this is the way we need to do things, which I understand.

But when it comes to rules you have to know why the rules are there and then of the rules which ones do you bend, which ones do you break, which ones do you adhere to, which ones do you ignore? But you have to know that stuff. So I'm not saying just make crazy, wild decisions but it's with all those things in mind.

**Mike Kearney:**

But I think sometimes, and I think this is what you're getting at, not all rules are created the same. Sometimes rules within organizations are kind of self-imposed or they're put in place for a very good reason. But then they hold back potentially the creativity and those are the type of rules maybe to push on.

**Mike Indursky:**

I was in a restaurant the other day. Maybe this is a horrible analogy. I was in a restaurant the other day and it was a Mexican restaurant, a high end Mexican restaurant and I had choice on the menu. I wanted some tacos. So you've got three fish, three beef or three chicken. And they're all about the same price so I said I'll have one of each and he said we don't do that. He said our rule is you don't have three of each. I said but I want one of each.

I'm not asking you for a third of a steak, a third of a chicken, a third of a piece of fish. We're talking about tacos. I know what your kitchen looks like. I know how it's served. It's in big pans with a ladle and you're just dumping it in there. Well that's the rule. I said, well why is that the rule? Because that's how we do it. I said you're not answering my question. Why is that the rule? We went back and forth. I said I think that's a dumbass rule. I'm a customer.

You have the food there. I want it. You have it and you're not gonna give it to me. Do you realize you're actually now kind of pissing me off to the point where I might not come back here just out of sheer stupidity? This is the conversation

we're having as lightheartedly as we can. At the end I spoke to the GM and he goes yeah, that's the owner. That's what they want to do. That's the rule. I said but the rule doesn't make it right. So going back to this, why is the rule there? And if you can find out that the basis of foundation for that rule is flawed then you can challenge that rule and break the rule or bend the rule.

**Mike Kearney:** I love that. I've not had somebody answer the question in that way and I think what you're saying is there are risks that – well first of all, there are risks you absolutely have to take because your survival is dependent on it and what holds us back a lot of times is these self-imposed rules, especially when you get into very large bureaucratic organizations and that's probably one of the reasons why they have a challenge at really responding to some of these upstarts.

**Mike Indursky:** If you look at the magazine industry, and I can't say this in fact, but I can tell you that a lot of people over the years, since the mid '90s, were saying we need to get more – the thing about this whole digital thing. And they said no, but we're a magazine company. They think we're actually a content company and if you own content that's much bigger than a magazine company. So someone drew that rule that we're a magazine company and that wound up hurting a lot of the industry.

**Mike Kearney:** So what makes Burt's Bees so special? I know the whole history. It's actually a fascinating back story. But you came in probably, what, about 10 or 15 years after it started. Is that right?

**Mike Indursky:** Yeah, about that. I came in actually I came in almost a little bit later because I remember we were celebrating our 25th anniversary. So I got there in 2005 and it was about a \$50 million company and it was a great company. It was what the founder had done, Roxanne was incredible and she got to the point where she didn't want to continue and she had sold it and private equity company was AEA investors and they looked for a management team.

And after placing the CEO and the CFO they placed me. And it was really one of those really interesting weird times where I kind of always liken it to a basketball player when he says the net is that big, it's so huge you can't miss. The path forward was so obvious to me because the brand was a very cute, quirky brand that kind of happened to be natural. And everyone likes the brand.

You meet someone, you work at Burt's Bees, their knees would kind of buckle. They go oh, I love Burt's Bees. So the love was there. But what they weren't really looking at in my opinion was that this trend of natural and wellbeing and health was like a locomotive. Not locomotive –

**Mike Kearney:** So meaning they stumbled – because that was what they were putting out. But they didn't understand how fast it was coming.

**Mike Indursky:** It was natural more for goodness and earth than it was about health and where the world was going. So I kind of led the charge to kind of refocus the brand.

Not relaunch it or restage it, whatever you want to call it. Refocus it. We're going to be the natural brand. We're going to put natural on the map. And we're going to still keep its cute kind of personality. But we're not going to leave with being the cute, cute brand. I remember Altoids was out around the same time. Altoids was this cute mint brand.

But it was all about it just being cute and provocative. I wanted it to be more than that. I wanted to be the leaders in natural, I want to make a statement about natural, I want to put naturals on the map. And it was so clear to me that's where the direction was and we were right. And before you know it we created a standard for the entire industry, a standard for natural personal care products. We got our competitors to join us. The true competitors.

Because we were all wanting this thing to win and we all saw it – all of a sudden there were brands coming out there who said they were natural and weren't natural. Big popular brands that were advertised on TV which have a lot of leaves on the front and they have a lot of celebrities talk about it but they're not natural whatsoever. And then the next thing you know we're working in Washington, and next thing you know we're working in Walmart, Target, Sephora, Macy's, virtually every – and creating natural sets. Here's what natural should be.

**Mike Kearney:** So there was almost a need to educate the consumer to a large degree because you're competing against others that probably are saying they're natural as well?

**Mike Indursky:** Absolutely. So we did that and I think between our wrap innovation by focusing on women's needs, one thing which was actually a very big decision in some ways was this iconic Burt. Burt was this old guy with a big beard who wanted to get into the beauty business.

**Mike Kearney:** He doesn't personify women beauty or anything –

**Mike Indursky:** No. The last thing women want to see is a dirty old man when she's putting on her lipstick and things. So I made the decision to pull him off and interestingly the founder, Roxanne, who came up with that wood carving thing of him, bust of him, said it's time. It's time.

**Mike Kearney:** So she was supportive.

**Mike Indursky:** She was.

**Mike Kearney:** Was she still involved in the –

**Mike Indursky:** She was on the board.

**Mike Kearney:** She was? Okay.

**Mike Indursky:** And I thought I'm getting my ass handed to me.



**Mike Kearney:** So you go to the board with this presentation and you're like, I'm dead.

**Mike Indursky:** Praise God. Fortunately I covered with her beforehand. It's always smart to talk to the board members before you go to the board meeting.

**Mike Kearney:** Absolutely.

**Mike Indursky:** You don't want to go, surprise.

**Mike Kearney:** Here's what we're doing to your company.

**Mike Indursky:** And she was supportive. But between the innovation, our distribution strategy, which was keep all the products together and don't have them separated into different departments like other brands did. We want this to be this hive of natural goodness, creating the standard. I mean the thought leaders are natural. And then just the marketing of it really led to the brand just to accelerate even the fashion it had grown. And I think you know we bought the company for \$177 million and we sold it for about \$950 million in four years. So that was a huge increase.

**Mike Kearney:** To Clorox.

**Mike Indursky:** To Clorox.

**Mike Kearney:** Before we get into the Clorox, the acquisition or the sale, how did you balance keeping your existing really zealot customers happy, but then bringing more people in? Was that a challenge or no?

**Mike Indursky:** Yeah. There's actually two parts to that. The first part is, the bigger challenge in my opinion was keeping the company as whole because the company –

**Mike Kearney:** You mean the culture of the company?

**Mike Indursky:** The culture. You had one group, which was very much rooted in the foundation of the company and you had another group, the new people came in, and I would say probably me as being the biggest culprit who had this vision for changing everything and it caused a lot of turmoil or considerable turmoil.

And a new CEO came in, John Replogle, and John saw that right away as his biggest opportunity at the time was to put the culture and solidify the culture and he did a brilliant job at that. And at the end what was obvious is your brand needs to have its roots in its history but like a tree grow to its potential. And it took a lot of workshops to get us there and realize we're all on the same page. But he's the one who did that and he –

**Mike Kearney:** How did he see that? Because what I hear you saying is respect the past but look to the future. Was it obvious to everybody that this was potentially a big risk or issue and it needs to be addressed?

**Mike Indursky:** Yeah, I think the previous CEO, who's a really good guy, he just felt look, let's just go forward where we need to go. And I was all good with that. I think John

realized that no, you need to have a company that's cohesive and all following the same vision and same path so we'll get there faster. Not just by brute force but by inspiration and by shared vision. And then to answer your question on the consumer standpoint, what it really was was a person who's a real let's say real country granola kind of person, they'll deal with the tradeoffs that a lot of natural products have.

They don't smell as good maybe, they don't work as good maybe, they don't feel as good maybe but it's better for me. And a person who's really country granola, and I don't mean that in the \_\_\_\_\_ they'll deal with that tradeoff. But if you want to reach the larger audience, and we did, we had to have a product that was at minimum smells as good, works as good and performs as good as its let's say synthetic counterparts. So in fact we went to say we want to be even better. So we did was we hired top R&D people from Chanel and Avon and L'Oréal and places like that, brought them in, retaught them how to formulate natural.

Because formulating natural is almost more like cooking than formulating. So the women who ran our R&D who's fantastic, who's still there, Celeste Lutrario, brought in this amazing team and then retaught how to formulate for natural. So we got our aesthetics way, way up. Some of the original products, as good as they were, you would never use them. Not you meaning anyone. Most people who were into beauty wouldn't use them like banana hand cream. You don't want to smell like banana.

I don't know anyone who says I really want to smell like banana. Great idea – or carrot face thing, and they're a great products and they have worked incredibly well but they're waxy. We brought in emulsions and we found a way to keep it preserved without using preservatives and things like that. So the team did a sensational job and the broader way we marketed it brought in all the consumers.

**Mike Kearney:** So then you were acquired by Clorox. From an outsider's perspective, was it an unlikely marriage?

**Mike Indursky:** Well it was definitely an unlikely suitor. When you think who's in your shortlist, you think about Johnson and Johnson, Unilever, L'Oréal, and people like that, P&G, but you would never think of Clorox. But there were a couple of companies like Clorox who came to the table and I think Clorox saw an opportunity. In my opinion, they saw these trends in Natural. They had Brita, the water filter, and that was kind of wellness inside you.

Then they were launching this brand called Green Works, which was going to be kind of natural wellness around you, and then Bliss was going to be kind of that wellness on you. So it was really trying to hit wellness, Natural in three different ways. I have to say the transition from us to Clorox was as smooth and

professional and responsible as I've ever seen in any transition, merger, acquisition, or whatever.

They allowed us incredible freedom. They supported us. They wanted to learn from us. They slowly started bringing people in and it was just such a smooth transition. I remember one of the people said we just want to make sure we don't hug you to death. It was a great analogy.

**Mike Kearney:** Why did they say that do you think?

**Mike Indursky:** Well, if they try to support you too much and try to put too much on you, you can't move.

**Mike Kearney:** Right, which is I think one of the things that kills acquisitions quite frankly.

**Mike Indursky:** Absolutely. They also understood they don't have any personal care background, so they needed to learn from us. So it was great partnering with them. Then after the sale, I committed to stay a year with them to help in the transition and they've done just a sensational job since taking the brand over, learning it. The brand still operates in Durham, North Carolina, and Clorox you know is in Oakland. So they haven't brought it in yet and it's been years. So they've done a great job and I give a big hats off to Don Knauss and everyone at Clorox. They've done a super job.

**Mike Kearney:** I read that you and John Replogle – did I say his name right?

**Mike Indursky:** Yeah.

**Mike Kearney:** Okay, good.

**Mike Indursky:** Replogle.

**Mike Kearney:** Replogle, that's a hard one to say, sorry about that, but I heard that you guys personally called customers that had reached out to you. Is that true?

**Mike Indursky:** Yeah. What happened was when the transition happened, this is so funny – it's not unlike what you are seeing, politically in a lot of other areas, is a lot of the people who are hardcore Burt's fans saw selling to Clorox a sellout, and they said that your standards are going to change, they thought that this was the worst thing that we could have done, and what they didn't know was Clorox did not buy us to change us, Clorox bought us to make us better.

So we knew that but they did not know that, but you had people really upset, and I told John, I said John, I think that you and I need to call every single person who sends us either an email or phone call, but preferably a phone call. I want to call every single person and have the conversation with them, and we thought about it. We calculated how many it would be, how many calls you would have to make a day, and we agreed to do it.

**Mike Kearney:** Just out of curiosity, how many calls was it, hundreds?

**Mike Indursky:** It was something in the realm of hundreds. The low hundreds. And I remember calling up all these people and I would say with the exception of one person, everyone was blown away.

**Mike Kearney:** First of all that the CMO was calling them and asking.

**Mike Indursky:** And having the conversation, as long as the conversation takes, and it was heartfelt, and their biggest concern in talking to them was your standards are going to go down. You are going to put chemicals and you are going to do this, and I said not only is our standards not going to go down, our standards are going to go up. We are at 96 percent natural right now. Our goal is to be 99 percent natural. Clorox bought us to help us get there, and we went on and on. I had one person who just was not buying it but they were very nice about it.

And we went back and forth and I said to her at the end, and she goes look, I just do not believe – I said I understand you. How about this? Let us mark our calendars in one year, let us get back together and have the conversation. I am going to call you. In a year, I am gonna call you and then we will see if I am right or not because the proof is in the pudding. I can tell you anything on the phone.

And she says, you know what? I am going to tell you, you do not have to call me. The fact that you even did this is just so indicative of what this company is about. I just applaud you for it and I wish you the best, and I will be watching from the sidelines. She said I will be watching.

**Mike Kearney:** I was hoping you were going to say and then I called back a year later.

**Mike Indursky:** I think by the time this happened, I think I might have left the company by then, but the intention was to call, but she said please don't call. She was just so taken. The funny thing is each of those people I spoke to, they are going to tell their friends, you will not believe what happened to me today. I got a call from the CMO or the CEO of Burt's Bees because I sent a complaint in and they talked to me for a half-hour on the phone. That goes so far.

**Mike Kearney:** Oh my God, yes the impact of that is significant, probably a good lesson for many leaders. Let me ask you a question. So I think you were acquired by Clorox sometime around the great recession, right? I read a quote where you said while we are having such a big problem in the economy, that also creates a lot of opportunity. From your perspective, what was that opportunity for Burt's Bees because I think there probably was pressure I am guessing on reducing costs, maybe changing what is in the product. Maybe if you could just share that.

**Mike Indursky:** I think this is genuine – it's just a truism. When things are bad someplace, it is good someplace else. Someone's misery is someone's opportunity, right? Let us just say the editor, the problem with the editor having and having their stuff read in magazines is to the benefit of bloggers, right? So people wind up being successful and that is what looking at business is; the world is filled with

opportunities, constant opportunities. When this thing happened, it got us back to listen, yes it is a tough time right now, focus on yourself, focus on what is good for you and focus on what is best for you.

Burt's Bees is what is best for you. It is good for the environment, it is good for your body, you are putting on good things, it is a great value for what we are offering. We are not offering hundred-dollar skin creams, we are offering skin creams that work really well, that are good for the environment, that are good for your body, that does what it says, it does not over promise, always delivers, and that is what you need to focus on. In any part of the world when something is going bad, someone else is going to benefit by it.

**Mike Kearney:** Is that a mantra of yours? You just said something that I hear, actually one of my mentors that I was thinking about — you remind me a lot of him, and he would always say, under promise, over deliver. Is that one of your kind of mantras?

**Mike Indursky:** Oh no, it is not. I wish it were. I overpromise and then try to over-deliver the overpromise, and I think to a fault. If that's one thing I should only learn once is under promise. I get very optimistic and I get very excited about things and I tend to push super hard like a bull and then you want to make it happen. A couple of things I would take back as some of the bigger promises I've made.

**Mike Kearney:** I'm throwing a bunch of quotes. You said having that conscience, and this is at Burt's Bees, changes you as a marketer, it changes you as a person too.

**Mike Indursky:** Yes, you know it is so funny. I remember when I was living someplace and before they had recycling really. I was an early recycler and I thought I was really kind of advanced, and then you get to Burt's Bees and you realize that you're behind where you really should be, but really, I think that so much of it being at Burt's changed me in so many ways. I think understanding the importance of culture in a company was very important and just the importance of doing good by the consumer is so important.

These are not consumers, these are people, and it is just so wrong that we refer to people as consumers. We never call them producers. We never call them the opposite. We call them consumers. Like Pac-Man, just going around, chomp, chomp, chomp, chomp. They're people and we have to take care of people and do the right thing. One of the things that is very big in that world is the triple bottom line, people plant in profits.

We believed in that. We developed a business model called the Greater Good Business Model, and the Greater Good Business Model was about maximizing the benefit to people, maximizing the benefit to the planet, and then maximize profits. It's not just about profit. So Burt's Bees changed me an awful lot and as did Bliss about the importance of happiness and the importance of taking care of people in a world that does not take care of them.

**Mike Kearney:**

What is your perspective – so there is a guy named Daryl Brewster who I think was our third or fourth interview. In any event, he was the CEO of Krispy Kreme but then he is now the CEO of a company called CECP. It is an organization not for profit, or he calls it a for-purpose organization. They're very much focused on organizations focusing less on quarter-to-quarter profits and more on how they're going to make a positive impact on the world long-term.

And they're actually hosting the first, Strategic Initiative Forum where 10 companies, 10 of the largest companies in the world are going to focus on what their long-term plans are with both a social and environmental impact. He would assert, I'd love to get your thoughts on this, but he would assert that if you're actually focused on social and environmental, funny enough, you're actually probably going to be more successful in the long run anyway. So even though you may be doing it for the greater good, it is actually going to help you, as well as an organization.

**Mike Indursky:**

Absolutely. Can you imagine like, if you look at one of the water companies, I think it was Poland, decided to take their little plastic caps and cut the plastic cap almost in half. It did not go down the neck of the bottle as much, and aesthetically at first you kind of go, I'm an aesthetic guy and it is not looking as good, but the amount of plastic it saved, so it is using less oil, less plastic, less manufacturing of the plastic, lower cost. Less plastic then has to be recycled or get thrown into a landfill. So it is a win-win. It is all wins going across.

And there is a triple bottom line. It does not always have to be profit. There is a sense right now and you're seeing it kind of politically in some ways that its business or environment, take one, right? That spending time on the environment takes away from business and I think that's a very dangerous concept. I think you can do better for the environment and at the same time be more profitable and be good to your people.

It's a responsibility. At this stage, in our evolution, if we're not doing the right things by the planet, we're not doing the right things by our people and everything else, I think we need to kind of reexamine what we're doing.

**Mike Kearney:**

I think in many respects what I think what you're asserting is that it is not just politicians, its business leaders that need to take the lead.

**Mike Indursky:**

Absolutely. Well if they're not going to do it, who's going to do it?

**Mike Kearney:**

Who's going to do it? Right.

**Mike Indursky:**

And you know what the other thing is? Some companies it's easier, some companies it's harder. If your DNA is all about sustainability like Burt's Bees and Natural, it's easy. If it's not about that, it's hard, but even a little change could be huge, absolutely huge, and you have to make those changes. We all have to make those changes.

**Mike Kearney:** Yep. I am going to throw another quote at you and I love this one and actually I think we've gotten the flavor –

**Mike Indursky:** I should stop talking so much. I say some weird stuff that now I have to respond to.

**Mike Kearney:** Well your quotes are good. They do help out this interview. So this one actually I think you've demonstrated that this truly is kind of who you are, but you said Burt's Bees is willing to do some very provocative, poignant advertising to make a point, knowing that not everyone is going to love it, and I guess my question for you is, how do you balance being provocative in what you are putting out versus going too far, or did you not worry about that?

**Mike Indursky:** Oh no, I'm worried about it. I have to say that I tend to think more about what I think sometimes to a fault, but I do believe though that depending on what you're trying to communicate, if you're not ruffling some feathers, you're not making a difference. If you're not making a difference, you're not being different. If you're not being different, you're not making a difference. You have to make a difference.

And when you make a difference, it's going to change people and it has to provoke some type of response. You would like them to all be positive but it is going to be some negative ones too. I remember when I was at Calvin Klein my first week, I was getting an orientation and the woman who was in charge of consumer affairs, who was a brilliant woman, she was taking me through how they do the metrics if they get too many complaints.

Because Calvin's advertising back in the Obsession days, they did some crazy – and CK One, they did some very sexual things. So they would say this many calls or this many percent, then we know we have a problem and blah, blah. So here is the maximum here and the maximum level this. So I said to her, do you have a minimum level?

And she said, what do you mean? I said if you're Calvin Klein, if you're not pissing off someone, you're not breaking through right. If I did like what I thought was a really sexy campaign and no one complained, I can tell you right away it's not sexy enough. But when you start getting sexy enough that people are starting to complain, now I'm in the ballpark. Now this is good. You don't want to get too many complaints.

**Mike Kearney:** It's playing in that sweet spot between the two different spectrums.

**Mike Indursky:** We were trying to tell people with Burt's Bees that you're a part of nature and nature takes care and provides for you and we showed naked people in the ads communing in nature. We did not show any naughty bits necessarily but we showed people in nature. Like its your body, Garden of Eden. They didn't have clothes back then, it was no different than that.

We were not trying to be salacious or anything, and then we compared our ingredients versus synthetics. We would compare beeswax to petroleum jelly and we would compare milk and honey to DMDM hydantoin and show the difference between the two. Our testing was through the roof, we won awards for it, it moved our business forward, and we pissed off people. We pissed off competitors, we pissed off ingredient manufacturers, and I take that as a medal.

**Mike Kearney:** I love it, and I think in certain respect, it goes back to our you have got to break some rules. So there is some rules out there around what is tasteful and not tasteful.

**Mike Indursky:** Yeah. Who says I can't do that? The only thing that gets in the way of you is you. Everyone is not going to say no. So if you think it is right and you can back it up, then do it.

**Mike Kearney:** I love that, say that again. The thing that gets in the way of you is you.

**Mike Indursky:** The only thing that gets in the way of you is you.

**Mike Kearney:** I love that because I think that is actually what holds back a lot of people. It is like somebody is not going to approve of this or this is the way it is going to be done. It is all that – it is that voice in your head.

**Mike Indursky:** Imagine, if something has not been done before, the reaction of most people to something new is, well it has never been done before, and that is the parenthetical thing. Well, therefore, it is not going to work; therefore, it will not be successful. Instead of wow, if you can do this, this could be game-changing, and that is what you have to do to be in this business, in any business.

**Mike Kearney:** If it doesn't work, there's probably a lot of learnings in there as well.

**Mike Indursky:** Yeah.

**Mike Kearney:** So proudest accomplishment at Burt's Bees?

**Mike Indursky:** The proudest accomplishment aside from the Beemones was I think in having a vision and watching the vision come to life and it goes back to that whole mission statement as having create amazing things, which was becoming this putting natural on the map and being this natural powerhouse, working with incredible people all over that company and enriching the lives of people. I think what we did at Burt's was the exact manifestation of my mission statement.

**Mike Kearney:** Anything you would do differently?

**Mike Indursky:** I would have done a ton of things. There is nothing in my life I would not have done differently. If you speak to somebody who said I would not have done anything differently, then they are the least self-aware people and the most arrogant people. I think I would be much more sensitive to the culture and I think I would have tried to be more persuasive rather than saying trust me this is right. I think that is where I would have done differently.



**Mike Kearney:** So bringing in people more on the journey, if you will?

**Mike Indursky:** Yes. Imagine you are a fast-talking New Yorker from the beauty industry who comes down to Raleigh, North Carolina and you are not one of them, you are just not, and I am not knocking anyone, just not.

**Mike Kearney:** Did you relocate down there?

**Mike Indursky:** I did not at first. At first, I was going back and forth and then I relocated, and that is their home and that is their company, their history. So I think that is one thing I would have done over.

**Mike Kearney:** Well based on your previous comments, so it sounds like culture now, your awareness of the importance of culture is very high.

**Mike Indursky:** Yeah, absolutely.

**Mike Kearney:** So then you go from Burt's Bees, now you are at Bliss. Fascinating back story about Bliss, about how I think the lady was going to school in New York, was a trainer, started to take some skincare classes, opens up a spa and then Bliss World becomes Bliss World in 1996 or something like that.

**Mike Indursky:** Very similar to the story of the founder of Burt's Bees. These are very strong, very powerfully strong women.

**Mike Kearney:** I was going to say, both were women.

**Mike Indursky:** Both women, they had visions. They were not building companies to be sold. They were building companies to have their vision come to life, and that is a big change right now in the world. People right now are building companies so I can sell it in two years, sell it in three years, sell to a strategic, sell it to a private equity company, they were in it to grow their businesses.

**Mike Kearney:** Because they believed in it.

**Mike Indursky:** They believed, they just want to see. I know it is so funny when you look at game-changing CEOs. One thing they have in common in most of them, they are real kind of jackasses, and the reason why they are jackasses or at least they are seen as that, and they are not jackasses, is they have a vision and they are going to let nothing get in the way. So when people talk about how difficult Steve Jobs was or how difficult even Roxanne from Burt's was, it was not because they were inherently mean people.

They are not inherently – they're wonderful people. They just had a vision and not let anything get in the way. You can love an employee, but if that employee is getting in the way of your vision, get them out. If you cannot, just get them onboard, you get them out and there is a lot to be said for that. So they are both real rock stars, I mean incredible women both of them. So, she had this company. She had sold it to LVMH. Then LVMH sold it to Starwood Hotels and Starwood sold it to Steiner.

**Mike Kearney:** Is that when you came in with Steiner? I think that's about the same time.

**Mike Indursky:** Yeah, Steiner. The way I kind of read it was LVMH was, and it is interesting to know what his backstory is. LVMH bought the company when they were buying a bunch of small brands, but they realized I love the products. I just do not like all these spas. So Starwood, who has the hotel company, says I love these spas. I do not do all these products. So then Steiner came in and Steiner was a spa management company that had both. So Steiner wound up being a very good owner for the company.

**Mike Kearney:** I think that is where I first came into Bliss was Starwood going to the W and being like I love this lotion. That was my first connection to it.

**Mike Indursky:** Yes, go into a W hotel, try it in the room. I have been a customer of Bliss. I like getting massages at Bliss. So after we sold Burt's and Bliss called me, I said I love Bliss, I am going to do this. So I moved back up to SoHo so I can live literally right in between our headquarters on Barrack Street at our number one spa. I was six blocks in either direction of both places.

**Mike Kearney:** So what was the state of the business when you came in because you were the president, you were brought in as the president.

**Mike Indursky:** Well, it was not in a good state at the time. It was down two years, double digit decreases, it was unprofitable, and we had to turn the business around. It's interesting, also similar, Burt's by the way is a very strong culture. Up until my last day there, we always talk about you bleed blue because the color of Bliss was – you bleed blue, and it was not without our arguments and all those things, different points of view, but everyone bled blue.

They did what they felt was best for the company always. So our decision was that the play should be focused on the products. You want to bring happiness to the world, you are not going to do it by opening up spa after spa after spa. It is not as scalable, but you can do with products. We focus on the product part of our business to grow that and that really grew the business significantly. I was there for six years and then we successfully sold that to Catterton, the private equity company, back in about November/December of 2015.

**Mike Kearney:** So go back to the bring happiness to the world. Did you guys believe in that mantra or that statement, did everybody really rally around it because it's funny you just said that because if you go to the website or if you do some research, that is all over everything.

**Mike Indursky:** You know, our whole thing was to achieve a higher state of happy, that we want to empower women and men to achieve a higher state of happy. If you look at the trends, it is part of the trends in wellbeing but it was all about the pursuit of happiness, right? The world is challenged and people aren't happy and we wanted to bring that. So it really touched every single part. You want to be

happy with the product experience, happy with the name, happy with the advertising, happy with the spa, but happy in a healthy way.

I think at first we were provocative just for the sake of being provocative, we used to make some really great jokes, and then it was more for purpose. It was about more empowering messages for women, like we have had an ad for a cellulite reducing machine and we had a picture of this woman using the machine on her butt and it would say like Aspire. So things like that and interestingly a lot of beauty brands started doing the whole funny-punny thing like Bliss did.

**Mike Kearney:** Funny-punny.

**Mike Indursky:** We took that very seriously, it was definitely part of our culture. When we put the culture together at Bliss, positivity, being the brand and results orientation were the top three values. We had like nine values, which is overkill, but everyone can say the top three, positivity, being the brand, and being results oriented.

**Mike Kearney:** How would you inculcate that into the workforce? I don't know if you like somebody comes to you, you see the values and then you go on the wall, and then you go ask an employee what are our values and they are like I have no clue, even though it is everywhere.

**Mike Indursky:** I have been through companies where they give you little tchotchkes that you keep on your desk saying you live or you do not. I remember in that book From Good to Great, they talked about this one supermarket chain and they would put the sign, the values in the elevator and the comment was, if you have to put the signs in the elevator, no one knows what it is. Either they live or they do not.

We had a culture that was much more freewheeling, much more creative and positive, and obviously was not without its challenges, it is a business after all. You do have to make your numbers monthly and quarterly and everything so that did bring of course its challenges, but to the most part, it is a very upbeat, positive working environment.

**Mike Kearney:** So it sounds like financially was not in great shape when you came in, sounds like you focused on products, anything else you did to kind of quickly turn it around?

**Mike Indursky:** Yes. Well I think it was products expanding internationally, I think innovating, having some really great products and we had some killer innovations. Some of them, like going back to one of the things I spoke about earlier, something that someone thought was just crazy. I had this idea to do a stomach tightening product. Women are obsessed with many parts of their body, stomachs were very big, and women were doing bare midriffs and they have bikinis, and I remember reading some study that if a woman is naked and is standing up and looks straight down and can see her stomach, that means past her boobs, then

that makes her unhappy. So I thought about a stomach tightening product and I remember telling my product development team and they thought, a stomach tightening product, there is no such thing, its crazy. There is no such thing, so therefore it is not going to work. I said well, here is the insight and here is why. So what is the insight?

It says we want to look hot, it is pretty simple. I want to have a hot stomach and we wound up coming up with a product. I remember seeing this cleanser, this oxy cleanser that is this tube with little nubs on it and you use it on your rug to get rid of stains and I got inspired by that. So we made that package and it wound up being the best line product for Bliss and we wound up getting sold out all across Florida and New York, Hong Kong, and Las Vegas because the Brazilians started going crazy over it. Brazilians would come up and wipe out the stores.

Sephora was their number one bestselling item in the Hot Now section in history at that point. So it was a huge success for us. So you have to innovate and you have some winners and, of course, when you are a small company, because Bliss is relatively small.

**Mike Kearney:** About 700 people I think, I read, or something like that.

**Mike Indursky:** Well in terms of people, it was big because we had all the spas, but in terms of dollars, it was small compared to we were up against billion-dollar companies with Lauder, L'Oréal. We are relatively small, so you take more chances. The good thing is if you fail, it does not hurt as much. If you win, you have a big homerun. So I think we did that, and we also changed the spa and we added some more services and we tried to be much more relevant and we are doing men's waxing.

**Mike Kearney:** I read that, there was an article. Yes, that was interesting.

**Mike Indursky:** To me, it was like a no-brainer because it was getting big and men were waxing and the TV show Entourage would always talk about Bliss for some reason, but we also had a challenge internally getting the aestheticians to be willing to wax men.

**Mike Kearney:** So you had nothing to do with the placement in Entourage?

**Mike Indursky:** The placement in Entourage was before me. I wish I could take credit for that.

**Mike Kearney:** So what about culture? When you came in, was the culture kind of what you were looking for? Did you have to make any changes there?

**Mike Indursky:** The culture was there. I think the structure was not I think right for what we wanted to do. The previous president who was a wonderful guy and a good friend to this day had a different style than I had and he had a long list of direct reports and I wanted to keep the direct reports short. I did something though

that was kind of interesting. You can go into a company and say here is what we are doing, and you are the president and you can just make it happen.

I didn't want to come across that way. So what I did was I hired this HR expert and she came to the company and she interviewed all the top people, all the key people. What is on your mind? What is working? What is not working? You tell me. So they told her everything. Not me, they told her, and they told her a lot of things that they were opening up about their frustrations and their challenges and everything, and she consolidated it and then presented it back to them with me in the room now and someone from the parent company.

They said it looks like the three issues we have are we have a challenge that there is not a clear vision in place, we have a challenge that there is not clear decision making, and there is a challenge that we have not integrated with the parent company as well as we would like. So that is when I said this is where you guys said now, let us make a plan to address all three, which comes across very differently than me coming and saying here is your three problems, they are like who the hell are you?

**Mike Kearney:** It is almost like a Jedi mind track to a certain degree because you got them to articulate almost your plan going forward.

**Mike Indursky:** It also just speeds up the process and we wound up – so we said we are going to put a vision together. We are going to work together, and we worked six months together to develop the vision, and it was a hold with all these people, about 19 people. We developed a vision and then put it in place and then we made an organizational change based on the vision because you need to know where you are going first, then you decide who you need, and then we made some changes there, which was good, and we streamlined the structure, and grew the business. We grew the business over 35 percent over five years, which in a category that grows 3 percent a year. To grow the business profitably over that time was quite wonderful.

**Mike Kearney:** That is fantastic. What about your products? They are very whimsical. Obviously, it was conscious, but maybe if you could talk about it – like a lot of the names had whimsical kind of names. What was the thought process behind it?

**Mike Indursky:** Well again it goes back to the whole ethos of happiness and what we learned is that in some categories you have more license to be funny and in some categories you do not. So with body products, you can talk about Fat Girl Six Pack, Fat Girl Slim – Fat Girl Slim is based on the DJ Fat Boy Slim. So we have Fat Girl Slim and then all the Fat Girl products came with it and then we had the poetic waxing and we had a bunch of products like that. So we always did that.

When you come up to a higher level anti-aging, the appetite for humor is a little bit less. So we had a line called Firm Baby Firm, which was something that I

named and then realized maybe not the best name for women who take that stuff very seriously. So you make some mistakes and you learn for the next time, but that was always part of the ethos because there is a whole bunch of stuff and it looks so serious.

They stand there like little soldiers on the shelf in their pristine and beautiful packaging and we just want to shake it up a little bit. We want to be seen in the store. You go into a store where there might be beauty advisors, in a lot of them, and a lot of them there are not, you will not find beauty advisors. So people are on their own. So we are waving our hand saying pick me and you have to make sure the packaging reaches out to people.

**Mike Kearney:** You have talked a lot about the transition of beauty to wellbeing and it seemed like there was a conscious decision to almost repurpose Bliss to a certain degree in 2013. Am I right on that?

**Mike Indursky:** Yes.

**Mike Kearney:** Maybe if you can talk about the background on that.

**Mike Indursky:** Happiness is so much part of your wellbeing. It is interesting when you look at even something like Huffington Post and they have a section on living. If you go down, one of the sections is happiness, and I have had this conversation with Ariana, you have it upside down. Happiness should be on top. What leads to happiness is the quality of life, good relationships, good health, good this, good this, that leads to happiness, and we believe that happiness was the umbrella under which all these things fell. So we want to stand for that higher purpose.

**Mike Kearney:** So highlight of Bliss—

**Mike Indursky:** I think the highlight of Bliss also was like just having this vision of going from a spa company that has some products to being a happiness company that helps give you the best products and services to help you achieve a higher state of happy.

**Mike Kearney:** I love it. Anything you do differently?

**Mike Indursky:** A lot of things I would do differently. Again, a laundry list in each place, but I think that when you have a small company, people make a bigger difference because there are just few of you. So picking the right people who do not just have the skillset, but have the right cultural fit is so important. In a big company you could have the person who is wacky, disruptive, and all this other stuff because they are going to hurt a company but not that much.

In a small company, one bad ingredient is like if you have this massive soup, you put a little onion in, no one is going to taste a difference. If you have a cup of soup and you drop an onion in, it is going to stink up that soup. I think it's all about the people, I think that maybe there were some people issues I would have dealt with differently.

**Mike Kearney:** And maybe sooner.

**Mike Indursky:** Yeah, sooner. That is sometimes the best person and you love the person and on paper they are perfect and all this but they might not be best for the company, in which case it's time to just move on, but I think that would be the biggest learning, and that is learning that unfortunately it will probably always happen because you do not know.

**Mike Kearney:** You want to give people the benefit of the doubt I think oftentimes.

**Mike Indursky:** As a guy who likes people, and I enjoy people, perhaps too optimistic sometimes.

**Mike Kearney:** So A or B, attitude over skills or skills over attitude?

**Mike Indursky:** Well the easy answer is C, where A plus B equals C.

**Mike Kearney:** Both?

**Mike Indursky:** Both please.

**Mike Kearney:** Yep.

**Mike Indursky:** Yeah. I mean I have been in companies where we have had people who are so the company, a thousand other companies but do not have the skillset, they are not right, and you can have the skillset, if it is just going to work against the best interest of the company that is not good either.

**Mike Kearney:** So let us talk about you left Bliss and now you are out on your own. What are you doing?

**Mike Indursky:** Yes, it's funny. If you remember when I was talking to Chesebrough-Ponds, I said I would be there for three years.

**Mike Kearney:** Okay, now I am going to start my own business.

**Mike Indursky:** Right. That was like 3,000 years ago and after Burt's Bees, I was going to start my own company, but I went to Bliss and after Bliss, I said now I am going to start my own company, and I just felt if I do not do it now, I will never do it, and I am just so excited and enthused by watching these people who start companies. So I am working on four separate things.

The thing that I am really focusing most on is this wellbeing project and it is really a giveback, and it looks at the work that I have done in my career, really focusing on the last two, on Burt's Bees and Bliss, and it is a giveback on how to improve a person's life, on how to improve their personal health, their personal wealth, and the world around them. The insight is that a person, let us say you, Mike, you have the ability to get to the weight that you want in half the time it would normally take you.

You have the ability to cut your stress in half. You have the ability to save the money you want in half the time. You have the ability to cut traffic in half. You have the ability to cut pollution in half. You have the ability to cut the damage to our environment in half. You have the ability to do all that at the exact same time. The concept is called halving. The promise is that you can halve it all. And that is h-a-l-v-e, halve it all.

**Mike Kearney:**

So it wasn't halving. It's halving.

**Mike Indursky:**

It's halving, but it's h-a-l-v, so it's cutting in half. The concept is by taking mindful approaches at what you consume and what you do and make hard choices in the way you live, you can actually improve your personal wealth, your personal health, and the world around you. So I will give you an example, and the example I will use is a true story and it happened at Burt's Bees, and that is how I came up with the idea.

Our head of internationals of Brit comes into Raleigh, orders dinner, and he gets his big salmon, big pile of French fries, big salad, big Diet Coke, and he goes, look, I cannot possibly eat all this. So next time I come here just give me half of whatever I order. So I thought about it. If he ate everything, and we typically eat everything that's on the plate, you have twice as many calories, which means twice as much food, twice as many calories, you gain twice as much weight, it takes you twice as much to burn it off, makes you twice as guilty, twice as sick to your stomach, twice as unhappy about it.

If you do not eat it, then half of it winds up in the landfill, which doubles the landfill. Half of the soda winds up in the waste stream, doubling that as well. Well that is pretty obvious. What is not obvious is think about the opposite. If you only ate half, you ordered half rather, only ordered half then they only need to half the salmon, which means they only need to fish for half the salmon which doubles the salmon population. You would have half as many fishing boats, which uses half as much gas and half as much oil, which causes half as much pollution in the air and half as much pollution in the water.

When they catch the salmon, they catch other fish, too. So half of that goes back into the wildlife and that population doubles as well. Then you need half as many trucks taking the fish from the docks to the distributors and to the restaurants, which uses half as much gas, half as much oil, half as much maintenance, half as much traffic on the road, which means you will get there twice as fast. You will also need half as much inventory, which doubles everyone's free cash flow. You have as much energy.

So the benefit of him saying I only want half the salmon is a greater salmon population, lower costs, lower impact to the environment. He winds up saving money, his health is better, and the environment is better. He also helped himself and he also helped people all the way down the stream. So the benefit chain of any one decision is massive.



**Mike Kearney:** What is interesting is yes it has got a positive impact on the broader environment, but the impact that it has on you personally is in many respects I think the draw.

**Mike Indursky:** Absolutely. I mean the average family of four goes through 400 gallons of water a day, shocking 400 gallons of water a day. So obviously if you cut that down, it is 200 gallons a day, right? If you cut that in half, but if you do that over the course of a year, an average family of four, if they cut out half their water, which is very easy to do, they can de facto manufacture 1.2 million 8-ounce glasses of water. They can start their own water company.

One family can produce 1.2 million and how do you do it? By thinking twice about how often you leave the shower running, how long you take your showers, do you leave the water running while you are washing dishes? If you use a dishwasher versus handwashing, you use only 10% of the water. So are you using 1.6 gallon per flush toilet bowl or 3.2 gallon per flush toilet bowl, do you automatically pour a full glass of water? Once you pour that full glass of water, that water's dead. That's not being used anymore.

**Mike Kearney:** It's not going back. Right.

**Mike Indursky:** So I only pour water when I am going to drink it and if I am going to drink it, I will drink the whole thing because it is better for my health, it fills me up, I will not eat as much, so it still continues that whole benefit change.

**Mike Kearney:** What I love about the halving too is it is very easy – it's almost like there is a book Ten Percent Happier I know we keep talking about but it is very evocative. Like 50 percent is something that gets people's mind around it really quick.

**Mike Indursky:** It is easy. It is so funny. It also talks about you are finding joy in life, where your true joy comes from and about the idea, we have to always buy and buy. I mentioned this before, we are not consumers. We were not put on this earth to buy stuff. We were put on this earth to live and to find happiness, and it is sad that we are thought of as consumers, how much are you buying? We should think about people and one thing that we talk about in this movement are, what are your true sources of joy.

I will just tell you this really quick story. I met this guy, and he is a middle-weight boxing champ, and we just got to know each other very intimately and he was telling me about his life story, and his life story was not a good life story. It is a very sad, tragic life story and he wound up becoming a champion. He is telling me his cars and his houses and stuff and he is telling me all of this stuff, and he says well, what kind of cars do you have? I said I do not have a car. He says, you do not have a car? I said no. I live in the city. What do I need a car for? I just take the subway where I want to go, walk any place I want to go.

He goes, well you have a house, right? I said well I have my apartment. He said, but you have another house, like a summer house? I said no, I do not have a

summer house. I do not have anything like that. He goes, well you own your house. I go, I see where you are going. Let me make this easy for you. Here is what I own – six guitars, a laptop, and a TV. That is pretty much it.

I do not have anything else. I have books and clothes, but I do not have anything else. He goes, what makes you happy? I said meeting you. That makes me happy. I struck a nerve with him and he said I want that. He said I want to be your friend. I said you are my friend. So it is not from buying nothing necessarily. It is just like have a great experience, and you are seeing right now people are spending more experience than products as a trend, but it's really funny resource of joy and maybe if you are doing a lot of retail therapy, maybe you just need therapy. You do not need to buy more stuff.

**Mike Kearney:** Where are we going to see halving come out? How is that going to come out into the mainstream?

**Mike Indursky:** Well I want to create a movement. I want to make this something that is big and global. The website is being built right now. I am hoping that we are going to launch it in about a month. There will be a book that will follow, do public speaking. I want to work with companies that are like-minded in this. There are amazing companies out there who are practicing this in some way, shape, or form.

There is a UK chain that is in the states now of sandwich places called Pret a Manger and it is called Pret everywhere, P-r-e-t, and they serve half-sandwiches, I mean by fuller half, half salads, and then all the food that is not eaten goes to a food bank. I mean that is just the perfect business model and you feel good eating there. It is people plant a profit, they are so far ahead of so many people. The amount of food that we waste on a daily basis, it saddens me to no end that people are starving around the world, starving in our own country, and we throw out tons and tons of food every single time.

**Mike Kearney:** A lot of times, it is not our decision. Like you said, it is like you are at a restaurant and it comes and either you eat it and you go overboard or you do not eat it and you waste. So you want to hear my story, then you can add this to your presentation.

**Mike Indursky:** I will take any stories I can.

**Mike Kearney:** I cut 50 percent out of my water bill by doing one thing.

**Mike Indursky:** What?

**Mike Kearney:** Actually I shouldn't even say cost. The usage by 50 percent.

**Mike Indursky:** Don't tell me to stop showering.

**Mike Kearney:** Well no.

**Mike Indursky:** I mean aside from that.

**Mike Kearney:** So I live in California, huge drought. We changed our grass from regular grass to synthetic.

**Mike Indursky:** Really?

**Mike Kearney:** I swear to God month to month, going from first month to second month 50 percent, boom. Did not change anything else but we just stopped watering our grass, and we still have plants and stuff that are on drip and stuff like that, but just because we stopped watering our grass, it went down 50 percent.

**Mike Indursky:** How does the grass feel?

**Mike Kearney:** So what is funny, and I will show you pictures, when you look at the synthetic grass, most people are like, is that real or is it fake, and the only reason they think it is fake is because there are no brown spots, because your dog goes to the bathroom or whatever. You almost cannot tell, that is how much it is advanced. Then we have had huge rains. Our dog will run out, barely will even be wet. So the drainage is incredible too. So that is my contribution. Literally one month, 50 percent change.

**Mike Indursky:** Part of what I want to do is on the website is have a place where people can give their suggestions like that. We want to build that up and share that knowledge because when you are doing something as expansive as this, because it is your home, it is the office, how to cut your emails in half, how to cut your meetings in half, it is everything that everyone wants.

**Mike Kearney:** If you could cut my email in half, I would pay you.

**Mike Indursky:** There's just so many little things you can do to cut your emails in half.

**Mike Kearney:** You are right.

**Mike Indursky:** A lot of us have Google Alerts that we have alert every day and if you change your Google Alerts to once a week, you are cutting out one email a day, you are cutting out 60 emails there, getting rid of all those things that you really do not look at and getting people off CC lists, there are a million ways to cut down on emails. It's funny, I remember when I would go on vacation at Bliss, I would tell everyone, listen do not email me. I do not want to come back to 3,000 emails, do not email unless I absolutely need to know, and do not call me unless there is an urgency and you cannot make the decision. The number of emails I would get would be nothing, and of course you get back –

**Mike Kearney:** That is a great idea.

**Mike Indursky:** And they blow up again. No, part of it is, he is back, now I can send it to him again, part of it is me. Maybe I am micromanaging a little bit too much, but really it is no guys, go back to the way it was before. It is okay to go back to the way it was before. Do not send me that stuff because no one wants to spend their life going through emails all the time.

**Mike Kearney:** So where you draw your inspiration from – so you have a lot of crazy, cool, interesting ideas. Where do you get inspired?

**Mike Indursky:** Honestly, I get inspired every single day. I just see opportunity in so much I guess. Part of it is just leading a life of positivity and when you are positive and you are happy, your receptors are wide open, you see things differently, you connect with people better and faster, opportunities come, people want to share opportunities with you. When I hear something, I think what can we do with that, not in a money way, but just what can we do with that. So that is it. I think you can probably draw a correlation between people who are happy, positive people are probably more likely to find these opportunities in people who are negative and kind of closed down because –

**Mike Kearney:** Closed down and the opposite of that is curious. It seems like that's kind of a key trait of yours, super curious. What is the next disruption in marketing do you think? Or is there?

**Mike Indursky:** You know, it is funny. The challenge with marketing has always been you are selling but you want to be authentic, right, and sometimes they seem like oxymorons. You are trying to sell, which I am trying to convince you, but I want to be authentic, and you are seeing this huge trend of authenticity and I think when the authenticity starts with bloggers and things like that and you see them with microbreweries and you see them with little barber shops, you are seeing the change.

But when the marketing flips over and the authenticity is so pure and so real that you cannot help, and you are seeing some brands do that well; brands like Warby Parker and others, where the marketing is the authenticity. The authenticity is the marketing. They are the same and they are not at odds with each other. Right now, everyone knows like a lot of the bloggers who we are using, we are paying big money to them. So is it really authentic anymore? Don't know. People still think it is to some degree, but there are a lot of people who do not think it is, but I think the disruption of marketing has become where marketing and authenticity is the same thing.

**Mike Kearney:** What your views on social media? Like maybe how you can use it positively for your organization? I think there are a lot of companies that do not do a really good job. Do you have an opinion on that?

**Mike Indursky:** Yes. Look, it's the hardest thing because it is like herding cats. No one has the right answer. I do not think anyone has the right answer, but what I do think is people have an appetite to do three things, they want to view it, they want to share it, and they want to comment on it. So if you can provide something that is sexy enough that they want to view, that is interesting enough that they want to share, and grabs them enough that they want to say something about it, that becomes the viral nature of it. So if you can do those three things, that is great. So it is not just about getting stuff out there, it is trying to hit those three things.

**Mike Kearney:** That being thoughtful. Actually I have never heard that structure. That is a good way of thinking about.

**Mike Indursky:** I made it up.

**Mike Kearney:** I like it. What is the one question – this is my last question – what’s the one question that somebody has not asked you in the past, or maybe I did not ask you today, that you have always wanted to answer?

**Mike Indursky:** That was it. That was the question.

**Mike Kearney:** No. I hope it wasn’t just this – I am sure that’s not it.

**Mike Indursky:** I don’t know. That’s a really hard question. The question that no one’s asked me that I have always wanted to answer is like I don’t know. Maybe it’s like, when do you stop? The answer is if you love what you are doing, you don’t. I love this. I love spending my days doing what I am doing right now. I love spending my days doing what I did before. I am fortunate enough in my life I can shape and make my own choices in what I do.

But to try to make projects happen and do business stuff and social good and things like that, it’s always going to be there. When I left Bliss to start my own thing, people said are you going to retire? Why would I retire? I found it was kind of an age-ist comment, but I am a kid. I am a puppy. I have got 50 or 60 years left in me easy.

**Mike Kearney:** But I would argue probably the nature, well maybe not the nature but the rhythm of your day probably looks a lot different now.

**Mike Indursky:** Yeah, you know it is funny. I work as hard or harder but it never feels like I am working.

**Mike Kearney:** Right.

**Mike Indursky:** You will feel exhausted maybe, but you realize I have just been at this for ten hours or I have just been working in silence for three hours just cranking out work on one of my projects and you just feel great about it at the end.

**Mike Kearney:** That is a place where we all want to get to.

**Mike Indursky:** Yeah, but I am in a different situation and I am just happy to be in it right now.

**Mike Kearney:** Great. Mike, thank you. That was great.

**Mike Indursky:** My pleasure. Thank you. That is great.

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**Mike Kearney:** Hey, I want to thank everybody for listening to [Resilient](#). I have been blown away by how many people are coming by and listening to these little podcasts. It is actually making me so much more fired up to go find these great leaders to

interview. This is a Deloitte podcast, and you know I would be remiss if I did not thank Rivett Radio who has been producing these podcasts since day one. They are an absolutely incredible partner to work with.

Now you probably already know because you are listening to the podcast, but if you forgot where to go, you can go to Deloitte.com or we are on pretty much every podcatcher out there, like iTunes, that's what I use, Stitcher, SoundCloud, Google, Spotify. I was actually sitting down with my eight-year-old the other day and I was like hey, Caden, check this out. Daddy's actually on Spotify. So that was pretty cool. We are now on Spotify. We are getting a lot of people coming through from them, and you know what I would encourage you to go back and look at some of our episodes. I love looking at the library now.

I know it is kind of geeky but I look at the library of all the different interviews that we have had so far. Let me just point out a couple that you may get some value out of. The first one, Bill Roper, and I will tell you I think I have gotten a lot better at this since the first one but it still was a fascinating interview, and Bill was fantastic where he talked about coming back from the stock backdating crisis. Or Mandeep Grewal who headed up customer experience at United. Or even Daryl Brewster where the interview was so good, we had to split it into two. He is the CEO of Krispy Kreme and now the CEO of CECP.

If you like these conversations, and I hope you do, I would be so grateful if you would just share it with some of your friends, your colleagues, maybe even some of your family. Like I have said before, my family is actually starting to get a kick out of them and I would ask one other favor. If you have a minute, if you could just provide a rating, I would be so grateful. Ratings play a pretty big role in how much the podcast gets promoted on places like iTunes. Finally, hit me up on LinkedIn or Twitter with any comments or recommendations for future guests.

You know, I have been blown away once again, I say this every single week, I know, or two weeks, but I have been blown away by how much social engagement we are getting. I respond to every single person. My profile is under Michael Kearney, last name is spelled K-e-a-r-n-e-y.

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