



**Transcript of “Philip McKernan: Finding Meaning,
Managing Relationships, & Understanding Value -
#163”**

Bulletproof Radio podcast #163



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Dave: Hey, everyone. It's Dave Asprey with Bulletproof Radio. Today's cool fact of the day is that if you want to increase your creativity, one way to do that can be by doing mundane everyday tasks, like copying numbers from a phonebook. Doing boring tasks actually allows your mind more time to daydream, which can let you be more creative at the next thing you tackle.

That might sound a little bit weird, but I spent about four or five years putting auto parts in boxes during summers to pay for college in addition to my entrepreneurial efforts. I would literally look at a sheet of paper, look at a 10-digit number, look at a shelf, and then pull that number of gaskets off the shelf. All day, every day. My mind would just go crazy places, but that was actually good for creativity. I'm not suggesting that you bore yourself, but hey, maybe there's something to this idea that a repetitive task like chopping wood or carrying water, as the Buddhists would like to say, could be good for you when you're doing something creative.

Today's guest is a philosopher, bestselling author, and some people would say an enlightened hooligan. He speaks around the world about the importance of overcoming personal obstacles, getting clarity, and cultivating confidence. This guy's shared stages with a few people you might have heard of, guys like Stephen Covey, Richard Branson, and the Dali Lama, as well as Olympic athletes, TV personalities, and entrepreneurs. This is none other than Philip McKernan. Philip, welcome to the show.

Philip: Hey, how are you doing, Dave? Great to be here.

Dave: There's so many things I want to ask you here, but one of the first things I want to ask you about is that you're dyslexic, and you've written four books which is awesome. I've spent a good amount of time working with people in the autistic spectrum, and understanding how the brain works because by all rights, according

to my visual training people, I should have been dyslexic, but I'm not. You've seen my orange glasses probably. Those have to do with visual processing as well. How did you hack your dyslexia to be able to write four books? There's lots of people who care about that?

Philip: Yeah. How did I hack that? The biggest thing I had to overcome was just the personal, the inadequacy I had around not being to read like everybody else. It's not to say that I had a three-point process. It took me a day, or half a day, or whatever. Maybe I'm just completely slow, but it took me many years. Honestly, I can truthfully say, I still haven't fully gotten over it. There's nothing else that I often say about myself and people give me compliments and speak about me, I think they give me way too much creditability for a lot of stuff I say or do. One thing I will say is the only thing I'm very good at is taking action, and I always remember when I got approached by the first major publisher called John they sent me an email. They said, we saw you speak. We're buying into you. We want you to write a book. We're thinking of this book. Are you in?

I remember just hitting reply, writing Y-E-S, hitting send, and the first thing that hit me was, fuck. Excuse the language. I'm glad you can edit that afterwards, but that's what happened. The fear was overwhelming. I literally wanted to run out on the spot. To be fair, I found some sort of place in my heart or my head or whatever just to say yes, just step in, and that was the beginning of it. So, have I hacked it completely? No.

Dave: To your credit, you didn't type E-Y-S.

Philip: Yes, exactly. Although I must go back and check the email. Maybe it's spelled incorrectly. I've had a couple of embarrassing ones along the way, I have to say.

Dave: That's remarkable. You just jumped in with both feet. You're a little bit stressed, but I'm just going to do it. Were there any particular things that you did? Just in order to get it out? I just finished [the Bulletproof Diet](#) manuscript, with Rodale, and I'm sending it in. Fortunately, I'm good at writing. I didn't used to be

good. I used to procrastinate terribly, but over the course of time, I've gotten to the point where I can just bring it and nail it.

What process did you put in place in order to generate the knowledge and really the good quality books that you've written? Did you have ghost writers, copy writers, helpers? Did you do some weird meditation? You have to have something you did.

Philip: Yeah, a little bit of all of the above. I have a team around me, but you brought up something really interesting because when you think about what I've been offered, I was offered a publishing deal with a large publisher. I'm thinking, hell of a deal. It was a book. A previous chapter of my life, seized upon the first two books about real estate and wealth building, and now I've moved into a slightly new phase of my life, evolving.

Going back to that, I think it would have been so easy for me to say, hang on, I'm dyslexic, so no, thank you. Or, listen, I appreciate the offer, but it's not a fit for me. Allow my fear to speak for me. But because I said yes, and because I stepped into it, then the conversation happened, and then it opened a door for me to share one piece of open honesty.

I went to the publisher and said, yes, I'll do it. I want to be very clear with you. I'm dyslexic. I was mortified. I was embarrassed. I'm dyslexic, and I was almost like expect them to go, oh, really? Listen, take care. Look after yourself. But they went, we don't care. Thanks for being honest with us. Thanks for being upfront with us. We're going to build a team around you, and we're going to pay for all of it in order to support getting the book out of you. We're not after your writing skills. We're after what you believe in, and what you stand for.

Dave: That's remarkable. You're not alone in being a really successful person who has stuff like that. I remember John Chambers, the CEO of Cisco. Some kid in the audience had a hard time and started stumbling, and without any preparation, Chambers was like, actually, I have a learning disability too. The journalists gasped, and he quote, came out of the closet.

There are lots of people who are kicking ass, who are neurologically unique. We'll just put it that way. It's really cool that when you talked to the publisher they didn't just get scared. They said, all right, no big deal. I think that in today's world because of the internet and because of media and all, the things that used to be embarrassing like that, they're more common than used to be because our general health as a society is going down. Also, it's just become something that we talk about. It's something that doesn't have stigma associated with it when you and I were 20 plus years ago going to school.

Philip: Absolutely.

Dave: How does this all tie into running from elephants in Nigeria? I've know you've done that too. There's got to be a connection?

Philip: There might be, but we'd need a long time on that one, or put you and pause and I'll come back to you in two hours. I've had the weirdest, eclectic mix of not just business involvements, but life experiences. I will honestly say, I say this regularly to people who know me personally, I feel like I've lived three lives. I've traveled to well over 70 countries around the world. I've put myself in the weirdest of positions, and yes, got ran down by an elephant in Nigeria. People laugh and joke about it, but I can tell you one thing. It was that close to death. It was so close. In actual fact, it wasn't so much later in life that I started to think, what did that do for me other than allow me to really understand what absolute fear is? I'm facing my own mortality in essence. When I think you face your mortality, not that I'm suggesting your listeners and viewer go and stand and try to face it, but I think what it does is it allows you to free yourself a little bit more, take a bit more risk because you've come so close.

I was within feet of him tripping me bumping me out and full size, and I went to the ground. I basically jumped onto this car to stop the elephant from getting me. If I didn't get there within a moment or two, I was caught, and I was dead. It was over.

Dave: What did you do to piss off the elephant?

Philip: I'm good at pissing people off. One of my clients had said I pissed off because I don't tell them what I want to hear all the time. The elephant, honestly, it was just one of things where I thought I was in a zoo. I was in a wildlife reserve which [inaudible 08:21] and everything else. No responsibility for anybody else except for this idiot here. I was wearing multicolored shorts and T-shirt. I thought I was at a zoo, and I was walked going, there's a calf elephant. There's a bull elephant. I was taking photographs. The elephant's waving its ears, getting ready for I was taking photos. I thought, it's really friendly. It just went for me. I was young and I was stupid. I may be older and stupid now, but just getting too close to its baby. It pissed it off, and rightly so. It protected its space.

Dave: I'm glad you made it. Now this was after you were a caddie for the president of Ireland, right?

Philip: Yes, correct. You've done your research. I did. I caddied for the president. For those of you who don't know what caddying is, basically carrying a set of clubs or pulling his clubs for 18 holes of golf, which sounds like job is not that fun. Basically, a caddie's job is really to support to player and challenge the player and question player which of course I didn't do until much later in the round because I was too nervous and scared about who this man was and what he represented.

Dave: If people listening haven't figured it out already, you've lived an unusual, eclectic life. Somehow you've took all of these things and made a career as a multi-book author, and a public speaker with some of the most influential, powerful, and interesting people on Earth. How did you make all this come together? Was there intent behind it? Did it just happen? I think a lot of people who are interested in success as a practice would just love to know what you did.

Philip: I think it was a little bit of accident as well. Just going back to the president story, it wasn't until the 15th hole where the president was playing pretty easy. He was great golfer. He was very good golfer, but he was miss-hitting his shots. He was basically hitting them too far and too low, or too short, I should say. I turned

around and challenged. He said, I'm going to hit an 8 iron, I think he said, into the 15. I said, Mr. President, you're going to need a 7 iron.

For those non-golfers, that's essentially saying, you're not good enough to hit an 8 iron that far. He looked at me, and I just said, why can't you just shut your mouth? Why didn't you just say nothing? All you had to do was three more holes, and you are gone. You're out of there. Of course, he nails it to pin high, three or feet from the hole. He looks at me as if to say, where the hell have you been all day?

I think that was really indicative of my life, my story. So much of my life was trying to fit in with everybody else. I didn't want to stand out. I didn't want to be dyslexic. I didn't want to be weird. I'll spend the rest of my life, much later in life, trying to understand my oddness and actually embracing that. I think that's been a huge learning curve for me, finding my voice, trusting my intuition.

If I had to bring it back to one incident, I think it was the best man speech in Ireland, where I was acting best man for one of my closest friends. I was very fortunate to be asked again by my brother and then again for another friend. On each occasion, I got a standing ovation. Now you don't get a standing ovations at weddings typically. It was a bit weird. It was a bit awkward for me, but a complete stranger approached me and said, "You need to be speaking. You need to do this."

It was a bit of catalyst for me. It was bit a shift. Sometimes your family can tell you something that they feel you need to do, but sometimes it takes a complete stranger to unlock something in you. That was the beginning.

Dave: Wow. You just stood up and told your story, and did it well, and it sort of brought things out. You have a new book that was just released a couple of month ago, *Rich on Paper, Poor on Life: Three Paths to Meaning and Money*. Sounds like pretty important stuff. In fact, it is. What's the basic premise of the book?

Philip: I think the basic premise was inspired by my own upbringing in the Celtic Tiger times. The Celtic Tiger was the economic boom that Ireland experienced in the early '90s. Ireland went from one of the poorest countries in Europe to the second wealthiest country on the planet in the space of 11 years which is extraordinary in the context of economics and timelines and timeframes.

The challenge in that space at that time was people made hay while the sun was shining, so they chased the economic reality, chased the money, assuming that it would give them the freedom and happiness. They let go of their health. They let go of their social outlets. They let go of their relationship. They took them for granted. They assumed they'd be there at the end of this big boom.

That's been a huge inspirational part of this. I don't just see it in Ireland. I see it around the world, where people thought money very much front and center. Even if they tell you they don't, they really put a huge value on money. The idea and premise is that I think we're chasing happiness often when I think it's a bit of an illusion. I think we can bring meaning into our lives, the byproduct of that is happiness.

The basic premise down in the book is we need to be driving meaning in three areas of our life, the work that we do, the relationship with ourselves, and the relationship with other people. It just illustrates life stories of how ordinary people did that. I hate to call them ordinary, but not well-known star, just real people and how they made some of those shifts.

Dave: Let's face it. Most of us aren't Richard Branson, right? If you're using that as your yard stick, things are different. Yeah, for the rest of us who maybe haven't had that success, but still care.

Philip: That's an interesting point, Dave, the relatability is really important. Sometimes people get inspired by somebody who has an island and has many businesses, not take away from what he did, but the relatability and therefore the chasm, the gap between what they've achieved and where we are right now, is often so difficult to comprehend. That's a really important part is to illustrate change from people who are everyday people, if you like.

Dave: I deal with that personally. I disclosed that when I was 26, I made \$6 million in the dot-com boom. Yeah, I put my health completely on hold. Who needs health when you're making millions of dollars as a young man? No one hears the part when I lost it when I was 28, when everything came back down. It's like, I've

been working my butt off for all this time, supporting a family, working in a cubicle, and all that kind of stuff.

On my path of biohacking and improvement and all that, it's only been nine months that I had been full time at [Bulletproof](#). The rest of the time, I was VP at a big company, working hard, flying around doing what VPs do. That relatability thing is really important because even the other guests on my show, everyone's a normal person who deals with normal things with varying levels of success. They run small gyms. Others of them are research scientists, and others are really successful entrepreneurs. It doesn't really matter. All of us face the same basic challenges. Some of us have more tools to try and outsource part of them, but it's the same thing.

Philip: Absolutely. Interestingly enough, the ironic thing is when you start to, as I call it, look at your life off the ice, and you start looking at those relationships, and you start getting meaning from your relationship with yourself, you start really reconciling some of those issues that you carry and some of those judgments that you carry and those expectations that you carry. You're dealing with internal stuff. You starting looking at maybe either doing something different from what you do as day-to-day work point of view, or changing the way you do it to bring more meaning into it.

The ironic thing is the money follows. I know it's an old cliché, do your passion, and money follow. That pisses me off sometimes because it's not entirely delivered in the right way. The kinds that I've started to do this, the money they're making, they don't define themselves by what they make. They don't define themselves by what they do. What they do is just an expression of who they are.

In Ireland and around the world, I see people have become what they do which is so sad because it becomes one of the first questions at a dinner party. Hi, Dave. So what do you do? What do you do? It's like we need to know what you do in order to put you in a box, which I think is sad.

Dave: What do you answer when people say, what do you do?

Philip: It was an ongoing joke on a professional level. What does Philip McKernan actually do? How do you describe it? My wife came to one of my retreats to Ireland, would you believe this? At the end of the retreat, somebody said, now you have a better sense of how to describe Philip's work. She goes, I'm not confused. It's more I'm not able to just put it down in one word, in one sentence.

What I suppose it really comes down to, just basically what do I do? I help people create more meaning in their lives, and make money at the same time. [inaudible 16:39] the money, but the money shouldn't play in this place. That's the important piece.

Dave: I never know what to say at a dinner party either. What do you do? I don't know. I help people in various ways. Number one ranked health podcast, but there's this coffee thing, and Brain Hacking. I don't know. Whatever helps people, and whatever helps me. I tend to take this and test it here, and put it out there. There are no words for that. If there were words for what you do, and you like that, that's cool. If there aren't words, maybe there doesn't need to be words.

Philip: No, I've been okay with that. I think there's a little bit of mystery. I think people go delving. If you speak on a stage, and people resonate with you, they'll find a way to you like yourself. The feeling I get from you, and maybe I'm wrong, is the sense that you mentioned money briefly a couple of times and looking at yourself is that you're not consumed by what the consumer wants. What I guess from you, and maybe I'm wrong, is that you give people, you develop stuff that you honestly think people need. I think there's something really cool about that where people keep saying to me, why don't you go at your clients and ask them what they want? I don't give them what they want. What I do is I'm all about creating experiences and challenges and questions that I believe that people need. People don't want this, the book that I wrote, *Rich on Paper, Poor in Life*. They don't want it necessarily, but it's a message that really needs to be brought to the world.

Dave: Yeah, doing what works is more powerful than what people want. There's that old tired story. You ask a farmer from 100 years ago, what they want. They don't say a tractor. They say they want a bigger horse that can pull a bigger

plow. Some crazy guy goes out there and says, screw this. I'm inventing a tractor because either it's what I want, or it's what I think everyone else wants. Those are the guys or women who totally transform things. Those are the disruptors. I don't know how to not be a disruptor. It's just how I am. I get a sense that you're like that as well. You're just going to do what you think is right. Funny enough, when people realize that they can pursue meaning instead of pursuing a certain title, or whatever else it is, it disrupts their life. That's what's cool about your book. By helping people see the power of focusing on meaning, I think they're doing more for them than they might recognize. That's why I actually wanted you on the show.

Philip: Thank you.

Dave: What about people's relationship with money? Is it dysfunctional? Is it functional? What do you tell your clients, especially the ones who go from where they are to 10 times bigger than that? What's the secret there?

Philip: Honestly, there are not many things that surprise me in life. I have heard so many things. I've almost would say I've heard it all. Probably not. The very time you hear something that you don't expect. But over the last two years, I started to have the conversation on money. What does money mean to you? What is your relationship to money? Not about how did you make more, and what do you do with the money that you have? When you start studying the relationship to people, and start to bring them through a process, you start to really understand their history with money, how they grew up around money, what they feel about money, the charges they have around money. You just give them money in a hammock. What do you feel? What emotions from it. It is absolutely extraordinary the dysfunctionality in money in society today, and how it controls us.

Here's the sad thing. Here's the challenging thing. There are people listening to this right now going, yeah, I can imagine. I've got a friend, Tracy. She's got dysfunction. People themselves don't know. There's an unawareness of how money drives us. It's been one of the most fascinating, challenging conversations with people. My clients range from billionaires, the top 1%, the wealthiest familiar in America who I can't mention the name, to people who literally don't have any billions, have minus

hundreds of dollars, who are trying to get a business going, trying to take control of their lives.

The difference between the two, it's incredibly similar. I have a woman sitting in a room one day and go, I'm here [inaudible 20:42] have enough money. I've got a hundred million in the bank, and I'm telling you one thing. I'm just as dysfunctional as the rest of you around money. But I'm coming at it from a slightly different perspective.

It doesn't matter what you have and what you don't have. The dysfunctionality our attachment and emotion to money is extraordinary. It often keeps us from actually bringing the money we want into our lives, if that makes any sense.

Dave: All right. We just crossed into hippyville. Keeps us from bringing the money that we want into our lives. What does that really mean? I was a Baskin Robbins 31 flavors scooping guy. I did that for a couple years part-time when I was in school. I could win arm wrestling every time because I had this big scooping muscle. Going from that mindset, where you're like, I make minimum wage. I work pretty hard, and I have a boss. I get X numbers of hours. From that mindset, how do you bring you money into your life? I know it feels like a quantum leap for people who are just getting started in their careers, or who are stuck? What unsticks them? What does it really mean?

Philip: I can't really speak to the people who are making minimum wage with respect. It's not that I can't speak or don't want to speak to them. My clients tend to be entrepreneurs who have a business and are just struggling. I would see them slightly differently. They're still people. These are entrepreneurs who are getting by. They're covering their overheads and everything else, but they just haven't broken through in terms of that profitability and to making and retaining income within the business and creating a business that is not controlling them.

That's the 99% of the clients I'm working with. It would be unfair to speak to the other side of that, that client, so to speak. Ultimately, they've got the salability. They've got the marketing ability. They understand their business. They're aligned

to the business to some extent, but there are patterns. It's often I see that people with, and again, I don't work in nutrition space and diet space, or the fitness space. I don't even claim to, never bring it in to my work, but there's something really interesting happening in the community of people that I work with.

It's that they come in. They go through a lot of shit. They're challenged to the core. They move through stuff. They get rid of a lot of stuff that they've been carrying that they didn't want to wear. They start to get really settled into their business. They start enjoying their business more. They start talking about their business in a way they didn't. They start attracting clients that ordinarily would avoid them. Then they start to look at their bodies, and they actually move from a place where they have to go to the gym to wanting to go to the gym. They start to put a value on their own skin. They start to put a value on not just who they are as a person, but they start to feel they deserve the money that they've been telling everybody that they've wanted. They start to feel that they deserve the body that they've been telling themselves they wanted.

You have person, man or woman, and they're overweight. You have a million people lined up. One by one, they walk in. They say, you're not overweight. This is maybe an area I didn't want to get into because it's a bit hippyville, if you like as well. At that millionth person, that person actually starts to think. They think, maybe I'm not overweight. Maybe I'm not, but they wake up the next morning feeling overweight, feeling ugly, feeling unworthy.

The difference is that internal shift. You can have that. That's what I do. If you can have that, then we give them permission to make money that they're capable of making. There's no magic to it. It's a value thing, a deep value thing.

Dave: When I was a young entrepreneur, and I've had most entrepreneurial successes, and I'll be straightforward, I didn't get paid in a lot of those when I should have been paid. I know now, I was getting in my own way. Wait, we just sold that company for \$8 million, and what did I take away from this? Nothing? Why did I put all these hours in?

There's various reasons for all of these things, but you'll find that there are entrepreneurs who seem to be successful but don't make money. There is something that they're doing there. Sometimes they just got screwed. They're con artists and people like that out there. In my own path of becoming, I'm not just a multiple time successful entrepreneur, but a multiple time successful entrepreneur who at least is self-supporting and doesn't have a job at the same time that I'm an entrepreneur. There is something that is psychological that's involved.

I did a lot of neurofeedback and became aware of the messages I had inside my body and repatterned those things. What's the technique that you use with an entrepreneur who's says he's keeping his head above water, but isn't where he wants to be to take him in an accelerated growth to the next level?

Philip: Yeah. I'll give you an example, rather than try to speak around it in different ways. I had a lady recently. One of the big transitions was she was in a business in an industry that she didn't particularly like, so we had to identify that, face reality, and of course, figure out what's next.

Literally, she's driving one day, and you might think this all attraction, I'm not a big fan of that terminology for obvious reasons, but she's driving one day, and she heard an ad on the radio that probably played 50 times before. I don't know. But she heard it and thought it was something she could see herself doing. She ends up setting up this business. Absolutely loving it to the point where she's in a room one day with another group of entrepreneurs I was working with.

I said, tell me about your business. I want you to prove it to me that this is the business you want to open up, this is the business you want to run. She teared up and spoke about the ramifications and the meaning that she can get from this business. There wasn't one person in the room that was going to call bullshit, alignment there. Great. She's doing her passion. She loves it and everything else. Of course, the big challenge that hits many entrepreneurs is, great. I'm doing my passion. But I'm just not making any money with it. Most people would go to, what's your bottom line? What are you doing from a market standpoint? Are you on Twitter and Facebook? Let's look at your least. Let's look at your sales channel, and

all this stuff. I just said to her, taking about your students and people who are coming. She works with young kids and helps them with maths. Basically through math, she helps them with personal confidence and everything. She just loves what she does. She says, I've got these kids and everything. I need disruptive kids. I've got a couple of disruptive kids. Why are you keeping them?

She didn't want to say no. She wanted everyone to like her. She has a scarcity mentality which is driven from her history and background which is driven around money. There's never enough money. We start to delving into that place. She agreed, and I'm telling you this is not a bullshit story, she agreed that she was going to get rid of the two or three kids. People were going, why did she talk to the parents? These are disruptive kids. She's attempted to rationalize and work with them. She went back. She got rid of the kids. She came back three months later to the workshop and said her business is absolutely exploded.

Is it timing, the time of the year? Absolutely it's all part of it. When I said to her, why? She was up 30% up to the end of August, 30% up in her business versus an entire year last year. I asked why. She said, because I started putting a value on myself, my clients, and my work space. I didn't put a big sign on the door saying, all asshole kids have now been kicked out. Come and sign up. I basically put a value. I asked these kids the route. The kids are not the problem, parenting issues, whatever. I don't get into that one. She put a value on her space and her business started to grow.

She can speak about it in a different way. People sense, people can feel the energy when they went into the room, and the business has taken off. That's an example of real life which is very recent in the last four weeks.

Dave: A lot of people, especially younger entrepreneurs, have gotten so into automation of their lives that you can spend so much time automating your life to save time that the equation becomes unbalanced. I'm a big fan that when I'm coaching people that you look at not just your time, but space, and also your attention and energy. If you're doing things like something stupid, booking your

own travel, who can't book their own travel? It's so simple to go to your favorite travel site and do all that.

It's probably not that simple if you're probably going to change your flight three times by the time you come home, and that you're going to be stuck somewhere. At that point, it's going to cost you \$25 to work with a travel agent human being, but honestly, it was \$25 and how much stress and energy did that save you?

Do you find that even the very successful people you're working with are nickel and diming themselves on things that are sucking their energy and time? Is that part of the things you help them value that mojo or whatever that is? Or is that outside the realm where you work with people?

Philip: No, I do. I do cover that space. I often tell the story, every so often, about my wife who doesn't appreciate me telling this story. One day I said, why don't we sit down and watch a movie? She says, somebody's got to do the ironing, that tone. I said, do you want me to look after it? She says, what do you mean look after it? You mean you're going to get someone to do the ironing? You're going to pay for it? I said, absolutely, because I believe my time is worth more than that. I didn't ask for permission to share this story, but she's not here.

I said, just sit down. What's really going on here? Ironically, this is where the story went. It wasn't about the money I would have given somebody to iron the clothes. It was, I said, if I got someone to iron our clothes on a regular basis, which I think we should do because I value my time and have some with respect more than you do, if you were to have that conversation, you'd tell somebody that you had someone iron your clothes, who's the one person in the world you'd not want to tell? Straight away, she said her mother.

Dave: Of course.

Philip: It was all about what people thought. It was all about what her mother would say if she found out. It wasn't about what practically makes sense her because you can do [inaudible 30:40] now. You can create one product, have one conversation, could make us the money for the year for ironing. But you don't do

that. You're more concerned about what your mother might think if her daughter had someone ironing her clothes.

Dave: I can tell you I take great pleasure in knowing that my wife, Carolyn's a trained physician with MBA from the Stockholm School of Economics, I love it that she's doing my laundry. Wait. It doesn't compute, but that same thing plays through all of in one way or another. There's times, I should go play with the kids. Hey, kids, let's go do something that's quasi-fun. Let's repair something. Wait a minute. We should go out and we should pick some berries and climb a tree and throw rocks or whatever. That's a better use of my time, even though I want to do it.

I have the same messages playing. If I don't install my own floors or whatever, I'm not a good person. That's actually not true at all. Just seeing those things for me, and recognizing that it's happening in my body, and being like, that's a total lie, and setting it aside and throwing rocks and picking berries. That's been really helpful for my own ability to be a good entrepreneur. I'd have more energy when I do that. I realize that I'm now accepting help whereas before I might have not accepted help.

Philip: Yes.

Dave: I think it applies equally well to women and men, but certainly I've had the very similar conversation with Dr. Lana about, okay, if you really want to do laundry, all right. I'm not going to stop you, but for god's sake, isn't there a better way?

Philip: I have a saying, we give ourselves what we feel we deserve in life. I honestly think there's no truer words that have come out of my mouth in terms that it's been proven time and time again. When people start to shift in terms of putting value on themselves, they start to then look at peripheral outside of their lives, and they start to give themselves the freedom. They start to take up things that they want to do. They drop things that they don't want to do.

When that value shifts internally, which is a process, it takes time, everything on the outside shifts automatically. It really does.

Dave: How many of your clients, when they start changing their internal way of valuing what they do and what they're looking for in life, how many of them find that they're partner or spouse hasn't made the shift at the same time? It seems like that could be very stressful. Does success actually harm relationships if both people in the relationship aren't on the same page?

Philip: Absolutely. Brilliant question. There are so many partners of clients of mine whom I've never met who hate my guts. This is not a sexist comment. They're certainly not designed to be, but initially most of my clients would have been men, for whatever reason. Maybe at the time I was a bit harsher. I don't know, but it was 90% men. That's changed to 60/40 in favor of more women working with me now. But initially, the response back was, these are things I could have told you. Why are you spending time and money with this Irish guy? All this stuff is going on because they felt threatened, or maybe legitimately thought I was full of shit. I don't know. Interesting enough, when they get through of that fear and they hit that tipping point of when they actually let go of their own insecurities which are driven by a lot of their own insecurities, they actually start to recognize that their partner is fundamentally shifting. I don't mean a different person, but there is an evident shift. There's a calmness that comes with these people. There's a comfort. There's an awareness, openness. There's vulnerable conversation happening at home. Then they start to lean in, and say, okay. How can I be a part of this? What's really interesting is they go from dislike and distrust, insecurity, nervousness, and I don't like change, to, I want some of this. I can see the shift. The way I describe it sometimes is it's like climbing a mountain. I try not to be condescending because my wife's amazing, but she would admit to this as well, is that when I start to climb the mountain of life, she was nervous. She didn't know what to do.

I started exposing myself to stuff that honestly two years earlier I would have thought was weird. I look back the mountain, and she didn't want to climb. She didn't want to. She didn't know how to. She was nervous. I went back trying to pick her up metaphorically speaking, push her up, or pull her up with a rope. All of which would negate the journey for both of us.

Eventually, I just had to let it go. I had to trust that if I'm bettering myself, I'm going to better my relationship. There was one day, now looking back, she came to me and said, I want to do some of my own personal growth. I want to step in. Where do I start?

I remember, Dave, it was incredible. The conversations that we've had since then, and anyone who knows us, knows that we're not perfect, or relationship, but we are very close, and it requires energy, effort, and challenging conversations. I've been working with couples with 10 years, something I didn't share with you. I've been working with couple for 10 years. It's an interesting dynamic, but it's driven by control. We often get attracted to someone who's the opposite of who we are, and then spend the next five, 10, 15 years trying to change that person to be like us and see the world like we do, and do the things we want to do. It's actually if you can celebrate both individuals, they create two completely different entities and paths and authentic beings. Then the communication keeps people together. That's what I normally experience.

Dave: I've spent a lot of time in the last two year around other successful entrepreneurs. Part of that is when you spend time with other people who are doing things in the same space, you learn from them, but it also ups your game. I've notice that there's a lot of people, especially people who have recent success, who have relationship stress. Just as you're describing, one person starts to pull ahead, but they're just basically bringing it, and the other person's made really uncomfortable. This can be men or women. It doesn't matter. I think it can be tougher when the woman starts to be successful because there's all these messages about masculinity for men. Whichever way a couple is working, it seems like a spring. One person goes, and the spring stretches. Either the partner who isn't moving starts to move, or the spring breaks. It is a stressor, no doubt about it. I've had something similar too. In my case, I focused most of my personal growth on neurofeedback and other biohacking things because I found it's the fastest for me. I remember the day very well when Lana said, I think I want to do 40 years of Zen. I'm like, I've been waiting for you to do this for five years. Hallelujah. Then changes started happening. It's really cool because it's important.

This is something I never seen written about in business books and in books in success is what happens when you're successful? What happens to your relationship? That's something that you're more aware of than most of the people that I've worked with. Any other advice for people who are planning to kick some ass and are already in a relationship? What should you do to bulletproof your relationship so as you become successful you both move more in lockstep?

Philip: One of the most common things that I see is they dilute their success. They dilute their aspiration, and they slow down because they're afraid of losing a partner. Ultimately, that leads to resentment. Resentment towards themselves, towards the relationship, and ultimately it comes back to haunt you. You have to go on your own path. The analogy I always use it the mountain. You have to climb that mountain, whether it's a new business, a book, whatever that is. You have to trust that if it's aligned that that relationship, that spring, will come together. You have to let your partner go. You have to let that person go.

When I do work with couples, I often ask them to come with things they want to change about their partner. Often they arrive, they'll have a longer list of the things, and they roll up their sleeves and go, here we go. Here's my opportunity to change my partner. What we do is we drop that completely. We get them to delve into some of their, how did they grow up around money? How did they grow up around relationships? What was your relationship with relationships? They go, what odd question. But we start delving into what they witnessed, what they grew up around. That's what's basically trained them. As their partner witnesses, not just what they're experiencing themselves in terms of the relationships to relationships historically, but their partner. Competition and anger and frustration is often replaced by compassion and understand. They end up coming away with the laundry list that they brought every time, I've never seen a change. They literally go like this.

They go, you know what? That's not the issue. The issue is here. I've got to deal with my stuff. My greatest, strongest plea to people is not to forget about wife or husband, or forget about your partner. It's not that, but it's you have to go for what's in your soul. You have to because if you don't, it will come back and it will haunt you.

You think temporarily you're protecting your relationship, you're not. You're setting yourself up for a fall eventually. I think that isn't necessary.

Dave: You said something amazing. People tear up their list of wants. What I find when I work with entrepreneurs, and even in just my own path of the last 20 years, knowing what you want versus what you are supposed to want, for most people it's not the same. You ask what they want, they'll answer the way they were taught to answer. But they're not even clear when you really scrape off the programming. It's often a question mark. How do you help people clear away the fog around what they actually want versus what they think they want?

Philip: That's a great question. Again, this is what we think we want up here, which is a lot of our goal setting and vision. I would rather work with somebody who has no goals whatsoever, than a laundry list of goals that are unauthentic, things they think they want because they heard somebody speak about it. They read a book about success.

I think that's a challenge in a world where there's so much information. We're taking the pieces that we think, but we're not checking, are they aligned to who I am? What I call it is intuitive clarity. Intuitive clarity of what everybody needs to do or wants to do is in their soul that isn't there now. It's not me. I don't have the answer. The first things I do is I call bullshit on my clients. I say, you keep telling me that you don't know what you want, but I call bullshit. I call absolute bullshit. I proved it time and time again, in 20 minutes with a client. I'll give you a quick example. An entrepreneur says, I've got this sulfur business. It's going really well. I'm making tons of dough, but I know, McKernan, I keep going after it. I know it's not what I'm aligned to. It's not my passion project. This guy has a gift that his talent, his sulfur business. His gift is something else. I just turned around and said, what would you do if you were to bring a passion project you can supplement maybe the business that isn't lighting you up?

He said, I don't know. I said, bullshit. Get on that board there and put on that board in front of all these other entrepreneurs, and just to be clear, we're not leaving this room until you write it all up. He said, but I don't know what you're talking about. I

said, bullshit. We kept at him and at him. I shit you not, when he started drawing this concept. It was all about stillness for young kids to help them with confidence and self-esteem. When he stopped and put his pen down, people had their jaws open because he created this vision. He looked and said, I have no idea where that came from.

My final question was, where would the location be? He said, I don't know. He looks at me, and he knows what's coming next. He goes, okay, okay. He picks an exact location, almost a street in Toronto.

Dave: Wow.

Philip: It's was all there, but he was afraid of putting it all out because of the implications, because the world now knows. What does he have to change? What does he have to give up? We're obsessed with holding on.

Dave: When you said he's afraid, he didn't know he was afraid, right? He was so afraid, this was hidden entirely. This is what I do with a lie detector stuck to my head. If I'm afraid of something, I rely on an external piece of technology to tell me that there's something there so I can dig for it. It's invisible.

The fact that people are listening to this, I hope they're going, this is interesting. If there are things that are invisible to you because of your fear, versus things, I know I'm afraid of that. I know I'm afraid of heights, so I'm not going to go on the Ferris wheel. That's conscious fear and it's trivial. It's the unconscious fear that screws up your life, your business, everything. Other than putting people on stage and making them draw it until there's enough stage fright and fear of being exposed that they just push through and they see it, what are the other techniques you might recommend to people, either in your books or just in your coaching practice to figure out what they're afraid of that they don't know what they're afraid of?

Philip: Dave, it's a big question. People ask, how do you leverage your business? How are you going to get other coaches in to do the work? I don't. What I do is small live experiences. That's my specialty. My lie detector is my pair of eyes

here. I can look at someone's eyes. I know they're bullshitting me, and I know they're bullshitting someone else, so 95% of my business, if not more, is live one-to-one. Sixteen people in Ireland, 20 people next month in Peru. All these live experiences. I sit with these people. I feel their energy. I feel it. I look in their eyes. I work with them.

Honestly, if I just sit here and give you three tips or three strategies, they don't come to me truthfully. I'm not saying that I couldn't come up with a few, but I think just on a simple level, it's really just questioning what you say you want, even just sitting down and asking I want to build a million-dollar business. I want this, that. I sat with an entrepreneur recently, and we did this session. He sat there and he was telling me about these plans. I just sat back and said, that's fantastic. I see how you rationalize it. I see you have it all planned.

I just have one simple question. Why? He said, why what? Have you been listening to me? I said, I've been listening. I know where that fits in there, and where that business fits. Why do it at all? I don't get it. I'm not saying it's not there, I just want you ... My job is to call bullshit. It's easy to tell people what they want to hear. It is so easy to massage people's egos, tell them, what they want to hear, and send them home fired up and ready to go.

It is very difficult to tell people what they don't want to hear because they get a lot of kickback. You get a lot of hatred, anxiety, frustration. Eventually, those people will breakthrough something, and it will bring them to a different phase of life that was unattainable to them. The entrepreneur had no idea. He had no idea why he was creating this complexity because he was so scared of stopping. He's so scared of the silence and the space, and he needs to keep busy because he doesn't have anything from an identity standpoint outside of his work. He's uncomfortable in his own skin, doesn't have great relationships at home, tells himself that he does, tells everyone he has great relations with his wife and kids. Never assume the relationships you think are great are. Always call bullshit on yourself. That's probably my greatest advice.

Dave: That's a really good thing, and having really good friends who can do that, or therapists, coaches, it's terribly important. The biggest mistake that I probably other than eating like crap so my basic biology didn't work was that I was very unaware of the stuff you talked about. I would tell myself things were a certain way, and I would just pretend they were no matter what. That wasn't serving me well. It means you get surprised in ways you don't like, like you don't make the million dollars you should have made on that deal. In fact, you made nothing. Things like that happen because of that self-deception. My powers of self-deception are so high, that I don't trust myself to notice them. I rely on other people or technology, or both. I don't believe I would have the relationship success, the financial success, the career, any of the fruitful things had I not taken that step to say, I need some help on this.

Philip: You do. You do need somebody. There are people listening here in all parts of the world. Find somebody who can just call the bullshit. When you stand up to them, one of the challenges I find with leaders in business is that people are not challenged. They're challenged to a point. When the leader kicks back, the challenger will back away. Find a coach or somebody that is prepared to dig in you further when you lash back at them because entrepreneurs and really driven people tend to be quite aggressive and they push back really hard. You need somebody that's able to come back and continue to dig in. If you have that person in your life, that's a valuable asset.

Dave: It really is. I would go so far, and I want to see if you agree, to say that it probably shouldn't be your significant other, your spouse. They can do it sometimes, but if it's their job all the time, it's probably going to be uncomfortable. Do you agree with that?

Philip: Absolutely. The person you need is somebody who's unattached to the outcome financially, physically, or emotionally. You can go to your brother or dad, and they might have the most phenomenal head on them. They might be so grounded and intelligent and great entrepreneur and a great businessperson, but at the end of the day, it's coming from a place of being attached to you emotionally, wanting the best for you and not necessarily putting you in a risky environment.

Someone who's not attached to the outcome, financially, physically, or emotionally, is critically important.

Dave: It is. We're coming up on the end of the show. I want to talk about a couple of things before we end. The first one is about money not buying happiness. What's your take? Does it buy happiness or not?

Philip: You're looking for a yes or no answer on this one. I think it give us experiences. I think it can give us the ability to create experiences, but what I know about experiences is the difference between doing and being happy, like holidays and going off and spending a month here and going to the circus. They're great feelings, and they make you emotionally engaged. I'd have to say does money buy happiness, yes, or no? I'd traveled enough in the world. I've seen enough different things. If someone put a gun to my head right now and asked, does it? Yes or no, I would have to say no. I'm also dealing with wealthy clients on paper, some of the wealthiest families in America. I fly down to LA and work with these families again in December, and I'm not saying that they're unhappy, but I just don't think that the cost of the economic success and the business success has on a dilution of core relationships and depth in relationships and confidence in their own skin. My answer would have to be, Dave, no, I don't believe it does, if it was a yes or no answer. That was long winded answer too.

Dave: That's exactly the length of answer I was looking for. It's not black and white. If you're starving, it's much harder to be happy. One of the things I learned was that making \$6 million sure make me feel really happy, but I wasn't actually that happy. I was just happy I made some money finally. I've actually been happier after I lost the money, although I would have like to have kept it.

Philip: I think that's interest because that speaks to your previous point. People don't know. They're unaware and blind to the reality. If you've got someone in front of you, listen, this is a lot of crap. I've got \$10 million in the bank. Now, I'm happier than I've ever been. Who's challenging? You say you're happy, where in your life? How do you know you're happy? Digging in.

I had a lady recently saying, I have a great relationship with my kids. I just turned around and said, how do you know? She said, they're my kids. She starts getting pissed off. I said, let's talk about it.

It turns out the relationship wasn't that great because she's benchmarking it on previous relationships and comparing against her neighbors. Now, she's got something to go with this. Now she's got something to do, even though it was sad to face the reality that it wasn't quite as good as she thought.

Dave: Yeah, benchmarking. That's a whole other conversation we could have. We're out of time. Only two more questions left. Number one, where can people find you? Your URL, the title of your book, things like that.

Philip: Thank you. Yeah, PhilipMcKernan. With one L, M-C-K-E-R-N-A-N, dot com. So, PhilipMcKernan.com. The book is RichOnPaperbook.com, is the URL for the actual book and so one, different parts of the world.

Dave: It's definitely worth reading because the longer I've lived, the more I've worked with clients, I don't think quite as many as you, but certainly some wealthy, some not, the idea that it's your relationship with money in there that really determines your economic success more than anything else, and that you can have lots of money and be super unhappy, or vice versa, they're both totally true, but getting those aligned has been powerful for me and those I know who have done it. Pick up the book. It's worth the read.

The final question is one that all guests get asked. In all these things you've learned, all the things that you've done, including caddying for a president, getting run over by elephants just about, and other things, three most important recommendations for people who want to perform better in life, not necessarily work or anything else. You want to kick more ass? What do you do?

Philip: Okay, I think number one, in no particular order, never put anybody on a pedestal, no matter who they are. Never put another human on a pedestal. When you put someone on a pedestal, they're mile high, you're saying one thing, and only

thing only, that you're not good enough, or you're not as good as them. Never, ever. Always respect people. Respect people in a position you're not in. Respect the position you'd like to get to. All of that, but never put them on a pedestal. Never believe they're better than you. Critical. Mistake I made for many years.

The other one is not really deep, but I would encourage everyone to understand their story. People often think to improve their future, they've got to focus on the future. We're so focused on the future. We're so future focused, it's extraordinary. People are obsessed with being present, and that's fair enough. But if you want to understand what's dictating your future, look at your past. Your past is creating your present, and your present is creating your future. Understand who you are, why you behave the way you do, why you think, and how you think the way you do. It can give you an incredible insight and awareness and understanding in the future. They'd be the top two. That's all I've got for you right now. In terms of number three, I could go with so many different areas, but number three is the whole area of goal setting, mapping out your future, the authenticity of your goals. Don't just create a goal you think you want, but really understand you want it. Delve in and really consider why it is you want the thing you say you want in your head. The amount of people that I meet every single day who have set goals that do not belong to themselves, and they spend five, 10, or 15 years chasing them. They get to the top of that mountain, and they just go, okay. This is not exactly the feeling I thought it would be.

Then they look across the horizon and say the next mountain, and say, aha. That's the mountain I need to climb. If I can climb that mountain, then I can be happy. The reality is that pattern follows them for life. The reality is the mountain they've climbed is not authentic. Question what you say you want to the core. Just keep asking why you say you want it because that will serve you in the long term. It will also solidify and validate to make sure that you are in the right track if you are.

Dave: Philip McKernan, thank you for being on Bulletproof Radio today. If you're listening to this, and you got some value from this, I'd appreciate it if you would do one thing. Go to Amazon and buy Philip's book, and then click pre-order on the [Bulletproof Diet book](#).

Philip: Thanks, Dave.

Dave: The reason for that is that Philip's book is absolutely worth reading, and I'm working on pre-sales for my book, and if these podcasts are valuable for you, it just takes a minute. It's on sale, and I'd appreciate it. You can buy one and get the other one. They'll be paired together, and everyone will see both books. They're both worth reading. Thank you.

Philip: Thanks, Dave.

Dave: If you've been listening to this podcast, and you're wondering where to start, why don't you just jump in with both feet? Check out the [Bulletproof Total Upgrade Kit](#), which is available at [UpgradedSelf.com](#)

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