

## **Why Having a Mentor is a Must-Have to Succeed in Business and Life – Kevin Harrington with Dave Asprey – #743**

Announcer:

Bulletproof Radio, a state of high performance.

Dave Asprey:

You're listening to Bulletproof Radio with Dave Asprey. Today, you're going to hear from a guest who's going to help you through some of the weird, challenging times that we're all dealing with right now. And if you're listening to multiple episodes, which you probably are, you've noticed that I've brought a few people in this year who can really make a difference for you. Because my assumption is, look, you may have lost your job. You may have had a pay cut. You may actually be doing really well because you already had an online business or because you're focused on health and wellness or whatever else, but whatever it is, you're stressed and you're making sure you have something in your back pocket because frankly, no one knows what's going to happen. And uncertainty drives fear and fear makes it harder to think. So I'm bringing people in to say, hey, here's some tools, some facts, some knowledge to help you turn off the fear, even if the fear is unfounded and maybe it's real because you're saying, how am I going to pay for my next delivery?

So I get it and I'm here to help. And I'd love it if you just hit me up on the comments on Instagram, if you have specific things you want to hear more about. And our guest today has a way to make sure your personal and your professional lives don't just do well, but they actually thrive. And it's the guy who's a very big name and his name is Kevin Harrington and you've probably seen him online or on TV. He's been all over the place.

And he wrote a book after phenomenal success. He's the original shark on Shark Tank. He created the infomercial. He created the ad seen on TV brand and he started a group called the Entrepreneurs' Organization or EO. And I'm actually a member of YPO, which is a close affiliate of the Entrepreneurs' Organization. YPO is for Young Presidents'. And what Kevin's book is about, the reason he's on the show for you today is finding a mentor and what that can do for you. I would not be here today without mentors. We don't talk about it enough and this show's going to be about how you can find a mentor or be a mentor. Kevin, welcome to the show.

Kevin Harrington:

Hey Dave, thank you very much. Looking forward to it.

Dave:

Do you ever feel really full of yourself when you introduce yourself and say, I'm responsible for \$5 billion of global sales and I've launched 500 products. Do you ever just like look in the mirror and go, is that me?

Kevin:

Well, I'll tell you this, it's great to have the big hits that work, but what people don't realize a lot of times is I might've had 10 or 15 or 20 bombs to get from one winter to the next. So it's very humbling to fail on a regular basis. So I've done about 700 projects. I've failed on about 550 of them. And that's putting money against things that you think are going to win, you believe in them and they don't. So it's a very humbling experience.

And by the way, some of the biggest winners weren't ones that I necessarily projected were going to be the big winners. They just, like we would be shooting an infomercial and we say, "Hey, we got one we're doing, let's add another one to the tail end of that one." And the one that we were doing, we thought was the winner, the tail end one that we just threw in for the heck of it ended up doing \$200 million in sales. So it's crazy that how things work, but we don't have a crystal ball. We do the best we can.

Dave:

Wow. So you don't really know. I remember the Ginsu knives, which you created. I had a set when I was probably 20 or something. Did you know that that was going to be winner?

Kevin:

This is how that came about. The Ginsu was somebody created it, because in the early days I didn't invent anything. I didn't own it, but I'm at a trade show, Philadelphia home show. And this guy, Arnold Morris is cutting through a can and he's going through mufflers and sneakers and everything. And I'm like, "What is he doing with that knife?" And it's called the Ginsu. So I stopped him and I said, "Arnold, I've seen you do this three times. You said the exact same words every time." And I said, "I don't know if you know this, but I'm just talking to this channel called Discovery. And I was watching Discovery last week and they went dark for six hours. And I called them to see if there was a technical problem, and I found out that Discovery is only an 18 hour a day channel."

This is the story of how I actually got this whole thing started back in the early days. So when I heard Discovery is only 18 hours a day, meaning six hours they're just going to put these colored bars up, I said, "Wait a minute, can I bring you something to put in there that we can both get some money on?" And they said, "You come on down if it's legal and clean, we'll do it."

And there I was sitting with Arnold. And so I said, "Arnold, let's film this, this presentation you've got. I've never filmed anything in my life. I'm not a video guy." I was actually at that particular moment, I was selling businesses. I was at a business and a real estate broker. I sold pizza parlors and delicate essence. And so, Arnold said, "Well, what do you call this?" I said, "I don't know what we'd call it. It's just going to be a long commercial because they've got six hours to fill."

And make a long story short, Arnold and I shook hands. We filmed it. I shook hands with Discovery, which led to a long-term contract. After we tested in Cincinnati, Ohio, where I'm from and where all my initial stuff started from and then I moved to Philadelphia, I had a chance to get all this time on Discovery locally, but then I went to the national Discovery, signed a multiple year deal to own that six hour block nationwide on Discovery, which was, that was a big breakthrough for me. And this was back in the early '80s. And that time, just that block on Discovery was generating tens of millions of dollars in sales annually. And we weren't paying anywhere near that for that time. So it was a very profitable start of business.

Dave:

You spotted an opportunity and you went for it. How many books have you written? So that was almost 40 years ago. I mean, you have a pretty good track record over that time. How many books have you written during that time?

Kevin:

Only a few. My first book was actually in 1990 with Wiley & Sons and the Gulf War had hit back then and I say, I've had a little bit of experience with really bad situations like pandemics and the COVID crisis,

because I was sitting with a team I've had about 50 employees and we were running infomercials all around the world in 1990. We were in Europe, we were in Asia, we were in Latin America and United States. And when that war hit, boom, our sales just almost stopped. And so I wrote a book... that book, in fact, that this was my very first book and if you don't mind me showing [inaudible 00:07:01].

Dave:

Sure. That was 30 years ago. I love it.

Kevin:

30 years ago, 1990.

Dave:

Oh my God, I had that book. I recognize that cover.

Kevin:

That's me.

Dave:

Wow. But I was just graduating high school when I had that book.

Kevin:

This was, it was six reprints. It was a big release by Wiley, and it took off because I said, "You don't have to quit your job. Get a side hustle. So [inaudible 00:07:28]-

Dave:

They didn't call it that back then, but get a side hustle.

Kevin:

We didn't call it that back then. We called it a spare time business opportunity.

Dave:

That book, Kevin, I have had a side hustle since I was a senior in high school and you did that. Wow. I didn't connect your name with that book, but that title, that cover really resonates. Amazing. So that was 30 years ago.

Kevin:

30 years ago. And then I didn't do anything for many years and my next book was called Act Now! And this is a very interesting story because I was hanging out with... I've had a lot of mentors in my life. And I say, my first mentor I got when I was 11 years old. Happened to be my father, Charlie. But he was a bartender, saved up enough money to open up Harrington's Irish pub. And he said, "Kevin, I'd like for you to help me out and come on in after school and on the weekends." But I wasn't just washing dishes and serving chicken wings. He would bring me back in when he closed the books out and have supplier meetings and had me in at 11 years old, which was pretty impressive. My dad, he wanted me to be an entrepreneur.

So he pushed me to start a business when I was in high school. And then when I was going from my senior year into college, he said, "Hey, look, your number four of six kids and the bar business been but there's not enough there to pay for your college. So you need a full time business now." So I started a heating and air conditioning company, my senior year of high school going into college. By my sophomore year I had 25 employees. We had six trucks going out every day and I had to drop out of college. But I was buying leads from the courthouse of all the new homeowner transactions. And again, this goes back, about 40 some years ago, 45 years ago, something like that.

And we would say, "Welcome to the neighborhood. We're going to come out clean your furnace absolutely free." And that business grew to over at, at that time, it was a million dollar plus business, but in relative terms, that would be about five million today. But I was trained by my father to be an entrepreneur. And I say, trained, he mentored me. But he only had certain skill sets. And so I needed to, as I got out, I sold the heating and air conditioning business.

And I said, I started selling businesses because I wanted to have access to all of the information about small businesses, the books and the records and the leases. And so as a business broker, I was selling hundreds of different companies at one time, pizza parlors, delicatessens, restaurants, nightclubs, small manufacturing companies, but I had all the details, books and records and sales and percentages of food cost and labor cost and leases with the malls and things like that.

It was an educational unto itself. And that is when I ran into Arnold Morris, because I used to go to a lot of trade shows, as I would sell flower shops, and home and garden stores. So I met the Philadelphia home show and there's Arnold Morris with the Ginsu knife. And again, in the early days, I didn't own the products necessarily, or the trademarks. I mean, believe it or not, Warren Buffet owns the Ginsu knife. His factory in Fremont, Ohio was the company that was making it and I was buying it from them. And so they owned the name, and I had the exclusive rights to it for some period of time and crushed it.

Dave:

That makes a lot of sense. So you had mentorship your entire life. And then you became a mentor once you really you got it known what you were doing, you understood it and then you've taught a lot of people. But you've actually been very sparse in what you share about how you've done it. And you just came out with your book. This is the reason I reached out to you, is Mentor to Millions, just coming out is about that mentoring process.

So you grew up with a mentor because your dad's like, "Hey, sit here and do this when you're 11." And what I like about the book right now for people is that there are so many people who just don't have a clue. And I'm going to tell you a little story, because this is how important mentorship is. Way back in the day, when we didn't have the word e-commerce, I was a 46 inch waist kid, sitting in my dorm room.

I needed to pay for school and they jacked up my tuition by like 900% or something. And I'm like, "How am I going to do this?" My summer job putting parts in boxes at our warehouse isn't going to cut it anymore. And so I started selling T-shirts and I sold them over this internet thing before there was a web browser. And it turns out that was the first thing I ever sold over the internet.

And I got my fat picture in Entrepreneur magazine and all this stuff. And what I did though, is I said, "You know what, I'm so tired of picking up checks, take them to the bank." There was no e-commerce payment mechanisms back then. First Virtual was the first one, and that was still two years away. And I said, "I'm just tired of putting T-shirts and bags. I got studying to do." And I just quit.

All I had to do was hop in a car and drive 80 miles to Silicon Valley and get funded. And this would have been before Amazon was funded. I mean, it was right there for me. What I didn't do was ask anyone for help, because I didn't know to do it. And then Marc Andreessen, same time he was like, "I'll make this browser." Like I'm writing reviews of his browser that are published nationally. And he goes straight to Silicon Valley and he gets a mentor, the CEO of Sun Microsystems who teaches him how to do it. And he's like a multibillionaire and like, I'm not doing too bad, but he's like, 100 X better because of mentorship.

And I tell this story maybe once a year on the show. So long time listeners are like, "David shut up." I'm like, "Sorry guys. A lot of people haven't heard that." But the point there is that if someone had gotten through to me when I was 20 and just told me, get a mentor and how to do it, it would have been more important than having a side hustle. So your book is the manual on how to do this. And I want you to teach listeners now, how do you go out and find a mentor?

Kevin:

Great question. So here I was, and I'm going to go fast forward from my father into, I was now in the business of selling products on TV. I owned As Seen On TV, Inc, [asseenontv.com](http://asseenontv.com). And we had thousands of products on these websites. And by the way, [asseenontv.com](http://asseenontv.com) was an amazing business because I didn't have to spend one dime of advertising and we were doing tens of millions of dollars in sales because it's where everybody went. They just, they Googled in into their Google search As Seen On TV and it would end up at our site. But the problem I first had, and this is going back to the early '80s, even during the Ginsu days, I was getting massive amounts of orders.

And I was sitting with 40,000 orders that I couldn't fulfill because I didn't have the capital for the inventory. So we cut the deal with Discovery. They're running these shows like crazy, orders are flying in and how am I call the factory. And now Ginsu's came out of Toledo. So we didn't have as much problem there because we could place an order and get a turnaround in about two weeks. But when we were doing these hand hammer Chinese walks out of mainland China, it was cash in advance upfront, and then you're going to get it 90 days later. So I went to five banks and I showed them my business. And I said, "I've got a nice business. It's just a new business model, selling products on TV."

And make a long story short, there was no assets behind this company and the banks are like, "Look, there's nothing that we can really attach. We need assets. So I got turned down by five different banks. And then I was very upset because I said, "If I just had money... we were doing \$50 million a year at this particular time. I said, "If I have money, we can take off." And so I reached out and this is step one when you're looking for a mentor.

And if you're in business, you write checks every week and every month to accountants, to lawyers, for me to phone centers, to fulfillment centers, to media companies, to payment processors, dozens and dozens of checks and big ones to different people. So where do you start? Who's going to benefit if you grow your business? Those people that you write checks to the accountants, the lawyers they're going to be dealing with a bigger business, more sales, more monthly fees that they can charge, et cetera. But they also want to help you.

So I say, start from within your circle that you're dealing with, but don't be afraid to ask your accountant, hey, I need some help. Can you help me go raise some money? And hey, yes. But as it turned out, my lawyer knew a guy, he said, "Hey, I know a guy that retired. He's a retired banker. He's only 60 years old." This is back a few years back in the '80s. But he said, "He's looking for something to do. Maybe you should give him a call show." This came through my lawyer, met with this guy and he said, "Kevin," he said, "Your business in its current state is unbankable, but I know how to make it bankable. And this is the deal that I'm going to cut with you."

He went to five banks. "I'm going to help you. I'm going to take 90 days because we're going to have to shore up some of your contracts and your presentation. It's never going to fly. So let me work with you. I'm not going to charge you a dime. I'm going to get you a \$3 million line of credit." And he said, "I probably will get it from someone that's already turned you down." And so I said, "Well, I've got nothing to lose. Let's go."

And he said, "And then when I'm done, we're both going to sit down and we're going to see if there's some future relationship that we want to have. But it's based on the fact that I was willing to help you for nothing, no charge. Just being a mentor to you." And I said, "Let's do it." We shook hands. 90 days later, \$3 million in my account on a line of credit. We use that to build the business to 150 million. And after that we got a \$10 million line of credit that took us to over 500 million.

So I wouldn't be sitting here talking to you right now if I had not found that gentleman that mentored me to go get the cash. Or maybe I would have found someone down the road, but the bottom line is entrepreneurs you've got to raise your hand. You've got to say, please, I need help. And then you start with the people that you're either doing business with, or you know, it could be some friends, could be some family, some uncles, or are a long a part of your life. But also I say in today's world, we all belong to different groups and clubs and organizations and EO, you mentioned, that was something we started in 1987.

We're at 150 cities around the world. And so when you join EO, you actually get a group of mentors that meet you on a monthly basis. So we said, "This is important." Young and actually EO started as YEO in the very beginning. And we said, "You can't be over 40." And then, Verne Harnish and myself, and a couple of us, Ted Leonsis. I don't know if Ted or Michael Dell, is one of the guys. We got up in our upper 30s. We said, "Well, we better change the YEO to EO and make it 50 years old. So we did. And so YEO morphed into EO and is now, it's been great. But they give you mentors.

Dave:

And I think a lot of people may not know about that group. What are the requirements to get into EO? You have to have a business of some size.

Kevin:

A million dollars in sales, and it's a qualifier because they don't want people in there that are tire kickers and people that are thinking about starting a business.

Dave:

The want entrepreneurs.

Kevin:

They want people that are in business.

Dave:

And I will tell you if you're listening to this and you're entrepreneur, and I know there are a lot of entrepreneurs because I speak to entrepreneurs because that's what I am. If you're not a member of either EO or YPO, which has a higher level requirement there, you're missing out because I've learned so much from people. I remember one of the guys, I'm not going to call him out here because I don't know if he'd want me to. But I was having a problem with one of my employees and I knew it, but I was also

like, "Maybe I could fix it." And so he literally looked at me and he said, "Hand me his phone." And he said, "Are we going to use my phone or your phone to fire the problem employee?"

And I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Look, how do you think I got to \$500 million, Dave?" He said, "You have to do this. And the longer you wait, the more it's going to punish your team like it's not working out, it's no one's fault, et cetera, et cetera." All this stuff that every entrepreneur has to hear. And this is one of those things where I already knew it, but I wasn't acting on it for whatever my own psychological reasons were. But man, you can't buy that. And he would have never let me buy it. It was literally an act of kindness and service from his perspective. But man, it was something I needed to do.

Kevin:

Exactly.

Dave:

I look back, it's so important.

Kevin:

So many other places, Dave, you know some of these, the Joe Polish's of the world.

Dave:

Joe is a dear friend. He's been on the show.

Kevin:

Genius. So I hit a point where I said to Joe, "Joe, I don't know what to do. This As Seen On TV business is going downhill because television viewership is dropping." And he says, "Hey, you probably would like to talk to a mentor." And he said, "What are you doing in about six weeks?" And I said, "What do you got in mind?" He said, "Why don't you come down to Necker Island with me, I'd like to introduce you to Richard Branson." And so I said to Dave, "What am I doing in six weeks? I'm going to be with you at Necker Island."

So I went down there and I'm sitting talking to Richard and he's like, "I've seen those As Seen On TV spots and that Billy Mays guy and Tony Little." He said, "But Kevin," he said, "You built Ellie Mae's brand, you built Tony Little's brand, but did you ever build your brand?" And it hit me like a ton of bricks. Well, I was making money on these deals, but no, I never built my brand. But Tony Little's brand is worth, I don't know how much, but he's done pretty well for himself.

So I came out of there and I said, "I got to start writing books again." And that was the chance for me. I came out of there, wrote my next book with HCI international, the guys who did Chicken Soup for the Soul. And that book came out, it was called Act Now! And I started, I was doing a lot of radio shows like, we're talking, today podcasts and stuff, but who was watching, Mark Burnett was watching some of this stuff out there, because I was creating content and getting out there. And so I say to myself that getting good advice, because I was up to this point, you said, how many books have I written in 1990? And then that book was, the Act Now! was 10, 12 years ago. And so my next book was 20 years.

Dave:

So three books in 40 years of success. So I would say you're waiting until you have something meaningful to say. And look at how you went about getting Richard Branson as a mentor. Not that you

call him all the time, but that you needed advice from someone. And has Richard Branson built his brand the same time he built many companies with Virgin in the name? Heck yeah. Like he mastered that. So he showed you that knowledge and all, but it's rarefied air. You get to talk to Joe Polish, who he runs a networking group that's \$25,000 a year. And by the way, worth every penny. In fact that was the first major networking group that I joined when I could afford it, because the knowledge was so good.

So you had a way to get to Richard, but most people here like 46% of people, according to research, you talk about research in your book, say they have a mentor. The other 54% don't have a mentor at all or a coach or anything else. So you could get to Richard, but how is a person who isn't breathing the rarefied air that you breathe, or frankly, that I breathe, how were they going to get a mentor?

Kevin:

Well, I mean, so that's one example of an amazing mentor. But just like I was talking about with this banker that was retired. I mean, we ended up meeting and when I called him, we were both members of the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce. So we said, "Hey, well, let's meet the next chamber meeting." And it was just me and him and boom, we created something pretty special. So I think it's important for entrepreneurs. First of all, I said, raise their hand. They have to say, yes, I need some help. And once you do that, then the question is, how high up the ladder could you go? So I like to go as high as I can, but, I mean, I can tell you stories that predate before I was ever known anywhere that I was aggressive enough to be able to go and make things happen. I mean, I'll give you one other example, a gentlemen came in looking for some capital, because this is what I say, why do people-

Dave:

So you do a Shark Tank, right?

Kevin:

Why do people go on Shark Tank? They want money or they want some help, they want some advice, they want to mentor. Really.

Dave:

Or publicity. I mean, let's face it.

Kevin:

Yeah. Publicity on ABC network. So this guy comes in, he sells products to the military, and I'm like, "So what's your problem?" Because mentors focus on problems and solutions. And his problem was he had great products, but he would get to certain points inside the military and then he couldn't get any further and he was getting shut down. So I'm sitting there and I'm thinking, "How do you get to the highest level of the military?"

And so I live in Tampa, Florida, St. Pete, Florida, MacDill Air Force Base is here, central command. And they have retired generals out at MacDill Air Force Base. So I said, "Why don't we do this, let's find out if there's some retired generals that might have a business model to consult businesses and become mentors to companies." And by the way, that's what they do. A retired general, their business model is consult eight or 10 companies, get on boards, become an advisor, get some fees, get some equity, build your... they have a brand onto itself.

So make a long story short. We did that. We got him on board. He became a consultant mentor to the company and opened up all the doors. I mean, it was mind blowing how fast and furious we were able to get to the higher levels inside the military, down at [inaudible 00:26:56] down in Dallas, by the way.

So I think one of the challenges entrepreneurs have is they're afraid to do it. They don't know what to say or where to go and it's in, sometimes you just have to raise your hand and just go for it. And for me, that's kind of how it all started back in the early days. I mean, also I had Zig Ziglar as a mentor along the way too. And this was back long before I was ever on Shark Tank or anyone even know who in the heck I was. Because Zig was a good man. I mean, I'm sure you ran into Zig over the years.

Dave:

Absolutely.

Kevin:

You were there.

Dave:

Very famous guy.

Kevin:

But at the same time, when I was going through this transition from As Seen On TV, and I actually realized, and I had a meeting and I called, this was another one that I called out of the blue, Russell Brunson, long before ClickFunnels, really before Russell became the guru that he is today, I sat with him. This is, eight years ago and I showed him what I was doing. He said, "Kevin," he said, "That TV stuff," he says, "You've got to be in the digital world. And you've got to be..." and he's talking about this funnel stuff and I didn't know what he was talking about.

But make a long story short, I realized I've got to get out of As Seen On TV my sole way of moving products. And so literally what I did, I sold it. I sold it As Seen On TV Inc., I sold [aseenontv.com](http://aseenontv.com), got out at a very nice number, way more than I had invested or paid for them. And so, I was able to get a return on that, but then get out at the right time because television time, the viewership it's plummeting. I mean, it's no secret, they're on Facebook, they're on Instagram, they're Disney+ signed 100 million subscribers in its launch. I mean-

Dave:

That's crazy.

Kevin:

... it's unbelievable what's happening out in the market. So make a long story short with Russell, this is the beginning of what I started to do. And I actually tried to put a deal together with Russell to be in business with him in the digital way, but he was already encumbered with a bunch of different deals. But I brought on a team of very talented young. I mean, these were kids in their, like their low to mid 20s, and that were just digital, really gurus, so to speak. And I started eight years ago in the world of Facebook and Instagram and digital and things like that, that we were able to have some good success with.

Dave:

It's been an amazing path. And I'm not sure that I quite here though, how you... I mean, you had your first accountant, but how do you go out? Let's say as a 20 year old, this is the hardest time because I get some people who are just finished high school. They're a little bit of the way through college and they'll hit me up on DM on Instagram like, "Hey, will you be my mentor?" And I'm like, "Actually, no."

And it's not that I don't want to help you, I actually really enjoy mentoring people, but it's that, A, I don't know you, I don't know what you're working on. Your pitch sucked. And I'm probably going to say no anyway unless you've already got something you can show me that says you've done something different or you have this unusual ability. But, those guys definitely aren't getting my time and attention just because my kids are getting it. How would you tell someone based on your book about mentorship, how would you tell someone who doesn't have a lot of experience? They go out, how do they know how high up the rank to target? What do they say? What do they do?

Kevin:

Great question. I think it's going to take some trial and error for most of these folks. There is no, just golden reveal of how it happens. But I'll tell you some people that have gotten to me in some pretty creative ways. I spoke at Traffic and Conversion last year and I think they had six or 8,000 people. They're a pretty good crowd. And so busy, busy the whole time. And I'm at the airport and getting ready to jump on a plane to go home. And this young kid comes up to me and he looks at me and he says, "Mr. Harrington," he says, "I know who you are. I've been following you. I was at the show today. You were so busy. I would have loved to been able to get you, but I just want to know, I have \$100 bill and I'd like to give you that for 10 minutes of your time."

And so this kid sitting there in the airport giving me this pitch and he hands me the \$100 bill. And I still had about 15 minutes before we were boarding and whatever. And I just looked at him and I had a huge smile on my face. And I just said, "You know what, son?" I said, he was probably 20 years old. And so I said, "Take your 100 back. That was a great pitch. And let's sit over here and let's talk." And I've been giving him some mentoring ever since then. And so I think it's, you said it, it's you got to have a good pitch.

And there's a couple of things mentors want. Number one, I've mentored people that after the first session or the couple of sessions, and I'm getting with them the next month and how do we do with updates? Can you give me an update from our last meeting? "Well, geez. I've been so busy. I didn't get a chance to do some of those things that you said that I should be doing." And it's like, "Hey, look, if I want to take my time and you don't have the time to do what I come up with, then I'm out." So I say a mentee should be the mentors best student. And in the book Mentor to Millions, Mark Timm, we actually take a journey. And Mark, he's sitting in a driveway. The opening of the book he sitting in the driveway and he had the best day of his life in business.

And it's 7:30 at night and he's going into the house, but he knows that the minute he walks in the house, everything's going to turn totally negative because why weren't you here for dinner? You're working too hard. What's this entrepreneurship all about? And he's like, "I need some help and-

Dave:

Get a real job.

Kevin:

Yeah. Get a real job. My mom used to say that. And so Mark realized that, his family wasn't fulfilled and he wasn't fulfilled in the family side. And so we have a journey and a transformation that we take. Mark reached out to me and he actually would bring his kids down to my office, down to my house and hang out. And that was part of the deal because he said, he wanted to create a family business that was going to be the most important business in his life. And that's what he did.

He brought the whole team in and they got business cards and they got titles and they got equity in the family business. And this was the transformation that he went through during the journey that we took during Mentor to Millions. And so Mark, he reached out to me, but I say he reached out to me. It actually was a pretty cool introduction because Mark was mentored by Zig Ziglar. I was mentored by Zig Ziglar, and Tom Ziglar knew both of us. And Tom reached out to the two of us and said, "You guys should be talking because I think my dad would have loved for me to put you together." And so our mutual mentor ended up creating the mentor mentee relationship between us.

So I think that again, you need a good pitch. You're not going to get a good pitch. If you don't have a good pitch, rather, you're not going to get that mentor. So sometimes you need to appeal to aside of them that... a lot of entrepreneurs like myself, I have lived the Zig quote, "You can get everything in life you want, if you just help enough other people get what they want," because I have always been there for entrepreneurs that were pitching me stuff.

And even if I wasn't going to help in the investment, I try to steer them in the right direction. Now, obviously you can't do this every single time, but I think the bottom line is that entrepreneurs that are successful, that could be mentors, they ultimately want to be able to provide some of this giving back to the entrepreneurial community in a mentoring fashion, as long as you're a good student and it's not too much aggravation and not too much of a pain in the process.

Dave:

I look at how you approach that you needed a good pitch. And it seems like the art of dating has been lost thanks to apps and whatever else, not to mention COVID. But I've talked to family members, I've talked to friends who were in the early 20s, and it's like, "Oh my God, how do I ask this girl out? How do I tell this guy that I like him or whatever?" I'm like, "Well, you just go up and you tell them."

And if they don't reciprocate it, it's like, do you like pizza or tacos? And the answer is, well, you like tacos and they like pizza. It's okay. It doesn't mean you're bad. It just means you're pizza and they don't like it. But that sense of fear that's there and the way you get over that, is you just ask enough people out, eventually you're not afraid because some say yes, some say no, and it's good either way.

And you also polish up your pitch. I'm not talking about the PUA, manipulative, pick up artists disgusting stuff. I'm just talking about learning how to do it. And it feels like for asking for a mentor, look, if you do a pitch like that with \$100 bill, most people who are successful don't care about 100 bucks, but at least you're showing you value the other person's time. But it can also feel like a bit of a shtick, especially now that it's just been on the show. So you can work on your pitch, but I would just say, ask a few people because the worst they'll do is get a no, and you might get a yes.

Kevin:

Raise your hand. It all starts raise your hand and ask for help. Absolutely. And the universe has a way of bringing things back to the people that do need them, but you can't just sit. And when COVID first hit, a lot of people were burying their heads in the sand. That's the time that you have to get out and start connecting. And as I say, what did I do? I collaborated quite a bit in the early days. It's like, let's connect and collaborate and do some things together because a lot of times that at times of strife like that, it's important not to give up, but to see if there's opportunities and what problems can you solve right now.

Dave:

It seems like asking for an intro is a good strategy too. We talked about Joe Polish a little while ago. He texted me the other day and he said, "Dave, you need to talk to this guy. He's the same age you were." When I was 26 when I lost six... I made \$6 million. I lost when I was 28. He was like, "This guy literally was worth nothing and all of a sudden he's got a company doing almost \$20 million a year in revenue, and he doesn't know what to do."

So I'm like, "Wait a minute. I get to get on the phone with this guy and tell him how to not lose all of his money the way I did." And for me, it's like, this is fantastic. What a great match. Thanks, Joe. Joe's like the ultimate business matchmaker that way. So we've had like four or five phone calls just in the evening sometimes where I'm like, "Oh my God, you don't have this insurance. You need to do this. And, don't do that." And just all these things that are no obvious to me. So the reason I'm sharing this, A, thanks, Joe. But B, it is so cool to be a mentor when it's someone who's going to really not step in a big pile of crap that you stepped in your life.

Kevin:

I got to give you a good example. I got a call from Joe Polish. "Hey, you got to meet this guy, Nick Sonnenberg." I don't know if you've heard the name.

Dave:

Yeah.

Kevin:

Nick is going on Shark Tank. And he said, "Can you mentor him on how to deliver a good pitch?" And so, that's right down my alley, obviously. Because I've gotten many folks on... been able to help them get on Shark Tank by teaching them how to make those pitches. Because I'm on the other side of taking the pitches, what is it that we look for in a good pitch and what are the producers looking for, because we'd hear all the horror stories of people that weren't getting accepted and those that did.

But make a long story short, Nick came back afterwards and said, "Kevin, thank you. I actually used your advice and not only got the show, but got the deal." Well, I think the deal blew up eventually, but, anyway, I love helping in areas that are specific to me. So I think sometimes the question from a mentee is what is the problem or problems that you have and who might be best suited to help you with this, because if it is in the skillset of the entrepreneur that you're approaching to be the mentor, for me, hey, to help somebody get on Shark Tank, that's a pretty easy situation for me to do, and one that I actually enjoy. And when I get people that call me that want help, when it comes to getting on a show like that, I like it. It's something I jump to because I have fun doing it.

Dave:

And is that where you're uniquely qualified, right? And so that asking for an intro is a powerful thing I believe, but I wanted to gut check it with you. And then on the flip side, I look at these statistics for Bulletproof Radio and we're somewhere around 180 million downloads right now. And it's about 55% women, 45% men, which is pretty cool. So we're like right in the middle. And it's a little bit weighted towards, 25 to 35, but there's people from all the different age groups and all of that, just because this, hey, I want my brain to work better, I want my body to work better and I don't want to spend a lot of time on it. It's a universal appeal. So for the people who are over 35, most likely who are saying, you know what, maybe it's time for me to be a mentor to someone. I don't know how to do the flip side of that. So how do you raise your hand and say, I'm happy to help?

Kevin:

That's a good question also. I mean, first of all, there are lots of organizations that could use good mentor. So we talk about the entrepreneur's organization. They're looking for, and I get phone calls now from members that are asking me for help also. So I think, I put myself out to different communities. I create content I'm on. So I don't mind helping mentor folks. And I think in my world, I do some mentoring that's just absolutely give back to the community and the entrepreneurial community. In other cases, I have a mentoring relationships where there might be some a benefit for myself. So for example, I joined the board. I mean, this is a crazy story. You may know this product. You're familiar with the company Celsius?

Dave:

Yes.

Kevin:

The energy drink. It's supposedly there's clinical studies that talk about the ability of it to burn calories, 140 calories for somebody that drinks it. So they came to me, the CEO of this company used to work for me. And he reached out to me as a mentor to start and, "Can you help because we're just getting started?" This is six years ago. And the company was a small public company. They had 5 billion shares of stock and the stock was 10 cents a share. And so I started looking at what they were doing and they were competing against Red Bull and Monster. And I said, "That the retail side of the business, that's going to be very competitive because you're talking about Publix and 7-Eleven and CVS and Walgreens and all of the retail distribution. That's one form you have to go after, but we have to also take a look at direct to the consumer and influencers, and by the way, fitness influencers, for example."

So I brought in FlowRider, who then brought in Khloe Kardashian. And now we started a whole separate path. And by the way, they then said, "Kevin, will you join the board and we're going to give you a bunch of stock and all of this." And so yes, I did. Well, let's fast forward. Now the company had 50 million shares at 10 cents, \$5 million market cap. The company just hit \$1.4 billion just this past week in market value. And most of that growth, the stock was \$5 a share in May of this year.

But from May to September, it went from five to 20. Why? Because we were focusing and pivoting with engines on the direct to the consumer side of the business. So fitness influencers were just crushing it for Celsius. And so while COVID was hitting and people couldn't find product in stores that were shut down, the direct to the consumer, the Amazon channels, et cetera. And again, this is my skill set.

And again, this happened from somebody that just reached out knowing that I would give some advice, but I took it to the next step and said, "Okay, maybe I'll join the board," and now have some compensation. And by the way, I mean, when you talk about a stock going from 10 cents to \$20, these sometimes mentors can end up with some very lucrative situations when it's all said and done.

Dave:

You certainly can. It's never been my motivation. One of the things that happened, I had a really strong employee who was relatively young and she came to me one day and she said, "I'm really sorry I have to quit." I'm like, "What are you talking about? Like, you have a department. Your career is great here." And she said, "I have this opportunity to take this cosmetics company that I've been, just dreaming about. And I've been working on and I just Good Morning America. I have to do this." And she had tears in her eyes. And then this is crazy. And she said, "I've learned a lot working for you, Dave. Will you write

me a check to invest in my new company so I can tell my other investors that I have your support." And I'm like, "That is a baller ask right there." Right?

Kevin:

Yeah.

Dave:

And I wish I'd have written a bigger check. The company is called Thrive Causemetics. And I think today it's worth as much as Bulletproof is worth.

Kevin:

It's amazing.

Dave:

It's like, "Karissa, well done." Karissa Bodnar is her name. But that ask was so... it was actually authentic. And it was not only, hey, will you mentor me, but will you actually put skin in the game? And normally I'm like, you put skin in the game because you're taking my time. But it was a good thing. And it also means that she is giving me stock at a low price or whatever. But man, I wish I'd put another zero on that check.

Kevin:

I understand. What are the other things I say that when people are approaching a mentor, they should do a lot of research on that person. I mean, it's just like, if you're going to go on Shark Tank, know what Barbara likes, know what Mr. Wonderful might like, or don't like, or how they like to structure things. So I believe that the doing the research like that is, it gives you the knowledge on openings that giving you ways to approach, because just like you said, that was a pretty ballsy move. It sounds like you made a little deal and helped her out and it worked out great for everybody.

Dave:

It's at least 100 X or something I think, or 60 X or something. I don't know, some giant amount.

Kevin:

The more information you have on the people that you're going to be talking with and the things that they're, maybe what their Twitter feeds are looking like, and, or their social media, their Instagrams, et cetera, because the more knowledge, the closer you can connect with that potential mentor also.

Dave:

I like that advice a lot. And the message for people listening is, all right, maybe it's time to be a mentor to someone and think about what are you good at. And if you're looking for that, one thing that we haven't talked about here is, you and I are both entrepreneurs. And even when I was very young in my career, I was always an entrepreneur. I'm the guy who would start something new inside a bigger company and turn it into, at one point, one of the things I was a co-founder of, we did 100 million a quarter in revenue, in my mid 20s, because like someone had to do it, but the execs almost shut us down because they didn't know what we were doing until we showed them our own numbers. And like, "That's the way the numbers are where they are." And then it got better.

But because I was clueless. But along the way I can think of three or four times in corporate America that a mentor sought me out. A woman named Carla Lindsey at 3Com. She was Eric Benhamou's. He's a big name if you're familiar with Google's history and all that stuff. She was his personal assistant, or sorry, his executive assistant. And she saw me in a corporate training thing and was like, "We need to sit down and have coffee every week."

And she taught me how corporation politics work. I'm like, "Thanks, Carla." But I didn't seek her out. She sought me out probably because I was just this noisy guy, noisy kid who needed a sitting down or something. But I looked through that and I would not be where I am without her and several others throughout that.

So in corporate America, you can also ask for a mentor or mentors will oftentimes find you. And so don't think this is only for entrepreneurs, if you're listening to this. If you have a job, even if you're on Skype, you say, look, we're going to set up a call once every couple of weeks. I'm going to have specific questions for you. I want your advice. You're going to tell me where I'm screwing up and then you just listen and that's good.

But something else has happened to me. I'm thinking, no, guys like Joe Polish, he reached out. Actually, it was an introduction. J. J. Virgin introduced me, but he reached out and really formed a relationship and gave me great advice. And then Jay Abraham, same thing. He called me up and said, "Dave, we need to sit down."

And like, "I read your book when I was starting my company, Jay." This is just an epic marketing guy. He's been on the show, I think twice now. And he ended up talking to everyone in my company about how to make a big difference in people's lives. But he reached out, we've become friends, he's a mentor. And then same thing, Dr. Barry Morguelan on more of the energy medicine side of things who's been on the show.

But these are relationships where I don't feel like I sought them out as mentors. I feel like they almost did the heavy lifting. And what I want to know based on you, because you have more experience than I do. So is it because I'm weird or is it because they're like Uber mentors? Like what's going on there?

Kevin:

I'll say this, I think, how many years ago was this? Was it five years ago or something?

Dave:

Jay and Barry like five. About five years ago or so.

Kevin:

I mean, first of all, you've created something very unique in the marketplace, and as you've taken off, some people, guys like Jay... I mean, Jay is a very smart guy. And so he's saying, I'll bet you that Dave is running into things that I've already seen and I can reach out to him. So that happens. Yes. Jay is an Uber mentor for sure because I received similar phone calls from Jay.

Dave:

Okay. So you know him. He's just a helping guy.

Kevin:

There are some people that are just very nice like that, and Jay happens to be one of them. But I think, I'm a big, in my direct response world, I have a formula that I use for pitching and it's called tease them, please them and seize them. Tease like starting with an attention, getting problem. You please by solving the problem with some magical transformations and maybe some great testimonials. And then you seize by having an irresistible offer.

So that process, tease and please and seize them is, I think if you're a mentee and you're trying to get to a mentor, you've got problems that you need solved. And so you appeal to the interest of that mentor to identify tease with that problem. So, hey, here's a problem I have. And hopefully you, Mr. Mentor can understand that I have that problem. But I'm inexperienced and I can't solve that problem yet, but I need some help. And could you please help me with that? So I think that's a very... you're giving a specific situation.

And for me, it was very specific when I got the finance mentor. I said, "I have a business, I've got orders. I need inventory to be paid for it. I need capital." And so this guy, I don't know if he was looking to be a mentor or not, but I raised my hand, I asked him and I pitched him to help me. And then he came back with an amazing deal that was like, "Hey, I'm going to get it for you and not going to cost you anything. And you're going to have the money sitting in your bank in 90 days."

When I presented the problem to him almost like, hey, is this something that you can solve? You're almost appealed to his competitiveness of, yes, I could solve that and I'm going to do it. In fact, I'm going to get a guy that turns you down, give you the money. I mean, it was almost a game for him.

And so I think some mentors like that game aspect a little bit of helping and succeeding. And I have so many different stories of different people that I have mentored over the years and seen that really positive transformation. But I have just as many that didn't do what I said and so I had to cut them off and go by the wayside now. So raise your hand, go for it. And again, like I think you're saying, hey, let's just, it doesn't have to be a formal pitch. Hey, do you like pizza or you like tacos? I like a little more structure to it. And for those that don't know how to do it with a little structure, they might have a better chance.

Dave:

The structure is a good idea and asking it never hurts, because if they don't like you, it's not about you. You don't have to be wounded. And the other thing we talked about EO, we talked about YPO. There's a local chamber of commerce. You mentioned that you did that early on, like hanging out around people who do business if you want business mentorship is a pretty good idea. And the same thing, if you want mentorship for pro sports, hang around places where professional athletes go, you might meet one and hit it off. And so go to the right conferences, all those sorts of things. It sounds obvious when I say it, but a lot of people aren't doing that because frankly, when I was 25, would I have gone to a chamber of commerce?

Well, actually I was in Silicon Valley. I'd probably not even know if they have one of those. But in most of the time I wouldn't have because I would've thought, I don't belong here. I'm not good enough would have been, especially back then. Like who do I think I am showing up with all these experienced business people? Not knowing, wait, look what you just did. Like you did the first e-commerce and all that. But your self-image may not be there. And so the message for you listening is, go where the people who might mentor you are, would be an obvious thing. But Hey, like we got to talk about that.

Kevin:

And you can use digital ways also. I mean, LinkedIn, we do a lot of stuff on LinkedIn now, so there's good connections there. But I also, I do a lot of business. I've talked about associations, as part of starting EO.

I started the ERA, Electronic Retailing Association. I'm very like when I go to the houseware show for example, which is, I've been 33 out of 35 years to the Chicago housewares show. And they just canceled last year because of COVID. So this is why I missed one of the... one I was definitely ill and the other was COVID. But the bottom line is, I network at high levels there. And this is before Shark Tank. I would network with the people that are the publishers of HomeWorld magazine, for example.

And so when you start networking at the highest levels that you can, you start making the right connections. And so when you need help, these are the people that you can reach out to that tend to have some pretty good connections and good ideas on who they can get maybe to help you out. And sometimes mentoring isn't going to be necessarily for the next five years. It could be a quick fix of something that you need or, a six month or one year run or something. So it doesn't have to last forever type of thing.

Dave:

That's such good advice. And Kevin, I think your book is worth reading for any entrepreneur and especially for people who are getting going as an entrepreneur. And you talk about being the original side hustle guy, which given how much I recognize your book, I'm like, "Oh wow. I hadn't put those together." If you have a job in corporate America and you're saying, look, I want to be an entrepreneur. I would just tell you, look, think about whether you really want to be an entrepreneur. You can have a side hustle and not be an entrepreneur, and that's okay. And your side hustle may be working with an entrepreneur and that's okay.

Kevin:

Sure.

Dave:

You can be in support of someone like that, but having a side hustle is something that is more important now than ever before. So you might as well start thinking about that. And I will just share with you as a listener, since my teens, I've always had a side hustle. As I was going Bulletproof, I actually had three other companies that I was incubating that I didn't pay much attention to at all.

So that when I hired a CEO for Bulletproof and became executive chairman and founder and evangelist, what do you know, I have 40 years of Zen and I have TrueDark the glasses company and all that stuff. And they're all ready to go because even at a successful level, a side hustle is about doing what you want to do. And could I have done those things if I didn't have good mentors? No. And one of my biggest regrets, seriously, biggest regrets of all is not asking for and being willing to accept mentorship much earlier in life. And that's why I wanted you to be on and talk about your book because three books in 40 years, and one of those about mentorship, I think you've learned something.

Kevin:

I mean, I was an egotistical entrepreneur when I first started and I didn't... I mean, I'll never forget having a conversation with my accounting firm when I was hiring a CFO, they're like, "You've got to put a big budget on that because you're going to be a very big successful company." And I'm like, they wanted me to pay him more than I was getting. And in hindsight, that was a smart move probably for me because, I owned the company.

My value wasn't in my paycheck. My value was in the enterprise value of the company. Let me get the best guy I can in finance, but I didn't take their advice. And I found the guy that I hired had a big box in the corner of all by returns that were coming in, we were supposed to issue credits. And he's like,

"They're just, month after month." We had 60 plus days of returns and the banks were screaming and it's because this guy was so incompetent because I didn't want to give him the money that he deserved. Not him, but-

Dave:

You don't want to pay for the position. Right?

Kevin:

... [inaudible 00:59:31]. Yeah. So I'm totally the opposite now. I'm like, I want the best people that I can afford and the best mentors that I can bring on. And I just say that the folks that are out there that are thinking, can I go get a really good mentor? You won't believe how many people approach the shark and say, "Will you help me?" And I've got dozens of people that I'm helping right now, not every single day, but on a schedule of time. And so it's different reasons that I picked some of these that I'm just given back to the entrepreneurial community. And I get a charge out of helping people and seeing their success. And I think that's ultimately what many mentors are looking to see.

Dave:

That maybe the biggest gift of this episode is just that understanding that people who are doing mentoring, they are not doing it at their expense. They're doing it because it makes them happy, because it makes them better people, because they're paying it forward or they're paying it back for their mentor, but they want to help. And God, I wish I had to just understand that people want to help you.

Like what a crazy thing, but it's actually how it works. So Kevin, thanks for writing *Mentor to Millions*. It is definitely worth a read if you like the show and you're interested in how to get that extra help and just how to get inside the mind of a shark and all that, it's absolutely worth your time. And I wish you the best of luck and I'm going to probably have to reach out for my next book and see how you pulled off such a win with this one.

Kevin:

Thank you very much. The book has taken off. We're having a lot of success. I'm excited about it because it's only my third book in 40 years. So, thanks for having me on today. And I hope that you're going to share this with all of your folks, which you are obviously. And I want to just say this, for those that buy our book, they're going to get 30 days of free mentoring. And it's very simple, you go to [kevinmentor.com](http://kevinmentor.com) and 30 days of free mentoring, myself and Mark Timm. We have live coaching, live mentoring. We have virtual mentoring and lots of videos and all kinds of great content we've created. So [kevinmentor.com](http://kevinmentor.com). And I want to thank you for having me and sharing this with your folks following you. Thank you, Dave. Appreciate it.

Dave:

Kevin, thanks for your work in the world as an entrepreneur. Thanks for being on the show. Guys take advantage of a 30 day course from Kevin. That's a huge value, and we have no financial relationship or anything like that. This is just about you getting value, so that the things that are top of mind for you right now, we can address those and you can get the stuff that you need. I'll see you on the next episode.