



Achieve Your Goals Podcast #107 - A Radical Approach to Achieving Your 2016 Goals Jon Berghoff

Nick: Welcome to the Achieve Your Goals podcast with Hal Elrod. I'm your host, Nick Palkowski, and you're listening to the show that is guaranteed to help take your life to the next level faster than you ever thought possible.

In each episode you'll learn from someone who has achieved extraordinary goals that most haven't. He is the author of the number one bestselling book, 'The Miracle Morning,' a Hall of Fame and business achiever, an international keynote speaker, ultra marathon runner, and the founder of vipsuccesscoaching.com, Mr. Hal Elrod.

Hal: Goal achievers, welcome to another episode of The Achieve Your Goals podcast. This is your host Hal Elrod. Today our guest is none other than Jon Berghoff. And you've heard from Jon in the podcast before. That is because he is my business partner and one of my good friends but one of the most brilliant individuals that I know. He's the co-creator and co-host of the Best Year Ever [Blueprint].

And today we're going to talk about a radical approach to achieving your goals. But we're going to go beyond just talking about it. We're actually, before I announce that we're going to talk about it I should make sure Jon's there. Jon, are you on the podcast my friend?

Jon: I'm here buddy.

Hal: All right, that's good. It would be bad if I just introduced what you're going to talk about and then you weren't there anymore, so.

Jon: That's true. I think you would have been okay.

Hal: Yeah, I would have winged it. I would have been good. No, so here is the deal guys, we're going to go beyond just talking about this radical approach to achieving your goals as a concept. We're going to go beyond just talking about it as a concept and teaching it to you. We're going to give you a real specific example of how we use this approach to put on the Best Year Ever [Blueprint] live event, which sold out a month in advance. The response from attendees has been absolutely profound. In fact Jon, I'm holding a thank you card from two women that were at the event and I just want to take a second to read just a couple sentences.

She says, "Hal, I don't think I've stopped smiling since I left the Best Year Ever [Blueprint] event. It is absolutely a game changer and something I will take with me forever. I've been to countless conferences and always leave with a good idea or two which ultimately I never put into practice. With this event I not only came away with hundreds of ideas but my mindset has completely shifted." I mean on and on.

So I share that with you guys and gals because we want, there is a twofold purpose of this. It's the radical approach to achieving your goals that we used to design and deliver the Best Year Ever [Blueprint] event and we're going to combine that with the best concepts from the Best Year Ever [Blueprint] event. So if you were one of the 350 people that were there, this is going to serve as a great reminder, but for the other tens of thousands of you listening that weren't there you're going to get the best of this approach that we used to design the event that you can apply to your goals and you're going to get the actual specific lessons and experiences that were delivered at the event for the attendees so you can apply those in your own life.

So Jon, does that sum it up pretty well?

Jon: Yeah, that sounds complicated.

Hal: It sounds like a big promise, a little complicated.

Jon: Yeah, it sounds like we just promised to do four things at once. And I think, before we jumped on I think you asked if we could do this whole thing in 30 minutes.

Hal: Yeah.

Jon: It sounds perfect buddy, it's perfect.

Hal: Yeah, yeah 30 minutes. All right, so let me just, I'll say this and then I'm going to bring Jon on. If you look at the...when we say this is a radical approach to achieving your goals, the common approach to achieving goals is you set goals. You set them, you write them down, maybe you make some plans and you hope for the best. And that rarely works out for the best.

This approach is very specific and if you're taking notes, which I encourage you to do, this is definitely a call where there is going to be a lot of nuggets that you want to jot down or this is a podcast episode with a lot of nuggets. The radical approach is very specific. Approach the future with questions that enable the greatest possibilities. So that's the radical approach that we're going to teach you for achieving your goals. I'll say it again, approach the future with questions that enable the greatest possibilities.

Jon, why don't you, I'll let you start where you'd like to, but I'd love for you to share the questions that we use to create the guiding principles that enable the greatest possibilities at the Best Year Ever event?

Jon: Yeah, happy to. First of all, can you hear me okay?

Hal: Yeah, fantastic.

Jon: I switched microphones while you were talking.

Hal: Wow, I didn't even know. You're that good.

Jon: Thanks buddy. So we're talking about questions and the idea of questions guiding our future. And this is not a concept in any way that we created, obviously. This is something that's been widely taught by many great teachers.

And I'll share with you Hal and with our listeners, the first time that I was introduced to this idea I was 17 years old and I had a sales manager and one of the things I'll never forget him sharing were two ideas together that really shaped my thinking even, whatever it is, 16 years later. And one of them was that we become what we think about most of the time. Or we become what we talk about most of the time.

And in fact that we used to have a saying in the office that if we wanted to solve a problem all we had to do was talk about it enough. And if you talk about something enough, it's amazing how things improve, right? So I'll never forget when I first heard that thinking wow, that sounds almost too simple to be true. But then over and over again seeing that it is true but the reason why we don't often solve all our problems is because guiding our thinking and guiding our conversations isn't always easy.

And the lesson that was brought to me at a young age was that one of the fastest and most effective ways of guiding our thinking, as you've already said, is by using really intelligently designed questions. And I can tell you years later that this topic has never meant more for me. In fact, in my business today, I actually use a methodology called appreciative inquiry. Appreciative inquiry, that is the word appreciative and the word inquiry combined. And if you search you'll see that that's actually a concept that is in the public domain that a gentleman named David Cooperrider developed about 30 years ago. And I use this concept when I work with businesses, not only as a theoretical concept, but we actually have a very practical process for using appreciative inquiry to not just solve problems but to create the best possible future that we can.

So that's a little bit of background. And I've forgotten now at this point what the original question was but I know you wanted us to use the Best Year Ever live experience that we just put on as an example of how we used appreciative inquiry, is that right? If it isn't I'll just keep going.

Hal: Yeah, yeah, it is. What are the questions that you asked? I think we had five kind of questions and guiding principles for the event. And so I wanted to give them the real world example of how we used this process and how it came out.

Jon: Yeah, perfect, okay. So to start with, and I'm going to do a lot of medic communicating here, it just means I'm going to teach while I answer the questions. To start with, Hal, one of the principal concepts here is the importance of starting from a place of strength. I want to give you an example of how often in our lives when we're trying to resolve a problem or we're trying to figure out how to create a better future, how we very naturally start from a place of deficit.

And I'll give you an example from my world on a day-to-day level. I walk into a company or a team, I'm brought in by the leadership and I'm sitting there either with the executives or with a very large team in the room and oftentimes somebody will want to start the meeting or the conversation by talking about what's not

working. Why? Because that's what grabs at our attention. You think about your listeners, a lot of what grabs at our attention mentally and emotionally are the things that aren't going well in our lives because it's that negative emotion that can really distract us. And so it's very difficult to have productive thinking when we're starting from that place.

Hal, I've shared this with you before that we often do an exercise where we have people pair up and we say, "Hey, why don't you pair up with a partner and talk for five minutes. And I want your first sentence to be blank and you can fill in the blank is broken or blank is not working," and we'll let them have that conversation. And usually at this point, Hal, they're confused because they're like, we thought this guy had this strength-based approach to management. We're starting off talking about what's broken.

And then what happens is we teach them appreciative inquiry. Appreciative inquiry is based on a couple of fundamental principles. I want to make sure I lay these out before I talk about the Best Year Ever event because if I don't lay them out then our audience misses really why this stuff works, right? They'll hear what we did but they won't know why it works.

Hal: Sure.

Jon: It's based on two principles. One of them is the fundamentals of positive psychology. And when I say positive psychology immediately there is a large percentage of the audience right now that will hear that and think that what I'm talking about is just the idea of having positive emotions. And that's part of it. But that's not the whole thing. See, the whole positive psychology movement which was born with Marty Seligman about 15, 16 years ago, it was born and since then we have this abundance of research that has proven that when we're in a positive frame of mind that our mental capabilities are rapidly expanded. I mean even exponentially.

There is an abundance of empirical evidence that says when we take a positive outlook on something, and that's not just the emotions but it's also the difference between focusing on what we do want versus what we don't want, that when we take a positive outlook our mental, actually our vision itself expands. It goes from being really clear at about 30 degrees outward to almost 180 degrees outward. So literally our physical vision expands. Which is symbolic of what happens in our minds when we come from a positive state of mind. There is an abundance of research that has proven this out.

And then the second principle, Hal, that this is based on is curiosity. And the idea that if we can just be aggressively curious and combine that with a positive approach, amazing things happen. And so when I go into a business and I say, "Okay, you just talked about what was broken or what's wrong, why don't you try this, whatever that thing was that was broken?" And for your listeners right now maybe it's a part of their business, maybe it's some part of their personal lives, whatever that thing is that maybe it's easy to think about how it's not working, try this. Instead fill in the blank by saying, "When is it that I have been at my best at blank?" And then see what kind of answers emerge and maybe even write them down or talk about them with somebody. And then you could follow that with, "What kind of strengths does that elicit from myself when I was at my best?"

You could also ask the question, "What could it look like to be at my best?" or "What will it look like when I am actually excelling?" or, "What would it look like to be exceptional at blank?" And see when we frame the question from the positive, what we're doing is what's called flipping the conversation. Instead of saying, "Hey, this is broken in my business," we flip it from the start by saying, "What would it look like for this to be exceptional?" And now the possibilities and the opportunities are almost unlimited just because we've reframed our mental conversation from the beginning. So that's what goes on here. I just wanted to lay that framework.

Hal, I'll tell everybody, our guiding question for the Best Year Ever live experience that we just had in San Diego, it was an amazing time. It was cool that you read those notes that were sent in. Our guiding question was how might we, and how might we is a really great way to start off a question, how might we revolutionize? Remember, no constraints, think big. How might we revolutionize the personal development industry? Notice this is not a small question. How might we revolutionize the personal development industry through this event by, and so that's like our umbrella question and then there is four or five sub questions that had everything to do with how do we leverage experiential learning theory? How do we connect personal achievement and purpose as guiding principles? How do we address the holistic aspect of individuals?

So Hal, the point is the whole thing was guided by questions instead of assertions. And I want to say one thing about that and if you want to respond. What I want to say about that is that when we use questions to think about our future it does something in the mind where it keeps us open to not only whatever possibilities we

think of today but to even better possibilities that we or others might help us to come up with tomorrow.

So if you go back to, we could have started by saying we're going to revolutionize the personal development industry, period, right?

Hal: Yeah.

Jon: And the challenge is if that's what we start with, I call that a stagnant phrase. It's exciting but it doesn't keep us open to well, how might we? So just the idea of using a question versus an assertion keeps us open to continually finding, continually looking for, and continually creating better and better and better answers.

And just to go back to this original discussion around The Best Year Ever event, what's amazing is we asked some very bold questions and we didn't know how we were going to deliver on them. We brought those questions to our leadership team. In over three months by looking at those questions and revisiting them we found incredible answers and it led to amazing results.

Just giving you a little background there.

Hal: No, Jon, this is one of the greatest observations that I've made of working more closely with you over the last year or so, is how you think in questions. And it took me a while to get it because I would always think in statements and I would tell you this is what we're going to do, or this is right, this is right, and you'd always leave a little bit a silent space and then you would respond with a question, or how might we blank?

And it took me a while to catch on to you doing that but now that I have learned from seeing your process, this has been revolutionary. And I don't think this is the first time I'm probably saying that to you but it's been revolutionary for me because it's gotten me to shift from definitive statements around what my goals, this is my goal, versus what might my goal be, or what might a goal be that would fulfill me, or what might a goal be that would even be bigger or more fulfilling or impact more people or whatever.

So this approach of really living your life from a place of questions I think, if everybody listening takes away nothing from this call other than flipping their

thinking into the form of these limitless questions, I think that can be really, really life changing for everybody listening.

Jon: Yeah. And Hal, the point you just made is, I think it's really valuable because I think a lot of us can relate. I work a lot with leaders and I think every one of your listeners can relate to this, that sometimes we feel like we're supposed to have an answer and oftentimes we've been conditioned that if we don't have the answer then we're not doing our job or we're not fulfilling the value that we're supposed to be bringing to the world. I believe that we have and are transitioning into a time where more and more leaders are going to be measured not by having all the answers but by their ability to ask the right questions so that they can enable others to help find the right answers. I think that's really important that we get over this idea that we're supposed to have the answers.

I'll share one other quick example Hal, that has a lot to do with what you just shared, where if this is the first time you're hearing this concept I'm going to give everyone a really great take away because a lot of the work that I do is I'm facilitating collaborations in a room. So anywhere from 10 to hundreds of people creating a strategic plan, which sounds crazy and it is if you don't have a method like appreciative inquiry that we use.

But there is a tool that everyone could use today whether you collaborate with others or even just with your kids or your spouse. One of our guiding principles or ground rules when we facilitate these meetings is coming back to this idea of starting from a place of curiosity. When we have people sit in a circle and they talk about a topic, we have a ground rule that says start with a question first instead of an assertion.

So let me give you an example. It would be very common if six people sat in a circle, or a husband or wife sat there. It's very common for someone to have an idea pop into their head and the way for me to present that idea to, I'll use my wife just to make this personal and really relevant to a lot of people, that the way we would share an idea with somebody else is as an assertion like, "Hey, let's go eat dinner at blank." Or in a business setting, "I think we should talk about our marketing challenges."

Here is the challenge when we present everything as an assertion, is it immediately has the opportunity to create tension. Because if whatever we say the other person or persons don't like or don't agree with, now we've essentially created a guaranteed moment of tension. Because they have to figure out how to

acknowledge either that they don't like my idea, my wife either has to figure out how to tell me that she doesn't want to go where I want to go, or this group of six or eight people collaborating somebody has to acknowledge, no, I don't want to talk about this. There is a lot of discomfort opportunities there.

So Hal, one of these that we teach is frame our assertions as questions. So instead of saying we should go have Mexican, I would ask my wife, "Hey what would you think of having Mexican?" Or if I'm sitting around with six or eight people, instead of me jumping in and being extra vocal and influential and having a risk of them not saying what they really care about, because in team environments and collaborations or just partnerships, people often will not share what they're really thinking because they're just afraid to harm the relationship, so they'll change their opinion. They'll just go along with others. And so how do we fix all that?

Well instead of saying to this group of six or eight, "We need to talk about our marketing problems," what if I said to them instead, "Hey, I'd love to know everyone's opinion. Should we talk about our marketing problems right now?" See now what I've done is I've created a space for me to actually figure out what they really think about that topic as a conversation. Because our questions and our conversations are faithful. As soon as we start a conversation, that conversation shapes our destiny. As soon as I say, "Hey, this is broken, let's talk about this," that frame shapes my destiny. It's very hard for that to become a productive conversation either with others or myself. When I flip it to, "What might it look like to have an exceptional future?" that question is fateful because even before the answers arrive it is guaranteed that we're going to have a better outcome than if we just focus on what's broken or we just assert instead of asking.

So I just want to share that real quick tip, maybe it wasn't really quick.

Hal: No, it was great though.

Jon: Maybe it made no sense.

Hal: As a husband of a wife I have found that asking what my wife wants to do versus me telling her what we're going to do is really more effective, so thank you for highlighting that. It's very important.

Jon: That's great, that's great. Where do you want to go from here?

Hal: That's a good question. I don't know. Now I'm at a loss on what, I mean we could go into the more...we talked about that we're going to, as a side benefit of this radical approach that we're teaching, that we would recap the Best Year Ever [Blueprint], and what are these lessons and guiding principles that we taught at the event specific to having your best year ever.

The first thing I want to say and then I'll turn it over to you but we can go day-by-day if you want or lesson-by-lesson or principle-by-principle. But I want to say this: that for everybody listening the essence, and this is what I said when I opened up the Best Year Ever [Blueprint] event before I brought Jon on, I said, "This event is not about doing. It's not about making, just writing out your goals and planning your best year ever. That's elementary stuff. That's best year ever 1.0. That's stuff that you can learn anywhere. You could Google how to have your best year ever or you could Google goal setting and you'd have all of those answers and those processes that you could do very easily.

I'm getting to this point of becoming was the focus of the event. Not what you do so much as who you become through the event, through the process. So I just want to lay that foundation Jon, for whatever you're about to share regarding the, what we're going to share, same thing. It's not about what you do. It's about who you become. Now, the irony by the way is, although who you're becoming is much more important than what you're doing, the irony is that it is what you're doing that determines who're becoming. So it's important to understand the correlation. But at the same time I believe that it's always more valuable for us to focus on, in every decision, every action, every day that we wake up, in the form of a question, who am I committed to becoming today? When the alarm clock goes off, am I committed to becoming someone that doesn't have the discipline to turn off the alarm and get out of bed, or am I committed to becoming someone that does have that discipline and waking up with that focus and that purpose and etc., etc.?

So just to set that foundation Jon, why don't you go from there? How did we and what can our listeners implement from The Best Year Ever [Blueprint] that will help them become who they need to be to make this their best year ever?

Jon: Yeah. So we had five questions or, we called them guiding principles. One of them Hal, which has everything to do with what you're talking about was, this was our question and they all had the same starter question, which was how might we revolutionize the personal development industry through this event by? And one of our five questions was combining the very best, and it's a long question so don't try and write this down.

Hal: Don't write this down, yeah.

Jon: Combining the very best in serving the complete holistic individual. In other words personal and professional, mind, body and spirit utilizing a multi-sensory, emotionally uplifting approach. So that's a loaded question. And I wanted to spell that out and take the time for when to hear that. I'll say it again because we had five questions that were that intensely designed. It wasn't like, "Hey, how do we help people to just become their best?" it's like okay, we're being guided by that North Star that Hal has taught to all of us. Now let's go deep.

Again, it was how do we combine the very best in serving the complete holistic individual, personal and professional, mind, body, spirit utilizing a multi-sensory, emotionally uplifting approach?

So let me actually pick apart how we answered that question through the event in a way where our listeners right now can get value that they can take into achieving their goals. So first of all, honoring the holistic individual. One of things that we believe in and that we express through this event is that in order to achieve any goal, there is very little in our lives that happens in isolation. In other words, if I wanted to view my life in buckets, let's say I say I have my relationships, I have my career, I have my finances, I have my spirituality or my faith, I have my health and my vitality, I've got my community, whatever the buckets are for each of us individually. We really believe that each one impacts the other. And that at the end of the day we can't hide from this reality that if one of our buckets is really struggling it can bring all the others down.

So one of the exercises that we did and that we did last year and we'll probably do every year, though we added some new twists this year, we wanted to keep innovating, but it was simply what we called the Level 10 Assessment. And as part of the Level 10 Assessment, we had people essentially draw a pie chart or a wheel and we gave some different ideas on how to fill out that wheel. But we wanted people to...we wanted to create a space where people could be self-aware and they could acknowledge that, hey, look there're areas here that maybe I usually ignore because for whatever reasons. That if I could just focus on this area it might actually be the one area that helps all the others. So that's one example of serving the holistic individual.

Another example Hal, is all throughout the event, here is what's really interesting. At last year's event we actually taught a little bit about exercise and energy. This

year we deleted that. We're like, "We're going to teach it, we're just going to do it." So this year we had yoga in the morning. We had Andrea Riggs, who is amazing, who led us in super high energy exercise.

Hal: Zumba style dance throughout the event.

Jon: Yeah, yeah. It's like beyond Zumba. I don't even know what it is. But we had a lot of physical movement throughout the event. And we didn't even need to talk about why we were doing it because we just knew that if while people were there they engaged their bodies that it would also engage their minds.

And then let me finish by, I'm just going to keep going back to the same question, utilizing a multi-sensory approach. So one of things that we did at this event is this year we invested into bringing intelligent LED lighting into the room. We invested into a better speaker system. Because we believe that our environment is one of the fastest ways of enabling ourselves and creating a space to feel better, to think better, and to do better, and ultimately be and have better, right?

Hal: Yeah.

Jon: And so what can someone take away from this? Well, they might not be able to hire the \$80,000 or whatever AV team, but wherever it is that you are right now, wherever it is that you go to work every day, whether it's the driving in your car or your home office or an office that you go to, what can you do so that everything physically about that environment stimulates you in a positive way? Like as I'm speaking I'm staring at some beautiful, beautiful, not only symbols in my office but even out the window what I'm looking at, and it's all by design. There is not a single thing when I look around that does not have an anchor that helps me to feel or think a certain way. So that's a huge take away.

And Hal, we executed it at this event that all was born with a question. And I should note, when we came up with this question we didn't have anything figured out. We just thought this is a good question to guide our thinking.

Hal: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. So that is something that when, I think it's a good example of how the question led to more than one answer, versus going, "Hey, we're going to do X,Y, or Z." Because of the question it just continuously, and not only did it lead to more answers before the event while we planned it Jon, but I think it's important and I think there is a side lesson in the moment. I mean, the event is never really fully planned, right?

And I don't know if there is something for you to talk about around that but about it's literally in the moment I know you and I are asking what does the audience need now? What would serve the audience now? What would we be able to or just re-asking this question around the best practices of serving the complete holistic individual. But it was like a moment to moment question, an assessment, not just something that was decided for an event.

Jon: Yeah, you're right. And this is something that, we teach this at our speaker trainer experience, and I think people would be blown away if they knew how much of what was happening in real time was being determined in real time. And you did just share one of our guiding questions during the event.

And actually we have a leadership team who is in the audience, it was about 20 to 30 of them who they've been pre-trained. We are all asking the same question in real time throughout the event which is, what is it that serves this moment or the person in front of me or the people in front of me more than anything else right now? What does this moment need? What does this audience need?

And I will tell you as the one who had to own the design and execution, that some of the exercises that I was most excited about, I don't even want to say them because people who were there might all of a sudden feel like, oh, we missed out on that. Because you didn't. Because in the moment, like we had one exercise Hal, that I mean, it was the first thing that I knew we were going to do at this event. And it was the one thing that I knew okay, at this day, at this time, this is going to crush it because everybody loves it when we do this. And I threw it out. We didn't even do it because we were guided by the question, what serves this moment? And we realized, I realized at least, that if I would have done that exercise it would have been serving me and my attachment instead of what the audience needed. I think that was important that you point that out.

Hal: Jon, let's talk about the focus on purpose at the event. I think that was such an underlying theme that we, we had people go really deep and really broad and repeatedly revisit the idea of purpose. Talk about that.

Jon: Yeah. Well, I'm glad you asked because of our five guiding principles, guiding questions, it was actually the one that we believed if we could figure it out would be the greatest unlocking of how do we revolutionize the personal development industry. And I don't say that lightly either, by the way. I've got to make sure your audience understands that when I say something like how might we revolutionize

the personal development industry, we'll be the first to tell you that we're geniuses and we have no freaking clue what we're doing.

That comes across like, I just want everyone to know that when we say that, we say that to inspire our thinking but not because we have some egotistical attachment to changing the industry. That's just to inspire our thinking. In fact, at the event, I don't even know if we told people that that was our guiding principle for the event. Maybe we did, but I just want to make that point, that it's about guiding our thinking, not about creating a question that just sounds really cool. If it does both, that's great, but...

Hal: And Jon, let me touch on that. It goes back to the Marianne Williamson quote of who am I to be fabulous, great, gorgeous, yada, yada, yada? Who am I not to be? I think that often we almost let sometimes our fear of being egotistical prevent us from thinking big, from going from like, like for me I had to get over that at one point and I wrote in my affirmations and it was hard because I felt like it was egotistical. I wrote, "I am destined for greatness." I had to own that and go, but I have to own it. I have to own it. And I also wrote a reminder, it's not guaranteed just because I'm destined for it. I'm only destined to be as great as I choose to be and as I act upon.

I think that's important because you just, there was an example of going wow, wow, wow, wow we are not coming from ways of ego, which we're not, but I think that often that prevents us from thinking as big for our lives and ourselves, is that fear of we're being egotistical because we think who am I to be, to say that I'm destined for greatness. So I just wanted to insert that side lesson. I think it's really important.

Jon: Yeah, yeah. That's so well put buddy, I'm glad you share that. As you shared that, it made me think about how is it that I allow myself to be okay with such a grandiose type of question. And part of how I allow it is when I put something like that into the universe or share it with my business partners or our leadership team, in my head what I'm thinking is okay, I'm going to go work my ass off now. Because when I put something like this out there I want to see if I can deliver on it, right?

Hal: Yeah.

Jon: There is a part of me that says it's okay to have this big of a vision or this big of a goal because life doesn't respond to what I put on this paper, it responds to

what I do at 3 a.m. when no one's watching. And I'm working my ass off every single night for weeks leading up to the event. So there is a give and a take between making grandiose statements and then having the willpower to work our tails off.

But let's go back to this question, because it was the cornerstone theme of the event. And the result was beyond anything that we ever could have imagined. So let's share that with your audience.

So one of our guiding principles, it was the fifth and final guiding question, was how might we revolutionized personal development industry through this event by instilling a deep connection between personal achievement and living purposefully, or living with a sense of greater meaning? And what that led to was taking a huge risk. But we felt okay taking the risk, and I think it's something we can all learn from, is that when our decisions are guided by principles that we feel good about, and these principles are really values. We're saying, "Hey, here is what we value." We value this idea of how do we instill a connection between personal achievement and living with purpose? Well if we value that then let's take whatever risk we need to to prove that principle out and if it doesn't work at least we followed our values, which is the highest success. Real integrity is valuing something and then living it out.

So Hal, here is what ended up happening, is you and I and John Vroman we thought okay, let's do an experiment. Let's host the Front Row Foundation. Let's host this event Saturday night in the middle of the Best Year Ever live experience and let's make it a big fundraiser. And we thought this could go one of two ways. Most of this audience had never heard of the Front Row Foundation or many of them hadn't. Either we attempt it and it doesn't work, the connection isn't made, or if it goes really well, if we explain it well, if we say look, the reason we're hosting this event is because Hal and I and John Vroman, who really also plays a key role in the Best Year Ever event, we believe in the Front Row Foundation, which is a wish organization. And we believe in the philosophy of living life in the front row.

We didn't want to have 350 people come here to San Diego and we didn't want to just tell you that we should integrate living purposefully with achievement. We wanted to try and exemplify it. So the way we want to do exemplify it is by actually hosting this fundraiser in the middle of this event. And we'll throw a big party for you. We'll feed you and give you drinks and we'll have an auction and see what happens.

And the most money we had ever raised in any Front Row Fundraiser was somewhere in the \$30,000 to \$40,000 range. And this event, Saturday night in the middle of The Best Year Ever [Blueprint], people were so emotionally connected to this vision that we brought to them, which was hey, look we're all here to become our best selves but let's also while we're here in one room, let's help a bunch of people that we're never going to meet. Let's raise money to support a cause that's going to create ripples, that's going to change lives knowing that we're not going to get anything back except for the goodwill and the feeling of knowing that we made a difference. And the outcome was we raised something like \$110,000 and it was a wild success.

I think the big lesson for people to learn from this, from your audience right now, I think there is a couple. One of them is allow your decisions to be guided by thoughtful principles and thoughtful values. And then once you know what those principles and values are, run with them. Because there is no failure when we act in alignment with what we value. The only failure is telling ourselves we value something and then not being willing to act in alignment with those.

The other big lesson buddy, is just for people to ask the question why. Because we taught this during the event, that when you look at your goals this year for 2016, and I don't know when we're going to publish this podcast episode, but it's somewhere in the first 30 days, whatever, when you think about your goals maybe you've been really motivated, maybe you've fallen off a little bit. So maybe the first thing to do is get out a pen and paper and say why is this goal important to me? And write down as many reasons as you can. Write down one and then ask yourself well, why does this really matter to me? And then after you write down your answer, why does that really matter to me?

Allow yourself to get a little bit deeper with what are the reasons that are going to drive us? And for some of us it's personal. It's because of who I want to become, the confidence I want to gain, the knowing and the knowledge and the certainty that I can do something. And that's great. If that drives you then let it. Articulate it really well. Write it down. Look at it every day. Let it drive you. For some of us it's relational. It's hey, what drives me is who I want to be for my kids, for my spouse, for my clients or whatever. Articulate it in a way that is really, really inspiring and let that drive you. For some of us it's societal or it's about a cause. It's hey, I want to be my best this year because the world needs it. I want to support a mission, a cause, an injustice, whatever it is. If that's what drives you, then articulate it really, really well, write it down, look at it every day.

But the big lesson here is get clear on what is your sense of purpose. And Hal, I want to make this point since we're on the topic. I believe that we often misunderstand what it means to say to be driven by purpose. I think there're misconceptions. I think one misconception is we think that purpose is like a divine intervention. Like we're going to wake up and know what our life purpose is. In other words, we think it's something that comes to us, when in reality it's the meaning that we give to our moment-by-moment experience. It's the meaning that we give to everything that we do. We create it. We don't wait for it. That's one big, I think, misunderstanding that we have from time to time.

Another one is that purpose is about a cause or a charity. I want to make no confusion here. You don't have to donate money to a charity to be purpose-driven. You could be purpose-driven by saying, "I'm going to go to work every day in a way where I want to treat people with love and respect and care." And that can be a deep sense of meaning and purpose. It doesn't have to be about some external cause beyond just you and your relationships.

Last thing I want to say about purpose is, and I really said this in another way, but it has nothing to do with what we do. It doesn't have to do with your title. It doesn't have to do with the industry that I'm in, the role that I have. I love asking people, "What do you do?" And oftentimes our immediate answer is, "Well, I'm a management consultant." "I'm a mortgage broker," "I'm a real estate agent."

One of things that we taught at this event is we called it the best introduction ever. Which is instead of saying, "I'm a blank," which is focused on ourselves that it's egocentric, could we learn how to introduce ourselves by saying, "I help blank by blank." In other words instead of saying I'm a management consultant how about, "I help organizations to transform utilizing next level methodologies." Instead of saying, "I'm a mortgage broker," how about, "I help first time home buyers to achieve their dreams." Instead of saying, "I'm a business coach," how about, "I help business leaders to solve their biggest problems."

And when we start to actually communicate through the lens of what we do for others, that in and of itself could be a great example of integrating more purpose into our day-to-day activity. Because ultimately it's through our language and our conversations that our relationships and our worlds are created. And that's an example of big purpose-driven.

So that's a long, long answer to, I don't even remember the original question.

Hal: No, nobody does. But it was a great answer. So let's wrap up with, for our listeners. We're going to close the loop on how we started.

I talked about the title of this episode is A Radical Approach to Achieving Your Goals. The common approach for people is you set goals, you make plans, you hope for the best. And as we talked about it rarely works out for the best. And this radical approach, if we can call it that, it's approach the future with questions that enable the greatest possibilities.

So Jon, I'd love for us to wrap up. I've got a few questions that I have jotted down throughout our conversation here, but I'd love for us to leave the audience with some of these questions that they can ask. By the way, the beauty of this is there are no fixed questions. We're not going to tell you these are the questions you have to ask. You can ask yourself questions about which questions will enable the greatest possibilities for you.

The first question that I came up with is some version of this, which is what would the best version of myself attempt this year? Or another way of saying it is if I could not fail, what would I attempt this year? To get yourself out of that limit, that box that we create around, well, here is what I think I can accomplish that is within my comfort zone. Well, if you're out of the comfort zone, what's the next version of you that maybe you've never even met yet? You haven't even tapped into this potential that you have. What would that version of you attempt to accomplish this year?

So there is an example of a question that can enable the greatest possibilities for you. Jon, any other ideas on some questions that our listeners can ask themselves this year?

Jon: For sure. I'm just going to borrow directly from the appreciative inquiry framework that I use with organizations. And what's interesting is these questions work beautifully for individuals as well as 1000 people in a room.

I love actually how you started Hal, which is what can I focus on? What kind of questions can actually give me the most empowering sense of focus? That's a great, broad umbrella question. But I think the first set of questions that I like to ask, you notice I'm saying set of questions because I like to compound these questions. Let them get as detailed and as extensive as possible. There is no constraints here, that's what's great about this.

So I like to ask well, what can I focus on to start from a place of strength? Because often times when we're setting goals, let's take this topic of setting a goal for 2016 or whatever the time period, we often start from a place of neutrality or even deficit because maybe we haven't achieved what we've wanted in this area or we're not where we want to be. So what does it mean to focus to start from a place of strength? Well, here's a set of questions that would be this first set of questions around starting from a place of strength. It would be: what are my greatest strengths? What are my greatest strengths? Another way of eliciting our strengths is to ask ourselves, let's say you have a goal around weight loss or around growing your business, acquiring new customers, you can ask yourself when have I been at my best in this area and what did that look like? What was I thinking, believing, seeing, and feeling? This is a way of eliciting somebody's modalities when they were performing at a peak level.

If these questions sound obvious, don't bypass them because they're so simple. They're powerful. I ask these of myself all the time. What are my strengths? When was I at my best? What was I bringing to the table at that moment? What was I believing? How was I behaving? What was I eating? What was I thinking? Who was I around? What was I reading? What was I listening to? Where was I driving to? Was there a place that I was at physically? Was there an activity, a song I was listening to? A conversation I was having? An article that I read? What was it that allowed me to be at my best? The more and more we dry out from that it puts us back into that state. How can I keep bringing these qualities to the table?

Here is a great question also in the same bucket of starting from a place of strength: what do I love about the relationships in my life? When I think about each of my key relationships, what's great about each one of these relationships? And you could go through a whole series of positive questions just to start from strength around our relationships.

A final question just from this bucket on strength is what are the opportunities in front of me right now? Or what can I celebrate that I have created in the past 12 months? What can I celebrate? And if I had a massive failure, how can I reconvert that to a significant lesson that I'm going to reinvest? What can I learn from last year that can reinvest into this year?

So that's one bucket starting from a place of strength. And I'll give one more bucket, which is about the future. And Hal, you asked a great one, if I wasn't afraid what would I think about achieving? That's a great way of allowing ourselves to move past fear, if that's what might be holding us back.

For some of us the primary reason we're not arriving at a better future is we're just not asking about it at all. It might not even be a fear, it just might not be, it might be that we haven't articulated the question well enough.

Here are some fun ways to play with the future. Imagine a Time magazine cover and imagine that there's a cover article. Time magazine edition of 2016 and you are on the cover. What's the headline and what's the article about? Get creative. And what's the picture of? And when you actually start to think in pictures, even if it's just one symbolic picture that's on the cover of that magazine, it starts to elicit some profound, powerful things inside of our brains.

Ask yourself this question, what would it look like for 2016 to be exceptional in blank area of my life? What would it look like? How might I create an exceptional experience in this area? You could also expand your thinking with some questions around who do I know or what are some businesses that I've seen who are exceptional in this area that I want to emulate? And what about how they do things can emulate? Who do I know just as people, as individuals that I want to emulate and be like this year?

And the more we are willing to expand outward and think about all the different examples we can pull from and bring that into our own future, that enables us to create new, previously unimaginable, previously impossible possibilities and potentials that our brains previously couldn't even come up with. But it all starts with just ask these questions. You notice how I can't stop myself. And there is not one question, there is not two.

Hal: Sure.

Jon: There might be buckets and themes but just keep going until it elicits better and better responses.

Hal: I love it. I'm inspired and for those listening that are practitioners of 'The Miracle Morning,' which I would say is probably 98% of our listeners, this is a great framework to utilize when you're scribing. This is a great when you're journaling. Ask yourself questions, and in the journaling can it be very open ended with what are the questions that I can ask that enable the greatest possibilities. And just like Jon said, you just keep going deeper and deeper and deeper down the rabbit hole until what will happen is you'll quickly start to shift your thinking to come from a place of not only maybe a place of fear or limitation, but to come

from a place of unlimited possibilities based on a framework that's around asking yourself these questions, and just always asking questions that keep leading you to new answers and new discoveries and new greater possibilities.

So Jon, anything else to share before we wrap up?

Jon: Oh, you opened up the window.

Hal: That was, God I just asked an open ended question that's going to...

Jon: Oh my Gosh.

Hal: All right everybody, everybody schedule another hour to listen...

Jon: All right, cut me off in 120 seconds or longer.

Hal: All right.

Jon: So I want to share one more set of questions, Hal. Anyone who is listening who is in sales, who presents, who speaks to audiences of any size, which might be a lot of your listeners. By the way, if you interact with other living human beings, you're qualified for this to help you right now. This is something that we teach at our speaker trainer experiences. By the way, I keep plugging this. It might be sold out by the time this airs but if it's not, go to speakertrainerexperience.com, you can watch our propaganda video that shows you how great it is. It's in San Diego in March.

Hal: I don't think I gave you permission to share that but all right, go ahead.

Jon: By asking is there anything else you want to share I think you did it.

Hal: That's true, we didn't agree on that ahead of time.

Jon: Yeah, but listen...

Hal: Oh by the way, I will be there as an attendee. Actually I should say that. So I am going to be at the speaker trainer experience not as an instructor, not as a teacher, not as a leader, I'm going to be there as an attendee to learn from Jon, from you and from John Vroman.

Jon: And we already know we're going to have you sharing the best of your knowledge too as someone...

Hal: Sure, sure, sure.

Jon: [inaudible 00:48:19] as a speaker. But one of the things that we teach at that event is how as a speaker or a presenter or just as a communicator, the most important thing to do first is to enter the world of whoever it is that we're communicating with. And we have a whole checklist that we use. At this point it's grown to like 35 different questions. But really, and we have these really fun exercises we do in the room around this so people get this very vivid experience of this.

But the thing I wanted everyone to take away Hal, just a tangible take away is if you sell or present anything to anybody, the next time you're preparing to walk into that presentation, ask yourself as many questions as you can about what it's like to be in that person's shoes. And you can ask the deep questions like what are their fears and insecurities? What are their dreams and aspirations and hopes and goals? Those are all important.

But also ask the tactical, logistical questions, like what's their energy level going to be at the moment I present to them? What were they doing right before they come into this meeting? Who might they surprise me with by bringing into this room? Literally, I could give you 100 questions to ask. And what's interesting is the more questions you ask, the better prepared you can be. Even if you're going to end up giving the same presentation, you're just prepared to make sure that you resonate at a deeper level based on whatever comes your way in that meeting.

So ask as many questions as you can, I just gave a few of them, before you go in your next presentation. Enter the world of that audience if you speak or train or present. If you're selling. What are they skeptical of? How can you handle that in advance? What problem means more to them than anything else? How could you potentially solve that through yourself or introducing them to someone else? Think about all these things.

Hal: And it's also an approach, Jon, that you can apply to personal relationships, right?

Jon: Absolutely.

Hal: How is your significant other feeling? What are they thinking? What was their day like? Or your children, on and on and on. So yeah, really, really good.

All right, let's wrap this up. So hey, if you're listening, Achieve Your Goals podcast listeners, I want to thank you for your time and energy and attention today. Jon, thanks for being on the podcast buddy, appreciate you.

Jon: Hey, I appreciate you buddy. Take care everybody. Bye bye.

Hal: You got it. Goal achievers, go out there and make this a great week. Anything else that I wanted to share? That's it. Your speakertrainerexperience.com. I will be there. It's in San Diego in March. Until next time, again, set some big goals. Ask yourself questions that enable the greatest possibilities and settle for nothing less than what you want because you deserve nothing less. We'll talk to you soon everybody. Take care.

Nick: And thank you so much for tuning in to this episode of the podcast. So now are you ready to go out there and try this radical approach to achieving your goals this year? Let us know what your biggest takeaway from this episode is by simply going to halerod.com/107 episode 107 and leave a comment there on the show notes page.

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