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Robert Glazer: Welcome to Elevate, a podcast about achievement, personal growth, and pushing limits and leadership in life. I'm Robert Glazer and I chat with world class performers who have committed to elevating their own life, pushing the limits of their capacity and helping others to do the same.

Robert Glazer: Welcome to the Elevate podcast. Our quote for today is from Thomas Edison, and it is, "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work." Our guest today, Brian Scudamore, is an inspiring entrepreneur who's made embracing failure a core part of his success. He started his business 1-800-GOT-JUNK at the age of 18, and has grown it into a massively successful company. He is the author of WTF, Willing To Fail and has appeared on Undercover Boss Canada, Dr. Oz, CNN, The Today Show, and The View, and he's also a contributing columnist to several national publications. Brian, welcome. Excited to have you join us on the Elevate podcast today.

Brian Scudamore: Excited to be here. Thanks Bob for having me. Always great to chat with an old friend.

Robert Glazer: Yeah. Hey, and full disclosure, because we talk about willing to fail. We recorded this podcast earlier and it was a fail, so I appreciate you coming back and giving us a second chance on that. We'll make it better this time.

Brian Scudamore: Well, the way you owned up to the problem and these technical things happened, I said, "No problem. Happy to do it again," and we'll recreate some magic.

Robert Glazer: All right, so let's start at the beginning. High school wasn't exactly your forte. Can you tell me a little bit about your high school years?

Brian Scudamore: Yeah. I've always been someone that loves to learn, I just don't fit well in a box. I don't fit well learning in a scheduled, formulaic type way where you've got to learn math, you've got to learn science, you got to learn English. I get that all those things are important, but I just didn't fit the mold in both elementary school and high school. As a kid, and this is one of the only things I've ever kept that I've collected from my past, are report cards. They always said things like... I mean, there was this pattern. I've looked back at them years later and they say things like, "Brian's such a disruptor," and they didn't mean it in a cool term like they refer to entrepreneurs today.

Brian Scudamore: I was a disruptive kid that just couldn't sit still and focus. There I was one course short of graduating from high school, it was Algebra 12. It was in my final year and I just really didn't like my teacher, so I stopped going to school, or I stopped going to that class. What that did for me, the consequence, was I was one of my only friends, or actually it was the only person in my friend group that did not graduate from high school.

Brian Scudamore: Every one of my friends was going to college, so that meant I had to find a way to talk my way into college as someone without a diploma, which I did. I'm an entrepreneur and I know how to sell, so I sold myself, talked to my way in, and then I had to find a way to pay for it, which led me to a McDonald's drive-through serendipitously. There I am, there's a beat up old pickup truck in front of me, plywood side panels built up on the box. It said Mark's Hauling on the side. I looked at the truck, bought myself a pickup, built my own plywood sides and a week later had a business called The Rubbish Boys.

Robert Glazer: Most people wouldn't look at that truck and say, "That is the dream," but clearly for you that that inspired something in you.

Brian Scudamore: Yeah. I don't think it was the dream at the time, but it certainly was a ticket. It was a ticket to pay for college. We talk about vision. You and I are big fans of creating a vision, a painted picture, of what the future would look like and for me this was just a vision to pay for college. It was a vision to join my friends and not be left out, but ironically, three years into my education I found I was learning much more about business by running a business more than studying in school.

Brian Scudamore: I made the bold decision, I call it a bold decision because I had to face my father who's a liver transplant surgeon and say, "Dad, guess what? I got some good news for you," that's really how I presented it. I said, "Have a seat, got some good news, I'm quitting college. I'm learning more about business by running a business more than studying in school," and my dad failed to see how that was good news. I get it. 10, 15 years later he came around, but it was one of those things where I knew that university would always be there should I choose to go back. My business opportunity could have expired and I had to strike while the iron was hot.

Robert Glazer: Well you said good news, but it doesn't sound like... I thought the good news was going to be like, "Hey, you're off the hook for paying for college." What was the good news part of that for him?

Brian Scudamore: Well, the good news was me just being proud as his son saying, "Hey, I'm learning so much more by running a business. I don't need to go to school." Frankly, the good news was a bit of salesmanship positioning to him so that if I presented it as good news, he might not get as upset with me. It's always that

conversation when you say, "Hey, have a seat. I got to talk to you about something serious." I wanted to do something differently and presented it like good news because deep down in the end it actually was very good news.

Robert Glazer: All right, so you have your truck, you're launching your business. What does the beginning look like?

Brian Scudamore: The beginning was a little more fun than a job. I was my own boss. I got to be in charge and dictate how my day went. Now, of course, on many days that meant, "Oh no, what do I do? I don't have business." But what those early days were like was just a lot of sweat equity going into a business. It paid for itself within a couple of weeks because my expenses were a \$700 pickup truck, some uniforms, some tools, shovels, that kind of thing. The cost to get in was fairly inexpensive. I mean, you get what you pay for when you buy a \$700 pickup truck, but it really got me out there starting learning very quickly and my MBA on the streets, so to speak, showed me that, "Wow, I can create my own destiny. I can work through the challenges and learn from all the mistakes I made." My book is WTF, Willing To Fail. It's 30 years of all the mistakes I've made, which all translate into being gifts.

Brian Scudamore: Every single mistake I've ever made and ever will make is a gift. Things happen in life, but your perspective, how you look at it. When they say, "When the student's ready, the teacher will appear," that's what failure is, and I've looked at each and every one of those. One of the biggest failures I had in the early days, I'm half a million in sales, five trucks, out there building a business and having success, quite profitable. Bought my first home in Vancouver, which is an expensive city so that tells you the profitability was there. However, I had 11 employees, the old expression, one bad apple spoils the whole bunch. I had probably nine of the 11 were bad apples and I came up with a choice.

Brian Scudamore: I wasn't having fun. I didn't have the happy, friendly, positive individuals that I saw in the vision for my business. I sat them all down one morning meeting and started with two words. I said, "I'm sorry. I'm sorry that I've let you down. Haven't found the right people, haven't treated you with the love and support that you should have received to be successful, and we're going to part ways." I parted ways that day, which meant five trucks down to just one that I can drive on my own. Did the booking, the dispatch, it was a painful time, but it taught me the most valuable lesson. The gift was, the realization that a company is only as strong as the people you bring on board.

Brian Scudamore: It's all about people, finding the right people and treating them right. Anyone that ever comes to Vancouver and comes to the Junction, our head office, would see a big sign [inaudible 00:08:11] the space that says, "It's all about people," with my name below it. That's a commitment that we have, that every single person that we touch in any way with our business, we want them to feel like we've made their lives better. We want them to feel like they were a part of building something bigger and better together.

Robert Glazer: Yeah. When you talk about the mistakes are a gift, there's probably a formula there, right? Mistakes plus time equals gift or something like that for most people, right? Because you see later on where that mistake was a key learning point for you.

Brian Scudamore: Yeah. To take a simple analogy, you're on a surfboard and you're hit with a big wave and you fall flat on your back. You don't get the learning right away. You're first reflecting on the pain and how it hurts. In business, you definitely need time, just like in real life, to sit there and say, "Okay, wow, that just hurt." When I fired my entire staff, I don't think I saw any learning for several months because all I could do was be focused on rebuilding. I hadn't yet learned the power of actually reflecting on mistakes, reflecting on bad things that happen.

Brian Scudamore: When I look at things like PR, we would get some big media hits, I know you mentioned some of them. One of my favorite is being on the Oprah Winfrey show. We failed many times trying to get on the Oprah Winfrey show, but each phone call, each email, each rejection, we would learn from that to figure out, "How do we succeed someday?" Again, failure, it's hard to accept that it actually is a gift, but I just don't think that anyone ever experiences victory without pain along the way. If they did, it would be a hollow victory. It would feel unearned. But instead imagine having riveting stories of moments of despair and regret and longing to succeed. I mean, that's what makes business and personal growth so much fun.

Robert Glazer: Well, you also talk too about people and there's a concept that you've really, I think mastered, or really just show how it should be done, and that is treating people really well, but also telling people the truth and being honest about what the business needs. I think most leaders have a really hard time compartmentalizing these things. Look, you've grown exponentially from the beginning to the end. I'm sure you've heard... I've heard people share this formula with me and I think it's true that, every time you double the business you break half the people and half the processes.

Robert Glazer: I know in the book you talked about having to move on from key people in the business life cycle, including your good friend Cam Harold. A lot of leaders struggle with this, separating the friendship and the business need. Can you talk about both that experience and this concept in general of how treating people well, but also dealing with the truth and what the business really needs?

Brian Scudamore: I think if you're real with people, with life... What's the golden rule, treat people as you'd like to be treated. I've always looked at that. I remember hearing about that from my parents as a young kid, and I try and empower my kids with that same golden rule, but everything's about how you treat people. If they are no longer the right person, i.e, Cameron Harold, we grew from 2 million to 106 million together. He was still the right person to be a friend. Now we went through some hard times because when you've got a fire your best friend, of course they're going to take it personally, but there was a lot of love there and you worked through those things. But it's how you treat people that becomes

most important. I think, as you said, most leaders, or not all leaders, they don't follow that simple rule.

Brian Scudamore: I think you and I, we've certainly spent time together at GOT, Gathering of Titans, and MMT. I think that you and I are cut from similar cloth in the sense that, what motivates us is people, it's growth, it's helping others. If I look at our businesses, we named our parent company O2E Brands, that's Ordinary 2 Exceptional. We're taking ordinary people and helping them into exceptional opportunities as a franchise owner or exceptional opportunities for growth in our head office, the Junction. Because I understand what motivates me and it's not money, it's helping people. I think every decision we make both good or challenging, we try and do the right things the right way.

Brian Scudamore: The right decision I've learned, and I talked about this in the book, is that it's rarely the easy decision. But if you do it in the right way, again, there's a gift in that and there's something that comes around one day that you just go, "Wow that decision was a hard one, but it made me, or it made that person or the business better than they were at that point in time."

Robert Glazer: Yeah, it's because you care about a person that you probably feel the need to tell them that they are not in the right job or they are not doing something where they're going to be successful and that hiding that from them is not really the truth or is not helping them, right?

Brian Scudamore: Yeah. I think transparency is the right way. I know that you are on a big campaign or it's building even its own virality is the whole concept of the two weeks notice. I mean if you treat people in a transparent way and help them, and be honest and upfront, just makes such a difference in business decisions and where things go. Back to the concept too of, "I'm not motivated by money." I think most entrepreneurs are. However, when you focus on the people and you focus on taking care of your customers, the money comes. I mean, it comes in such large amounts sometimes that you don't even know what to do with the money, but it comes by not focusing on the money. It comes by focusing on the people.

Robert Glazer: How do you react to the comment, "It's just business," when people say that?

Brian Scudamore: Never been a fan of that comment because it's not just business, it's actually just people. Every business that exists on this planet is about people. I don't care how much AI process you have, I don't care how much technology you're using and how often or infrequently you're interacting with people. It's a people business. Our philosophy is, take care of our people, they'll take care of our customers. By taking care of the customers, then they'll take care of our growth in both profits and brand. The people we put first. The most important priority in our business is people. When someone says, "It's just business," that sounds ruthless and cutthroat, that sounds like it's about the numbers, the bottom line, don't take it personally. Well, how can you not take things personally if you're a person?

Brian Scudamore: Everything do is about figuring out, "What's right for the person? What's right for our people, not just the bottom line?" Sometimes we've had situations where you make a decision that on paper makes no financial sense in the short term, but in the longterm, the loyalty you have, the way you've treated someone, has them coming back in a way that's made more business sense than you could ever imagine.

Robert Glazer: If you think back to that, just to help people understand this, who struggle because they still come from that mindset of, "Hey I have to make a business decision." Back to those 11 employees and that day, how did you frame that in terms of your own mind in terms of say, well... You got rid of your entire staff. How was that about the people? Help people understand how you look at that in that framework.

Brian Scudamore: Well, so I don't think at 25 years old, 24 years old, when I made that decision that I had really learned exactly how to treat people. But at that time I still had a heart and I still said, "I'm sorry." I approached it with a level of compassion to say, "I know this is probably some difficult news for you, but I don't know what other path I have in moving forward." I treated them with respect. I think that you can, in a lot of those situations, have labor boards and lawsuits and things coming down your neck because you didn't deal with things properly. One thing we do is, everyone that gets let go from the business when these things happen, not just someone quitting, but someone being told that they're no longer an employee at O2E Brands, I reach out to those people and I call them to check in to see if they're okay because I care about them as a human being.

Brian Scudamore: I'm still appreciative of everything they've done, even if it didn't work out for the long term. I think that when you put people first, it just makes things easier. It leaves people with a better taste in their mouth of O2E Brands or any of the brands that they might've worked for if the CEO or other people in the company reach out and show they care about that person as an individual. While it's not the road most traveled, I believe one day it will be because people will understand that it's the right way to do business.

Robert Glazer: Yeah, and you mentioned this before, but I think, because of lawyers and laws and labor laws, people are doing a lot of things that they're told that will protect them from these things but aren't actually transparent or honest with people. I talk a lot about performance improvement plans and people saying, "Oh, well, we want to get rid of Johnny, but we got to put on a performance improvement plan because we need to document all the problems so then we can deal with it," that's the legal advice. But, what it takes out is the respect. What we've seen over the years is that if you are respectful to people, you will have far fewer issues, and legal issues, than if you follow some of this strictly impersonal legal advice.

Robert Glazer: There was a study, I think it was in the book Freakonomics, I could be wrong though, that said, insurance companies listen to discussions with patients and doctors, and they could predict who was going to get sued by the tenor of those

conversations. It was totally detached from the error rate of those physicians. Curious as to your thoughts on that. Because you mentioned the word respect, and I think people miss this. I think, yeah, in the name of not getting sued, they do stuff that's more likely to maybe get them sued.

Brian Scudamore: Yeah, it's a good point. I think that you can have both. I think you can have documentation and I think documentation can serve a great purpose of clear expectations with your person that you're putting on a performance improvement plan, but you can do it in a respectful way. Often what people will do is they'll send out the performance improvement plan in a language that just doesn't feel nice. That feels too legal. Versus having a heart and sitting down with the person and say, "Okay, so we're going to have a difficult conversation here, but I'd like to run you through what's going on and I'm here to help you." You can approach these things with documentation and with a heart at the same time and I think all in the end what somebody is looking for as a human being is a level of respect.

Brian Scudamore: I mean, what a way to avoid lawsuits by just treating people well. A lawsuit, I think in my experience, usually stems from someone being angry because they were mistreated, something wasn't fair, they got the bad end of the deal. Do the right thing, be transparent, talk about it. I remember there was this negotiating professor. A professor that taught negotiation at Stanford. I took an executive program there years ago and I remember this person said, "Okay, you've got a group of people that are all As, a group that are Bs. You divide off into, you pick an A, he picks a B and you start negotiating. You each have these cards and it's a secret. You can't tell the person across the table if you're an A, what you're looking for from the B. The As, from a case of a dozen eggs, had to get seven egg whites. The Bs had to get seven egg yolks.

Brian Scudamore: Well guess what? What happened in 95% of the situation was that the egg white team said, "I want seven egg whites and I'm not going to settle for any less, and I'm prepared to walk away." The same thing happened when the yolks were negotiating. But what was interesting is both sides can have what they're looking for if they were transparent and laid their cards down on the table. Imagine if someone said, "I need seven egg whites," and the guy with the egg yolks go, "Oh, I need seven egg yolks. How about this? You have 12 egg whites and I'll have 12 egg yolks. How awesome would that be?" I think transparency is a much better way to not just negotiate, but even to communicate.

Robert Glazer: Yeah. I was in a group earlier this week of really fascinating cultural leaders who were imagining the next 10 years of work. I know there's people like you and I who just believe in transparency, but there's an interesting thing that, the world is going open. I think people who are operating in a closed... One of the things they said is that there's a dark web version of glass door where... These large companies, people post everything about managers in the company and all the stuff. It also seems to me that this is just a... Not being transparent is going against the trend of just open companies and everything, being more open eventually whether you want it to be or not.

Brian Scudamore: Yeah, I've always had the belief that if you don't have something nice to say, don't say it, right? That also came from my parents, and I'm sure most parents say something similar, but the way I look at that in today's world, don't send a text to somebody with something nasty to say about someone else when you know that A, it's not the right thing to do, but B, someone takes a screenshot and that gets back to you, I mean you're screwed. In this world where everything is documented, whether we want it or not, just avoid being the mean guy. Just be nice, right? Again, back to the golden rule. I mean it's so simple yet how powerful if everybody just treated everyone, regardless of whatever diverse background they come from, with love and respect. Imagine the kind of place we'd live in?

Robert Glazer: It would be a nice one. We talked about your book earlier, WTF. You've been doing this a while. What prompted you to write the book after so many years?

Brian Scudamore: Roy H. Williams, I affectionately, we know him as the wizard of ads. He writes all our radio creative for 1-800-GOT-JUNK and does a lot of great branding work for our other brands under the O2E Brands umbrella. We were at his compound in Austin, Texas, his ranch, and he said, "Year after year, Brian, you've got to write a book." A couple of years ago I sat down, I go "Roy, I just don't want to write a book. My ego doesn't need it. I am not a great reader, let alone find the time to write even though I like to write." But he just said, listen, "This isn't about you. This is about the people that you can impact through stories, the stories you and your teams and franchise owners have created over the years. It's important stuff that you share with others."

Brian Scudamore: He convinced me and he said, "I'll make it easy. We'll hang out for a day in the wizard's tower and drink some red wine, and tell stories." He miked me up and recorded story, after story, after story. It was great because we ended up with 135-page transcript after that day, which became the basis for the book. He went off and created a structure and then we went back and forth for a good half a year or so. I realized after the testimonials I was getting from the book from, the youngest one I've had is nine years old, the oldest testimonial's from an 89 year old. This wasn't just a business book, this was some life lessons and seeing failure as gift and just some inspiration from stuff we've done that we thought we've either learned from others or created ourselves that was worth sharing. The wizard, I'm grateful, because he got me sold on it and I've realized it has actually made an impact. Glad I put the time in and made it happen.

Robert Glazer: I didn't realize it was all initially recorded in one day. That's fascinating. That must have been a lot of red wine.

Brian Scudamore: It was a lot of red wine. It was a lot of talking and the fact that there were so many stories recorded... What Roy did so well and has the gift for was just question, after question, after question. Drilling into my childhood, I felt like I was sitting at a psychiatrist's office on the couch for a while there, but he was able to pull up the stories and then help to lay out a timeline of how some of

these lessons fit together. That became the basis for what he and I wrote together as the WTF, Willing To Fail, book.

Robert Glazer: One of the big sections, I know we alluded to this before in the book, is around this concept of the painted picture or vivid vision. Can you explain a little bit to everyone what that is, and what your first one looked like at the company?

Brian Scudamore: Yeah, so to me, a lot of the mistakes we make, a lot of the challenging moments of course lead to greatness or lead to beautiful things that can happen. For me, I had joined EO, the Entrepreneur Organization in 1996. I was surrounded at that point by other entrepreneurs who had bigger, better, more glamorous businesses than my little junk removal company doing a million in revenue. I kept comparing myself to others and it was a big mistake because I found myself feeling down about myself, and not feeling the hope towards building my company. My parents had a little summer cottage and I went out on the water in the ocean one summer sunny day and pulled out a sheet of paper and said, "Okay, Brian enough doom loop." Take out the sheet of paper and start to envision in my mind and put it into words what that future could look like if I didn't think about the fact that I didn't finish high school, didn't finish college, didn't have the money and so on.

Brian Scudamore: I came up with this one page, double sided document that started with, "We will be in the top 30 Metros in North America by December 31st, 2003." All the language was very definitive in, this is where we were going, not where we hope to be or wanted to be, but where we were going. I said, we'd be on the Oprah Winfrey show. I said we'd be the FedEx of junk removal. All these things ended up being what I ended up calling the painted picture. It was a process that I shared with people, that I said, "Listen, this is the most impactful thing, looking back, that I've ever done in my business. If you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there." I created this document that became a manifesto that I was able to share with people around me and it did one or two things. It had people saying, "Brian, you're smoking some hope dope here and this is never going to happen." Or more importantly, the group that said, "Wow, I want to stick around. I want to be a part of this. This is exciting."

Brian Scudamore: I recruited people like Cameron Harold who came in. Cameron's version of the painted picture is the vivid vision because he too saw the power of what we would envision and then make happen. It's phenomenal what that can do. In fact, if any of your listeners want a copy of our painted picture, just send me a DM on Instagram at Brian Scudamore and say, "Painted picture," and I'll send you off, not only our painted picture, but also an article I wrote step-by-step how to create one. It's an easy thing that most people don't get. I remember Cameron in the early days, he goes, "I don't think in vision, I can't envision anything." I said, "No, that's garbage. Of course you can." I remember talking to Cameron about, "If you could go anywhere in the world on a vacation, what would it look like? What cold drink is in your hand? Who are you with? Describe the weather, the sounds, the..." He did it at all, and I'm like, "There you go. You

can envision." Sometimes people just need a process or a template and I'm happy to share that with your audience.

Robert Glazer: Yeah, well get ahold of that, and if you want we can put it in the show notes too. If you want to connect to people.

Brian Scudamore: Perfect.

Robert Glazer: What is the biggest challenge people face in building a vivid vision or a painted picture? They buy their notebook, they go to their place. Where are they going to struggle, where can you help them, and they're going to be cursing you, and you can help them through that first part.

Brian Scudamore: Yeah. If there was one thing, if I was to focus it and say, "What's the most impactful thing?" I'd say get somebody who you're close with who can ask you really penetrating questions. Someone that you know that is just curious and good at asking questions. Imagine Cameron and I sitting together again and Cameron says, "I can't think about vision." I say, "Well, if you could go anywhere in the world right now, money wasn't an object. Where would you go?" He comes up with an answer. "What does that look like? Tell me what you're hearing in the air. What's the smell? What does it feel like? Who's beside you? Is it more than one person? Is it a bunch of people? What do their faces look like? Are they smiling? Are they happy? Are they cheering?" You get people, by asking questions, you pull out what this could look like.

Brian Scudamore: Now, somehow I found that if someone's asking you the questions and they keep on digging deep, it's easier than someone who hasn't done this for the first time trying to think on their own, "What does my future look like?" You need people to be curious and draw it from, it's already inside you. Just get it clearly out, put it in writing and once you've got it you share it with people, pure magic. Everybody I know that's taken the time to create a painted picture, pure magic. It doesn't tell you how you're going to get to where you're going, but what it does for the leader, for you, for me, for Cameron Herald, is says, "Everyone who joins my movement..." For us O2E Brands building these exceptional businesses together and creating a platform where entrepreneurs come in who might not want to start with something on their own but they see what we're doing and they want to springboard off of it with one of the brands, you get people coming and joining your cause and being an incredibly important part of that momentum.

Robert Glazer: How many have you had over the years?

Brian Scudamore: We have a painted picture approximately every four years, and as we start to get close to one we'll write the next, so that we've got something to keep working towards. It is amazing the specificity of these painted pictures. Sometimes things happen in them that I'm like, "Wow, how's that even possible?" I'll give you a story. I was in Las Vegas, 2012, we were in a tough

place in the business, but I had envisioned a painted picture that I wanted to share with everyone in the company. I said we would go to Hawaii if we doubled our business by 2016, four years later. I got everybody at this conference to show up with a Hawaiian shirt. We gave them fresh lays, mai tais, had everybody sit down and I had them close their eyes. I started with the first part of the painted picture, which was something to the effect of, imagine you're 12 feet from the shore. You can hear clinking of mai tais, you can feel the smiling faces and the energy as we're all so proud celebrating the fact that we've hit double our revenue.

Brian Scudamore: There we were. After we hit our goal in 2016, March of 2017 we went to Hawaii as an entire company, 700 of us, and there we were 12 feet from the shore. I'm standing on stage rereading that painted picture as everybody's clinking their mai tai glasses and it was just strange. I'm like, "Who put this stage 12 feet from the shore? How did that happen? How do you see the future so clearly?" But again, that is the power of the painted pictures. You're creating the destination in full technicolor so that someone else can get out there and go, "If I know where I'm going, I can be a part of the team to figure out how to get us there."

Robert Glazer: That's a crazy story. I remember hearing it before, but I think I missed the detail of the 12 feet. But yeah, we've had huge success with it. I remember hearing Kendra Scott speak, who is in the MP program that we were both in and talking about doodling these pictures in her vivid vision a painted picture of her global headquarters. Then she was showing us the headquarters exactly as she had written it. Hey, you got to put something out there. There's a quote by... "If you don't know where you're going, any direction will do."

Brian Scudamore: Yeah, I think it was an Alice in Wonderland quote, "If you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there." It's funny. I call it the painted picture, Cameron calls it the vivid vision, you call it the vivid vision. To me, it doesn't matter what someone calls it, it's just, what an opportunity for someone to understand the power behind it. You can take any successful leader in this world. It doesn't matter if they're in politics, religion, business, sports. You take someone like Obama. I mean Obama knew he would be president one day. There was a clear vision, not necessarily a path, but you can take top athletes. Take the Toronto Raptors that just won the NBA championships, Go Canada. You interview these guys, I guarantee some of those key teammates knew exactly what that picture would look like as an end result, and they worked towards making the magic happen. Turning it into reality.

Robert Glazer: Absolutely. You actually hear these stories when these sports teams win of what they were doing each game or each series or they had a puzzle, or the Bruins had a jacket years ago, the Cavaliers had something else. It's interesting how oftentimes that comes out there's the story or something that the team had decided that was the goal. There's the famous story years ago when the Celtics beat the Lakers. When they played the last game of the regular season in Los Angeles, Doc Rivers was in the locker room and asked each player for like \$1,000 or something and cash, took it, hid it in the ceiling of the visitor's locker room

and said, "If you guys want your money back, we're not going to play them until the NBA finals," and they played them in the finals that year.

Brian Scudamore: That's amazing.

Robert Glazer: Quickly before we wrap up, I know I mentioned earlier you were on Undercover Boss. I love watching that show. For those who haven't seen it, you should definitely check it out. What was your key learning, or who is the person that you walked away from just super inspired, and what did you do for them?

Brian Scudamore: What was interesting? I mean, it was a super fun show and I spent a week traveling across Canada, which is the second largest country in the world. We were getting some air miles that trip, and it was super fun. But what I realized very quickly is, it's far from reality because you have people who are all on camera and they know they're miked up. They know that they're on camera. They don't know it's for Undercover Boss, so there's certainly a backstory. Everybody's on their best behavior.

Brian Scudamore: I didn't really feel like I saw the business in the most honest light, but I did get to connect with some really great people out in the tracks and some great stories. I remember little things like we had this one woman, Danny, who was in Calgary who loved to write and working in 1-800-GOT-JUNK her running the office and leading the team was a step to a point in her life where one day she wanted to write professionally and write a novel. I said, "Where would you write your novel if you could go anywhere inspiring?" She said, I'd go to Italy. When we brought to the head office on Undercover Boss, I said, guess what? I'm Brian Scudamore, now not undercover. I'm the CEO of 1-800-GOT-JUNK and you're going to Italy. She started to cry and she was just so excited.

Brian Scudamore: Now unfortunately, the franchise owner of that Calgary operation wasn't completely thrilled to lose a great person, but he was also excited that she was going for an incredible opportunity. She was leaving for a few weeks to go write in Italy, and then we get a call from her saying, "This has changed my life. I met the man I'm going to marry and I'm not coming home." I think still to this day, she's living in Italy. It's funny how a little moment, even if it isn't 'reality TV', the reality that she stepped into was pretty magical.

Robert Glazer: That's a great story. Every time you see that franchise owner, he curses you and tells you, you owe him person. I'm sure.

Brian Scudamore: Exactly. I mean it's hard not to feel while you're losing a key employee, seeing them fall in love, live their life's dream in Italy. Hard not to feel like that's a pretty special opportunity.

Robert Glazer: Yeah, that sounds very fairytalesque. Last question. What's a mistake you've made either personally or professionally, that you've learned the most from in your career?

Brian Scudamore: Yeah, it's a good question. I don't know if there's one that I've made that's been more impactful. It's cumulative. I find that each mistake layers on to the learning. I think one of the hardest times, if I reflect back, was when I had a ex-president from Starbucks come in after Cameron as the person who was really going to take this business to the next level. I hit the Jackpot, this person's pedigree, it was going to be phenomenal. They had run 30,000 employees in their tenure underneath them, and I thought, "Wow, my little company is just going to blossom." But I'd brought the wrong leader in for me. This person's gone on to be very successful in a bigger way in a different company, but after 14 months in my little business, we'd almost bankrupted the business, revenue dropped \$40 million. We had just a culture that was starting to fall apart and show cracks in the foundation, and the business completely changed. It wasn't that this person was a bad person, they were the wrong person for me.

Brian Scudamore: I think the big learning for me is, it is about finding the right people and treating them right, but part of finding the right person is the right leader for you. I ended up finding Eric Church who I created this mini painted picture, if you will, describing the person I was looking for who would be the right leader for me. I got this mini vision out to people through my networks and three people, unrelated, got back to me and said, the person you're looking for, the person you described is Eric Church. He's been here seven years, I believe he'll be here forever. It is like a Yin and Yang, there's some magic to it.

Brian Scudamore: But what I did is I found someone that believed in my quiriness, my ADD, my entrepreneurial passion and ideas, but also being able to rein me in at times and we've got this relationship where Eric can say, "Hey, that's a great idea. It really is, but we can't do anything, even talk about that idea for six months," or, "With all due respect, here's why that great idea I think is too risky for us right now." We have good open conversations, but there's a balance between my visionary leadership and his rigor and discipline, and his leadership, and the two are absolutely needed together. I think it's the one area that entrepreneurs fail in most often, and often fail to the point where their business might not ever succeed, is not being able to let go of control of everything you do in the spirit of finding someone better who can do a better job than you can. It's a tough thing for egos to handle, but when you can make that shift, it's pretty awesome.

Robert Glazer: Those are good lessons for, I think, a lot of people in a lot of different circumstances. Well, Brian, thank you for sharing your story with us. You set a great example of how courage in the face of adversity and willingness to fail are actually required elements, I think, to being a successful entrepreneur.

Brian Scudamore: Awesome. Well Bob, thanks for having me again. But you know what, your goal was to make this one better than the last time. I can't remember what we talked about last time, but the energy was great and enjoyed being back.

Robert Glazer: We'll say it was better. We'll include links to Brian and 1-800-GOT-JUNK as well as to his book on Brian's episode page at [robertglazer.com](http://robertglazer.com). If you enjoyed today's episode or the Elevate podcast in general, I'd really appreciate it if you

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