
Sarah Gregg: And then I looked down the platform and I could see this team of 10 people running down the platform. These Chinese train guards and a doctor, I assume – with a wheelchair for me – just racing down. And the rest of them are staring at us on the platform. And Chris just whispered in my ear, "I'm going to count to three and you're just going to run. We just need to run away from this." So, he counts to three and we just run. And Chris had all the bags – these two massive backpacks. And we ran with this wheelchair brigade chasing after us. And we managed to outrun them and hide in a stairwell.

Announcer 1: This is "The Maverick Show", where you'll meet today's most interesting real estate investors, entrepreneurs, and world travelers and learn the strategies and tactics they use to succeed. And now, here's your host Matt Bowles.

Matt Bowles: Hey, everybody. It's Matt Bowles. Our guest today is Sarah Gregg. She's a life coach, business coach, certified NLP practitioner, and the founder of The Power to Reinvent, a company entirely focused on helping individuals and businesses achieve their goals in less time. Over the past decade, Sarah has worked with hundreds of clients ranging from large corporations like IKEA to startups and individual entrepreneurs. She has also worked with the European Commission on developing an entrepreneur accelerator program.

In 2016, she sold her house, her car, and all of her stuff to become a fully location independent entrepreneur and design her dream lifestyle. She left her home in Belfast and has been traveling the world with her husband Chris while running her business from some of the world's most beautiful locations.

Right now, we're doing this interview live in Chiang Mai, Thailand before she heads onward to Porto, Portugal next week – which is also one of my favorite cities, by the way. Sarah, welcome to the show.

Sarah: Hi. Thanks for having me.

Matt: So, we have hung out a good bit over the last month in Chiang Mai. It feels like most of those have been on rooftops at cocktail hour, watching sunsets, and that sort of thing.

Sarah: Yep, they have. And I am glad to see that you kept with that line of entertainment today and supplied the wine.

Matt: Absolutely. It wouldn't be an official Maverick podcast interview without a nice bottle of wine. We have a Chilean Carménère – which, this is your first time having a Carménère. Is that right?

Sarah: It is. It is. I can highly recommend it, especially after the not-so-great wine in Asia. I feel like I'm in heaven. And for those who may not have realized before, I actually nearly cried with joy whenever he opened this – and that's no exaggeration. So, yeah. Little amuses the Irish, clearly, when it comes to alcohol.

Matt: So, I had never had – I had never even heard of Carménère – it's a variety – it's a type of grape – until I went and lived in Chile. And this is the specialty wine of Chile, basically, in the way that Malbec is the specialty wine of Argentina. Chile is – produces the best Carménère in the world. And so, when I went down there I found this and I started just basically having it pretty much every night. And then now, as I go around the world, I'm looking for it, tracking it down, finding the best wine stores, and sampling it. So, we definitely have a good one here today.

Sarah: I have to say, I love that you say you have to sample it almost every night. That's good going.

Matt: Well, in Chile. You order dinner and then it's like, "What would you like with that?" "Okay, a glass of Carménère. That'll do." It pairs with just about all the Chilean food. So, we are now in Chiang Mai and you are only here for another week or so and then you're on your way to Porto, Portugal.

Sarah: Yes, I am.

Matt: Which is amazing. You've never been before?

Sarah: No, I've never been. So, I did a bit of work in Lisbon before, but never made it up to Porto. So, I've heard really, really good things about it, so I'm super excited. It feels like every digital nomad is headed there. I've spoken to quite a number of people this week and the majority of people seem to be heading off to Lisbon or Porto. So, yeah, it seems to be going on there. So, I'm excited to get there and see what it has to offer.

Matt: It's an amazing city. It is – I think you're really, really going to like it. One of the things that I recommend to do is that one of the – what's rated as one of the top 10 most beautiful train rides in the world departs out of Porto. And it's super inexpensive – I mean, it's

maybe \$27.00 roundtrip or something, if I recall. And it's – I think the destination you want to go to is called Pocinho. I don't know if I pronounced that properly, but it's just about three hours out and then three hours back. You can do it one day.

But, the train ride goes from Porto, which for folks who don't know, is right on the coast in Portugal where the Douro River empties out. And the train ride goes right along the Douro River, which is the river that irrigates the Portuguese wine country. And so, the train is going along the river and then, on both sides of the train, you're just seeing wine vineyards. I mean, it's just unbelievable. So, I highly recommend that you take a look for that soon after you get there.

Sarah: That sounds amazing. I'm really, really excited to go. It's my first time. So, I've lived in Ireland and England, but it'll be my first time actually living somewhere in Europe. So, I'm really intrigued to see what the experience is like and to have the wine and the cheese and all of those comforts again. So, yeah, I'm really excited.

Matt: The Portuguese wine is amazing too. I think it's one of the most underrated wines in Europe. I feel like normally it's the Italian wines, and the French wines, and even the Spanish wines that get a lot of the attention. But, I would say that the Portuguese wines are absolutely on par with those other countries. So, you're definitely in for a treat.

So, let's talk a little bit about your story and how you became location dependent. I know it was 2016 that you actually made the transition, but can you tell us a little bit about your life leading up to that point, and then how you made that transition?

Sarah: Yeah, of course. So, yeah, it feels like a lifetime ago now, even though it wasn't really that long ago. I worked really, really hard in my career. I've always been super driven and very successful at what I do, to a certain extent, and I had a real focus to become a top business coach with any university in England. I achieved that. I was probably the youngest on my team by seven or eight years at least.

And then, I bought the house, we got married, had the car, and it was like, "Is this it? Is this really it? Is this what happiness is meant to be like?" And it just felt like it was great until it wasn't. And that's the only way I can describe it. And something just didn't feel right. I felt like I could see my whole next 10 years – 20 years –

just right out in front of me, that it would be the next promotion, the bigger house, a different car, change the sofa, or paint the walls a different color. And that excites some people, but for me, that's not my source of excitement.

Traveling, variety, and seeing different places – that's what I really wanted to do. To me, it felt like people have the model of life the wrong way around. It was wait until you retire. Just wait until then, and you take that for granted. You assume that you're going to reach that age and then you're going to have the health to do the things that you want to do in life. And so, we took a trip to Bali and Thailand and it was there that we spoke to a couple of people who were living this type of lifestyle. They were working and traveling online. It was a really new concept for us.

And we came back and it – honestly it started as a joke, ironically as well – over a glass of wine. We said, "Well, what if we sold the house? What if we just sold everything and just took our backpacks and just went?" Weirdly, that felt less scary than the alternative of staying. And that's really how it started. The journey was crazy to get to this point. It's been really crazy.

Matt: Well, I want to hear about it. But the first thing that strikes me about your story, that's really significant, is that I feel like a lot of people have the impression of the digital nomad lifestyle, that "Oh, that's for single people," or, "Do it when you're young," and, "Do it now." And then, eventually you'll get married and settle down.

Sarah: Yeah.

Matt: Whereas, you did exactly the opposite. You got married and then the two of you together, as a couple, chose to unsettle –

Sarah: Yes.

Matt: – and go – and travel the world.

Sarah: I think we gave our parents a heart attack. Truly, we gave them a heart attack. And we probably announced it at the worst time. We did it on Christmas Day, which was a really bad idea. I don't know why we did that. Yeah, we just thought Christmas would be a good distractor, but on reflection, I think we ruined that Christmas.

So, yeah, we did, I suppose, do it in reverse. A lot of our friends were genuinely worried about us. When we said we were going to

go off, the first question was, "What's wrong?" Which was really strange because, actually, for me and for Chris it felt like this was the right decision. This was everything we wanted. It was like the whole world made sense to us now, that we could have this life, that we could travel, that we could work, that we could move from Thailand to Portugal, that we could meet different people, see different things, and not put that on hold.

And it was really, really difficult going against the grain. It was really difficult to have conversations with friends and family, and try to explain a concept that isn't known to people. It was almost like, "So, what are you going to do? What do mean you can work with a laptop? I don't understand. So, you're traveling." And people want to put you into the pigeonhole box that they understand. "Okay. So, you're backpacking now." "No, no. We're not backpacking. We're working and we're traveling." "Oh, right. So, you're working." "Yes, we're working, but we also travel."

And even the nomad part, they can't still quite wrap their heads around. So, we've been in Chiang Mai for five months now. And when we said to our family, "Oh, we're going to go to Porto next," they were like, "Oh, so you don't like Chiang Mai anymore." It's like, "No, we do like Chiang Mai. That's not the point of being a nomad." The point is, you move around. So, it's a very, very new and very, very different concept for people, but the rewards of this lifestyle, the quality time we share together, the experiences we share – the stress levels are significantly lower. I would highly recommend to anybody.

And I would say that if you are a married couple out there and you're nervous about selling and giving everything up, you won't regret it. And you can always go back.

Matt: And it is amazing too. I think a lot of people that haven't done this before, or that don't have their mind around the concept – it's actually so much less expensive to live this way, when you don't have the overhead of a mortgage in an expensive country, and a car payment, and this, and all of this kind of stuff. You can live in Thailand and eat amazing food and see gorgeous scenery and be in this incredible place around these amazing people, and it's a fraction of the living expenses.

Sarah: It is a fraction. Yeah. I mean, I don't even cook anymore. The way – we don't cook. We eat out every night. We have a really nice – it's a small apartment but it's everything that we need. It has a

swimming pool, jacuzzi, gym, 24-hour security. And we pay \$300.00 for that a month. That is just crazy. And people think I'm mad. I cannot be the crazy one.

Matt: Yeah. You pay \$300.00 a month for a furnished apartment – and my lunch today, which was an amazing Thai chicken curry with rice dish – I mean, just delightful – was about – in US currency, about \$1.50 for an amazing meal.

Sarah: Yeah. It – the quality of life is incredible. The people that you surround yourself with, the community, has really been the biggest eye opener for me here. I thought I was doing it alone. We came with our backpacks. We met a couple of people. We met one guy in particular, actually, on an island in Malaysia and he said – he worked online and he said, "You should definitely go to Chiang Mai. It's a real nomad hub." I was like, "Really? We were in Chiang Mai seven years ago and I just remember there was a city wall and bicycles that you could cycle around. And everybody kind of jumped through here and went to Pai."

And that was my only memories – getting here and meeting people – meeting other married couples that do it, meeting older people. I met a guy who is 65 and he's doing it. And his children think he's crazy. It's just such a big spectrum. And if one person can do it, anyone can do it.

Matt: Yeah, it's been amazing to meet a lot of the people in the community here in Chiang Mai. And you're right. It is a massive diversity of ages. There are certainly people in the retirement age category that are travelling around – well, nomading around the world. But I have been amazed with how young a number of the entrepreneurs here are. I mean, I'm meeting 23-year-old entrepreneurs from countries like the US, or other places, that have come here and are living on the living expenses that you just described and building location independent businesses. I mean, it's unbelievable.

Sarah: It is. And it's the best way to bootstrap your business – I mean, 100%. Strangely, if you think – it's just about thinking a bit differently and outside the box. I think my family would've been more reassured if we had said, "We're going to quit our jobs. We're going to go into business together. We're going to go to the bank. We're going to purchase some kind of fictitious spreadsheet that shows our forecast. They're going to lend us a load of money against our house and then we're going to work endlessly to pay

that back, and pay our mortgage, and pay our bills."

That model is flawed now. We live in a world of ultimate resources. We have technology. The Internet here is crazy fast in Chiang Mai. People are more used to working online. A lot of my clients enjoy working online. The older model is flawed and you can have an online successful business, and you can do it at a very, very minimal cost with an extremely good standard of living still.

Matt: So, one of the other interesting things that I want to ask you about is in terms of doing this as a married couple – I know that you and Chris – who, by the way, is an amazing guy.

Sarah: Thanks.

Matt: Also, and is just an incredible guy to hang out with. So, we have had so much fun over this month spending time with you guys. But, I'm interested for you to share how you balance your life. You have your marriage and then the two of you are also involved in businesses together, right? So, how the business partnership's dynamic works as spouses – and then you're also traveling and seeing things and you're in these amazing places. And, of course, you want to go and do stuff and all of that.

So, can you talk a little bit about how you've balanced it? Because you've obviously made it work. I mean, it's amazing. You two have an amazing dynamic. And I'm just – anything you can share or impart about how that works would be fantastic.

Sarah: Yeah, we drink a lot. It's a key to any good marriage. No, that's a joke. I'm making myself sound like a raging alcoholic. Okay. No, we don't. Yeah, we've been together for a long time, which I think helps. We've been together for 12 years. We know each other really well. We know each other's strengths. We know each other's weaknesses. And we're both quite different people. So, Chris wouldn't do anything like this. He doesn't want to talk. He doesn't want to be on camera, but he's extremely sociable. And yeah, he tends to specialize more in the tech stuff. I do different things, and we just plug each other's weaknesses, which is extremely helpful. It saves cost, for one.

And I think – more than that, I think the thing that keeps it together is we're working towards the same goal, which is establishing the lifestyle. So, we both know that the effort put in rewards us both and it makes sense to do it together.

Matt: As so, as you're doing business projects together, though, that's – I feel like that's an interesting dynamic for a married couple to do because I have traveled around the world and nomaded with relationship partners before, also. And you have the relationship and then you travel stuff that you're doing together. But, in my situation, the work was totally separate. They were just in a totally separate space doing their thing and I was in a totally separate space doing my thing. So, it was almost like we had a separate workday, almost – kind of like a traditional situation, right?

And then, you're in these amazing locations, so you're traveling and hanging out in the evening or you're doing whatever. But, the fact that you guys are also – have developed this dynamic where you have these complimentary business skills and you've decided to build businesses together is amazing. I mean, can you talk a little bit about that? I mean, does it ever – because I feel like, when you're working in a business environment, there's a certain dynamic to that, right? Where it has to be business focused. It has to be this and it has to be that. There will sometimes be business disagreements or business strategy differentials.

Or, when stress happens inside a business, there are dynamics. So, can you talk a little bit about how you've navigated that when doing business with your spouse?

Sarah: Yeah. So, we work together. So, we physically sit beside each other in a co-working space. We spend an insane amount of time together, but we do get on really, really well. One thing that's worked for us is taking the agile approach. So, if you come into our apartment right now, you'd see that we are super geeky and we have a big white bit of paper with Post-it notes and all the tasks. And we drop a dime and we review that regularly – I mean, every morning. So, before we go to the co-working space, we look and then Chris will give an update on, "Yeah, I've built the sales funnel. I've coded this bit of the website."

I can say, "I've written this content. I've done this little bit of social media," or whatever it is. And then, we drop a dime. And then, we discuss, "Okay, what's the high value priority for today? What is it that you're going to work on? What is it that I'm going to work on?" And then, it's trust. I mean, trust is the biggest thing. It's going into that space and knowing that Chris is going to work to the best of his ability to do what he has to do and I'm going to do the same. And it's a 50/50 partnership – so, the organization, the

clear differentiation of tasks, the ownership of those tasks, and then the trust that the other person's going to do it.

Matt: Wow. Okay, so let's talk a little bit about – I want to go back to your story and when you two decided to leave. And you had all of the conversations with people, and you packed up, and you sold the house, and you sold the car, and you actually did it. Take us from there. Over the last couple of years, you said it has been quite an experience.

Sarah: Yeah.

Matt: Tell us a little bit about that journey.

Sarah: It's been a crazy experience. I mean, the house – even selling it was way more stressful than I could ever have imagined. We made the decision to sell the house and it all sounded really great and romantic and like, "Yeah, we're going to pack our bags." And then, we started to clear stuff out. It just felt never-ending. I mean, I owned – I'm not even joking – about 200 pens. I don't know why I owned them. I don't know where they came from.

But, there were maybe 250 free pens that I picked up from marketing things. I'm like, "What do you do with that?" If you're not going to move it to another place, where do those pens go – to Pen Heaven? You can't give them to a charity shop. No one's going to want to buy them. So, it was this weird thing of just cleansing yourself from your stuff and also realizing how much crap you had accumulated over the years and how much of that was unnecessary.

So, yeah, that was actually very stressful. And then, we took a bit of time off to recover from the house move. We went up to Scotland and we rented a really nice lodge by the lake with a hot tub. We just chilled out. It was amazing. And then, we started into really the nuts and bolts of the business. We went to Malaysia for a bit and then we went to Bali. And we had to do a lot of upscaling in a short amount of time. And I think that kind of transition has been a sharp one. We both had certain skills, but I'd say our – both of our digital skills maybe – probably weren't where they needed to be.

So, we didn't know how to build a website. We didn't know how to create a sales funnel. But the amazing thing about coming to Chiang Mai and the community is we learned it all from them for

no charge.

Matt: Wow. That is really significant, I think. And one of the other themes that I'm hearing from you is about how most people obviously don't live like this. And we're socialized to believe that either you can't or you shouldn't or something along those lines. And nobody else that we know lives like that, so it's very different. So, I feel like a lot of people might hear a podcast like this, or they might hear something like that, and it's like, "Oh, wow. That sounds amazing." Or, they might read a book that would inspire them along these lines. But then, when they start talking to people about it, they get dissuaded, right?

Sarah: Yes.

Matt: And they think, "Oh, I couldn't do that," or, "Nobody that I know does that. And people around me are telling me that it's not possible, it's not for me, or it's not" – that kind of stuff. What advice would you give to someone in that position in terms of how to break through that if they want to really pursue this type of lifestyle?

Sarah: Definitely. It's really difficult to break through that. And you feel like you're the crazy one amongst all the crazies that don't want to do what you want to do. And I love this quote from Steve Jobs, which is, "Our time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life." And I really think that that is so powerful. And if you want to do it, and you have those people who are telling you that you can't, then you need a different super team. They are not the right people for you to be with. I guarantee, when you leave, you will meet people out here that will not give you the problems. They will give you the solutions.

When I turned up at things like WordPress meetups, and I was saying, "Okay, I'm not even sure what WordPress is. Could someone teach me how to do this? Can you show me? Can you give me a few hints," there wasn't one person in that room that said to me, "You shouldn't be a digital nomad," or, "You're silly and you don't know what you're doing." Every single person was like, "This is amazing. You're going to learn. I was in the same position X-amount of years ago. I made these different mistakes. Now, I'm going to teach you the fastest way."

So, success leaves clues behind. You need to find those people that have already done their journey. You need to speak with them.

You need to learn from their mistakes and just gather as much information as possible. But just do something towards that step. Everyone will still think you're crazy. Everyone will still think that you're mad, but that's their lives. If you want to do this, live your own life and just step out of it.

Matt: Right. And I think surrounding yourself and finding ways to plug into supportive communities, and connecting with people, and with groups, and with communities – even if they're online because you don't know anybody in your physical location that does this, connect with communities online and get support from them. It's amazing. We were – you and I were both at the Nomad Summit here last month, where we met.

The people that was talking to there were there from all over the world. And they basically – I mean, a lot of them just worked regular – I talked to a guy who worked construction on the other side of the world, or something like that, and he just said, "I was listening to these podcasts and I knew that I needed to get to Chiang Mai to plug into this community. And now I'm here and I just made my way here and I'm going to try to – I have three months to try to figure out how I'm going to build a location independent business." I mean, it's literally the mindset of a bunch of the people that are here.

Sarah: Yeah. I mean, so many people that are here, it's exactly the same story. They come across, they have a little bit of money to invest in the business, and yeah, they just go for it and they immerse themselves in the community. And it – there's comfort in the community, particularly when you're just starting out the journey, I would say. If you want to do it, find a hub. Find a spot where there are going to be others doing this and where there are going to be meetups.

And if you don't have access to that just yet, coworking spaces are all over the world now. Go to a coworking space. I guarantee you will find someone that is working online, or someone – even if they're just running their own business and a traditional sense, go and learn from them. We live in a world of crazy infinite resources now – YouTube, podcasts, online forums. It's all there at your fingertips. And I think, if you really want it, you can find a way.

Matt: Yeah. I mean, we're doing this interview in a coworking space right now, in fact. And for people that don't know what that is, basically most cities around the world will have coworking spaces.

And these are basically offices, right, where you can come in and they have really good high-speed Wi-Fi and you can work at workstations. And there are other people that are working there – digital nomads from around the world or – in some cases, maybe local people also – as well. But they also have conference rooms.

So, right now, we're in a conference room, in a coworking space, in Chiang Mai, Thailand. We have set up a podcast studio here and we're doing this interview. And you can do this pretty much anywhere in the world. They're open 24/7, so whatever timeframe you need to work on for your hours, or anything like that, these are open 24/7 and you can just come in here. But you meet people in the coworking spaces. There are ways to plug into the community. And I have been amazed with how organized the community is in certain places like Chiang Mai.

Sarah: Yeah.

Matt: I mean, socially organized, professionally organized, all of these meetups you're talking about, whatever you want to learn, whatever you want to strategize about, or whatever social event you want to go to and meet people socially, which is also important. Can you talk about that for a little – because that's really important. I mean, one of the things that's very difficult about traveling, for me – because I left the US in 2013. And so, I've been nomading around since then. And, in some cases, I was doing it with ex relationship partners and so forth.

But even, I find, when you travel with one partner, if you're travelling – nomading around long-term, that can become very lonely. Even if you have one other person with you, if you're not plugging into social communities – can you talk a little bit about what your experience has been with that?

Sarah: Yeah, definitely. So, I completely agree. Actually, being in a couple, meeting people is harder because people automatically assume that you have each other. And I think people think you're maybe a bit more difficult to approach, or I don't know what it is. So, yeah, that's always a factor. And travel can get lonely. The amazing thing about the community and the meetups, I mean, they are never ending.

When I first got here, I was like, "I could be at five different things a day at least." From – there's a wine and pizza meetup where you can go and drink wine and have pizza. There's a Rocky Horror

party here next week. There are women's only lunches. There are Amazon FBA groups. There is – yeah. There is everything you could ever possibly think of and more. And I've met some incredible people and the people really give strength to your journey and they inspire you. And that's what's really important.

It's not just about their learning in the practical sense, but it also shows you what is possible in life. So, Jim Rohn says, "You're the average of the five people that you spend time with." And we may not spend a lot of time with people individually here, but I think the people that you do spend time with, they are incredible. I met travel bloggers, the guys that run Adventure in You, last week. They earned passive income off their blog last month, nearly \$13,000. That's crazy.

And just having those chats and having access with people – chatting with people that I used to follow their blogs, and then I meet them in a bar in Chiang Mai, or I meet them at a women's co-working event – and you're like, "Oh, you look really familiar." And then it's like, "Oh, my god. I read your blog. I saw you." And it's just incredible that the inspiration – the different ways to do things, the out-of-the-box thinking, and just the inspiring stories which makes you think, "Man, if they can do it, I can do it."

Matt: Yep. Absolutely. It is amazing, just the types of people that you run into here and how structured it is to meet people. I think it's very important to be intentional about that because I think one of the things that causes travel fatigue for people is the social isolation.

Sarah: Yeah.

Matt: So, being able to strategically pick where you're going to go, and then being able to plug into those meetups and be intentional about proactively integrating into those social communities is really the key to doing this long-term.

Sarah: Yeah. Absolutely. So important. And because people move around – we've met people here that are off to – off to Porto next. We'll hang out with them whenever we get there. And the community moves around and people share amazing travel tips like your train journey. All that kind of stuff, it's just a lovely thing to be part of.

Matt: Yeah, and it's amazing too, because when you get into this digital nomad ecosystem, you meet people and you connect with them on

social media or whatever and the extent to which you then cross paths with those people in the future is amazing. I've literally met probably three or four people here, in Chiang Mai, that I have told, "Oh, about three months from now, I'm going to be in Valencia, Spain for a month." Literally, three or four people are also going to be in Valencia, Spain, in that same month – I mean, who are in Chiang Mai now.

I mean, literally, it's unbelievable how these global paths cross and people are going to be in all of these future places and stuff. So, as you start meeting people and you start then building your social network virtually, wherever you go you're going to know people or cross paths with people and then you're going to plug in to meet new people and stuff. It's really an extraordinary global network that's developing I think.

Sarah: Yeah. Yeah. It really is. It's fabulous. I hope many more people are inspired to make that change.

Matt: So, let's talk a little bit now about your business. Let's talk about The Power to Reinvent. And tell us a little bit about how that came about and what it is basically.

Sarah: Yeah, so, I have worked as a coach. I actually hate that term "coach," but that's a different story. But we'll use coach for now. So, I've worked as a coach for 10 years. I qualified in psychology, NLP, and all that stuff. And when I came out here, I really wanted to do something with it still, but I wasn't quite sure what. And I started to look at what was the one technique that I used over and over again in my past 10 years that moved people the fastest, that brought them the results the quickest. And it was, without doubt, goalsetting.

And I decided to focus the business on that because I believe in results. I believe in getting people results. There are some people that enjoy the affirmations and the chanting and all that. All that stuff is good, but without action, without somebody – without knowing how exactly you move forward, then it doesn't work. So, my approach is to really help people achieve those goals in less time.

Matt: Well, I'm super excited because I'm actually attending one of your goalsetting workshops next week, and I'm going to work on my own goals under your leadership and –

Sarah: Expertise.

Matt: – expertise and advice. And so, I'm super excited about that. But tell us a little bit – I mean, let's go into it a little bit now in terms of goalsetting and how you work with people on that. I mean, talk about the – I guess, first of all, what it does in terms of performance, in terms of happiness – I mean, in terms of the things that you see. Why – let's talk about why setting goals and then let's go into how to set effective goals.

Sarah: Yeah, so why set goals? So, it actually touches back on the conversation that we had earlier on about drifting into other people's lives. And, if you don't have a goal, you don't have direction, you're just drifting. If you're not sure if you have a goal or not, then I would encourage you to think about this question. What is the next chapter of your life? What does it look like? If you can't answer that question specifically, with details, then you don't have a goal. You are drifting.

And drifting is very, very dangerous. You wander into other people's goals. You end up becoming envious. You compare yourself to other people. You might stumble across success by accident, but it's a complete waste of energy because goals are the fundamental. They are the key ingredient to success. There is endless number of philosophers, scientific research, that backs up what I'm saying. But yet, we overlook it. I think goals, in particular, have become a bit like white noise in society – smart goals, set your goal at an appraisal, set your New Year's resolution goals – all that stuff.

But, actually, goals should be part of your daily practice. They should be something that you do on a regular basis. It's not just a one-off. And a shocking – I find this shocking – eight out of 10 people don't have a goal.

Matt: So, let's talk about that and go a little bit deeper because I feel like goalsetting, the concept of that as you mentioned, is a generically, I think, acknowledged thing. Like, "Oh, yeah. Goals are good. It's good for me to have goals. I set New Year's resolutions. I have this. I have that." What inevitably happens, right, with the New Year's resolutions – I mean, ask anybody that owns a gym, right?

Sarah: Yeah.

Matt: Ask anybody that owns a gym, a fitness center, what happens with

New Year's resolutions, right? They get an enormous amount of new gym memberships, right, on January 2nd. And then, the first half of January is very busy.

Sarah: Yeah, very busy –

[Crosstalk]

Matt: And the gym –

Sarah: Come in and get on one of those spin bikes.

Matt: Yeah. There are no treadmills available in the first two weeks of January at all.

Sarah: Yeah.

Matt: Right? And then, all of a sudden, come February and March – all of a sudden the treadmills are – there are a lot of them available. There are a lot fewer people in the spinning classes.

Sarah: That's it. And they are the people that set goals incorrectly. So –

Matt: So, talk a little bit about that. What are people doing incorrectly when they're setting goals? And is it the setting that's incorrect or is it the execution plan that's incorrect? And what do people need to do to revise how they're doing that so that they can be successful?

Sarah: So, it's a combination of factors. First of all, you have to make sure it's the right goal for you. What I mean by that is you have to be willing to expand the amount of energy for the reward that it brings. So, your mind has to really feel like it's worth it. So, if you're just going to the gym on New Year's, for example, because you think, "Oh, I probably put on three or four extra pounds over Christmas. Oh, I could sweat that off in a couple of weeks," and that's your goal, that's all it's going to last for. Or if you're doing it because everybody else is joining the gym and because the gym has given out a really great promotion and you think, "I should do this," then that's not a reason to set a goal.

So, number one, is it has to be motivating enough. You have to be willing to bring through the pain barrier of it. So, for me, I'm wanting the digital nomad location independent lifestyle. Even though selling that house was painful, the reward was greater. So,

that's what pushed me through. So, it has to be something that super, super motivates you.

The second thing is, it has to be in alignment with you and your values. So, every little part of it has to feel right. And I use a process for that. I use an NLP process, which goes through stating your goal in the positive, making sure that if you could have it now would you take that goal, what happens if you do achieve that goal, what happens if you don't achieve that goal. And just checking that everything is in alignment, that it's really, really something that you truly want.

So, there the key bits are one, you have to really want it. And two, it has to be worth the pain. The reward has to be worth the pain of achieving it.

Matt: Yeah, that's interesting. I mean, one of the things that we did with Maverick Investor Group as we were building our company is – we basically did three things. So, one is, we set business goals for our company. And we want to achieve these things as a business. But two other things that we did, is that we institutionalized a component in our business where we donate a certain percentage of the net revenue of our company to charitable causes that are important to us.

Sarah: Nice.

Matt: Right – to effect positive change in the world. So, what that does is it creates a double incentives because, as the company does better financially, so too do all of these super important causes that we really care about. So, it's a proportional thing. So, the inspiration to achieve better things in the company is one, to – for the business to do well. Two then, that means we're helping more clients, right, because we're helping people invest in real estate and take their own wealth building and lifestyle design to the next level. So, we're helping the clients improve their lives, for them and their families.

And then, three, we're helping these charitable causes that are important to us with more and more and more financial support. So, it's a three-pronged approach in addition to – obviously, then also having the location independence, not only for the owners of the company, but for 100% of our staff.

Sarah: And actually, that's so interesting that you say that because a lot of

people that I work with will come to me saying, "I want to double my income in a year. I want to grow the business three times in size." But actually, it's really important that you focus on the purpose and not the object. Because, if you focus on financial goals, science proves that you're actually more likely to be unhappy. So, precisely what you've described in that bigger picture, that growth in contribution bit – it's okay to have money, but why do you want it?

So, why do you want the \$3 million house? It can't just be for the house because once you get it you're not going to be happy. But, if you're going to fill it with family, friends, have a big party at it – yeah. Make a place of love, move your parents into it – whatever it is, it has to be about the purpose behind it. Why are you doing this? Like Simon Sinek – great fan of his – you have to get the why right. And that has to be the right motivator. And finance can be a motivator as long as you understand why you want that money in the end.

So, as your business does better, then the charities do better, then you grow better. And it's just a nice well-rounded goal, which is so important and integral to happiness, which is what we all want.

Matt:

Right. And I think the lifestyle component is really important too because – one of the things that happens, I feel, a lot – especially in Western societies and that kind of stuff, whether it's the UK, or Ireland, or the US, or any of those kinds of places – is that people are working more and more hours, and harder and harder, and working more. And maybe they're making more money, but all of their time is spent at the office. And then, usually, they're taking the extra money and they're just stockpiling more and more stuff.

So, they buy a more expensive house, a more expensive car, a bigger TV, and then the money goes there. And then, they're just working harder and they're on this sort of hamster wheel. So, I feel like the lifestyle part of – one of the things that we did at the very outset of our company, when we were building it from the inception of the business plan, we said, "We want to be completely location independent, totally and entirely. So, we are going to build a business and retroactively design the business plan so that we and 100% of our staff – everybody that work with us – will be location independent.

"So, we're just simply going to design a virtual infrastructure to facilitate that freedom of mobility." Because for me, that's always

been more important than however much money I make. If I make this much or that much or a little bit here and there – if I can travel the world, and live in these amazing places, and hang out with and meeting extraordinary people, and have incredible experiences, that's worth so much more than making X-percentage of increased revenue per year.

Sarah: Yeah. Absolutely. And again, we did exactly the same thing. So, we worked backwards and everything in the business model, whenever we put a process in, or whenever we think about a new product or service, we test it against that. Is this going to bring us towards our end goal? It doesn't take us away from work. I mean, it's still good quality products, but if it relies on me and me sitting at the computer all the time, that's not what I signed up for.

And I think technology has evolved at such a rapid rate. There are so many clever plug-ins, tricks, and tools that can take you out of the equation so you can enjoy life more. But again, it comes back to that bit. If you don't know where you're going and you don't know why you're doing it, then you're just a busy fool. You just kind of run about. You stockpile your money for what? So that one day you'll do that one thing that you kind of think that you maybe want to do but you're too busy right now to think about it?

I think if more human beings set goals, they would have a greater impact on the world as a whole. They would be happier. They would be less stressed. They would inspire other people. Their actions would have meaning behind them. I think if people would just take a little bit of time out of their day – it doesn't take much to set a goal – half an hour, 45 minutes – and it gives off that sense of purpose, that sense of being, that sense of, "This is why I'm doing it. This is why I'm on the planet. This is my role at this moment in time, is to achieve X."

Matt: And I think that – what I tell people too, along the same lines, is thinking about how – it all comes back to adding value, right?

Sarah: Mm-hmm.

Matt: If whatever you're doing for your business is actually providing value to your customers, that's so significant. Because what it means is that there's an interrelationship between the more that you sell, and the better you do therefore financially, the more value you add to all the customers that have bought something from you.

Sarah: Absolutely.

Matt: And if you can have that symbiotic relationship, that's really the game. So, just thinking about how can you add value. And then, you can go into selling something with this incredible thing. So, if people that buy real estate from Maverick Investor Group are able to increase their passive residual income and buy those income generating assets, that means they have to work less, they get more lifestyle freedoms, and they have even more time with their family and all that kind of stuff. I'm adding value to my customers. They're buying from me. Our business is doing better.

That's, then, throwing off a higher percentage of income to the charitable causes that we're donating to. We're affecting positive change in the world that way. And there's a congruence in terms of your inspiration to try to improve what you're doing for all of those things, right? So, I think as a foundational element I agree 100%. Figure out your why as the baseline and have – beyond you, you're going to create those types of benefits.

But now – so, my next question, though, is once you do that and you say, "Okay" – because I do highly recommend that people say, "Okay, the better I do financially, the more I'm going to donate." And if you create a fixed percentage of what you're going to donate to something, then you have that institutionalized from the beginning. So, I recommend that personally. But once you do that, let's then talk about, "Okay, now I'm motivated. Now I understand how I'm going to contribute positively to the world by doing better in my business."

Let's talk about goalsetting from there. How do you execute effectively, execute for the long-term, and actually achieve the goals that you set?

Sarah: Okay, so there are two things – there are two aspects to that. The first one is with what I would call proper, or a well formed, goal – is you power up your subconscious during it. So, your subconscious is a million times faster than any other part of your brain, which is incredible. It's a huge, untapped resource that will just work away like a big machine in the background. So, by powering up your subconscious, you feed it information about success. You tell it, "What will it look like when you achieve your goal? What types of things will you see?"

So, for the people at the gym, for example, they might see

themselves in the bikini. They might see themselves on holiday, fitting into that pair of jeans. And then you ask, "What will you hear?" So, in your internal voice, I might hear myself say, "Hey, I look amazing." I might hear other people say, "Wow. Those jeans are great on you." Whatever it is – so, you power that up. You feed it as much information as possible.

And the final stage is, you think about how it's going to feel. And what that does is it creates a disconnect between the subconscious and the conscious mind. And it activates a part of your brain called the RAS. And the RAS gets really confused because the subconscious doesn't understand the difference between imagination and reality. It feeds the conscious mind information. It's like, "Hey, guys. What's going on here? We're not skinny quite yet. We don't fit in those jeans. Okay, we're going to work really, really hard to do that."

So, some people – and I call that manifestation, but that is, in its purest form – you're activating that part of your brain that will provide the disconnect. It just bridges that gap between the conscious and the subconscious. And the amazing thing about that is, it just works in the background. So, you don't actually need to know the exact how – you don't need a step-by-step plan when do goalsetting really, really well. All you need to know is what the end goal is, and then you start to notice the most amazing things of how people and opportunities present themselves, because energy goes where attention flows.

So, your mind has this laser sharp focus. It starts kind of whittling out the information, so when you have a conversation with someone, you're like, "Hey, that's relevant." And then you get intrigued. And people come to me after our sessions, so I had a session with a girl last week and she was going to a big buying networking fair. And she was nervous about talking about her new business model. And as I said to her, "It's going to be amazing. I promise. You're going to go, you're going to hear yourself speak, and you're going to hear those comments come back to you."

"You're going to hear how people are interested in what you do." And she ended up closing the deal that day and – in fact, they flew here. It was here in Chiang Mai. She was at TED Talks and they flew her from here down to Bangkok to meet with them – one of the big embassies. So, it is amazing and it does work. So, this is a great thing. You don't need to know all the details. You just need to know where you're going and trust your mind that it's going to

get there. It's kind of magic, but it's science. It works.

Matt: So, what would be an – a specific – is there a specific exercise for mobilizing your subconscious in that way, right?

Sarah: Yeah.

Matt: Because – yeah. Can you share what that might be? So, someone sets a goal or wants to achieve something. What would be the actual exercise that they would do for getting their subconscious into the position that you're describing?

Sarah: Yep. So, I have a five-step process. It's called Power Goals. So, the first step is to set it in the positive. So, the mind doesn't understand negatives. So, for example, if I said to you, "Don't think about that bottle of wine on the table," the first thing that you think about is the bottle of wine on the table because you have to think about it in order for the mind to delete it. So, it has to be in the positive. So, if you wanted to become location independent, you would say, "I want to become location independent," as opposed to, "I don't want to work on my nine-to-five job anymore."

So, that's the first step. You should be able to say your goal in just one or two sentences. Keep it really, really short, really punchy, really succinct. Then, the next stage is to think about the outcome. So, that's the "O" part of the stage. And, at that stage you're really just testing, "Do I want this goal?" So, good questions at this stage are, "If I could have it now, would I take it?" On a scale of one to ten, one being I don't want it at all, ten being I do, where does that rank?

So, you just test in your mind, "Okay, do I really want this thing?" Then, it's the where and when. So, getting specific about where exactly do you want it. And then, the "E" for the evidence, that's the subconscious bit. And that's, "What will I see? What will I hear? What will I feel?" And you really have to take time to get into that. If you can draw out the pictures, great. Really hear those signs. And I know we've got a free link to a guide that I produced that I will talk any listeners that want to do this process themselves through it in detail.

Matt: Oh, good. Okay. Can you tell us a little bit more about it now, though? Because I've heard – and maybe people have heard things like, "Create a vision board," or, "Do things that will stimulate your sensory connection with the goal that you envision." I mean,

do you recommend that in terms of –

Sarah: I do.

Matt: Yeah, can you – I mean, can you – because I'm really interested in whatever specific exercise you can do to get people to this next level on the subconscious stuff I think would be really valuable.

Sarah: Yeah. So, the visualization is really, really important. There is a lovely story about the lady, Sara Blakely, that founded Spanx for all those people that don't last at the gym and need just to tuck it away – the easy option. She started that company on \$5,000.00. And she saw herself – she visualized her success to the point where she saw herself having this really interesting conversation on "The Oprah Winfrey Show". And that was 15 years before it happened.

Matt: Wow.

Sarah: Yeah. Jim Carrey. I don't know if you know the story about Jim Carrey and the check?

Matt: No.

Sarah: Oh, it's amazing. So, this is a great story. So, Jim Carrey was a failing actor and he was super into visualization, to the point he used to drive around Hollywood and be like – imagine that he was a famous actor and look at the houses. But one of the really interesting things that he did was he wrote himself a check for \$10 million for acting services rendered. And he dated it just a few days before Thanksgiving, and he put it in his wallet, and he looked at it all the time as a visual reminder of what he wanted. And three days before the exact date he got over £10 million for "Dumb and Dumber".

Matt: Wow.

Sarah: Yeah.

Matt: That was incredible. So, okay. So, what do you recommend to listeners? I mean, should they go and just grab this content that you're talking about?

Sarah: Yeah.

Matt: Is that the best guide to it? I mean, but – and we'll give that website

out at the end, where they can go and they can get that and they can follow the process. But in terms of what people should do to start with, where do people start? So, right now, if they want to start setting goals today and they want to start mobilizing their subconscious and getting in the right mindset, what are their first couple of steps?

Sarah:

So, for each person it can be slightly different. So, some people will know exactly what they want. They'll be super driven. They'll have already kind of gone through the clarity stage. For other people, you might be thinking, "Hey, when that crazy Irish girl asked what was the next chapter of my life, I didn't have a clue. Where do I go now? I don't know what my goal is. What's my "P"? What's my positive bit?"

And that's completely normal, so I wouldn't worry too much about that. So, if you are at that stage, where you're not sure what the next chapter of your life looks like, or if there's an element of doubt where you think, "I sort of know but I'm not sure," there's a really good technique. Just spend five to 10 minutes or so and write down 50 things that you want to achieve in your life. So, 50 things. It could be anything. It could be places you want to see. It could be how much money you want to earn. It could be people you want to meet. It could be you want to be on "The Oprah Winfrey Show," or maybe on "The Maverick Show". You could be here.

Maybe this is your goal. This is one thing you want to tick off your list. Write them down. And then, I want you to number them one, three, and ten. So, one being things you want to achieve within the year, three being within three years, and ten being within ten years. And just notice where your priorities lie. Notice the things that you're most interested in. Notice what motivates you.

This is a really difficult exercise for adults, which is so interesting. So, one of the biggest challenges I have in my professional work is, when I ask people what they want, it's the hardest question for them to answer. Because they want to tell me what they don't want. They want to talk about, "I don't want the job. I'm fed up with this person. I'm stressed out in this business. I don't want that business partner. I don't want these kinds of customers." Whatever it is, they want to be in that problem state.

So, this exercise will really get your imagination going because when you write a goal, the goal you aim for is more than likely the

one that you're going to achieve. And also, if you make it stretching – so, if you make it really super ambitious like, "I want to be the President," or, "I want to produce wine in this particular region" – whatever it is. Stop talking about wine, Sarah. I know. It's because you're drinking it.

Whatever it is, make it stretching. Because if you do, people with stretching goals – so, goals that are going to be difficult to achieve – perform 90% better than those that set attainable goals. So, really go for it. Let your imagination go totally wild with that exercise and just see what comes up. If a kid did that – if I gave that to my niece or nephew, they could have 50 in 10 minutes. They'd be like, "I'm going to the moon. I want to be a police fire dog." They just come up with random, random stuff.

But, for adults, because we're so in that system. We're so in that line of thinking of, "This is what we should do. This is my next step. What do you mean that I don't have to buy a house? What do you mean it's okay for me not to get married? What do you mean that I can sell everything, take a laptop, go to Chiang Mai, hang out with digital nomads?" But all of these things are an option, so get creative. Let your imagination run wild. See what excites you. Notice how you feel when you do the exercise.

And then, at that stage, you can start to really focus down into, "Okay, what are my year goals? And in that year, how can I articulate that into the "P" of the power goal, as in what I want?"

Matt: I feel like that's really important. One of the things that – I assume you come across this in your business too, depending at what stage people are at when they come to you. But I have a number of friends who are in their thirties, who have worked years in a grinding industry like advertising in New York City, or that kind of stuff. And then, basically leave their job, they're burned out, they're like, "You know what? I didn't really like the stuff that I was doing."

And then, I'm trying to say, "Oh, great. Well, now is your opportunity to reinvent yourself and do something you're really passionate about. What is it that you're passionate about?"

Sarah: I don't know!

Matt: So, what do you – do you have any additional suggestions for people that are like, "Okay, I'm finding my passion. I need to sort it

out." Is that the same exercise you'd recommend for those people?

Sarah: I would do that. And then, if you're still not sure, just do something. So, if you want to understand, act. So, if you're not sure if that's your idea or Jenny's next door, or Bill's down the road – just because Bill said he wanted to own a fishing boat and you're like, "Well, maybe I like fishing boats. Yeah, I'm going to stick that on my list so I can get to 50." Go out and try something. So, if it's in a job scenario and you think, "Maybe I want to do – I'll be a social media manager. I'll get on this Instagram train and do whatever."

Then, just do something. See how it feels. Notice how you respond in that environment. You have to get – at some point, you have to get out of your own head and you have to do something. Because we can live in our heads. It's a comfortable place. It's safe. Because tomorrow we're going to do that thing. Next week, we're going to get around to that list. But time disappears quite quickly. So, make the list and then take action. Just whatever it is, no matter how small it is, just do something and then notice how you feel in that moment.

And listen to your gut. It's not rocket science. You either like it or you don't. And if you don't, cool. Move on to the next thing. And then, before you know it, you'll be there and you'll not quite know how you got there. But you will. You'll be there.

Matt: So, let's talk a little bit about techniques for replacing or transcending limiting beliefs. Because I feel like society, in general – wherever you're from – you are heavily socialized into very traditional paths that you should –

Sarah: Yes. Yes.

Matt: – pursue this career path, climb this corporate ladder, do this – whatever it is. Go on this trajectory. Do that. Get married. Have kids. Whatever the traditional trajectory is, there is a heavy socialization pressure for people –

Sarah: Heavy.

Matt: – to do that. And it varies by culture. It varies a little bit maybe, but there's a heavy pressure to do a particular direct – go a particular direction anywhere. And so I feel like what that does is – there's that, plus there's just human beings just getting beat down by

society in general and just – "Oh, well I couldn't do XYZ," or, "I see these people that are doing this, or see them on the TV, or hear them on the podcast. That's really cool and interesting, but I couldn't do that because" – list out 12 reasons why it wouldn't apply to me.

Or, "I couldn't do it because I have X-number of things going on." So, in terms of that though, what do you recommend for techniques for replacing or transcending those limiting beliefs that we all have?

Sarah:

Yeah. So, like you said, it's huge and it comes from a really young age. And just on that point, if it's okay just to go slightly off tangent, but not really, is – I don't know if you remember the game. It was probably around when we were growing up, called The Game of Life. The theme of it was get married – why am I singing? That's the wine. Get married, have a baby – and I remember that so vividly. And the point of the game was you moved around and then you collected money and you got married, you had a child, you bought a house, and then, at the end, you got to Retirement Meadows.

And that was where you counted all your money. And the person with the most amount of money won. That's what I grew up on. That's what played in our house. So, it's so, so entrenched. And you're quite right. To get out of that, and to realize that actually you can do what anybody does – we're not – we're special people, but we're not that special. We're just people that made a decision to do it.

So, to get over those limiting beliefs, there is a really simple technique, actually. It's an NLP technique. For those who don't know what NLP stands for, it's neuro-linguistic programming. What NLP is does is it changes the connections in your brain at a really, really fast rate. So, all of your beliefs, everything that you know, has been learned. You weren't born with that predisposition. So, all you have to do is unlearn it, which sounds easy, and to a certain extent it is.

So, here's the technique. So, what you're going to do first is you're going to write down what your limiting belief is. So, you write down, "I believe that I can't become location independent," or, "I believe that I couldn't be a successful entrepreneur," or whatever that is. And you write it down. Now, what's really, really important is – we have to get old school here. You have to write it with a pen

and paper. It's very important. It's the science behind it. It activates a different part of your brain. You won't regret doing it that way, so write it down.

After you've written it down, I want you to think of how you can replace that belief. So, what's better than that? What's a more useful thing to believe? So, it could be, "I believe I can become a successful entrepreneur." So, you write that down again on your bit of paper. And then, just notice how it feels to have that belief behind you. Notice how, if you could picture yourself saying, "Ha. You know what? I used to believe that I couldn't be a successful entrepreneur, but now I believe I can be."

And your whole physiology changes. Notice how good that feels. Notice how good it sounds to hear yourself say that. And then, the next stage is to get your brain to think of three more useful beliefs. So, the amazing thing about our bodies and our minds is they always want to protect us. They're protecting the organism, so every behavior has a positive intention. So, your belief about not wanting to become an entrepreneur or not, wanting to become location independent, or not wanting to – whatever crazy dream that it is that you have – is because you're maybe frightened of failure.

And your body doesn't want you to feel pain and your mind doesn't want you to feel pain. So, just go ahead and think of, "What's three more useful things that I could believe?" So, generate those, get creative about them, and then write them down. So, three more things that will be more useful to believe, and then pick out that belief system. So, it could be, "I believe being an entrepreneur is easy. I believe that being an entrepreneur is a skill that can be learned. I believe that being an entrepreneur is something that I can easily master."

You would pick one of those and then you write it down. You make sure that it feels okay. And then, over the course of the next seven to 14 days, you repeat that on a daily basis. You repeat your new belief and you say in your hand, laughingly, "Oh, I can't believe I used to believe that thing." And the more you repeat it, the more the connections change in your brain, the more then you can hardly even remember that you did believe the old thing before.

Matt:

Yeah, and I feel like one of the things that's important that I want to emphasize to people is that it's – you're never too old –

Sarah: No.

Matt: – to reinvent yourself and go on a totally different trajectory, right?

Sarah: No. Yeah.

Matt: So, one of the things – and you heard my talk at the Nomad Summit.

Sarah: Mm-hmm. Excellent talk.

Matt: Thank you very much. And the way that I started that talk is I said to people, just to be entirely clear, that my entire academic background, including my graduate work and all of my work experience up to the age of 30 has absolutely nothing to do, at all, with what I'm doing now. I got fired from my job when I was 30, and I was like, "You know what? I'm done working for other people. I'm going to be an entrepreneur."

Sarah: Yeah. I love it.

Matt: And then I was like, "There's only one problem. I don't know how to start a business."

Sarah: Yeah. But it's great because you learn it. When you're born, you don't know how to walk. You don't know how to talk.

Matt: You don't know how to do anything. Yeah.

Sarah: Everything that we do in life is learned.

Matt: Yeah. I mean, you can change direction. You can pivot. You can reinvent yourself at any point in your life if you're not satisfied with what's happening, if you're not inspired by it, if you're not motivated, if you're in a rut. You can literally just say, "Today, while I'm listening to this podcast, I'm going to make a decision to fundamentally alter the trajectory of the remainder of my life," because that's what you have control over.

Sarah: Yes. It is never too late. And it used to be – scientists used to study the brain and they used to say it, after a certain age, became in a fixed state. That was it. Nothing could be done to change it. But now, there have been huge advances in neuroplasticity, which shows the brain can change right up until you're 90. In fact, it's just

a muscle. It just ever grows. It just goes – you feed it the right nutrients and the right information and it will grow with you in whatever direction you want it to go in.

It is a muscle. It's just part of you, in the same way if you work out your arm at the gym. Then, you're going to get those toned muscles. It's the same with your brain. You really have to work and exercise your brain and make it work for you. It wants to. It's ready. It's willing to go in whatever direction you point it. But just make sure you point it in the right way and that you keep on sending those positive messages.

Matt: Right. And that's what I like about your story, because I feel like a lot of people will say – they'll listen to something like this and be like, "Oh, well now I'm married, and I've bought the house, and I've got the car, and I've got the this, and I've got the whatever. And so, for me, this is no longer an option." But for you, I think your story is great because you were married, and you had the house, and you had the car, and you said, "You know what? We are going to make a life change to live more passionately and to do incredible, inspiring things, and to do it now and not wait until we're 65 and then start traveling."

Sarah: Exactly. And I didn't know what I was doing. That's the honest truth. I just knew that that was the lifestyle that I wanted and that was enough to power me through. So, don't feel like you have to have all the answer. You're never going to have all the answers at any stage of the journey. There's always something to learn. So, if you're thinking, "Oh, well, I don't really have – I don't have the business idea. I'm not really sure if I have the digital skills." We didn't have any of that when we left. We were probably a bit crazy, but it totally worked.

We came out here, we spoke to people, we listened to stories about things that worked, and we noticed the things that interested us and the things that didn't. And you find a way. Human beings are amazing and the potential that we have is incredible. So, I would have regretted this if I hadn't of done it.

Matt: So, let me ask you this question. Let's talk about the long-term strategies for accountability and motivation in terms of achieving those goals. So, you talked about goalsetting for a year out or three years out, right?

Sarah: Yeah.

Matt: And what I find happens with me, right, is that I go to some inspiring event, right? I'm going to be in your goalsetting workshop next week and I'm super stoked about it. And I know what's going to happen. I'm going to be inspired by you and I'm going to set my goals and it's going to be, "For the next year, I'm going to do this. And Sarah inspired me and I'm fired up." And I'm going to walk out of that workshop with my goals written down in pen as you told me to do it. I'm going to be fired up. And then, two weeks from now –

Sarah: You'll find that –

Matt: – I'm going to be like, "Oh, wow. Yeah. You're inviting me to go climb this waterfall? And you're inviting me to go and do this cool thing?" And all of this kind of stuff. So, what are the techniques or recommendation for after you set the goal properly, right? And you have all the foundational stuff done probably for setting those goals, what are your recommendations for implementation, execution, creating accountability mechanisms, and staying motivated to actually achieve those goals and execute on them over the course of a year plus?

Sarah: Yes. So, there are two important things. One is a long-term vision. So, create the long-term vision, as far as you can go. If you can go more than a year, great. The second thing is make – break down those goals into achievable things. So, something that you can do in the first week, something that you can do in the second week, third week – delayed gratification is the number one reason that people don't achieve goals. Because we're like, "Oh, it's too far away. It's too much effort. I don't want to do it. I'm not getting any reward. I don't feel like I'm getting anywhere."

So, just little achievable goals that you can do. So, for example, if it was about setting up your own business, that can be an overwhelming goal. If you're not an entrepreneur at the minute, and you're thinking about it, or you are an entrepreneur and you're thinking about how you can become location independent, that can be an overwhelming goal. Where do you start with that? So, just pick one thing that you can do, two things that you can do, and then you gradually build momentum.

And as you get rewarded for that, and you start to feel really, really good – so, it might be something as small as, "I'm going to listen to a couple of podcasts. I'm going to watch a YouTube thing. I'm

going to think about my business strategy and how I can take from the current analogue to an online setting. How would that work? I'm going to brainstorm it out." Whatever it is, just break it down into an achievable task. The second thing is, celebrate success. So, when you do something, because we're all forward people where we're just, "Oh, I did that thing. On to the next thing."

Celebrate the success. Take time to look at how far you have come. So, if in – a month ago that you didn't have the business idea but now you do. And now, you're facing a new set of challenges. Celebrate the fact that you've got there. You're moving forward more than anybody else, more than the majority of people if you're doing that. So, celebrate your success. Take time to do that. Thirdly, super team. Create your super team. Find people who are going to inspire you, who are going to help you solve your problems, who are going to raise you up, who you can bounce ideas off of, who can be a mentor to you, for example. Who have maybe been – or done it before.

So, if you can find an entrepreneur – even if it is online – whatever it is, talk to them and understand what they did. Model their behavior. What worked well for them? You're not going to be the first person in the world that has ever become an entrepreneur. You're not going to be the first person in the world that has ever become location independent. So, find those people. Understand what they did. Learn from their journey. Feel inspired by their journey. Most importantly, you need to understand what worked for them. Ask them those questions.

Matt: Yeah, absolutely. So, let me ask you this. I mean, in terms of just you personally as a business owner, I want to get back to this and ask you what worked for you in two areas. One is time management. I want to know how you, as a business owner, manage your time because you have a lot of stuff going on in your life. You obviously have a spouse that you need to spend quality time with. You're obviously living in epic locations around the world and you want to go and do –

Sarah: Everything.

Matt: – really amazing things and do incredible stuff. And you're moving around and you want to see things and all of that. How do you structure your personal time to execute on your business priorities?

Sarah: Yeah. So, that was a real struggle at the start – like a real struggle.

I'm all about the next shiny things, or doing the task that excites me more rather than what needed to be done. So, I quickly noticed this about myself, that I would spend stuff on the – time on the more creative side of things, or more on the client side of things, rather than building up the web and the content and the things that needed to be done. So, I always – and I know you referenced this as well in your Nomad presentation – is what's the high value priority? What's the thing that's going to bring me closest to the goal – and get super focused on that.

So, I'll give you a really good example, actually, that happened this week. So, I'm quite a task-oriented person. I really – if I put something on my list, I want to tick it off. I want to tick it off so badly that it pains me if I can't tick it off the list. So, one thing I wanted to do before I left Chiang Mai was create some video content. And I wanted it for the website and I wanted a bit of – off a platform. And other things have happened. Other challenges have happened within the business, and technical stuff that we didn't know.

Stuff just gets in the way. And I was like, "Oh, I'm just going to go in today and tomorrow and I'm just going to smash out some video stuff. That's what I'm going to do." But, actually – and it was Chris that's like, over coffee – he was like, "Sarah, it's not a good idea. One, you're not prepared for it. You haven't done the work for it because other things have happened. Just because you're not going to do it now doesn't mean you're never going to be able to do it. You really need to think about is this the thing that you really need to be working on right now or are there other priorities?"

So, it's good to have someone to rein you in. So, I just had to scrap that. I was like, "Okay. Do you know what? I can just do it later." So, really focusing in on the things that are going to make up a difference in your business and using your time that way, and then getting the reward for it because you see how it moves it forward rather than a scatter gun approach of doing everything but none of them quite as well as you should do.

Matt:

So, you structure your business priorities, and then when you go to execute on them, are you creating focused time blocks during the day? Do you work the same hours each day? Do you have a morning routine and rituals that you go through and you know that you're going to be in the office, or the coworking space, or wherever it is for these hours just pounding out these priorities? And then, you're going to be socializing or spending time with

Chris or doing whatever in these other hours? Do you have the same day structure?

Sarah: To a certain extent, yes. But flexibility around it – I'm not a huge routine person. I have a good morning routine which I stick to. But, other than that, yeah – most days I work from 10:00 until 5:00, maybe 6:00 in the co-working space – 7:00 or 8:00 if it's needed. I don't like to work later or longer than that. I like to sleep. I like to rest my brain. I think it's important. It's certainly how I work. I know others are different. If I'm having a day where I've just been working on something super intense and it's taking way more energy – you have to be kind to yourself.

So, yeah sure. I may just go to the pillow for a couple of hours that day. So, there is flexibility around it. I think that's nice because your mind and your body knows that it's balance over burnout. Sure, I could go and smash it for another four hours, and push myself over the edge, and really tap into that adrenal rush. But actually, I don't need to do that and it's probably not best for me in the long-term.

Matt: Yeah, because one of the things that I think people struggle with when they're getting into the nomad life is discipline and structure for actually executing on their work priorities when they're in these extraordinary locations.

Sarah: Yeah.

Matt: It's like, "Hey, want to go scuba diving? Hey, want to go hike this epic place, and the sunrise, and want to go do this and go do that?" There is all of this stuff going on and I feel like some people, when they're transitioning out of a traditional work environment where they were in an office or –

Sarah: They just want it all.

Matt: – in nine-to-five to this, then being able to – a lot of it relates to self-discipline and being able to structure your lifestyle with your execution of your work priorities.

Sarah: Yeah. So, we do. We take the weekends off. I don't know why it's weekends. It's that engrained thing. We tried to be like, "We'll work weekends. We could work a weekend and then we'll take a Wednesday off because we don't have to follow that traditional format." I don't know, for whatever reason, we couldn't get that to

work for us. There was just something really rewarding about it's Friday. That's the time.

Matt: Yeah.

Sarah: So, we do still work the traditional working week, but we take the advantage of being business owners. If we need that bit of time away, that we can do. And then, we take dedicated breaks. So, we're going to go to Malaysia for a little bit before we go back. And the nice thing about the business is we put so much work into it, that it can automate itself. It doesn't need us there. We can take that step away. And that has taken longer to get to that point, but the rewards are really, really great. It means that, when we are in KL, we can just minimally check the emails if we want to. But the site will run itself.

The scheduling tool will run itself. Everything is automated. Everything is working in the background. So, yeah, a mixture of both, but always taking that reward that this is the reason why we're doing it. We're entrepreneurs because, if I choose in the morning when I get up that I feel like I need a rest or I want to go and see that sunrise, then I can do it. But then, I have to put the work in at a different time.

Matt: Right. Well, I was very impressed with this past weekend because I think I emailed you on a Friday –

Sarah: Yeah. I did not answer.

Matt: – and you did not answer. And you emailed me back on a Monday.

Sarah: Yeah.

Matt: And you said that, "I took a – I unplugged for the weekend and did not check email and was away from my electronics," which I think is an amazingly healthy practice that very few people follow in this digital age.

Sarah: Yeah. I mean, it's just so important. It's just other people's noise in there and things that you need to do. And, when you open it, it's a wormhole. You just get dragged in. And it's really come out of a lesson because, what we were doing for a while here was we'd finish on a Friday, we'd feel great, then we'd talk – because you talked about Chris being a business partner. One thing is, it's hard for us both to switch off. So, we don't just go into weekend mode.

Then we have a coffee and then it's like, "Oh, what about this? Oh, we should probably do this."

And then we talk about the tasks. And then, the next thing, the laptops are out and five hours later the one thing that you were going to spend 30 minutes on, you're still sitting there. And so, every now and again, it's just a complete unplug. It's just, "I'm not looking at it. It can wait. They can wait," in the nicest way possible. But you need that. You need that mental rest, and I think that's really good for creativity. It's really good for me and Chris as a couple just to have that kind of disconnect, that we both say there are no emails, or, "Tonight we're going to talk about our travels. We're not going to talk about the business."

We're going to focus on that because it can become 24/7. Even when you're not working, the business is in the back of your mind. It is your baby. You're thinking of things. You're just thinking about tasks, you're thinking about new ideas, you're thinking about where you can bring it. So, it is 24/7. You don't need to add to that through your email list.

Matt: Yeah, I think that's really important because, when you live this lifestyle, your business/work and your travel/lifestyle design are basically integrated.

Sarah: Mm-hmm.

Matt: And so, it's up to you, the individual, to segregate them.

Sarah: Yeah.

Matt: Because, in the same what that, if you don't discipline yourself to knock out and execute on your work priorities, the other end of the spectrum is also true, that you have to end your work life, and unplug from that, and focus entirely on your social/lifestyle design/relationships/whatever else it may be and get into a non-work space so that you're able to balance those two. And I think that either end of that spectrum can overwhelm the other end and the balance of those two in a way that works for you is really a central part of the game for this lifestyle.

Sarah: It's so difficult. So, again, when we first started, on our weekends we'd do crazy trips. We were in the back of trucks, driving up in the jungle like down mud tracks – sleeping in hilltop villages – and then coming back on Sunday late at night. And then, "Oh, cool."

Now, we've got to go to coworking space? Our laptops after seeing all that?" So, we made a real decision this time when we came back. In Chiang Mai – we went home for Christmas and we came back – that we weren't going to do those trips because we really needed to knuckle down and focus on the business.

And, actually, as amazing as those trips were, traveling takes a lot of energy. It really does. It sounds great, it looks great, but it's tiring moving from A to B, seeing those different cultural things. So, I think you have to understand when it's a good time to take a break and when it's not. And that will be different for each person, but you find your own balance. But it's not easy. We all want to go for those sunrises. We want the nice riverboat trips. We want to do everything that's here. But, yeah, you come to –

Matt: It's about scheduling, right?

Sarah: Yeah.

Matt: And structuring that – so, one more entrepreneur question I want to ask you is how you personally deal with stress. Because one of the things that I tell any people that are interested in entrepreneurship about preemptively is the entrepreneurial roller coaster –

Sarah: Oh, wow. Yes.

Matt: – as we call it. Which, every entrepreneur that I've ever talked to says the same thing that you just said. It's very real. Get ready for it. And you're going to have very high highs and then you're going to have very unexpected, and sometimes calamitous or cataclysmic lows where you're just going to fail and things are going to backfire and you're going to have struggles or very stressful experiences and situations. And it's part of the entrepreneurial life, and it's part of everything.

And I don't want to romanticize or gloss over that because it's a real thing. So, when you are in periods of stress or having periods of stress or that kind of stuff, how do you deal with that? What are your techniques or practices? How do you work through that and handle that?

Sarah: Yeah, so definitely can relate to that. A couple of weekends ago, I was 100% in the valley of death. I was just right there. Just couldn't see a way out. I was like, "I'm just not making progress." And it was one of those real low lows that come after the real high

highs. I have found meditation really, really works for me. I super struggle to meditate. I have a real monkey active mind and I get a real kick and burst of energy from that mind. I don't want to shut it off because I enjoy it. And I tried lots of different apps over the years and nothing really worked for me.

And a friend recommended a meditation retreat in Chiang Mai, and I was always a bit skeptical about that. I like it, but I'm more like a practical girl. I'm not a massive hippie or anything like that. I love hippies. I think it's awesome, but I just struggle with that whole airy-fairy kind of culture. It's not who I am. So, when I went to the meditation place I was like, "I know this is good for me, but I don't know what to expect." And it was absolutely incredible. I spent three days learning with some of the most talented monks in – it's a forest monastery in Chiang Mai.

It's one of the top three in the world. It's free, which is amazing. It looks like a resort. I had my own private kudi – like a little bungalow. They feed you. And because it's Buddhist, you can just make a donation if you want to or if you don't. And they really taught me the value of the mind and the body aren't connected, which was a concept I'd heard but I didn't understand before. So, now I meditate for 10 minutes a day. It's not loads, but I can get there a lot faster, I think, because of the training. And I can just calm and slow the mind down. And that really, really helps with stress, just to center myself, to get myself in that space. That's really valuable.

Exercise really helps, so swimming, in particular. Just that muscle memory of the actions and the relaxation. That's really, really important. And, too, just knowing that the minute that I stop is the moment that I feel. So, I remind myself of that. That, "Okay, things are bad but things will be good again. And this is not permanent." And just reminding myself that this is momentary. This is temporary. It's going to be okay. And it will only not be okay if I make a decision in this moment that that's the end of the journey or that's a time that I choose not to work on it anymore.

So, those three things combined – so, settling the mind, a bit of exercise for the endorphins, and then just a mental reminder that it's temporary. You know, no one races through life 24/7 on a happy happiness ride. That's not how life works. Everybody has problems. Your only problem is that you think that you shouldn't have them. But, everybody does have them. So, it's just about relaxing into it and knowing that you'll find a solution – that it may

take longer, but ultimately it's temporary and just keep going.

Matt: That's really significant because I think that, when people fail or they have a setback, there's a tendency to quit.

Sarah: Yeah.

Matt: There's a tendency to say, "Oh, this path isn't for me. I can't do it. I had a setback; therefore, this is a sign that I should then go back to whatever the prescribed route for me is." But, in fact, 100% of entrepreneurs have setbacks all the time. It's a regular part of it. You fail and fail and fail and fail and fail and fail and fail again. And then your ability to just persevere through that and to overcome that and to just continue on –

Sarah: That's it.

Matt: – is what makes an entrepreneur.

Sarah: And you don't realize how close success is. So, using that example – last week, I was in the complete valley of death and it was around a bit of branding we were doing for the website, and neither me or Chris could agree on anything. And we couldn't get the idea right. And it was just – we're never going to get there. And by the Monday – by the Monday afternoon, it was there. And it was fine. And it was like, "What was that about?" Those two days of – literally felt like I was banging my head against a wall. I was like, "This is all – I just don't get this. I'm not going to be able to do this. It's going to take months."

And you work yourself up into a state and then you become solution focused and it's like, "Right. What can I do? What are the options here? What's a way out of this problem?" And then, suddenly, it just comes, just in a click of a switch. And you think, "Thank goodness I kept going because it was closer than I realized."

Matt: Yeah. I think the solution-oriented stuff is super important, that every bit of stress, every setback, every challenge that you have, you view it as a business problem.

Sarah: Yep.

Matt: And then you say, "Okay, what is the solution to this problem?" And whatever it is, there is – somebody has experienced it before."

You're truly not the first one. And there is a solution and you just have to figure out what that is and to keep going. So, with regard to the meditation, though – so, the 10 minutes that you do. Is it – for you, is that a first thing in the morning when you get up – and what type of meditation are you doing? Are you doing guided meditation, are you doing – how does that work?

Because I feel like one of the things with meditation for people is that they might just say, "Okay, I'm going to try to meditate tomorrow." And then, they just sit there and they're like, "Oh, my mind is wandering. I guess I'm not good at meditation. Forget this practice." So, how did you cultivate that in a way that works for you? And how does it work for you? What do you actually do during those 10 minutes?

Sarah: Yeah, so the way that I do it, and the thing that's worked for me, was the technique that was taught at the retreat, which is a combination of Vipassana and then Samatha training. If you don't know what that is, it's simple. It's – the first stop – the first stage you start at is your breathing. So, you just focus on the breath in and out of your mouth and then you say, "Boo doh, boo doh." So, boo as you go in, doh as you go out, and you just watch the breath. You observe the breath, in and out, in and out.

Then, you observe the body. So, you feel how you're sitting, where you're uncomfortable. But you don't move. You just stay really, really super, super still. And then, as the body relaxes, you go into this stage that they call Vipassana, which is the mind might wander a little bit. And, actually, the mind is naturally going to wander. It doesn't mean that you're bad at meditation – which is exactly how I felt. And, I spoke to one of the lead abbots, actually at the retreat, and I said, "I don't think I'm good at it. I sit and I can do the breathing bit, but then my mind – and it just goes and I don't – it should be still. It should be silent."

And he just laughed and he was like, "Ah, this is not what meditation is." He said, "All you have to do is just think, 'Hello, sadness. Hello, thought. Oh, I'm thinking about this.'" So, you become the observer. That's what he termed it, and that was really helpful for me. He just said, "You just become the person that observes the thoughts and you step out of it." So, if it's like, "I feel really stressed about the meeting tomorrow," or, "I feel stress about a presentation," or whatever it is, you just observe it and you just comment on it. "Oh, that's stress. Oh, that's sadness." And that is meditating.

So, it's not about your mind being silent, necessarily. For some people, they can reach that stage. It takes a long time. But, it's just about recognizing your thoughts and stopping them at that point. So, rather than it being, "Hey there, sadness," and then the next thing, sadness is taking over your whole body and you're crying and it's awful, you just recognize it and you go, "Okay, there you are. That's just my thoughts." And you just recognize that they're just thoughts in your mind and you just observe them for what they are and comment on them.

So, yeah – so, I do it for 10 minutes. I just set my iPhone for 10 minutes, sit on the bed in the room, and that's it. And I do it in the morning. The other thing I do, which is really useful – and, actually, a top tip that, if you work with your spouse is coconut oil. Like pulling in the morning, like 10 minutes or 15 minutes – and it's great because nobody can talk to you because you have a mouth full of coconut oil. So, it's really nice just to get your mind in the right frame in the morning, particularly if you're with a group of people or you have a husband or a boyfriend or a girlfriend – whatever it is.

So, I do that for 10-15 minutes in the morning as well. And that just helps get the toxins out of the mouth, and just cleanses. You feel nice and refreshed. And then, bulletproof coffee – my other super favorite. So, yeah, they're my three things that get me going in the morning.

Matt: Awesome. All right. Are you ready for some lightning round questions?

Sarah: I'm nervous, but I'm ready. I don't know what's going to come out of my –

[Crosstalk]

Matt: Listen, take as long as you like to answer them, but they're just quick, short questions.

Sarah: Yep.

[Musical Interlude]

Prerecorded Audio: The lightning round.

Matt: All right. What is your top favorite podcast or blog that you follow regularly?

Sarah: It's one that I've just started recently and it's called, "How I Built This".

Matt: I have heard of that. I have heard very good things about it. I have not –

Sarah: Very good things.

Matt: – checked it out yet. But –

Sarah: Very, very good.

Matt: We will link that in the show notes below so folks can check that out. What is your most influential book that you have read along your entrepreneurial journey that has inspired or helped you the most?

Sarah: Yep. So, it's one that I just finished at Christmas, and it's called *Shoe Dog*, and it's by Phil McKnight (sic) and –

Matt: The Nike story.

Sarah: The Nike story. Amazing, amazing book – I love that he started to travel and then just how the journey unfolds. And it's – yeah, it was so unexpected. It was so unexpected, and I don't want to ruin any part of it. But I highly recommend it, particularly for the highs and lows, for the challenges. And if you are thinking about becoming an entrepreneur, or you are an entrepreneur, it is a top read.

Matt: Awesome. What are your top three places that you've ever traveled? And let's maybe a little bit further say, top three places where you would love to go back and spend at least another month enjoying them and that you might recommend for people to check out.

Sarah: Okay. So, I love China. I love China. It was crazy – absolutely culturally just insane, but beautiful people, really friendly. Just a complete culture shift. So, I would love to go back there, particularly because it's changing so rapidly. I'd love to see what it looks like now and how it's developed.

Matt: Is there a particular city you would go to?

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- Sarah: I would –
- Matt: If you could spend a month in China, would you pick a particular city to go to?
- Sarah: I don't know if I would because they're all so big. I'd like to get into the country a bit more, if that's possible. China was crazy big. We went to this place to do the Yangtze River Cruise, and we got on at this place called Chongqing. I'd never heard of it. I think its population was ridiculous million people. It was just insane. So, yeah, I don't know if I would pick a particular city, but I'd like to travel around more. And I love the trains there. I travel a lot by train. Yeah.
- And the next place would be Bario. I don't know if you're heard of it? No. So, Bario is in the interior of Borneo, and I went there – I had to take a little tiny plane to get there. It's super frightening. There are chickens in the plane with you.
- Matt: This is in Borneo, you said?
- Sarah: In Borneo, yes. It's a place called Bario. It's really off the beaten track. I think they're building a road there at the minute, so – probably get there fast, or maybe it's already completed by this stage. But it's super beautiful. You can trek into the rainforest with really remote hill tribes. We went there and we actually ended up not trekking. We ended up staying there for three weeks because there was a big food festival that was on, where all the hill tribes come to it – walked in. They killed a water buffalo every night for dinner. There were huge feasts.
- And again, it was just an amazingly beautiful place with just cultures that I never dreamed that I would ever interact with before.
- Matt: Wow. And for folks that don't know where Borneo is, it's part of the country of Malaysia.
- Sarah: Yeah.
- Matt: So, it's in Southeast Asia.
- Sarah: Yeah.
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Matt: And it's a separate island off of the mainland of Malaysia that has Kuala Lumpur and all of that kind of stuff. So, you would take a flight to get there.

Sarah: Yep, and then another little –

[Crosstalk]

Matt: So, that sounds amazing – which I've never been to, by the way, but I've heard only incredible things about Borneo.

Sarah: Yeah, it's a – yeah. Absolutely incredible. Orangutans and – yeah, just wildlife beyond your wildest dreams. And then, there's an island, but I don't want to tell the name of it because I don't want people to go.

Matt: It's a secret island?

Sarah: But there is a secret island in Malaysia which is just –

Matt: In Malaysia. Okay.

Sarah: – perfect. It is my favorite place on earth. It is just stunning. There are no roads. There is no Wi-Fi. It would be awful for digital nomads, but it's perfect for shutting off. You can reach it in 15 minutes from the mainland, and it is just white beach and jungle.

Matt: Will you say the name of it only for The Maverick Show listeners?

Sarah: Only for The Maverick Show? Oh.

Matt: Yeah, but they would have to promise not to tell anyone.

Sarah: Okay. Do not tell anybody, but it's called Pulau Kapas. And it's just amazing. You can't even book accommodation in advance. You just have to turn up and – but it's just beach and jungle. And you wake up from your accommodation – every single piece of accommodation is on the beach because it's just beach and that's it. And you wake up in the morning and you walk down to the ocean and you snorkel with sea turtles and baby sharks, and time just disappears.

There is – if you want to be on a deserted island, but still be close to civilization, this place is just the stuff of absolute dreams. It's amazing.

Matt: All right, I've lived in Malaysia – around four months in Malaysia, and I've never been there. So, I'm going home tonight to look up how to get there.

Sarah: Yeah.

Matt: Because I'm going.

Sarah: It's incredible. It is incredible.

Matt: It sounds amazing.

Sarah: Yeah. Yeah.

Matt: So, when you were in China, did you take the bullet trains?

Sarah: Yeah.

Matt: The Shanghai to Beijing and some of the major routes?

Sarah: I did. I did. And, yeah, I did. I had a very interesting event on one of those trains, where I got sick really badly before I got on the train. So, yeah. A bit of a stomach upset – I'll not go into too much detail. But, I got really poorly and I was on the train for 18 hours. It was a super, super long train. And I couldn't keep anything down and it was just absolutely awful. And, at that time, when I was traveling in China, swine flu was the big thing. And so, they were deporting people. Anybody with a temperature, they were checking their temperature as you go on the flights, on the trains.

We had heard horror stories of people being detained in their hotels for months and months. And I was really sick, and I was running a temperature. It wasn't swine flu. It was just food poisoning, but me and Chris were so worried that the authorities would know, right? Like, "Oh, they're going to check our temperature." So, we were – we get to the final stop. I've actually made it, but I'm really weak at this stage.

And so, Chris gets the two backpacks and he's like, "Oh, can you just carry the small bag?" And I was like, "Yeah, okay. Small bag." So, I put the small bag on. And as the train stops, I faint. Not only do I faint, but I whack my head off the table. And when I land on my backpack, my eyes are open, even though I'm out for the count – to which Chris then informs me there are like 25 Chinese train

attendants who all come rushing down. They are shaking me. When I wake up, I don't know where I am. I'm so confused. I'm like completely out of it.

They scream at us in Chinese, telling us to wait there. I was like, "Oh, we're going to sent out of the country." This is the start of our trip. We're freaking out. And Chris is like, "Okay, look, it's okay, right? We're going to deal with this." So, anyway, we try to get off the train. We're like, "It's fine. We're just going to get off the train." And they're like, "No, no, no, no, no!" Signaling with their hands like, "Wait here! Wait here!"

And then I looked down the platform and I could see this team of 10 people running down the platform. These Chinese train guards and a doctor, I assume – with a wheelchair for me – just racing down. And the rest of them are staring at us on the platform. And Chris just whispered in my ear, "I'm going to count to three and you're just going to run. We just need to run away from this." So, he counts to three and we just run. And Chris had all the bags – these two massive backpacks. And we ran down this Chinese – I think it was in Hangzhou, it was – with this wheelchair brigade chasing after us. And we managed to outrun them and hide in a stairwell.

And we just stayed there for 10 minutes until they came up, yeah. And then we checked into a hotel for a few days. So, that was absolutely crazy. But, yeah, a great story now, but horrific when it happened.

Matt: That is amazing. I have never been to mainland China. I've been to Hong Kong and Macau, but it's super high on my list. And I feel like China is so enormous.

Sarah: It's enormous. It is enormous.

Matt: And it's – whenever you see – I mean, not only are there the epic cities of Shanghai and Beijing and all of this other litany of other cities that have 10 million-plus people in them – they also have this unbelievable natural landscape. I mean, I feel like any time you see those lists on Facebook of the 100 most amazing things in the world to see, 25% or more are from China.

Sarah: Yeah. It was incredible. And it was just culturally – I mean, you didn't have to do anything different during the day. You could just walk down the street and just sit for five minutes and you just were

constantly, "What is happening?" It looks like you're in a cube, but you're not in a cube. Nothing makes sense. It's – take your Western rulebook and just throw it out the window. And the thing I love is their hostels are crazy good. They were \$1.00-\$2.00 a night and they were five-star. They were beautiful.

And they do a free beer to get everybody together in the hostels in China. It was everywhere that we went. So, from 6:00-7:00, you could bring down your token and you could have a beer. And it was a great way to meet people, and almost every night people were just talking about, "You'll never guess what I saw today. This happened. This is crazy. I don't understand that." So, culturally it's crazy. The nature is beautiful. Great Wall of China was incredible – definitely, one of my top highlights.

I ziplined off it, which was – only in China could you find a zipline off the Great Wall of China. But, yeah, it was just brilliant. If you haven't been, I would highly recommend.

Matt: Wow. Okay. So, you are very well traveled. But, what are your top three places on your bucket list that you have not yet been?

Sarah: Yeah, not yet been – I would love to go to Iceland. I've never really – because being – growing up in Ireland, we have an aversion to the cold. Why would I go somewhere colder than my own country, right? I don't want to go there. But, actually, now I'm really intrigued about going to a colder country. I'd love to see the Northern Lights. I'd love to do a boat kind of trip down the fjords – all of that stuff. So, I'd really love to go there.

I've never been to South America. I haven't touched South America at all. So, that's definitely next on the list. I think maybe after Portugal that might be where we go. And New Zealand. So, I skipped New Zealand. I've been to Australia, but I've never been to New Zealand. I see photos and it's just – the nature is just incredible. And I think there would be something just amazing about getting a van and just driving through and seeing nature, and pulling up and having the barbeques and all of that stuff. So, yeah, they are my top three.

Matt: Amazing. Well, I spent almost six months in South America last year. So, let's definitely talk about your itinerary.

Sarah: Yes.

Matt: Because there is some epic stuff to see on that continent. But, I think you guys would love it. That would be awesome. Cool. So, Sarah, this has been amazing. So, let's talk about where folks can connect with you, where they can find you, and especially where they can get that content for how they can begin setting their power goals and getting into this.

Sarah: Yeah. So, we have a website. And you can just head on over to thepowertoreinvent.com/achieve-your-goals.

Matt: We are going to put that link in the show notes, so all you have to do is go to the show notes and then click on it.

Sarah: Yeah. And there's tons of amazing stuff there. It is the efforts of a lot of work. It's really good quality content. It's all my knowledge. It's super big. It's 3,000 words. It has free templates in it, and it's all free to download. I recognize that not everybody can afford or are in a position to pay for a professional service, but I don't think that should ever stop anybody from achieving their goals. So, all the resources are there. You just need to click on the link, download it – I'd love to hear how you find using the templates and how they help you achieve your goals. So, yeah, get in touch.

Matt: Amazing. Yeah, well, I'm going to do one of your paid workshops next week. I'm super excited about it. But, for people that can't be here and do that in person with you, definitely go check out the website. Just go to the show notes. We'll have the link there. And you can get a bunch of free content for how to start – how to start setting your power goals so that you can achieve them and utilize all the exercises that we have discussed in this podcast. And then, if people want to follow you on social media and that kind of stuff, how can they connect with you there?

Sarah: Yeah, so I have an Instagram account @thepowertoreinvent, and I'm also on Facebook, same handle, @thepowertoreinvent. So, yeah, come. Hang out with me. I'd love to get to know you better, love to hear your goals, and there is lots of daily inspiration on there. So, yeah, get in touch.

Matt: Awesome. Well, I'm a follower of your Instagram account.

Sarah: Yay.

Matt: It is definitely awesome. And we'll put those links as well in the show notes for people to check out. So, Sarah, thank you so much

for hanging out today.

Sarah: You're very welcome.

Matt: It was amazing.

Sarah: Yeah, thank you so much. It's been great.

Matt: Thanks, everybody, and we'll talk to you later. Have a good day.

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