[Start] [00:01:03]

Matt Bowles: Hey, everybody. It's Matt Bowles. Welcome to The Maverick Show. My guest today is Dr. Laura Gallaher. She is an organizational psychologist, speaker, facilitator, and executive coach. She is the founder and CEO of Gallaher Edge, which she started in 2013 to help business leaders create cultures of accountability by growing from the inside out.

                 Her career began after the space shuttle, Columbia, exploded upon reentry in 2013, killing everyone on board. Following the tragedy, NASA hired Laura and a team of organizational psychologists to change the cultural influences that were deemed to play a role in the accident.

                 She worked for eight years to positively influence culture, develop leadership capacity, and improve organizational performance at Kennedy Space Center. Laura was then hired by Walt Disney Parks and Resorts to help manage the radical changes in their performance management process and philosophy.

                 Laura is an expert teacher, trainer, speaker, and consultant, particularly in the concepts of self-awareness, accountability, trust building, and team cohesion. She holds a bachelor's degree in Psychology, and a master's and PhD in Organizational Psychology.

                 Laura is a licensed Human Element practitioner, a certified Radical Collaboration trainer, and a certified coach. She gave her first TEDx talk in 2018. And she has also been traveling the world for a year, together with her personal assistant, running her business from at least 10 different countries around the world over the last 12 months. Laura, welcome to the show.

Laura Gallaher: Thank you so much, Matt, for having me.

Matt: I am so excited for this conversation. And we just need to set the scene here for people. You and I are currently in Austin, Texas at the South by Southwest conference where we are both going to be speaking on a panel about remote entrepreneurship, which is coming up in just a couple days. And we are currently literally sitting around the kitchen table. We have just opened a bottle of

	Chianti Classico from Tuscany.
Laura:	Sounds really good.
Matt:	Yeah, it does, doesn't it? And I was just showing you my on-bottle wine aerator that I never leave home without, and I travel the world with it just for occasions like this.
Laura:	It's so perfect. I love it.
Matt:	So, let's start a little bit with your background, and let's go way back, and sort of start your journey when you were growing up, and maybe talk a little bit about what music and theater and being on stage meant to you and how that led and evolved and eventually how you got into and interested in psychology.
Laura:	Yeah. Well, I think I'm kind of the classic youngest sibling, last child, baby of the family that wanted that attention, being on stage and everything. So, I started music when I was 5. I learned piano. I also, by the way, I wanted to be just like my sister, like anything she did I wanted to do it, too, and I usually wanted to do it better. So, I had this very like strong competitive drive, but also, of course, just loved and admired her so much.

So, I that, piano, and then I followed my sister into the band in middle school. So, I just kept learning more and more instruments. It was like added on alto sax, and then in high school my director wanted me to learn oboe because we had more sophisticated songs we were playing. And then I needed an English horn because that was yet another new instrument. So, I was kind of always like, "Oh, a new thing? Sure, I'll do that." "Oh, a new thing? Sure, I'll do that."

And then by the time I was a senior in high school, I felt compelled to just do my own new thing, so I picked up trombone just because I wanted to do something totally different than all of the woodwind instruments. And by the time I got to college, I was like all right, I don't play in a band anymore, I'll pick up guitar. So, I like literally picked up one of those kits where it's like the guitar and like a DVD. And I don't know if your listeners know what DVDs are. It's this older technology, and how we used to consume video content.

Matt: Well, at least you weren't referring a VHS tape.

Laura: VHS tapes, yeah, yeah. No, I do have some VHS tapes though that record some of my past performances, so yeah. And I also, yeah, I started doing like little school theater stuff. So, yeah, I really enjoyed that. I think I was a pretty strong reader, which when I was 8, that was like the main criterion for getting some kind of a part in a play, like, "Oh, she knows how to read the words. We'll give her the lead role."

              And then I think I'm kind of an emotional, and not a dramatic person, but I feel pretty in touch with my emotions, and I like that sort of just theatrical way of walking through the world. So, I enjoyed acting here and there, pretty much consistently, minus high school, like elementary, middle school, and then I did a bit in college, and even in grad school I sought out some theater. So, there's just something for me about being on stage that I love. I feel fully alive. I feel fully engrossed in what I'm doing, especially if it's something that I feel like I have some knowledge on.

              So, I feel like where I'm at now, all the things that I've learned about psychology in my career, which is maybe coming up on 15 years deep, plus my desire to be on stage, and the fact that I don't have a ton of stage fright. I mean, I get a little bit nervous here and there, but I just like I love it. I feel like having the chance to speak on stage about psychology where I get to bring it elements of some theatre, that's kind of like my ideal world. That's what I'm moving towards.

Matt: That's amazing. Yeah, and your TEDx talk was outstanding.

Laura: Thank you so much. I loved that whole process. It was such a validation for me, like yeah, yeah, this is really what I want to do.

Matt: Yeah. And it was awesome. We're going to link up to it in the show notes, for sure because I want everyone to go and watch it and to pay attention to a number of things.

              So, one, as you mentioned, was the actual stage performance and the actual delivery of how you're presenting the information. Then the second was the substance of the content, which we'll get into

here in a little bit. But really awesome, and I am super excited now also be on this panel with you at South by Southwest and to share the stage. I think that'll be a blast.

Laura: I'm looking forward to it, too.

Matt: Yeah. So, tell us a little bit about how did you then from there get interested in psychology? And how did your journey go in that direction?

Laura: Well, so, in high school I wasn't really doing much acting, and I was doing the band stuff. But as much as I love music, I never really wanted it to become something that was professional. I think it's just my happy place with music is to have it be my hobby. But I loved, loved giving my friends advice, right.

So, like when I was in high school, that's kind of what my picture of psychology was all about, like people come to me and I give them answers to help them make their life better. I really enjoyed that process and experience. And I've evolved tremendously from 20 years ago, the way that I used to just dole out advice to friends. As a coach, it's so much less about advice and so much more about connecting each leader with what he or she truly wants for him or herself and finding out how can I best communicate this with the world, et cetera.

But I felt like I love this human stuff. I felt like it's a way for me to stay in touch with the right-brained piece of me that really likes the softer things. But I also really liked knowing things. I really wanted to be an expert in a lot of stuff. And so, I, yeah, decided to study psychology. I thought I would be kind of like a traditional like clinical psychologist, doing therapy and stuff.

But I got fascinated by social perception issues, right, like if I walk into a room and I see you, what am I immediately judging you on? What are the things about you that I notice? How do I judge you differently based on your voice? Like all of those things became fascinating to me, so I kind of became a social psychologist, but I didn't know how to make a career out of that.

And somebody said, "You know, there's this field called organizational psychology, and you can basically study anything

you want in psychology as long as you add at work to the end of it." And so, I was like, "So, I could study like what social perception looks like in organizations, and I can study anything because it's at work?" And they're like, "Yeah." Like that's cool. So, that's how I narrowed in on org psych as my specialization when I got to grad school.

Matt: Awesome. And then from there, how did the NASA connection come about? And talk a little bit maybe about that experience, what that was like. And you we were there for eight years?

Laura: I was.

Matt: Yeah, so, maybe talk a little bit about what that whole process was like and what you learned from it.

Laura: That was all pretty intense. I mean, so having the opportunity was a lot of the right place, right time kind of thing. But I am a big fan of that idea that luck is preparation meets opportunity, right. So, I had two people that I knew personally who were working internships at NASA when they realized that they wanted to start this organization development function and hire org psychologists.

So, I became aware of the opportunity because I knew people on the inside, and they were both willing to recommend me because they perceived me as smart and hard-working and in all those good things, right, that you theoretically want to have in an employee. So, that's how I got the interview and got the role.

So, I was 24 when I started at NASA. And the first real responsibility that I was handed was okay, so we are about to execute a reorganization of the Kennedy Space Center that affects about two thirds civil servants, which is maybe 1,500 people, something like that, and we want you to go ahead and be the primary consultant to the Senior Executive Director of Engineering who is leading that. Cool. Cool, yeah.

Matt: Wow, at age 24.

Laura: I was 24. Yeah, I'm like what am I doing? Oh, man. It pushed in a lot of ways because I so wanted to be that expert. And it's like I'm coming in to say what to this person? Is he really going to listen to

me? And you know what? He was pretty great, actually. He had a lot of respect for the background that I had.

And there may have been a couple times in hindsight I can think, you know, he might have been mocking me a little bit here and there with stuff that I would say that just felt too obvious, but it helped me get over a lot of fear of not having like the "right answer," and looking at myself more as somebody who could facilitate a helpful process where leaders could grow.

Matt: Yeah, I was going to ask about that. In terms of like over the course of eight years, how was your personal and professional growth during that time? And what were your main takeaways from that?

Laura: So, when I talk about starting at NASA, I do like to mention this. This is relevant to your question, I promise. So, one of the main variables that I feel like I was brought in to help with at Kennedy Space Center had to do with one of the findings from the report around the tragedy of the Columbia accident, that there were fears that stopped people from fully speaking up and speaking out and campaigning for what they truly thought was best.

And that is something that happens to all humans pretty much everywhere at various places in our lives, right. Like this is not specific to NASA. It just so happens that that, plus there were dozens of other factors if not like hundreds of other factors. But this was an important one to me, that there could be these intrapersonal fears that would stop somebody from truly fighting for what they thought was best.

And so one of the main missions that I had was working with leaders to help them exhibit behavior that creates psychological safety, so that all opinions can be voiced. And I say that because about three years into my career there at NASA, I got to experience this workshop called The Human Element, and The Human Element is all about getting real work done by getting real, acknowledging that people issues are real, that they come up, and that they get in the way of us getting shit done.

So, that was a very significant experience in my life. I think I went into it, so I was 27. I went into it feeling like hot shit, life was

great. I was almost done with my PhD. I had this great boyfriend. He was a rocket scientist. Career was cool. I had friends. I felt great about myself and my life. And by the end of those five days I felt like a shell of a person. I felt completely shaken to my core. And I felt like the things that I thought I knew about myself were completely backwards.

So, it probably sounds terrible, right, like whoa, okay, come in and feeling great, walking out feeling broken. But what it did for me was tremendously elevate my own awareness about how I was showing up in the world. And there's this beautiful and painful irony that I was actually exhibiting a lot of the behaviors that I was there to teach leaders to not do, if that makes sense.

Matt: Wow.

Laura: One of my biggest takeaways was that people were not fully open with me because they feared my reactions. And it's not that I was like some tyrannical leader who would like yell at people. I didn't do anything crazy. It doesn't really take crazy behavior for us to shut down. It just takes like a little eye roll, or last week she made a comment like this, and so this week I don't want to mention this because she's already very opposed to that, maybe having like too strong of opinions, and that type of thing.

So, for me that was like a huge Aha moment, and it completely changed the way that I was approaching the work with the leaders there and myself. Like holy shit. It was huge. It was so hard for me at the time. And I've gone through several workshops like that over the – how many years has it been now? Like 10 years since I went through that? I continuously find new ways that I'm getting in my own way.

Matt: Can you talk about any specific things that you changed and implemented differently as a result of coming out of that? Like what did you observe about yourself that you then changed? And you were not only aware that you needed to change, but you were able to execute that change, and then what was the result that you saw from that?

Laura: So, the main takeaway that I remember having was around this idea of openness. With The Human Element, they preach a lot

about the value of openness. It's the grand simplifier. If you and I can just both be open, it so much easier for us to solve the problem at hand.

And I thought I was super open because I thought that being open meant willing to share my opinions. And I was like, "Oh, I've got opinions about everything." Like I could tell you, "I have an opinion about that."

"Oh, you had your girlfriend pack your suitcase before your business trip? I have an opinion about that." I had things to say about everything, and that's what I thought openness was all about. Not so much, right. Openness is about like, actually, we were talking earlier, like if you annoy me as a coworker, I could probably choose to be open with you about you, and tell you the things that I think I don't like about you, and here's what's wrong with you, and here's how you need to change.

And anybody listening is probably like, "Yeah, that doesn't sound very productive." And it's not. The reality is what bugs me about you is really about me. And so, for me understanding that openness means being open about me, being open about my experience, my feelings, and the hardest thing for a lot of people, my insecurities. Like what is it in me that's being triggered by you?

That's the thing to process through. That's the thing to share. That's the thing to work on because I can try to change you, but that's probably not going to work very well, and you're probably not going to like me much because of it, right. And that's kind of how I think I had been walking through the world.

And so, for me I realized at that point okay, so being open means connecting with myself, figuring out where is this emotion coming from, right, if I'm feeling annoyed, I'm feeling frustrated, I'm feeling pissed. Like that's coming from inside. There's something internal to me that's being triggered. And if I can surface that, that becomes the real problem for me to solve. So, I don't know if that's tangible enough for you, but that's kind of the big thing that I took out of that.

Matt: So, how can this concept be extrapolated for business owners in general? Is there a general, let's say, exercise that business leaders

can do if they're a business owner, entrepreneur, a founder, CEO, someone who's trying to create an organizational culture, run a team, that sort of thing? Is there an exercise that we can be or should be doing along these lines? And where should we start with this process, in general?

Laura: There are so many different exercises and things that leaders could do. Let me start with something and then we'll just see where that goes. So, practicing openness is going to yield more openness. And true openness is vulnerable, and vulnerability is courageous, and courage is contagious. So, when I can be open with you, you are a lot more like to be truly open with me.

So, part of why openness works in communication is that it's self-accountable, right, like if I come in and I say, "Well, let me tell you what's wrong with you and all the reasons why I don't like you and all the things I want you to do differently," not likely to create a culture of accountability. It's likely to create resentment and pain and a lot of that stuff.

If I can approach any given situation by being self-accountable first, then I'm a lot more likely to get that self-accountability from you as well. So, coming into a situation when leaders can say first to themselves, right, just think it through, "What did I do or not do to contribute to the exact situation that I'm in?" That's the first question to think about.

And I can tell you that if any leaders are like, "I didn't do anything," it is all them. That not only are they in complete and total denial right now, but they will render themselves completely useless. So, anybody who is – if you're in a situation then you contributed to it being what it is. And it's not about blame. It's about true accountability.

So, all this to say one of the exercises that we do that's been and extremely powerful is called the Self-accountability Circle. And it's very structured. And it might sound weird and foreign, and I do a lot of stuff that's weird and foreign with leaders, and I encourage them to just go with it.

So, literally sit in a circle, and one person turns to the person on the left and says, "What did you do to prevent a solution to the

problem?" And, of course, you would have identified the problem. I write it on the board so we're all in agreement about what the "problem" is. And that person gives an answer; something they did or did not do to prevent a solution to the problem.

And they say, "Thank you." And they turn to the next person and they ask that. And you go around and around and around. This is not just once around. And people start to realize, and they surface, "Holy shit. There's a lot that I did or did not do to contribute to this being exactly what this is today." And it's actually incredibly empowering because then each person realizes all of the things that they can choose to do differently next time, like starting right now these are things that they can start to do differently.

And that is a radically different conversation than most retrospectives, right. If there's a problem at work, something goes wrong, usually emotions are high, people are triggered, they're really defensive, they're blaming each other, finger pointing, all that shit? No leader likes that. It drives them crazy. But most leaders get pulled into it, right. They start there.

In fact, a lot of leaders that contact me, their first message is something like, "Can you come in and fix my people?" And it's not usually quite that like crass, but that's kind of what they're asking because they feel like they've done everything that they know how to do. And they feel like they're out of tools. And they feel like those people must need something. Please give it to them. And, of course, what I really do is come in and work with the entire team to really create that culture of accountability.

Matt: Can you talk a little bit about what is company culture? I feel like this is sort of a buzzword a lot of people use, right. What is it? What should be? And how should business owners, founders, CEOs, go about intentionally architecting a company culture? How should they think about that?

Laura: So, I'm going to deviate and then I'll answer your question because you're using a word that when I'm consulting with leaders, I encourage them to use a different word. Do you have any idea what word you're using?

Matt: I have feeling you're going to tell me, but I'm super excited

	because I'm about to get a lot of value out of this discussion for myself personally, so I'm excited to hear it.
Laura:	Okay. So, the word "should." There's a lot of weight and heaviness associated with the word "should." It's usually a judgment, right. So, if I come on and I say, "What leaders should do," mm, it's a bit authoritative, and it's usually based on some kind of value system that's mine, not necessarily yours. Or the thing that happens is like it's somebody else's value system that's been imposed upon me. And so, I'm like, "Yeah, man, I guess I should really do that."
	Should I? Or do I want to? What do I want to do? And so, that can be one alternative to say, is, "Want," what do leaders want to do. Or you could say, "Could," what could leaders do? And so, it's an option. It's one thing that they could consider.
	So, I like to use language that creates a bit more flexibility because when we get rigid on something, that starts to become a barrier to problem-solving and to interpersonal communication. So, that's the first thing that I'll offer, is "Could."
Matt:	Cool.
Laura:	All right. So, culture is how we do things around here. Most simply, culture is about how do humans behave? What are the relationships like? What does interaction look like? How do people actually show up? And so, there's a loop that we talk about in terms of designing culture. So, because culture is behavior, we like to look at well, what drives the way that people behave?
	So, I'm going to behave based on the beliefs that I hold. For example, if I believe that my opinion matters then my behavior means I'm going to speak up in that meeting. If I believe that my opinion doesn't mean shit because I'm at this level, or I only make this much money, or whatever, in that meeting I'm going to keep quiet.
	And so, to then look at the beliefs and go okay, so how as a leader can I shape somebody's beliefs because that feels like it's pretty personal, it feels like it's pretty fundamental to them. But I can do that by intentionally creating experiences. So, I'll just use this really simple example again. If in a meeting my leader says,

"Laura, I'd really like to know what you think about this. I want to know what you think because you have insight into it. You're working in it day-to-day. And you also bring a wealth of experience that adds a lot of value to this. What do you think?"

That experience that I have is likely going to change my belief about how much my opinion matters, which is going to change my behavior. So much so that in the next meeting, even if my leader doesn't say, "Hey, Laura what do you think," I'm that much more likely to share my opinion, just as an example. And then the behaviors, of course, that we exhibit, lead to experiences for other people. So, it's this like continuous loop, so the behavior feeds the experience which changes our beliefs, and that just continues to go around and around.

So, at like in organizational levels, sometimes I talk about an example where leaders say that they want to create a really high trust culture, right. We want high trust. We want you to trust us. We want to trust you. But then they ask the employees to sign a timesheet, right, in and out, and log the time when you go to the bathroom, and ridiculous stuff like that.

Okay, there's inconsistency here. You say that you want your culture to be X, but you're treating it like Y. And now the more you talk about culture, the more the employees are going to roll their eyes at you and be like this doesn't mean anything. So, the issue, the reason why culture, I think, becomes really hard is not because leaders actively and intentionally want to shut people down, but because in that meeting instead of the leader saying, "Hey, Laura, what do you think? I'd really like your opinion on this," maybe that leader is feeling really stressed out.

Maybe there is a high level of urgency or tension or stress around this particular decision. And maybe that leader has a lot of fear about how this is going to ultimately reflect on me, and that stress and the way that leader is perceiving him or herself in the situation leads the leader to behave in ways that he or she knows is not the most effective.

And so, when we talk about behavior, it's not just like, "Sure, let's just flip a switch and change the way we behave." It's a matter of digging deeper into ourselves to figure out well, what does lead me

	to show up as my best self, and what are the ways that I get in my own way?
Matt:	Right. So, when you're doing a consulting project when a CEO or a business owner hires you to come in, right, are you starting with the leader and going through these exercises with them before even working with the rest of the team? Or sort of what's the process? Because it sounds like what you're saying is that the role of the leader in reflecting inward, right, and developing this stuff is critical to the entire thing. Like if they don't do that, then a lot of this other stuff, it's not really going to be all that effective, right?
Laura:	Yes.
Matt:	And so, do you start with just like one-on-one sessions with whoever it is, the CEO or the business owner?
Laura:	Almost always. But there's not always as much lead time as you might expect. And I've gotten a lot better at vetting my clients. And so one of the things that I'll do is find a real opportunity to provide feedback to that leader before they've even hired me. And most of them are pretty surprised by that, right, because here, they may consider that they are in a position of power with me because they're considering, "Do I want to hire her?" "Do I not want to hire her?" And we tend to think that money rules all.
	But I'm also looking at them, going, "Are you somebody that I want to work with?" "Are you somebody that's open enough to me and the concepts that I bring that this will be fruitful?" Because I don't want to waste my time.
Matt:	Right. Because they have to be personally open to it –
Laura:	Yes.
Matt:	– in order for any of this to work.
Laura:	Yes.
Matt:	Because if they're just saying, "Everything I'm doing is correct, come fix my team," you know immediately that you're not going to be able to deliver those results if the leaders are unwilling to be

introspective and really transform themselves. So, that's not going to be an effective client for you, I assume.

Laura: Absolutely. And we've had a couple clients even recently who have said, "You know, I figured I had some growth to do. I knew that I would get something out of this. But I admit I really, really thought that this was mostly for my team. And now I realize, holy shit, I really, really needed this."

So, I don't need them to have like the full level of openness and self-accountability that they will develop. I just need them to have the door open enough. Because I have worked with clients that that's not there, and it's really painful, and it's extremely hard for the other members of the leadership team to be witness to it, where they are open and they really want to, and they're in the presence of their own leader who has not fully bought in, or who is not fully stepping into the process.

Matt: So, with the NASA experience, just as an example, in terms of your eight years there and being able to go through this workshop at the earlier kind of first half of that experience, can you talk about just the transformation that you saw from Day 1 to Year 8 in that organization?

Laura: Oh, gosh. So, yes, and it's a bit caveated because they did move us around a lot, right. So, I worked a lot with the Engineering organization to begin with. I worked with them for a few years, and then I was also working with the Technology organization. I worked with the Shuttle organization, so they did move us around a bit to just help with resource issues. But there were a lot of changes that were happening.

So, I mentioned that there was a reorganization, right. And so, I think one of the variables that became really important was that engineering as a function was no longer underneath the program. So, it used to be that all engineering for the Shuttle program was housed in the Shuttle program from an organizational design perspective, which means the leaders at the top have a program mentality, which is like schedule, budget, you know?

And so, the reorganization pulled Engineering out of that, so that the engineers had an equal seat at the table, if you will, right, the

senior director or the senior executive director of Engineering was right there at the table with the senior executive director of the Shuttle program. And I think that that played a big difference. They also pulled Safety out, so Safety, also. So, you had this three-legged stool then, and each of them has equal footing, and at least organizationally speaking, at the table, so I think that that made a huge difference.

And the other thing that that transpired during my career at NASA, Kennedy was the retirement of the Shuttle program. And so, that became huge. So, part of what I was working on was the change management associated with that. So, first there was the change associate with the reorganization, and then several years later it was okay, I have for my entire career identified as a shuttle engineer. Now that's going away. Now what the hell am I doing? And what does this mean for me?

And so, what I saw was that the Engineering organization in 2006 when it was first formed as an organization, everybody had very, very strong ties back to their specific program or project, right. It was still, "I'm a shuttle engineer," "I'm a shuttle engineer," "I'm a shuttle engineer."

And not only because the program retired, but because a lot of the work that we did to help them refocus, to say, "I'm an avionics engineer who works in the Shuttle program," I think we really worked to help change their identity. Who am I in relation to my organization? And get them to see themselves with a lot more versatility.

And, honestly, it was a little bit slower than I thought it would be because I think I underestimated how much programs were a part of people's personal identity, which is funny because I'm a total workaholic myself and like I totally identify with my business like it's my baby. So, I get it now.

So, yeah, it was slower than I thought it would be, but I think that that transition really did happen where individually they started to identify differently. They really started to feel like, "I am an engineer. I'm a NASA engineer. And I can do multiple things to support the programs and projects at NASA."

So, I feel like that was really big. And, specifically, at the top with the leadership team of the Engineering organization, they just became more cohesive. They did some strategic moves. They had some leaders switched up, right, so that people wouldn't even get too attached to like, "I'm an avionics engineer." It's like well, so what else are you capable of doing, especially at the leadership management level?

And so, I think that a lot of those organizational design initiatives really started to create some meaningful shift in terms of how the engineers identified. And, weirdly, I think that created more cohesion for them rather than it being the same level of attachment to like a programmer project.

Matt: That's awesome. And then how did the Disney relationship come about? And how did that sort of transition happen? And what was the Disney experience like? Why did they hire you? What were their goals? What were they looking for? And then what was your experience there in that company culture?

Laura: So, I left NASA in 2014 because I wanted to pursue my business full time. I didn't go straight from NASA to Disney, actually. And it was sort of my first big failure if you will in the entrepreneurial space. I only was out there trying to do it full time for maybe six months before I started working for Disney. And I was like doing teaching, like I had scarcity mentality, I had fear, so I took on these teaching gigs. And they were actually like that was actually taking up like 40 hours of my week, but it wasn't paying nearly as well as NASA paid me.

And so, and I was going through some transitions in my personal life. And I got in through Disney, believe it or not, super old-fashioned route of job application. And that shocked me. Like, I didn't know anybody there. I didn't have any network connections. I just had a kind of a cool fucking resume that said "NASA" on it, you know what I mean? And like a PhD in org psychology, like I just had credentials that got me the interview, and then I'm a decent enough interviewee that that got me the job.

So, it was super like old school kind of traditional route, believe it or not, to get the Disney role. And the work there was so cool, like have you ever been a part of an organization, Matt, that does like

the traditional performance evaluation process like once a year you get a rating, and.

Matt: For sure.

Laura: Yeah. How did you enjoy that? Super fun, right?

Matt: Yeah, it was exhilarating.

Laura: So, like the vast majority of people in organizations, leaders, and employees, hate it. They hate it. There might be a few like super consistent high performers that really thrive on external validation, and they think it's like the best in the world. They love being graded. They love hearing that they're at the top of the curve. That does good things for them. So, I don't want to take away from those few people. But most leaders hate it, too. Like, it turns into a ratings justification conversation.

The whole point of performance management is to try to improve performance. And this like outdated industrial-age-driven process is not doing it. And so, the work there was so cool, and I love that Disney was really kind of on the cutting edge of saying, "We don't have to keep doing this like this. This is not working. And, in fact, not only is it not working, it's actually detracting from how people show up in the organization," like, "Everybody hates this so much. Why do we keep doing this?"

But that's multiple decades of experience people have been doing this this way, and they don't know how to do it any other way. And most organizations really struggle to create culture, like you were asking that before. They don't know how to do that. And so, they like to lean on processes and policies and, yeah, that doesn't work. I mean, there's this great line of "Culture eats strategy for breakfast," and really, I would say the same is true about processes and policies.

Like you can put a policy in place, and it doesn't mean shit. Like what it might mean is that people get really good about checking the boxes for your policy, and they still do whatever the hell they feel like. So, I thought that work was super cool. It was all about helping leaders to connect more meaningfully in conversation with their employees because that's where true development happens.

And getting leaders out of the mindset of judging, which is what they have to do in order to do a performance evaluation in its strictest form and get them more in the mindset of coaching.

Like, our brains cannot do both at once. I cannot simultaneously judge you and coach you. If I'm judging you, then that's like a certain area my brain. Coaching is about letting go of judgment and just being with you in this process of problem solving. And so, I loved all of that because it got to pull in so much cool science and psychology around like mindset and what happens in human interaction, and like the neuroscience of performance. It was really, really cool.

But, ironically, culturally, I was not a strong fit for Disney. And so, I left after only about a year. Plus I had kept things going with my business and things had accelerated to the point where I really wanted to dedicate full time to that again, second time, so I left Disney in 2015. It went a lot better.

Matt: In terms of the performance management philosophy, I think that's a super important topic, and I really appreciate that what you just articulated about the difference between judging and coaching, like I think that's a massive point of divergence in terms of mindset for business leaders to be thinking along those lines. And I wonder if you have a specific tip in terms of how, for the business owners or CEOs, those types of people who are listening, how they could begin – "Could," did you see?

Laura: I did. Look at you. Fast learner. I love it.

Matt: Could begin thinking more constructively about performance management in terms of the systems and processes that they are developing. Do you have a particular kind of tip or a starting point for how people should really be thinking through that and how they could be building that more effectively into their culture?

Laura: Yeah, because a lot of this comes back to accountability, as well. I mean, that's part of the intention of performance management, which doesn't really happen. So, philosophically, and I will get to something tangible, I promise. But philosophically, I'd encourage leaders to look at co-creation, right. So, that means that instead of me looking at your performance as an employee as a function of

you as a human, instead I look at your performance as a function of our relationship and our interaction, and the way that the organization is designed to get the results that it gets.

So, back to that whole self-accountability circle, anybody who's part of a situation has helped to create it. And so, making it much more of a dialogue, making it much more of a two-way conversation, is one of the first things that becomes really, really critical. Which means you could literally start with that same kind of self-accountability thing, and it's designed around a problem.

But you could take it and morph it a little bit to say like, "Hey, if we are here, and we would like to get to this other level, we want to step things up, what would that take? What would you want from me? How can I support you? What would I like from you? And let's co-create this together." Like let's talk about how we are working in collaboration to tackle this problem.

Matt: I know that some companies have started implementing basically an employee-review-of-manager concept. Do you find that that's also just simply a kind of bifurcation of the problem that you're describing, and that instead of just saying, "Oh, well, the employees will also evaluate the managers just like the managers will evaluate the employees," instead to just mix both of those processes, and just come with this more collaborative approach?

Laura: My short answer is yes, especially because most evaluations like what you're describing are anonymous, right. And understandably. Like if I'm a leader and I get a really, really harsh evaluation from two of my employees and there are five love me, it's probably going to really, really affect the way that I show up with that employee. And I might really struggle with them, I might feel like trust is lost. So, I make it anonymous, right?

So, theoretically, I don't know. I don't know who said what. I don't know who marked me so low, except that I have a story in my head and I probably get really married that story, and I'm convinced that it's you, but I can't know that it's you, and I can't talk openly with you about that I think that it was you. And so, I think it damages trust hard core. And I'll admit like when I was internal at NASA, not only did I participate in the facilitation of 360-degree feedback evaluations, which are almost entirely

anonymous, but I even created one that was designed for influence leaders.

So, I used to think that they were these really, really great tools. And what I was missing was how much angst and anxiety that creates, and how much information is lost. So, Matt, if you were to give me feedback to me, that actually tells me more about you than it does about me.

Matt: Mm, interesting.

Laura: And that gets lost anytime we're doing these like anonymous evaluations. So, yeah, I think they're kind of terrible. And I, on my own podcast, like back in 2014, I had recorded this episode that was talking about how great they are. And then a few years later it was like you know what, not so great, like I do not endorse these. The thing that they can do is, theoretically, they can raise somebody's awareness of a blind spot. But the problem is that it's done in a way that almost always triggers defensiveness.

And so, in a lot of cases, I think it actually works against the leader because the angst and the lack of trust ends up overpowering their new awareness. And if they don't know where it came from or how to behave differently, then they just start getting in their way even more. And so, it sounds scary to a lot of people, but when you have the tools to communicate openly and honestly and directly, it would look like what I was saying.

You and I can have a conversation about how have things been going, what's going well, what's not going well, what would you like from me, what do I want from you. And let's co-create something together, like nobody's commanding or directing anything. It's legitimately a collaboration and a co-creation, that we will truly elevate performance.

Matt: That's awesome. Can you talk a little bit about now Gallaher Edge, and what inspired you to create it, and what the value proposition is, and all of that? And then also what that sort of entrepreneurial journey and founding and business start-up experience was like for you?

Laura: Yeah, for sure. So, it really started from a strong desire to control

everything.

Matt: Is this your openness coming out now?

Laura: Yeah, this is my open. Yeah.

Matt: I appreciate it.

Laura: I mean it's true. So, part of what happened for me with NASA is I was promoted very, very quickly and repeatedly, like I basically rose up really high, really fast, and that was a combination of me working my fucking ass off and being pretty smart, and also just timing. People were moving into other roles. Roles opened up. I had an amazing champion in Dr. Phillip Meade. I had an amazing leader named Stacy Phillips, and they supported me. And they both gave me a tremendous amount of autonomy, which was fantastic.

And then the higher up in the organization I got, the less autonomy I had. And that blew my mind. It was so the opposite of what I thought it would be. And so, the more I was in a situation where I was being asked, or really told, to do things, that 1.) I didn't think were ultimately going to be the most beneficial for the center, 2.) Not things I wanted to do, and 3.) Things that didn't really play to my skill set. I got increasingly frustrated.

And so, I started the business on the side and I kind of thought like maybe I'll just coach some leaders. I had become a certified coach at that point, and I thought maybe it's just like something on the side. But I connected with a leader who really wanted my help inside the organization that he had founded. And so, like I said, I think from when I started the business to when I left was less than a year. So, it started as this side gig to NASA.

And for me, I was really, really excited to control all of the variables, right, or so I thought. Right, I'm like I repeatedly get the lesson of how much I cannot control. I have a really, really strong internal locus of control which is a geeky psych way of saying that I really do believe that I create my life. I believe that my choices impact what happens in my life, and that I can drive it. And I think that that's, for the most part, really, really good. And at a certain point it gets my way, right.

At a certain point I start trying to force things, and then it stops working in the same way. So, so I largely started it because I really, really wanted to control the variables, but largely I think in a benevolent way. It was like no, I want to work with leaders in organizations in a way that's actually going to have an impact.

Like I don't want to create a stupid career pathing process that worked for the Army where it super-structured, like NASA is not like that. Don't make me do this. This is pointless, and nobody wants it, nobody's asking for it. They won't even help us create it. We need them to create it, and they won't give us their time. Like does that not tell you anything? I was like it was driving me nuts.

And I really, really wanted to focus on the things that I thought actually mattered, and actually made a difference. So, thinking okay, well, I'll start my own company. I'll become a consultant. I'll work externally. I will get to tell them, "Here are the things that I do, and here are the things I don't do." If you want this stuff then you can talk to somebody else, and maybe I'll try to build up my own referral network, and I'll put you in touch with somebody. But that's not my thing.

So, that was kind of what started me wanting to do it. I really wanted to use the concepts from The Human Element and from Radical Collaboration, which is also powered by The Human Element. That's what I wanted to do. I'm like this shit's amazing. Like this changes lives. This transforms organizations. Don't make me do other stuff, you know?

That was like how it started. And 2014, I mentioned was tough. I was like cool, I'm going to leave NASA. I'm going to just rock things out with my business. And I was focused on like all the wrong things. I'm like well, I have to make a really good website, which it was not a really good website, and all like marketing stuff, instead of just getting out there and meeting more people in like normal human face-to-face interactions.

But my second time around, focusing on entrepreneurship full time, was much more successful. I took the approach of like let me just get a shit ton of meetings set up with leaders in the business. And I actually massively oversubscribed myself within the first six months. It was like I was so excited to be getting Yeses, that I

didn't stop to think like wait, can I actually do this work? It was terrible.

Matt: Right. And so, the Disney thing was in between the initial launch and some of the challenges that you experienced. And then after experiencing those challenges, you then went and applied for the job at Disney and went back to the traditional job route, got the job at Disney, and then decided to leave Disney to go and rekindle, restart, reformulate the business, and go all in on the entrepreneur thing at that point?

Laura: Yeah. I didn't actually fully stop the business at any point, and Disney was super not supportive of that, which to a degree I can understand. I can understand why leaders want to have an employee who is fully engaged what they're doing. I just wasn't, right. So, actually, one of the things that were really cool for me as an entrepreneur was to have the full-time gig at Disney and have two different leaders approach me because past biz dev that I had done was starting to pay off.

People were starting to come into me. I was getting like word-of-mouth referrals. And I noticed that the fear in asking for the prices that I wanted for my services virtually went away because I was kind of like, you know what, if I don't get this, it's fine. It's fine. Like, I had just started this job at Disney. This is cool. I can go to Epcot for free, Food and Wine Festival, what's up? I was like, "I'm cool. If this doesn't happen, no problem."

And I noticed how much different my interactions were with these leaders when I was not terrified of losing it, right, like that scarcity mentality we've talked about.

Matt: A hundred percent. A hundred percent. Yeah. I think that is a total game changer because of the way you go into a negotiation or a pitch or a sales opportunity, I think that impacts it a lot. And the other thing is that you were able then to basically select and choose your clients, as you said earlier.

Laura: Yeah. Yeah.

Matt: It's not just about oh, I'm going to try to sell my services to anyone who will buy them. You're able to position yourself as very

selective. And then it's a mutual discussion to see if we both want to work with each other.

Laura: Exactly. And that was a really, really nice thing for me to realize. And it continues to be true for me that anytime it starts to feel like it's out of alignment or out of balance, I know that your listeners cannot see me right now, but if I hold my hands up level with each other, that's what I want any engagement to feel like, right? I am not above them nor below them.

And if it starts to feel out of alignment in either direction, something is not working. And it's a red flag for me to at least begin a conversation to try to level-set and get things back to where they are. And so, noticing how abundance mentality can completely transform the way I personally show up in all aspects of my life is huge.

Matt: Can you talk a little bit about, you're using terminology like "scarcity mentality" and "abundance mentality," and just for people that maybe aren't entirely familiar with that language or exactly what you mean by it, can you sort of just summarize what you mean by that?

Laura: Yeah, so, scarcity mentality is a general belief that there's not enough to go around, that each opportunity is precious, and it could be the only one, and it creates a lot of fear in people to say like, "This one thing has to go just right." And it feels terrible. And I can tell you like the very first lunch meeting that I ever had with a legit business prospect, I think I literally spent – this is going to make me sound super creepy – literally spent like 30 hours stalking him.

I was like okay, who is this guy? What has he done? He happened to have like a bunch of videos that were online, so I was like watching these videos, which like what is that going to do for me? Like I'm watching him talk about technology and coding at like a conference, like I'm not going to use this. And I didn't use it. Like, I prepared so much and so hard. I came in like with a folder of like printouts and handouts and like all this stuff. And I used precisely zero of any of that in the conversation.

And was a great conversation. In fact, like he actually forgot that

he had a meeting after lunch, and we were together for like two-plus hours, and he was like, "Oh, shit. I totally missed a meeting." I'm like, "Well, that's a good sign. This is going well." And so, the scarcity mentality had me going in with a tremendous amount of fear. But in the conversation, I was able to just kind of let go that, be me, and that ended up working out really well. He was my first client.

But there have been repeated instances where I find myself getting overly attached to one thing. And so, Benjamin Hardy is another organizational psychologist who give me this phrase that I just love, which is, "Expect everything, and attach to nothing." And I think that's the essence of abundance mentality, like this is not your only opportunity.

There is so much opportunity out there. There is enough for everybody to have everything that they want, and how much that can change the way they we're driven. We're not driven by fear in those instances. We're driven by, "This is what I want, and what I want matters."

Matt: Right. And so, I want to just reiterate and see if I correctly understood what you were saying in terms of some of the mistakes or the mis-prioritization of where you were putting your time and energy the first time around versus the second time around.

And the second time around, instead of focusing on things like website, and how are we going to make ourselves look online, and all of that kind of stuff, you were focused on sales and closing clients and saying, "I need to close this number of clients," and I am just going to go out and proactively find these people, set up meetings with these people, get in conversations with these people, sit down with them, and close the clients but I want to close, that I want to work with, that I know I can be successful with.

And then you just went out and basically ostensibly focused on sales and closing the first number of sales that you knew you needed to be successful, as opposed to focusing on the website and focusing on all that other stuff. Did I hear that correctly?

Laura: Yes. And what I would say about that, especially in hindsight, is that I realize how much more real face-to-face conversations

played off of my genuine strengths. Like, I don't know much, especially back then, about marketing and making a website. And then you have a website and it's like well, what the hell do I do with this now? How do I get people to –?

That's a whole huge area that I really, still to this day, really don't want anything to do with. But having a real conversation with a human being, I'm pretty good at that.

Matt: Right.

Laura: I'm a pretty good listener. Obviously, not in this conversation. I'm just doing a shit ton of talking. But, generally, like I'm a pretty good listener, and I can get to the heart of what people are struggling with. I relate to the vast majority of my clients on a personal level, and I can connect with them. And so, once that became my new strategy for like getting things started with the business, I was like, "Holy shit, this is so much easier," like let me just keep getting in front of people and having real conversations. Like this is great.

Matt: I think that's a really important takeaway because I feel like it relates to the honest self-auditing and self-awareness and self-reflection about understanding what your real strengths are, and then how to identify the highest and best use of your time. And then to go out and understand that that's going to give you the best results if you're able to put your resources into the highest and best use of your time.

Laura: Yeah, it's kind of like the 80/20 thing, this idea that maybe 20 percent of the things that you're doing are actually yielding 80 percent of your results. And so, what would happen if that became 80 percent of your time instead of 20 percent.

Matt: Right.

Laura: And, for sure, like I continued to notice when I was in abundance versus scarcity mentality in those conversations. If my mentality was, "I must close this client," nuh-huh, stressful. It's like dating, right? There was like a sense of desperation, right, like if I'm on a date with somebody and I'm like, "Oh, my God, like this is the only man that will ever go out with me," I'm not gonna show up –

That's not cute. That's not cute. Right?

Like the texting afterwards, like, "Hey, like was that okay?" Like, you know, "Eh, do you wanna hang out again?" Like eh, eh. Everything about that's just so unappealing. And that's true in business as well. Like we are drawn to people who have a real sense of confidence in themselves, and that scarcity mentality is just not hot. It's not.

Matt: Right, for sure. Yeah, which is the ironic part, right? The less desperate you are for business, the more business you will close because, I mean, it just comes across very apparently.

Laura: It does. So, anybody who's like new into entrepreneurship that's listening or considering it, I get it. I get that it's scary in the beginning. It's scary as fuck, I think.

Matt: Yeah, for sure.

Laura: But genuinely believing in yourself, and trusting that things will happen, especially if you are dedicated what you're doing, you're smart, you're in an area where you know you can add value and you're focused on adding value, like it's going to happen. Just believe in that.

Matt: For sure. Yeah, so, I think that's a hugely important thing though in terms of the self-auditing, understanding what you personally are insanely good at, like these are my just raw strengths, and if I can get myself into this space, like I can crush it, right? And so, you know that about yourself. In an interpersonal conversation, like you perform extremely well, right?

You can develop – and I know this because I know you, but you can you can develop trust extremely quickly. You can make people feel very comfortable. You can impress them very much with your conversation. You're able to perform in that environment. You're also able to perform very well, for example, on stage, or in front of groups, or things like that.

And so, when you're able to say, "This is my like A-level stuff where I make the most impact," and then you're able to structure your time, your resources, your mental and emotional energy

	around getting yourself into those positions as frequently as possible, all of a sudden, your business results can totally transform.
Laura:	Yeah, it's so true. And I felt a lot of the pain of not being fully in alignment with my own strengths in 2018. In the last year, I was in a very different position than I had been historically with traveling. I was traveling around the world at that point, so I'm not face-to-face. I'm not meeting these people. I'm not networking. And besides the TEDx talk that I did in October, I wasn't doing speaking engagements. Minus a couple of events that I did for my cohort, which were like such a blast.
	People were like, "You are so busy. You're so slammed." Like, "Why are you doing this shit for us for free?" And I'm like, "I fucking miss it." Like I miss doing this stuff. Like this is fun for me. I feel alive in this.
Matt:	Right. Let's get into that. That's a really good bridge and transition, I think, to talk about the travel. So, you started your business and you were based in Orlando?
Laura:	Yes.
Matt:	And you built that business, and you landed those clients, and you were working with those clients, and you had a successful business that was rocking and rolling. You were doing your thing. You had all-star staff, and everybody else. And you were just crushing. What made you decide that you wanted to travel, that you wanted to try to work remotely, that you wanted to have that experience?
Laura:	So, I'm a really like slow roller in this particular sense because in 2013 I went to Australia and New Zealand, and I fell in love with the city of Sydney. I loved it so – I still love it so much. I haven't been back. It's still to this day my favorite city in the world. And I wanted to live there. I wanted to move there.
	Like we came back to Florida, and I was like, "Oh, my God. I wanna move there." And so, I'm currently divorced. So, my husband at the time was like, "Hah." I'm like, "No, I'm serious. I wanna move there." And he was like, "Oh, yeah. That's not happening." And I was like, "Shit. Okay."

And for the next few years I continued to allow relationships to get in my way of this idea like of going to live in another country. And so, I had a relationship end at the beginning of 2017, and I was like, "Okay, for real, I am going to do this." But I had just signed like four year-long contracts with Orlando clients, and I'm like okay, I'm going to see these through, and then I am moving to Sydney.

This was my plan. And I was adamant about it, and I was telling everybody and their mother, like I was super into manifesting and Law of Attraction, and I was like, "Speak what you seek until you see what you've said," like this is happening. I'm going to Australia. And I actually made some progress, like I got introduced to a business owner who had a headquarters in Orlando, but he had offices in London and Sydney, and most recently, LA. And he was super friendly, and he was like, you know, I think we might be able to work something out where I could sponsor you.

Well, long story short, we were pursuing it, but just kept running and obstacles. And I had pursued my own stuff, kept running into obstacles. And in the meantime, this woman had said, every time I mentioned Australia, she's like, "You should do Remote Year." And I was like, "What is that?"

So, she explained it, "Oh, it's one country per month, and you move around with a community." And I'm like, "Oh, I don't wanna do that. No, that's not what I want. I want to move to Australia." But the second or third time she brought it up to me after I was like hitting of all these obstacles, I was like, "Okay, I'll take a look at Remote Year. I mean, Sydney's my favorite city now, but there's a lot of the world I've never even seen, so okay."

And, you know, Remote Year was on top of it. Like as soon as I applied, they were reaching out to me for an interview, and everything happened really quickly. And this was like six or seven months into 2017. And I was hard-core minimalist. I like did not even buy normal furniture for a home because I knew I was leaving, right, like I was in the mindset of this is happening.

So, I was like the easiest sell in the world. Lawrence, who was my admissions person, was like he's lucky he got me because I was

like, "Dude, I'm in. Whatever. Let's do this. Let's go. I'm ready. Whatever the itinerary is, just take me around the world. Let's go." And so, I committed to that in like September of 2017.

And then within a month or so I started talking with Kayla who works with me. She's my personal and Executive Assistant, and she really has grown so much. I mean, she's my Marketing Coordinator. She's my Operations person. She's in the finance world now. She's like she takes care of so much for me and for the business.

And we were like apart for a couple weeks because I was traveling, and we like hated it, we hated it so much. And I told her like, listen, I know I'm leaving, but I want you to stay on with me. And then I just randomly threw out like, "So, would you wanna go with me around the world?" And she was like, "Yes." And I'm like, "Oh, that was kind of a fast answer," like okay, well, let's have a conversation about how we can make that happen.

And so, we talked some finance and stuff, and figured it out. And so, she came with me. And we left at the end of January. And, yeah, it was pretty insane, actually, how quickly everything moved at that point.

Matt: That's amazing. And you traveled the world for a year. And I think you wrote an article about that, right, on LinkedIn –

Laura: I did.

Matt: – that ended up going viral about traveling the world for a year with your assistant?

Laura: I did. Right, like I brought my employee on Remote Year, yeah.

Matt: It's so amazing. And you and I have both done the Remote Year program. I did it about a year before you did it. And then you did it, and that's one of the ways that we sort of connected with each other in terms of the alumni network and all of that.

But I would love to talk a little bit about your experiences with travel, and sort of what that was like for you to travel with the experience, the personal growth, and all of that over the course of

	the year was because traveling, in general, I find is just always like this massive source of personal growth because it will be simultaneously like absolutely amazing and spellbinding, and also like incredibly frustrating and challenging.
Laura:	Yes.
Matt:	All at the same time.
Laura:	Absolutely.
Matt:	And so, I would love to hear your reflections because the Remote Year program is particularly unique because it's a one-year-long commitment, and you're traveling to – we did 10 different countries, 12 cities in 10 different countries. And that's usually what they're doing, or now they're up, I think doing 12 cities in 12 different countries.
	But you just get this massive array of cultural diversity. We were on four continents, so you're in Asia and Europe and South America. And you're all over the place. And it's just this totally – I mean, for me it was thoroughly a transformative and deeply moving experience where I just went through – I feel so much personal growth. But I would just love to hear your experiences and reflections on the year of travel for you.
Laura:	Yeah. Well, gosh, so much, so many thoughts come up for me. The first thing that I would say, and Trish, who's the like VP of Experience, she's amazing, I love her.
Matt:	Shout out to Trish, by the way.
Laura:	Hey, Trish. Love Trish.
Matt:	Yeah, she's amazing.
Laura:	She is. And she said something very powerful at the very beginning of my experience, which was, "This is still a year of your life," right, "So, it's easy to take a look at this situation to be some place very cool or exotic in the world and think like I should, right, I should be having the best time. I should be feeling so grateful. I should just be beaming from ear to ear every day

because look at this cool thing I'm doing, but it's a year in your life."

Like whoever says like every day of this whole year was fucking great? That does not happen, right? We have hard days. And so, to a large degree, when I very first think about the year, what comes up for me is just like what was my year like? More than even like what was the travel like? And for me because I mentioned business is like my baby. I don't have any real babies, so my business is my baby.

And so, how that was going feels like it was really dominant in my experience, and it was super, super affected by my travel. Like I was just telling you, one of my strengths is human face-to-face interaction and/or being on stage, so speaking, using my voice, meeting people in face-to-face engagements. And now I'm across the world, so how I do that?

And time zones aside, like I was able to manage that, that wasn't that big of a deal. But just being physically removed from my normal environment had a really, really huge impact on me. And so, I talked about how I started the business because I really wanted to control everything, right, this a theme for me.

And I had, I think, an inflated sense of confidence in my ability to control how things went, even from afar. And so, it was a very humbling experience for me in that vein. I realized wow, okay, the more that I'm trying to control things, the less I'm enjoying this experience, and the more strain I'm just putting on myself and my team.

And so, I think for me, a lot of it, especially in hindsight, is wow, the Law of Attraction is great, and I think it serves me very well to believe that when I work hard at things, I can make things happen. And it only really works to maximize my potential when it's applied in tandem with the law of allowing, or this idea of surrender.

So, letting go of the things, actually, that I cannot control, right, like the Serenity Prayer, basically, some secular version of that. This idea of recognizing the things that I can control, the things that I cannot, the wisdom to know the difference. And so, that's an

ongoing thing for me, and I feel like that was my biggest personal learning was there is a lot that is not within my personal control.

And it's funny because with Remote Year, part of that I actually really liked. I liked that they plan everything for me. I liked that they were telling me where to go, and that they figured out all that ship for me because I didn't want to do the logistics. So, I voluntarily gave up a lot of control, but there were other elements that I was not in control, and it was a huge, huge stressor for me.

And so, it was just a repeated lesson for me around like, actually, if I can just let go of this, let that go, then my life will be better, and I believe my results would be better. But it feels very contrary to everything that I feel like I know as a high achiever, as a recovering perfectionist, as a Type A, super-driven entrepreneur. I feel like no, I want to hang on to this piece of me that can control everything.

And so, for me, like finding that balance is an ongoing part of my journey. And I think that the Remote Year experience really, really heightened my whole awareness around it.

Matt: Did you have business developments and things that you did with respect to your business while you were traveling the world that you might not have done if you had just stayed in Orlando the entire time? And what were those?

Laura: Yeah, so that was huge for us, right? So, everybody asked me like, "So, what are you gonna do?" Like, "How are you gonna keep things going with your business?" And I told them over and over again like, "I don't know. I'll figured it out when I get there. I'll figure it out when I get there."

And I had this tremendous sense of confidence that I would figure it out when I got there. And there, by the way, is Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, which is just about as far away as you can go on the planet from Orlando before you start coming around the other side, right.

Matt: For sure.

Laura: It's like as far away as I could fucking go. That's where I went.

And things did not go as I thought they would. I assumed that a lot of my clients who had been with me for years would be open to engaging with me remotely, that they would do virtual conferences with me, that they would keep coaching with me. Some did, and a lot didn't. A lot more than I thought ended up bailing on me, sort of in a, "Well, just like let us know when you're back, okay?" Right?

And I was like, "Ah, shit. Really?" So, month two, we decided like okay, let's build a membership site. People have been telling me for years to put my content online. They were like this is stuff that the world needs to hear. You have to put this shit online. And I was like, "Eh, I don't want to." Like everything about online intimidates me. It's not my strength. Back into 2013, me building a site and trying to pour my energy into that, like that didn't yield anything for me.

So, I was super resistant for years and years, and I finally thought okay, I guess I can do this. So, we stepped into building this membership site, and I felt wildly incompetent just about every day. Every day. And not just because I was trying to build this platform and create a membership site when I knew nothing about creating membership sites, and I didn't have any data that I was using to build off of it.

Like I hadn't done some brilliant customer discovery around what do all these CEOs want in terms of online engagement? I didn't have that data. So, I was guessing a lot. I like to call them SWAGs, but don't even know how sophisticated they were, Sophisticated Wild Ass Guesses. They were just Wild Ass Guesses, I think, to a large degree.

And so, it was like it was a huge, huge challenge for me. So, I felt wildly incompetent in that, and I felt wildly incompetent in like the day-to-day stuff. I mean, weird, weird things that most people don't think twice about could sometimes feel like this huge unknown, like where do I take the trash out in this building? Like when I'm so tired, and I'm just like –

Matt: How do I turn my stove on?

Laura: How do I turn my stove on, yeah, I talked about that in my TEDx talk. Yeah, I use that example. It took me like 30 minutes to figure

out how to turn on my stove in Kuala Lumpur. I'm like I just want to make some eggs. This is what I eat in the morning. I eat eggs. How do I do this? And it was a switch on the wall. And I'm like I have never heard of a switch on the wall for a stove.

But then that was true in Serbia, too, for the washing machine. I literally was like googling a video instruction on how to use the washing machine because none of the buttons that I was pushing was turning it on. It was the switch the whole damn time. Just one switch. And then everything worked fine.

So, I was like I felt wildly incompetent in the very, very basic day-to-day things because I had chosen to subject myself to this experience, like living in these countries where I didn't know the language and the culture was new to me and the way to the apartments in the buildings and the homes were configured had some abnormalities that I wouldn't even think to ask because like what the hell? Like I just wouldn't know.

And so, we were talking before about how traveling can be like a magnifying glass on like stressors and strains. And so for me, like I felt like wow, so, I can adapt to this, but it's taking a tremendous amount of my energy. And so, I found it to be enlightening in a lot of ways around how much I can take certainty for granted, how much uncertainty can still really, really mess with my head. And, yeah, I think I just kind of stepped into just about every aspect of uncertainty or challenge that I could face as a human, I did.

The one thing that I am continuously grateful for is my health; minus being like ridiculously sick on the 17-hour plane ride from JFK to Taiwan on my way to Malaysia, like besides normal sickness that occurred throughout the year, like my health was great. And I'm really grateful for that because just put everything else in my life was like a massive challenge.

Matt: I feel like that's really important, a really important observation, and really important to be upfront about. And when I think about, you know, because I've been now full time itinerant, nomadding for about six years, right?

Laura: Damn.

Matt: Fifty countries in the last six years.

Laura: Holy shit.

Matt: And when I think about that, and I reflect on that, I feel like as human beings we have an understandable desire to get really good at certain things, whatever that may be. You're professionally good at something or you're good at a sport, or you're good at an instrument, or you're good at whatever it is good that you're good at. You're really well-versed and really comfortable in a particular space, right.

             You can talk about certain categories of things very intelligently. You can perform very well in certain areas. And once you develop that, you want to spend your time in those areas because you are above average in those areas. And you can feel very good about yourself.

Laura: It feels great.

Matt: It feels amazing.

Laura: So good.

Matt: I'm so good at this, and I'm just going to put myself in the space where I'm good. And then I'm just better than most people in that space, and then I feel very good about myself. And it's very comfortable, and very familiar, and you're just like, "Man, I feel very good about myself."

             But that is a really – whatever space that is for you as a human being, that's a very small, specific space. And when you move out of that space, all of a sudden, you're like, "Whoa," right. And when you move way out of that space, right, like one of the things I think about international travel, I feel like I am just continually, intentionally putting myself into places and situations where I am so far out of my comfort zone, and out of my element.

             And you basically just oftentimes feel like a child in terms of I can't speak the language, I don't understand this part of the culture, I've never had this type of food. And you're just, I mean, you feel like a child. I mean, you can have whatever level of

education and professional success, and all this other kind of stuff.

Laura: It just doesn't help you in some situations.

Matt: It doesn't help you at all.

Laura: No.

Matt: But I feel like for me, the personal growth that occurs in the learning, that occurs, and just through doing that is so amazing and profound because it's simultaneously like humbling, and sometimes frustrating and challenging.

Laura: Absolutely.

Matt: But also just like so amazingly stimulating with the newness and the differentiation of just like whoa, like this architecture, I've never seen buildings that look like that. And I've never heard this language before, and I've never eaten food like that. And it's just so amazing and wonderful and incredible. And yet you're so far out of your element and your comfort zone, and you're just trying to take it all in.

So, I find that international travel is just an extraordinary place for personal growth on so many levels. And I know that you as a psychologist have really, I think, had time to sort of reflect on all of these realities. And I would love to just hear a little bit about it, and I know you talked a little bit about this in your TEDx talk, but just your concept of home, and feeling belonging, and all that kind of stuff.

When you are traveling around the world and going to all these different places, way outside of your comfort zone, and outside of traditional things that people would call home and belonging, what were your sort of reflections and conclusions on some of those kinds of personal things?

Laura: So, similar to the work that I do with leaders and organizations, for me it really does all come back to the self, and how do I see myself? Like what is my own self-concept, and how much do I accept the way that I view the way that I am? And so, like traditionally, you might call that "self-esteem," and I'm putting air

quotes that your listeners can't see.

And I put air quotes around it because I think when people hear "self-esteem," they think about the trophy era of like, "Everybody gets a trophy," "Nobody feel bad about yourself," "Everybody is a winner." And like that's not what I mean. It's almost the exact opposite of that.

So, what I talked about in my TEDx, and I really, really enjoyed having the opportunity to have a real reason to reflect on the concept of home while I was still traveling and like doing all this craziness is that I recognized for myself that like partway through my journey with Remote Year, I went back to Orlando. I was in Orlando for like 13 years, like that was a long time. I mean, that was a huge chunk of my life at that point.

But when I was there, it didn't like home. I didn't feel more at home there than I did when I was in Marrakesh where I had flown from. It was like felt weird. It's like I feel out of place. And in hindsight it's easy for me to look back and realize that I was in a pretty tough place, actually, at that point in time. Things with the membership site, they were going, but they weren't going as we thought.

I had a client relationship kind of fall apart, not on great terms, which is a whole other conversation that I'll save for another time. And things in my personal relationship, my romantic relationship, were particularly troublesome. And so, just about everything to do with 'how is my life going?' felt like it was kind of in shambles, like I was really, really struggling.

And so, this place that I had called home for 13 years didn't feel like home. It still didn't. And so, I was like nothing feels like home, like what gives? And I started to realize that that was really just more a reflection of how I felt about myself and the way that I was thinking about myself.

So, when I talk about "self-esteem," I prefer the phrase "self-acceptance." And so, what that means to me is not that I think that I'm great at everything and that's why I'm okay, but wherever I am in my life, in my journey, in my skill set, in my relationship status, in my business, wherever I am, that's okay. That's okay.

And when I can really be okay with myself, wherever I am, with all those variables, then I can feel at home anywhere. And so, instead of like sometimes I hear of people or I have friends who they literally are moving, they're physically moving because they're like trying to find that sense of home, they're trying to find like happiness. And I'm like, "No, no, no. It's internal. It's inside." You've got to look here to figure out where that sense of home really comes from.

So, one of the things that I talked about in the TEDx, for example, that you've alluded to, is this idea of like competence, right, and I how I felt wildly incompetent every day. But I can reconceptualize what that means. Most of us when we're kids, competence is knowing things. You're graded on very basic tests like what's the alphabet? What's two plus two? And it's right or its wrong. And it's this very like polarized, binary way of living. And that's not real, past a certain point.

And so, competence, for me, when I start to recognize and realize that it's not about knowing things or being an expert in a particular area. It's about trusting in my ability to figure shit out. That's so much more valuable, right. Like I'd like to tell you, actually, that it took me less time to figure out that the washing machine in Serbia it was the switch than it did in Malaysia. I'm not sure that's true. But I can tell you I think it took even longer for me to figure it out in Serbia.

But I can tell you though that my psychological experience of it was different. Like in Malaysia when I figured out it was a sense of exasperation, like, "Uh, fricking switch. Oh, Jesus, okay, fine." Like turn it on, you know? In Serbia, it was like, "Oh, it's a switch here, too." And like they had this little icon on the switch even that I could see it in hindsight looked like a washing machine. And I was like, "Oh, that's cool." Like my experience of it was different.

And it's this idea of I can figure things out. And that, representing competence, was really critical to my journey of like trying to build a membership site. And as a human, like I oscillated very much between knowing that conceptually: I can figure this out, I can learn this, I can grow, I can talk to experts, I can learn through experience. It was like a startup within a startup to me. And I had

had a very successful startup experience for the previous five years. So, I was like I know I can figure this out. But, shit, this is painful right now, like this is hard.

And so, I was oscillating a lot between knowing that competence wasn't knowing stuff, but, man, it was hard sometimes to not know things. And so, for me, a lot of it is the idea feeling at home comes back to can I choose – and I do think it's a choice – can I choose to be okay with where I am right now?

And the thing that helped me realize that yes, I can, is the idea that I'm never going to get to a place where I can't find ways that I can improve. I'm always going to find things that I can do better. I don't want to not find ways that I can do better. So, how about I stop waiting for some mythical destination where I'm perfect because that's not a thing.

How about, instead, I choose to accept myself right now, literally right now, like any of your listeners can choose right now to accept themselves exactly as they are because they will never get to a place where they've decided I'm done. I'm done growing. I've learned all I – No. No. That doesn't happen. And when you realize that is not an actual thing, I think the concept of self-acceptance becomes much easier.

Matt: Yeah, and being confident enough to catapult yourself into totally unfamiliar places with the confidence that I will be able to figure out how to navigate around, and I'm also going to be self-aware enough to know that I don't know that much, and therefore, I'm open to learning while I'm there. And that's actually a huge part of why I am there, and the value I'm going to get from it.

And when you go into it with that, and you say, "Listen, I'm just here to learn," and, "I'm here to try to figure things out," and, "It's just gonna be a massive learning curve," and then sometimes there are frustrations. There are it does take you 30 minutes to figure how to turn on the stove, or you're like I probably could have spent that 30 minutes doing something else.

Laura: Exactly.

Matt: But at the same time, like your mind will also be blown by a

number of totally unexpected like niceties and extraordinary things where you will just meet people whose kindness will just like make your heart melt; random human beings that you will just interact with, and you will be like, "Whoa," and you just will be almost moved to tears by like how kind a random person was to you, right?

Laura: Yeah, it's so true.

Matt: Or like how unbelievably good like this food was that you'd never heard of, and now you're like, "Wow, that was like unbelievable," and all of these different kind of sensory experiences and human interactions, which will just inspire and motivate you, and just give you so much confidence in like how extraordinary humanity is because sometimes I feel like we just get like depressed and just downtrodden at the state of the world, and the state of politics, and the state of everything else.

           And it's just all of this chaos and negativity, and then just like you just come across these like random strangers who just like inject this warmth and sunshine into your life. And you're just like, "Oh, my goodness," like faith in humanity has been restored by this human being I just happened to coincidentally interact with.

Laura: Yeah, it's so true. I genuinely believe that most humans are good, I really do. I fall into the bucket of like ridiculously trusting, I think, when it comes to a lot of things. I don't believe it's to the point of naïveté. I believe is just a philosophical way that I choose to walk through the world. I would rather put my energy into other things than a constant level of like self-protection.

           And for me, when I do that, I feel like it's mostly reinforced in a yes, people are good. People want to help. People want to connect. I actually genuinely believe that our natural state through evolution is human connection, right?

           And oh, my God, I got to see Brené Brown yesterday. So cool, like live. I'm a huge fan of hers. I've consumed much anything that she has in terms of content. And so, to see her live was just a really, really fun experience. I was in the longest line ever. And one of employees at South by Southwest, I asked him like, "Where I go for Ballroom D," or whatever. And he's like, "Well, this is the line

for it." And he goes, "Good luck."

And like, "Hey, buddy. I got in." And it was super cool. And so, she talks a lot about that, like we're hardwired for human connection, right. So, I believe that our natural state is one of love and connection and helping and support. And we go through things in our lives, especially as kids, where we start to armor up, right, we put on defenses. And I do believe that that's a lot of the sort of negative human behavior that we sometimes see. But I think at our core like we really are, we are destined to be that like supportive, loving, nurturing connection for each other.

And I do think that travel is one of the ways that really highlights that, not only through what you were talking about, like meeting local people who just are so kind and so open and so welcoming and so loving, but also through the sense of community, right, that you have if you're traveling with that community, and how much we are supportive of one another.

Matt: A hundred percent agreed. I mean, that's been one of the most amazing things because when I started Remote Year, I really felt like I needed a community, right. I had been traveling without a community for quite some time, and my feeling of loneliness was very palpable, and I needed a community.

So, I was either going to move to a city and try to reestablish social connection and community in a meaningful way, or Remote Year had created this opportunity where you can travel the world for a year with basically 30 to 50 strangers who are committing to form an intentional community, and be together, and travel the world for a year.

I was like that is unbelievable, like I'll take that option. And I did, and it was unbelievable. I mean, it was a completely transformative extraordinary year. And everybody that went through the entire year and finished the program, I mean, that's family for life for me.

I mean, we still have a chat group. I mean, I finished the program in September of 2017. And we still have a chat group where we're posting stuff almost every day, and organizing reunions, and meeting up around the world, and doing all this stuff. And, I mean, it was just an amazing community experience.

And now there's this proliferation of other, all these different, kind of this whole nomad ecosystem where you can plug into communities around the world. And it's just, it is extraordinary because people that I think prioritize that and are making choices to travel and live in other places, and all of those types of things, I mean, it is super interesting to interact with those people.

And people are coming together because they want that social sustainability pillar. They want to connect with you. Everybody wants to. We have the same human needs. We want to love and be loved, and get support and hugs, and give those to other people. And explore cities together, and do fun cool things together, and all of that.

And so, now it's really possible whereas when I started nomadding in 2013, none of these programs, none of these work/travel programs existed. And so, the proliferation, and just to see what's going on in the last five years has just been amazing, you know?

Laura: It's been really cool.

Matt: Yeah.

Laura: Yeah, I'm glad that a lot more people are exploring it as options for themselves. And for a long time I have said that my top core personal value is freedom. And I think that a lot of at the time was like freedom to do the kind of work I wanted to do. But I knew not far behind that at all was my desire for the freedom to travel and physically be wherever I wanted to be.

And so, I love that it's something that a lot of people are embracing, and I honestly don't feel like I know that much about the societal implications from an academic perspective, right, but like I genuinely feel like the world seems smaller to me now after the traveling that I've done. And I really want to know like how would our world be different if the majority of people traveled this much?

And I'm not talking about like the carbon footprint because that might be a disaster, but like, conceptually, right, philosophically, like yes, there are different cultures and different countries,

different experiences, different switches, whatever it is. But one of things for me is like people are still just people. It's not actually that weird or that different wherever we are. And I think that closing that emotional and social distance between cultures and international boundaries could do complete wonders for the way that we interact as a species across the planet. I really, really do.

And so, I really commend any individual who takes it upon him or herself to travel around and experience the world, and for programs like Remote Year, and many, many others that exist who are there to facilitate that. Because I'm pretty confident that I would not ever have done the travel that I did in 2018 if not for Remote Year. And maybe in one of the programs, right, but like that one was in my face and it was being recommended by a friend who hadn't even done it before.

And it was an amazing platform for me to be able to experience the world in a different way. And it has absolutely transformed the way that I view and see everything. And it has reduced my fear tremendously. It's boosted my confidence tremendously. Like everything about travel now feels less scary. Asia used to scare me, not in a bad way, in like a, "Shit, it seems like it's so different there." Like, "Can I cope there?" And now I'm like, "Let's go to Tokyo." Like I'm ready. I want to do it.

Matt: That's awesome. I want to ask you one more thing, and then we'll jump into the lightning round. I want to ask you about the podcast that you are hosting, and if you can just talk a little bit about that. What's it called? What's the concept? What types of guests are you having? What are you discussing on your podcast?

Laura: So, my podcast is called Expand your Edge, and so, it's largely about expanding your edge over your competition, but we play on words a little bit because it's also about pushing past the edge of your comfort zone, and things like that. And so, a lot of our episodes, probably most of our episodes, I'm talking with leaders who have had some big experience in their own self-awareness growth.

So, I have leaders come on to talk about the ways in which concepts from like The Human Element and Meta-Collaboration have shifted the way they see themselves and shifted the way that

they interact with the world. And that's my favorite. Like, I love having leaders come on and telling their personal stories. And I've been extremely impressed, actually, with the caliber of leaders that I've had come on and be so vulnerable and like tell these stories.

One of them openly shared a story about like, "Yeah, we made this mistake and it cost our business a couple hundred grand." And I'm going to tell you about that mistake and how they used the self-accountability circle to transform the way their culture thinks about mistakes and creates that culture of accountability.

So, it's mostly that. And then over the last year I actually experimented a bit with having other experts on. So, like one of the episodes that's coming up that I'm really excited about has another organizational psychologist named Doctor Tasha Eurich. So, she has two TEDx talks, actually one of them is on the TED site, so she's officially a TED speaker, so it's got like millions of views. And she also speaks to self-awareness. So, she has some incredible research on there. And so, I really, really enjoyed the conversation with her.

So, it's a mix right now of other experts in the space of leadership and self-awareness, plus leaders that I have had the chance to work with personally.

Matt: That's awesome. So, I definitely, by the way, highly recommend it. Your podcast is really good. You're an excellent host, and guests are really substantive.

Laura: Thank you.

Matt: So, we're going to link up your podcast in the show notes, so people can just go to www.TheMaverickShow.com and get the link to the podcast and your TEDx talk, and basically everything else that we've talked about and referenced in this show.

And at this point, Laura, are you ready for the lightning round?

Laura: I'm so ready.

Matt: Let's do it.

Announcer 1:   The lightning round.

Matt: What is one book that has influenced you significantly over the years that you would most recommend to people?

Laura: I really like the book called *Radical Collaboration* by Jim Tam and Ron Luyet. So, it's written by a lawyer and a judge, that's one person, in combination with a psychotherapist. So, the combination of practical problem-solving with the psychology of self-awareness is so powerful.

Matt: Awesome. I have not read that yet. That will go to the top of the list. What is one app or productivity tool that you're currently using that you would most recommend?

Laura: So basic, and so well-known, but it's Slack for me. I'm in so many workspaces, and it's such a functional, practical way to stay in touch.

Matt: That's awesome. And we're both on the Remote Year alumni Slack network as well, which is super, super cool. I mean, one more thing to say about the Remote Year experience is that once you finish your year with Remote Year, and they actually also have a four-month version of the program, so your 4-month or your 12-month version of the program, when you finish that, you get into the alumni network.

                And on Slack, you can basically just communicate with all of the other Remote Year alumni from all of the different programs over the years, which is totally insane and amazing.

Laura: And it's a growing community of like awesome humans.

Matt: Amazing humans.

Laura: Amazing humans.

Matt: And like super-savvy business people, super-interesting travelers. And there's all these like different channels, whatever topics you're interested in, you can be a part of that. If it's entrepreneurship, or whatever else. And for me, it's like when I just go somewhere, like I was going, like last year I went to Nairobi,

	Kenya for a month, which is totally not a city that Remote Year has ever been in or brought people to, or anything else. And I just put on the Remote Year Alumni channel, I was like, "Is anybody gonna be in Nairobi, Kenya in September?" And six people –
Laura:	Oh, my God.
Matt:	– said, "I'm gonna be there in September."
Laura:	That's awesome.
Matt:	"I'm gonna be there." "I'm gonna be there." I didn't know any of them. They were from all different groups. I'd never met them before. But they were from different Remote Year groups. They were alumni, and they were going to be there. And so, we had a Remote Year meetup in Kenya.
Laura:	That's so awesome.
Matt:	Totally amazing.
Laura:	I mean, because there's an immediate shared experience and community, even though you don't know that and those individuals yet.
Matt:	Totally, yeah.
Laura:	That's awesome.
Matt:	And of them was Kenyan, and he brought a whole bunch of his Kenyan friends to the meetup.
Laura:	Wow. Oh, my God. That's so cool.
Matt:	And, actually, from Kenya I went to Kyoto, Japan. And I was going to go from Kenya to Japan, and one of the friends, right, the Remote Year alumni who was Kenyan from Nairobi, he brought another Kenyan friend of his from Nairobi. Then I was talking to his friend who had not done Remote Year, but I was talking to him. And I was like, "Oh, yeah, you know I'm going to Japan next week." And he goes, "Oh, that's cool." He goes, "I just spent seven years in Japan, and I speak fluent Japanese."

Laura: Wow.

Matt: And I was like, "What?"

Laura: Damn.

Matt: I'm like, "You know." And so, he was giving me all of these tips on Japan and everything else. And it's just like the way that those networks like evolve, and you just get to plug into them. It's just like insane. And like the caliber of humans in these networks will just like blow your mind.

Laura: That's so cool.

Matt: And just know how inspiring and amazing they are. So, all right. So, on with the lightning round. If you have the opportunity to have dinner with any celebrity or author or public figure who's currently living today, who would you choose, and why?

Laura: I would choose Jim Carrey. I'm trying to read your facial expression right now. So, all right, so, two things I'll say about that, quickly. One is that when I was a kid in the 90s, his comedies were like epic, and I became a huge fan, and I was so obsessed that I wanted to find like every film he'd ever been a part of.

                So, I was a fan from that angle. And more recently, I see him as somebody who is adamantly exploring his own existence on this planet, and I love the shit he has to say. I follow him on Instagram. I love what he puts out there. There's a gallery in Winter Park, Florida near where I live that has a whole room right now dedicated to his art.

                And he had his interview on E! that was like weird, and everybody was commenting on how weird he was. But he was talking about personality is not a thing, and that like we are an illusion. And everybody's like, "He's weird. He's gone off the deep end." And I'm like, "No, he his getting this shit," like, "I wanna have a conversation with him."

                So, I actually fully intend to meet him. It's going to happen. I just have not figured out how yet.

Matt: I feel like you could definitely make that happen.

Laura: It's going to happen.

Matt: I feel like you could definitely make this –

Laura: It's going to happen.

Matt: And I agree with you. That would be a fascinating human to have –

Laura: Oh, my God, it's so fascinating.

Matt: – like a three-hour dinner with.

Laura: Yes.

Matt: Like, my goodness, I think that's actually a really interesting choice. Okay. What are your top three travel destinations, favorite places you have ever been in your life?

Laura: All right. So, I already mentioned Sydney, Australia.

Matt: You did.

Laura: So, you knew that one was coming. Another one might feel really cliché, but I don't care, it's my favorite: Maui, Hawaii. Beautiful. All times of the year the weather is amazing. The sunsets are ridiculous. The whale watching is fun. The water is warm. Like love it. I'm totally a beach person.

                And then my new favorite that emerged from my Remote Year experience was Croatia. And I was in Split most of my time in Croatia, so I guess I would say that city specifically, but even to Dubrovnik and the exploration that I did of the country as a whole was amazing. I had no idea how amazing Croatia was.

Matt: Croatia is amazing. It blew me away as well. And then you go out to the islands, like Hvar.

Laura: Oh, my God, the islands. The water. I just cannot get over the water. I still, to this day, so Croatia was back in June for me, and

	we're recording this in March. And the screensaver on my phone is the water, the beautiful blue waters of Croatia. I have not changed my screensaver since then because I'm so in love with it.
Matt:	It's unbelievably. Yeah, the Adriatic Sea is like insane.
Laura:	Gorgeous.
Matt:	And then also, there's just like all of these other things that I didn't know to expect, like the wine.
Laura:	Yes, the wine. And the food that's very like Italian in nature. It's like the pizza there is amazing.
Matt:	Right. Right.
Laura:	Yeah, the food was great, and the people are very attractive in Croatia, in my experience. Just sayin'. I'm a fan.
Matt:	It just keeps on giving.
Laura:	Yes, it does. Croatia.
Matt:	If you go in with no expectations, you're just like what? Wait? Where am I?
Laura:	Yeah.
Matt:	No, totally agree. Croatia is amazing. Okay. So, what are you top three bucket-list destinations you've never been to that are currently at the tippy top of your list, most want to see?
Laura:	Okay, tippy top of my list, which I love that I just said tippy top, is it's got to be Japan. And I would lean slightly towards Tokyo, but I know that Remote Year goes to Kyoto and so I'm strongly considering that as well. But, yes, that is some place that I really want to go.

Actually, my dad's a pilot, or he's a retired pilot. He was a 747 400 Captain, and when I was in college, I was meant to go on a trip with him to Japan. And his schedule changed last minute, which is super rare, and like I didn't go. So, it's like this, "I'm supposed to |

be there. I'm supposed to go." I was supposed to go however many years ago, like, "I'm supposed to be there." So, Japan.

No. 2 for me, I would say right now, is Greece. I'm very excited about Greece. I have considered doing some kind of like Mediterranean cruise, or something, but just Athens. Like I have this visual of what Greece looks like, and I really want to visit.

And the third one for me, I actually have friends from my personal cohort of Remote Year there now, which is Bali. I hear great things about Bali, and based on what I think I know, I think I would love to go and be there.

Matt: Those are awesome recommendations. Those are really awesome. I actually applied to Remote Year from Athens. I was sitting in a coffee shop in Athens applying to Remote Year.

Laura: Oh, really? Oh, my God.

Matt: It was pretty amazing. And I've been back once since to Greece, and it is really spectacular. I think that's a good one. And then Tokyo is insanely epic. I mean, it's just insane.

Laura: Yeah. It used to scare me, right, like I only wanted to go with my dad because I was like to 20 years old and it like scared me. And now I'm like, "Let's go. I'm ready."

Matt: That city will blow your mind. It will blow anyone's mind.

Laura: I want to go.

Matt: When Anthony Bourdain was asked what is, of all of the places that you have traveled, when he was asked what is the one, like the top place that is most like amazing, mesmerizing, like favorite? And he said, I mean, without even almost blinking, he was like, "Tokyo." That's it, like that.

Laura: I want to go.

Matt: I mean, that city is just it is crazy. It's insane. But it's like in so many incredible ways, like it will just be a sensory experience like you have not seen. The food is like, I mean, it's quite – I don't

	even – I was going to preface it with "arguably," but I don't even know if there's a lot of argument about that being the single-best food city in the world.
Laura:	Oh, Matt.
Matt:	I mean it's like nuts.
Laura:	You're making me want to go like right now.
Matt:	Yeah. Yeah, yeah.
Laura:	Jeez.
Matt:	Tokyo, that's a good one to have on your list. It's so awesome. All right. So, Laura, I want to ask you how people can find you and follow you on social media. How they can find out more about Gallaher Edge, if they're perhaps a business leader that's interested in what you guys are up to. How they can listen to the podcast. All of that good stuff. What is like all the ways people can find you and connect with you?
Laura:	So, the best way is going to be to go to our website, which is www.GallaherEdge.com. It is Gallaher instead of Gallagher, although I did buy the domain name for Gallagher and redirected just in case because I know that it's like a slightly weird name. So, www.GallaherEdge.com. That's how you can find information about the podcast or any workshops we have coming up.
	And then as far as social media, my handle for the most part, Kayla, my Executive Assistant, and my Marketing Coordinator, pushed me to change it over the last year. And so, now it's @drlauragallaher, so I'm @drlauragallaher on Instagram and on Twitter.
Matt:	Amazing. We're going to link up to everything, by the way. So, if you just go to the show notes of www.TheMaverickShow.com, you're going to have all of Laura's social media handles, and her link to subscribe to her podcast, and the link to www.GallaherEdge.com to check out all of the cool stuff that they're doing there. And you guys have a bunch of cool information on your website that they can check out as well. So,

	we'll put all of that in show notes.

Laura, thank you so much for being here.

Laura: Thank you so much, Matt, for having me.

Matt: This was an awesome conversation.

Laura: So much fun.

Matt: And I appreciate it. All right. Good night, everybody.

Announcer 1: Be sure to visit the show notes page at www.TheMaverickShow.com for direct links to all the books, people, and resources mentioned in this episode. You'll find all that and much more at www.TheMaverickShow.com.

Announcer 2: If you like podcasts, you will love Audiobooks. And you can get your first one for free at www.TheMaverickShow.com/Audiobook. Whether you want the latest bestselling novels or books on investing, business, or travel, try your first audiobook for free at www.TheMaverickShow.com/Audiobook.

Announcer 3: Would you like to Maverick Investor Group's white paper on real estate investing for digital nomads, how to buy US rental properties from anywhere in the world and finance an epic international lifestyle? Just go to the www.MaverickShow.com/Nomad. The report is totally free and available for you now at www.TheMaverickShow.com/Nomad.

[End of Audio]

Duration: 106 minutes