

## Mario Armstrong - Creator Series - 10-12-2020

### Eric Koester

Alright, folks keep jumping on here. I will post the link one more time that should have all of the places. If you did want to add any questions or anything, I'll try to cover as much questions and I'll try to cover what I can and keep the conversation rolling here. Hopefully, Mario will jump on it. We'll start the show a little bit after five o'clock, but should be a fun conversation for sure. Mario is a really interesting guy. We'll tell you that. Very interesting story. But also, I think his story lines up a lot of what we're trying to do here with book creators experience. It helps folks have that path to create things and share things and really use those things you create to stand out, be different, open doors for you. So, I think we'll hear a lot about the story here. But Mario certainly has an interesting story. He's a guy from the Baltimore area, went to University of Maryland, Baltimore County, UMBC. And has gone on really to carve out his amazing name for himself as a digital lifestyle, a digital guru, tech guru he's been called. A lot of really interesting things here. So, we'll let him tell a bit more about his journey in just a couple minutes. But certainly, going to be a fun conversation. And like I said, take notes on the conversation too. We'll share the recording and transcript. But there's some things in here many of you could use in your books just to inspire you. But we'll talk about some themes around. Thinking about audience building, thinking about different mediums, the ideas of resilience. Got some really good questions from people. Questions from Lacey, Michael and Elias. Some good questions here to go on. As all those sorts of things here too. So should be a fun chat for us in just a little bit. So as a reminder, I will keep cameras off during the actual presentation. And then at the end of it, we'll do our class photo group shots here together. So you can use them, post them and share the highlights and conversations from the conversation with Mario. Again, just as a quick reminder on the conversation and quick overview about our man Mario, really interesting. Really interesting background and story to break into the entertainment industry. And I think we'll talk a little bit about it, too. But in some ways, a lot of us think that there's only one straight path in and I think as Mario learned releasing a new show, sometimes the doors don't look exactly how you thought. And you have to make your own doors. And I think that's kind of what his story is. We'll talk about a little bit of how to create that own door when there isn't one open for you. And I think now that he's won multiple Emmys for his show, I think all those people that said, "I just don't think that'll work", "I don't think it'll sell", here it is with a two-time Emmy winning show. He certainly has proven that you can push the doors open, if it doesn't open for

you. And so, I think that's part of the neat part about the conversation that you'll see is that there is this idea, Mario's big message of 'Never settle'. I think it's such a powerful one for so many of us today. If you have that consistent vision of where you want to go and the doors is just not being open for you, kind of an obligation to yourself to not settle and push it open and jump in. And now Mario Show is sponsored by NASDAQ and other things behind it. I think a lot of really cool things behind this at this point. So, we'll keep video off during the actual presentation here. At the end of it, we'll add them on here. My man! How are you?

**Mario Armstrong**

Hey, Eric! Good to see you.

**Eric Koester**

Yeah, I love to see this. We had Jason Mayden on last week, you've got the perfect background there with all the shoes behind you. I love it.

**Mario Armstrong**

Jason and I probably need to swap backgrounds.

**Eric Koester**

To be honest, his background was really boring. I was expecting his background to be more like flashy.

**Mario Armstrong**

Like this!

**Eric Koester**

Like his personality. Well, thank you again, so much for joining us here. We really appreciate it. And I have to say as we were going back and forth today on email, I was like, "Man, we might need six hours to have this conversation with as much magic as you've got." But thank you again for agreeing to do this

here. And I wanted to start out a little bit of what we were talking about on email today about this interesting journey that you had to become this personality out there. But nobody handed it to you. And you told earlier about this idea 'Free to fee' journey you went on to break into radio and the television. It was so inspiring. Maybe tell us a little bit about that hustle factor that broke in.

## **Mario Armstrong**

Yeah, I appreciate that. It's just one of those things to all the students that are out there and you're trying to think about what do you really want to do with yourself? Where do you see yourself being? And how can you create your own path? That's exactly what I kind of figured out along the way. And so, I ended up calling it something. And that was from 'Free to fee'. But really what it was, was about really taking steps consistently outside of the educational walls, if you will, and really trying to get the experience as much as possible in areas that I wanted to learn more in, so that I could actually charge a fee. So to start, I was like, I want to be on radio and television. I went to school for communications. And because of a crazy turn of events in my undergrad experience, I did not end up finishing college. And it caused this whole other way of me like, what am I going to do? Even during college, I said to myself, I'm gonna figure something out. I'm going to actually buy my own airtime. I saw an ad and it was like, "Host your own radio show." And I was like, okay, this sounds like me. I want to become a radio host. I want to be in TV and radio. So I found out when I get there, it's a little AM station in Annapolis, Maryland. Shout out to anybody from Annapolis. But you could hear this, you could throw a rock probably down the street. That's probably as far as you can hear the signal. But it's all about where you start, right? This was like a little studio. Let me paint the picture. This was in a house that was converted into a studio that had a dish in the backyard type of thing. And so, I ended up having to buy 30 minutes of airtime. And the only airtime they could give me was 12:30 in the afternoon on a Thursday. Fortunately, my job at the time was only 15 minutes away. So on Thursdays, I would break out at lunch hour, eat my lunch in the car, go through this half hour show live, I'd get there like five minutes before airtime, do the show. Mind you, I had no experience doing a radio show whatsoever. You just have to try stuff and understand that you don't fail when you try. You actually learn when you try. And so I would do this show, and then drive back to the office and sneak into the back door to hopefully not be seen because I was always 10 minutes late get back to work. And that started the path. Once I did that and once people were listening and calling in, and it was working, I said, well, how do I get to a bigger outlet? I

then called around FM stations. But now guess what? I have an AM demo that I can now give you. And they're like, "Oh, he's already doing this. They don't know if it's successful or not. If they don't know if your book is going to be hit the bestseller or not, that doesn't matter. What matters is you put in the time and the energy and the passion to show a level of commitment about something you wanted to do and you want it to write about or talk about or share with the world. And that means so much more than a lot of other things that you check off on someone's list in terms of whether or not you want to hire them or work with them or collaborate with them. So that's how it all started, man. And then I guess from that point, it went to an FM station. And then I said, well, okay, I can do this. How about NPR? So, I got to NPR and I was on 'Morning Edition' as their tech contributor. And then the goal was always to get to television. But I found that I needed to go the radio route because breaking into TV was a little bit more difficult at that time. And then I took the radio stuff I was doing, and I went to the TV station and said, "I want to do something like this but do it weekly on your network. And I'll do the technology segment every Thursday for free. I'll come on the morning news, do my two-and-a-half-minute thing." I was never on the morning news. I never had any TV like that. I wanted to learn because I knew that I wanted to see myself on the Today Show or on CNN or on BIG network. And in order to do that, I had to get the experience somehow. Once I realized that this process worked, where you can build your own credentials in an unorthodox kind of way by just taking some personal risk on yourself and really giving value to whoever it is you're trying to give value to. So your book still needs to get value, right? But what you get from that experience, you're going to actually be able to rinse and repeat that for so many other goals and milestones that you want to accomplish in your life. And then get to a point where you look up and you're in the game for eight years and you get an Emmy. I can't believe it. And people are seeing you for the first time like, "Oh, Mario's got an Emmy. He popped up overnight." No, he didn't pop up overnight, dude. I've been working on this for almost 10 years.

### **Eric Koester**

Yeah. I was gonna ask on that a little bit. So, you've become this master of the rapid learner. I mean, again, you're basically learning this on the fly. Because obviously, college teaches you how to consume stuff and take multiple choice tests. But you have to learn all these things so you could add that value. What did you learn about how to learn differently or how to learn faster, that accelerated you in this way?

## **Mario Armstrong**

Oh, beautiful question. Number one, I think the first thing that comes to mind is understanding what you are really good at or what you have a passion about, and then really figure out how you can bring that unique thing to someone else, so that it gives them value. So I guess the bigger thing was, how can I really create more value? I know what I'm getting. But they may not know. Like, why would this kid want to do this for free every Thursday and come here in the snow and come here in the rain and show up every Thursday for free? I would do this. And I did this for three years, people. I still had a day job. But I did this for three years strategically, because I wanted to get to a bigger thing. And so I think the first thing is really figuring out what you can bring. A lot of times we see something we want or we desire and we minimize what we actually bring to the table. And therefore, the power of the leverage, you give them way too much power, not understanding how much power you can actually bring to them. And so I think really understanding that is important. And then being a really good human being. Like being nice to people. I would show up every Thursday and bring the crew Dunkin donuts. So I'm not only not getting paid, I'm now spending money, right? And I didn't do it like as some false trick to try to become friends. I did it because the crew is there. I was being appreciative that I was on the air. And so, it was just a thing of being a nice human asking a lot of questions and then trying to find someone on the inside that could be a mentor. Once you get in and you've gotten in, now it's your job to try to figure out a personality or two that you could say, "I really respect what you do. Can you help me?" You will be shocked at how many people will answer 'Yes'. But so many people hesitate to ask.

## **Eric Koester**

Yeah. So, a couple quick questions. Michael King, actually, you've got a Baltimore guy here. Michael is from Towson. So, a Towson guy here. You talked about that early time, early eight years or so before people think you've made it. And it's not a straight line by any means. None of us have a straight line, right? For sure. So how did you kind of give yourself the resilience to move through setbacks? Because it's not easy when someone's in that three-year, eight-year, 10-year grind to get going and get punched in the mouth. How did you push through those times when it's like three years in and nobody's picked up the phone yet?

## **Mario Armstrong**

Yeah, that's a really great, you know, I'm wearing a shirt right now that reads 'INTENT'. Part of it is really being clear as to what your intent is. What do you really want to accomplish? And are you committed to wanting to accomplish that? Because it isn't a straight line. Here's what I think that I did unknowingly at first, but now that I've been able to really try to pull back the layers and unpack it, it's now a part of the strategy. I call it dream far, but focus near. So it's really understanding what you really see for yourself in the biggest picture possible. Normally, that big picture overwhelms you enough that you don't know where to begin. And so therefore, what you need to do is reverse engineer that goal or that destination by really making the smallest steps possible. So, the way that you beat resilience or the way that you beat the times when you're knocked down or people are saying 'No', is that you constantly are taking very small steps towards the bigger picture. And if you have an opportunity where you can work on a project or intern for someone or put in some hours for free for somebody, even if it's just a couple hours a week, try your best and make sure it's in the industry of the area you want to go into. Because what you're trying to do is align everything that you're doing even on the small steps with what the bigger picture is. And it may look like you're jumping to the left or jumping to the right. But no, you're acquiring a different skill in this particular industry. That industry may not make sense to you, but the skill that you're getting is going to make sense to bringing it back to where your vision is.

## **Eric Koester**

Yeah. Someone asked me a similar question before and I talked about it. Too many of us think that we have what's called escalator careers. You get to the right escalator and it's gonna take you there. But I think what I'd like about what we were talking about, I said, "We need to have video game careers." You're Mario. Not this Mario, but the Mario Bros. jumping around down the hole and stuff like that.

## **Mario Armstrong**

Yeah. Earn some coins, jump around.

## **Eric Koester**

But I think your point about intent, it's a lot more of an empowered career today. I mean, you meet a lot of people who want to break into television today. What do you see that a lot of them do that maybe on the negative side that they expect the escalator to take them there versus the Mario Brothers version or the Mario short version here, a pick up the controller?

## **Mario Armstrong**

Showing me on paper what they've accomplished, that's not going to do it. I'm talking to my son, everybody. I'm like, "Christopher, you know your Instagram channel is your resume, right? It's not just for you to horse around. Fine but come up with a different avatar to horse around with your friends. But Christopher Armstrong on Instagram, you better be showing that you're a composer that, you write, that you want to be a writer for film. Let me see you playing a saxophone. Let me see you playing the keyboard." Everything is about showing what you can do. Because there's no excuse now to create. You used to need to be able to have access to get to something in order to prove that you could create something. "Oh, I just need to get in the door." No, you don't. But we are locking ourselves out of opportunities, because we still think that that's the case. For me, the first question I say is, "Can you show me what you've done?" "Okay, so you want to build website? Okay, what websites have you built?" Seriously, ask someone for free to do. And they'll say, "Mario? Well, I'm not on a news channel yet." So what? Did you go shoot a story about that community issue that you're really super ecstatic about? Are you very energized about it? Did you go and do a story on that and just put it on your own feed? Show me something of your passion. We don't want perfect. We just want to see that you actually care about something enough that you've actually created something on your own without anyone asking you to do it. It blows people away! It really does. It's simple. But since it's underutilized, I think it has so much power.

## **Eric Koester**

Yeah. And you talk about it, too. It's not this massive thing. I read you said small steps over 12 months adds to your greatness. These small little steps behind it. How did you figure out what are those small steps then? Do you have a strategy for that? Like thinking long versus acting short? Or how do you approach that for you?

## **Mario Armstrong**

Yeah. I think for everybody, it's different. Because what is small to you may be big to someone else. My hundred might seem like somebody else's thousand. So, I get that. So what I do is that I really look at what's the end goal. So right now, let's give you an example. I have on my shelf here, what are called tangible affirmations. So, these are pair of shoes. This is one way I hack myself. I'm a sneakerhead. I love sneakers. And I love eyewear. These are the two things that define me from a fashion perspective. I cannot wear these shoes until I launch my book. What this reminds me every single day when I come in here and get dressed is I can't wear these shoes, although I want to and they've been sitting on the shelf now for six months. I can't until I get to that book. So how do I get to the book, Mario? How do you get to the book? All right, what's the date? The first thing is set the date. Okay, Mario. These books got to be done, at least manuscript done by the summer of 2021. All right, what does that mean? What kind of book am I writing? How many words do I think I'm going to do? What are the chapters? These are all very small steps. And so the first thing is, well, let's do a table of contents. Another small step, who could I get to write my forward? These small steps might take you a week. It might take you two weeks to do that one small step, but you added every single day. I've only come up with two chapters. Okay, that's alright. You still got Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. You can come up with more chapters later. But the idea is that you just keep coming back to doing some action and then you look up and you realize that you've hit a certain goal. So what I normally do is I will take the 12 months or the six months and then I will look at what needs to happen in that month. And then I will say, okay, in order for me to hit that goal for that month, what needs to happen each week? Okay, now I know what I need to do in week one, two, three, and four. Then what do I need to do in each day of that week of week one? Each day of that week of week two? So, it really is breaking down in a very painful way. Take all the steps possible. But the only thing that prevents procrastination, and the only thing that I've seen really work towards resilience is consistent action.

## **Eric Koester**

Yeah. So, the video that you shared with us that I shared with everyone here about the start of the 'Never settle' show. That story to me is so powerful. Because in some ways, you went out thinking like, all right, there's this particular path I'm going to be on and I'm going to basically get this on networks. And then they told you like, "No, maybe not." And you have to figure

this thing out here. Because a big part of this one is we're borrowing their audience. And here's you. I got to create this audience and make the show happen here. Tell me about that process of saying, all right. I'm gonna do this thing. And take people through the journey from saying, all right, I'm going to think differently to own my own audience, own my own channel and make this happen.

## **Mario Armstrong**

Yeah. I was getting a lot of 'no's and I was already on the Today Show. For some people, they were like, "Oh, Mario! He's made it! He's there." And it's like, no. For that maybe, but not for what he wants to really do, which is to create his own show. So, he's being told 'no'. So I think there's a couple of things that you need to pay attention to. All of us get told 'no'. Everybody gets told 'no'. The issue is how do you listen to it or how do you probe the 'no'. So to me, every no deserves three why's. You have to ask three deeper questions to every 'no'. If someone's giving you a 'no', and then they tell you, "Oh, it's the wrong time", or "Oh, your price is too high", or "Oh, see me next year", or "This isn't what I thought it was, I thought it was. But that doesn't mean that something's wrong with your product. It means that you just haven't hit the right person yet. And you just need the law of averages to work in your favor. So, keep going is what that means. But when someone says something over and over, "The price is too high", "The price is too high", you might need to really look back at your product and really think about maybe tweaking what the price is because you keep hitting this particular challenge. So when we were getting our no's, they were all over the place. So I knew, oh, this doesn't mean the idea is bad. This just means I haven't found the right home yet. But what happens when you start looking for someone else to be your access point to then create something that aligns to help you catapult, you end up hooking your destination or your destiny to someone else. And ultimately, we need to be in charge of our own dreams. Then when people see you in action, they come to help you. So, I'll make the story super quick. We were getting a bunch of 'no's. We decided, you know what? Let's just do this ourselves. Because we'll keep asking people, and they're either going to tell us no or yes. Do we believe in this enough? Then let's just do it ourselves. Well, how do you do that, Mario? I don't know. Let's write it all out, all the things we think are necessary. Let's talk to some people. So, then what I did is I called around to some tech companies that had lobbies that were pretty big. And I said, "Can we use your lobby for a studio space? Because we couldn't afford the \$300,000 studio in New York." And I said, "I'll give you a shout out for your product in the show." And they were like, "Sure, can you be in and out like we

won't even know you were here?" I was like "Perfect, because we shoot our show at 7pm at night. We'll come in, set it up and break it down like you won't even know we were here." So that's what we did. Our first, which by the way, your first model of anything, your first book, your first website, it should not be and it won't be perfect. We are characters that are meant to have evolution. We're supposed to evolve. Nothing's perfect. So, get that out. So I called, they said yes, I shoot my show there. We do six episodes. It goes nuts. People love it. We have a red-carpet experience. I'm having guests like Daymond John get on to this show. It's crazy. It's going crazy. And this is the actual season, a year later that we win the Emmy for. But at the time, at the end of the sixth episode, the show's over. It's all done. I'm now with three of my teammates. And I'm packing up a U-Haul truck. Just two weeks ago, I've been signing autographs, people wanting to come to the show, they're having a ball. They think I'm on this other level. And now I'm packing up the UPS up the U-Haul truck to put the set design stuff in storage. So, it was a really gritty story is what I'm getting at. And what I'm saying to you is at the end of those six episodes, we didn't know what we were going to do next. But then we get a phone call three months later, because someone at NASDAQ said, "We like what we saw what you did. And we want to bring that over to NASDAQ would you be open?" And of course, we didn't say no. We didn't know where we were gonna go. So, thank you. We said, "Yeah, that sounds like a good idea. Let me talk to my team." Oh, my God! Can you believe it? Time Square, New York City in the mecca of it all at NASDAQ. This is crazy. And that's how it all started. But it was only because we decided to actually take our own destiny and build our own credentials and do the work ourselves. And on that note, we had to put up a little bit of money. We went in debt believing in this idea. We paid probably 20% of the budget, but then got sponsorship for the other 80% budget. So whenever you can, keep your day job while you're doing your side hustle as much as you can, until it really is the right time for you to make that transition.

## **Eric Koester**

I mean, it is such an interesting thing to write. Your point about it is that you did have to believe in yourself. But you also had to convince other people, onesies, twosies. How did you get that first set of people to come into the audience there of this unknown show? I mean, you're clearly a guy who exudes passion. What is that direct hustle game that you played to get those first people to believe?

## **Mario Armstrong**

You mean partners and other people to actually believe in the idea?

## **Eric Koester**

Yeah.

## **Mario Armstrong**

Yeah. Being very transparent. Be very realistic about what you think you can accomplish, but push it a little bit further than what you think your reality is. Because that forces you to push yourself and not come up with comfortable goals. And that sounds too easy. And then the other thing is, how can you make something a win for somebody else? I think this is probably something that I overlooked. But that was kind of natural to me is, how do I do a show? And I need videographers, I need staff, I need a producer, I need writers. I need people on that team and I can't pay them a New York rate. So, what was I going to do? Well, then okay. What do you most people that like to produce like to do? They like to have their ideas be heard. So I'm not going to them saying, "Everything's a bait. Here's the document, follow this to the tee. And that's how you work for me." Who wants to work for that, especially when you're saying at a discount? No. You have to really want to listen to people and want to create something that benefits them. I would say to the team, I said, "Look, this is your show. It's not just Mario show." And I would put that over and over and over again, and then mean it. Take the input, allow people to express themselves, incorporate that where you could incorporate that, and really show people how they can get value by hitching themselves. So, here's a question I asked people. Before I hire, I don't care about your skills. The first thing I say is, "What are you passionate about? What do you get excited about? Where are you trying to go in your career right now? What's the most important skill or project or thing you could acquire for yourself right now? What would bring the most value to you in working for someone right now? Because I want to know where your head really is at. Because then what I want to do is, as a leader of the organization, I want to figure out how to make one of my projects actually fit something that is so high on your priority level, that you see beyond the pay check, beyond the transaction, why this is important to you and me taking the time to be empathetic enough to really say, it's not about, 'I need you to fill this hole'. It's about understanding what hole I can fill for you with what I have available.

## **Eric Koester**

Reid Hoffman, the founder of LinkedIn, he always tells people, he has this amazing question. He says, "I want you to do a tour of duty with us for two years. What's the next job you want after this one at LinkedIn?" Which is amazing, right?

## **Mario Armstrong**

That's a great question.

## **Eric Koester**

What skills can I teach you in these two years that will guide you for the next one? And it takes an extreme amount of confidence. But also, what he said is that people now don't leave. Because they know they're gonna keep pushing me to grow, and no one else is going to push me in that way, which is exactly what you said there is like you're always getting trained to building skills for the next job. So, who's going to train you better than where you're working right now?

## **Mario Armstrong**

Yeah. That's a really great point. And I think for those of you that may be more timid. Like, "Oh, man, Mario's got so much energy. He can really talk and all that stuff." For those of you who feel more timid, I think it's not about the energy that I exude. That has something to do with it. But you can get energy from people that know what they're talking about without all the rah-rah. In fact, in some cases, the rah-rah can make you look almost too salesy. Almost like, "Yeah, I don't know. That guy's really down to earth", or "He's on cloud nine with this idea. He talks a big game", type of thing. What really is important is that you understand why you are passionate about the thing you're passionate about. That to me, supersedes everything. Because then your energy is natural. Don't try to talk the way you think they want you to talk. Don't try to present the way you think they want you to present. Be authentically you. Because when you are it makes it so much easier for you to just naturally be passionate about what it is. Even without all the crazy excitement and the bells and whistles. People don't need that. What they need to really feel is the sincerity. I say right now, vulnerability is the new currency.

And so, what I'm asking you to do is get more vulnerable with maybe being uncomfortable talking on video. Okay, then why not turn off the video and send it as an audio pitch? You don't have to be on video. But it would be great for me to hear it in your voice as opposed to hearing it in your email. So, I went through tactics like that to try to get people to hear what it is I'm trying to get them to be a part of, as opposed to reading about what it is I'm trying to have them be a part of.

**Eric Koester**

Awesome. So, you've been super gracious your time. I got one more question. Then we're gonna do our little group photo here. Because, again, you've been so great. And just so you know, too, the group of students here, we do something fun where they're gonna send you their books when they're done. All the books that you've inspired.

**Mario Armstrong**

Are you kidding me? I got a whole shelf. I'm ready.

**Eric Koester**

You're gonna be getting lots of books.

**Mario Armstrong**

I'm ready for it.

**Eric Koester**

You're gonna need to fill some more shells here. We might have to move some down if we're not careful here.

**Mario Armstrong**

It's so amazing what you're doing for these students. Students, some of you that are on the fence about what Eric's methods are, I don't know Eric. I just met him. But the research that I did on Eric and the research that I did on what

he's doing and watching that video about how he's talking about, what he's trying to do to help you move the meter for yourself, family, you guys have to understand something. This is mind blowing to me, because this is exactly what I did 10 years ago, and it's changed my life. And if you can accelerate what I did intend by taking this course, and whether or not it happens in the first three months, six months, or three years, the point is, this process is absolutely going to change your life. And it's proof because I just also got a book from a friend. I'm sorry, I'm going off on a tangent, but I feel compelled to share this. I just got a book from a friend. And it's called, 'We Wear Kicks To Work'. It's when pop culture meets leadership and education. So, these two guys are about leadership and education and how education needs to change. But they love wearing kicks. Whether they're in suits or not, they'll wear kicks. And they found that that was the thing that connects them to students when they could start talking about Air Jordans and different shoes that are coming out. And other educators were like, "I don't get why you're doing that, blah, blah." He wrote a book. And the book is literally 101 pages. I am so into this book. I'm on page 50 and can't put it down. Because all he's talking about is what he's been seeing in the educational system, what he's been trying to deliver to the educational system, and also what he's learning along the way. He's not an expert in the educational system.

### **Eric Koester**

Me neither.

### **Mario Armstrong**

Now writing a book, documenting the process of him learning about what he's doing. And so when I see this, I'm like, oh damn, his credentials just went up. He's on Amazon, the book is actually selling, educators are now picking it up. You think he's going to get more gigs? You think he's going to get a TV segment? You think so? It's going to happen. So, what I'm hearing you do for your students, I don't care what your passion is. From fishing to AI. I like the fact that you're getting students to actually create a finished tangible product that they can be proud of, that shows people their commitment. It shows your future hires, your future bosses, your future partners, your future investors, your future collaborators. It shows them your commitment, no matter what it is. So many people want to do a book and haven't done one and you'll be able to say you did. That's crazy to me, dude.

## **Eric Koester**

You're exactly right, though. When you were telling your story and saying, this is what people should be doing and everyone in life. Every one of us needs to create. And what I like about you is, I always say this all the time before we met. You got to create your own demo reel. And you did that! You've created your own demo reel. And whatever that thing is, your demo reel is super powerful and however it is. That's the thing. And I always tell people, unless you have proof of it, you probably didn't learn it.

## **Mario Armstrong**

It didn't happen. Yup.

## **Eric Koester**

You know, AM radio at 12:30 every day or every Thursday is your proof of it. Like today, it builds. It compounds.

## **Mario Armstrong**

It's so true. Just believe in yourself. Find supportive people. Reach out to me on Instagram. This is what I do, just because this is what I do and what I love to do. So if any of you are in this class and you need someone else to be a support system or outside of Eric and any of the other advisors, I may go a little bit extra in how I offer myself up. Because unfortunately only a small percentage always come through. So, this is also a challenge to see how many of 158 participants in here, my guess is that five to six people will actually hit me up. But on Instagram, I mentor all the time in the DM. If you follow me @mariormstrong, if you ask me any questions, I will actually reply. Give me a day or two, but I will actually reply. And it may be by voice, it may be by video, maybe by text, but if you're stuck on something or just need some other encouragement. Because that's the thing, Eric. To hold yourself accountable is tough in and of itself. And then you do it under social injustice, you do it under COVID, you do it under job loss, you do it under all this other conflict that happens around us, but it affects us, you start to really need an accountability partner. So, please whether that's me or someone else that you can identify with and meet with once a week to say, "Hey, how are you coming? How are you going? What did you win?" I do what's called a 'three wins' exercise every single Sunday with my family and friends. I'll get on the

phone or I'll hop on zoom every Sunday. And I'm like, "What did you win at this week?" And it doesn't need to be, "I won an Emmy." It can just be, "I got five pages done in my book" or "I actually figured out what it is I think I'm going to work on", or "I got this email response that I didn't think was gonna happen", or "I had this great call with a friend that I haven't talked to in a while." You just need to remind yourself about the wins that you're having. Because we have them but we're so wired to know what we didn't win at that we beat ourselves down and then the inner critic really starts to work at us. And that self-doubt starts to kick in. So, you got to have these systems. See I'm getting into the neuroscience of it all but you got to get into the systems that support you. And so whatever Eric is sharing with you, I can already tell he's giving you people, tactics, advice and topics and things to help support you. But if I can be of any support outside of the classroom, please don't hesitate to reach out to me on IG.

### **Eric Koester**

You are the man, I have to say. Well, let's do our group photo here. Because you've been so kind here. We always like to do this one. So, let's put cameras on everyone here and let's get our group photo here with Mario. Again, Mario I want to say thank you so much on behalf of everyone here.

### **Mario Armstrong**

I'm going to stretch this. I want you to do the same.

### **Eric Koester**

You're gonna just get a photo here, but we'll get a photo so everyone can see it here. And I will tell you, Mario, part of our big goal here is we want to make sure that we have this incredibly diverse group of authors, first time authors. And if you knew this, but less than 20% of children's authors we know are people of color and women. And so, we need to flip the ratio here across all books. There's not enough diversity in authorship today. And so this is our attempt here to do it. We got some amazing people in this community for sure.

### **Mario Armstrong**

Oh, man. I see Mike, Jennifer, Lianne, Madeline, Ingrid. Man, El, Jeff, Deb, Finch, Shira, Jacob, this is packed. Nate, what's up? Luna, Dino, Carlos, Mary, what's up?

**Eric Koester**

We appreciate it. So, what do you want us to do? Like we always do something fun that we can have.

**Mario Armstrong**

Like a pose or something?

**Eric Koester**

Yeah, like a pose. So, is there a pose that you wants us to do here?

**Mario Armstrong**

I want everybody to go into whatever their favorite superhero pose is. Whatever empowers you. You think superhero, what do you do? I'm gonna go straight into a superhero pose. Whatever that is. I like what Robert is doing. Robert is doing some telepathic thing. Robert, that was cool. He was like this. He was doing some telepathic thing. How long do we hold this pose? How does this work?

**Eric Koester**

Now we've got it. I can take a screen grab, whatever. So, I think we're good.

**Mario Armstrong**

Oh, wait, did you take the picture while we're doing the pose?

**Eric Koester**

I did. Yeah, of course.

**Mario Armstrong**

Oh, okay.

**Eric Koester**

I mean, I tried anyways. We'll see how good I am.

**Mario Armstrong**

All right, that's great. Do we have time for questions from the students or no?

**Eric Koester**

Absolutely. Anybody wants to drop a question in or have a question here. As long as you're getting to hang out, we'll hang out.

**Mario Armstrong**

Man. Are you kidding me? This is what it's all about.

**Eric Koester**

So anyone want to drop a question and want to give with the first question here anyone? Who wants to be the break the ice here?

**Medina**

I have one.

**Eric Koester**

Yes. Let's hear it.

**Medina**

Hi, Mario. How are you? My name is Medina. It looks like Modonna, but it's pronounced Medina.

**Mario Armstrong**

Okay. Hi, Medina.

**Medina**

I'm actually in Baltimore. So the book that I intend to write right now, the working title is everyone is lying about college. And the idea behind the book is that there a lot of misconceptions that we will have about what the college experience is going to look like. So when Eric was talking to us a little bit about you, and I think you mentioned on that but you didn't finish. What is something that you thought about college that once you started that experience, you realize was completely untrue?

**Mario Armstrong**

I thought that going to college would guarantee me a career.

**Medina**

It's like the number one.

**Mario Armstrong**

And the next one I thought going to college would accelerate my possibilities and opportunities. And then I think the last one would be I thought that by going to college, I could make other people proud, but not myself.

**Medina**

Thank you.

**Mario Armstrong**

That's doing it for the wrong reason at a certain point.

**Medina**

That is extremely helpful. Thank you.

**Mario Armstrong**

You're welcome. Great question. I can't wait to read that book. That sounds really nice.

**Medina**

I'll autograph it just for you.

**Mario Armstrong**

Yes, please. I like what you're thinking already. Autographing. Yeah, like that.

**Aaron Brooks**

I got one. Aaron Brooks.

**Eric Koester**

All right. Let's hear it.

**Aaron Brooks**

Me? Aaron?

**Eric Koester**

Yeah.

**Aaron Brooks**

Hey, Mario. How are you? Good to meet you. I just sent you a LinkedIn connection.

**Mario Armstrong**

Okay. Well, I'll look for that. Thank you.

### **Aaron Brooks**

Yeah, I was inspired to do that. I'm writing a book about sincerity. Sincerity, the roadmap to living your best personal and professional life. Man, thank you. I just want to thank you sincerely, for what you've had to say. Because it seems to me like a very little of what you have accomplished would have been possible without sincerity and authenticity and trust and all the things that I think are just imperative. I'm wondering if there's any particular stories that you might tell where without that sincerity and passion, those things would just not have been able to happen for you. And that might be difficult for you just given that I know that it just comes from within your heart and your soul. But I'm wondering if there's anything that might jump to mind.

### **Mario Armstrong**

Yeah. Aaron, great question. Great topic. It's a word much like empathy that's lost. So, I love this word 'Sincerity'. Because really what you're asking people to do is dig deeper into themselves in order to really get to the truth. Because you can sugar coat your pitch or your proposal, your idea, but people will always get the truth out of you, whether it's from your nonverbal communication or some other way. So, sincerity is more than just saying it. It's the moves you make, your character that you are, the person you're developing. And so, it's like integrity over income. I just think that every project that I did, I was sincere in that moment about what it was I was trying to accomplish. The only thing I think, being honest, that I had to work on was selfishness. I started off things selfishly. I thought that I was the one that have to make it happen. I thought that it was my idea and I had to go that way. And I learned early on that that was like a recipe for self-destruction. But all of my stories were sincere. So, it is hard for me to figure out one that wasn't. What I will say is, the hardest thing about being sincere is that it hurts. Be prepared for the hurt because you're looking for other people to respect and appreciate your sincerity. When you put yourself out there and you're sincere about it and people that you thought would be there to support or look out for you aren't, it can do one of two things. It can really let you know that they just don't understand what you're trying to accomplish and maybe they'll come back around or that you just need to move on and find out a different route. But what most people might start doing though is they start actually cheating themselves. Because they think that's a sincerity is what's actually getting in

the way of their success. So now they want to try to shortcut sincerity and do it a different way that's not being truthful. And so that's the thing that I really get fearful about with people that haven't had success yet with being sincere. But I think we're at a place in our country and in our culture, where authenticity and transparency are becoming more comfortable. I'll go on IG live. I'll say things and I still to this day will get a phone call from my dad, "Why are you sharing about that loss that you had when that contract? Why would you tell people that you didn't win that contract? And why are you getting teary eyed about why you didn't get it?" And I'm like, "Dad, it's not about me. And I get it. Your generation or you may not, but vulnerability with sincerity actually matters." So, I hope that wasn't too long of an answer. I love the deepness of this book.

### **Aaron Brooks**

No. Mario, man. I'll tell you, thank you. If you have a little bit of time, I'd love to spend some. Because I'd love to dig into some of this with you. This is why I'm doing this. You are why I'm writing this book.

### **Mario Armstrong**

Dude, if I can be a part of the book or help or something I'm in. So yes, I'll follow up on your LinkedIn. Done.

### **Aaron Brooks**

Thank you, Eric for putting this together. You get better and better every time, man.

### **Eric Koester**

We told Jason Mayden that one. I don't know, Mario. You raised the bar, I guess here. Michael King from Towson is here.

### **Mario Armstrong**

Hey, what's up?

### **Michael King**

Hey, what's up Mario? Yeah, it's been a while man since the DJ and the parties you won't be seeing in Towson.

### **Mario Armstrong**

Yeah, I was gonna say. You probably know.

### **Michael King**

Yeah, you know. So I had a question for you, man. How do you deal with setbacks?

### **Mario Armstrong**

The setbacks are tough. I just had one the other day where something that I was really banking on that I was going to work on with Daymond John. And I can say this, because he's comfortable with me saying it. But it's not gonna work out the way I envisioned it. And it was a pretty major setback, because of the amount of time and energy that was already put into an idea that now has to get reworked. And it's not his fault, but it's just some changes in the structure. So we have to now come back at it again. And I have to try to figure out how to make it work under these new different parameters that he now has on him. And so for me, it's a couple of tactics. Whatever works for you, lean into it. But for me, number one is not trying to blow past the emotion of actually dealing with the fact that you just felt you got kicked in the chest. Like actually feeling that you just got knocked down. It's okay. Like, man, I feel like I just got knocked down. Not in the whole hype of that just get back up. You can run right through it. No, you can't right now. Right now, you can't even begin to think past the fact that you got your chest caved in. And so, owning up to that moment and just allowing that to be present so that you can feel that and just understand it. Then I want you to do it. Don't sit in this for months, don't sit in this for weeks. Recognize the hit. But then what I want you to do is quickly think of any other time in your life when you got kicked in the chest. And there's been several. And I want you to think about those. The ones that you got kicked in the chest that you overcome. I don't care. Dude, I go back to when I was 14. When this stuff happens to me, I actually channel a moment when I was 14 years old, playing in Pikesville rec league and I ended up hitting this game winning shot. And at the buzzer and everything, and the team in the stands went crazy. And I just remember getting picked up. And I was 14. And I still use that today to remind me that you did win. I was told I

could never play basketball. I was too short was too thin, not strong enough, couldn't shoot well. All I could do is really dribble and see the court. So, I was never picked up. I was always the last one to be picked up on the side-lines to be put onto a game. So, I had all these no's all the time. But now more recently, I can look back to smaller things that are significant. This is why I tell people to do tangible affirmations. Because these pair of shoes, I couldn't wear for two years until I got my first talk show, until we got that show that Eric and I were discussing, then I could wear these shoes. It took me two years to build that show. But here's the thing. Every time I get with some self-doubt, I go and write for these shoes now. Because I go, damn I remember when everyone told us no and we couldn't do the show. And I got the shoes to prove it. I now use these tangible affirmations as reminders of winning. So basically, all of that to say, however you want to make the hack work for you, the issue is you really want to rechannel a moment in your life that you did overcome. And you really want to close your eyes and absorb that full moment, the emotion, the sense, who was there, what do you see. Really embody that to try to shift your mindset. And the other thing you need and look this up, it's called a pattern interrupt. And if you look it up on google, pattern interrupt is basically completely interrupting whatever pattern you're dealing with at that moment. And it forces you to change the environment around you or within you. So for me, it could be a motivational playlist that I'll play. That's a simple tactic. Sometimes that can get me out of it. When it gets really, really tough, especially in quarantine and in these COVID times, I'll go and take a shower at two o'clock in the afternoon if my day is going bad. And I'll change clothes. I restart. I reboot the day. So the point is you have some tools that you can do to choose. You have a choice to whether you really want to sit in it and sulk in it or if you want to absorb it, understand it and then do something about it. There are so many different ways to make progress on it.

### **Eric Koester**

You got time for one more Mario at least?

### **Mario Armstrong**

Yeah, I'm sorry. I would love to answer more. I'm just going too long winded. I should make them short.

### **Eric Koester**

No, you're doing great. Jeff Shafer has got our next one. You want to give us a question, Jeff?

**Jeff Shafer**

Certainly.

**Mario Armstrong**

All right, Jeff. Hold on one second. I just saw Anna said, "I thought I was alone with the shower forced reset." Anna, we're alike. The forced shower reset is genius to me. It completely works. I'm sorry. Go ahead.

**Jeff Shafer**

No problem. I just wanted to say thank you so much, Mario, for coming and speaking with us. This has been so energizing and so refreshing. My book is called 'Black excellence journeys of success'. And I'm really just going through sharing the stories of a number of black people from various professions, various backgrounds, about how they've overcome difficulty and challenges in their lives. And using this as a platform to educate, inspire and inform other people. But the question that I had for you was, how did you develop the courage to be vulnerable? You spoke about vulnerability being the new currency. So in your own life, how did you develop because it takes courage in order to really authentically be vulnerable?

**Mario Armstrong**

Great question. I'm going to answer that but I also want to say this and I don't wanna forget. If any of you are doing interview-based books when you're going to be talking to people, I would challenge you to also make sure that you're recording those either in audio at a minimum or at best with video.

**Eric Koester**

We teach it, Mario. Don't you worry. We teach it.

**Mario Armstrong**

Okay, fantastic.

## **Eric Koester**

We use Otter. Otter is a way to not only record it but also transcribe it.

## **Mario Armstrong**

Oh, yes. Oh, man, that's my go to. Absolutely. Because then it's done. You not only get the audio but you get the text and now you just have to edit text. Yeah, it's great. To answer that question which is a beautiful question, everybody's level of courage is at a different state. Depending on your background, what you've been exposed to, how you've been treated. So, what works for me may not work for others. But whatever works for you, the point is to take some steps. So the way that I think you can help develop more vulnerability or more courage is finding something small that is a little uncomfortable for you to talk about, and start talking about it. So maybe you don't want to tell someone that you're diabetic. And that's a big thing. And maybe that's a lot of vulnerability, you don't want people to know that. So just tell people how you're having some challenges with your eating habits or your diet or your blood sugar levels. Notice, I'm not saying anything about being having being diabetic or diabetes, but it's getting you more comfortable. Because what you find is that if you can start taking small steps into the thing that makes you uncomfortable, first and foremost, growth people, does not happen. You're in this class. You want to grow. So in order to do that, please do yourself a service. Stretch, because you cannot grow if you are not uncomfortable. If you're not uncomfortable, there just is no growth. Just fess up. Just like, Yo, I'm just going to be complacent in life. And that's just who I want to be. And that's fine, if that's really what you desire to be. But don't have ambitions, and then not match it with actions. And that requires courage. And that requires trying, and that requires risk. So to answer the question, I would say, talk about something very miniscule that makes you uncomfortable. It may be something you've been bullied about, maybe something that you were bullied as a kid. And then once you start having that conversation, what you're gonna find is that so many people start coming out of the woodwork saying, "I had that same problem", or "My cousin had that issue", or "I got a brother that deals with the same thing". Here's what they found worked for them. So, find something that makes you still feel a little safe to talk about, but yet makes you still feel uncomfortable to talk about. And you'll realize that people are more embracing than adversarial to you. And then you'll start to lean into it

more. And I would try doing it with some friends. And I would also try maybe just going live. Going live maybe on Facebook or Instagram. Has anybody else had this kind of issue? Like you kind of throw it out. Has anybody else dealing with this thing? So, you throw it out to start a dialogue and a discussion. You'll realize how many other people start jumping on that wagon with you. And it makes it easier.

**Jeff Shafer**

Thank you so much.

**Eric Koester**

You got time for one more? How many more we got for you? Two more?

**Mario Armstrong**

Yeah. I'm good.

**Eric Koester**

All right, Melissa. How about you, Melissa? Next, you can give us your question here, Melissa.

**Melissa**

Hi, Mario. Thank you so much for this talk, and apologies that my camera is off. The internet is really weak here today.

**Mario Armstrong**

It's quite all right.

**Melissa**

I was curious and you address this a little bit in the last question. But how do you create boundaries between your public persona and your personal life?

And as you become braver and more courageous with sharing, how have you navigated what those boundaries are for you?

### **Mario Armstrong**

Beautiful question. When you live in your purpose, it's so much easier for you to not have to worry so much about boundaries. And don't take this the wrong way, but when we're a little bit more driven by our ego, or when we're a little bit more driven by our self-esteem, then we create these boundaries, even subconsciously of what we won't go into. And so, if we can remind ourselves that you're here for a purpose. And the purpose isn't just for you, that each and every last one of you on this call has a gift. Whether you want to acknowledge it's up to you, but you have a gift and a talent. Sometimes we want to ignore it. We don't answer the purpose that's calling for us. But if you can answer the purpose that's calling for you, you end up finding yourself more aligned with your true purpose. And when you do, you start to notice that the boundaries disintegrate. So there are certain boundaries of certain things like, maybe I won't go into super details about something that's challenging in my marriage. But at the same token, maybe I will. Because I'll talk to my wife and I'll say, "Hey, honey. We're working through this thing. Is it okay if I talk about this? Because I think it could also help other people. So, I don't believe in work life balance. I believe that life is a continuum, and that there are moments when you're working and there are moments when you're just doing life, whatever that may be outside of working. But if you're always present, you're always in the moment that you're in. So, there is no real balance. It's just what are you balancing in that moment that you're in. And that's a hard place to try to get to. But I think that that's really helped me not have as many guardrails. But at the same time, not just be a loose cannon by sharing everything. That's not the point. The point to me is I think the guardrails help to get this integrated when you identify something that may be painful to you, that's valuable to someone else. And then you realize that your role is bigger than your pain. And when you realize that your role is bigger than your pain, it starts to make it easier for you to actually talk in a way where those boundaries don't hold you back from sharing. I hope that helps.

### **Eric Koester**

Great. All right. Well, our last question here. Nate Jones is going to bring us home here. And we'll let you get on with your balance of life here.

## **Mario Armstrong**

Yeah. That's why right now, I'm not thinking about what I got coming up at 06:30. And the thoughts will pop up. I'm not not human. The thoughts will pop up. I wonder what Nicole is going to have for dinner. I think she said something about tacos. Shut up. You're in a Georgetown class right now. Focus! So it happens, but you got to constantly bring yourself and think back to the present, and really understand that your gift and your service is bigger than you. And when you do that, I think you'll get more comfortable with just sharing.

## **Eric Koester**

I love it. Nate, bring it on.

## **Nate Jones**

All right, Mario. Thank you so much for everything you've said. I've been really feeling your energy. And I'm that same sort of person. I'm a professional musician. And I'm writing a book that is basically a book of my songs where each chapter will begin with a song title and then the lyrics to the song. And then people will have the opportunity to go find me online and listen to the song at each chapter. The chapter itself will be stories, anecdotes, memoirs, philosophy from my life and things that I've experienced and trying to tie together everything I've experienced.

## **Mario Armstrong**

Is it relevant to the song as well? Like here's why I wrote this song, or here's what this song was about, or what was going through me at the time and all of that context goes with it?

## **Nate Jones**

Absolutely.

## **Mario Armstrong**

That's beautiful, man. It's dope. That's hot.

## **Nate Jones**

Thank you. It's an idea that came to me because I feel like the music industry has taken a huge hit with COVID. And I'm really curious to explore the intersection of literature and music and how so many musicians like me consider themselves poets. But it's like, I'm not like Walt Whitman. I'm not going to release 'Leaves of Grass' or something. So I would like to reach those people and present my song as poetry, but then someone has the chance to look into me if they feel that I've delivered them enough value with the song. So, I'm dealing with some pretty big imposter syndrome. Because last year, the first song I ever put out, was voted on to the official Grammy ballot for two Grammy Awards.

## **Mario Armstrong**

Holy, this is the most beautiful thing, dude. This is what we mean. This is what Eric is saying. Take action, because every action creates a positive or negative reaction. Every action you take, you will have some kind of reaction to it. Okay, so what's the imposter syndrome? You don't feel like you're worthy of the Grammy even though you've been nominated?

## **Nate Jones**

Well, so what it is, I guess my imposter syndrome comes from knowing that I want to help usher in what I call the psychedelic renaissance that's going on in our world where people are taking back their consciousness. And I believe music is a conscious activity. Not everyone has the privilege of, say, going on a plant medicine retreat or a mindfulness community. Some people, as you said, are dealing with a lot of things. So basically, how can I present myself as an authority on the subject of music, mindfulness, conscious evolution, without turning people off to say, "Oh, this guy just had luck or he's got white privilege or he's got different things." Because I've had my share of setbacks. But I'm ready to level up and take my message to the world. But there's that fear of criticism or that fear of rebuke when you put your ideas.

## **Mario Armstrong**

Dude, I love the rawness of this question. This is going to help so many people. And this is so big. Let me just say this first and foremost. Number one,

beautiful idea. I love this, you have to continue to push forward no matter what anybody else says. Number two, when your intent is in the right place, everybody else's opinions are irrelevant. I need you to put that in your phone as an alarm and you read those three times a day. When your intent is in the right place, everyone else's opinions are irrelevant. Because it's true. Especially when you're trying to do something that's not about how do I capitalize. Although it's fine for capital and concern to be in the same bucket. You can be compassionate and still have currency. It's fine. But you're too worried about what other people will say. We are in a society where we are addicted to other people's validation. We have an addiction to validation. And it takes different moments for us to break free of that. And what I want you to do is start really working on that by reminding yourself that you are coming at this from a really great place of positive intent and constantly coming back to your center, which is that 'why'. And as long as you keep coming back to that, the people, the voices and the noise and all that stuff doesn't matter. Because what you start doing is you start radiating energy that will bring you the people that need to come to you. And by the way, if you're doing something that's really powerful, you're going to have detractors that don't agree and don't understand it. And then you're going to have a bunch of people that do agree and understand it. Your job isn't to try to convince the detractors, even though I know that's what we want to do. You want to try to reach and eventually you will. But you never will, if you hook your validation on to them or you allow them to take you off of your mission and off your direction and off your path. So please just stay with good intent like the sincerity that was brought up earlier. Stay with that authenticity. And then the only other thing that I would suggest for people with imposter syndrome is a lot of times you're dealing with the fact, well, I'm not an expert. So, how can I talk on this? Here's what you do. You don't try to be the expert. You document what you're doing as you're learning to become the expert. You understand the difference? The difference is, instead of me trying to say, "I know this will work for you, because I have 20 years' experience and 10 years' experience", you can truthfully say, "I really don't know. But here's what I'm studying. Here's what I'm finding out. Here's what I'm uncovering", and being a little bit more truthful in the documentation of your process as opposed to trying to convince someone that you have the process.

## **Nate Jones**

Okay. What you said reminds me of this author, Jen Sincero. She's the author of the badass series. And she wrote the book, 'You are a badass' while she was still moving out of this shack, basically, that she was living in. And it was

about her growth rather than like, "Hey, I'm a life coach, here's how you fix your life."

### **Mario Armstrong**

That's exactly it. A chef that really wants to start to get classes and do other things. But they have no experience as a chef, they haven't been in a restaurant before. But they can cook their butt off and their family loves their recipes and all that stuff. That chef just needs to turn on the camera and just start saying, "I'm trying out some recipes. This is what it is. I'm trying, I'm growing, I'm developing, I'm learning, I'm studying." These are the words that you say that tell people that you are committed to an area, but an area that you may not yet be an expert in. But because you're saying I'm committed, I'm studying, I've researched, when you start doing that more evidence-based documenting style with what you're doing, you get more credibility to follow you along the way. Because you're not just spitting stuff. You're actually also backing that up with some evidence.

### **Nate Jones**

Absolutely. Thank you. My question to you which at this point, it'll probably be super brief, Mario. I love that story from when you were 14 with the buzzer beat. For me, I'm in my studio right now. Over my recording unit, I have this picture of Abbey Road. Because I'm on the ballot with Paul McCartney. I use that to remind myself like, hey, you're on the Grammy battle with Paul McCartney. Maybe you should take yourself more seriously. Do you have a way that you just shake out that imposter syndrome that really reliably works for you?

### **Mario Armstrong**

That's a great hack. Visualization is usually the best thing for me. Just visualizing a previous win, a previous accomplishment or something that was very challenging that I did overcome. It doesn't matter if it's in the same field or not. Just something that reminds me that I was able to overcome a significant challenge in my life proves that I am in the spot that I'm supposed to be in at this point, and that I will overcome any challenges I'm currently facing. Cornell University did this study. 85% of the things that we worry about, 85% do not come true. So, we spend a lot of time in our heads and in our thoughts about things that won't even happen. For the 15% that it does come true, that's the

worst-case scenario. And by the way, when we think about something not happening, we go to the worst-case scenario of it. We don't go to what's a small thing about it that might not happen. We go straight to the cliff edge of what could possibly go wrong. Out of those 15% where they say it actually did come true, 79% of them realize that they had enough resilience to get past it. 79% of the people that ended up having their worst thing manifest found out that they actually had the resilience to be able to get past it, or that they learned an incredible lesson from it. So, don't worry about others. Don't worry about the validation. Worry about what you can do to bring you back. And to me, it sounds like you're super passionate about your story, and about why you're doing it. And you're doing this for other musicians, and you're doing this for the culture, and you're doing this for mental health. And you're doing this for so many other reasons, that you don't have the time to actually be selfish enough to actually give a damn about what somebody has to say about you, Nate. You're just not that important, dude. But you are. You understand what I'm saying? Don't allow your ego to make you feel like you're so important that it actually matters what other people think. Constantly put yourself back into the importance of the work, and what you want to have. That's it, my friend.

### **Nate Jones**

Cool. Thank you so much.

### **Eric Koester**

Mario, you are the man. You should teach this class, honestly. I got work to do now, my friend.

### **Mario Armstrong**

I want to team up with you. When I started doing research on what you were doing, Eric, I said, this is amazing what you've unlocked, my friend. You are really changing the trajectory. And the fact that you actually cared as a teacher and a quasi-teacher. Like I'm not a teacher. I'm telling this professor; I'm going to leave. And you're like, you can. And then you're like, but I'm not moving the meter. Like, I got two entrepreneurs out of a whole semester that happened. This isn't doing anything. And to really take the care to rework how your energy was going to be used and what experiences you can lean on. Guys, if you haven't researched enough of Eric's story, it makes sense because I think researching his story gives you more understanding of your own story.

Because what he's doing is something that is so impactful and different. It really is going to dramatically change some outcomes for many of you.

**Eric Koester**

I appreciate it, man. Go have your tacos. You've spent some time with us. We appreciate it. Expect a bunch of books to start coming your way. We've got some coming out in December, some in April and August. We're gonna fill up some shelves behind you with the magic you're hearing.

**Mario Armstrong**

Here's the thing. I'll one up this. I'll put this on anybody. I'm looking to see if anybody's following. Anna followed me. Hangry Nelly followed me. Thank you. So yeah, make sure you DM me. If you were in this class, just send me a DM that you were in this class. Because then what I could do is I could even put you into my own little IG DM group. How about that? I'll make my own little Georgetown DM group so I can keep tabs on you people and your books. But here's the deal. Eric, when these books are done, remind me that I promise this that I will post at least a story on my IG feed for every single book that I get.

**Eric Koester**

Oh, I love this.

**Mario Armstrong**

Just to help. Just to try to get more activity out there for them.

**Eric Koester**

You, my friend are good people in so many different ways. And we love you. We appreciate you. Thank you so much for doing this.

**Mario Armstrong**

I can't thank you for thanking me, man. Really, this does a lot for me too. Trust me, when I get to see that people really care about themselves, this really helps me. So, I appreciate it.

**Eric Koester**

And you also said something really powerful here that you are working on a book here. So we can help with your book here. Who's gonna be helping you with this book here?

**Mario Armstrong**

And I need some help to be honest.

**Eric Koester**

Don't you worry. I'm there. I know a guy.

**Mario Armstrong**

That's great. That's awesome. Look forward to that man. I want to put on these damn shoes. These are really flat shoes that I cannot wear yet and I really want to put these on.

**Eric Koester**

Here's what we're gonna do. You got to tell me where they are so I can get a matching pair. So when you take those shoes out, I'm coming to wear them with you.

**Mario Armstrong**

You know what? Done.

**Eric Koester**

I'm in.

## **Mario Armstrong**

I appreciate that. Oh, how can I find you on Instagram? @marioarmstrong is my account. And we're also on YouTube. 'Never Settle show' if you want to search for any videos on YouTube. I also have a podcast that's called 'Wake Up and Level Up'. You can go to [wakeupandlevelup.com](http://wakeupandlevelup.com). And it's really short. It's not like these long hours, it's three minutes a day just to get you focused on one thing to jumpstart your day. But I also do that same podcast in audio form in video on Instagram. So that's why I kind of try to push. So, if you really care or if you really want to connect with me turn on your notification so that the algorithm knows that you really want my stuff and engage with it and I engage back. I just really appreciate everything that you all are working on. I know it's not the easiest, but nothing easy was ever worth it. So, keep going. Don't give up. And you got your boy right here hanging in the wind anytime you need a six man to come out onto the squad and help you with anything you're working on.

## **Eric Koester**

Never Settle. That's the word to live by, right?

## **Mario Armstrong**

Yes. It is, Eric. Yes, it is my friend.

## **Eric Koester**

Thank you, Mario. Thanks, everyone for hanging out here. We'll see you guys all this week in our sessions together. Mario, you've kicked off the week with the bang.

## **Mario Armstrong**

Yes, I appreciate that. Good to know my energy was used in a great way. You all, have a wonderful week. I'll talk to you all soon. Take care.

## **Eric Koester**

Bye, guys.