Fluorescent blue – grit

Fluorescent Yellow - grit and flow and meditation

Grey – flow

Army green – leadership

Fluorescent green - meditation

# M2.mp3

**M2:** [00:00:25] It's frustrating. How is your research going gathering here?

**BB:** [00:00:30] I've got some meditators, non meditators, but many teachers are very hard connecting with meditation centers and talking to their owners. So let's see how it goes. Till now, only two.

**M2:** [00:00:51] But they have to be working full time, though so not yoga teachers.

**BB:** [00:00:55] I can do yoga teachers if they're working full time and they're doing yoga. Yeah. Yeah. That's okay. But they're full time yoga teachers. Well, yeah. Because that's their profession.

**M2:** [00:01:13] Yeah. That's a profession. Okay. Okay. Well in that case I can put the word out.

**BB:** [00:01:17] Okay. Thank you.

**M2:** [00:01:18] Yeah. Some yoga teacher friends of mine.

**BB:** [00:01:20] OK, good. That's great. All right. So we begin with I have a few things here which you would tick for yourself. But before that, let's start with your age.

**M2:** [00:01:33] 52.

[00:01:34] Oh, really? You don't look back.

**M2:** [00:01:39] Couple, two weeks ago.

[00:01:41] Okay. Happy belated. Happy birthday. Second, is in this organization, I have seen that your signature is that of manager. So who do you report to and how many members do you have in your team?

[00:01:57] So I report to the head of product and portfolio. Okay. The head of the university side of the business and direct reports. I don't have any I mean, recruitment at the moment, but indirect reports, a lot. Maybe eight.

[00:02:19] Okay. Because yours is a horizontal role.

**M2:** [00:02:21] Yes, that's right. And it's good. It's a weird setup. Even I report to someone who I don't work with. So it's a very strange. It's a very flat structure with indirect reporting. Yeah. So in that area it's very strange. Which is why my direct reports is technically zero. But there's a lot of people for whom I'm an approver. For example. So. Yeah.

[00:02:44] And but you are having a few recruitments happening now. So then you will be having.

**M2:** [00:02:50] Absolutely. Yeah. Right.

**BB:** [00:02:52] So how many will there be?

[00:02:52] There'll be two new ones again.

**BB:** [00:02:55] Are they going to be grads. Business grads or lateral hires?

**M2:** [00:02:57] No. No. They will be lateral hires. Yeah. They'll be experienced professionals. Hopefully so.

**BB:** [00:03:09] So you're in for a promotion.

**M2:** [00:03:12] That's the plan.

**BB:** [00:03:13] Yeah. Okay. So that's another part. And could you give me a little bit of your personal life?

[00:03:22] Yeah. So. Married. No children. Okay. With a cat.

**BB:** [00:03:29] Thats a child

**M2:** [00:03:29] Husband's a child too. Obviously work full time, part time PhD student. And I teach yoga twice a week.

**BB:** [00:03:43] So that makes you a meditator. I think you had how many times a week you need to meditate 20 minutes per day if possible. So roughly how much does it come to average?

**M2:** [00:04:00] That would average out at that rate. Yeah. So during the week, you know, I might miss a day here and there. But then the weekends might be more so. Yeah, I would average out 20 minutes and I would be doing it on private practice. So I take classes and I do my personal practices. Yeah. So I squeeze it all in so I have no spare time.

**BB:** [00:04:21] Oh. No one has.

**M2:** [00:04:23] Not when you are studying.

**BB:** [00:04:26] Even if you're not studying. No one has time.

**M2:** [00:04:27] Exactly.

[00:04:29] So when you came in to this interview, what were you thinking?

[00:04:36] Oh gosh. About the interview. Just life in general.

**BB:** [00:04:41] What were you thinking?

**M2:** [00:04:42] What was I thinking when I came? That's a good question. I was thinking. Wow, is it that time already? In this day? And I was thinking, oh, my God. Of course, so many things I need to get done. But it's been a day.

[00:04:59] Where were you?

[00:04:59] Where was I? I was at my desk.

[00:05:03] Ok. And what does the main thing that you were doing?

[00:05:07] Literally, I was typing an email. I was writing an email. OK. And then I went, oh. Then you called and said, You here? And I was like, oh, my God, at the time already. Okay.

[00:05:20] Okay. So I think I got the answer to the next question. . How well were you concentrating?

**M2:** [00:05:27] Probably not. Well, because I was thinking of about five different things at once. Yeah, but they all worked related. All work related. So literally, I got your email to say you're on your way. And I went, oh, okay. On the way someone was standing by my desk and my phone rang.

**BB:** [00:05:48] Okay. Okay. Was it hard to concentrate?

**M2:** [00:05:54] No, not really surprising. I'm quite used to juggling lots of different things at once. So flipping from that to that to that that, I think.

**BB:** [00:06:09] So you were actually working unconsciously on lots of different things, and you would say that you were giving your best effort to all of them.

**M2:** [00:06:21] No more. No. I be honest. No. I think my role is such that I often don't give 100 per cent to one thing at once. Because there's lots of different things going on. So I'm always saying everything gets done at 80 percent. Otherwise, only 50 per cent of things would ever get done. OK. So if I could only do one task at 100 per cent and then move on to the next task and do that at 100 per cent, half the things I'm supposed to do wouldn't get done at all. Yeah, just a little bit frustrating.

**BB:** [00:07:01] But are you self-conscious about this this way of spreading yourself,.

**M2:** [00:07:07] Spreading myself thinly? Yes. Yeah. Sometimes it does become a little bit worrying, even studying. If I, if I go to my part time study, I get frustrated that it's going to take so long to finish because I can't devote all of my attention to that. So I am conscious of it constantly.

**BB:** [00:07:36] And what do you do when you're conscious? I mean, look, how do you cope with it?

**M2:** [00:07:42] Well, how do I cope with it? Well, I just remember that every hour I do is an hour that I've done. And so there's a there's a term in yoga which I use all the time, quote, a paragraph and it just means non attachment. So just let it go. And so I have to stop myself and go, wow. Okay. I did an hour study today that. Thats an hour of study I wouldnt have done. So I do consciously stop myself and go and calm myself down and just go. You know what? That's the way it is.

**BB:** [00:08:15] OK. How do you calm yourself? Is there a process?

**M2:** [00:08:18] Yeah, there is is. It is definitely breath related for me and so slight my breathing down know. So it's this that constant, that conscious, knowing when things are getting too much and recognizing the signs and then removing myself from the situation that at some some stages. But it's just letting stuff go. And this can be as simple as on the train going home. I don't use my phone so I don't sit there with my phone. I just sit there and I breathe. And so I've got a 20 minute train journey and that is enough for me to disconnect from the day. And then I've got about a 10 minute walks. About the time I get home, I'm quite disconnected and I'm calm and I'm into my next, which for me is then studying. So I'm really religious about not sitting on the phone, you know, on the train, glued to my phone. It's making that conscious effort to disconnect.

**BB:** [00:09:15] Ok. So when you're not on the on the train, how would you disconnect?

**M2:** [00:09:19] When I'm not on the train from work? At home, Sort of similar. It's it's just consciously not doing anything and allowing yourself to do that. Like sometimes to just sit in the backyard in the sun and not read or not do anything, not study, just sit home. And, you know, maybe what I do is have a cup of tea, but it's just allowing yourself to sit and literally sometimes watch the ants playing on, you know, the courtyard or listen to the birds or just sit. Just just to be. Yeah. So for me, it's that conscious not doing anything which is meditative in a way because, you know, just being and is not coming back to being and the mind attuned to it. Yeah. Yeah. It's a conscious meditation.

**BB:** [00:10:11] Do you feel good about yourself? .

**M2:** [00:10:13] Yeah.

**BB:** [00:10:15] How do you recognize you that you're feeling good ?

**M2:** [00:10:20] Oh, how do I recognize it within myself? Oh, that's a good one. More external validation is one. So that's always. Yes. then you do. I guess. Care what other people think. And they tell you that say, you know, you get that. But also, I think I'm fairly good at motivating myself and rewarding myself. So, for example, with my study, I keep a journal as to how much I've done. And then during that week, I'll add up. Well, how much time did I spend studying? And I'll go, oh, it's 15 hours or it's 20 hours and I'll go, okay. That's good. Mm hmm. Some weeks it might only be 10. Mm hmm. And some to sometimes that's all I can manage. But it's then going well, you know what? That's ten hours that I've done that I don't have to do. And that's good. So it's that it's going to a yoga class and or taking the time to meditate. Meditate and. Well, I've done that. And that's a good thing. So it's that, I guess, self reward for things that I've done. It's how I feel good about myself. I am a bit of a I do like to be productive. So, yeah, I mean, my weekends I like to. I'm a big list person and I like to tick things off. So I'll have a list and I'll be through it. And I feel good when I've ticked something off my list.

**BB:** [00:11:42] Yeah. And what do you do? How you reward yourself?

**M2:** [00:11:46] That's a good question. How do I reward myself? Mm hmm. Maybe I'm not really by myself. Like I won't go out and go, oh, well, I've done 10 hours of study, so I'll go and buy myself something. So it's not that I don't like it. Maybe it might be taking time for myself, maybe having a bar and sitting soaking in the bar. So I will do that at the end of it. If I've been studying on a Sunday and it's been all day. Then I'll crawl into the bath and sit there and say so I guess that's a way of rewarding myself.

**BB:** [00:12:23] Okay. So it's basically relax and you let yourself go.

**M2:** [00:12:27] Yeah. It's let myself go. Yeah.

**BB:** [00:12:32] Mm hmm. So I'm now coming back to the situation that end just before you came in. Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Were you in control of the situation?

**M2:** [00:12:44] Oh, gosh. Well, I couldn't control who was calling on the phone or what the person wanted that had come to my desk. I could control whether I answered the phone or whether I responded to them. So I did feel in control there. And I guess it was. Mm hmm. Did I feel in control? I think I did. Yeah, the I did.I wouldn't say I was out of control. Maybe there's more control I could have had, but I didn't. I didn't feel chaotic and that I was drowning. To put it that way.

**BB:** [00:13:24] Okay. All right.Were you living up to your expectations?

[00:13:28] Am I living up to my expectations?

[00:13:30] Well, were you ?

**M2:** [00:13:30] Oh. Mm hmm. Was I living upto my expectations? I don't know what my expectations were of it. Yeah. Look, I think I was because there was an issue and this is why the phone was ringing and why I was dealing with an email about the same issue. There's a problem with a conference that we are doing. And so, yes, I had control that situation. And that's why the person was ringing me to tell me the outcome was what I wanted. So yeah, I guess in that situation at that time, yeah, it probably was living up to my expectations again.

**BB:** [00:14:09] Okay.

**M2:** [00:14:13] Interesting questions. This is just one part. So describe your mood as you came for the interview. Yeah. Excellent. Alert would seem to correct.

**BB:** [00:14:23] You can choose alert to drowsy and so on.

**M2:** [00:14:33] I think I was quite alert. I was very happy. Irritable, cheerful. I think I'm quite cheerful. Strong or weak. I am, it's a lonely or sociable ? I felt very sociable. I'd just been chatting to people. Ashamed or proud? I have neither those involved or detached,I would say involved. Very bold, exciting. Yes. I was excited. close or open? I knew I was going to be interviewed, so I was open. Clear or confused. It's a strong word, isn't it?. Maybe a little bit more apprehensive because I didn't know what the interview was gonna be about. I wasn't confused, but. Maybe a little bit tensed comparatively. More cooperative.

**BB:** [00:15:45] So here this one. You said you were open or closed. Yes. So you're?

**M2:** [00:15:51] Oh, sorry. It should be open. Sorry. Thank you. That was wrong. Cool. Is that right?

**BB:** [00:16:02] Yes. Did you feel any physical discomfort as you were to join the interview? You mentioned, that you were a little apprehensive. So was it physically?

**M2:** [00:16:13] Maybe a little bit nervous

**BB:** [00:16:16] Ok. But that's a mental state. Physically, was it manifested?

**M2:** [00:16:20] In only butterflies like you would sort of. But no, no, no. Physical. I didn't feel tense or anything like that. No.

**BB:** [00:16:29] Well, you were with someone? had someone.

**M2:** [00:16:29] Yes. I was with someone. Yeah. There was people at my desk.

**BB:** [00:16:33] Ok. OK. And this one we will complete at the end. Now I begin with. Go back to your childhood.

**M2:** [00:16:43] Oh, yes.

**BB:** [00:16:45] And when you go back to a childhood and as you travel down the years to today, describe the most challenging experience that you had.

**M2:** [00:17:00] Oh, my gosh. Gee. The most challenging experience I've had. Oh, God. That's a big question that I've overcome. During my masters was pretty challenging because I was working full time and changed jobs twice throughout the course of doing my masters. And getting through that was quite challenging and it had been a long time since I studied. So overcoming that was, yeah, that was a challenging situation.

**BB:** [00:17:37] Okay. And what were the factors? So that was for how long?

**M2:** [00:17:43] Four and a half years.

**BB:** [00:17:45] Yes. And what kept you going?

**M2:** [00:17:49] Dogged determination. I think I don't like to quit things. So once I start something, I will see it through. So I think that kept me going through it. And, you know, Masters is good because you get a unit and then you do another unit, thats how it goes. So you just keep going. So, yeah, I think that certainly got me through. The fact that I don't like to quit. I don't like to fail. So, you know, I would say probably that about I mean, apart from the fact that I just wanted to get the qualification to from a career point of view. But yeah, I think that's what kept me going through it.

**BB:** [00:18:33] Ok, so say you had a unit. Hmm. And it was a tough. What was your masters in ?

**M2:** [00:18:41] masters in marketing. Marketing.

**BB:** [00:18:43] So did you have finance or accounts or something?

**M2:** [00:18:47] Yes. Accounting was my most challenging unit, in that regard.

**BB:** [00:18:51] Okay. So now you were doing accounting and then you had an assignment.

**M2:** [00:18:55] Yes.

**BB:** [00:18:56] And you felt really challenged.

**M2:** [00:18:58] Yes, I did.

**BB:** [00:19:01] At that point. What exactly did you do to get through?

**M2:** [00:19:07] To get through that one? Yeah, I can remember. Exactly. So I asked for a lot of help both from the lecturer and other students. It took me a lot of, accounting was my most difficult subject. My brain just does not work in that way. And it really is difficult and it's the lowest mark I've ever gotten. And I think he passed me because he felt sorry for me. So, yeah, it was a really challenging situation. And yeah, it was a lot of work. So I spent a lot more work on accounting than I've done any other unit, I think ever. So that was a lot of time invested on it. And it was just a methodical progress. I guess it was just doing and doing and doing and doing it again and doing it again. And yeah, it was it was quite the unit for me. OK.

**BB:** [00:20:01] Ok. This was the most challenging phase of your life?

**M2:** [00:20:05] Yeah, that was a challenging phase..

**BB:** [00:20:08] Other than this?, How old were you when you passed your masters and when you started and when you finished ?

**M2:** [00:20:18] It took four and a half years. I was thirty eight when I started. So I was forty two and a half and a half.

**BB:** [00:20:24] Yeah. Okay. And before thirty five to 38. Was there anything any other challenging.

**M2:** [00:20:31] Yeah, absolutely. I used to be an athlete when I was younger and my goal was to run at the Olympics. I had a serious injury accident. I was a hurdler and I'd fallen over and I broke my collarbone, my elbow and my rib. Which meant I missed the trials. So I was ineligible. And that was really hard. You know, it's really hard to get over.

**BB:** [00:21:00] Okay, so how long were you practicing to qualify?

**M2:** [00:21:06] So at a very competitive level, about 10 years. I started when I was 15. I retired when I was 25, Going through injury, but a different injury. So this one I was. This was 1990 because it was the Commonwealth Games. I was trying to get into. Yeah. So. So that was a challenging time.

**BB:** [00:21:26] So it was 10 years of practice and then the Common wealth games.?

**M2:** [00:21:30] Yep. Yep, yep. So that was in the middle. So I retired in 93. So that would have been about after seven years.

**BB:** [00:21:37] Ok, so you've got seven years of effort and then that happened. And how long did it take you to recover from that injury? Physically?

**M2:** [00:21:46] Physically, it took it took a couple of months because. Well, actually, it took longer than that because my elbow dragged on for a while. But we didn't realize. But probably two months. So I was back running very quickly. So literally, I was back on the track within a couple of weeks. To recover from the disappointment, though. Yeah. That's yeah. I don't know a long time to take a long time. I dont know. I would say probably years.

**BB:** [00:22:16] And did you get any help or did you manage it all by yourself?

[00:22:19] That was yourself. Because you have a lot of those disappointments in athletics, too. You fall over. You fall quite a lot. Especially when you're a hurdler. Hurdlers fall over a lot. Hmm. And so there'll be big races where you fall and you just get up and do the next race and you might not fall and you might win. So, yeah, there was lots of lots of things like that, but that was one that particularly stands out because of the injury was so bad. Mm hmm.

**BB:** [00:22:42] Yeah. And it took you years to recover your disappointment.What did you do ? What did you do to help yourself?

**M2:** [00:22:52] Just kept going. Just keep training. And there's another just keep at it.

**BB:** [00:22:56] How many hours of training you do?

**M2:** [00:22:58] Oh gosh. Then back then. Wow. I would have been training a lot, maybe 15 hours a week. So quite a lot of training, maybe more. If you add in all the all the other stops, you know, at least 15 hours a week.

**BB:** [00:23:16] Okay. So you must have started very young.

**M2:** [00:23:19] I started when I was little, but I only got serious when I was about 15. Okay. And then the training obviously increases and the really hard training started when I was about 19, when I was serious. So probably from out nineteen to twenty five was when it was really serious. Serious.

**BB:** [00:23:39] Okay. And today, what are the lessons from your hurdling experience that do carry you to your work?

**M2:** [00:23:47] Oh, well, the ability to keep going and I know that I always talk about athletics, taught me the ability to set a goal and work towards it. And even though that can be a long period. I mean, know, trying to run in the Olympics doesn't happen overnight. The ability to pick yourself up and carry on. So even when the PhD gets really hard, you just go, okay. It's just keep going. It is going to keep going. Do another training session or do another. So that's what athletics taught me, the ability just to keep going.

**BB:** [00:24:21] Mm hmm. And who do you think you got this from? Your parents. Somebody else?

**M2:** [00:24:29] My dad. OK.

**BB:** [00:24:31] Would you tell me something more about him ?

**M2:** [00:24:32] my dad? Oh, gosh, I. My dad has a really strong work ethic. He came from a very poor background. He's self-made and worked really hard. And so I think I got my work ethic from him. So that ability just to keep going. And just pick yourself up and start again. I think that comes from him.

**BB:** [00:24:58] And you have siblings?

**M2:** [00:24:59] I have a sister and a brother. Okay.

**BB:** [00:25:01] And are they like you?,.

**M2:** [00:25:02] No. They take after my mum. No, no, no. They are not like me at all. I am the one who drew the line in the family.

**BB:** [00:25:12] Ok. Yeah. OK. And now so you have actually given me pointed answers, with reference to grit. Have you heard of grit? Yeah. This is grit. Yeah. Sharing this example is the grit. Right. And as you were saying, to just keep going. So that was in a way your focus. So your focus never wandered?

**M2:** [00:25:37] No. No.

**BB:** [00:25:40] So you had a coach who helped you?

**M2:** [00:25:44] Yeah, a number of coaches. No. Yeah. Not one in particular. Well, my dad's also a coach. So for, a lot of years he didn't coach me. I worked with a very famous coach who's coached a lot of athletes. But in the later part of my career, I did. My dad did coach me and he's got a high school stable of athletes as well. So I worked with him.

**BB:** [00:26:09] Ok, so how was it working with someone else and working with your own father?

**M2:** [00:26:18] Yeah. Interesting question. I guess my dad, because he knows me better even than my other coach I was with for a number of years. He knew what I was capable of taking, so he knew how far to push him, which is a good thing. But in some ways, that's really that was really hard for him. Because, for example, during a training session, you push so hard that, you know, sometimes you would be throwing up because you've pushed yourself to the limit. And that's hard for a father to see. He's pushed his daughter. And then, you know, I've got to get up and do another one. That's really hard. When I had my accident where I fell over, he was there. And so he saw me lying on the track and he he saw my broken bones. And he knew at the time that the goal that I was working towards, was over. So that would have been hard.

**BB:** [00:27:12] Okay. And did he stand by you all the time that you were recovering?

**M2:** [00:27:17] Oh, absolutely. Yeah, definitely. Yeah. Yeah.

**BB:** [00:27:21] So was he to some extent your mental strength?

**M2:** [00:27:26] I wouldn't say that. Okay. Yeah. He was. No, I wouldn't say that.

**BB:** [00:27:30] No. Yeah. Okay. So the strength came from you?

**M2:** [00:27:33] Yeah. Yeah. And what is it that made the strength? How was the strength born?

**M2:** [00:27:41] How was this strength born? Oh, good question. I think maybe it stems back to my father's background of coming from nothing. And and, you know, achieving what he did, which I think is really cool. And I guess it's it's a fear of being maybe that I don't know if that makes sense. So it's the fear of wanting the desire to keep wanting to achieve and being be more than maybe watch your birthright says you should have been. OK, if that makes sense. You know, coming from a very poor or the poor background.

**BB:** [00:28:28] But you didn't see the poverty?

**M2:** [00:28:29] It's only my father. No, my father did. But it's it's that legacy, I guess. And he moved away from it very quickly. They came here, emigrated to Australia when they were really young. My parents had me when they were young. So they were kids themselves and moved to Australia. The first born. Yeah. Oh, yeah. Yeah. And my mum my mum comes from money. My father doesn't. So my mother was disowned when she married my father because of all of this. And that took a long time to get over. So that's why I say they literally landed with nothing in Australia. So which means this was a factor that actually made me want to prove myself here. Maybe here, maybe at some called subconscious level. Absolutely. I'm sure it probably did.

**BB:** [00:29:08] Yeah. You wanted to prove. Make your identity known or your existence to people who had disowned. Yeah. Did you do it?

**M2:** [00:29:17] Maybe we all do eventually and only literally do it. Well eventually it all you know. Well on my mother's side, my father's side never knew us in is his family. We were never close with my mother's but when my grandfather died my grandmother did come around and eventually moved to Australia there and she ended up living without him. You know, the relationship was really great. So I think that part of it was mended. But I'm not sure my father. I don't think he ever mended things with his parents in the same way.

**BB:** [00:29:52] But your father's parents did not disown him?

**M2:** [00:29:56] No, they didn't disown him. They just weren't close. But that's a way of life. And also when you moved to Australia in those days, communication is not what it is today. So it is hard. Yeah. My my mum's mum's side were very much with us. Okay. She was pregnant at 19. So young.

**BB:** [00:30:17] Yeah. Yeah. All right. So, Bill, those are the unconscious things looking behind you?

[00:30:25] Yeah, I think so. Very much so. Yeah. I have this. Well, not so much now. I think I've gone over that now, but I had constant feeling that everyone else is better. Mm hmm. So it's that always wanting to be over it. And maybe even it still exists with the pair today. You know, why am I doing a PhD today? I don't need to from a career point of view, I'm doing it purely for myself. Why? It's ego related. I think it's that constant coming back to, you know, wanting to prove yourself and still do it. You can still achieve something. And you do. Yeah, testing is still a test. Absolutely. Very much so.

**BB:** [00:31:11] Ok, so when it comes to. So you must be concentrating quite a bit.

**M2:** [00:31:17] During the day yeah.

**BB:** [00:31:18] Yeah. So because you're working full time and then you say you detach yourself. So these are techniques that are generally used by people who know how to concentrate and have desire to concentrate. Who know when to use apply the technique. Mm hmm. So do you prepare yourself like you said that you detach yourself when you're going back on the way home, You walk down and then you start mentally preparing. But now I have to study. So is that the only preparation required? Or do you do anything else?

**M2:** [00:31:53] Well, I think there are physical preparations. So a dedicated space. And I always study and work in the same space. So I'm not someone that sits at the kitchen table or the bedroom. It's always in my study. And that's where I study and my study is. I have all my stuff in a wardrobe. So my desk is literally it's a bedroom and the desk is in the wardrobe so that I can shut the door. And when I shut the door. Studies over. But when I open the door, I'm in study mode. And even if I'm just sitting on my laptop on a chair, I will open the doors. And then that means I'm in study mode now. And then when I finish, I shut the doors and study mode is finished. So that's a bit of a physical ritual that I have. I always have a blanket that I have on my legs when I'm studying as well. For some reason, even when it's warm. This is kind of weird. I think it I think most people have, I have those sort of ritual things that I do.

**BB:** [00:33:01] And at that time, if someone see your husband, your friends drop in, neighbours very close friends drop in. Then how do you feel.

**M2:** [00:33:11] Oh, I get annoyed and nobody showed. Well, I know my poor husband will often because I shut the door. And if he comes in and he just, you know, wants to oh, I've talked about this, then I look at him and I'm like. Hurry up and tell me what you want to tell me, because I need to get back to this and I'll be yup, yup. Sometimes I do this (nods) or I'll just look at him and go, hey, have you finished because I'm doing this. So I do get yeah. I don't get those angry, but I get annoyed. Yeah. I make it clear. Yeah. I express the fact that you've interrupted me and I want to get back to what I'm doing.

**BB:** [00:33:54] So how long does it take? Say you have been studying and you have an interruption. You have been studying for one hour or so.

**M2:** [00:34:00] Concentrate. Concentration is easy.

**BB:** [00:34:04] All right. Say you concentrate and study and say in five minutes the husband comes in about something and that goes on, say, for five minutes.

**M2:** [00:34:14] There might be couple of minutes, three minutes, five minutes. He doesn't interrupt very often because he knows I get annoyed.But when he does, it's a couple of minutes.

**BB:** [00:34:22] So then how long does it take for you to go back?

**M2:** [00:34:27] Usually not too long. Yeah, usually. Although having said that, I'll often take that as a bit of an opportunity to go. Oh okay, I need to stand up and take a break. So I guess sometimes that becomes a trigger to remind me that I've been sitting here for an hour, which is maybe why he does it. So I'll get up and get a cup of tea or go to the bathroom or something and then come back and straightaway sit down again. Most times it's not too long though. I can sort of look up and then come back to it.

**BB:** [00:35:02] Yeah, it's pretty spontaneous and immediate. It comes back.

**M2:** [00:35:07] I think so. Yeah, I think so. All right.

**BB:** [00:35:11] And is this applicable only for studies and work? Or do you use this for other things?.

**M2:** [00:35:15] No, I have lots of rituals even at work. OK. I do the same when I come in. I have a little process of come in. I take my phone, my glasses and my pass out of my bag and I put them on my desk. Then I get my laptop out of my drawer and I plug it in. I turn it on and then I go and get a cup of hot water. And then I come back to my desk and I log in. And I do that. That's my process. And then I'm at work. I mean work. I can sit down and do my emails. I think it is annoying when people interrupt me at work.

**BB:** [00:35:50] So when people interrupt you at work, you accepted that as part of work?.

**M2:** [00:35:55] I accept that as part of work. If I'm doing something, though, that I really need to concentrate on, I'll move away from my desk. So I will take my laptop and go sit anywhere in the building where people can't find me. So I do the coffee shop, too. I'm really good at working out. So I'll disappear if it's if it's something I need to concentrate on, if I'm writing something, for example, I'll take myself out of the environment that I'm working.

**BB:** [00:36:22] Was there ever a situation or a phase when you couldn't concentrate at all?

**M2:** [00:36:32] God, I don't remember one. I can't I can't think of any time. Not that I know.

**BB:** [00:36:43] When do you concentrate the most? When you feel that you are really into it. That someone would have to break or fire a bomb to grab your attention.

**M2:** [00:36:53] You mean, my flow. Yeah. Probably when it's something I like doing. So if I'm writing then yes, that's I can sit there for hours like I can literally sit on my laptop, on my faces and just write for hours. Not a problem when it's flowing, obviously when I'm doing yoga or working out of classes or something like that. Again, it's very difficult to break my concentration then. But yeah, I think it comes down to whether whether I like something even at work. Like if I'm writing a report, I can sit there and write my report pages. But if it's something I don't like, I'm really bad.

[00:37:38] So what are the things you don't like?

**M2:** [00:37:40] Budgets, costings, that sort of thing. I'm not very good at the detail either. So, you know, spreadsheets and analysis of what I'm doing. Well, not quantity. No.

**BB:** [00:37:57] Yeah. Okay. So when you are working and you are giving your hundred percent. And for some reason some external injuries beyond to control things go wrong. How do you react?

**M2:** [00:38:16] When I'm giving my 100 percent and things go wrong. I probably, I think I get disappointed in myself for allowing it to go wrong, maybe even though it's beyond my control. Yeah. So maybe it's a meeting that the that hasn't gone how I would like it to go so technically beyond my control. But I tend to go, oh, is there something I could have done to have prevented that situation? Mm hmm. Or presentation goes badly or whatever it is. Yeah. I tend to bring it back to myself rather than the situation.

**BB:** [00:39:02] Mm hmm. Yeah. What makes you do that?

**M2:** [00:39:05] Oh. Back to where you need to be better than everyone else. It's that constant fear of not being good enough to, you know, is there something I could have done differently? It's like even if you think of it in a PhD context, if I write a draft of a paper and I think, okay, this is all right, give it to my supervisors and they scribble over it and blah, blah, and then you think, my god, why didn't I? Why don't I know that? You know, why can't I write like that? Hey, you know, I'm a student, so I guess it's that sort of stuff which again, comes back to that constant need to show your most.

**BB:** [00:39:43] I find that your motivating factor is that you've got to be giving your best.

**M2:** [00:39:52] Absolutely. And it's not the need to be better than everyone else, because I certainly don't think that in any way that I am. But it's to be my best self. Mm hmm. Yeah. And I'm really I say quite ambitious goals for myself. And like, I think I work hard to achieve them. So it is disappointing. And even if I look back on my career. Yes. I wanted to run the Olympics and I didn't run a big Olympics, but I did a whole load of stuff. That's pretty cool. But it's still that that's what I wanted to do.

**BB:** [00:40:26] Ok, there is one question that came up, while you were talking and I thought of it OK. When think you're giving your best when you think that in this,I have given everything. Yeah. And the verdict comes out that no, it's not. It could have been better. Something else could have happened. Yeah. Then what do you do?

**M2:** [00:40:57] Of my own doing so. So I feel I given my best but it turns out I haven't given my best. Yeah, that probably happens a bit, too. Usually I can recognize it. Mm hmm. Yeah. Like I have a goal with my study that I'll spend 20 hours a week and that that's my target 20 hours a week working on my thesis. But I can manage, you know, there are lots of times where I'll do 15 hours of 16 hours or less, and I try and go, okay, is that because I was slack and didn't do it? Or have I given 15 good hours? You know, it's I guess I try and see the positives when I try to achieve them. So I look at what I have achieved. I answer that question, OK.

**BB:** [00:41:52] And there are your positives. And what do you think is OK? And while you're doing this and I'll see you are analyzing yourself and you know you are sure, that these things are positives. And I've done that. So this is it. Mm hmm. And then you find that one wonderful feel positives is actually a big weakness. Has it happened?

**M2:** [00:42:20] Sure, it has many times. Yeah, I guess I always used to think I could write really well. You know, I get that feedback. Oh, yes, you write really well. But then I go, wow, if it is then how come there's so many things that are wrong? Then most probably,maybe it's not such a strength, but I thought it was so. So that that might be a recent example that comes to mind. Yeah. Yeah, I think that's pretty recent example. So yeah, I don't know how that makes me feel though.

[00:42:54] How does it make you feel?. That's exactly the next question.

**M2:** [00:42:56] How does that make me feel? Look in some ways. I like the challenge of then having to improve because I say to my supervisor all the time, one day I'm gonna walk in here and you are gonna go, "This is good". And that's my motivation. And they laugh about it saying, you know. Yes, it's good. But you're improving on this stuff. Yeah. But that's my motivation, you know, one day I want to walk in and like, oh, you know what? We are on draft number 40 and this is it. This is good. So I that's, my I guess I try and look for the positive. I'm naturally a positive person. So it gets a bit too dumb to joke about it all the time because I'm a half the glass is always half full with me. Even if someone says, oh, you know, in this and with other people, I'll always be. yeah but, but you know, you think of what you have done or all of that sort of stuff.

**BB:** [00:43:47] So now coming to your career, how many major downs have you had?

**M2:** [00:43:54] Major downs in my career? I don't think too many, actually. Okay. Yeah. I've got the career I wanted. Okay. And I'm at the level that I wanted to be at it. So I've never really had any major disappointments. I mean, there's been jobs that I had gone for and that I haven't got. But I wouldn't say that they were all major, major crises. I've been made redundant. And that was kind of a good thing. So, yes, I don't think there's been any really negative thing.

**BB:** [00:44:28] Okay. So when you were made redundant, how did you feel?

**M2:** [00:44:31] Oh, I was elated. I was elated. I'd been there a long time. I wanted to be made redundant. So I was, you know, trying to architect my own redundancy. I got a nice package at the end of it, and I wanted at that point in my career. This was only five years ago. I wanted to take a career break. I'd been working a lot and I didn't really know what I wanted to do. I was not unhappy, but I'd done everything I wanted to do. And I just thought, there's got to be something better than working in digital media. So I took 18 months off a career break to decide when I wanted to do, and that's when I applied for the PhD. And I decided I wanted to work in an area, an industry that was a bit more in line with my personal values. So I wanted to work in education. So literally I got, this is funny, I got the message to say that I'd been accepted into the PhD on the Tuesday and then I got a message to say I got this job on Thursday. So it all sort of came together. Good. Yeah. Yeah. So it was a really positive experience. Mm hmm.

**BB:** [00:45:40] So since it engineered your redundancy, it definitely not a negative one for you.

**M2:** [00:45:46] Not for me. It was definitely not negative. It was good. And then, funnily enough, my husband was made redundant at the same time. So there was a period where we overlapped of about eight months and we were both still able to drive. We were travelling. Yeah. So it was good. Yeah. So there's a good period of life. Yeah. Sighs Okay. Now.

**BB:** [00:46:08] Regarding your personal life. We are coming to your married life. What would you say are the things that keep both of you together? Oh.

**M2:** [00:46:21] Wow. Friendship. We're best friends. We have a lot in common. We like the same thing. Support. Definitely support especially. We've been married 21 years and I think I've been studying eleven of those. So blessed sort of socks. I've got so many things. He's just. Little hottie, I guess, is, you know, physical, mental. Definitely intellectual. Mm hmm. He's a really smart guy. Mm hmm. And so that's he's interested in what I'm doing. He can understand what I'm doing. So we can have conversations around that, which is really cool. He's just fun. Yeah. Lots of stuff.

**BB:** [00:47:10] And what put into what would you like to change about him?

**M2:** [00:47:15] I'd like to change about him. He could be taller. Don't tell me that we're the same height. So when I wear heels, I'm told. I mean, that's. That's right. So I could be taller. That actually looks pretty good. It's kind of a blessing. Look, I honestly, I wouldn't change him knowing that he's. He doesn't need to be changed.

**BB:** [00:47:43] So because why I ask this question is because you said it's 21 years. Yeah. And it takes a lot of partnership to live through a relationship. It does, especially in, our this kind of circumstances where we see things falling apart here and there and everywhere. And so that's why I ask this, because you need a certain amount of grit to get through a relationship.

**M2:** [00:48:10] You do end up winning all relationships, especially ones that have lasted 21 years. They're not all plain sailing, obviously. And you know, the period of time where I was doing my masters and that was really challenging and I was working full time. You know, he he had to live through that as well. Mm hmm. And he's living through the PhD. Yes, I'm sure. Yeah. It is a great thing. I'm sure it's probably grit from from his point of view as well. It's very selfish study. Yeah. When you're in a partnership.

[00:48:39] Mm hmm. Which is why I asked, did you have that much amount of deep feelings being tenacious.

**M2:** [00:48:46] Yes. Yeah. Yeah. And I think your partner has to show some of that as well. Especially on the weekends where you're stuck in your office. By choice, you're not spending time with them. Mm hmm. Yeah. That's hard. That takes grit.

**BB:** [00:49:06] Yeah. That takes grit. Okay. Now coming to yoga. Yes. And when did you start learning yoga.

**M2:** [00:49:17] When I was running. So I used to do yoga then, but I was doing it for all the wrong reasons. And I think I was just stretching. I wasn't doing yoga since doing my teacher training and being serious about yoga. I understand what yoga is. And I look back at what I did in my 20s and that wasn't yoga. So I would say I started getting serious when we came back to Australia. So I was probably back early 30s. Yeah. So that's almost twenty years ago. It's a long time. I did my teacher training six, six years ago, my first one, six or seven years ago. So I've been teaching about that long, six to seven years. I did my training seven years. and six year I have been teaching.

**BB:** [00:50:04] Ok. So this training is is it phased out ?

**M2:** [00:50:08] Its a year. OK, just one training. That's for one training. And then there's lots of advanced ones. Yes. And then you keep doing training in different areas. Different specialise. Yeah. All of that sort.

**BB:** [00:50:22] So now when you do yoga, do you do what? What is the process? I mean, how do you how do you get into the yoga?

**M2:** [00:50:29] It depends. So if I'm going to a class, that will be completely different. So we'll do it at my own practice. And it depends on the day. So, for example, Tuesday, today, I'll meditate in the morning. So I get up at 6:00, roll up my mat. I have a little meditation stool. I set my timer and then I just sit. When the timer goes off, I'm done. All right.

**BB:** [00:50:54] And when you sit what do you do?

**M2:** [00:50:56] So I have a little stool or meditation stool. I wrap a blanket around my legs to keep myself warm. I sit with my hands in a mudra. I close my eyes and I just breathe and I focus here (heart chakra). And I try and breathe through that space and I just try to not think of anything. So the thought comes in. I just let it go. And I practice a form of meditation Kiastrearum, which is non. You don't swallow. So you just completely still and obviously your breathing and your heart's moving and all of that sort of stuff. But you don't swallow, you don't move in any way. And so, you know, you'll be drooling all over yourself. It's not really attractive. But it's, I find it extremely peaceful. So you just sit in absolute stillness until the timer goes off. Okay. So that for me, is is my meditation is just to breathe, slowing down the breath and just letting those thoughts disappear. And some days it's really hard. You know, it's your mind's going (hands going all over the place) and it might, you know.

**BB:** [00:52:03] And then what do you do when your mind goes (imitating hands going all over the place)

**M2:** [00:52:07] I try and stay with it. Okay. Some days I'll let it go and just go, you know what? It's not working tonight. And after if if it's still going crazy about after about seven minutes or so, that's when I hit my sock. Then I'd give up and just go. You know what? Today is not a meditation day. This is not going to work. Some days it might just be breathing. So I'll open my eyes and just breathe and do different breathing techniques or some days I'll go. Today is not a meditation day. I need to move. And so I'll do asana or something else. when I do my asana practice, it always starts with a meditation. And then I'll do my whatever I'm going to do for about an hour and then finish with a shavasana or something like that And as I always said I guess it kind of depends on.

**BB:** [00:52:51] OK. So this is just curiosity. When I was starting yoga, we were taught to begin with pranayama, then you do your yoga asanas. After every yoga asana you do a shavasana.

**M2:** [00:53:07] Yes. Every. That's what I was taught too.

**BB:** [00:53:11] And then at the end of it you sit with padmasana which is when you meditate. Right. Is this what you did too?

**M2:** [00:53:19] When you were, well, I was taught always start with period of meditation and breathing and then do the physical, always shavasana. And then at the end, maybe coming back to might only be a minute or so or two minutes of just stillness. Stillness that is padmasana. Yeah. So that's kind of the process. And that's how my classes are structured. And so I always teach in the same way, not the same stuff, but always that structure. Yeah. And then I do I do yin yoga as well, which is a lot more meditative because you're not moving or flowing as much so that, you know, you'll hold the pose for about five minutes. So that becomes much more meditative because you're in the posture as well as the stillness. So and then the older I get, the more I lean towards that type of yoga.

**BB:** [00:54:11] Yeah. OK. All right. And do you do all the walking meditation? Well, have you tried it?

**M2:** [00:54:22] I have. Yeah, I have tried the walking meditation. Yeah. And I guess it depends where I am. Mm hmm. Yeah. So sometimes it works. Sometimes it doesn't.

**BB:** [00:54:33] But what do you say that now that you've been meditating for 20 years?

**M2:** [00:54:39] Oh, no, not as long as the meditation took me longer to get into. So I'd probably say meditation seriously, probably only about five or six years. OK.

**BB:** [00:54:47] So this is where this what you're seeing is serious meditation is when you really meditate and you're still.

**M2:** [00:54:53] Yeah.

**BB:** [00:54:54] So that means you are into dhyan and before that you were into dharana where you are you trying to get into meditation? And that started ten years ago. Yeah. All right. Great. So when you're doing this, and you meditate through it. After you meditate, so your meditation is done. I have spoken to people and they say that sometimes they see images. Sometimes they see things which might happen in the future. Have these things happened with you?

**M2:** [00:55:38] I haven't seen. Mine's more a feeling. And it's weird. Well, for me, it's a really strong connection to my grandmother died. The maternal. Yes. My mom's mum. I cant remember she was living with us for what about 11 years ago, longer than that, 15 years ago. I have a really strong connection with her. And often when when I'm meditating, the first thing I'll think of when I come out is her.

**BB:** [00:56:10] Okay. So you don't actually think of her, do you?

**M2:** [00:56:13] It's a feeling that she is. Yeah. There's a feeling like I and I sometimes will say, hi, Nan, you know, like it's a feeling as if she's very much there. Yeah. So I get this really physical sense of. Sense of nurturing, perhaps not an hour protection might be a better word. So often after meditation, I'll have a really strong sense of protection. And I think it comes from her.

**BB:** [00:56:44] So you feel secure?

**M2:** [00:56:45] Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. I often meditate in the morning in front of a window, so I'm looking out. And so it's dark. In winter it will be dark by the time I start. And then when I finish, the sun will be coming up, although it will be getting light on. And I often quite look up at the clouds and it's like, "Hi Nan". I can do that, but I do. And that happens quite a lot.

[00:57:09] Ok, I'll give you one of my experiences. We when we first came to Sydney and we took an apartment where we were living. It was a delightful apartment. And I used to keep seeing a very sad gentleman, gray haired with very similar eyes like yours. And he was sad and he used to keep staring at my home from outside because outside my home there was a tennis court. And in between you have those little grass patches like a border. So he would stand there and he would watch. And I used to sometimes feel in our bath tub , like as if there was a man laying down. Okay. So this happened quite some time. And then I came to know my neighbours and we started talking and things. And then one of my neighbours said, do you know that there was a musician used to stay in this house before it was his house. And he committed suicide. Oh, and he actually died in the bathtub.

**M2:** [00:58:12] So that was him?

[00:58:16] I don't know whether it was him or not, but I just know that that was very similar. Is was then that I started meditating on him and started telling him that maybe you are unhappy and so I think you should be at peace. I would keep meditating and keep meditating and keep telling him. I just I didn't share this with my husband and issue this with my child. My child was anyway too young. So I did that. And then one day it was and like you said, you know, the sun and you feel that your grandmother is there. I saw him as if he smiled. And then from next time onwards, he wasn't there. This was with an absolute stranger that I've had an experience. So that's what that's what I was asking from you, whether you would get something. Can you see inside yourself?

**M2:** [01:02:25] I dont know.

**BB:** [01:02:29] Has any of your teachers ever told you to look inside?

**M2:** [01:02:36] Yes, and I don't see it as finite. So when it's go inside, I disappear and become it's just vast openness, so when they say like it, when I meditate and come in, I don't see the physical. It just becomes this vast. I but not in a bad way.

**BB:** [01:03:05] Yeah. So what does it become? Nothing. Can you describe the nothing?

**M2:** [01:03:08] Can I describe the nothing? Yeah, it's dark. Yeah, it's it's very black but it's. It's like it's almost it's not like a night sky because it's not there's not stars and things like that, but it's that sense of vastness. So it's just a total and it's really nice, but it's just a total nothing but it's movement. So it's like a liquid, almost like mercury, like a flowing metal. But it's dark. It's like it's moving.

[01:03:44] This is vipassana. So as Buddhists, we are taught that. So my grandmother had taught me that I look inside. So that is what I'm sharing with you. When I started this and I was three years old. And when I began, she was she was fairly strict. She used to say , you can see, close your eyes, and I used to (squinting my eyes), as if by doing that, I can do it. And what I would only see is kind of a red tunnel, a red orange kind of a thing. and that is that used to go down down down down down down. Yeah. Even today when I do that, I see that. it's like it's like being surrounded by something which is red and orange. Yeah, but it's not fire. It's not it's not like it's not burning. There's no discomfort. But there is a kind of red.

**M2:** [01:04:51] Yeah. Yeah. That same sort of enveloping an overlapping thing but mine's not. It always feels like it's up. It's always up, not down. So it's not like I'm going down into a tunnel or a hole. It's always a sense of lightness.

[01:05:10] Yeah. Yeah, yeah. It's bouyant. Yeah.

**M2:** [01:05:13] I think like you, it's a nice feeling. Yeah.

**BB:** [01:05:16] And it's this like you say, it's a secure maybe. And maybe that's where the security comes round with my Nan. It's that secure, safe darkness.

**M2:** [01:05:25] So you used to get a lot of security from your grand mother.

**BB:** [01:05:30] Yeah we do. Yeah.

**M2:** [01:05:32] Yeah, yeah. Well she lived with us as well in the house for quite some time, which was nice. We had an extended that extended family experience, which I don't think a lot of people have necessarily. Yeah. So I would say I did get a lot of safety from her. She's quite a grounded person.

**BB:** [01:05:53] All right. If I have any more questions, I will ask you. Right. Because now all I can do, what I'm taking, In case they find something which is story or haven't been answered at all. So I'll come back to it. Interesting. Thank you. Thank you very much. It is a busy time.