Fluorescent blue – grit

Fluorescent Yellow - grit and flow and meditation

Grey – flow

Army green – leadership

Fluorescent green - meditation

# M4.mp3

## Transcript

**Banya:** [00:00:00] Thank you for coming here and just begin with what we are doing. This is a study which is with meditators. We are looking at this point on the meditation practice is practised for 20 minutes for the maybe for two months, that is defining as meditation practitioner. So pretty loose, not very strict.

**Banya:** [00:00:40] How long have you been practicing?

**M4:** [00:00:42] It's probably about two years now. OK. Yeah. Two years? Sort of regularly by regularly, I would say at least three times a week. OK. And then about the last year, it was more like every day, at least 10 minutes, if not half an hour or more again.

[00:01:06] So there are a few questions that I have which is formatted that will be on that instant. What made you begin meditating?

[00:01:19] I always had an interest in meditation, since I think even in high school. Because of the sort of the time to quiet everything down and not hove. Just see what happens without any external input and have some quiet time to just think about myself and see what's happening with my own body. It's sort of the interest started there. But then and you know, I never really practiced that much then. maybe from time to time. And then there was when I was in my last job that I had, there was a lot of stress every day and it was there was a lot of emotional trauma going on with me. And so I had to find a way to cope with that. And that's when I started meditating regularly. I found a specific practice that allowed me to stay sort of more focused and present in the moment, happier with the current situation while continuing to sort of move towards things that needed to achieve. And so that's when I started practicing pretty much every day, because without it, I started noticing as on days that I meditated, I would even have a good day or a day that I could deal with. whereass if I didn't, I would generally have a crappy day end. And at the end of the day, may not having enough energy to make a proper dinner or go for exercise or do something with my fiance. And so, that's when I really started seeing the benefits of it. So, yeah, I don't know if that answers your question or do I you keep going.

[00:03:23] And so when you were coming here today, what were you thinking about.

[00:03:30] When I was coming here today? Well, I was actually I did my meditation this morning, but I was actually listening to a podcast, completely unrelated in terms of I mean, they did talk a bit about meditation at some point, but I was just listening to this podcast. And what I was thinking about in terms more specifically to this interview was the actually coming of age interest thing it is or to be part of, because I always read a lot about studies like this or, you know, when they're looking into the effects of meditation. I just thought it was very fascinating that I'm now on the other side being researched in a way. And so I was just excited to share my experiences and whatever I have to tell you.

Banya[00:04:28] Where were you when you were thinking?

M4[00:04:29] On a train. Yeah, the metro here.

[00:04:34] And so what was the main thing that you were doing?

[00:04:37] I was travelling.

[00:04:39] how well were you concentrating?

[00:04:47] I was mainly concentrating on the podcast. And I think if I follow to compare that to if I was doing a piece of work or a project or even when I was meditating, I'd say about 50 percent instead of listening to it, but then going off on tangents in my head about whatever they're talking about or thinking about things like today and so on so. I'd say about half of the time I was really focused on the rest of the time I just let myself wander.

[00:05:29] How self-conscious were you?

[00:05:33] I think of, I would say, a pretty self-conscious self aware of my surroundings and what was happening around me. Yeah, I think I'd a fairly self-aware.

[00:05:47] Did you feel good about yourself?

[00:05:50] Yes, I did.

[00:05:51] Were you in control of the situation?

[00:05:55] Yeah, I did.

[00:05:55] Mm hmm. Were you living up to your own expectations.

[00:06:01] Today? I actually was.At that point? Yes.

Banya[00:06:07] And were you living up to the expectations of others?

M4 [00:06:18] By others, I don't know.

Banya[00:06:20] I can say that because the other was me waiting at the other end. And you did arrive, so you did live upto others expectations. I would like you to complete this on how you're feeling, your mood. So it could be alert or drowsy.

[00:07:59] The rest will be the end of it. OK, now I'll start with your journey. So let's start right at the beginning. When did you begin thinking of meditation and how did you start? how was your childhood?

[00:08:26] I had probably one of the unique childhood my parents worked in development aid. So I grew up in Africa and Southeast Asia, which ran every three and a half or four years. We'd move, which was very exciting. As I got to see lots places and meet lots of new people and make lots of friends everywhere. The downside, was having to leave your friends behind and so on. Because we were international, we would go to international private schools, which meant relatively small classes, small schools. So small communities, which was very nice as well in terms of feeling like, you know, you're part of a group and not a huge school. We did spend some time in Germany and there was a school of 2000 students. So I was a complete, sort of contrast. I did a lot of sports was outdoors a lot, and travelled a lot with parents and holidays and stuff. So I'm very active and always. Sort of out there seeing the world. I was very fortunate in that sense, very privileged. And yeah, there's not. I can't say very much.

[00:10:13] So given that, was there ever an instance when you would set a goal and then later you would not complete that goal? And what would make you do that?

M4[00:10:33] I think that's still that's many times. I think it still happens. It still happens for sure. When we used to be a kid, it used to be due to boredom. So I'd set a goal and say I had this idea of making a movie with my friends or something like that. And then you sort of get through all of the videoing and the shooting and all the fun part, and then you have to actually make it and edit it and sit there for a while and then, you know, I'll be on my own. when friends would go home and then I would be bored so I would stop doing it and sort of let go., Well, you know, we made the movie really. It's not just editing. That I think was mainly when we were kids. When I was a kid, I was sort of this kid.

[00:11:29] This kid was at what age?

M4[00:11:32] Sort of 12 to 16, 17. Sort of around those times, I would say, used to do a lot of things and just start them and then, you know, I would end up doing something else instead. Yeah, exactly. Something else would come along that would be more interesting. And I think that sort of can continue. I mean, in school it was different because you had to finish your projects and your homework and so on. But I always found it very difficult to focus to, you know, the beginning was fine. There's always that energy and the momentum and the excitement and then that died down. And it was very difficult to keep going. And I still find that sometimes. But now I've sort of developed the grit to just process through and see things through. I think it really was during university, which was mainly project based, a lot about product design. So you would have to build out the whole product. You could come up with the concept and then halfway through building it, you couldn't just sort of leave it so I think that really helped me develop some of that. I studied product design, industrial product design.

[00:12:59] So what happens then? What did you learn?

M4[00:13:00] It is basically pretty much the ideas you get in, get an itch about something, so a problem, something that you can see that's not working quite as it should or that is hindering people to do certain tasks well. That could be really anything. So it doesn't have to be, like industrial design is often referred to as in building cars or making machinery and that type of design, but it can really be anything. It can be related to fashion that could be related to anything we see is really design. So you get an itch and as you read, then you research that and you sort of look into, well, what's the what's the problem here? Why are people doing it in a certain way or, you know, and you don't get some ideas which I get on. So that's the creative part of, well, how all the different ways we can solve this problem. And then once you have the idea, you iterate it. So you take three of the ideas of five of them and you test them. And by the end of it, you then get what's the last itch idea? Sorry, it's itch inside, iterate, idea. So ideas. The last thing which is the final. And so that's that's a process you use for anything and then you apply. No, we did. We built backpacks and surfboards, but also like software application and dishwashers.new types of dishwashers, so all sorts of different.

[00:15:06] So you apply your mind whereever the problem is.I saw your website and I found it very interesting and really liked it. And did the projects that you showed there's a lot of link, kind of the link that you have looked into those countries which associated with your childhood.

M4[00:15:41] I think that that definitely has a correlation between my childhood and the experiences I've had as well with my studies and sort of what interests me and what I'm doing now. I think, to me that I get excited by solving problems or seeing something and figuring out a creative way to do that. And I think it's sort of playing the mental game and figuring out, you know, how do I get my head or my brain to come up with these new ideas and and do that is probably what has also driven me and inspired me and motivated me to meditate more.This made me explore the various types of meditations because that's one of the things.

[00:16:41]So what are the types of meditation that you have explored?

[00:16:46] The first I don't actually know what it's called, but its focus is much more on visualization of certain concepts. So you have a section which is of visualization, of gratitude, I suppose, or, you know, bringing up things that you're grateful for in your life. Visualizing connection and compassion with other people and visualizing forgiveness as well. So thinking of situations, scenarios, people that you were crossed by or upset about and then going through a process to forgive them. So all of these types used visualization very heavily. That's what I started with regularly. I think the reason for it being that I could feel a direct difference between before and after, I would be happier, I'd be more focused, I'd be clearer about what I was doing after my meditation, whereas currently doing a bit more Vipassana start meditation. So what is traditionally considered as mindfulness meditation? Just being more aware of sensations, breathing, thoughts, feelings. And now that I've been meditating for a while, I can get a lot more out of doing that because I can. I'm becoming much more aware. But when I, before the, difference between that before and after meditation isn't this great. So there are subtle differences in this. There things that I started noticing. But however, it's not an emotional shift yet. I think those type of meditation that focus on most. I have done a bit of I don't actually know what it's what the term is, but pretty much just using a specific mantra or an object to really focus on that. It's positive. Transcendental trance. Yeah, a bit more transcendental in terms of focusing on one thing and trying to use that.

[00:19:10] So do you have a mantra?

[00:19:10] Yes, they change from time to time, but the one I use the most often as I actually got from a book which is completely unrelated. But then they use a mantra in there, which is "I'm free, I'm free, I'm free". And you alternate between "I'm free" and "I'm here". And so you just alternate between those two words that has seemed to work pretty well for me. Others tend to get me lost there. I think that too complicated or touch too many other things. And this one is really easy for me to just focus on and repeat.

[00:30:45] That's a positive thing. Yeah. Just the the. I am using an app now? I don't know if you've heard of Sam Harris. So he's just about I think it's three, maybe six months old at last. So it's brand new. It's a 50 day programme, every day you get 10 minutes. And I've been doing it, so I haven't managed to do it every day. But more or less, I think five times a week. And that's been really good. And that's mainly Vipassana and mindfulness. He does work both on internal and external factors. I thought it was really good for a couple of reasons. One, because it's neutral. It's very neutral. He has removed any reference to any spiritual or religious elements which might get some people to back off. But also that it is 10 minutes and the commitment I'm supposed to make is the 10 minutes a day and that I sort of turn it on and put on my headphones or just listen to the guided session. And then once it's over, it's over. I generally do another 10 minute meditation to do my gratitude and compassion and forgiveness practice. But what I have discovered is, I] currently work in software apps and my my current programmer business, the idea is - can we get people to appreciate more? Can we cultivate a mindset of appreciation in terms of being more appreciative of the basic things? To be grateful of the basic things we have in life, but also the people around us. And then also to express that appreciation. I am currently focusing on designs focussed for businesses to improve as well wellness in a sense within the business, because one of the according to research, one of the reasons most people leave their job is because they felt unappreciated. So focusing on that. But one that I'm really interested in is how do you get people to change that behavior, that habit of a time might create. And this app is good because it over those 50 days, it's in a lot of ways it's very repetitive. It's sit down, focus on your breath, get aware of everything. And there is always at first is focus on the breath, then the sound. So it builds every day,there's like, just a little bit more. So it builds up, but you just get to practice. If you were to do it 50 days straight from 50 days, you get to practice that. And I think that really helps. I've noticed within the first week of doing it that just being in conversation or talking to someone, I would notice the I'd make the connection gap between what I would normally just automatically process my default programming me go there goes my default programming. That's what just happened and being more aware. So even within a week of doing it, I really noticed a change in how I was perceiving the world now where I was, even though I'd been meditating for a year and a bit on a regular basis. But I was really focused on this visualization technique and more, I think and focus on it's called meta like changing the, you know, my emotional state instead of focusing on just experiencing things.

Banya [00:40:07] when you work towards the core of your being.You did mention about new ideas and projects and that it takes you a certain amount of discipline to be able to continue with that idea. And then more from that itch to the idea of Stage idea.

Do you think this would have happened even if you hadn't meditated yet?

M4 [00:40:57] I think it comes with age. I think it's sort of started changing between high school and the universe. Shifting. When you go to school from 9:00 till 3:00 and these are your classes. You know, it's, it's much more rigid. Whereas you go to university and it becomes you can't go to class. If you do, it's good. And you can complete these projects if you don't keep doing it again next year. Sort of much more dynamic. So it puts the responsibility on you. And I think you naturally tend to merge or migrate to words having to say, OK, I have to see this through. I have to do this on my own. So I think it's a natural progression. And it just comes with practice and then we practice it. And now it's becoming easier. I think meditation plays a role in a lot of these things in the sense that it accelerates the progress so it would happen anyways. But by meditating, I take some time out of my day to become aware of these things and closed a feedback loop, in my own brain. If I don't do that, the world around me will do it eventually. So something will happen. You know, it might be a walking into someone on the street and I go out. I have to, you know, whatever the the outside world sort of triggers it, but that it could happen in one month, it could happen in two years. And so there's no control over that. And so it could take me 10 years instead of one year to get to make the same amount of progress internally. If then if I don't. And I think that's where it's especially in the business setting or a professional setting, I think it has a lot of value. Putting aside the Enlightenment element of meditation, the letting go. And there are moments when I would very much say, yes, I just want to pack up and go. And at the same time, I know if I do that, there will be a certain regret as well. But that's that's a that's a different conversation. But I think for a professional setting, it's just giving people a tool that helps them close their own feedback loop to learn quicker about themselves, to not have to suffer through the same mistakes over and over and realize that, you know, I'm still in this position in this job because I don't take feedback. Well, for example, or whatever it is. And I think that there's a lot of value to that. It's definitely helped me in that way. I am very fascinated by the other elements and the deep elements. I don't think it's for everyone. Some people I think it freaks people out. I love it. And very much a person who likes to explore my mind and explore consciousness and what's possible with it. So I find that very fascinating. But I think there have to be, in a way, separate. I think there's as you say, you have to either find a balance between the two or you go the whole way. You can't be a Fortune 500 CEO and also the Dalai Lama at the same time. I think there's a contrast between those two worlds. They both have they have that level of responsibility. And I think as long as you have that responsibility you can't quite let go. And if you go on another stage, you cannot completely let go.

Banya [00:47:51]. But what is it that would make you lose interest? You said something more interesting would make you. But do you have any any tangible features of that interesting thing which would tell you that this is more interesting? And I would do that because I think it can.

M4 [00:49:46] It is different. I'm going to use the example now and more precisely about the end of April, beginning of May. I went away for my mom's 60th birthday celebration. I only did a week of diving on a boat. So scuba diving. And before then, I had just set up a whole bunch of new clients. They were pretty much ready to go. And so I left to the holidays feeling good about what I was doing. And so felt go on holiday, come back and continue and everything is gonna be great. When I went on holiday, nine days of just diving, eating and sleeping, I was fantastic. Not a worry in the world. And then I came back and started messaging. You know, get back on network and no news and everything got delayed, which triggered me, for the sort of last nine months before that I'd been working up until this point, and then it triggered in me, something was like, well, maybe what I have done is not good enough, maybe people don't care. maybe there is already enough, you know, similar products and similar services out there. So very much drilled down on that I'm not good enough and I don't want to do this. And I don't know if it's worth going through all of this. And in that moment of hardship and now as in this example as it was, because I sort of got disenchanted with I was not sure whether or not everything I'd done was actually well worth it, worth anything in that moment. It triggered then the thoughts of, well, what else can I do? But what it doesn't matter. I can just stop now and do something else. And so I started thinking of other things. And by doing by it by going through that process, I sort of put aside for a while that my focus on the current work and so so thinking about, OK, go back to work, I can do these things. It took about two weeks where I still continued working and waiting and then people started coming back to me and it took about two weeks to get through that mental phase where I would probably have displayed signs of depression and indeed motivation, anxiety like still complete negative episode. It took me about two weeks to get through that and once I was to serve so picking up again and I decided I'm going to continue and sort of see this through to at least tested with people at least give it a go and at least get a hundred people to use the application to see if it has an impact and then see if it does that. And that's proof of concept and proof of value. And then I can decide that whether or not I want to continue. But it sort of took that two weeks period. And during that period, at any point, I could have just said nothing. I don't want to do it anymore. I'm not just doing something else. And I think it was just the thing it was partially the feeling that I always do this. I always get to a point where it's hard and then I go, I'm gonna go do something else. I don't finish things that made me continue to go through as well as the fact that I put so much time into it. And there or there was movement right there or a client coming in, they were ready to sign up and start using it. But it took longer. I was sort of expecting ten clients to sign up and said at least three in and out of those three, only one of them was responding. So everything seemed much more difficult. So I don't know what it is that got me through to sort of focus on getting through that point. I think talking with friends who are in similar positions and just also doing other things and not only focusing on that helped me get through it. During that time, it was really hard for me to meditate because that's all there would be. So when I quietened my mind, that's all that was sort of in my head and it was uncomfortable and painful to constantly listen to. And so I had I prefer not to quieten my mind so that I wouldn't have to because I knew I was there. And I just wanted to figure out what to do about it and sort of get through it, which I thought was really interesting because it sort of coincided with me as well. So for about a month before that was when I started this new app was focusing purely on the experiential, sort of the breathing without focusing on any of the visualization or changing my state. And so I don't know if it's coincidence or if they're related, but I think it did have an impact on me being able to continue doing what I'm doing, because more than half of it is just me being able to convince myself, getting up every morning and sitting down in front of the laptop and continuing to do the work, because I think and believe that it's worth it doesn't matter whether or not.

Banya[00:56:03] So your were your own driving force.

M4 [00:56:05] I was doing and focusing on the things like gratitude and the positive and I was setting daily goals and visualizing. Doing all this really helped me keep that illusion going.

Banya[00:56:20] Okay. So what do you think? Was that pain that you said that let you choose something else? Like you said, you used to visualize but then at that point you started focusing on your breathing and then focusing. So what what does that that factor that made you choose the other that other techniques of meditation rather than continuing with?

M4 [00:56:53] I think it was partially boredom. In the sense that I practice the visualization and doing that for long enough. And I listened to a lot of podcasts and a lot of educational. One of them was the Sam Harris one. And literally, you know, I was speaking to someone about the app. So he was on someone else's podcast. And so I just want I give it a go and download a trade. First, I thought that it sounds like pretty good. So I decided to do the whole course. And it was very spontaneous in a way where I just sort of found it and went, oh, this is good to give this a go. But I think somewhere it was because while I was bored of always doing the same three parts of it every day, and so I went, well, let me try and explore another type of meditation to do something else. And that's now I combine the two. So I do the 10 minutes of meditation and then I do the other one on the back of that to make sure that I'm getting ready for my day mentally.

[00:58:16] Right. So this thing is something that you've been there for yourself and this choice. Okay. Let me just let me choose this. But let me also continue. So you did not let go of it. Continued. So this is a choice that you made. How did you make this choice?

M4 [00:58:21]This is the choice that I should be making or I should continue with visualisation and not just give up on it.I think it's because I'm somewhere I knew that the working for myself and being the only one that the only thing I had was my own mindset. They only my own sort of illusion that I'm creating around. And what happened when I started doing the other meditation is those deconstructing that illusion faster than I could build it, that I knew all of these things. And as nice as in ten minutes, I was able to serve of understandable. This is why I'm thinking of all of these things and unravelled thoughts and emotions. The problem was that after those 10 minutes, very well aware of those things. But then I was motivated anymore to continue pursuing that illusion because I knew was an illusion. So it was very. It took me a while to get to that realization. I think it was by month and I think it was good to take a break and sort of unravel these things. But at the same time, it's in a way it was very dangerous because I was in the middle of a phase in the business where I was taking what I'd created and putting it out in the world. So that's sort of the time when you would be the most vulnerable in any creation process is something. Here's something I've spent nine months creating. Now I'm giving it to the world and seeing what people say. So, of course, I'm worried about, you know, people are not going to like it. They're going to like it. They're going to say it's crap. And that process is sort of. I mean, if you write a book and you put out there, it's a bit more trouble. In this case, I literally had to message people and leave and continue to hear people saying I'm not interested and sort of to get to space. And during that time, same time, I also decided to change my meditation practice, which made me so much more aware of all of these things, which I don't know if it's good or bad. It's probably neither. But it led to that 2 week episode, which was really hard. It was probably one of the hardest times mentally for me, because normally I was so motivated to get up every morning at seven thirty to make meditation, cold shower, coffee work till 6. That was my my normal routine.

[01:01:49] I was coming to that question. So if you start work 8:30-9:00 How long can you continue working without taking a break?

[01:02:10] It depends what I'm working on. If it's design graphic or programming sort of work where I have a task and I need to complete it, sort of a finite project saying that I can sit there for 10 hours like I will get up, get a glass of water, go to the bathroom. Yeah, I'll go around like a five minute breaks maybe. Take micro breaks. But I can sit there for a really long time and just work. If it involves things like calling people about sales elements or interacting, sending out things going for me, then I find it a lot harder because I need to get out of some doing something and focusing back into it. Once I'm focused on something, then its fine. I can just keep doing it like right now. building out or extending the website certain say and the last two days time disappears till people come home and say, okay, it's time to finish working. But when I'm sending out LinkedIn messages or calling people or doing other things, it just takes place a lot more time and effort to concentrate. And that's when I'm motivated. But I don't know how to find another way. But get up and say I'm going to do it. And it sort of happens that it was not the case. It was like every thirty minutes I had to reconfirm that I'm still doing this. Guys, I don't want to do this, I want to go to the garden, watch TV or garden or do something else and say, I got another half an hour and these little to really push myself to continue to do the most simplest of things sometimes. And it just felt like a lot of effort. And I think that's why it was so tough for me.

Banya[01:04:20] Does it happen for you that you work to check time only for those activities that require interaction while for most creative work you continue till you are prompted that the day is over?And if you were working on the creative aspect would you still be thinking of it while say cooking dinner?

M4[01:04:59] Yes. Yes. Yes and no. So if I'm cooking, for example, I tend to just turn off and then just cook and I really enjoy cooking. And so that's a great way for me to switch off and do something else. I do try and do exercise at least two or three times a week. So that's another great way to just switch it off. And if it if it's something where I'm sort of it's one of these finite projects, say website, and I've finished somewhere at six o'clock and say, OK, I'm done now. But I know there's a couple of things that I still wanted to do. Then sometimes I'll creep up and be like, I need to do this before lying in bed and that all of sudden it's like I need I need to do that, but I don't get carried away by it. So I realized I go, that its not the time to think about it. I'm going to have plenty of time to think about it tomorrow morning at 9:00 when you get back to work. And so it sort of pops up and I go, what's not in the show? But yeah, it's not worth wasting are not wasting my time. But doing this now because it's time to go to sleep. It's time to read or something else.

Banya[01:06:32] Okay. So this was the toughest phase of your life or do you have a phase of life which you say toughest.

M4 [01:06:44] This was just tough in terms of as mentally tough. But at the same time, it also wasn't Like I was just making, my expectations were here. This is what I was meeting. That's why I felt it was tough. I was just not doing the as good as I think I should have been then should have been more forgiving about it and being like, you know, the last nine months you've been doing pretty well. Anyways, I think the hardest time was for me when I left, I finished high school and went to university. For one because of course, you leaving the parents and everything. You have to do everything and do your own cooking. So I moved to be in a different city. So they were at Laos and I think that they moved to Cambodia when I moved to the Netherlands. And so I studied there and moved with my girlfriend at that time. So that was a consistent sort of the saving grace because otherwise I would have been all alone. But moving, I think, moving out of the house was one thing. What I really struggled with, though, was going from living in China, Southeast Asia to Poland, where on one end rules are all guidelines, and you can pretty much do if you have a lot of freedom in whatever you do and you can afford to do anything as well, even though you know you're not earning any money in the pocket money. Pretty much very free and flexible to moving somewhere where you don't. And you have to be very careful with your money and what you do and how you spend it. But as well, I think I think it's was the mentality between going from being surrounded by people on Laos, for example, who had very little but did so much with it and were so generally content and happy with life. To people who had everything and did so little with it. So all of the kids in my class and in my uni class, for example, were mainly all from Europe. So I ended up spending most of my time with kids that were like me and talking about the contrasts in like how it is to live. And it took me a really long time to sort of get back into accepting how life was in Europe. And it was all the rules. And the difference is. That time was really difficult for me. I think goes about a year and I also didn't like my university. And so ofcourse I was doing, I was doing international business and I found it all very boring and not relevant to, you know, creating businesses and coming up with ideas and solving problems. Rather, it was about economics and micro and macro and things that I just didn't care about.

Banya[01:10:32] So why did you choose the subject?

M4[01:10:37] Why? Because I've always been interested in business. But from the perspective of let's solve one problem by a business. So let's create some solution and offer that. And so more an entrepreneur ship than in corporate business. And what I want to study was mainly corporate business. How do you do management and how do you financial accounting and subjects like that. And I guess I did, I just didn't do enough research into what I was choosing. So that first year I did that and then I did product design, the company shifted and that was much, much better as to what I wanted. And yeah, I think it was that was probably the hardest year. The first year moving and sort of getting getting used to living alone and living back in Europe. I still don't enjoy, I still didn't enjoy my last three years in Europe if I moved here. I don't know what it is, but just there was good times, of course, but much more enjoyed living in Australia. I know to ask you,.

Bnaya[01:12:01] What made you choose Australia?

M4[01:12:03] Well, my girlfriend is Australian, I'd say now. So we studied in Holland and [01:12:08] enough to Holland us was always do you study here or in Europe? And then we go and see Australia after that year. [01:12:16] Yeah. Australia I have been for three year three and a half years now.

Banya[01:12:21] But you are not from Australia.

M4[01:12:22] I am half French half German origin. Yeah. So I think that was the hardest time. And during that time I also didn't meditate at all. Or like I didn't have a practice and pretty much just took life as it came and think that's well done.

Banya[01:12:44] I think that is what most 18 year olds do. Nothing uncommon. Okay. So have you achieved a goal that took you years to complete?

M4 [01:13:17] I don't think so. I mean, not one. Oh, yeah, actually, two goals. One is my meditation practice. It took me all of my university plus another a year and a half where I knew I wanted to meditate. And I started doing it one day and then I wouldn't do it again for a month or two months. And for a really long time I did want to develop a regular practice, but I just never got to it. I didn't do it. And then eventually I did start and I think more of need than want because of my job and how stressful it was. But I don't know if that qualifies. And the other one is taking time to read some nonfiction books. I'm very curious. But again, I'm also very distractable. So when I started reading a book, I read it. I'll start reading it today. And this is really interesting. I put it down and not touch it again for another two weeks. And so trying to set aside an hour every day or half an hour, every day to read has been the other one. And so it's a lot of my goals are mainly focused around my own habits. And the next one will be to just start this business. So if that works out, there'll be a project that will have taken a goal that would have taken quite a few years.

Banya[01:15:06] How many years ?

M4[01:15:12] this current one has been going for a year. But the first business I started was right after university, so about four years ago now. I was also on an application that I worked on that for about a year before deciding to stop because it wasn't going. But sort of the goal was always to be able to start a business, to learn the things I needed to learn to, but different types of businesses later on or join other larger businesses, but also to meet the people and make the connections needed to get to work on what I'm really passionate about and which is sort of sustainability and green energy and recycling, mainly recycling, just something that gets me extremely frustrated and annoyed that we can't figure out how to reuse so much of the stuff. And so getting into that field and studying business in that field is something I wanted to do for a long time. But I also see it as something that has quite high barriers to entry in terms of you need to either be materials scientist or have like years of study and then get a person who can do years of studies had to figure out. So having sort of the connections and knowing the people and being able to run the business around, that was okay.

Banya[01:17:12] So to go there, that is now a theoretical one?. What have you started working?

M4 [01:17:22] Yes, it's it's theoretical. So it's it's there's no there's an idea. There's no business. But that's where I am going to go at this stage. The business currently is on its way. There is we are looking for a couple more clients to test the concept before then launching it and getting investment for it and turning it into cause. More serious business at this stage. Still a concept.

[01:18:00] [And the setback. Have you ever overcome any setback which had stopped you from achieving something?

[01:18:23] Those two weeks that happened about a month ago in there. I think that would have been a setback. But it was and it was an internal setback

Banya [01:18:41] Any setback which is harsher or more painful, which was deeply real stronger than this one that you mentioned before.

M4 [01:18:54] No, I don't think so. Um. There have been others there because this one is the newest one as well. It's more fresh, hot, fresh and credible than. No. Um, yeah. There have been others.

Banya[01:19:34] Which was the toughest challenge that you faced and how have you overcome?

M4 [01:19:44] Toughest challenge. I think the toughest challenge so far has been being in a relationship for nine years or staying in a relationship, not in the sense that in a bad relationship, but figuring out and learning how to get along with a person and getting through all of the things that come along with our relationship, I think has been the most challenging thing, because it requires a nice combination of self awareness and humility and sort of realizing that it's not just about me, but also about the other person and understanding that relationship. So I think that's probably been one of the biggest challenges sort of from a time perspective. I think it's an ongoing challenge. And then the other one that I think would be related to the business currently, and that's just it's selling or not only selling, but promoting and bringing out the product that I've been working on, building lots of things that design lots of things I've created. And then I've shared that with the class, but never with the real world. And I have shared it with people to sort of judge it if you want. And I think that's been really, really tough.

Banya[01:21:41] Aren't there any competitions or something that you would participate and get that feedback?

M4 [01:21:50] Yeah. There's there's quite a few of them. I've decided not to apply until and so I want to do this the beta group now and then apply to a couple of them. Concept would be really hard to pitch to a group of strangers without context.Like it is about is specifically designed for business and without also having no proof. But a test ground, if you like, having tested out the actual content, on some people. It just if you look at the pitch competitions and what they write on or rank on, I'll be missing a couple of things. One of them would be the future proof of concept or testimonials or traction. So are people using it? Or is there a clear need for it? And that's what I'm currently working on now. Once I have that, then pitching for investments or feedback or any other work or pitching for any any sort of response becomes much easier. But it could also be just me not wanting to pitch prematurely. Time probably plays a part in that.

Banya[01:23:55] And since his spoke about relationship. Does your partner also meditate.

M4 [01:24:01] Not frequently. Not regularly. I try to get her to meditate. But again, it's sort of she has a different schedule and doesn't like getting up in the morning and doing a whole bunch of things. And then in evening. There's always something that comes up. So but she does sometimes.

[01:24:37] Okay, so this challenge that you have now and the fact that you have to self motivate yourself and currently you do not have you do not have anybody working with you. OK. And right now, you don't have anyone as a stakeholder above you either, right?

M4: Yeah.

Banya: So in this situation, you are actually much more free in the sense that you can do what you want to do. Know you don't have somebody to take orders from or be around, having someone reporting to you or having to build a relationship with anyone. Have you ever been in a situation where you had somebody involved you and in dealing with you?

M4 [01:25:26] Yeah. So job before I quit and started this one was traditional corporate job. And I had, of course, the CEO and the other executive team or leadership team and also a team of people working in marketing. And there is one point two people working with me that were marketing. And then there was another point in which I was overseeing the call center. So I think at most it was like five or six people.

Banya[01:26:05] Ok. And how did they look at you as their supervisor or manager?

M4[01:26:13] It's probably a question to ask them.

Banya[01:26:17] Do you feel.

M4 [01:26:20] I think it was different for different people. Like for us, some of them felt like very much an equal and a part of their team. Not so much a supervisor. Yes, I had to do certain things, I had certain responsibilities. Role was different, but it felt much more like we are on a team together and they were part of my team. And then for others it felt more like I had to supervise and guide and like give direction and advice and a lot of feedback and spend a lot of time with them. I don't know what their reaction was to me

Banya[01:27:24] Overall when you left them were they happy or were they sad?

M4 [01:27:38] Probably sad, but most because the company changed quite a bit. Most of the times they technically left me. And by the end, when I finished at that company, I was technically consulting and there I was not sort of fully employed anymore, but I was still managing most of the team and I think, most people who are worried and upset when I left because it was a small team or relatively small team, and so they now passed on and handed over a lot of work and a lot of things that I was doing. And so I think that sort of shifted the dynamics and once I left, my role didn't exist anymore. So I was all sort of split up. And I think the structure changed.

Banya[01:28:59] So the structures changed?

M4 [01:29:00] Yeah the structure changed. And.But Iam still involved. I stil do a bit of work from them from time to time. And I still go back and have very good relationships with everyone there. So I'd say hopefully on a positive note. But I get the chance to intercat with them still.

Banya[01:29:21] Ok, so you said that working you did require meditation. That's that would help you to go through the day positively. So did meditation help you to manage people better.

M4 [01:29:43] Yes. Maybe indirectly, more than directly. But the firstly, me being in a more positive headspace made it easier to interact with other people. When it's shitty, then I'll be equally shitty with other people and that never, never helps, when you're trying to motivate or get somebody to do something or work with someone. So I think in that way it indirectly definitely helped. I think it also bothered me to be more aware of my own feelings, emotions, reactions, habits, thought, processes, how I do things. So that I could be more mindful of how other people did it. I'm trying to understand where they're either confirm compatibility was or what it was.

Banya[01:30:48] Thank you. So you were more conscious of being literally manager of that team and what you had to do to be one.

Banya[01:30:59] Yeah. That's one thing that all around made me more conscious either way. Don't think it helped was to. I don't want to confuse the two, but I don't think it helped my cause. I was I want to say relationship skills and a sense of how I actually communicate as in the language I use while at the same time it's sort of it naturally does because you're the changed mindset more where you say you choose to say some things and not others. Some sort of struggling to find what I mean by. I think it sort of didn't naturally put me up to management techniques or skills or things that I would have learned if I went to a management workshop. I think it would have made applying a lot of those easier. It made my job easier, but I don't think in itself helps to sort of instinctively develop better skills. I think you still need to take knowledge and strategies and methods and apply those. And when you apply those being more aware, it really helps.

Banya[01:32:44] Ok, so this goal that you have this vision that you have of starting your own company where you do something that is going to be different from what you are currently doing and you work towards it while you are still trying to earn a living out, you know, whatever work you're getting right now. So. So it's like balancing a long term goal and the short term goals and balancing that you do. What keeps you going in maintaining this balance?

M4[01:33:28] But what keeps me balancing? My dad has always been very much, and then many times he said that you always need a balance. And he referred to it more in terms of eating, exercise, sleep, work, partying, friends. You need a balance between all those things. And that's what he instilled. And I think that's very much if you do too much of one thing and you end up and you end up in imbalance or not in a good place and puts you in a mental state that's not healthy, really. And so when you ask what keeps me going to keep that balance, it's the mental state in itself. So very much seek to stay in that state of balance, because I know that when I'm in that state of balance, I can, one, achieve my current goals and my long term goals. And it's when I get out of that state, when I tip the balance on how I eat too much junk food for a week, I don't do any exercise or I go diving for 10 days and don't do anything else. Then that tips the balance and I have to bring it back. I have to bring it back. And that's where everything becomes a lot harder because you have to consciously sort of get the balance. You have to consciously do things to get the balance back. Whereas if I am in a state of balance, I would say I feel like I am in right now. The last couple of days, I sort of felt very balanced. It's a lot easier to do all of those things and make the right decisions and continue to do my work and go and do exercise at the end of the day, eat healthier. And yes, it is the it's getting into the state of balance in itself that keeps me motivated and achieving.

Banya[01:36:19] Yeah. And the thing is, it's not easy to do. Its like riding two boats at the same time. And some people lose lose vision of the longer term one, continue to work on the short one that then becomes life.

M4[01:36:41] And it's that it does have to like it's. I think it's a constant, its like juggling. You have to keep an eye on the balls. You can't let your eye off the ball because the moment you do, you you lost it like you have it and then it's gone again. And then you have to work. And the more I can so play in the fear of having that balance, the better, not the better. It's the wrong word, but the more fluid and easier everything becomes. Things just move on their own.

Banya[01:37:25] Would you consider yourself as a hard working person?

M4 [01:37:30] I would not, but that's because my expectations of hard work is that completing my fleeting goal where I currently are not. But if you were to ask my girlfriend, for example, she would say that I am a horrible person. So I guess it depends who the question is being asked.

Banya [01:37:58] Do you get to do describe yourself as diligent?

M4 [01:38:05] Partially. Sometimes when I'm in a good mental state, I'm diligent when I'm not. Then I will cut corners.

Banya [01:38:17] So what is the percentage of cutting corners and being diligent?

M4 [01:38:23] I reckon it's but 75 percent diligent and their best is I think that's pretty much what my school grades would have reflected as well. It's about 75 to 80 percent diligent. And yes, on average, I think that's what it would have been.

Banya[01:38:49] This is just a curiosity. So you are half French and [01:38:53] half german. So which side of the family influenced you more? [01:38:56]

M4 [01:38:57] So my dad, My dad is French and my mom is German. [01:39:02] And they both met at the civil services [01:39:09] It's a civil service. I don't know if you have that here, in France, you have to join either the military or civil service. So like the Red Cross or firefighters or somewhere, I thought for a year or two, I don't think you need to do that anymore. But he went to do civil service in Tonga in the South Pacific, and that's where he met my mom, who was during her PhD at the time. And they then had really never been back to Europe besides a couple of years here and there for work. Yeah. So travelled abroad most of our lives.

[01:39:53] So which part of the family do you prefer? The French or The German.

[01:39:58] It depends on what I'm doing. Again, it's I don't think there is a, like clear cut, I prefer, you know, that the German mentality and way of doing things is very good. When you want to get stuff done. Very efficient tool. And so I try to apply that a lot more to my work habits and style. But then when it comes to cooking and eating and having a good time, I would say I feel much more french. Right. But then again, sometimes it also sort of marriage between the two..

[01:40:47] So you can speak French, German and English? Yes.

[01:40:52] That's nice. Yeah.

[01:40:53] My parents always spoke both. I've always spoken French with my dad and german with my mom from the beginning when we were very little. And now that we've sort of gone abroad, when we come back, it's a bit of a mix and match.

[01:41:12] No, because I would go for French cuisine any day. I definitely enjoy the French movies. I can understand French to some extent. I learnt France thirty years ago. But without practice, it becomes difficult.

[01:42:24] Yeah. They do like their food. It's quite amazing when you want to visit family and friends over there. Yeah. The French I think have a 35 hour workweek [01:42:39] coming in overtime at night. [01:42:41] The last I was they retired fifty. I think they've moved that back up to 62. And the Germans have a forty two hour workweek or 40 like we have here. But then they retire at 67. And it's like just those two facts show quite a bit a two cultures and how how different they are never, of course, when you're actually there. You really see it in the mentality and the ways of doing things as well. It's sort of a so different. They're right next to each other

Banya[01:43:17] Exactly. That's the best. But they're right next to each other. And yet there's difference. So because I would. I just went in there and it sort of refreshed my memory on how different the cultures are. Now we come to the last part of the interview. Did you have any physical discomfort while you were going through the interview

M4[01:43:59] no,.

Banya[01:43:59] [01:43:59]You were travelling alone in the train and now you are with me so these are obvious answers .So that's it. How you felt about this interview activity.

So are all of these others low-high.

M4 [01:44:21] Okay. I don't think it was challenging. It was quite enjoyable. I don't know if that was same low or your skills in the activity.

Banya[01:44:36] Did you need any skills?

M4 [01:44:40] My communication skills, which aren't very good, is very much.

Banya[01:45:48] What would you rather be doing?

M4: I would be with my girlfriend. Well, that's always my answer.

Banya [01:45:55] So thank you. You did sign a consent form which you sent earlier.

M4 [01:46:07] True. So it's fair to ask what is the methodology behind this. OK.

Banya [01:46:14] So what I'm doing is study. In the questionnaire, if you find that in question, do a lot on, you know, how much you concentrate on and the type of challenges that you first thing is because looking at two attributes, one is flow and the others grit. Flow has to a large extent has already been worked on that it has done. It is directly proportionate to the kind of meditation you do and that it enhances. But for grit, we don't still have that. There was the assumption that we working on is that that grit should equally have some sort of relationship, with meditation, and that it could actually help a person. Grit is a incognitive trait. Which has got to do with perseverance, passion and to be able to use persevere and passion right through the toughest phase of, you know, doing whatever you're doing. And so that's where we are at.