

- Sean Wenger: [00:00](#) First I think the Genesis is just being, you know, extremely grateful to be a part of this community. Just thinking about, you know, the tools and the relationships and the actions that I've taken with my family as a result of being in the front row dads community have been amazing. What's up gentlemen? Welcome to the front road dads podcast. I'm your host John Broman and this is the show for family men with businesses. We want you to crush it in all areas of life, family and business.
- Jon Vroman: [00:29](#) So we're here today. I've got my buddy Sean Wenger with us and Sean is a great dude, man. Lives in Ohio, been married for, are actually together with his wife for 17 years, married for 10 too. Great kids, eight and five and okay. Professionally I'm the executive VP at fathom, which is a digital marketing agency. And one of the reasons that I wanted to talk with Sean today is that he is a front row dad, one of our brothers. And he did something really cool recently where he got guys together for a dinner to have great conversation and perhaps bring some of what we were doing at our retreats into that environment. But also just [inaudible] great conversation, uh, with, with great men. And so we have Sean with us today. Sean, welcome to the show, man. I'm so glad you're here. All right. Thanks John.
- Jon Vroman: [01:21](#) Really appreciate you having me on a, on the podcast, dude. Let's start with something as a little warm up. Little warm up here, man. What is going on in your life presently that we can celebrate, man, specifically relating to your family? Something great trip, fun experience. I mean, we're here in the holidays, dude. I, I, you seem like the type of guy that would make the most of this time of year as well. So tell us what's going well in your life. Yeah, for sure. So I think, uh, as I look at, you know, our path, uh, you'd mentioned my wife and I were together for 17 years, but married for 10. So we, uh, you know, we, we didn't rush into that decision. And, uh, you know, being a little bit older, I think we definitely, uh, you know, take the opportunity to appreciate where we're at in life and just how special that this time is.
- Jon Vroman: [02:08](#) So, yeah, I think this, this time of year is the really special time for our family. There's a lot of traditions that, uh, that happened, uh, you know, this time of year. But one of the more fun ones is we've got, so we're blessed here in Cleveland. They have an amazing, uh, amazing orchestra. The Cleveland orchestra is one of the top five in the world. So we have this family tradition where we go to the orchestra, we get dressed up, we have a nice dinner, and then we stay at a hotel downtown Cleveland and there's a big square where they just, you know, they totally do the, you know, the holiday lights. So

we've got the pictures of our little kids, you know, in their pajamas afterwards, you know, kind of looking at the lights and it's just a, a really great tradition. So, yeah, really grateful for a lot of things this time of year. But, uh, some, some really special moments thrown into the mix. When you were a kid, what do you, what do you remember about the holidays? What, what makes you smile? I'm sure not the presence you didn't get, but a what, what are the things that [inaudible] rich and tradition for you as a kid?

Sean Wenger:

[03:06](#)

Yeah, so I grew up with, with three brothers and I just, uh, I reflect back to, you know, those times where we all believed. And it was just this magical moment of, you know, coming down, uh, coming down the stairs and seeing, seeing all of those, uh, those presents and it just being really special. And, uh, you know, we had this, uh, this one moment of this one year where you need write letters to Santa. And I had this, uh, you know, I had this epiphany that I wanted to go to the North pole and work as an L. so, uh, you know, Sandra wrote me this note that, you know, Hey, you know, this year I just, I had so many toys that didn't have room in the sled, but next year you can come by next year. And I forgot about that. But my, my, you know, my parents didn't, so they wrote the note, Hey, we came, we, you know, you didn't see a, you know, there was any bags packed. So we took advantage of my goal and this is my opportunity to yeah. To be living in the North wall

Jon Vroman:

[04:00](#)

there. That's fun man. I really appreciate that. You know, you talked about when you just said coming down the stairs or seeing the presence under the tree. I remember that as a kid, so, well, you know, my dad would make us wait at the top of the stairs and he would get a camera ready and he would, I think you would draw it out longer just to make us suffer a little bit and perhaps in great wisdom that we would then be more excited. Uh, you know, about the experience because of waiting. But he would, you know, he would build a fire and my mom would put like this casserole in the oven and we would be at the top of the stairs just waiting to run down the stairs. And I remember charging down the stairs of my sister and seeing all the presents. And I, I've always felt that was something I wanted to give to my kids. Was that,

Sean Wenger:

[04:46](#)

yeah,

Jon Vroman:

[04:46](#)

that wow experience. And you know, now that my tigers 10 and notions five, I get concerned. I have a little bit of concern about, about overdoing it with toys, you know, concerned about plastic and too much plastic in the ocean, you know, and, and I, I'm just

wondering like, Sean, how are you viewing presence? And no, no right or wrong here. I'm not angling for a, uh, to, to either compliment you or criticize you on your approach and nor anybody. Um, do I want to do that? But I am genuinely interested as to kind of behind the scenes, man. When you and Katie talk about presence and how many and you know, all those things, like what, what is a little bit of your family philosophy with?

Sean Wenger:

[05:32](#)

Okay. Yeah. So it's, it's a great question. It's one that we, uh, you know, we definitely have, you know, serious conversations on, I think, you know, we're in a position to be blessed and to be able to, you know, give our kids a, you know, certain things that likely I wasn't able to be given. Uh, you know, just in, in my upbringing. You know, we tend to really air on, you know, not going overboard in, uh, in the, in this holiday season. Um, you know, we'll get a few nice gifts, but you know, just in terms of, you know, it's, it's amazing. My son's eight and he's asking for an iPhone 11 Christmas, you know, just you're thinking about, you know, throwing a a thousand dollars towards a gift for an Emma, an eight year old, right. These are active conversations in his school, but really taking the time to focus more on what, what is the season about.

Sean Wenger:

[06:20](#)

Our faith is really important to us. So really bringing that element into the conversation with, uh, with our children, elements of, of giving back, the omens, uh, you know, really, you know, comparing what other, you know, children may be going through with, with their, their holiday. Just to keep that perspective as our children get older. I think, you know, the gifts get bigger and bigger, whether it's, you know, PlayStation fours and phones and those pieces. But I think we're in a, uh, you know, a part of time in our life right now we're just, I think, you know, less is more and really, you know, using that as an opportunity to explain the true meaning behind the Christmas, the Christmas holiday for us individually. Do you think Sean, and I didn't prep you for any of this, but that's how this goes, right? This is just an honest conversation.

Sean Wenger:

[07:06](#)

I, these are the same questions I'd be asking you if we were sitting around having a coffee. Right? I'm just, do you think that you could spoil [inaudible] too many toys and I, I realized that the words I'm choosing could all be debated, right? Cause we'd first have to define, well what is spoiling and what is too many? And there's a lot to this question, I realize it's loaded, but just in the spirit of that, you know, do you think that's, is it quantity of toys that can spoil a kid or is it or is it how we present them? Is it right? Yeah, I don't know. I'm just curious. Can you ever do it?

I think you certainly can overdo it as you know, as I think the, the macro, you know, dad topics or parenting topics, I think there's an element of I want to be successful and not having, you know, material things be a huge focus and putting so much energy around material things that that's the driver of happiness for the kids.

Sean Wenger:

[08:01](#)

I think there's, there's a macro element, but then I think there's also just, you know, being grateful and you know, when, you know, we're, we're buying presents and they're going to, you know, you know, the grandparents on one side and the grandparents on the others and you just got all of these gifts, does that become special and are you truly grateful for those things? So I think you can absolutely, you know, overdo it and give guidance to a, you know, our parents. I mean if you can get to the grandparent age where that's their, uh, you know, their mission in life is this, you know, it's a, you know, get to get all those gifts. But I think for us and everyone has a different philosophy, so definitely not saying, you know, our way is right. But yeah, I think, you know, not overdoing it and really celebrating, you know, one special gift or using that to reinforce that the bigger elements of the holiday. You know, I think that's the path that we're, you know, my wife and I are moving down with our kids. It's so interesting cause when I evaluate my own emotions around this, Sean, I think about

Jon Vroman:

[08:56](#)

sometimes I want to create that amazing moment for my, my son, my boys on Christmas morning where they come downstairs and they're like, no way. Right? I also realize that in an attempt to do that, that is a game that if you try to one up it every year, like it just gets bigger and more grand. So if you're trying to win their hearts, like if Christmas is about Christmas morning and the grand nature of that without every so often like when your, you go five presidents, when your, you go 10, when you're go 15 amendment next year you go zero just to reset it, you know? But I think about whether you celebrate Hanukkah or Christmas or some other holiday, I think the spirit of what we're talking about is the same. [inaudible] you know, even for myself getting the difference of asking like what do you want for Christmas and what do you want to experience this Christmas?

Jon Vroman:

[09:49](#)

Because I think that as adults [inaudible] perpetuate the problem at times by even asking kids like we, we sometimes get lazy as adults. We don't know what to say to these kids who go, what do you want for Christmas? Right? What do you hope Santa brings you? And it's like, of course you're not a horrible human for asking that question. But we do kind of perpetuate

the problem when that becomes our primary question. Got to get your list done. Make sure you know, Billy, you're really falling behind because you haven't written out all the material possessions that you want to make you happy. Like, and then we wonder why they're not happy versus what do you want to experience this Christmas? What do you want the season to be about? I think early in my life I used to make it all about the, the morning and the presence and all that versus like, what do you want the experience to be about?

Jon Vroman: [10:34](#)

What do you want to do as a family? How do you want to feel this Christmas? You know, what do we want our rituals and our traditions to be? Yeah, no, I think that's a, that's a really healthy perspective, John. And just a, on a personal note, my mom's going through some health issues right now and I think it's just, it brings a different element as you know, we come together and I've got brothers that live outside of the area, you know, as we call come back. Really, you know, taking in that experience and being present to those things. Uh, you know, that's truly the gift. You know, 30 years from now reflecting on this year, it's not going to be, you know, that nice toy that was under the tree. It's going to be, remember this time that we're all together in the log and you know, we've got the ability to do that every day of the year.

Jon Vroman: [11:14](#)

That's right. That aren't Christmas. So yeah, I think that's a really healthy perspective. That's right. Yeah. And it's the difference of, you know, how many presents versus how many smiles or how many laughs. It's almost like, what are you counting? Right? What quantity of what, right. It's not quantity of presence, it cookies. It's, it's you know, and that those could be love languages. Again, nothing wrong with that, right? Nothing wrong with the love language of food or presence, but I think it's in addition to or, or really it's also what results are you getting? Yeah. Hey, there you go. Are you happy with how, what's the vibe of your family? Right? How does it feel? All right, so, Hey, well we really wanted to talk about today. Rail does. And I told, I was like, ah,

Sean Wenger: [11:54](#)

we're just gonna focus on this one thing. I really want to get into the dad dinner and maybe if you can, Sean set us up a little bit by, and I'm just going to, I'm going to go right to you here and say you hosted a dinner, so maybe take this wherever you want. You could start with, yup. Where did this idea originally come from? Or just take us right into the dinner and tell us about it. Either way you want to go, I'll let you be the captain here. Yeah. Perfect. So first, I think the Genesis is just being, you know, extremely grateful to be a part of this community. Just thinking

about, you know, the tools and the relationships and the actions that I've taken with my family as a result of being in the front row. Dad's community have been amazing. So, you know, for me, I was really thinking, how can I amplify this experience that I've had with, uh, you know, with this community.

Sean Wenger: [12:44](#)

How might I bring, you know, these tools and these resources to folks that may not have access to, you know, to this, this way of thinking. Uh, as I look at our, you know, I look at our group, there's a lot of entrepreneurs, there's likely a lot of folks that have invested heavily in personal development. But as I think about these tools, you know, there were so many folks in my network that I just, you know, I knew to be great dads, you know, family man doing their best, you know, going down this path. So really the, the idea was, you know, how might I bring these tools back to folks that I think really could need it. I think there's people that may be a great fit for this community and they get exposed to that and Hey, I want more of this, but there may be others where, you know, it's just these simple tools that I was able to, uh, to, to bring forward and share kind of in that, you know, that collective wisdom or, you know, crowdsourcing element that was, uh, you know, that was really helpful.

Sean Wenger: [13:36](#)

So I've actually, I've done two of these. I did one in January of last year and I did a, the most recent one in October. And basically the premise is I, uh, I sent an email out to, uh, you know, my friends who I just knew, you know, this role as a dad of, of being very serious. And I knew that through conversations or seeing on Facebook the type of posts that they had, and basically sent out a invite and saying, you know, Hey, I'm willing, you know, I want to buy all of you dinner. You know, dinner is on me and we're going to talk about this topic. Uh, you know, being a great dad. And I called it the Allstar dads not to break any, a trademark infringement.

Sean Wenger: [14:15](#)

Hey, this North not coming from a place of expertise. It's coming from a place of, you know, Hey, we got people in different junctures on the path, then you can probably all benefit from hearing the wisdom of the group. So that was the Genesis. And I did the first one and I think, you know, people didn't know what to expect. I hosted it at a kind of this neat little bar and this private room. And I think people just imagine, okay, they're going to accommodate some beers and BS and you know, tell stories. But really had kind of a structure to this experience for the guys and said, Hey, if this was a value, you know, I want to do this, you know, a couple times a year, you know, it's not a huge commitment. It's not, you know, monthly meetings. The group feels that, you know, this was a valuable experience. Let's

continue to do that. So I think we had around 15 folks the first time and our most recent one there was, you know, I think close to 20 folks that uh, that either came back or new folks. So, uh, I think people have really seen the value and you know, that was my biggest takeaway is, you know, how might you share to the larger group?

Jon Vroman:

[15:21](#)

I think it's awesome. I hope that more and more guys do this. I mean, I think that no matter what, whether they're a part of front row dads, brotherhood or not having them, you know, be part of this, you know, this the smaller group conversation. I mean, like I said, we have bands, um, you know, for anybody out there listening that doesn't, or is new to the show or just new to the community, the band is a small group. We have, we believe it's four guys, two hours a month and basically no business talk. And I think these smaller conversations are so critical and we need them. We need them to happen everywhere, whether they're officially front row dads groups or not. They just need to happen. And I remember when Adam stock did this. So shout out to one of our are actually our original members.

Jon Vroman:

[16:04](#)

He was at our very first dad's retreat. He's been to every retreat since then, which is really cool. And I remember him coming home and doing the same thing. He's like, I've got all these great ideas. Why don't I just get some of my friends together and I'll share. Dan cossetted did this with his team where they brought in their best ideas and pass them along. And I think there's brilliant and also getting great ideas from people who, you know, uh, who, it's not just passing along the information from our group, but it's gathering and mining for great ideas within any group, right? You don't have to be passing it along. You can just be, you know, extracting it from the brilliance of all the people. Cause somebody, everybody's good at something, right? Everybody's got one idea that's going to be great that they can bring to the table and share with everybody. Let's get into some technical parts of this if we can. Sean. So of those 20 people, do you remember how many were returning and how many were new?

Sean Wenger:

[16:55](#)

I'm going to say, you know, probably three fourths. We're returning probably a quarter. We're, we're new. I cast a broad net and just, I mean, you know, people have very busy schedules, so not everyone, you know, for the first time could make it, that wanted to make it, um, books that wanted to make it the second time, you know, the scheduling didn't work, so you're never going to find the exact time. But I just took that as a validation that most people, you know, not only raise their

hands, but you know, came back for a second time that there was, there was great value being, you know, being shared.

Jon Vroman: [17:22](#)

That's really cool. And give us a little bit of the structure of the experience. So how did, how did it flow from start to finish for the agenda, if you will?

Sean Wenger: [17:31](#)

Yeah, perfect. So one of the things I went through the exchange training, I don't know if you're familiar with the, that that's Jon Bergoff sup organization and basically used a lot of the kind of the core tenants of that facilitation method to structure this and it works brilliantly. So that was really nervous. The front end, like what is this, you know, how's this gonna work? But you know, literally just, you know, taking some of that recipe from, from that training was great. So, you know, the first thing we do is kind of align on a purpose question. Why is this important? Why are you not with your family tonight to be here? What was it that you drew you to, to make that investment in time? But then, you know, I would do things like paired interviews. So having some focused reflection, you know, sharing that with a, with a partner, going into a group exercises, you know, really, I think that's one of the most valuable pieces for the guys is that that crowdsourcing, right?

Sean Wenger: [18:22](#)

Getting into small groups, finding a topic and really mining for all the great wisdom that that comes when you bring a group of 2020 folks together. But then there were some real tangible tools that I was able, you know, to share up to this point. You know, things like that. The miracle morning, simple things like the life priority wheel that, you know, many of the folks on this call are, you know, have access to those types of tools. Jim shields, the education matrix, some foundational scheduling tools. So just so you know, some life tools that may be helpful to folks that don't have those access or don't have access to those, uh, those things. You know, I brought books in, so the, the first one I bought, everyone, Jim shields, uh, 18 summers book, you know, so everyone got that. We talked about the family board meeting and what, you know, what that's meant to, uh, to, to my family.

Sean Wenger: [19:04](#)

This last one, I bought everyone your book and you were able to have to speak at it. Intermix some, some guest speakers. I had a, an entrepreneur speak at this most recent one in October. Really great guy. He successfully sold a technology business. But during the process of selling his business, he had a really horrible health issue and his body basically went septic and had a very small percentage of chance to live. And he basically came and told his story in great detail and some, some really gory

detail, but really the message coming off this, you know, he was, you know, felt invincible. You know, he had a really successful business. He was in the process of selling this very successful technology business and then going through this process of, you know, almost losing his life. Just the focus that he has and the priorities he has on his family.

Sean Wenger:

[19:54](#)

And you know, really right now, his most precious, you know, um, asset is this time. So, you know, he shared his calendar and how he makes decisions and you know, the decisions to, you know, be, you know, be there when his kids get on the bus every morning and he's there when they get off the bus every morning. Just, you know, these things that just, you know, I think a lot of us probably, and I'm, I fall into this just feeling invincible, right? Things are going great. You know, you've got your businesses, you're running a million miles an hour, but not in kind of a, you know, a negative type way, but to, you know, use this as an opportunity to bring perspective. You know, what, what are those most important things? Are we, you know, are we listening to that? Are we bringing the presence that we need in these times when we are together?

Sean Wenger:

[20:36](#)

So I think there's a million ways you could format this, John. But I would just, I would say, you know, I think, you know, going through the training with the exchange community, that was incredibly for me, just in terms of building a recipe that was successful. I think people walked away, you know, coming into it thinking, Hey, this is just going to be some guys shooting the shit about being dads. And they walked away saying like, wow, that was a powerful experience in that, you know, I can't take credit for that. I mean the design came from us and some really smart folks that are a part of our group. Yeah. I think a little bit of when people think about dads getting together, at least my opinion, my projection is that know people will sometimes think about like, all right, we're going to have a beer or we're going to talk sports.

Sean Wenger:

[21:19](#)

We're going to smoke a cigar. And while listen, if somebody is out there and enjoys sports, cigars and beers, power to you. But really your event and our events are much more and they are very carefully crafted conversations and also environments that invite in spontaneous conversation that people can have where this isn't where we complain about everything. Although you can be honest, this is a place to find answers and find solutions and then to be able to show up with courage, to be able to make changes for your family. When you think about the results of this, right, this experience, this, um, your dinner and the front row dads, retreats, well let's just focus in on a dinner for a

second. What do you think are some of the great stories that have come out of that? Either for people that in the moment, how to break through after the dinner had a breakthrough or, or even for your own experience?

Sean Wenger:

[22:21](#)

What's been the result of this? Yeah. Yeah. So I think for me one is kind of that immediate feedback that they give that just how surprised that they were around the experience and the real conversations that that folks up oats have. I would say this about you know, your events as well. I'm always amazed like how candid and real people get. Like immediately, like you go from zero to like sharing your most intimate details and you know, I think you know with your group is a high alignment, just the [inaudible] values and the types of folks. I was amazed to see this in this group, right? You know, partners of accounting firms to a police officer, right? Like this very disparate group that came together and it was the same. It was that same feeling. People were getting real very quick. I think that real conversation brought out a lot of key learnings.

Sean Wenger:

[23:13](#)

What I love is the feedback where they say, Hey, you know, since your meeting, I've been doing the family board meetings and this is the types of conversation or this is the experience that I've had or, you know, one of the things I've, I've got a daughter John and uh, you know, I've got three brothers and my wife has two brothers. So literally our daughter's the first girl in 40 years on either side of the family. So we know nothing about raising girls. So, you know, reading the book, you know, strong fathers, strong daughters, I mean one just scares the heck out of me. But bringing that to, you know, folks in this group where it's, you know, people are just getting exposed to things sooner and we're just going to be so much better equipped to, to handle these things. So knowing that I might have a small part and you know, shaping that or you know, you know, avoiding certain things down the road for people I care deeply about. That's been amazing. And you know, for the cost of a dinner for a, you know, for some guys that's money, very well spent. Uh, you know, investing back into people I really care about.

Jon Vroman:

[24:12](#)

All right guys, I want to take just a quick second to talk about something really important now and know you're listening to the show because you want to level up your game at home, but if you want to take the next step within front row dads, I want you to do something today which is text the words front row dads to three one four six six five one seven six, seven three separate words. Front row dads, it's not case sensitive. I want to send you a few things right away. First, I want to send you a recording from a masterclass that I recorded with my good

friend and author of the miracle morning, Howe L rod. He's a father of two amazing human beings and we recorded a show called the five habits of a front row. Dad, I want to send that to you because I think it is well worth listening to.

Jon Vroman: [24:49](#)

Second, I want to give you 45 minutes of a mindblowing conversation that I had with a woman named Kim and NAMI and the show is titled have better sex, hugely popular. This will rock your world and likely your spouses as well, but I want you to have access to this information. Number three, I want to give you access to 1300 other front row dads inside of our Facebook group where you can ask any question, share any win and give any resource that you think could be valuable to the community. And lastly, I want to include you in one email I send out each week. It's short, it's to the point and I pull from my life experiences along with the insights for more than 135 members of our brotherhood. I want to give you the best of the best in each email. So all you have to do is just text the words front row dads to three one four six six five one seven six, seven and we will get you started today. What do you think is the [inaudible]? There is one, but more the most common challenge men face when they do get around the table and they open up and they're honest. Is there a theme or a pattern to notice about the challenges that they're up against?

Sean Wenger: [25:57](#)

So I think if I were to boil up some of the big ones over the last, uh, the last two dinners that we've had, just, you know, I think really this, this issue of time. How are people managing time? How are they viewing time, you know, kind of the quantity of time versus quality of time. There's a lot of discussion around, around those topics. You know, I think, you know, the, the topic of just embracing failure is one that we've had some really good conversations as we, as we break out and we have those, uh, those conversations and some of those, you know, I may prime the pump with, uh, with stories. So, you know, one of my favorite stories is that the founder of Spanx, I don't know if you're familiar with that, uh, that story or that company.

Jon Vroman: [26:38](#)

Tell us Sarah Blakely.

Sean Wenger: [26:40](#)

So, you know, started this company out of her house. Everything

Jon Vroman: [26:44](#)

from you know, selling to, to shipping, going to the, you know, the post office to this multibillion dollar company. But one of the things that she did growing up, and you know, maybe this is something that was even shared with one of your learnings was you know, they had an exercise where they would, you know,

her dad would sit her and her brother down and they talk about, you'd ask him what did you fail at this week? And really building that muscle that, you know, failure is okay and what you do with failure is really important. So she talks about how critical that was in her ability to persist. There are all these challenges of, of, you know, growing up going dollar business. You know, I think there's a real topic for the folks that I'm bringing in this group. Failure hits us really, really quick with all the travel sports.

Jon Vroman: [27:25](#) When I was growing up, I don't think if I couldn't ride my bike to the baseball field, like I think we'd have a real conversation about my talent level. But now with, I mean just all of their travel, dance and travel, baseball and soccer and hockey failure. You're having these conversations at second grade kids. So how are we equipped to have that conversation? And another one that comes up and I think it's parallel and it's intertwined is that the relationship with your wife, whether it's purely from a relationship perspective, whether it's your aligned strategies on raising, raising kids. So I would say in terms of these sessions, those would be three big ones. John, you know, kind of the, the time piece, embracing failure and relationship with their spouse. No shot. I know that there's a possibility your friends listen to this. Your wife could listen to this, your whoever, right?

Jon Vroman: [28:11](#) Like anybody, coworkers, right? [inaudible] anybody good? Listen to this. So I, I asked with great respect. Like I know you're also very vulnerable, open person, so whatever you feel comfortable sharing with the world. What do you struggle with, man? Like where when you look, even if you looked at 2019 as we end this year and a decade, right? What is been something that where have you, what have been your toughest moments if you call it a failure, right? Or a learning or, or what is it now? Right. Mine, I'm very open with mine. I've just talked about it a lot, which is emotional mastery is probably the one thing that I've wrestled with the most and I'm still amazed at how quickly I can lose my cool. Like I, I'm like, I've read a thousand books, I've been to Tony Robbins events, I meditate, I exercise like I'm pretty well taken care of in my life.

Jon Vroman: [29:05](#) So many things are going great and I'm like, why do I lose it? You know, I've seen a therapist about it. My wife's emotional freedom technique, tapping if you know, she taps with me and all these things I've tried so much and I have made progress, but I've been really open with our community that that is something that I've wrestled with and there've been so many moments when I've raised my voice at my kids or my energy got really intense. And I remember that feeling when my dad did it to me

as a kid. And I was like, I'll never do that to my kids. And here I am doing it to my kids. The thing I swore I would never do and it breaks my heart man. And um, I've really worked

Sean Wenger:

[29:42](#)

on that. So I'm just curious for you is what's been something that you work on it? Yup. Yeah. I think, you know, one to just acknowledge them. I've got a great wife, I've got a great partner in life that definitely helps. This is a, this is a team sport and I'm so blessed to, uh, to, to have her herbs know. I think we've got complimentary skills. You know, I think the, the big thing that I struggle with and I, you know, continue to struggle with is just this topic of presence. How can I be most present? I was a part of that first a retreat as well in Philadelphia. And I shared an idea about, uh, the gun safe that I bought and uh, pick that up and like that. But I think even if I'm in a situation and I'm, I'm with my kids, you know, and I don't have my technology with me.

Sean Wenger:

[30:26](#)

You know, is my mind going to something at work? Is my mind going to something that I, you know, I forgot to do or I need to do? Is it thinking, you know, down the future, you know, intellectually, you know, you need to be present. But I think in terms of really building that muscle and being in a situation where I look back at the end of each day and say, you know, I gave it my best and you know, at the end of my day, right? So ultimately the end day my kids will say, Hey dad, dad was there. I think that's, you know, that's still the big goal and I think that takes work and I think that, you know, that that's a muscle that you need to build. And I think there's some structural pieces that, you know, I'm working on that, how do I show up the best in that fashion? [inaudible]

Sean Wenger:

[31:09](#)

is this truly a priority of mine? All right, I can say that, but my actions aren't showing that. Then I need to either change my actions or I need to change my goal. But that's one that I know I'm not going to change my goal on. So I wouldn't say that I'm not present. You know, the people around me would likely say that, Hey, he's a pretty present guy. But just knowing that that's definitely one thing that, that if I could improve that 20%, um, I think there'd be a lot more benefits for, you know, for, for my family and my relationships dry. Let's talk about that for a second. This idea of being present, and I don't want to take too much away if there's more to talk about with the dad dinner, because I know that's the thing I'm most interested in, but this is a really interesting trail to follow.

Sean Wenger:

[31:49](#)

What have you noticed specifically pulls you away most often? Is it the ding of a phone? Is it incomplete work? Is it that

you'd rather be watching TV, you're projecting a bunch of possibilities, right? But like what is it that's pulling you out of the moment specifically? Yeah, I, yeah, I think it's, it's definitely work-related items, whether it's you know, the dinging of the phone and email that in your mind, do you think you need to get back to right away when the reality is you likely don't have to get back to those things up right away. Maybe thinking about deals that I'm working on or just, you know your, your mind going a million miles an hour. Like I'm sure a lot of the entrepreneurs are part of this group or are hardwired that way. So I think it's, you know, not only presence but also distraction. Right? Or are you distracted in that time? So you know, and is it because

Jon Vroman:

[32:40](#)

just play that obvious I guess. Is it because like let's say you spend eight hours a day doing something and then you have a five minute drive home or a 20 minute drive home, but you get home and you're, you've spent eight hours thinking about something, you're still in that mindset. And then do you never just get out of it or is it the type of thing where because you get to go, there's actually a thing called the Tetris effect. I believe this was written about by chip and Dan Heath, but this idea that you played Tetris the game and you play it for long enough and then you walk outside and you can't help but try to put buildings together so that they all fit. You know, you're, you can't stop. And I think lawyers face this where there are police officers where if their job all day is to bust people doing something wrong, who's breaking the law right?

Jon Vroman:

[33:26](#)

Then you get home and because your, your brain, the way that our brains work, we're so conditioned for that that we look at our kids and we're like, who's doing something wrong? What law did they break? And that's what we're, that's what we're experiencing that or is it that your phone dings, you pick it up, you look at the email and then you're like, Oh crap, now I'm, I'm sucked out of the moment and into something else. Yeah. No, I think it's more of the Tetris effect. Just being a, you know, running a, you know, running a business, thinking about the different deals, you know, I'm a part of several nonprofit organizations, you know, from a board perspective. So there's just, there's a million things going on. So I think it's just, you know, it's, you know, trying to process all of those things or a new idea comes up and you go down a path, you know, mentally, uh, on something.

Jon Vroman:

[34:10](#)

So, yeah, I think, yup. Building out those tools, whether it's the meditation, whether it's being focused, whether it's, you know, having a, when you feel that you're going down that path, how

do you quickly recognize it and bring yourself back to, to that state. So I just share that. I don't know how vulnerable that is, but that's [inaudible] it's definitely something I, you know, I need to continue to, to focus on and improve for, uh, you know, for my family. Well, I think vulnerability is about what's real, right? It's not about trying to, it's not, it's not, it's not about having a more vulnerable moment that beats somebody else's.

Jon Vroman:

[34:44](#)

Cause you're very real. You know? And I think that by the way, when you think about, look, you could, somebody could be like, Hey, I'm an alcoholic and nobody knows it or whatever. And those might be shocking moments. But to a kid, a parent who's not fully present can really be a challenge. Right? And to a parent not being present can be real challenge. Both can suffer in that space. So I'm really grateful that you brought that up Sean, because I do think that's a big one. What do you think is the solution and where have you had success managing that? Is it being less busy during the day? Is it a bigger transition period or you know, a buffer period between work and family life? How have you had success and what are you thinking about for 2020 how are you going to continue to get better?

Jon Vroman:

[35:24](#)

Yeah, so I think, you know, there's some, some light packs like a, you know, the phone say for locking your phone in your car before you go in. I mean, I think there's just, you know, some easy things you can do there. But I think there's a, there's power in having accountability coaches in those. So, you know, you've got, you know, some of the folks that are most in tune with how you're wired every night when you come home and your wife and your kids. So, you know, I think there's value in saying to them, Hey, this is something that dad's working on. This is something that's important to me and this is why this is important me. And if you ever get to a point where you feel like I'm not giving you the focus or the attention that you deserve and I want you to have, I want you to call me out on that and I'm gonna, you know, I'm going to set that intention and I promise you as we go throughout the course of this next year, I'm going to react to that.

Jon Vroman:

[36:09](#)

You appropriate way, right? In my mind, I may be working on people like, alright, just the, I just need to get this done. But you know, I think there's power if that is something that is important to you as a, as a bother or me. So you bring some accountability partners into, into that mix. My wife knows when I'm distracted, right? My five year old, she may not know to the extent you're not paying a hundred percent attention in a conversation. And so I think there may be some easy ways to do that. But you know, the big question, like, are you willing to do

that? Yeah. Do you really want that feedback? So, so yeah, I think those are a couple, a couple of easy things outside of, you know, a strong meditation practice and some of those others that, you know, may help you personally, you know, be aware when, when you have those triggers.

Jon Vroman:

[36:54](#)

Sean, we just had this conversation in San Diego. Tatiana was there with tiger and we were talking about being on the phone, right? And there's a, there's an interesting element here that we're wrestling with, which is that tiger will say, can I play on the iPad? And we'll say, no, and that, yeah, I'm on the phone. And mom's on the phone at that moment when he's like, can I play on the iPad? And we're like, no. Uh, Nope. Well, I might be looking up zoo tickets right on my phone for that day. And Tatyana is sending a message to the AI rods to plan breakfast with everybody. We're still on our phones. Right. And the interesting thing that I've come to realize is that it's like, listen, you lead people, Sean, you know this, you've stood on stages and given speeches. If you're giving a speech and somebody's on their phone and they're typing away, you could easily say they might be taking notes.

Jon Vroman:

[37:44](#)

I've taken notes on my phone in a speech easily thing. They might be totally bored. They might be on social media, texting a friend, whatever. There's no matter how many times I tried to intellectually understand that situation. There's a part of me that feels it's very different than if somebody has got a journal app. If somebody got a journal and they're taking notes, I'm like, they're writing down everything. Brilliant. I'm saying right now. But somehow, somehow if they're on their phone, I really wrestle with what are they doing right? Cause there's just a [inaudible] a thousand things they could be doing. And if they're writing in a journal, they're probably taking notes. And I think for tiger, I get his frustration with that, right? Because, so what we, what we determined as a family or we've, we've now said, and we'll see you follow through on this.

Jon Vroman:

[38:29](#)

I mean that's the intent is that when we're on the phone in front of tiger is too, let know what we're doing. Like, Hey buddy, I'm just going to take a quick minute and plan out our data Morrow and get passes for the zoo. So tell him what I'm doing on the phone versus just having him see me be on the phone all the time wondering what I'm doing. It's like when, when I'm in the car with my wife and she'll, you'll pick up her phone and start texting somebody. I get a little hurt because I'm like, there she is. Like, I'm driving, I'm doing the work and she's texting somebody who's having a great time. And I'm like, and so I'll, I used to get really passive aggressive with her. I'm like, must be

nice, you know, and, and then uh, but what I've realized in that moment also is that she might be doing something valuable. So a couple of times I have busted or she's just talking to somebody else and I'm like, I'd like to talk with you. And then there's been other times when you know, she's doing something really like, I'm like, there you are on your phone again. And she's like, well ocean just got hurt and I'm just helping the babysitter to figure it out. And I'm like, I'm a jerk.

Jon Vroman:

[39:32](#)

So I guess my point up behind this is that, do you experience the same thing by the way? [inaudible] does that, what I share resonate with you? Do you wrestle with that, you know, in your life just in terms of being hurt when someone else's like the screen time thing. Cause you're saying like Alec is asking about a phone, right? Yep. So I'm guessing screen, so are a thing. Can I assume that? Is that, yeah. Not so much for the kids, but it definitely resonates. Uh, not so much the texting, but my wife will be on her phone at night. So over the last five years, my wife, you know, she stayed home with our kids, which is rage. She worked out when we had our first and we had a second child. It just didn't make sense. And you know, she was off. So we just had this misalignment of time.

Jon Vroman:

[40:20](#)

Right. I would go and work, she'd be working at home, you know, the tough job of raising kids. You know, I'd get home and he'd go into to dinner time and bed time and at the end of the day, like I'm ready to connect with her and she just wants to decompress. Right. Gretchen is going into the phone. So just even looking at the schedules, right. I can take that as a slight, which, you know, I totally resonate with your message, but it's also just recognizing like, what's a, you know, what's the time? And maybe just, you know, being in the car, you know, that's the best time for someone to do that. So, yeah. So it definitely, definitely resonates with me. Um, I think we're to the point with our younger ones, you know, their own phones, but you know, wanting to get on the iPad and you know, monitoring those types of things.

Jon Vroman:

[41:06](#)

It's not out of control at this, uh, at this point, thankfully. Yeah. Yeah. Well it's something we all need to be thinking about and talking about because the screens are definitely changing the landscape in a major way. I think we need to be just in conversation around that and being honest with ourselves. Like I've definitely felt an addiction to my phone. Like if I can't go to the bathroom without my phone, I have a problem I need go to bathroom. Where's my phone? That's a problem. Like, let's be honest, if you can't sit with yourself for a couple of minutes while you're using the bathroom in silence with your own

thoughts, you may have a problem. Sean, let's go back and complete this conversation and thank you so much for saving some or giving some time today for this, this chat. Yeah.

Sean Wenger: [41:52](#) Is there anything that we didn't say about the dads dinner that

Jon Vroman: [41:55](#) we want to mention? Is there anything we left out that we didn't get to?

Sean Wenger: [41:58](#) I just think in terms of, uh, the experience, you know, I think if someone's been a part of the front row dads, you know, you've been given really great tools to go out and share this, share this with friends. I've been really inspired with some of the amazing leaders that we have as a part of the front row dads group. Cause I, you know, I look at you, I look at, you know, Dan Cassada and what he's done and John Cain and the hundreds of folks that, you know, it's changed the trajectory of their lives. It's super inspiring to me. But at the end of the day, we all have the ability to make that impact, right? Just, yeah. Repackaging the tools that I receive from you, right? Spending a dinner like you, you just never know when you're gonna, you know, make that impact in someone's life. So I would just, you know, share that.

Sean Wenger: [42:43](#) We all have the ability to go out and, you know, maximize, amplify, you know, that's a, that, that impact. And I think that's evident in how I came into the group. I came in from, from a guy named Scott Lowery. He's a, he's a member of our group. He invited me to the first one and I mean, here's someone that you know is changed. Uh, you know, you know, me as a, as a business leader, as, as a husband, as a dad, right? That's just a one on one relationship has been incredible. You know, we talk about, you know, is one of the things he always says you're the, you know, the average of the five people you spend the most time with. Like he's definitely, you know, up to my average, you know, by a by a lot. But I, you know, my big takeaway is, you know, how might we be that for others and you know, if you're a part of this group, got the tools and it's, you know, a small investment investment of your time with, you know, hopefully folks you care about and you know, there may be some really special outcomes that you may not even know about as a result of this investment that we're making.

Sean Wenger: [43:41](#) Art being a part of the front row dads community

Jon Vroman: [43:43](#) for sure. And I want to give an additional love that you shared earlier about the exchange community that's led by John Bergoff and Scott Lowery, this incredible group that is teaching

facilitation skills, how to have conversations within communities and organizations that change the future, right. For those groups and for everyone that's associated or connected to those groups. So our buddies, John and Scott, hello, done incredible work. They've worked with Google and BMW and Facebook and the heart math Institute and so many other groups. Uh, and John was generous enough to facilitate our first ever retreat in Philadelphia in October, 2016 when I called him and I said, Hey buddy, we got 30 guys coming. Not sure what we're going to do with them. He's like, I can help, let me. And so he but his super powers to work and created the [inaudible] the agenda and put together the workbook that changed so many lives. And I am super grateful for those guys. I mean, heck, Scott has a front row tattoo. So, uh, I've never questioned their commitment

Sean Wenger: [44:55](#) or

Jon Vroman: [44:56](#) their brilliance in any way because I see the group there for me, I mean at best year ever, the live event we were at, just in San Diego, there were 500 people there and they offered up a lunch where they would explain more about what exchanges and this methodology, right? That they teach people. So if you're out there leading, if you're a leader, if you're an entrepreneur, if you have a team, if you're in a position where you want to influence others or create a conversation within your company or your family, you've got to look at exchange because they simply offered up a lunch to learn more about what they're doing. And 150 of the 500 people showed up and said, I want to go through your training. Which is remarkable. It's crazy, right? Like,

Sean Wenger: [45:38](#) yeah, credible. And I, you know, I'm not a professional facilitator. I've gone through the process. But to your point, if, if you're, if you're a leader, you have a business, you, you manage teams. I mean, it's been instrumental. We redesigned our client experience using this methodology of the nonprofit work that I've been doing. The ability to plug in and show value to those organizations you know, I care about has been, you know, tenfold, you know, thinking about this experience with, you know, my, my friends. I mean it's like all right, simple dad's dinner, but it's just, there's just some amazing tools. So yeah, I would highly encourage folks that are leading teams to uh, to check into that they were all looking to improve ourselves or prove our abilities, add to our toolbox and yak exchange has been incredibly helpful for out.

Jon Vroman: [46:20](#) We'll put a link to that group, that page in the show notes app, front row dads.com and if anybody has any questions, you can just reach out to me directly and let me know. Sean, this has been wonderful man, so appreciate you. Appreciate your influence in the brotherhood. Appreciate you taking time to talk to us about what you've done. And I really want to honor you as a leader because it says so much about you that you would go to this event and then one of your questions is how do I get this to the other guys in my community that may not be in a position to go to a retreat or just you want to connect some dots, build some bridges, pass along some wisdom and information, introduce guys to each other. Because I think one of the greatest struggles that men, the fathers, especially business owners face is isolation, right?

Jon Vroman: [47:05](#) And not talking about things, right? Thinking that they just have to have all the answers cause they're in a position sometimes at work where they do know a lot, right? They're looked to as the leader and that they have everything together. And yet we don't, none of us do. We're all a work in progress. We might have a few things that we've done well with, right? But we all need help in certain areas and especially blind spots. Cause I remember somebody not too long ago and I was like, what are you struggling with? And they're like, ah, I really can't think of anything right now. And I was like, that may be the thing you're struggling with is that a, you are delusional that everything is perfect because it happens. Sometimes guys will come to me and they'll say, you know, my wife came to me and said she's really unhappy and, and they'll say, I had no idea.

Jon Vroman: [47:51](#) Right? And I go, sometimes our optimism is so good that we don't recognize it. Anything when it's wrong or just like everything's great and uh, it's not always right. So I think somebody that could be like, Hey, here's the blind spot, but we need people in our lives, whether it's in a band, a small group, whether it's at a dinner, whether it's at a retreat, wherever you're connecting guys, that is one of the biggest messages here is get around other people, ask great questions, have honest dialogue, set some goals, move forward in progress. That's the big mission. So that's it buddy. I think we're wrapped. All right. Thank you so much John. I really appreciate being on the podcast. Thanks for being here, man. I will see you maybe at the spring retreat. Let's do it. Alright man, I'll follow up with you on that much. Love buddy. All right, thanks John.

Jon Vroman: [48:46](#) Hey guys, if you haven't already done so, go right now to front row dads.com/facebook and join the conversation that's happening right now on line. We designed this group for guys

who are entrepreneurial in their thinking that are high performing guys with low egos. We're looking for the dads that believe in teaching their kids how to think, solve problems and be real leaders. We're looking for guys who believe in being family, men with businesses, not businessmen with families. We're looking for the fathers who have great knowledge but also believe that they have so much more to learn and we're looking for men who want to add value by sharing their wisdom and those that are willing to ask the questions that we all need and want answers to. That's [front row dads.com/facebook](http://frontrowdads.com/facebook) or simply go to Facebook, type in front row dads and you'll get to our group and what we put in there, links to all the podcasts and videos and other resources that you can't get access to anywhere else except for in this group. We want to give you the best ideas to help you with your marriage, balancing work and family life communication strategies with your spouse and also your children, travel ideas and even suggestions on the latest gear that would save you time and help you be more effective. We've got updates on upcoming events and so much more. Go right now to [front row dads.com/facebook](http://frontrowdads.com/facebook) and join the conversation. I'll look forward to connecting with you there. [inaudible].