

Speaker 1 ([00:00](#)):

What do people need to succeed? They need love. They need confidence. They need to believe in themselves. When I think if we're able to give, whether it's our children, and again they're, they're my kids, whether they're adopted or you don't kids, it's all the same stuff. We want to build healthy, confident children that believe in themselves and they have that foundation. They're going to succeed and thrive wherever they go.

Speaker 2 ([00:21](#)):

Gentlemen, welcome to the front row dads podcast. I'm your host, John Broman. This is the show for family men with businesses, not businessmen with families and today my guest is a fellow front row dad, Tom Lambot who has been with his wife for 10 years. In fact, they're just about to celebrate their anniversary. Go on a, on a trip. Maybe we'll start there. That'd be fun. Tom has four kids and quite the journey of how you've grown your family, Tom, and I'm excited to get into that. Professionally. You do stuff I don't know much about, but it's outsourced it and you're a managed service provider for Mac law firms. I remember the first time you told me that. I was like, that is super niche. I love it man. It's uh, it's wonderful. But buddy, welcome to the show, man. I'm glad you're here.

Speaker 1 ([01:03](#)):

Thank you. I'm honored and thrilled to be here.

Speaker 2 ([01:05](#)):

Was going to be a fun chat. Let's start with something fun and light and cool and whatever it might be. So what's good in your world right now, man? What can we celebrate with you? What's positive in the land? Bought family

Speaker 1 ([01:15](#)):

you don't change at 2020 is going to be a really good year the past couple of years. So I've been a character building cycle, uh, you know it with a company and you know, turning it around and we're coming a lot of obstacles and this year I'm really focused on, you know, putting family first and you know, fathering and, and, uh, husbanding and, and my health. You know, a lot of things I had on my goal sheets for three, four years, but never really taken big action. You know, that's why joint front row dads and then now business just pursuing my passion, you know, for, for 20 years. I've looking back now, I see I've always been a coach and this year I'm going to start a separate business and kind of doing that. So really excited and passionate about that.

Speaker 2 ([01:55](#)):

Cool. Typical entrepreneur. Oh is expanding. So Tom, I'm excited to get into the show, uh, because you shared with me your story, your family story and it's quite, I don't even know what word to insert in there. It's [inaudible] a lot. It's been a journey for you and your family and growing your family. So, uh, you know, I've really wrestled with where do I want to start this? But maybe the question is just can you take us back to the beginning and sort of walk us through this journey of building your family. I realize that might be a lazy question to get into it. Okay. Based on all that, I do know and I want to share with our audience today, I think giving you free reign to just sort of walk us through the story. It might be a good launching off point.

Speaker 1 ([02:42](#)):

Sure. No, I think, I think a good entry point is, you know, my wife and I met, we were joined at the hip and we both knew we wanted to have kids. You know, it's always just been in our DNA and our path. And so once we decided to it, we're very, you know, granola, you know, hippie new age. And also we, we first tried, you know, we tried the standard approach, like most people try to make babies. Uh, but we realized that, you know, it wasn't working out, we weren't able to get pregnant. And so we spent, you know, we tried for six years essentially just trying, you know, different things. You don't naturally just getting everything handled. We did my end abdominal massage, you know, I mean, we tried everything and then eventually we're like, ah, this isn't working. Let's go to plan B, which is kind of the traditional medical route here in the States especially.

Speaker 1 ([03:33](#)):

And so the first route typically is Cohmad. So we did a couple cycles of that. But it, my wife's really sensitive and it just really threw her off. Just her, her body and her hormones. And everything. And I was really fortunate to have a discussion with a client who's a close friend of mine now who had triplets via in vitro. The discussion he had was like, Hey Tom, you gotta, you know, figuring out how far you're willing to go. Because when you know, for those out there who are not able to have kids, you know, naturally conceive, typical, you go through Chromat and you go through vitro and kind of the, you know, the quote unquote standard approach. But the problem with that approach is you can spend a hundred grand and you can do that easily and still not have a family, still not have a baby.

Speaker 1 ([04:15](#)):

You know, there's no certainty in that, in that process. And so I had that discussion with, with my friend and you know, he kind of suggested the idea of like, where do you, you know, how far are you willing to go and what are you willing to do? And so my wife and I talked and we realized we didn't, we weren't willing to put her body through the, the, the emotional and physical stress of, of going down that route plus the uncertainty, you know, spending if you will. And so we opened ourselves up to adoption and you know, we both share the same mindset where like, there's so many kids out there that just need love and that's it. And I mean, they just need a chance, you know, at any bat back in the days, you know, hundreds of years ago when someone's parents died out in the wild or work in or whatever, the village raised them.

Speaker 1 ([05:03](#)):

And it wasn't even adoption. It was just like, Hey, this is what we do. And so we opened ourselves up to adoption. And so after doing two cycles of comment, it just threw her off so much when like, all right, this is the path we're going to take, we're going to adopt. My wife is a high follow through high fact finder. If you're, if you're familiar with Colby, uh, that's kind of what the profiling system we use. But she got the paperwork done in record time. You know, they, they were amazed. And, uh, so we, we went down that road and a couple of funny things happen when we first started going into adoption. And this is something I love to share because when it comes to adoption, you and I had this chat and I, there's so many people that say like, Oh yeah, my wife and I have talked about adoption and it kind of stops and ends there, right?

Speaker 1 ([05:45](#)):

Like, Oh yeah, we've considered it, but no one knows where to start. There's a lot of unknowns. The world of adoption is a topic that people know extremely, a little close to nothing about unless have been directly involved in that world. Like, like anything. And so we get the same two, three questions from

people all the time. Oh, what if they changed their mind? Right? Oh, if you have an open adoption, does that mean they can just come and hang out anytime they want, you know, drop in and have dinner with, you know, there's a lot of misconception and false beliefs that people have and the lack of uncertainty and a lack of knowing where to go to get that clarification keeps the discussions people have simply to, Oh, maybe we should adopt. Oh, would it be great if we adopted? Then that kind of stops and the, you know, the buck stops there if you will.

Speaker 1 ([06:31](#)):

Hmm. This, I'm curious as to where would you send somebody to start the conversation if they wanted to? There's typically adoption, you know, kind of networks and adoption agencies, you know, in your local area. They'll have, you know, it's pretty common to have informational sessions, you know, that's kind of where we started. So we went to one of those and when we first started our mindset going in was we want to close the adoption and I want to adopt a white baby. And it wasn't because of race or skin color. Obviously this hasn't come up, but all my kids are African-American. So it's not something you care about. But my initial thought was, I want to make it easy for my kids. You know, I want the best for them. And so if we look different, maybe it will be difficult. And so that was, uh, you know, the, the initial skin belief and then the closed adoption was, Oh, I don't want them to be confused about who's their mom or dad if their mom comes back in the picture and that kind of thing.

Speaker 1 ([07:22](#)):

Right. And those are, I think, two the most common misconceptions. And when we went to some of these kind of trainings that we attended, we learned real quickly, you know, the closed versus open adoption. Closed adoptions are extremely unhealthy for every party involved for the birth mom who never knows what happens with their child that they made the choice to, you know, put up for adoption. The child who, you know, historically it's been like hidden and kept hush, hush and taboo. You know, it's like a secret. And then they're 18. It's like, Oh Hey, by the way, uh, you're adopted. And their whole worldview just comes crashing down, you know, and, and it's very difficult for them to process and it creates a lot of questions. I don't know where. So there's a lot of negative impacts from having closed adoptions and whereas on the other side, open adoption, it's a lot of healthy, you know, the birth mom knows what's happening.

Speaker 1 ([08:13](#)):

I mean we, we chose early on to honor and respect the birth mom. We were fortunate that, you know, where the, the background of our kids, the birth moms were, you know, they were present, they weren't on drugs or like, you know, the worst case scenario. Everyone imagine, you know, one was on, you know, section eight and they have four kids and you know, just scrape it and make it by and, and so for them to be able to make the decision that I cannot give my child the best life, I'm going to give him up for adoption. And we just, we've always chosen to put, or kids birth moms on a pedestal, praise them. It raised them up instead of down. So that's kind of open. And another thing with the open adoption, people think open. That means they can, you know, knock on a door, but like, Hey, you know, can I come see my daughter?

Speaker 1 ([08:55](#)):

You know, but in the real world, most open adoptions, you know, they lose contact after few years. They'll pop in once a year and pop in. I mean, you know, phone call or mailing letters, that kind of thing. For our, our four kids, two of them are siblings, so they have the same birth mom. We still stay in touch

with her a couple of times a year we'll chat. You know, we haven't actually seen her met up with her in a while. The other two, the zero contact, but it's technically an open adoption. So that's a little bit about the [inaudible] open, close adoption. And then the second thing for the race, it's sad. The world we live in, people need to have a white baby. They're not open to it yet. For us. We learned that, we looked at the numbers, we're like, all right, if you open to whatever, you're going to get placed a lot sooner.

Speaker 1 ([09:38](#)):

If you holding out for the white baby that looks just like you, you're going to be on the wait list for a lot longer. And so we're like, we don't care. You know, it's just how we are. We're, we're, you know, we're, we're color blind. And so we decided that was a nonissue. We just want a family. We want children, kids need love. And so our, our first adoption, our daughter, we replaced, we finished all the paperwork. I said, okay, you are alive. And I say, I told my wife, I said, all right Christine, why don't you go spend a one Florida? Spent a week in Florida with your mom. It's the last time you'll be able to do it. One on one, go do it on Sunday. She's getting, you know, she's getting ready, her bags are packed, you know, I'm going to drive them to the airport in a few hours and we get a phone call from the agency.

Speaker 1 ([10:19](#)):

And this is on a Sunday and they never called. And that was our daughter. And so she was born at the hospital and uh, you know, we picked her up two days later. So we, we got Eliana in 11 days from when we went live. You know, our profile went live to actually bring it home. Holy cow, 11 days. So she canceled the trip. I didn't get to go to Florida. Every single one of our four kids has interrupted travel. Fun tidbit of info there. How old were all the kids when you adopted them? Uh, all of them were straight from the hospital. So they get released after 48 hours. Got it. So they were all straight from the hospital. Another common question is, you know, the whole placement thing, like, Oh, what if we get matched with someone and then they changed their mind two months later.

Speaker 1 ([10:58](#)):

So I believe it's around 50, 50. It's not exact, but 50% of adoptions are where they have a matched placement. Okay. So you get to meet the birth mom before you kind of talk, you know, she chooses you and vice versa. Uh, and then you wait until the delivery date. Uh, and then the other half are what are called emergency placements. So, you know, birth mom comes in, she doesn't have plans, she delivers and she realizes I can't keep the baby, I want to put him up for adoption. So two out of four of our kids were emergency placements. Uh, and then the other half were a matched ahead of time. So, and you were mentioning a little earlier that you don't subscribe to the wait till they're 18, and then, Oh, Hey, by the way, you're, you're adopted. When do you have that conversation with your kids?

Speaker 1 ([11:45](#)):

Our kids are pretty smart cause their skin looks a little different, you know. So for us it's not like if we want it to not tell them, you know, they would, uh, but having, you know, but it's, it's bringing adoption and highlighting it front center. You know, it's not something that I, I don't believe it should be taboo or secret. It's like, Hey, there's many ways to build a family and this is how we built ours option books for kids, you know, for all different ages that we bought and had been reading to them and we tell them about our birth story and you know, the day we brought him home and you know, the situations of different things, we, we tell them about their mom. My two girls have pictures of their birth mom in the room. It's not a secret that we're trying to hide, you know, it's like, Hey, your birth mom brought you in this world or she's wonderful because of all these reasons.

Speaker 1 ([12:29](#)):

How involved is the birth mom really isn't, you know, the first few years, you know, my wife and I would, you know, we'd send letters back and forth once a month. Then it became three to four months and it's once a year. Eliana and Malia's birth mom, she actually, uh, no, I actually bumped into her at the airport versus at the airport now. So I bumped into her a few months ago, which was amazing cause I hadn't seen in a long time. And I was like, Hey Tiffany. And just gave her a big hug. And she's a part of our family also. So is she more involved Tiffany? No, no. I mean we talked to her once a year, you know, kind of things. So when you say part of the family, what I hear is not on a weekly basis, not on a, on an active, we hang out, you know, the first weekend of every month, but that you openly talk, you openly, you have love for Tiffany, for the moms and, and respect and you realize they were a part of the, they're part of the family.

Speaker 1 ([13:27](#)):

It's like saying, you know, I have relatives that are part of my family that I don't talk with very often. So yeah, I got it. And when you talk to him, you welcome with open arms. Like, Hey, how's it going? You're like, I randomly bumped into Tiffany at the airport and I was like, Hey, right away I just give her a hug and I even take a selfie and I say, help me today. How old are all the kids now come to our house? Our daughter's haven't met her. So how old are the kids now? Eight and a half. Eliana's almost nine. So the nine in March, Malia tree you is going to be seven in June. So he's six and a half. Malia is going to be six and a few weeks and Katya is three and a half. Yeah. That's awesome. That's so cool. I just really love this.

Speaker 1 ([14:17](#)):

I've really loved this conversation, Tom, for lots of reasons, but I think it brings back, for me at least, it brings us back to, I think the best part of being human does this idea of we can choose to love, we can choose our family. I remember somebody telling me that long time ago that there, you know, there's the family you might be born with and then there's the family that you choose. And when you're in a situation where you're building a family through adoption, making this conscious, open, loving choice, bring somebody into your home and create

Speaker 2 ([14:52](#)):

and build a family. I just think that's a beautiful [inaudible].

Speaker 1 ([14:55](#)):

Yeah,

Speaker 2 ([14:56](#)):

I really honor you for that.

Speaker 1 ([14:57](#)):

You know, there's a lot of ways to, to build it. And we haven't even gotten to the tragedy, you know? And although the homes,

Speaker 2 ([15:02](#)):

well let's talk about that because I do know that's part of the story. You, you lost two sons along the way. I know that's a painful story to tell, but if you wouldn't mind, I think it's an important part of your journey.

Speaker 1 ([15:12](#)):

Definitely. Yeah. No. So we had our daughter and in February, seven years ago, her birth mom, we found out that she was pregnant again. So some people, he got the spectrum right. Some people they can't get pregnant no matter what. Some people they just get pregnant, you know, instantly. And so we found out that she was pregnant and she was with a boy, his name was going to be Tristin and open up our arms instantly, you know. So of course if we can keep the siblings together, we'd, we'd be happy to adopt him. You know, we hadn't considered adopting again yet, but it didn't even cross our mind. And so we were going to adopt him. We had about eight weeks heads up. And in between that eight weeks in the delivery time, we actually found out that my wife and I were pregnant, which was a complete miracle.

Speaker 1 ([15:58](#)):

We, you know, we hadn't tried, we'd given up. It was a not an option for us. And my wife got pregnant, so we had that great news and we're like, Oh my God, we're going to have three kids under 18 months. All right, we're gonna have three under 18 months. So we went out and bought the minivan, uh, sold the truck at the delivery. We actually drove when she went into labor, we went and picked up Tiffany from her house. And you drove her, cause she's here in Cleveland and we drove her to the hospital. She had a placenta abruption and Tristan was still born. And so we, we lost him. And that was right on the cusp of finding out that we were pregnant. So we almost didn't have the ability or the choice to really process it, you know? I mean, yeah, it wasn't our son, but it was our son.

Speaker 1 ([16:39](#)):

You know, we had already brought him into our family, you know, and it was Eliana's biological brothers. So we lost him and we just thought we were pregnant. So we're like, Hey, we gotta pull herself together as best we can and focus on the baby, you know, that we do have. And so we did everything right. You know, my wife didn't miss her prenatal pills one day, you know, we did everything perfect pregnancy. And then at the very end she went into labor and there were complications and he was still born. Uh, and it was a freak thing that's never happened historically. And also it was just some crazy thing, long, horrible, painful labor. 36 hours. Uh, and you know, he was already gone. And my wife got sepsis, she got infected and she almost died and she was in the hospital for almost 10 days.

Speaker 1 ([17:27](#)):

I mean, she was gone. Doctors were amazed that she came back. And so that was the darkest period of my life. You know, we lost our son, almost lost my wife, you know, we say all the time, like, if we didn't have Eliana, I don't know how we would've gotten through it. You know, she was just our Ray of light. You know, I, I'll never forget coming home from the hospital and just hugging her. I mean, yeah. So we got through that, you know, slowly and the harder my wife gained her strength back, you know, there's still, you know, complications, different things from it. But it was hard. And what we realize, what we learned in the process, the me, you choose whatever meaning you attach to life, you know, it's whatever happens to you. And I'm not going to move back and say, yeah, that was the greatest thing that happened to us.

Speaker 1 ([18:11](#)):

But we learned a lot from it. And we grew a lot from it. Uh, I learned that people want to help. They just don't know how to, and you know, when tragedy strikes, people always step up and come together and do that, you know? And that was really touching, you know, to see the, you know, the followup. So we, we, you know, slowly pulled ourselves out and kind of moved forward again. We had Eliana, so it's like we couldn't just give up, you know, he still had someone counting on us. So in time we decided we're like, Hey, we're not, we're not done. We're not done building our family. We want more kids. And so we opened ourselves up to adoption and we a, again, we did the application process, you know, got our profile live. We're like, Hey, let's go take a trip back to San Diego where I grew up, we live in Cleveland now.

Speaker 1 ([18:54](#)):

And halfway through our trip we got the call from the agency. He said, Hey, we got an opportunity and we figured everything out and it sounded just perfect for us. And so we rushed back home to, you know, they cut our trip in half. We're staying in great place in mission beats where you guys had your event I think a year or two ago. And so we rushed back and he was in Columbus, so just few hours South of Cleveland here. And, uh, we, you know, we brought a tray, you home a few days later and then six months after that Eliana's was birth. Mom was pregnant again, where with Malia at this time. And so we said, yeah, you know, at first she was hesitant. She's like, Oh, I don't know. You know, she's like, you guys are going hate me. I was like, no, you know, we're open to it.

Speaker 1 ([19:31](#)):

And so we, we brought Malia home, so the, the two, the middle are six months apart, uh, Trey and Malia and we brought Malia home. And then after that we actually worked with Tiffany to like really push using Medicaid and get to the doctors and get to the right meetings. So, so we had her, you know, get the surgery so she wouldn't have anymore. It's not like she was trying or wanting to. And then a little bit more time went by between Malia and Kaiya, you know, the two and a half years apart. And we said, Hey, we're not done. So we got one more. And so we'd brought Kaia home three and a half years ago. And for a long time I said, Hey, for no more know we're done recently, it's been coming up that we might not, so it's taken me in a longer than my wife to open ourselves back up, but we're going to go, uh, or they were, we're going to try again, have our own

Speaker 2 ([20:18](#)):

biological wow man. Wow. Thank you for sharing all that. I have so many questions about all this, but let me zip back for a moment too. Point. When you shared that, you know, sometimes when you're going through these difficult times in life that people want to help but they don't always know how to help. Right. I'm curious as to what was helpful for you and your family around that time because I struggle with that where somebody is going through a really difficult dark time in life and I, I'm like, what do I say? Do I say anything? And I've had moments in life where I've totally frozen up. It didn't say anything, didn't offer any support. And I look back and I feel really terrible about those moments when I, I could have just said something. Even at the risk of saying the wrong. Okay.

Speaker 2 ([21:03](#)):

But I do think that there are people that I've her tell me, you know, how unhelpful some people can be in their attempt to be helpful and how it annoys them. And so I get a little gun shy myself and I know this is a topic, I actually interviewed a woman not too long ago who wrote a book called alongside and it

was all about how you can show up for people in difficult times. What did you learn? What did people do that was really helpful and maybe what did you wish people would have done?

Speaker 1 ([21:31](#)):

I kind of compartmentalized it just the way I'm wired. You know, I looking back, I didn't process it the way I should have the emotions I had to, I have to be there. I had to, I had to hold up the roof. You know, I was the foundation, I was the rock and we had to keep moving forward. Thank God we had switched our business the previous year to a recurring revenue model. So I was able to, you know, step out, you know, check off for two whole months and deal with this without our finances being impacted. Cause that would have just been an extra thing on top of it all. I mean something as simple as like a meal train, you know, like making meals was super helpful. The last thing you want to do is cook. Right? Or having to think and plan and grocery shopping.

Speaker 1 ([22:10](#)):

You know, the little easy things that you kind of take for granted. We had a couple of meals we wish they would have ordered in, you know, but no, it was great. You know, just the thought, you know of that when it got to, you know, adopting a tree, we actually did a go fund me because adoption is not cheap. Right. We did go through private adoption, you know, through all of them and we, you know, instead of buying a house, we'd bought our kids the way we look at it. So we made that investment. It's about 20 to \$30,000 for private adoption. And a challenge that we ran into is that, I know I'm going on a tangent here, but I'll go with it. Uh, there's very little support for families who are not religious. And that was something, you know, cause we're, I was raised Catholic but I'm not in on anymore.

Speaker 1 ([22:53](#)):

You know, I consider myself spiritual but not religious. You know, I don't have any one religion that we go to or follow or anything like that. But I believe in a higher power. And so if you are very religious, so you know, if you're Christianity for Catholic, you go to your church and there's all kinds of funds and support and different things you can do. You know, when you, when we were looking at grants and, and different things to help us, you know, the cost of adoption, I mean 99% of them were religious based, you know, they were tied. And so we had very few options. So with Eliana we were really lucky. We got to \$13,500 grant, which was a huge help. But with a tray. And we didn't have the cash sitting around. We actually did a go fund me and we raised, I forget, I think 12 or \$14,000 or something like that. And that was just amazing, you know, reaching out to just our family and clients and friends and neighbors and again that that was a sign like, you know, kind of put your money where your mouth is, if you will. Right? It's like, Hey, here's the tragedy. We had dared help us build our family, you know? And that was just really, really touching, you know, really overwhelming for us. Yeah, I'm kind of bouncing all over so I'll, I'll stop and let the ball settle here.

Speaker 2 ([24:02](#)):

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 is 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.

Speaker 2 ([24:39](#)):

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 would 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 (314) 665-1767 and we will get you started today. All right, so Tom, tell us about your conversation with your wife around what age to adopt. You obviously brought home babies. Was that very intentional for you? Did you guys ever consider adopting older kids or how did you land where you did?

Speaker 1 ([25:50](#)):

That's a great question. It was intentional for us, you know, so we wanted a newborn. We wanted our baby from the womb. We've definitely discussed, you know, fostering or doing that in the future. I mean, again, it's like so many kids out there just need love. That's the message. If there's one message, it's like there's more than one way to build a family. And I look back at it, you know, the things that people are willing to put their bodies and their wives bodies and the emotion of it and like to go through vitro and all these, cause you have to have your own baby. It's like my kids are my own babies. You know, they don't look different. They don't consider themselves. You know, we are mom and dad and it's no different. We look back and we're like, man, can you imagine what their life would be like?

Speaker 1 ([26:34](#)):

You know, if they didn't have this opportunity, you know, and you see the movies and shows and little things here and there. But this is so true. You know, there's so many kids in the system, you know, whether it's fostering. And so if, you know, if private adoption financially isn't an option, I think fostering it should definitely be looked into. I mean, for us, we just, we wanted to raise our kids, you know, right from the get go. I mean, it's a, you know, it's like, I hate to make the analogy where it's like, you know, getting a pet from a pound. It's like you don't know the background, what they've been through, how they were raised, that kind of thing. So for us as more of a security and control thing, I think really, and that was just our personal choice. But you know, I think we'd definitely be open perhaps down the road to, you know, fostering and just at the time, because we had worked so hard, you know, and had the emotional up and downs of trying to get pregnant and, and do that, you know, and accepting that my wife was put on this earth to BMR and now like that's her number one role in life and she's amazing.

Speaker 1 ([27:32](#)):

And so it was really difficult to seek good people who don't want kids to keep getting pregnant, but that they're not there, they're not present, you know, that it's like, you know, they drop them off as quick as they can and all we want as a family, you know, I mean, that's hard. And so for us, I think the reason we didn't go through the, you know, fostering was the, you know, it's not 100% right. You could foster a kid for two years and fall in love with them and then they go back to their mom. You don't have that sense of control. So we weren't in a place where we could have handled that. Now that we have our family, I

think when our kids are older it's definitely a possibility. I mean I want to share this message. I want, I want to help people see the light and that, wow, there's another way to build a family and that's, that's why I wanted to do this podcast is like, Hey guys, smash a few of these limiting beliefs and ideas and what are the things that hold people back from the thought.

Speaker 1 ([28:26](#)):

I was like, Oh yeah, we should adopt to like let's build our family. Let's adopt and do it. Yeah. Cause there's a lot of kids out there. They just need a chance. They just need someone that loves and believes in them. I remember back in my Cutco days, you know, in 1998 to 2001 or 2002 like something that just got it. My heart and soul back then was seeing kids whose parents didn't believe in them. [inaudible] they told them they would fail and they couldn't make it. And I was that light that said, Hey, you can do it, you know, and help like, like believing and showing that. And I'm like, so many kids need that, you know? And like why not make to give them a chance and grow your family at the same time? You know? So it's, it's more of a mindset. It's like they're my kids.

Speaker 1 ([29:09](#)):

Yeah. Well look at it from your kid's perspective for a minute. So what do they experience in their lives? Are there challenges that they face? Do their friends know that they're adopted? Is that an issue? Do they get picked on for that? Or what types of conversations are they having? And also about having a different skin tone than mom and dad. What does that look like in their world day to day? You know, is it an issue on the regular, you know, is it happen the grocery store, do they face it at school? Like, and I'm just curious there, the experience of being an adopted child. What's that like? Yeah, no, I think that's a great question. It's definitely a topic that's on my mind now. You know that my, my eldest is going to be nine, my second is going to be seven. So they're getting older. Those kinds of things are going to come up and something I read about in this U Facebook group for, you know, adoptive parents of African American children.

Speaker 1 ([30:03](#)):

So you can kind of learn and no, it makes me sad to see the world we live in and the problems we still have now. You know, 50 years later you would think we would made more progress. You know, we haven't experienced much. Yeah. Really anything directly, like really bad. But I know what's gonna happen. I know that I'm going to have to teach my son like, Hey, if you're walking at night, you know, don't keep your hoodie on and hands out, you know, like things that, conversations that if my kids were white, I would never even do it. It never crossed my mind. [inaudible], you know, my client that I mentioned, actually Sobo Shaundra, he was the attorney for Tamir Rice's family, you know, here in Cleveland and he's a civil rights lawyer. And so we talk about these things and it's, it's definitely going to be a thing that we need to face.

Speaker 1 ([30:46](#)):

And I, I need to arm an educate my children, you know, in terms of day to day experience. Then they go to Montessori schools. So it's a smaller school. It's, you know, they, they don't go to Publix. It's kind of more, more control if you will over that, you know, so they haven't been the victim of teasing or comments or things like that. I mean, everyone knows they're adopted, you know, we come and pick them up. It's not a secret. Kids will be like, huh, you see him sometimes he'll put in to do together. Your mommy looks different, you know? But it's never, we haven't had the hard experiences, but I know they will come. [inaudible] you know, I think they're still at that younger age. So I, I'm doing my best, you

know, I want to teach them about their culture and their background. I don't want them to be, you know, sheltered and all of a sudden go out into the real world and go, Oh, why didn't you prepare me for this?

Speaker 1 ([31:34](#)):

I know it's definitely a thing. And so it's, it's definitely at the front of my mind. But again, it's like what do people need to succeed? They need love. They need confidence. They need to believe in themselves. And I think if we're able to give, whether it's our children, I mean, again, they're, they're my kids, whether they're adopted or you don't get it, it's all the same stuff. You want to build healthy, confidential to the believe in themselves. And should they have that foundation, they're going to succeed and thrive wherever they go. But at the same time, but yeah, there's definitely issues and things that will come up, you know, that we're gonna have to deal with, you know, like getting their hair done. White people have it so easy. We have no idea. You know, I take my girls to, uh, to get their hair done every six weeks, you know, and they get a braided, and it's the, you know, they love it.

Speaker 1 ([32:16](#)):

So that's a little daddy and girl time that I do have two of my girls right now, you know, so there's little differences, but again, it's just keeping an open mind and not turning a blind eye and like stepping right into the, the discomfort and the fear, the unknown. And then when you step into it, you're like, Whoa, it's not as bad as I thought. And then that could be said for anything in life. Right. Is there anything that you wish people would have told you about? They didn't? Is there any info that you were missing that you look back down and say, man, you know, it would've been really great to have that would have helped me in this process in some way, shape, or form? No, no. There's really nothing that, nothing that comes to mind. I mean, it's, it's been amazing, you know, it's been a wonderful experience for us.

Speaker 1 ([32:57](#)):

I mean, we've got a family, we've got four kids. We're so fortunate. Yeah. Do you think that's typical? You've been in around the adoption community. Do you think that that's other people's experience to that, Hey, it's just a wonderful experience? Or do you think that you've sort of locked out here a little bit with having an awesome relationship with the birth moms and [inaudible]? Or is there a flip side of that that people need to be aware of? At least fully informed? For our son, he's a Somalian descent, so his, his parents are first generation and after we first adopted him, there was a little TUFF where the mom tried to, you know, go back and change your minds, you know, and say, Oh, well we, you know, we want him, I think family or parents got involved or something like that. Uh, and w one thing I, that's the biggest fear that I think people have about adoption, right?

Speaker 1 ([33:43](#)):

It's like, well, what if we bring him home and then we have to give them back, right. That would just break my soul or somebody coming after you legally, right? Or, yeah. Yeah. And so there is a document called a permanent surrender. And as long as your adoption agency gets the right people work done, that is a non factor. Like the, the few can come after somebody, you cannot, there's not a new one. There's not an undo, you know, if the father doesn't step forward, which is very, very common, you know, if he's not involved, he's gone or whatever. They have a certain amount of days to step forward and say, Hey, this is my son and I want him. Right. So that was kind of a little fear we had with one of our kids. You know, cause they didn't both signed the paperwork, but that's where like, well, we don't have 100% certainty.

Speaker 1 ([34:26](#)):

They're like, yeah, but don't worry. Give it 30 days when it's time's up is time's up. And that was the case, you know? So it's very rare that that happens. So again, you know, the horror stories you hear are just that. It's that one horror story that everyone talks about and Ooh, yeah, well I heard if you're adopted, you know, it's like people banging on Tesla's, you know, it's like, Oh well just those explode. It's like, okay, really that's like educate yourself with the facts. Yeah. So we got lucky, you know, the birth moms work, drug addicts or anything like that. You know, it's, there's definitely that. And you know, you get a choice. It's not like, well here's what we got. You're up and you know, you can put down what your preferences are. Like we're open to like marijuana use. Like I'm not worried about marijuana, like screwing up my kids, you know, crack cocaine, not so much, you know, so you can go through your list like, Hey, this is what I'm open to, this is where I'm not.

Speaker 1 ([35:18](#)):

So you have control, you have final say in that. It's not just like, Oh, you're on the list, here's a baby, you know, here you go. You know, you can make the choice, you know, they, they go over all the details and they say, Hey, here's what we know about the medical background, you know, and so forth. Tom, this has been great man. Is there anything else that we haven't covered on this? So, I mean, I know that we could talk for hours and hours, but is there anything just that you wanted to share it with? Anybody out there listening, interested in this subject that we didn't get to that's important to say? Yeah. You know, I know how difficult it is to deal with infertility issues. I mean that just rips at the soul of a man and a woman and a couple of time build a family and it's hard and there's so many unknowns and the ups and downs emotionally, you know, physically and so forth.

Speaker 1 ([36:05](#)):

And so what I want to share to anyone who finds himself there right now is considered the same question that my friend submitted asked me. He's like, Hey, what are you, what's your plan? You know, what are you willing to go through, you know, to build a family. And I would really challenge people to open their mind to adoption again, for us, it's, we went through tragedy, we went through horrible things that people shouldn't have to go through. But we decided to keep on going and keep on building our family. And we would do it on the same even if that hadn't happened. But we have an amazing, beautiful family that we love and I, you know, my kids just light up my life. And so if your outcome is a family, like open yourselves up to adoption. If you haven't, so kids out there just need love.

Speaker 1 ([36:47](#)):

Tom, thanks so much man. Really appreciate it. Hey, one last thing before we go. You are a front row dad member. We are opening up enrollment in March again for one of our three open enrollment periods, 10 days each over the course of 2020 for anybody out there who might be thinking about this and they've got a couple of months to to consider, but why did you say yes? Why did you jump into front row dads? Because my intent wasn't aligning. You know, it's like I go back 20 years before I was married and had kids and all that. And I know my goal was always to be a great person and it was two simple basic words. But to me what that man does, I want to be a great husband and a great father, and I want to take care of myself so I can be there for my kids and not die of a heart attack on them.

Speaker 1 ([37:31](#)):

You know, 45 and all these things that you hear about. And it just, for me it was the alignment of values. And it's like, Hey, I've talked about this for years about families first, but it's not. And I had to face that

hard truth, you know, it's like, Hey, my business is really first and my family is second. And you know, it's not like they're way down there. Right. But the passion and energy and time that I put into growing my business, right? Through courses and books, I mean, I love to learn. I have an unquenchable thirst and hunger for it. And I was like, I'm not putting that time and energy into being a father and a husband. You know, I've wanted to lose 30 pounds for five years and I'm still at the same. I've wanted to strengthen my relationship with my wife and we're still in about we're, we're, we're trending better for sure.

Speaker 1 ([38:13](#)):

We're doing much better. Uh, but I know I just want to be that amazing dad. I want to be there for my kids. And one thing that I'll share that I think really nailed it for me was a Jim shields book. Of course, the family board meeting. Yeah. Family board meeting. And on the cover he says you have 18 summers to build lasting connections with your children. [inaudible] and I mean, I should just get that tattooed on my arm cause it's like, Holy crap, my daughter's going to be nine. We're halfway there, you know, and I'm like, I want to be there now. Yeah. My kids and with my kids and with my wife not want to have all of the things that really matter. Flourish because, okay, if I've got an amazing business, I'm making all kinds of money, but I'm divorced and I have no relationship with my kids and I'm fat and I get a heart attack and die. What's that worth? You know? So that's why I joined. Yeah, and I, I've been thrilled so far. Just just the insights on the conversation and the vulnerability that people bring and share and it's just, you know, surround yourself with people who you want to emulate. And I think everyone here has those values and those priorities and that's really why I joined. I had to make that commitment and investment into those

Speaker 2 ([39:20](#)):

areas of my life. I want to strengthen, well, good news. I don't know if you know this, but a, Jim's going to be our guest trainer for our monthly call in March, which is going to be very cool. So we're going to get a chance to talk with him live for anybody out there listening, it doesn't know what I'm talking about. For our members. We host stay expert call every month where it's live Q and a where guys, rather than just listening to the podcast, have an opportunity to have direct dialogue and ask questions about their personal experiences and share victories. It's a lively conversation. So Jim's going to be our guest and if you haven't read his book, check it out, the family board meeting, it's well worth the read. It's a quick read too so you can get through it really fast. Very cool.

Speaker 2 ([40:02](#)):

Tom, I'm grateful that you carved out some time today for us, man. I really appreciate you sharing this story. Thanks for being a leader in this space. Thanks for having a, an open and loving heart and being colorblind and being just a man who, I guess you've said it several times, right? Is there's more than one way to build a family and kids need love. And so I think that you've, you've hit those points really well today. Thanks for being open and real and raw with us, you know, uh, as well today and I think it's going to be really awesome. I personally was excited about this because my wife and I've talked about adopting and because I share everything on the show and I'm kind of an open book, uh, it about, what is it, 48 hours I'm going to be seeing the doctor here in Austin to get snipped.

Speaker 2 ([40:48](#)):

So I will personally not be making any other babies at the Roman household, but we've talked about adopting and so that conversation is very much alive in our home and I'm excited to see where that it could potentially take us. My wife talks about a little girl, and so I think that could be in our future. So

maybe we'll move past being one of those families that just talks about it and then, and then puts the conversation on the shelf. There's nothing wrong with that, right? Like if you talk about adopting and decide not to do it, there's nothing wrong with that. But I guess avoiding it because it's an uncomfortable subject is different than choosing not to. Yeah.

Speaker 1 ([41:22](#)):

Ross, it was a lot easier than IVF and going down that unknown road, you know?

Speaker 2 ([41:26](#)):

Yeah, yeah. I could see that. Lots of ways to build a family like you said. All right Tom, thanks buddy. Appreciate you being here. If people want to connect with you or could they find you

Speaker 3 ([41:35](#)):

if I'm [inaudible]

Speaker 2 ([41:36](#)):

or LinkedIn and reach out and I'm happy to help. Cool. Put all the show notes over@frontrowdads.com and if you want to have a continued dialogue about this, I will also be posting this show where you can comment, ask questions in the open Facebook group, just got a front row dads.com/facebook and you can join the conversation there and that guys look forward to having you back on the a future podcast. The top. Thanks for being here man. I'll see you on a future fret road ads call or maybe at a retreat.

Speaker 3 ([42:02](#)):

Awesome. Thank you for having me. 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 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 and join the conversation. I'll look forward to connecting with you there. [inaudible].