

Mike Dillard ([00:00](#)):

A really big part of this journey for me over the last year and a half is learning self forgiveness and really knowing that you're just doing the best you can do and being okay with that and forgiving yourself around whatever expectations you had but you know, weren't able to accomplish and really finding love for yourself I think is the foundation for anything else you want to do around your kids and your family.

Jon Vroman ([00:26](#)):

All right gentlemen, welcome to the front row dads podcast. If you're brand new here, I'm your host Jon Vroman. This is the show for family men with businesses, not businessmen with families. My guest today is Mike Dillard and I was just mentioning that my good friend Howe L rod had been talking about Mike quite some time, so I was really looking forward to this conversation because Mike and I don't know each other yet and so this is me getting to know Mike, although I'm familiar with some of his work and his impact in the world. I don't know much about his personal life outside of what, how's TOFI? So this going to be fun, Mike. Welcome to the show, man. Yeah, glad to be here. Thanks for having me. So let's start out with something positive. What's good in your world right now? What's recent? What's relevant, exciting and good?

Jon Vroman ([01:08](#)):

Yeah. Yeah, it's interesting. The good stuff is, you know, we're really getting my business back up and off the ground after a year and a half of not being able to work from a major health issue that almost took me out. And so making progress on that and just seeing an activity and getting back into momentum for the first time and almost two years is a, is a really big deal. So I'd have to say that it was probably the biggest positive thing I've got going on right now. That's great man. So let's jump into that real quick. So clearly, dude, you've, um, I mean I think your business stuff is pretty well documented. So w w we don't have to spend a lot of time there, but I really was, my heart went out when I learned about the health struggle that you were going through.

Jon Vroman ([01:55](#)):

Yeah. You have a nine year old. And let me start with the big question, which is, well I guess we need a little context. Why don't we start with what was the health struggle, but where I want to go with that is how did that impact your relationship with your son? How did you navigate that space when it came to your ability to be a dad? So let's start with what happened and then, yeah, yeah. So June I think it was 13th 2018 I felt a little click in my brain and I thought that was kind of odd. And that was the last time I was able to fall asleep for almost a year. So not insomnia, not a difficulty in falling asleep, but a little literal inability to get even a single minute of sleep. Uh, and that lasted about seven days before. Aye could really feel my body shutting down and I was starting to die and my doctor put me on Xanax and Ambien that got me 20 milligrams of Ambien, which is a double dose. Got me about an hour to 90 minutes. [inaudible] it's very dreamlike, altered state sleep, not really deep

Mike Dillard ([03:00](#)):

restorative sleep, adjust, knocks you out and disassociate you. And then I would wake back up again. And the really scary part is that nobody knew what was wrong. I couldn't find any information or any similar cases on anywhere on Google or YouTube or anything like that. My doctor had no idea what was going on when to [inaudible] brain doctors and had EGS done. And the doctor comes in and he says, well, you know, I've been doing this for 23 years and I've never seen anything like this and I don't know what to tell you. And that happened with doctor after doctor after doctor. And that's a really scary place

to be when you can't sleep even on medication. And no one can tell you what's [inaudible] going wrong, so there's no way you can fix it. And then that led very quickly within two or three months into a state of severe depression because of the medications.

Mike Dillard ([03:54](#)):

And my days essentially were spent 12 hours a day on the couch, you know, watching TV, unable to think, unable to work, brain and body are in fight or flight, just dumping cortisol and adrenaline 24 hours a day and then I would move into the bed at night, take my medicine, wake up an hour later and just sit there and lie in bed and really kind of a tortured state for well over a year. And that was unbelievably scary and unbelievably hard because that makes you start to think about, well what am I going to do when it comes to taking care of Chase and how much I'm going to miss out on when it comes to, you know, watching him grow up. Then all of the other stuff that you are looking forward to as a parent, I've never been suicidal but I did experience that through this and it was really interesting because it gave me empathy and understanding for people who have experienced that.

Mike Dillard ([04:48](#)):

Yeah. Because it is not a logical or emotional choice. It just starts to make sense and this really weird, scary way. And the moment I got off of those prescription medications that went away. And then I got back on him a couple of weeks later and it instantly came back and I was like, Oh, this is some scary stuff. Take these medications. And I've always heard about new stories of, of those substances being linked to those kinds of events. And I got to experience that. And it's absolutely real and it's not. It's not. All right. So that went on for an entire year, essentially lost my business, lost the ability to work. And my relationship with Chase turned into, you know, a 12 hour a day babysitting experience in front of the television. You know, I can't, we lived in a high rise in downtown Austin, two bedroom, there's no playground, there's no park, there's no going out and doing anything.

Mike Dillard ([05:47](#)):

It was really just screen-time and, and depression. And that was about it. So yeah, thankfully a year later, after many, many doctors, I got an introduction to Dr Ann Shippy here in Austin and she tested me for toxic mold and that test came back positive. The scale. And the test went from zero to 50 anything above five is toxic. And in the red mine was 21,000 so I literally had molds eating my brain like a piece of fruit. So as you can imagine, your body is under attack, but you can't feel pain in your brain like you would an injury outside your body. And so it's causing all of these chemicals again, like like cortisol and adrenaline just to freak out all day because you're literally being eaten alive by a substance, but you just don't know it. But that's what was happening. So that started a big detox program and spin.

Mike Dillard ([06:42](#)):

Yeah, it'll be two years this June in 2020 significant significant improvement within three months after identifying the the source and starting to treat that with supplementation, detox, anti inflammatory diets and all of this other stuff. And yeah, so I'm really in the last, I'd say four months, just getting back into the swing of things. I'm probably 80% done. I still have trouble sleeping now. I can get three or four hours a night, but my nervous system essentially went through so much trauma that it's still kind of freaked out and I'm having to train it to be able to relax again. So. Okay. Yeah. That was the last, it's been the last year and a half. Holy cow man. What a ride. Yeah. Where did the mold get introduced into the equation? You know, we think it came from the Bowie because about three or four months before that little click happened and all the symptoms showed up, the building had a massive leak from the

roof all the way down the elevator shafts, you know, for three or four days with just water pouring in from the top down to the bottom of the building.

Mike Dillard ([07:44](#)):

So I think elevator shafts are infected. I think all of the AC ducts are infected. And I don't know that for sure cause I moved out before, you know, I had the place tested. But you know, it's a very logical thing to me. If rain soaks an entire building here in Austin with such high humidity and all of that stuff. So yeah. And do they say what kind of mold this was specifically the one that was 21,000 a thousand, I think it's called aspergillus, or at least that's the mycotoxin that may be, is produced by the strain of mold. And ultimately I have five different types that were neurotoxins in my end, my blood. But that was the one that was, you know, unheard of levels. So it makes me wonder how many other people are battling this because they've got mold somewhere in their house and they just don't even know it.

Mike Dillard ([08:32](#)):

It's a lot. JP Newman here in Austin is a mutual friend of house and I went through this for three years. He's the one who introduced me to Ann. I've got my buddy James, who runs a very successful tech companies. Then all of our tech for myself and other very big marketers you would know of, she got infected in the last six months, almost died. His body shutting down is he as long started, uh, you know, decane I think they had to remove part of his lung. His brain started bleeding and he's still in the recovery process. Uh, right now. So unbelievable. It's an absolute epidemic that's taken over the country. And the bad news is, is that nine out of 10 doctors are more, don't think about it, don't test for it. Yeah. Aren't really aware of it. And if you have any kind of mysterious chronic symptoms where you just had these chronic health problems or insomnia or chronic pain or chronic fatigue, I promise you it's probably toxic mold.

Mike Dillard ([09:30](#)):

And the great part is, this is \$150 test. You pee in a cup and you can find out in a week. And it's called a mycotoxin test from great Plains labs. And I've got another friend who's got a daughter. He was in college and she had the same type of stuff mentally started shutting down, had no energy, couldn't move. They did a test on hers, toxic mold. She had to move to Colorado, uh, just to get away from it. So I've had to move twice in six months. Holy cow. And how often are you going to test for this now? Going forward? About quarterly. Quarterly? Yeah. Yeah. Just to, it's, and we've gotten it down. We've made a huge progress. It's gone down from 21,000 to one 70 to one 30 now the last test was down to 35 which is great in comparison, but it's still seven times higher than the maximum that you want to see.

Mike Dillard ([10:17](#)):

Yeah. And uh, yeah. So, and did you get chase tested? No, we probably could. He hasn't shown any symptoms or signs. What happens is most young people are not susceptible to this. What happens is if you get leaky gut and leaky brain barrier, just because of our typical American diet these days, which I'm going to say 98% of Americans have. If you're 30 you have leaky gut and leaky brain barrier is that where the mold gets passed, you're going to brain bury into the brain. And that's where our habit, it's cost and cha. And so he's too young, so really have a leaky gut at this point. And with the, the diet we, you know, we have them on a very healthy diet. And so yeah, we're not, not really too concerned about that yet, but yeah. Incredible man. What supplements or what dietary stuff did you do you think has had maybe, yeah, the antiinflammatory diet was huge.

Mike Dillard ([11:13](#)):

Getting rid of dairy, sugar, gluten, alcohol, any and all of that stuff. Yeah, is really critical because that's what allows your body to actually heal and repair itself. I lost probably 20 pounds in two months. The moment I got on that diet and just all the inflammation flushed out, but a lot of glue defiant. There's a lot of antifungal supplements like can decks activated charcoal. So you want to take supplements that will kill the mold and then supplements that will support your body's methylation cycle and detox cycle. So it'll actually remove it and remove those toxins from your bloodstream. But it's a really, really, really, really hard thing to kill and to get out of your body. And most people like JT have had to either build completely new houses from scratch with certain materials, ventilation and you know, all kinds of filtration or literally move out of the South and go to high altitude dry areas like Colorado.

Mike Dillard ([12:08](#)):

And this is all new to me. Yeah, I mean I've, I've heard of it but I don't know. I didn't know any of this man. This is crazy and good to know because I think that these are the types of things that people who have symptoms and they're looking for solutions. To me, this would probably, B would have to be at the top of the list, especially with \$150 tests. 90% of it is going to come back positive for these folks because it is so prevalent with today's diet in our foods, processed foods and yeah, candida, you know, and everything else that's so prevalent that it's really, really easy to get that stuff into your, into the wrong parts of your body where you don't want it these days. Yeah. Are you tired of talking about all this stuff yet? No, because I want to help people who, yeah, are we, we did a big hour and a half interview video interview with my doctor and dr Ann Shippy and my buddy Aubrey Marcus a few months ago that's on my YouTube channel.

Mike Dillard ([13:01](#)):

It talks about this in much more, uh, that I went through during the year in different types of therapies because the scariest part about this was not finding anyone else who had gone through it and had similar symptoms to me because that is a situation without hope. And that's the scariest part of the entire thing is it's not having hope. So for me, if anyone sees this and they're like, I know someone who's going through that or, and they ended up going through it, at least have some places to look and, and, and know that I've made it through it and that other people have as well. So now that you've been on, I mean you spent so much of your life being upfront in the lead, you know, leading people in so many ways that to end up on the couch. Right. What did you appreciate about how specific people showed up for you?

Mike Dillard ([13:48](#)):

Because the reason I ask them, asking selfishly, like I sometimes don't know what to do when somebody is going through a difficult time. What do you say? What do you do? How much space do you give them? How much are you up their ass, like checking in on them all the time? Well, yeah, no, that's a great question because as an entrepreneur you're usually a self starter and we don't necessarily ask others people for help because we're so self-reliant and being in a position where you're forced to ask for help, it was a very humbling experience in a very new one. But it was also a very liberating one because it forced me to reevaluate my levels of trust with people in general and quality of friendships and deeper friendships. And so that was a really big positive out of this entire experience. And it also really made me angry because I've had two or three friends who are around my age and all entrepreneurs who've all died from cancer in the last two years.

Mike Dillard ([14:46](#)):

And neither of them [inaudible] told anybody. Hmm. Even when I would see them in person, I was like, he's really losing a lot of weight. What the heck's going on here? That's what I'm thinking. But I'm like, something's wrong. You tell me. And then I find out two years later when they're on, you know, two months away from dying and my life was saved by people, me asking for help. Insane. I'm open to any help and any ideas that anyone has and being open and asking for that because if I hadn't gotten told JP about it and gotten a referral to an and and all of the other doctors I've worked with, I wouldn't have made it. And so that really pissed me off when they have either that much fear or pride or ego or whatever to keep that so private. Because between our group of friends, we know everybody, we're one connection away from anyone on this planet that can help. And for that not to be utilized, there's tragic to me. So if I could go back my or I can give some advice to anyone who's going through a situation like that or like you know what, how and through is let people know and let them show up and support you and any way that they possibly can. I just don't understand people who aren't willing to do that. So drop the ego and the fear and just ask for help.

Jon Vroman ([16:05](#)):

How about people just who want to help but don't know really how to help. I'll give you an example. I interviewed a woman for a different purpose, not on the front road out of the show, but when for our charity, front row foundation who wrote a book called alongside, one of her thoughts was, we don't know how to help sometimes when somebody is in a place of struggle. So we go to them and say, Hey, tell me what you need. And she talked about how that's such a difficult thing to ask somebody who needs help because you're really putting the burden on them. So you really just need to do something, right? Like just do something. If they're struggling, if they're battling cancer, it don't ask them do they need their lawn mowed? Just go mother lawn. Right? Don't ask them if they need food, just drop it off at their front door and you know, do you feel the same way now having been in the place where people might've been showing up for you, just doing stuff for you, giving you whatever.

Mike Dillard ([16:52](#)):

Do you feel that way? I'm sure it would have been appreciated. There are also circumstances coming up or situations coming up where if somebody like dropped off the thing of supplements at my house or whatever, I would have been maybe frustrated in one way because I'm like, Hey you just thank you. Cause I get emails all the time. Yeah. Anytime I talk about this I get it, you know, dozens of emails from people that are on my list or in my audience who have great intentions, they want to help and they're like, Hey try this supplement, try that supplement. And I'm just like, I understand the intention but you really, really don't know the details of what's going on. You don't know my lab work, you don't know what I'm doing with my doctor. And this is not necessarily helping. Yeah. On the other hand, there's gold in there, there's [inaudible], Hey I, my brother is this doctor or whatever. You need to talk to them and they can help. Right. So be receptive to all of it. And you know, if for me, gosh yeah, I would just say, you know, write a cause that's always helpful

Mike Dillard ([17:51](#)):

when you're going through a health crisis and you lose your ability to work. Bill stock up quick. And all of the health stuff that I went through, all of the therapies I went through are not covered by insurance. Right? None of the medications, none of other products, none of the lab tests, nothing was covered by insurance. And, and you know, not being able to work has cost literally millions of dollars in revenue in the last year. So, you know, when Mark was sick with cancer and it was past the point of no return, his

wife, he didn't, they didn't have life insurance. And now he's got four kids and his wife is alone with four kids and no income provider. And so they did a, a fundraiser. And you know, I wrote a check for five grand and I was like, that's going to help no matter what. So even if it's for 100 bucks or 1000 bucks, whatever you can give.

Mike Dillard ([18:36](#)):

That to me is a really welcome gift in any circumstance, no matter what the situation is. So yeah. Yeah. Let's switch to talk about Chase. So you went through this time Chase spent some time in front of the TV. How did you react over from that? How did you cover that element now looking back or what have you changed? Right. Healed or moved forward. Tell us about that journey. I don't know, other than being ex, you know, much more grateful and, and trying to be more present with my time with him now. Does he talk about it? Does he bring it up now? Does he really even know or was he like, this is awesome. I just get, I love this screen time. That's a really great conversation to have. I think I've brought it up once and you know, I think it's a conversation that'll need to come up multiple times as he gets older.

Mike Dillard ([19:26](#)):

Yeah. Because I'm sure that that was a pretty scary situation. And I'm also sure he didn't really understand what was going on or the severity of it. Yeah. So, yeah, I mean we tried our best just to kind of carry on and the best way that that we could in a normal fashion. He knew I was having trouble sleeping and that I was going through some serious health stuff, but, uh, at the same time, it's not like I was keeping them up to speed on stuff and making that a scary situation. Yeah. You know? So yeah, that feeling right now that he, he kind of weathered that in, in a way that, you know, you say it's hard to say, you know, I don't see any signs that he didn't, and yet as a, a male, we tend to internalize a lot of shit even at that young of an age.

Mike Dillard ([20:11](#)):

And so I think that that's going to have to be something that's discussed multiple times as he gets older. And once this is truly over for me, I'm still coming out of the tail end of it, but it's still something you know, I deal with on a daily basis. So yeah, I dunno, it's going to be a really good question. Thankfully his mom is very supportive of him and takes great, great care of him and, and he has had that support, uh, in that regard. So yeah, I wish I had more of a lessons learned and final feedback about that experience, but it's really still in process at the moment. So yeah, that story is yet to be told. All right, well that just gives us something to talk about for a future show. So we'll come back to that one. Let's talk about what's going great.

Mike Dillard ([20:54](#)):

Like when you look at your role as dad right now, where are you proud? Like what do you think is, where's the gold in fatherhood for you? What are you doing that you're like, Oh, I think, I think I'm nailing it with that one. As a four months ago, I'm, and a committed relationship for the first time since my divorce nine years ago, eight years ago. And we moved in together a month ago and she has a daughter that's around Chase's age. And so this is the first time he's ever been around an actual family or in a family environment where there's other people besides me in the house. And the first time he's ever seen me interact in a relationship. So, uh, he's never had that experience with his mom or with [inaudible] only grown up with two single parents for the last nine years. So that's been great for it to give him an opportunity to see what family looks like for the first time has been awesome.

Mike Dillard ([21:48](#)):

And you know, Michelle is amazing. My girlfriend and her daughter's amazing and the kids get along great. So it's awesome to be able to go walk, take a walk at night down the street in our neighborhood for the very first time and to make dinner together for the very first time into, you know, do all of the stuff that a normal family does. Cause this is the first time he's had really experienced that. So that's been awesome. Well that's really cool man. I'm happy for you. Yeah. Yeah. That's cool. When you look around, you're quite connected. You're around a lot of influencers. Who strikes you as an amazing dad and why I look up to or admire in that space? I'm trying to think of of my friends who our dads, and to be quite honest, I don't have a lot of friends who are dads.

Mike Dillard ([22:32](#)):

The first one that comes to mind is just how cause he is sharing his journey and the influence he's had through your, your organization and what you guys are doing and [inaudible] what he's doing to strengthen his relationships with his kids. And I hate to use him as an example because I know he's so well known in this community, but seeing the changes he's made and even the last six months has been really awesome to see and, and a great role model for myself, an example to follow and to look at and get ideas from. Okay. So that's been a, that's been really neat to watch his journey. Oh gosh, you know, my friend Mark, who's the one who died was a phenomenal dad with his four kids always present and they're just, they've just turned out as awesome as you could possibly imagine despite their ages. You know, they're, they're probably between six and 14, uh, right now. So he's always been up a huge role model when it comes to that. Yeah. And my dad was an awesome dad with me growing up and present and there and giving and supportive. And so I had a great, you know, a great dad growing up in a great role model when it comes to that. So yeah, but I would put how, how's it number one right now as a, as an example. That's cool man.

Mike Dillard ([23:43](#)):

All right guys, I want to take just a quick second, talk about something really

Jon Vroman ([23:46](#)):

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 1466517673 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. Second, I want to give you 45 minutes of a mind blowing conversation that I had with a woman named Kevin NAMI and the show is titled have better sex, hugely popular.

Jon Vroman ([24:31](#)):

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 (314) 665-1767 and we will get you started today.

Jon Vroman ([25:13](#)):

What do you want to carry forward? You talked about your dad doing some things right? What do you want to repeat? Just your traditional value sets that last you a lifetime. The difference between right and wrong, the taking pride in a job. Well done. Pride in details and taking care of if you're cleaning a car, cleaning the parts that people will never see. Right? And just wondered if you're going to bring up car talk. That's something I hated when I was a little kid, but now I really appreciate it. Yeah. That lesson learned of, of taking care of the stuff that you own and taking the work that you do. And that's right. A competition. There's a big one, you know, always playing sports and always learning how to be competitive is such an important skillset. And the biggest thing moving forward that Chase's mom is really great with and uh, we're getting better and better at here is just open communication [inaudible] and just having Frank open conversations about everything part of life where in our generation, you know, I'm 42 now growing up there are certain parts of life you didn't talk about, right.

Jon Vroman ([26:21](#)):

Sex, religion, money, none of that stuff was ever really discussed. And now that to me, does everyone looking back, that didn't help us. It did us a disservice as kids. Yeah. And so having open conversations about all of these topics from a very young age and you know, something that we're doing and we'll continue to do that. I think it's unbelievably important to not trying to pretend it doesn't exist or that it's irrelevant. I just think that's kind of silly. Yeah. Well you seem, you strike me as a really just candid, open, direct, straightforward person and I would imagine that would carry over into your family life and just be very similar there as well. Yeah. If anything, the challenges as again, being an introvert and being a guy is consciously making the decision to have those talks and discussions because a lot of times you can have them in your head and pretend that happened in real life.

Jon Vroman ([27:10](#)):

So yeah, that's the biggest challenge is you know what you need to talk about. It's just to make the time to sit down and have that conversation. Do you and chase bond over cars? Uh, you know what? Not quite yet. I did a lot of racing out of COTA. That was my, my biggest passion and I'm hoping to get back into that again soon as racing cars and he gets into things a few years later after I kind of hoped that he would, you know, track and I'm trying to teach him about the brands and the cars and he doesn't care at all. But at the same time it's like, dad, when are we, you know, when are you going to go racing again? Cause he likes to be out there and experience that kind of life. And uh, yeah. So I found that whenever I've wanted him to take an interest in something, he ends up taking an interest in it.

Jon Vroman ([27:54](#)):

But like three years later then yeah, my expectations. Yeah. I've experienced the same thing. Tiger right now, my 10 year old. So tiger is really into cars. Like it is the only thing we want to talk about. So, and I just had this really cool experience, which I know you'll appreciate this. He, I give credit to mom, my wife who was having conversation with about manifesting, right? Like really what are your dreams? How do we create them? Had this whole conversation. She's like, what do you want to create in your life? And he said, I want to ride in a Lamborghini. And she said, all right, well let's set that intention. Let's, let's hold space for that. Let's talk about how we make that work. Well do it within a week. He spots a Lamborghini at lifetime fitness on the South side, right? And he says, Oh, you got it.

Jon Vroman ([28:40](#)):

Pull over. Let me go talk to that woman. And she jumps out of the car, he strikes up a conversation with her. Next thing you know, he's like in the car and next thing you know she's giving them a ride. And like this all happened, you know, within days of him setting this intention and just so cool. Yeah. What's really amazing. And she was so kind to him. And it reminds me also of the words that we can speak into the lives of people that aren't our kids, but that the impact we can have when we are as men, as father figures for other people are in figures of influence for other people. Because what she said to him was so powerful. I mean, it was something along the lines of, you want one of these cars? He said, yeah. She said, well stay in school, right.

Jon Vroman ([29:23](#)):

Don't do drugs, don't, don't drink. And you know, and just study hard and you'll go. And I love it. It was a female [inaudible]. Totally. Yeah. 100%. Yeah. She even told him, she goes, Oh, she goes baby. She goes, I've got lots of these cars. I've got Ferrari's. It was really cool. That's cool. So it was really fun. She was super, super sweet. But he, he still talks about that moment and nice. Yeah, it's been fun. So, uh, we've been to the track two and yeah, it's interesting man. How they just, they're going to be into what they're into when they're into it. Yeah. Yeah, exactly. In, in, you know, there's always that other side where if your parents push you into something, you tend to want to rebel against that. Yeah. And so I'm just like, I'm not going to push it cause that'll cause the opposite reaction.

Jon Vroman ([30:08](#)):

Exactly. Yeah. Oh that's, that's cool man. So what's a, what's ahead for you in 2020, what are you excited about with your family? Like, I know you talked about you'd been out, moved in, you've got these walks in the neighborhood. What trips? What's on the horizon for you or what's it, what's firing you up? Just having family experiences for the first time. You know, we took the kids for Christmas up to Dallas. Yeah. Gosh, I can't remember the name of the hotel, but it's this giant big hotel outside of Fort worth that is almost like a theme park inside where they [inaudible] yeah, they set it up with this winter Wonderland, uh, you know, with ice slides and snowball fights and all of this stuff inside the hotel. The Gaylord. Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's it. So doing that, I mean that was my first family trip, if you will, since I had him.

Jon Vroman ([30:57](#)):

And so going camping, taking the kids, skiing, getting on the Lake, you know, teaching them to surf and, and wakeboard this year, this summer is going to be huge. So that's it. Just more, more time as a family for the very first time, you know when my life is going to be awesome and it's really great that he can finally experience that as well. So that's cool. Do you like to camp? Is that something, would you consider yourself an outdoorsman? Ironically, yes and I used to all the time but I haven't taken him for one reason or another. He goes, as you know all the time with his school mates, they go like every two or three months and that's something mom has done with him. And so now that you know there's more, there's another person in the picture that can help supervise and take care and support on a trip trips become much more fun.

Jon Vroman ([31:45](#)):

And so yeah, I'm sure we'll start doing that a lot this year and spending a lot of time on the Lake is going to be super fun too. So we should get you out with us. How, and I have a camping trip coming up. Yeah, well loving you with the details about that. Below that for sure. We just, I would say we just got into this

as a family. I certainly not consider myself an outdoorsman by any stretch of the imagination, but just, well here's what's interesting. You might appreciate this and this will actually go full circle back to the beginning of our chat about sleep. So Tiger's part of this program called fire Scouts locally here in Austin. And if you don't know about it by the way, Mike, you should, we should talk about this. Okay. It's amazing. The guys who run it are the real deal.

Jon Vroman ([32:25](#)):

They're just so talented. They take tiger on these incredible camping trips and I volunteered to go, this is a couple of weeks ago. This is a really recent and I've been tracking my sleep obsessively. Hal and I have this conversation on regularly cause I'm using the aura ring. Yeah. I've had a bunch of them breaking on me. But yeah, and, and I'm, I'm fascinated by, and I'm learning about HRV and all these things, right? I realized my body was in fight or flight way more than I realized until I got blood work back. That said, I had likely an internal bleed. Yeah, it was a, I got tested in Russia when I was there with my wife and they said you had a higher wreath recite sedimentation rate, which is a inflammation marker, a test for inflammation and then also low iron and low hemoglobin. And so I started really paying attention cause that was the first time that I was like, Oh yeah, like, like I need to really dial this in.

Jon Vroman ([33:22](#)):

Well now I'm learning about all this. So this all tees up where I'm constantly looking at what impacts my sleep. Well I was out there with these kids all day long, standing around, connecting to nature, breathing, fresh air and circadian rhythm, watching the sun go down like the whole deal. Right? Campfires. My HRV was off the charts that night. And here's what's interesting. I thought I slept like shit. Hmm. Cause I was in this, I bought this sleeping bag. It's like a cocoon. I didn't even know these sleeping bags. They called like, I don't know what they're called. Mummy. They looked like a coffin. Yeah. Right. And they're really tight. Like, you cannot turn your body, you can't, like if you're a pillow between the legs, how to sleep or like this is not the big bag for you. So I thought it was miserable, but when I woke up in the morning and I looked at my stats, I slept incredibly well, which is fascinating.

Jon Vroman ([34:14](#)):

Hours of deep sleep. Did he get, I've got two and a half hours of deep sleep, which is crazy. Like I had not had a two and a half hour deep sleep maybe ever. And so, and then I was like, Oh man. Yeah. So the variable that I assigned as the reason for that, of course, being in nature, just being connected and also getting away from the led lights. I took a video for how of a slow Mo of inside Costco of led lights. Oh, and they're flashing. Yeah. And they're flashing. And I sent it to him and he immediately started changing all the lights in his house and, but I really like, I subscribed to this, so I dunno man. What, what, what's your take on any of that? Like I would, I've done it all because I've done it all. So I've got the blue light glasses at night.

Jon Vroman ([35:00](#)):

I've got the chili pad system on my bed. I've got, yeah, I take like 10 different supplements every night before I go to bed to be able to fall asleep. What else is CBD helping you? It wasn't CBD THC was the game changer. That's what allowed me to get off the Xanax and the Ambien. Yup. And so what my body needed was the disassociative because it was in that traumatized state, sure. To actually be able to relax enough to fall asleep and that replaced did those two drugs and actually worked better. So instead of an hour and a half asleep, I was actually getting three or four of them more real sleep. So that really saved my

Mike Dillard (35:37):

as well as definitely a part of the process.

Mike Dillard (35:40):

Um, and uh, that was a hugely, hugely helpful, beneficial substance. Uh, and I found that about pill form is much more effective than, you know, inhaling smoking, so that, that was a game changer for sure. Yeah. Yeah. Mike, what do you need right now? Or what do you want to learn more of in case our community does have resources for you? You talked, you started out the show talking about being willing to ask for things, right? Sure. And so what are your big asks in the world right now? What, what can the universe conspire to help you with? It's hard to say because you know, the goal is to get my body, it's been in this sympathetic dominant state for a year and a half now. And it needs to get to a point where it can relax and I'm still constantly pursuing so many things, whether it's meditation, you know, or the muse headset or different types of ways to release trauma and energy from the body.

Mike Dillard (36:38):

I've literally got 10 different things on my list that I need to implement, try, you know, experiment with and do. So there's a lot of therapies that I think will be beneficial that I have in front of me. And it's just taking the time to implement them between everything else that I'm already doing. Yeah. And I think that this is just also a process that takes time to heal from, you know, JP, it took him three years before he was finally, you know, kind of back to normal and healthy from his mold. So as long as I'm seeing progress and heading in the right direction, which I am, then that's the most important thing. And all of the labs are going in the right way. And so that's been a really big learning curve as well. That's been a part of this process is patience.

Mike Dillard (37:21):

As an entrepreneur, we want to do it now and go get it done and like, show me what to do. I'll do it, I'll get it done. And at the same time, your body is on its own schedule. Yeah. So having to learn patience around that has been a, a big part of this process. So man, I think I'm doing everything that I know of to do and that the experts that I found no to do. And so again, somebody might have some magical thing that worked for them and that, you know, that'd be great. Again, I'm open to all ideas. Yeah. I just don't know what else there is that I haven't tried already. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And my last question here, Mike is a, and thanks for your time man. This has been great. Yeah, I just really appreciate this conversation and one of our pillars of front row dads is integrated living, so balancing these businesses and so, so many of the guys in the group are really successful in their business.

Mike Dillard (38:06):

But you know, I think, well what I've heard over the years is just this internal wrestling a little bit with how much time to spend in the business. Even if they have a scale profitable, it's still something they love. It's still a place to go to be a rock star. So they might not need the money, but they love going and doing that thing cause it's a, it's a hobby for them. That's an passion. Probably the building. That's great. It's good to show our kids that. So it's wonderful. It's good to have that outlet. [inaudible] you're in a really unique situation right now, recovering. How are you orchestrating all these moving parts from your business to the family to healing yourself? Like what does that look like for you practically? Well, thankfully he's in school, so I work all day while he's in school and then I have him three nights a week.

Mike Dillard (38:52):

And so when I have him, I don't work at all and I never have. So whenever I have him, I don't work and I, and I've never drank around him or parties or any, any of that stuff. So when I'm with him, I'm with him, we're in the same room, we're doing something, even if it's just watching a movie, whatever it is, playing a video game together on the iPad or whatever. So for me, that's been pretty simple because I don't try to do everything at once. There's a very, very clear separation for me between work and not. And yeah, so that's never really been an issue. Uh, thankfully if he was three years old and not in school yet, that'd be tough. Yeah. You know, that would, that would certainly be a different situation. So, yeah, that luckily has, has not really been an issue just because I've had such a clear separation there.

Mike Dillard ([39:38](#)):

Between those two, those two events, parts of my life, everything I need to get done business-wise I can do between nine and three. That's it. Like when I've talked to people who have been divorced in a relationship again, or navigating that space of, you know, a shared custody of a child. Whenever I talk about that, I always get emails or calls or something saying we need more of that because I'm in this space. This is what I get from the single guys. Right. Or the divorced dads. What advice would you have, you know, for these gentlemen out there, what's worked for you? How have you navigated that space? Yeah. What would you say to that crew? The most important thing is to get on the same page as the mom because that affects things more than anything else. And what do you mean by that?

Mike Dillard ([40:23](#)):

What does that look like? Uh, having a healthy, a healthy relationship in that regard. Even if you're not talking a lot or often at least the, the communication that you do have is, you know, was cordial and, and healthy around the kids. And so, and that to me is number one. Like you never want to show up when you're exchanging, when your, your kids over to your there, their other parents and have it be this anger filled yeah. Situation. So getting that squared away I think makes life infinitely better when it comes to the child and, and for your own relationship and just peace of mind. And there's obviously a lot of wounding that happens when you go through a divorce. And so going out and getting the therapy and the help that you need to move past whatever anger or resentment is still there. Cause there's no way you're going through a divorce without that shit. Yeah. That's going to be there. And so the sooner you can go get that handled on your own end and you can do whatever you need to do, you don't have to have their cooperation to make a, a change. In a difference in your mindset or your outlook or your attitude or your actions in that regard. Or you can just go handle

Jon Vroman ([41:34](#)):

what you can handle and make a very big difference in your own life in that regard. That's my single biggest piece of advice because if you just keep dragging that around for years, cause I did, I was very angry and resentful for many years around my situation and that just didn't serve me or chase or anyone else. And so finally getting to a place where I can move past that was very, very beneficial for myself and everybody else. So, yeah. Yeah. You know, my wife and I, Mike went to a, um, fostering, adopting meeting last week, so we have two boys, 10 and five. But thinking about adopting now or fostering actually fostering wasn't even on the table until we went to this, the session. And what was interesting was there was a lot of things that were very, very fascinating about the conversation, thought things.

Jon Vroman ([42:22](#)):

I didn't know right about this space, but something I took away that was a great value was the woman had said, was talking about how it works with a, your relationship if you're fostering a child or adopting a

child, how your relationship works with the birth mom. And what she said was so profound to me was that she says, you want an amazing relationship with that person. You always want to talk about that person and in a light because that's still their birth mom. The more love that child can experience. Yeah. Loving on that child. Right. The more people connected to that child that is rooted in a place of love, the better for the child, period. And the story. Yeah. And I just thought that was so beautiful. Like the more people loving when a child is just so beautiful and the more people that that child can see you loving on the better.

Jon Vroman ([43:15](#)):

Uh, it was just a really positive articulation of those very complicated relationships. Yeah. I think, yeah, without a doubt. And that needs to go and be expanded to anyone and everyone, because I look at myself and other adults as children with oxidized bodies. Yeah, exactly. That's all right. Are still a bunch of them children inside with, you know, older, oxidized bodies and that's about it. So I think that that should apply to, to every, every human, no matter what their ages are. Sure. You know what it is. So yeah, let's go man. Yeah. Mike, anything left to be said that you wanted to get out to the guys listening out there? Any of the family men, the dads, do people navigating the space? Yeah. Another really big part of this journey for me over the last year and a half, it was learning self forgiveness. And I think guys, especially again, we tend to internalize things and take them personally. Yeah. As to whether or not we think we're being good dads or not dads are providing or not for whatever it may be. And really knowing that you're just doing the best you can do and being okay with that and forgiving yourself around whatever expectations you had but weren't able to accomplish. And really finding love yourself I think

Mike Dillard ([44:31](#)):

is the foundation for anything else you want to do around your kids and your family. So for me, that's really big. A great resource that I'll share with you in that regard is my buddy. Come all Robert Kahn. I had him on the podcast recently and has his book. How to love yourself like your life depends on it. Go by that and read that book if you haven't done that already. Uh, I don't think this is a topic that is talked about in the circles of men in general enough until he finally brought it to the forefront this past year. And Kamala is a rock star. You know, this dude's a vast, hugely successful venture capitalist out of Silicon Valley in New York and has some unbelievable life experiences and he's an author, has just done so much work on himself that he's kind of like a VC meets a monk.

Mike Dillard ([45:19](#)):

Yeah. If you will. A very humble dude. And for me, that's been a, an unbelievable part of my journey over the last year that I think just needs to be looked at more, talked about more, considered more, and made a focus in everybody's lives, especially if you have kids. Well, thanks for saying that, man. I think everybody needs to hear that. You know, I just had this feeling the other day. I was like, Oh man, I'm failing it every, you know, I just had the lens on where I looked at it and I'm like, it just was seeing all the things that were broken and just weren't working the way that I wanted it to. Talking to people that just seemed like they were dialed in at a much greater level than myself. Uncertain, important topics really. That's good, man. That's a good message for me to hear today, Mike. Thank you. Cool. Awesome. I appreciate that, man. Thank you so much for having me. This has been been awesome. I appreciate it. Where should people go find you, Mike diller.com? That's it. Yeah. Any, any, uh, anything that I've done is there, so, Hey, really appreciate it, Mike. This has been a lot of fun. Absolutely. Take care guys.

Speaker 3 ([46:21](#)):

Hey guys, if you haven't already done so, go right now to [front row dads.com/facebook](https://frontrowdads.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](https://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](https://frontrowdads.com/facebook) and join the conversation. I'll look forward to connecting with you there.

Speaker 4 ([47:48](#)):

[inaudible].