

Michael Barron (00:02):

Gentlemen, welcome to the Front Row Dad Podcast. While it's common to hear men say family first, most guys are working long hours and finding it really difficult to juggle all the priorities on this show. You're going to hear unscripted conversations, guys, who are as committed to winning at home as they are to winning at work each week, we're going to share a new conversation, digging into the strengths and the struggles of guys, just like you and me to help us level up our dad game, strengthen our marriage, succeed in business and stay healthy along the way. If you're new to the show, I'm John Broman, married to the free spirit known as Tatyana father of two boys tiger and ocean and living in Austin, Texas. Let's get right into our next conversation,

Michael Barron (00:48):

Right? Michael what's up, man. Welcome to the show, John. It's good to see you. All right. So Michael, the short bio professionally is that you're an investor and we were introduced by a new friend. So shout out to Gordy, right? He was the one that put us together is that you did. Thank you, buddy. Thank you, Gordy. And Michael, tell us a little bit about your family. Let's begin with the most important part of your bio. And they're like the way you frame that I am a father of three and a husband. It most certainly is the most rewarding, most fulfilling role that I carry. I have two sons and a daughter. One is in college in Colorado. My middle is starting his senior year in high school. And my amazing daughter is a, is a rising sophomore in high school. Now, how do you feel about the era that you're in this period of time, where you've got older kids?

Michael Barron (01:49):

You're always going to be a dad. Something we believe here in the brotherhood is that you're never not a dad, right? It's not a, it only changes and shifts, but how are you feeling, man? What does this mean to you? Where's what purpose are you giving to this particular period of time? Well, it's a big question. I think that if we draw it back to the near immediate, you know, this has really been an historic time for everybody here within the community. And I think that one of the things that I reflect on John is that the pandemic and being close as a family and physically close has afforded me as a father, the opportunity to dig into dig into some issues that maybe wouldn't have happened as quickly. So being together for months at a time, you had to get creative. And I think that watching my younger sort of unpack what was going on on either walks with the dog every day or unwinding at night after a, you know, a long news cycle, it really is interesting to sit back and listen and to give them a little bit of opportunity.

Michael Barron (02:51):

So time space, as you, and I've talked about to sort of find out what was on their mind, teenagers live a life of their own. And they're involved with, with friends and school, extracurricular activities and sports. So that time can be very time filled for them that time of their lives and taking this time to be able to unpack some of those things that were on their mind and give them the time and space to sort of either work through what they were hearing, seeing, feeling, what their friends were sharing. I think that's been one of the silver linings for my wife and I through that period of time. So, you know, as a guy who has spent a good part of your life and your bio is incredible. So I can't even get into the bio cause we'd be at the end of the show, but for a guy who, who in short understands strategy and investing, right.

Michael Barron (03:44):

I love the term investing because I just think it's such a great, I have buddy Justin, Donald, who's an, a wonderful investor and man of high integrity. And I just love who he is. But I said to him recently, I said, I

just love that you're a title is investor. I like to think that's what I do with my life too. It's not just choosing where to invest my time and attention and resources. Like everybody's an investor to some degree, right? It's where are they investing themselves? And where are they giving their attention? That makes you an investor to some degree, but I can't help, but make the correlation Michael, to your world of investing and then your world at home. And to have to ask you, like, what has that taught you about life at home? How have you viewed your investment into your family differently, perhaps?

Michael Barron ([04:34](#)):

How has it been informed by your work, right? Where choose to invest in, where do you put on the blinders and how do you stay in your lane? And you know, all the things that you might learn in the world of investing. So I think that you hit on two of them in your, in your, in your lead up there, John, and it's time and people, right? You're investing your time. You're allocating time. And you're really at the end of the day, you're not investing in products, goods, or services you're investing in people. And if you're leading an organization, you're starting an organization, that's where you want to focus your time. And as a parent, that's absolutely what it's all about. And I think that there is a strong parallel and it winds up reinforcing itself. I think that a lot of people who are listening to the podcast right now can connect to this idea that the longer you go in your career and the more you realize that it is about people, it is about communication.

Michael Barron ([05:22](#)):

It is about relationships, the more robust that business or, or those relationships get. And that winds up filtering over and carrying right over to the things that are going on at home. And I can tell you firsthand that I had a lot to learn as my kids were born. I thought that I was doing a good job of compartmentalizing. I think that some of my friends liked to give me credit for being good at compartmentalizing or keeping things in their box. But I think that early on John, I was fooling myself because you can't compartmentalize your life that narrowly. And I think that you have to sort of take a step back. And this is where I became a little bit more aware of this issue, which was taking a step back and realizing that the way that I filter information and my timeframe and my outcome, wasn't my kid's outcome.

Michael Barron ([06:09](#)):

And it wasn't necessarily my, my employees timeframe or outcome. So one of the things, one of the tools that really helped me in business continues to and helps me with relationships with my kids is, is making sure that I have time and space to have these conversations. And it may not happen. It's like the misnomer of that's 11 o'clock, I'm going to schedule two o'clock to have quality time. You don't do that. Right. Quality time is always a function of the quantity of time you're spending. So when it finally became clear to me that this was really a function of, of being engaged, so tuning in and finding the right way to engage either my children throughout various arts of their life. I'll give you a good example this weekend, my son and I are headed to North Carolina or headed there for a couple of reasons.

Michael Barron ([06:56](#)):

But one of the main reasons why we're pulling out of town, John is that North Carolina is an eight hour road trip from Pennsylvania. And it's gotta be a lot of windshield time. My son is coming up on an important year for him being a senior in high school. And he's the type of kid who would give you the shirt off his back. But sometimes even with his father, it's hard for him to engage in questions. He needs time and space to sort of let it settle, to make sure that it's safe, make sure that he's thought through it.

So this road trip is going to give us a chance to connect both on the road and through whatever adventures we choose to get into. The second part of that is that when we wind up in North Carolina, we're going to be at my best friend's place.

Michael Barron ([07:37](#)):

My best friend treats my son like his own son in the lead up to this conversation. He knows Jack very well and knew what this was. And he said, look, brother, I'd like to get some time with Jack alone because I know that the conversations that he and I have will be slightly different than the ones that you and he has. And to me, that would lead on to a second point, which is that one of the things that I think I do a better job at now than I did maybe 20 years ago, is asking for help and knowing how to ask for help. It is tough for a lot of individuals. I'm still not great at it. I am still not great at it, but I'm better. I think that as a parent, letting kids know that you don't have all the answers all the time, even though you'd like to think you do, he has an important realization for kids to have, and especially as you get into the teenage years.

Michael Barron ([08:28](#)):

So, you know, that's tough for you and many men. Why is it tough to ask for help? I've thought a lot about that. Part of it could be growing up. You will take a quick side story here. You know, my father passed away. I think, you know that when I was young. And so for me, when I look into it, maybe it's because of the fact that I wanted to keep things as calm in a Rocky home environment when I was young. So I didn't want to upset the applecart, maybe part of it, maybe John it's because we're not taught that maybe it's because we don't have mentors who are constantly reinforcing that. And that's one of the things that's great about the front row dads community is that that's part of why it exists. You don't have to go it alone. You can workshop some of these things and in a safe environment and you don't have to have all of the answers by yourself.

Michael Barron ([09:17](#)):

So when you can get there mentally as a parent and as a leader, I know that you do. And I do as well participate in either mastermind groups or workshops or independent professional studies. You're trying to bring together the best practices, best ideas, challenge each other. It would just make sense that you would do the same thing as, as a parent. And so that's one of the things that I'm spending more time on with my kids, making sure that they don't have to be right at all costs. It's not binary. It's okay to be unsure. But when, you know, when you get deep in the weeds, you need to be comfortable asking for help because there are people out there who love you. There are people who care and there are people who are willing to help. Sometimes I think that professionals build up these walls, that if I ask for help, it's admitting weakness. If I let my team or my employees know that I'm unsure of this, they won't trust me when I firmly have found out and believed that the exact opposite is true.

Jon Vroman ([10:09](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. Do you think guys are better at asking for help at work than they are at home? Or do you think they struggle in both equally?

Michael Barron ([10:17](#)):

Well, I would say it's probably equally challenging. I think that when you do something and you see it's effective, you probably are more comfortable trying it in a different setting. Right? So I think that with communication, you know, if you are a good communicator, if you're a good listener, you're probably

able to take those skills into your personal life, your professional life, your friends, your charitable. So to me, it's a function of getting comfortable with it. It's like riding a bike. It's like starting an exercise program. It's really uncomfortable at first. But you know, after two weeks or three weeks, you're sort of in the swing. Yeah.

Jon Vroman ([10:51](#)):

You know, the interesting thing about the asking for help is, and I've evaluated this in my own life as well is it's, it's almost as if we hear something in one setting and then we try to apply it in all areas of our life. Like we learn in one moment at one time playing one sport in one class in one conversation that self-reliance is important. I'm not going to help you with that. You do that on your own. You've got this right. And we learn that somebody teaches us that. And it's a big breakthrough moment. Wait a minute. I do have this. I don't always have to ask somebody to spoonfeed me. Like I'm capable, I'm able, I can. Right. And it's all of a sudden we find this new toy and we're like that. We just apply it to everything. And we forget that.

Jon Vroman ([11:38](#)):

Yes self-reliance yes. You want to have the confidence and the understanding that I can do that it's like running a marathon. I can move my legs. I can make a decision. I can get my body across that finish line. And at the same time, we almost need to remember that somebody else made your shoes. Somebody else might have organized the run. Somebody else paved the road that you're running on perhaps or clear the trail or did like that. There's so many people that have a hand in our success in life. And then being able to balance the two of both recognizing and appreciating all the hands that play a role. And when we need to ask for help, ask for directions, ask for right support, hire that running coach, right? Hire an accountability partner to go run with us so that we'll run further. And at the same time, just grabbing a hold of our own grit and moving forward, balancing those, I find really fascinating in my own life.

Michael Barron ([12:42](#)):

I think that you just laid out a really important distinction, which is that as parents, we are raising our children to try and become, you know, at all stages of their life, incrementally more independent, self-reliant responsible. And in that sort of upward push through school sports and home activities, it's constantly climbing the mountain and there's nuance there, right? It's not all or nothing, but you're right. That's the message. It's, you know, you can do that. You're old enough to do that. You learn that three years ago, whatever marker it is, but teenagers, and this is where I am. So I'll focus in on this part right now, teenagers, don't do a great job with nuance. So if that's the message, that message that they're getting, right. The quiet message that they're also getting is do it by yourself. Or you got this right. You don't need me anymore.

Michael Barron ([13:31](#)):

And so I absolutely connect and agree with what you're saying is that we're fighting this competing battle. And I think that as, as parents, as fathers and as leaders, we need to be mindful of that. We need to take a second to think about that, which is that, how do you in parallel have the conversation about self-growth independence, reliance, grit, determination, digging in. And at the same time, at the end of the day, you're not alone. You didn't do it alone. You won't do it alone. And there are resources. So I think that you just laid out to me, which if we talk about nothing else, this is the foundational issue, which is that parallel path, which is we are going to help support our spouses, our kids, our families, our

businesses, our teams. And we're going to do that in two ways. We're going to be pushing them, but we're also going to be supporting them. Right. There's going to be that net. There's going to be that safety net, whether it's implied or real that we're there all the time.

Jon Vroman ([14:27](#)):

Yeah. It brings me to an important skill that I think makes sense, which is yes. And right. It's uh, I think we're kids are trying and adults are trying, we're all trying to create distinctions in our lives to understand something. So where is truth? How true is that to me? And I feel that when I'm working with my boys, now I'm in a different phase. I've got a 10 old and a five-year-old, but I keep trying to bring into the equation of the conversation. Yes. And Hey, is it this or this dad? I'm like, yes. And right. It's like, and let's not make it so binary or it's not always do you have to go left or right. Like where's option three, four, five, six, seven. Let me explain to you. And we just had this conversation this morning over breakfast, like how to be a critical thinker is so important for kids, how to be a thinker of these things.

Jon Vroman ([15:22](#)):

Like how to ask interesting questions, how to wait, brought up this conversation this morning about like, you don't really want kids that are great listeners, because if your kids that amazing listener, as an example, if you have to take everything within context, right? Like if somebody were to take that one sound bite, they would fight me tooth and nail on it. But the point is like, it's about if a kid just listens to you and does everything you want them to do, that might feel great in the moment as a parent, you might be like, look at me, look how great of a parent I am. And all the parents will look at you and be like, your kid listens to everything you say, but at some point don't we want our kids pushing back. Isn't that what helps them in the world is to not just sit around and take instruction and do whatever somebody else says. But to, you know, to be in a place where you can challenge the status quo, where you can be an inventor and an innovator and look at things differently. Like as much as that drives me crazy as like kids want to negotiate on everything, there's a part of me. That's like, yeah, man, like negotiate. This is the place for you to learn that skill

Michael Barron ([16:29](#)):

Right now. Because you know, if your kids are doing it now, just wait the teenage years, they hone those skills at, with remarkable speed, John they're ninjas. Huh. But I want to go back to something you talked about, which is listening. You use the phrase. Yes. And when my kids are asking questions, I like it right now. I think a lot of times it's 80, 20, right. And they're the 80, and I'm the 20% of that conversation. Because when they're bringing a topic up, when we're on the road this weekend, I want my son to sort of, I throw something out. I want him to be able to unpack everything that he can and challenge him. And when he gives me an answer, I'm going to, you know, why do you believe that? Or why is that important to you? Or how did he come to that?

Michael Barron ([17:10](#)):

So I think that open ended questions gets kids get older. You know, it sounds trite and simple, but to go back to where you started with this, which was critical thinking, right? Let them unpack this and sort of let them discover because it winds up teaching you, you have to go back to when we started about the time and space for important conversations. When you talked about, we bridge this into listening, they all go together. And I think that when you're new to parenting the idea of, you know, of a kid on a strong sleep schedule and listens, and doesn't cross the street when he's not supposed to and picks up his toys, that's great. That's what you want. But as they grow, you're not raising robots and we're not raising eggs

either. These are kids who are going to have to go out and figure out a lot of, a lot of difficult things and integrate a lot of their critical thinking early in life, be faced with challenges.

Michael Barron ([18:00](#)):

And they're going to need to have the courage of their convictions and be able to workshop some of this, both with you and for themselves. And it's remarkable sitting and listening to teenagers, what they think and why, and some of the challenges that perhaps you and I didn't go through in school years ago. And so maybe if within this community and within conversations, it's important to have a framework to think about what does success look like? We're right now in a really interesting gray area, because there's no real term for what we're talking about, right? Nobody would, how do I say you're sort of deepened as gray area with conversation. It's not direct, it's sort of a winding road and it may take days or sometimes weeks for a conversation with teenagers to be completely teased out for them to step back for them to think about it for you to think about it for you to come back together.

Michael Barron ([18:57](#)):

But you know, parenting is not transactional success. You're on a long road, right? We both agree that it doesn't end. You know, it is well and it's never ending. And so success looks different at different points of your child's life at different points of, of, of your, of your business life, different things are going to be important. But that ability to take a step back and to give your children or your partner business partners, a chance to really connect and unwind, unwind conversations, use that may be important at the time. I think it's foundationally important. It is the single most important skill. I struggle with it at times, but if I came back because you want to be a teacher, meaning you struggle with listening. I think that early on in, in my career, most certainly I wanted to be seen as an authority.

Michael Barron ([19:52](#)):

When people call you up and ask you for, you know, for your advice or your you're on certain radio programs or certain TV shows, you can fool yourself into thinking that, you know, look, all I have to do is talk to people, listen, they write it down. They publish it, the newspaper, they have the on TV people call it. Talk to me, this is the model. This is what I need to do. I need to do more of this. When in fact the listening piece is going to give you 10 times more. It's going to give you 10 times more. And I say, I struggle with it. I struggle with it at times, because it's not that instant gratification. So you constantly, you know, when we talked about big picture and big picture strategy, there's no short term payoff in some of these conversations, some of these are conversations and ideas and sort of data points that you will take as a parent and as a spouse and as a leader, you'll take in and you'll harvest these data points and you'll have to sit on them for awhile.

Michael Barron ([20:39](#)):

You have to reflect on them for awhile. You'll have to come back and challenge yourself and challenge your kids. While, you know, we talked about this two weeks ago, is that you, you still believe that. Is that still important? Is that still, you know, how do you feel about that? Oh, you know, dad that's, that was two weeks ago. That's not important anymore. And so I think that, I think that being brought up to go back to what you talked about earlier, which is, you know, do this, get this result, do this, get that result, move on. I think that it's important to realize that this is not like that. Sometimes it's do this sit and think about it, do this, come back to it.

Jon Vroman ([21:20](#)):

Yep. That's definitely a theme there of just giving some space. I remember my dad telling me the same thing when I was a kid and I would bring heavy stuff to him. He would say, it's always better for him. If you write it in a letter and let him sit with it versus, you know, his said, it just his personality, isn't one to want to respond. I had a challenge with the way that we would not converse. Cause I'd throw a big question at him and I'd take his silence is that he didn't give a shit. But really it was just his processing style was he really wanted to take his time because the way he was brought up was that when he opened his mouth, he had better be thoughtful about what came out. And that was interesting to learn how to work with him as my dad, that space for him was very, very important. And I was more of an instant gratification, like give me your gut reaction. And he was hesitant to do that.

Michael Barron ([22:10](#)):

Yeah, I can. I can completely understand how that could be frustrating for either of you, both of us. Yeah, for sure. And you know, my daughter is far more direct, you know, when something's on her mind, she'll what she'll peel off and she'll, you know, she'll start laying it out and she'll lay it out in painstaking detail. There's no mistake. She gives a thorough download. She either asked me to weigh in or validate or laugh at it, but my son is very different. So I tend to be, I guess, more like your father with him in that bring me something. And I'll, I'll say, okay, let's connect tonight. Or let's, you know, let's sit down tomorrow or let's sit down this weekend and talk about that. I know that he is really sensitive towards the way that I react and he'll take my initial reaction as judgment, meaning yes, no positive negative.

Michael Barron ([23:00](#)):

You're on the right track. And so I tend to be more measured and circumspect with him because he needs the time to sort of connect with, with his thoughts. So I'll tell you that I have different communication styles within my own family. I believe that yeah. And this spills over professionally too. I think that when we talk about the right way, the right time and the right place, a lot of conversations I think, need to happen outside the office. At least for me, whether that's a lunch or breakfast or a cup of coffee or a walk or something after traditional office hours, I think sort of remove some of the barriers, some of the fears that people may have. And when I think that one of the things that has been really helpful for me is connecting some of my team members or employees or colleagues and just different settings like that without necessarily John a heart agenda. And it's that space. I think if that space regularly, whether it's, you know, once a month, once a quarter to just check in, you wind up learning a lot about, about situations that, uh, that you may not be completely aware of. And I think that's important.

Jon Vroman ([24:12](#)):

What's up guys. I want to take a quick break to talk to you about our private mastermind that we call the brotherhood. Now we created this unique community for a very specific type of man. And you may just have found your tribe if you believe in the power of relationships. And perhaps you're always trying to out-give everyone around you, you crave ideas that make you effective and efficient in all areas of life. You resonate with the idea of being a family man with a business, not a businessman with a family, by joining our brotherhood, you'll have access to weekly interactive training calls get to join as many or as few as you like. Our guys commit to one of these each month, optional, small groups designed to create meaningful connections and higher accountability, a private resource library accessible to only our members. And we have challenges throughout the year to help you push your limits.

Jon Vroman ([24:53](#)):

And we even involve your family in a few of them. The brotherhood is where I'm connecting every day. I'm asking questions when I need help and giving support wherever I can. Our brotherhood was created for men with wisdom, but also those who are wise enough to know there's more to learn. And the guys who value investing time to work on their families so they can make the best of their time when they are with their families. Now, of course, you're a badass. You can do a lot on your own. You likely have for many years, and yeah, you probably don't need front row dads to have a great family to love on your kids and have a great relationship. But one thing I know for certain is that men for years have done better in tribes versus trying to brave the world in their own. Here's what one of our members has to say about the brotherhood,

Michael Barron ([25:32](#)):

The message of what you're doing. And putting out there resonated with me at such a high level. I knew I had to be a part of it. And because I didn't know that this existed, I didn't know that front row dads was there and that community existed in that way. I mean, family men with businesses, not business men with families that changed everything. That one line shifted my entire thought on what your, about what this community is about, what this brotherhood is about and what this group is about. And I would say if you are a dad or an entrepreneur or a father or husband, and that resonates with you, this is a great community to be a part of because it's unlike anything else I've seen.

Jon Vroman ([26:09](#)):

If we want our kids to have great relationships and learn from others, we should lead the way and model the behavior. We went to pass along to look guys, the time is now to pour into your family. I read an article by Tim Urban that put everything into perspective for me about how important it is for me to get parenting. Right, right now he wrote that 93% of all the time he'd ever spent with his mom and dad happened before he was 18 years old. And it's crazy to think that I've got only eight more years before my oldest son is an adult. I feel confident saying that no matter how old your kids are at the time to go all in on your family is right. We have members with newborns and we've got guys with kids that are grown adults members with only one child and guys with 10 people with blended families and everything in between. But by joining our brotherhood and choosing to invest one to two hours each month, we can help you make the most of your time that you do have with your kids. So no matter how great you are at fatherhood, marriage, juggling your work and your personal life calendar, we can help you be better. If you're ready to take the next step, go to [frontrowdads.com](http://frontrowdads.com) and click join the brotherhood today.

Michael Barron ([27:14](#)):

I'm gonna take a slightly different direction or not. Maybe this is in the same lane, but I think it's important to talk about our challenges as dad like, Hey, what's working and how do we replicate that? But also where did you really face a significant struggle? And how did you overcome it? So when you look back on your time as a dad,

Jon Vroman ([27:35](#)):

There's probably many to choose from, but where did you fail

Michael Barron ([27:40](#)):

A significant struggle? And how did you get through that? What comes to mind, gut reaction? And I realize I should probably be saying, let me have given you this question two days ago, let you think



about it. So I can answer that. I think that one of the things that has been challenging for me is sort of where my life is right now being bifurcated. And I have parents who are older, who I care for very deeply, and some of them are facing certain health challenges and my children still need a good deal of my attention as does my business and finding a way internally in my head to be able to reconcile all of those needs, I think has been challenging. I think that when you go back to what we were talking about, which is one of the things, the stereotypes or the reinforcement messages that we hear growing up, which is that you're supposed to take the next step and then the next step and the next step, while we say that for our kids, we hear those messages professionally too, right?

Michael Barron ([28:43](#)):

As, as, as, as, as, as, as, as professionals. And so you think, or you can think that your career is supposed to look a certain way, which is on an upward, you know, positive slope, directory direction though, from this position to the next position, to the next position. One of the things that I did was I paused a little bit about five years ago to take a different tack, to be able to be more engaged with my wife and kids on a daily basis to be local, meaning to be 10 minutes away from my parents where my grandmother's 95 years old, John she's one mile away from me. So one of the things that was both a priority for me in one breath, right? It was a priority for me to be engaged with my family, with my children, with my parents and with my extended family.

Michael Barron ([29:34](#)):

It was also a challenge. So that was a priority for me. But reconciling, how do you put that into practice? How do you execute on that? How do you balance that? We talk about work life balance. You know, my father was fond of the saying that, you know, balance is an easy thing to talk about and a hard thing to put in practice. And that's that phrase has never left me because it is, it is okay to decide that you want to take a different, different tack. And sometimes you're going to get off the bus, or sometimes you're going to say, you know, my roadmap is going to look a little bit different. So I think that one of the more challenging things for me was to validate what was important to me in action. So if I say that family being connected, being engaged, being present, if I said that that's being was important to me, which it is, how do I put that into practice? And how do I have those two things sync up? So my actions and words are in parallel.

Jon Vroman ([30:29](#)):

Do you think your business suffered as a result of that? Meaning like, do you think you left? I mean, I don't want to make an assumption here, but let's just say that, uh, let's just say that revenue is a metric of success in your business. If your revenue is continuing to grow. And certainly that's not the only metric that equals success in business, but do you think that that was compromised by your decision? And if so, is that okay?

Michael Barron ([30:54](#)):

I think it is. Okay. I think that the metrics are what you define them to be. So from a, you know, from a revenue or a profit standpoint, by saying, I'm going to take more time to do this. I'm going to say no to more things. So I can say yes to the important things. It's certainly, there's a trade off there. There's a trade off in time. There's a trade off at opportunity. There's a trade off in revenue. I think that you, if you make that decision, you have to give yourself the permission. This is where having a group of positive, you know, positive people in your life, surrounding yourself with the right people. It's okay to do that. And sometimes as a professional, and even as a father, you can doubt yourself on that. But at

the end of the day, John, I was able to do something that growing up that my father was never able to do, which is actually be present, be here.

Michael Barron ([31:46](#)):

So I considered that to me to be, if we're going to reframe this, I considered that to be the definition of success. So I succeeded that way, right. By being here, by being able to do those things, if it, in the short term, it means that short term, it means the following tradeoffs. I was okay with that. I was okay with that big picture. It didn't mean that along the data points, the blips didn't mean that I didn't have self doubt. It didn't mean that I didn't struggle with it at night. And I think that that part of this group and part of the value of this group is that you reach, or you have fostered a group of people who can be introspective and emotionally aware and vulnerable a time to say, you know what? This doesn't feel exactly. Right. I got to check in on this, but I'll tell you that was one of the bigger challenges internally for me.

Jon Vroman ([32:34](#)):

Yeah. I feel that that's really a thanks for opening up, man. And just talking about

Michael Barron ([32:40](#)):

All this, you know, as a guy who's traveled down the road and has kids that are, we'll just say more grown than many of our listeners, like somebody out there, who's got a three year old, a seven year old, a 10 year old, a 12 year old, and you've navigated that space. It was brought up recently in our group, how much our guys want to learn about discipline boundaries. Right. And I think there was another phrase that was used or a way to describe that, but let's just call it discipline and boundaries. Right. Um, do you feel that's something that you had kind of figured out along the way, and you developed a strategy or a framework around that that was your belief, your principal, that you operated by? Um, cause I'm sure that's different now that how, and it's different for every stage and age.

Michael Barron ([33:30](#)):

Of course. Right. That's the interesting thing about it is it's constantly evolving, but I know that's something guys struggle with. Any thoughts on that? It is. I think that, so I'm smiling because in my father's day card, uh, that my daughter gave me one of the lines she wrote, John was, you know, thanks for keeping me in line, right. To get me in line know as children sort of chase against, you know, boundaries and restrictions and discipline. We all know that they need them. And when things get out of check, it's not good for anybody. I think that understanding impact is the key. So what is your outcome, right? When you talk about discipline, what outcome are you looking for? I grew up in a household where my mother grew up with corporal punishment and there were times where her nerves were probably afraid. And I had, I had worn her last nerve and I paid, I paid the price, but I think parenting today is very different.

Michael Barron ([34:26](#)):

So you look for currency, you know, what's important to them. How can I send a message? Um, you know, and whether that's a time and space, whether that's, uh, you know, a restriction and I won't go into nuances parents, each individual parent here is going to know what's important to their kids and how to get their attention. And I will say, this is that as kids get older, it becomes less about trying to get their attention by taking away something than it does. I found in my own time, John takes less, it's less about taking away something as a punishment, as it is as is being connected with a conversation, telling

my son that I'm disappointed in him is a thousand times worse to him than being beaten. Right. I would never lay a hand on him, but I wouldn't have to. I mean, he's crestfallen when I tell him that I'm disappointed the power of words and so long way around this conversation, I think that as kids get older, when they act out and when you see a behavior that isn't, that isn't normal for them, it's usually it's something isn't right.

Michael Barron ([35:32](#)):

And rather than a knee jerk reaction, which is, I see this happening, I'm going, I'm going to step on it like this, or I'm going to deal with it like that. Maybe, maybe the strategy here is to take a breath and to ask yourself first, or you're to huddle up with your spouse. You know, why is this different? And my wife and I were through this several times during the fall of last year. And it came out that one of the three didn't feel as connected as they wanted to be. And so we had to sort of step back and say, okay, we thought that we were all on the same page here. We obviously weren't. And in conversations with this one child, we had to let you know, let them sort of pour their heart out about this issue and sort of reconnect. And so maybe that doesn't sound like discipline, but as far as reconnections and boundaries, it was foundationally important. Does that make sense at all?

Jon Vroman ([36:26](#)):

Absolutely, man. You know what? It triggers a thought for me that I'm still working to define what discipline looks like in my role as a data that's actually defining things is actually my, my mission for the year is to look at these terms, what is fatherhood? How do I define fatherhood? How do I define discipline? How do I define listening? How do I define, you know, like what does that look like in after I've been thoughtful about it? You know, it's just like defining your company's mission statement, your core values, you're defining your own personal strengths as a leader, defining the strengths in your team. And it's all about understanding the essence of something in my opinion. Right? And so I've been playing with this personally about discipline. I mean, with a 10 year old, the five-year-old, this feels like a major topic of conversation.

Jon Vroman ([37:15](#)):

And to me, I think where I agree with you is for me, it's moving from disciplining the behavior to discovering the cause of the behavior. Like I used to just like, Hey, I didn't like that. And here's the consequences. And see if you can match those up and stop doing it versus what is the cause of the behavior? A lot of times we punish a kid because they're doing something and we don't take a minute to go, Oh, are they tired? Are they hungry? Are they having a, is something else what's below the surface, right? What's the root cause if their one sibling is trying to hurt another sibling, then maybe deep down inside that's, you know, that person is wrestling with something. There's a reason that shit comes out of their mouth is because shit is what they're feeling inside. And so if we don't just punish the fact that shit came out of their mouth and we figure out what shit is causing that,

Michael Barron ([38:06](#)):

Right. Then I think

Jon Vroman ([38:08](#)):

That's where we can make better progress, which is why, you know, if I look for the big red thread here, the whole conversation, Michael, and like, what does all this mean? Like what have we been talking about here for the last 40 minutes? A lot of this is I think what you're going back to, there's a space and

a time there, an allowing for something to emerge, there's listening to your kids, there's paying attention, right? There's nuances to this, there's adapting and being flexible. Right? There's

Michael Barron ([38:36](#)):

All of this is a practice as a father, right? That is important. I want to get to a question that I really wanted to ask you, which is eight hours in the car. You're about to embark on this journey. How are you setting your intentions about that ride, right? Like how will you stay present to your son in that situation? Right. And when is it okay to not be present? When is it okay to be like, I'm exhausted from being present with my son and I need some Michael time. How are you looking at that? So I love the way that you sort of led up to that, which is, you know, one of the words you were using was, was flexible. And this is an evolution. So as children get older, the ways that you're going to approach these conversations will evolve and they will change.

Michael Barron ([39:25](#)):

And with my son being on the doorsteps of manhood himself, I told him, you know, a week ago, I said, look, this is what we're going to do. These are the things that I think that we've been talking about for the last six months, but we need to get a little bit more clarity. And I want to use this time to sort of reconnect and check in on these issues. So I'd like you to think a little bit about this and this is what know go spend some time together. So I've given him ownership. John I've given him a role in this trip, glitter role, cause he's mad, he's ready. He's gotta be driving part of it. He's going to be participating in these conversations. So I shared with him that I expect him to show up to, you know, to this trip, having, given it some thought, he doesn't need to come up with the answers.

Michael Barron ([40:07](#)):

I don't have the answers, but we're going to go down that path. And with him to me, I think that, you know, it's going to be a, you know, it'll be some road conversations there'll be out of the car. My middle is one who will pick up and put down conversation. So he'll tell me, right, both physically and verbally what's going on. And as I mentioned before, that one of the best things that I did was connect with my best friend who he trusts and feel safe with. So I'll be able to compare the stories that he tells my friend with the stories that he tells me and Tom will give me feedback. Look, this is what, you know, this is what he was saying about this. Or this is my opinion. Knowing him as long as I did, this is what I think is really going on in his head.

Michael Barron ([40:46](#)):

So to me long answer to your question. I think that being intentional about this, giving children a role in these conversations, having them be vested. So it's just not, it's not a lecture. It is a discussion giving him ownership of the outcome. And one of the things that is important to note for some listeners here is that, you know, we have one in college and my daughter, uh, you know, is pushes herself far harder than we could ever push her. My job is to simply pull her off the ceiling. A lot of time dresser, our middle child is finding his own path in life. And I was really clear to him last summer that his path did not need to look like my path for me to love him. He was free to discover this. And if college is right for him, he's an intellectually curious kid. Doesn't like sitting in class. I can identify with that piece. So giving him the time and space to really be comfortable and connect with who he is and be authentic, make decisions that are right for him, not decisions that he thinks are right. Based on what he's seeing with his friends or what he thinks would make me or his mother happy.

Jon Vroman ([41:53](#)):

Yeah. Without breaking any privacy agreements that you have on this car ride, any like little sample of what types of things you guys are going to talk about, or what did you encourage him to think about? Just prompting other guys to maybe topics they could dig into at their kids roughly the same age.

Michael Barron ([42:10](#)):

Yeah. So without getting too deep in the weeds, there's a communication tool that, um, that I was turned on to about 20 years and it's called the Colby profile. Are you familiar with it? No. Tell me about it. KOL B colby.com. It really looks at the way that people interact at their authentic self and it deals information processing systems processing the way they react to new ideas and the way they react with the tangible world. It is not an intelligence test. It's not a personality test. I've used this a lot to build cross functional teams at work. And I had my almost 18 year old son take this about a week ago, John. And it was interesting to see sort of where, how he processes information and how he deals with uncertainties. And so I had him do that. I gave him a copy of it and I said, look, we can talk about this.

Michael Barron ([42:58](#)):

It's not, you know, I explained to him what it was and what it wasn't, but tools like that as parents, you know, to me, that was, that was the ultimate check-in right. Which is, I think I know my kid, however, maybe I need a little bit of insurance. So, you know, so that's where it started. But in the car, I think that, you know, where I want to start at the beginning of the trip, which is, you know, where do you feel most energized? Where are you most passionate? And as a kid looked that changes from month to month or quarter to quarter, and that's okay too, but I want this trip for him to be about discovery and I want him to come away and I will define this trip as successful or this conversation, this group of conversations as successful. If he feels that there is, um, there's no limit to the things that he can explore.

Michael Barron ([43:44](#)):

There's no to the fact that if he doesn't get it right on the first try or the first, the second try, he can always, you know, there's always another path forward. And to keep going, I think to build that combination of what we talked about, being resilient, to reinforce the fact that you can figure out some of these things, but you don't have to do it alone. And I think that there is, you know, and I'm reconnecting back to my past, right? Because at that time in my life, my father had passed away maybe three years prior. And so dealing with that, dealing with the rigors, with those feelings, and one of the joys of fatherhood is being able to help your children bridge and attack situations that you as a child struggled with, or you saw other struggle with, it's incredibly rewarding. It's frustrating as hell sometimes, but it is emotionally rewarding. Yeah.

Jon Vroman ([44:36](#)):

And Michael, you, uh, you just mentioned your father and from our initial conversation, he was a Navy fighter pilot, right? Yeah. He was a member. Thank you to your dad for his service. And, uh, yeah, it's, it's so tough for me to imagine losing dad an early age, man. So my heart goes out to you on that. I don't know how that would impact somebody, but I can imagine, I can imagine, man,

Michael Barron ([45:03](#)):

If there's no doubt, John, that it was the driver for my actions and why I took the course I did. And quite frankly, probably John, why we're having this conversation today. I can't tell you that I would have been as Intune is had that not happened, but it's something that, uh, that if you have a spouse who is lost,

you know, has lost a parent or you've left a parent, you're incredibly aware almost a daily basis of how that loss carries over long term and is always with them. So I think that having been that through them, that you're aware,

Jon Vroman ([45:38](#)):

Yeah, Michael you've lived a, a very, what's the word I'm looking for? I can't find a singular word to define what I feel about all that I've learned about your life, except for the fact that it's been rich and experiences that you've, you know, that your life has been very rich and experiences. And we only got into a small fraction of those experiences today on the call, but I want to thank you man, for making time and sharing what you did today. I think this is really helpful and I'm walking away with just maybe a, a little bit more attention given to what it means to, to hold space, right? To be in a place where it's almost like for me, the meaning I'm giving to this show, Michael is like, I think you cast a vision for me of like taking a trip with my son when he's a few years older and like telling him that we're going to talk about the profile that you just talked about, the Colby and how that shows up in learning about ourselves together in the world and then discussing it. And I remember people telling me that like, that's one of the coolest things about your kids getting older and older and older is the conversations that you'll have. So thanks for casting that vision for me today. That was really cool.

Michael Barron ([46:55](#)):

Well, John, I appreciate it. We're right in summertime right now, which is when a lot of those trips happen, I will say to your community and your listeners, if you have the opportunity to connect with your children, one-on-one be it a, you know, a day, a weekend, a week away, those are memories that you will cherish forever. Your children will never forget. And the conversations and the learnings that come out of those are worth more than anything that you could possibly buy for your children. So I, I can't stress the importance, the impact, the legacy of doing that enough,

Jon Vroman ([47:27](#)):

Michael, I think that's a great way for us to wrap today. That's a great call to action. And, ah, man, I'm just wishing you so much fun and enlightened conversations with your family, you know, as you move forward, man, and I'll look forward to following along with your journey. If I can ever be supportive to you, please let me know what you need. And, uh, all my best to those in the Northeast. I miss a lot of that area, man, and my friends in and around Philly. I miss being at Villanova. I know that you've got a heart for Villanova, so it's my best to you and to everybody. And anything else you want to say, Michael, you can have the final words here. Anything you want to leave everybody with? I just think that this is an important community. I think it's a valuable community and I appreciate our connection. Awesome, Michael, thanks so much. My friend have a great rest of your summer.

Jon Vroman ([48:22](#)):

Hey guys, thanks for listening to the show. And if you enjoyed this one, consider what other dad out there would enjoy it also and pass this episode along and guys make sure you're subscribed to the podcast so that you get notified whenever release the latest episodes. And if you could, would you leave us a quick review if you haven't already done so, and if you have thanks because not only do I read every one, but tons of other people are reading them too. In the more of those reviews we have and the better they are, the more chance we have to get other guys to say yes to checking this out. And we can help them in their journey to fatherhood and having a great marriage and just kicking ass family life. And also before we go, would you like to get a short, weekly email with a timely insight?

Jon Vroman ([48:57](#)):

And every Thursday I send out this super short three minute read with a personal photo from my own experiences as I try to go all in on family life. So if you want to get some recent relevant and real stories of my failures and the few of my wins, then text front row dads to (314) 665-1767, and you'll get our weekly insights, email blast, and the list guys, if you're still looking at whether or not you should join the brotherhood, then I want to leave you with a few comments from guys who are part of our tribe. And here's what they have to say about why they join, what value they're getting out of our brotherhood. So if you're ready to say yes, just go to front road, ads.com and click join the brotherhood. I'm super grateful. I was just at an event and I wore my front row dad's hat.

Jon Vroman ([49:41](#)):

I can't tell you how many people ask me, like, what's that all about? And it's just so easy for me to talk about it because it's had such a big impact on me. It's a group that I've been looking for for a long time, and I love what you're all about. And I'm really grateful that you created that group. I think there's this whole other level that is there. That's like Epic that you can reach. If you're listening to this, you already care about your family and your kids and your wife and growing. So I just challenge everyone. That's hearing this to take it to the next level, whether that's joining this group or some other group, but just take it to the next level, to take your family to the next level.