

Jason: Hey guys. We are excited to be with you guys today. We have an awesome, awesome guest with us, our friend, Neen James. You may have noticed in your treasure box there is this awesome book that she provided. It's ...

Kim: Oh, my gosh, it's dense with wonderfulness. Thank you, Neen, for being here with us.

Jason: Yes, so Neen is a productivity expert, she's originally from Australia and she's now living in the United States. She's an amazing professional speaker, executive coach, and the author of many books, including this one and also Folding Time, which I'm sure we'll talk a little bit more about, but Neen is obsessed with helping clever people get more done, so that would be you guys, and because she believes that if you can get more done, you can create more significant moments in life that matter, which is what we are all about. Neen, thank you so much for being with us today.

Neen: Good day. What an absolute delight to part of something that is truly rocking the planet. I got to tell you I love your titles, Ringleaders and Ruckus Makers, that totally appeals to me, and I'm loving that I get to be a little bit a part of the lab with all the fun that you're about to have with this fabulous fella, and I'm so glad that you're going to enjoy the books, so that is I'm delighted to be part of it. Well done, guys, for what you're doing.

Jason: Thank you. Yeah. We decided it would be fun as we were doing shopping, we saw the feather bow, and we're like, it will be kind of fun to do a prop that we send our guests that they can at least where and I know it's probably itchy, so we're not going to wear it for the whole time. Thank you for bringing it up.

Kim: It matched your book so well, so.

Neen: My sweater that I'm wearing today as well.

Kim: Exactly.

Jason: Yeah, so we wanted to kind of one of the things that I kind of specialize in, I guess, is talking about the big picture of a story and looking at our lives in that context, and I don't spend a whole lot of time talking about the nitty gritty everyday real stuff that we can bring into our stories that literally save time, make things go more quickly, and more at the top of list of people that we know who's great at that. What would be some ... I kind of just want to let you just talk because I know you'll just have good stuff to share.

Kim: We'll take notes.

Jason: What are some of the best tips to start out?

Neen: Everyone who is attending this amazing lab knows that you don't have time to do everything. You only have to time to do what matters and I think what's really cool about the way you approach things, Jas, especially in your keynote, you help people write their story. Right? You get to help them design the story they want to write, and I think the same is true of time. We get 1,440 minutes in a day. That's it, so we've got to choose what really matters. Now, some practical ways to think about that and that's what I think this is really about, is everyone's who's attending your [inaudible 00:02:58] lab is busy, we're all busy, right? we're busy like a badge of honor these days, it's crazy.

I think the most important thing to do is to think about time differently. The first practical thing I would say is think about time in 15-minute increments. I believe 15 minutes is the key to productivity because no one has an hour anymore, right? Now what you want to think about is 15 dedicated minutes. In 15 minutes, you can work out, in 15 minutes, you can make a healthy meal, in 15 minutes, you can call someone that you love and remind them that it's important, and in 15 minutes you can plan your day.

The key to my day, you ask me what do I do in my day, the key to my day is kind of embarrassingly simple but let me give it to you anyway. At the beginning of every day I am this 15 minutes and in that 15 minutes I set up my three non-negotiable activities for today. I'm looking at strategy here, and then it's really technologically advanced so everyone needs to write this down.

Then I grab a Post-It note and I write on my Post-It note, "Today I will," and I write three things. What that does is it becomes my filtering system for the day and that is before my head hits the pillow tonight, I want to make sure that my three things are done. I am a person who loves to cross things off a list. I wonder if there's anyone who's in your lab that would be willing to admit in public that they will write things on a list just so they can cross them off, right? We [inaudible 00:04:29] yeah, we [inaudible 00:04:30].

Jason: Stuff that's already done, I write it down just to [inaudible 00:04:33].

Neen: [inaudible 00:04:32], right, because Kim, you are a little misorganized, right? Everyone knows you are the queen of details, right? [inaudible 00:04:40] faction, I got to hear our wonderful friends got help recently at High Point University and he said the brain needs the sense of completion. The brain needs us to check a box or cross something out

and that validated my need to write things down. I think you want to decide really clear in the morning what is your day going to be truly about, and that might mean business and personal. There might be a health checkup that you've been putting off for a long time and it's been weighing on your mind, it's got to go on a list, right? Because we get one body on this planet that we are blessed with, we need to take care of it.

It might be that you haven't spoken to your mom for a while and here's the thing. If you have your mom on this planet, you got to call your mom. If you are fortunate to have your mom on this planet, call your mom, and if you don't have your mom, there's someone in your life who's important to you, you got to call that person, and these are the things we've got to make time for. The reason my life is rich is because of the people I have in it, and I think from a productivity point of view, you got to make time for what matters. You are also going to have email, you are always going to have Facebook, Twitter, and every kind of social media distraction. You are always going to have meetings, that is what we do.

What we've got to decide upon is how we're going to invest our minutes, so practically invest 15 minutes in the morning, grab a Post-It note, write down your three not-negotiable activities. This is the commitment you make to yourself that you'll get them done. This is a Post-It note that I can then write down, cross off, and then screw up and put it in the trash when it's all done, and that's a great feeling, right?

Kim: Yeah.

Neen: Look at these massive to-do lists. Women especially, we have a work to-do list, a personal to-do list, a I must do list, a one day I want to do list, and there are all these things you're going to do. I wonder if you got people in this group where they're, "Oh, one day I'm going to do that, one day I'm going to do that." It doesn't get things done. I think we wake up with to-do lists, we go to sleep with to-do lists. I love a to-do list but the reality is you really want to do what's most important because busy is not productive.

Kim: Let me ask you this, Neen, for your little Post-It note, you're obviously an entrepreneur, a business owner. Does your Post-It note combine, okay, call my mom, and then I have to write this proposal, or do you have Post-It notes for this is my business Post-It note, this is my personal Post-It note. Are you just like, these are the three things regardless.

Neen: [inaudible 00:07:02] one because here's the thing, I am one Neen James, I am one little person, there's not a lot of me but there's one person who goes [inaudible 00:07:09] and who goes up. I'm the same person and the distinction as an entrepreneur is tough, right? Parents don't differentiate

between their children, they're still one parent to each child, right? In your case, lovely little people that I adore, right? When you think about this, I don't think it's easy anymore to separate work and home.

Look, generations before [inaudible 00:07:31] our grandparents era, they may have had an opportunity to distinguish differently than we do but today we don't. We don't have 9-to-5 jobs anymore. We don't have the opportunity that we walk out of the office door or we close our office door in our home if we're an entrepreneur, life doesn't [inaudible 00:07:50] economy, we are in a situation where everyone has made themselves available 24/7 and that's not good.

Now, at the time of recording where we are approaching we're in a crazy, crazy, time, right? In January, we have all these New Year's resolutions. We're going to change the way we we're going to work out, we're going to stop smoking, drink more water.

Kim: [inaudible 00:08:11].

Neen: Right? Whatever it is. Right? It's crazy, right? We have all these New Year's resolutions. About the third week of January, right? You can get on a treadmill in a gym because up until that point you never could, right?

Kim: Correct.

Neen: Right? when you think about it, it's not that we're not well intentioned, everyone's busy, but the reality behind what we do is we have to make these choices about when we'll connect and when we won't. You see, I think these little supercomputers that we carry around with us is what has truly changed the way we relate. We have allowed email and social media become more important. We've made technology more important than the beautiful person who's standing in front of us and that's not productive.

I get [inaudible 00:08:54] parents [inaudible 00:08:54] kids, I don't have time. That's a lie, you're actually outright lying to your kid. You have time, you and I have time, we're given the same amount of time when we wake up in the morning. You aren't more important, I'm not more important. You don't get more time than me because you're richer than me, it doesn't work that way. The reality is that everyone gets the same amount of time.

If we say to someone I don't have time, that's not true, everyone has time, you just have to choose to invest it.

Jason: Yeah. It's a good point.

Kim: You bring up a really good point with the phones, okay, and this is something I'm struggling with right now. We had this conversation last night. Screen time, anything that you can speak to with that specifically with some little hacks or tips that keep you accountable or however you look at it.

Jason: Because it does. Like you said, the little phone in our life, its so great in that we can be connected at any moment but it's so bad because we could be connected at any moment, right? Bleeds into it, so how do you address that?

Neen: [inaudible 00:09:46] black, right? I have literally turned my phone off. Right? I know where my husband is, he's the most important person in my world, so where I know where he is right now and I feel good about that. He is my world, right? He is my universe. Right now, it's safe for me to have my phone to black, it is literally turned off. My desk phone is on do not disturb. Right? I think what happens is we're scared, we're scared to press the off button. One of the first things you can do is just get used to silencing it if you're too scared to turn it off, silence it. The other hack is to turn it over. Instead of having your phone facing you, always turn your phone over so you can't see the notifications that constantly interrupt, the emails, the text messages, the voicemails.

The simplest, easiest thing is I think to turn it off but not everyone has that courage. Okay? [inaudible 00:10:36] little people, you can't always turn it off, but turn it over, right? Turn it over. Then there are also out there brilliant apps that can block things that distract you. Now, my favorite one that I use, I'm a Mac user, so it's not going to be for the PC users, but there's equivalents. I use an app called Antisocial. Now, it sounds nasty but what it is, is you can set up and block certain sites and those sites like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Instagram, eBay, wherever you are being distracted right now and you can set it up for periods of time.

I can go in and say, "I don't want to be distracted for the next three hours, I just want to work on this proposal," so I turn access off to everything. That's another thing you can do. Freedom is the PC equivalent, right? Find an app, right? There are also lots of tracking tools you can attach to Google where you can track how much time you spend on social media sites. Now, the scary thing about that is you get an actual snapshot and it's embarrassing if you actually ever do it to see how distracted we get.

What I found was when I was writing one of my books, the only way I would allow myself to check Facebook is if I did it on my iPad. What I did was I never let myself check Facebook on my computer that I was typing my book on and I was not allowed to do it on my phone. I had to make a

deliberate and conscious choice to go to my iPad. Maybe if you are distracted by a certain social media platform or Nordstrom shopping or eBay or whatever takes your attention away, only allow yourself to check it from one device, not all.

Kim: Awesome.

Jason: Interesting. That's a good idea.

Kim: Yeah.

Neen: Keep your laptop if you're using a laptop, keep that as your primary business tool and then allow your playtime to be on other devices. Right? It's also harder to play on our phones if you really want to go into detail, so when you really think about it, I hate surfing on my phone. I'm really happy to happy to play on the apps, but I have to get my information, I'm less likely to do it, which also can be a great thing as well because I'm not going to spend as much time. Some of the things are turn it off, turn it over, or turn to a particular device. If you want to reduce screen time.

Here's the other thing, Facebook will always be there, email will always be there, all these things will always be there but the person who's standing in front of you or sitting with you, you don't know how long you have with that person. We take people for granted, right? What I'm going to challenge who are watching this to do is to let's not assume that that person that you're with, that might be the only moment you have, so make the most of the moment. That's how you reduce screen time.

Jason: That's a great reminder.

Kim: Yeah.

Jason: Yeah.

Kim: Very much so, and those tips are so ... Thank you for those for my own self because you just kind of get in this zone and you get in these habits and they're not always productive and they're not healthy.

Jason: It's really [inaudible 00:13:40].

Neen: I'm a work in progress, please don't think I've mastered this [inaudible 00:13:43], right? I am about to take two weeks off. I have tried to tell everyone in my life to keep me accountable to the fact that I don't want to be on email, I don't want to be on a lot of social media, I just want to check out for a couple of weeks. Honey, I am a work in progress, I

haven't mastered this. These are just things I'm learning with you at the same time.

Kim: Yeah. Good goals, that's for sure.

Jason: Yeah, because it is, it's really easy when you have the phone, it's really easy to just, like, I'm just going to, you're in line for three minutes or we're at the bank and I'm making the deposit, you're in the driver's seat and you're just surfing, then that bleeds into okay, so I'm ...

Kim: Five minutes later I'm still on it.

Jason: Yeah, still on it, right?

Kim: Yeah.

Jason: I do the same thing.

Kim: That reminds me of Jason just had a program with a group and one of the people as a manager has people that works [inaudible 00:14:30] and he has said that he will sometimes send emails to his employees or whatever on a Sunday just to test them to see if they'll reply.

Jason: If they reply, he emails back yelling at them, why are you checking work email on a Sunday? I'm like, that's awesome.

Kim: That is so cool.

Neen: He is awesome but here's what I say to leaders, this is something interesting. Leaders often, because it's in their head, they want to get rid of it, so they put an email out to someone. They don't anticipate people have to respond because it's out of their brain and on someone else's plate but here's what [inaudible 00:15:00] with that. The person who reports to the them, because they're the manager, American society has been set up that people believe that they have to respond because the manager sent them something. I caution people like that and say, "Just put it all in drafts." Send it on Monday morning instead. Right?

Jason: Yeah.

Kim: Good point.

Neen: [inaudible 00:15:21] out of your mind but the challenge we are doing it almost thoughtlessly and every time we send an email to a person who reports to us on personal time, we're stealing minutes from them. We're stealing minutes from them spending with their family because don't most of us work so we can create a lifestyle for people we love? Isn't that why we work as hard as we do? We want to create memories, we

want to give them experiences, we want to make sure there's a home for them to live in and a holiday for them to enjoy. We do that. That's why we work so hard, and yet it's our family that gets the leftovers.

Kim: Yeah.

Jason: Yeah.

Neen: Now, [inaudible 00:15:56] where grumpy women come home because we gave all the goodness to the people we work with. The challenge is we're paid to be nice to people we work with, no one pays us to be nice to our family, right?

Jason: Right.

Neen: There is [inaudible 00:16:08] that's not leadership and that's not cool, so I think if you want to reduce screen time, you got to take personal responsibility and I learned this because I use an app called Boomerang on my ... Because I use Google for everything and it's an attachment where I can delay the sending of messages. What I do is if I'm Maria, who works with me is the key to my entire universe. I don't want to bombard her with everything I'm thinking. What I do is I Boomerang them for the start of the business day [inaudible 00:16:37] and then they go out to her when I schedule them to go out to her.

We have to be more diligent and thoughtful instead of thoughtless about the way we communicate with people on their screens.

Jason: Good points.

Kim: I love that.

Jason: We talked a little bit about mentioned New Year's, New Year's resolutions and the point of the year now where a lot of people, maybe me, if you have the weight loss goal, now is the time you're on the couch eating a bag of Doritos.

Kim: Waving the white flag.

Jason: Bravo to some people who are still have whatever their resolutions. What are your thoughts? One of the things that Kim and I came up ... We didn't come up with it but we heard that, heard about that we've implemented the last few years is thinking of a word of the year or a theme of the year and people have different beliefs. New Year's resolutions are stupid, you should never have them, some people swear by them, some people swear at them. What's your take on the whole

New Year's resolution and goals in general and any tips [inaudible 00:17:41] ...

Neen: For many, many years I've had a contextual word. I've had a word that has run through my whole year, right? This year, for 2015, my word is different to what it was in 2014. In 2014, my word was fitness. What that meant to me was spiritual fitness, right? Was I meditating? Was I doing something and being in wonder and awe every day. It was physical fitness. I had no idea I was going to be this stupid person who took up running but apparently that's what I did, right? Fitness was that, was physical fitness. It was emotional fitness as well, making sure that I was showing up my best self every day and that I had the people around me that I needed, it was relational fitness.

My husband and I celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary in 2014, that's a long time to be married. Yeah, I know, right? Fitness wasn't just physical, it was mental, it was educational fitness. I knew which business events I wanted to attend, what online training programs to strengthen my brain. Fitness was my 2014 word of the year, so my goals all reflected that. My goals always work around spiritual, educational, financial, physical, and relational, those five every year, that's how I set my goals.

The challenge with New Year's resolutions is sometimes they're said with a little bit too much champagne and they don't make sense the next day, right? I'm not a fan of the New Year's resolution but I'm a fan of a contextual word. My contextual word, I can see it in front of me for 2015, is amazing. Now, that's also my tattoo. I'm not suggesting people there need to get a tattoo of their word [inaudible 00:17:41] to me, it's about AH, being in awe and saying ah every day. How do you be more amazing? How do you be more amazing physically, mentally, educationally, financially, and spiritually, and so for me, I'm looking at my 2015 goals, they're all around that particular thing.

I love the idea of learning a word because it means so much and sometimes you don't have to declare your word into the world, but it sits and every time you do something, it hits your luck, you're like, oh yeah, that's about my word. I think a word is so much more powerful and it makes you think more strategically about how you show up every day, as well.

Kim: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I love that.

Jason: Yeah. Do you have right in front of in your office? Is there any other places where you put it to remind yourself?

Kim: A tattoo.

Neen: Yeah, so it's on my pin [inaudible 00:20:06].

Jason: Yeah, the tattoo is, yeah.

Neen: Yeah, but I took a photo of it so it's on my phone and I took a photo that's on my iPad, and so I have it with me all the time, right? I am the person who believes in looking at their goals and I also have it here. I have these little index cards. I know, I'm so technologically advanced, aren't I? Post-It notes and index cards. See how you can see, I don't know if you can see it there, but see how it says be amazing? That is what it's about for me, so I have actually written it so I can read it. Look, you can even see I have 2014 goals there as well, right? These little index cards sit with books I read every day and I love to glance over these, as well. I have them pretty much anywhere I can see.

Here's the thing, they keep me personally accountable. Because if I'm not doing stuff that drives those, that's not really a good use of time. It helps me determine who I spend time with, what I spend time on, and I am perfect. I do not always manage every minute because that would make me a crazy person, but I do try it on the goals that I have put in place because there are people who rely on me and people that I want to honor as well and that's I think we need to make time for what matters and create those moments that matter.

Jason: Absolutely. That's awesome. Yeah. I've got two things. I'm trying to figure out where you get together these Post-It notes that you supply with the [inaudible 00:21:28].

Neen: They're fancy.

Kim: Yeah, the cards, that's interesting.

Jason: I'm trying to figure out how you were able to get married when you were 12 years old if you've been married for 25 years already.

Neen: No, it's legal. I know I sound like I am 12 still, go figure.

Jason: That's funny.

Kim: I think we're kind of winding down here, we kind of always want ...

Jason: First of all, I want to ask about your book because the folding times, tell us a little bit about that.

Neen: Duh, so folding time. How do you achieve twice as much in half the amount of time? This book was written and designed for people who don't have time to read. Okay? At the beginning of every chapter, there is a section called accelerate. It's all the bullet points you need to know

about that chapter. The best book is designed because we live in a time where we are constantly being bombarded with messaging, technologies change the pace at which we work and our access to information is overwhelming.

I wrote this book because I don't believe in time management. I think time management's out the window. The old way of managing time worked in the 80s, it doesn't work now, but it's about three core principles in this book, and that is how do you truly be more accountable for your time, how do you truly engage your attention and how do you leverage your energy because when you do those three things and you filter your decisions and workflow differently, think what happens is if you invest in the right activities, you're a person of integrity who does what they say they're going to do, that's how you make a great impact in the world, so that's what Folding Time is all about.

Jason: That's cool.

Kim: Awesome.

Jason: That's great.

Kim: Yeah. When it does it come out, Neen?

Neen: It's out. It's actually out, you can get it on Amazon, you can get it on my website, neenjames.com, and you can get it on Kindle [inaudible 00:23:07] or Kindle [inaudible 00:23:09] as well.

Jason: Awesome.

Kim: Awesome.

Jason: Cool. All right. Now I'll let you wrap up because [inaudible 00:23:13] wanted to make sure we talked about that because it's ...

Kim: I'm impressed that you still, I think because it's now the screen's on us so I can't see really good but you still have the feathers on. Is it true, or did you take them off?

Neen: Yes, I do, [inaudible 00:23:26].

Kim: [inaudible 00:23:26].

Jason: Above and beyond.

Kim: If you get a rash, we're so sorry, that was [inaudible 00:23:33] fault.

Neen: That's so funny.

Kim: Thank you for playing along with us and obviously this, the insights you share are just so awesome, so I really think everyone's going to be pretty excited. We wanted to find out at the end just kind of going along our theme of escaping adulthood, would you share with us what is your favorite way to escape adulthood, Neen? Do you have kind of your go-to?

Neen: I love to play. I love play every day. Everyone that I meet, I walk into a room and I assume everyone wants to play with me. Constant playground that I live in, right? I'm always wondering how I make that person smile, how do I leave them a better person because we had the chance to interact, but I will be honest with you, I love the people in my life and I love life, so any time that I can surround myself with those people who are really, really close to me, that's my idea of escaping adulthood. I think people take themselves too seriously. I certainly don't and I think that being an Australian and loving play as much as I do means I get to escape and on a fairly regular basis.

Jason: That's awesome.

Kim: Awesome. We've met your wonderful husband, Andy, and just seeing you two together, I can attest to that, you guys are such a great couple and have a lot of fun together, so.

Jason: It's a good couple to sit at a wedding with.

Kim: Oh yeah, [inaudible 00:24:54].

Neen: [inaudible 00:24:55] he said the same thing about you, I loved that, that's so cool.

Jason: All right, well, again, thank you for spending some time. Obviously we just kind of scratched the surface but hopefully the book that everyone has, there's amazing things in here and then of course the new one that's out, that would be a great resource to go deeper. Just the stuff that you said is turning the phone over. This is mind-numbingly simple but in a good way, in a way that people don't.

Neen: [inaudible 00:25:24] we missed, though, Jas, that's the thing. [inaudible 00:25:28] or make a technology advanced and we need stuff we're going to do that's simple and easy and we can do it right now and nothing I shared today is going to cost any money.

Kim: Thank you, Neen.

Jason: We love that [inaudible 00:25:40].

Kim: Yeah.

Jason: All right, Neen. Thank you so much for being with us, it's been our pleasure. Hope it's been great for everybody else and thank you for taking the time.

Neen: My privilege. Congratulation, guys, you are doing amazing things in the world.

Jason: Thank you.

Kim: Thank you. Take care.