



Vishen: Hi, I'm Vishen Lakhiani, founder of Mindvalley, the school for human transformation. You are listening to the Mindvalley Podcast, where we'll be bringing you the greatest teachers and thought leaders on the planet. They discuss the world's most powerful ideas of personal growth, of mind, body, spirit, and work.

Hey, tribe, thanks for tuning in. This episode comes straight to you from A-Fest, and it's by a remarkable man by the name of Kamal Ravikant. This is how Kamal describes himself in his bio. He said, "I've trekked to one of the highest base camps in the Himalayas, meditated with Tibetan monks in the Dalai Lama's monastery, spent 3 months in the swamps of Georgia earning my U.S. Army Infantry patch, walked 550 miles across Spain, lived in Paris, bungee jumped out of a perfectly good hot-air balloon. I've hung out with some of my favorite authors, and being the only no been the only non-black, non-woman member of the Black Women's Rights Group." That's an incredible line. And Kamal Ravikant is a lot more than that, of course. He's written some incredibly inspiring books. He's an investor, lives in Silicon Valley. He's the brother of the famous Naval Ravikant who founded AngelList. And Kamal has got an incredible world view, an incredible story.

What you're gonna learn about in this podcast is the idea of truly, truly, truly knowing how to love yourself. Kamal wrote a book of "Love Yourself Like Your Life Depends On It." I picked up a book by accident when I saw it sitting on a friend's desk. It's only around 80 pages. I read it. It shifted me. It fundamentally change my life in an hour. And I knew I had to get Kamal on this podcast. So, let's get ready for Kamal Ravikant.

I'm Vishen Lakhiani, and this is the Mindvalley Podcast.



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Kamal: Thank you everyone. Basically, every time I've spoken on stage, I've pretty much spoken with a very close friend of mine, Ryan Deiss. He was actually here for Zentrepreneur. Great guy, very, very talented. And every time he does a conference, he calls me up, "Hey, can you come just hang out?" "Sure." And then I come and the day before he's like, "Hey, can you come speak about this?" So I do. The last time I did, he called me up, it was a traffic conversion. It's 2,000 people, and he's like, "Yeah, can you come talk about the mobile industry for an hour?" "All right." That's like asking someone, "Can you come talk about the internet for an hour?" That's Ryan by the way.

And so, today's the first time I'm actually speaking without him for a very long time, so I kind of brought him along with me, kind of like my training wheels. So this part is for me, and the rest is all for you. Because actually being on stage by myself scared the crap out of me, I haven't done it in so long. And I had this rule that if something scares me, there's magic on the other side, and that's the only way to experience magic, is like when something just scares you from inside, but you know it's like a tingling scaring, you gotta go do it, you gotta jump off that cliff. That's like every time I've had great things happen in my life when I felt the fear and I jumped off. I mean, I've fallen off cliff sometimes, you know, be honest, and got my bruises. But I tell you, half the time you sprout wings, it is the best thing ever. So here I am sprouting new wings, in front of you. So thank you for this.

So actually I've thought a lot about this talk because this isn't about me telling you about mobile industry, or venture capital, or crowdfunding, or all that stuff that I could just talk in my sleep. This is about, you know, how to be our best selves. And I was thinking, "What is the one thing..." And I actually know [inaudible] reminded me of this, another great guy who's here, "What is the one thing I can share that has really made all the difference in my life?" If I was to look back at like at the arc of my life, what is the one thing that if I could just pass along, not advice, just like sharing that has made all the difference is this, okay? And like I'll use [inaudible] as an example. So we're all here. We're meeting amazing people, we're listening to amazing speakers, and I'm not a believer in inspiration, you know, I live in Silicon Valley, we [inaudible] results in metric focus. I am a believer in transformation.

So, we're meeting all these people, we're listening to all these great speakers, and we're learning, but I would say, if you can in these four or five days, if you can find one thing that speaks to you, just just one thing, and pick it, something that just really feels right, or tingles, or whatever, however you judge it, and just make it your own. It's like you commit to it, you got to commit. Write in a piece of paper. You just commit that I'm gonna be this, I'm owning, whether it's fitness, health, gratitude, entrepreneurship, loving yourself, whatever, just go all-in. Take that piece of paper, write it down, put it somewhere you can see it, but that's just half of the equation, you gotta do the work. You can't just sit there and visualize it, you gotta do the work. Just commit, burn the ships behind you, and I will bet you, by the time the new year's come your life will be different, it'll be transformed. Every time I've done this in any part of my life, anything in my career, it has really made all the difference.

So, I was actually talking with a very well-known editor, Nils Parker, has edited a bunch of New York Times bestsellers. We're talking about the power of sharing his story because it's like it doesn't do any good to tell anyone, "Hey, listen. I'm at the top of the mountain, and



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this is really awesome being on top of the mountain." What it is is this is how I started, this is the path I took, these are all their roads I took and fell and did all of this, and this is how I got on top." And because then you actually show others the way, and hopefully they can avoid the pitfalls that you did.

So I wanna tell you a story about my friend Joanna, and I don't know if she'd be horrified that I'm telling everyone about this or not, I'll check with her afterwards. She's one of my dearest, dearest friends, this amazing tall, beautiful, striking blonde, full of life, big heart, incredibly smart entrepreneur. She was also a national champion rower, and she was in the FBI. And she used to train the Afghani police, the Iraqi police. You know, imagine this tall blonde teaching this really male culture, the police there, right? She used to take the toughest assignments, and she's only like early 30s, if that, I can never tell. I think she's in her 20s but given what she's done, she think she's early 30s. And now she's a CEO in Silicon Valley building this great company. And she has people who get 7-figure offers, turned them down to go work for her for \$100 grand because they wanna be a part of what she's doing. I mean, she's just amazing, right? So she and I are having dinner in San Francisco about four five months ago in this Chinese restaurant, and she's sitting against the wall, and I'm facing her. And we're talking, and she tells me, out of the blue, we talk about our lives, the things that have really formed us who we are. And she tells me that when she was 24, she had a heart attack and she died for 7 minutes.

I was like, "Okay." And so like I leaned forward and I got to ask what happened. And she goes, "I don't remember." She was in a coma afterwards, you know, they brought her out of it, and she was in this bubble. She was like the Bubble Boy for like a month. And Joanna being Joanna was just working away in the bubble. But she said, "You know, what changed there was after that, everything I wanted my life, like anything whether it's love, how she met her husband, her career, whatever she wants to do, it just happens, it comes to her.

So like, "All right. You know, like, I don't wanna have to die to get that, like, how do you do it?" And she goes, "Well," she leans forward, and she goes, "You're gonna think I'm crazy, but what if this is Heaven?" And then she leans back. And it was like you ever seen the movies like the camera just spans back and things get really slow. And I was like, "Oh, my god. And I swear there was a homeless man, you know, behind in the window, he kind of like winks at me. And like, "Oh, my god." Like for a few moments I got it. Imagine the irony of that. She's like, "Yeah. What if this is Heaven?"

She's like, "I died, how can I prove I didn't...I'm not on the other side? So because this is Heaven, given what Heaven is about, I can have, be, and do anything I want." And she's living that. So I'm gonna separate successful people and fulfilled people because I know people who are insanely wealthy, and I know people insanely wealthy and are happy and fulfilled, those are the ones I want to be like, those are the ones who are my mentors. And for all of them I've noticed one pattern, including her, that whatever happens, it's never like this is happening to me, she'll... Life is happening for them. Whatever is happening, I mean, they fall down, they lick their wounds, they get up, but it always makes them be better. And they've internalized this attitude. And it is an attitude. None of us...like all of us who try to live this, none of us are unique in that sense, we're all humans, right? The same minds



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walking around with the same dramas and same, you know, fears. But that attitude that life happens for her, I've noticed consistently in all the best people I've ever met in my life.

So my story. I never set out to be an entrepreneur. I'm not one of those natural, you know, selling lemonade when I was four. And like Noah Kagan, Neil Patel, those guys are natural entrepreneurs. They're two of the best entrepreneurs ever met. What I did, if I can say that the smartest thing I did was I moved out to a place where all the best entrepreneurs in the world went, I moved to Silicon Valley. I moved out there, I knew nothing, I just jumped off that cliff, showed up there, and just managed to join a startup. I helped build that company, that company ended up going public, you know, it's actually still one of the few from that time that's still around. And so I got to ride that big wave and just learn along the way. And where I live in San Francisco, you can't throw a rock without hitting someone who's running a startup, has an app, or who is like looking for funding. My doctor, my primary care physician, left his practice last year to start a startup. It's like your waiter starting startups, everybody is starting startups.

So like, if you move there, you're gonna start a startup, and odds are you'll get funding too because you know everyone. That is actually another great secret. If you want to be fit, you know, don't surround yourself with people who wanna be fit, surround yourself with people who are insanely fit, you will just step up. Surround yourself with entrepreneurs, you will become one. And now I'm very good at it, but I'm not good at it because it's natural to me, I'm good at it because I'm surrounded by the very best, so I can't help to step up, otherwise I'll be left behind. And we all have egos and none of us wanna be left behind. But this company that went public, after that, you know, I got kind of well known for being able to do certain things. And I went consulted for like CEOs of big companies. And I started more companies that some failed, some didn't, and, you know, like so by the world standards, you know, I've had some success.

And I thought I had success, but it was very, like, there's a lot of ego there in all honesty. And my last company that I started, that was going to be my big thing, that was gonna be my last one. That was going to be like, you know, the island money or what we in the Valley call, excuse me, "fuck you money." And that's all ego by the way, right? And I was... You know, but that's where I was. And I built it from scratch, and I decided I wasn't gonna take any funding, self-funded it, you know, and to put everything into it. I was gonna transform an industry. And it finally started to take off, this crazy idea I had, and it was really working. And then investors jumped in because I wanted to build it out bigger, then I was running out of money. And...but it didn't matter because I knew what the potential of that thing was. And I'll tell you something interesting. In the beginning I used to motivate my team and everybody about how we were gonna transform an industry. By the end I was motivating them by how much money we were gonna make. See that difference? Can you see that I would make different choices as a CEO? I would choose different partners. Can you guess what happened, right? The thing blew up, it was massive, it blew up horribly, right? I lost everything. I was in debt. I lost my friends' money. I had family invested in, I lost all their money. And because my ego was so attached to it, I blew up with it.

I got insanely sick, my relationships fell apart, I was bedridden, the doctors were throwing diagnoses at me that were very scary, like pack-your-bags-to-your-mortality kind



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of diagnosis. And, you know, I tell you, if I was depressed, that was a good day. I was just, you know, I thought of a suicide, you know, the works. I was in a bad place. And I remember one morning I woke up and I was like, "I can't do this anymore. I just I'm getting out of this or I'm dying trying, but I'm done." So I staggered over my journal on my desk. I don't know where it came from but I wrote down a vow. You know that one thing, committing to one thing? I wrote down a vow that I'm gonna love myself. I'm gonna fully commit every thought, every action, every feeling, every moment I'm conscious, I'm gonna love myself. And I sat back, I was like, "Okay, where did I come from, first? And second, oh shit, I've made a vow. So I gotta like figure this out. I got to figure out how to love myself." Because, you know, it's not something they teach you in school, you learn in Silicon Valley.

But so I set about to do it. And I started like meditating and working my mind and doing things and what worked, I kept them and I went deeper. What didn't work, I threw it out. And here's the thing, within a few weeks, I was fine. I got my health back, all right? Things started working out. I was happy, like the depression was a fond memory, right? But here's the thing I did not expect, my life got better, like things I had no control over, like people came into my life, situations came, opportunities came. I could never have reached out. It was purely because all I did was commit to loving myself, and I went all-in. I was gonna love myself or die trying. And everything changed. So now it's very interesting. I used to share what I did with people and it really helped them. So a lot of them are like, "Hey, listen, you need to write about it." So basically to shut them up, I wrote this little book. It's like 8,000 words. Really, just 8,000 words, no publisher would have published it. I self-published it. I figured out would be 10 copies sold, 8 of them I would buy to give them to my friends and be done. Really. And I was so shy about it. In Silicon Valley, you don't talk about loving yourself, right? The book is called "Love Yourself Like Your Life Depends On It." And within five weeks, it was the number one self-help book in Amazon. No marketing, me really hiding not telling anyone.

You know how they talk about things go viral, the book went viral. That book has gone on and sells more copies than a lot of New York Times bestsellers, just continue selling and selling. And I get emails every day from people like, you know, it's changed their life, stopped them committing suicide, like all these all these groups use it. That changed my life. And because of that, it's insane, like I have success now and different things but a different kind of success, fulfillment. Because I realized what did I do with the book, all I did was I expressed my true self, full-on open, this is who I am, this is how I've screwed up, this is how I got out of it, and this how anyone can replicate it. I mean the only secret there is I put like a little piece of my heart in every word, that's it. And anyone can do that, right? And whatever they do, you can put your heart into it and be your full-on self, and that's it.

And so now, you know, Silicon Valley, I run a successful venture fund. I write books, my books do very well. I get asked to come speak at events like this, you know? Like I don't need to buy an island, I'm on an island, I'm meeting great people, right? This is better. Who wants to be alone on an island? And even my only rules now, and because I get lots of opportunity, I'm in a great place in my life, but I only take up to the people I love, only people I love. I will do anything for them and I'll only work if people are... I get opportunities to [inaudible] people [inaudible] my phone. I turn them down if something about them doesn't seem right. I'm sorry, I don't need your money because money has energy, and,



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you know, money, funny enough, when you start being your real self, is the easiest thing in the world, you just stop worrying and it just comes. [inaudible] it, but there is a couple of keys to it.

The other one is that it's whatever I do is an expression of me. Everyone has things that are full-on expression them. Writing I would do if I was stuck in a deserted island. I would write in my head because I love sharing knowledge. Whatever I learn I just want to share it. And the fun, I love helping entrepreneurs. And this is a very lucrative way of helping entrepreneurs. And it's just me. Like it's stuff I would do whether I had money or not, and it just comes, and that's like the simple secret, right? So I don't necessarily believe in success anymore, you know, I'm surrounded by insanely successful people, but I also know their dark sides. And I also know my dark sides. So look, what I just care about is fulfillment. And there's basically four things that matter in fulfillment, and which includes, you know, worldly success.

First it's got to be a pure expression of yourself, whatever that is. And, you know, people talk about finding your passion. For me this is the definition, just what is you. And I think that actually helps people when they're trying to find their passion, just what is an expression of you, that's it.

The second, this is actually easy. If it's an expression of you, you got to give your all because you know when you're holding back. You know, we can be our best friends and our worst critics, and this way you can be a best friend and give your all to something that's naturally you.

The third one is the one where I've actually seen a lot of talented people stop. Whatever you create you got to put it out to the world. I could have written that book, and I could just sent the Word doc to my eight friends to shut them up and that would have been it, right? But it would not have created magic in my life. I had the fears, it scared me, I mean, putting that book out scared the crap out of me. I lost a lot of sleep. Even my second one scared me even more, you know? But that's how I know that there's magic on the other side. The magic is when you put it out to the world because when you give your full self, your full-on self, and you give your all, you put your heart into it, the world just...gosh, the world just gives you so much. It gives you more than you ever could have expected. You know, when the book took off I I was like, "Oh, okay." So someone asked what's the definition of success for the book? I was like, "Okay, 10,000 copies." It sold out within a month. I never could have planned for what it's doing, like... And the fourth, this is another important one.

This is what I learned when my company failed because I was attached to the outcome, right? Because a lot of great things did come. My friendships and things that I'm doing now came from building that company that didn't work. But I was attached to one outcome, which was that company succeeding versus who I was being. You know, the one of the key things in life is we're the effort, we're never the outcome. And if you do that, if you just focus on your effort, who you are, expressing yourself to the world, and just setting it out to the world, ironically, the outcome is far better than you could have planned for, guaranteed, I mean really guaranteed. And what's the prize? The prize is not necessarily



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the accolades or the money, I mean, those are nice, those come, but the real prize actually is who you become in the process. The price for me has been who I've become. Like if I do something stupid next month and lose all my money again, you know what? Five months later I'll have 10x the money. I'm not worried about it because I know who I've become. And that you only get by doing. I don't think you can visualize that, I don't think you can train yourself, that kind of confidence just comes jumping off the cliffs, and you realize, "I'm jumping up another cliff, I will sprout wings again."

You know, I think then metaphor "jumping off cliffs" is a great one, you know, we talk about that in startup land. But there we say it's like jumping up a cliff and building a plane on the way down. I like sprouting wings better, which of course leads us to Tokyo. When I came back from Tokyo, interesting happen. I checked my bank account and like two-thirds of my money was gone. I was like, "What the hell, did I get robbed? Well, sort of. Like apparently, I would [inaudible] bad taxes, and my accountant, you know, he signed checks, I mean blank checks, so I mean, he just paid them. So I was robbed by the IRS. You know, good luck getting that money back. So I remember for like a three days or so, I was walking out really stressed about money. I was like, "All right. How am I gonna bring that back? Blah, blah, blah. There's these things I wanna do." And then I read this post by James Altucher. If you haven't read his blog, read it, it'll change your life. Amazing man. And it was about gratitude, and it reminded me back to Joanna's thing, life for her, this is Heaven. Reminded me of Tokyo. Like all of this, the empty bank account, almost empty bank account, which is scary, it is for me.

And so, I just walked around for days just like feeling gratitude. So like three days later, I was in L.A., three days I'm feeling this way. And I checked my email and a company I advised like maybe five years ago that I completely forgot about and wrote off that I had stock in, I had an email from them, "Oh, we just sold for a lot of money. And can you please sign your paperwork so we can pay you?" Three days, right? And you start to realize this is how life works. Like this is, you know, entrepreneurship, whatever. All entrepreneurship is an expression of you, you know? I think a lot of people get caught up in the, "I'm an entrepreneur, I'm an entrepreneur." I'd say be the entrepreneur that's a fulfilled entrepreneur. And the only way you're gonna do that is if it's expression to you. You know, I know people who go for the money and they do well at it, I'm not one of them. I will always screw up if I go purely for the money, but if I go for what's an expression of me, the world is just amazing.

And, you know, it goes back to the one thing, if I can just leave you with that. It's just find your one thing, pick one thing, it doesn't matter. Do it for a month, 30 days, trust me, your life will just blow you away. I mean, each time I do it, and I'm lazy, you know, like I'll do it, it'll be amazing, then I'll get lazy and I'll fall, and I'll be like, "Oh, yeah." Then I'll go do it again. And that's okay, that's part of life, you know, part of being human. I learn about it then I write more books. So that's my talk. And I hope this has been a value to you. Thank you.

Vishen: Thank you for listening. I hope you enjoyed that talk that was filmed at A-Fest. Mindvalley's festival. Sort of our version of TED Talks with incredible speakers and an incredible community. If you enjoyed that talk and you want to learn more about A-Fest, go afest.com, afest.com. Can't wait to see you some day at an A-Fest. And just know that A-Fest is application only, it's very much in demand, so just like ted.com, you have to



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