

EPISODE 173

SS: *"In the walk to the bridge, was what I refer to as the – what you see in Bugs Bunny, where you got an angel on one shoulder and a devil on the other. There was a flat-out war going on. What I noticed was in that moment, and this is something I think it's important, for anybody's going into a situation like this, hopefully, that they can work themselves out of, is the negative voice was yelling and shouting.*

I use this word loosely, almost audibly. You know when your thoughts are intruding, and you know the vibration of the volume in which they're doing it at. Okay. So, the negative side was very loud, very apparent, super doubting. The other side was a bit more of a whisper. Every time the negative voice would say something mean, or hateful, or whatever. The other voice would say, 'No, that's not true. You're this, you're that.' Which is kind of weird. I don't know if that happens to other people, but I think it must happen to enough people for Bugs Bunny to put it in a cartoon.

Long story short, I end up on the bridge, and then the quiet voice at the last minute, shouts, 'Well, if this is going to be it, when you're ready to leave, then you should reach out to people that you love and tell them goodbye.'"

[INTRODUCTION]

[00:01:03] LW: Hey, friends. Welcome back to The Light Watkins Show, where I interview ordinary folks just like you and me, who have taken extraordinary leaps of faith in the direction of their path, their purpose, or what they've identified with as their mission. In doing so, they have been able to positively impact and inspire the lives of many other people who have either heard about their story, or who witnessed them in action, or people who have directly benefited from their work.

Recently, I was on a wonderful podcast called Unstoppable, which is hosted by a guy named Stephen Scoggins. As is often the case, I didn't know much about the backstory of Stephen. I

was just showing up to promote *Travel Light*, which is the book I just released, and it was a lovely conversation. But during the episode, I learned a little bit about Stephen's backstory and how he dropped out of school to help his family, and how he made a bunch of money, then he lost all the money, and he had to live in a car for a while. Then, from there, he started this construction business that became very successful. Now, he's got seven businesses all generating an eight-figure income and he's working with past podcast guest, Ed Mylett and other luminaries.

It was such an inspirational story that was so unexpected. Of course, it's easy to focus on the material success aspect of the story and how that all came to be. But you know me, I wanted to go deeper into the early days of living in cars, and experiencing suicidal ideations, and feeling confused about where he was going in life. So, I said, "Look, let's have a podcast conversation on my show, where we can get into all of that. I have to say, it made for a surprisingly powerful conversation, one that I think is going to stick with you for quite a while after you hear it.

We talk about the difference in a person who's experiencing abundance in their life versus someone who is experiencing scarcity, because Stephen has been on both sides of that equation. We talk about what led to those suicidal ideations and how he was inspired to change his mind about jumping off of a bridge in the final hour before doing it. We talked about what experience led him to have faith in something bigger than himself, even though he was more or less an atheist before that, and how he prepared himself to have a lucky break at some point in the future, which he ultimately did.

Again, Stephen's story is so touching. It was full of vulnerability that it almost felt like watching a movie, and you'll want to know more about all of the characters in the story. His father, his brother, Ryan, the Barbecue Girl, and of course, his mentor, Old Man Myrick. So, grab a tea, get some tissues, and settle in for this one. It's quite the adventure. Without further ado, let's go right into my conversation with Mr. Stephen Scoggins.

[INTERVIEW]

[00:04:21] LW: Stephen Scoggins, it's so great to see you again, man. I was just recently on your podcast. It just came out, and I sent you a couple of messages saying how impressed I was.

[00:04:30] SS: I wish I could take credit for that. That's the team though. But I'm excited to hanging out with you again.

[00:04:35] LW: Yes. But you still set the standard for the team, right? You had to hire the team.

[00:04:39] SS: That part's true.

[00:04:41] LW: That's what I was communicating. Because I know how it is. I have a little team, they do my clips and things, and you always want to strive for whoever's doing the best job in the industry. I want my clips to look like that. So, to get it to that point, in my experience takes a lot of editing, pruning back and forth, making sure you got the right people working with you and all of that. Thank you so much for putting the time and effort and care into that, and I can tell that when you do it with those little things like that, you probably do it in all other areas of your life as well.

[00:05:14] SS: We sure try. We do try.

[00:05:15] LW: Question, if you have to articulate, I don't want to limit it just to your professional standards. I really feel like it's a life standard. Do you have a moral code or standard that you operate from right now in your life?

[00:05:28] SS: One of my mentors that, again, I heard like this quote, long, long time ago, but one of my very first mentors, a guy by the name Old Man Myrick or Steve Myrick, I'm sure we'll get into him a little bit more, told me one time to pursue excellence in the ordinary. Excellence in the ordinary. So, how you do anything is how you do everything and it all starts with intention. So, my intention, and I share this with you and your team before when you're on my show. My intention is to showcase the thought leader that I'm bringing on for the hard work that they fought to achieve. All of us in creating content in general, if we're doing it well, it's a journey to create it well.

It starts with, I kind of get up and do the same routine every day. I try to lead by example. I try not to ask people not to do things that I wouldn't do myself. So, I'll give you example. One of my larger businesses, we have a production meeting on Fridays, and I went ahead and had a conversation today and I misspoke during the middle of the meeting. Well, part of our culture is to make sure that if you make a mistake, you just own up your mistake and move on. So, I made a public mistake. I turned right around 10 minutes later, I made a public apology.

Either you're going to be who you say you're going to be or you're not. I've been on this journey for the last 20 years of trying to figure out what congruent Stephen is. How does Stephen's heart, who he is in his heart, starting to begin to showcase itself to everybody in the world? How do I show up in the world? I think excellence in the ordinary is just doing the little things, the best you possibly can, with whatever experience you possibly have, or whatever you have at your disposal in that moment.

It gets you out of automated approach. You stop responding to everything, and you start choosing everything. I think choosing kind of like, okay, well we want to – when we do events, I'll spend time on an ink pen. “I don't know, this one doesn't feel right. It doesn't write really well. The ink runs out super quick.” because you can have an amazing event and get all the way done with it, and like a week later, I'm still filling in their notes and having a good old time, and then the ink runs out of the pen. Like, “This stupid pen.” So, I want to make sure that no matter what we do, that people in general, are having an experience when they think or work with me in general, just in general. My life has been changed by the power of experience through the lens of congruence. If I can stay in that zone, then excellence in the ordinary becomes automatic rather than something that I'm just kind of like, “Oh, whatever will be, will be.” I don't believe in that methodology.

[00:07:56] LW: I have a similar approach. Just recently, I just got back from London. I was in Europe for a couple of weeks. I'm now currently in Mexico, and I'm on Mountain Time, US Mountain Time, and there's always a couple of days of jetlag and that kind of thing. And I had a standing meeting that I do every other week at 5pm on Wednesdays, with my community, my online community. I made the cardinal sin of taking a nap the day I got back, for like, I was just

going to – it's going to be a 30-minute little nap, not a big deal. Two hours later, I come to, I see all these missed calls and messages. I missed the meeting that I was supposed to lead.

[00:08:40] SS: That you lead.

[00:08:42] LW: Of course, I could have said that I had some technical issues and just kind of BS my way through it. But I tried to really use those small moments that aren't really life or death, and people would understand. I use those to really allow myself to become more vulnerable to my own experience. I said, I made an announcement and say, "Hey, guys, this is very embarrassing to admit. But I overslept. I just got back into town. I was having jetlag and dah, dah, dah. But I overslept, and that's why I missed the meeting. And we're going to make it up tomorrow." I'm like a super stickler for punctuality.

[00:09:16] SS: Yes, me too.

[00:09:18] LW: In excellence and all of these things. But it felt so good to just own what actually happened, even though no one probably would have even question if I'd say it was a technical difficulty. I would have known that, and I think that's what you're talking about when you talk about excellence in the ordinary.

[00:09:34] SS: I mean, it's definitely a huge piece of it. The other thing that I was thinking of just as you were kind of relating that is the ability to be transparent. So, in today's world, you and I were talking about this a little bit off air, the world has been nuts off and on for a while now, for a variety of different reasons. And I think people are searching for truth, and they're having to siphon through all kinds of various levels to get to truth. What I've discovered is, is truth actually starts on the inside and works its way to the outside.

So, when you're being transparent with someone, they can sense truth, therefore, they gravitate towards it rather than repel away from it. I think, especially, in the educator, content creator, thought leadership world, author, speaker, all that kind of stuff, it's never been more important than ever before to be as authentically transparent and truthful as you can possibly be. Because I think people can sense now when somebody's being fraudulent. That's the quickest way to

stumble across or limit the amount of impact you could make if you're not being truthful and transparent. So, maybe adages, you can't be truthful while being transparent, in general.

[00:10:46] LW: Let's stress test this thought, because I agree with you. But I consider this other – like you and I, you're the head of your thing. I'm the head of my little thing. But let's say someone was working for us and they overslept and they missed an important task. How should they think about truth and transparency in that situation, from your experience? Because I'm sure you've dealt with a lot of that kind of thing happening.

[00:11:09] SS: Yes, we've had a few team members along the way. What I try to do is I try to set the example. If I bring someone into my organization that's brand spanking new, and I sit them down in a table when I say this is what we stand for, and this is what we stand against. Let's assume for a second that what we stand for is, one of the things is punctuality, or being on time. Another thing that we stand for might be, if you make a mistake, just own your mistake and move on. It's a learning lesson.

So, if they come in the organization, and we say that, but we don't live that, then they know it's a lie, and then they're going to feel more compelled to cover it up, which is going to make the leader that's supposed to be “leading them”, probably more aggressive than they probably need to be in holding them accountable for the mix up or mess up.

Conversely, if you come in, and you say, “Okay, team, this is what we stand for, this is what we stand against, this is super important to us”, and then set the tone. Then, an hour later, I, myself, as the CEO of multiple businesses goes out, and completely butcher is one of our core values. Because I'm hungry, I'm tired. I'm jet lagged, because I travel as well. You're not your best self when you've got all these things going on, necessarily. But I'm short tempered, or whatever. I got two choices. Either I can act like that I'm special, and somehow, it's okay for me, but not for you. Or I can say, “Guys, I totally screw up here. What we stand for is real. This is me apologizing, owning my stuff. So, can we work this out?”

Because a lot of times I find that a sincere apology or a sincere amount of accountability or responsibility taken, gets a lot of grace from a lot of other people that we're dealing with that situation. People who think you're sincerely corrective, and you believe what you say, and you

stand up for what you say, and you stand up for the expectations and you didn't do it, they'll give you the grace of the runway. Let's flip that around.

So, let's assume that I've said that, I've illustrated that, and then we have a team member that makes a mistake that I've made in the past or something like that. They come in the door, I got two choices. I can either show an expression of empathy and compassion in conjunction with accountability. Or I can just show accountability. This is another thing that Old Man Myrick taught me. He taught me a long time ago that when dealing with people, specifically, to try to always use the feel, felt, found approach. Because if you use feel, felt, found approach, what happens is people tend to learn. And if you don't use that approach, they typically just tend to resist.

So, I understand how you feel and you're being authentic, you're giving a real reason of how you feel that way. You can talk about, "Okay, now it's felt. This is how it made me feel or felt. This is how it felt. Let me tell you what I found. This is what I've learned." Right? So, for example, we're talking about what I've learned. What I've learned is don't show up and being authentic. If you make a mistake, own your mistake, and everybody else will see that. There's an old adage, I think Patrick Lencioni said it. He says, "That culture is oftentimes caught, not taught." It's like children watching a parent. They're going to do what they see you do, not what you say they should be doing.

So, if you're cursing all the time, and whatever, they're going to start cursing all the time. If you're not being accountable to your actions and your stiff arming, they're going to do the same thing. I feel like that's at the core of it, of a congruent lifestyle is when your beliefs and your values are congruent with your actions.

[00:14:23] LW: Old Man Myrick was your dad's boss, right?

[00:14:25] SS: Yes.

[00:14:26] LW: So, it sounds like he was sort of like your Obi Wan Kenobi figure in your life. But just to help us appreciate that dynamic, let's take it back to the early days in Raleigh. Americans can probably detect give a little bit of southern accent.

[00:14:43] SS: Just a little. It ain't too bad. My parents call me, son. So, I feel like I'm doing pretty good.

[00:14:49] LW: All right. So, talk about your childhood, and I guess what I'm most interested in hearing about is what was your dynamic like in your family? I know there was some issues between your parents, but I want you to tell in your own words, what were some of the ideologies that you remember your parents echoing good or bad, talking about catching culture, what idea of success that you catch during your younger years in terms of like, what success looks like, and what you want to do with your life growing up?

[00:15:20] SS: One of the things that I've been very careful with choosing my words nowadays is, if I use my past upbringing in a negative connotation, it actually anchors me to more of a victim mindset. So, I've learned to kind of position my words a little bit differently. I've also learned to accept those that were difficult in my journey for the benefit of having their own journey. So, with the audience, I would recommend that as we talk through these things, realize that these people were doing the best they could with what they knew and how they could, because I have a feeling that a lot of folks will resonate with some of this stuff, because the nation's economy in the US, for example, which is where I spend most of my time, largely deals with single-parent households in some way, shape, or forms.

But the reality is, you got two broken people who decided to get married, to try to build a whole relationship, which never functions very well, long term. I've been there myself. I've dated people that I wasn't a whole person. I wasn't ready. They weren't ready, and it turns into a mess. But my father struggled with alcoholism for a number of years. He grew up in an alcoholic environment where it was kind of natural. My mother, on the other hand, grew up in a very, in certain instances, after her parents split, in a very abusive environment by the mother's boyfriends and all kinds of stuff. So, she had traumatic injury.

And lo and behold, I come along in 1976, unbeknownst to me that my parents were struggling or whatever. By the time I'm about, I think, I'm probably five or six, they'd already had my little brother Ryan. By that time, they'd already had enough of each other. My dad had made a bunch

of mistakes in the relationship. I'm sure my mother, based on what she's told me, didn't make much great choices as well.

At some point in time, I don't know the full catalyst, but they both kind of disappeared from my life. My father moved to Colorado. My mother went into a couple of health care areas for a little while to get some help. And then came out of the health care areas and then kind of went to Kentucky or somewhere else. That actually led me to living with my grandmother, who was my mom's mother, who was awesome for me. This is where the journey gets super important and understand. This is why if you're really seeking healing, fulfillment, contentment, significance, and meaning, and all those things, you need to actually understand how you're shaped, not that you get to use it as a tool to kind of like prevent yourself from accepting whatever the next step is.

But in this particular case, my grandmother was empowering. She was loving, she was awesome. I didn't realize that my parents were gone during a huge chunk of our time together. Then, about the age of nine years old, my grandmother comes over and pulls me to the side and basically tries to in her best way possible to communicate how sick she was becoming. She had just gotten diagnosed with cancer, and this was in the eighties. I think '86 or '87, in that timeframe. Of course, chemotherapy was just as dangerous as the cancer then. So, I think she kind of already knew the writing was on the wall.

But at nine years old, she started teaching me how to make food. I boil water, pour milk into. So, I started taking care of myself, my little brother, getting ourselves up in the morning with an alarm clock, dressing ourselves. Walking the – it's probably maybe three or four blocks to the school. Fortunately, it was a good community. I did get bullied a lot on the way to and from school, unfortunately, during that season. But by the time I was 11, my grandmother passed. Then, my parents come into the picture. My little brother moves in with my mom. They moved to Florida for some reason. I'm moving with my father to another place here in North Carolina we call [inaudible 00:18:34] Arena, which is even more southern than where I was growing up at the time.

Literally, moved in on Friday. Saturday morning, I was on job site carrying studs, 11 years old. By the time I was 13, I was buying my own school clothes and stuff like that. By the time I was

16, I was running framing crews for my father, doing construction. And it was probably around 16 or 17 years old that I met Old Man Myrick.

Now, in this specific juncture, you talk about belief systems and how you view opportunity, success, growth, or whatever. All I had known at that point, was blips of empowerment, blips of happiness, blips of joy. But other than that, a lot of negativity by people who said they love me. And each time your parents split, you always think it's your fault. Well, I say always, but a lot of folks end up internalizing that inner wounded child as it's, "My fault. They left they. Don't love me. Now, I have worth issues." So on and so forth. I had all of that rolled up in a bag of chips.

On top of that, my father at 16 or 17, unfortunately, was losing his business. So, one afternoon he comes to me and he says, crying, he says, "I always want you to remember that Scoggins don't get ahead, they get by." Now, instinctively, I knew that was a lie. However, emotionally, I took it on as a truth. In times that I've shared that particular statement with other people, it's almost like they can immediately go back to something else someone said in their parental journey. It may not have been mom or dad, but it was someone that they looked up to for love and support and admiration no matter how one sided it may have been.

It was probably a year later that I met Old Man Myrick for the first time, like actually spending time with him. He'd watched me on a job site summer after summer, weekend after weekend, holiday after holiday, worked my butt off, learned to read blueprints at 16, 17 years old. He came to me one afternoon and pulls me down and says, "Hey, come and get this car from me for a couple minutes." Of course, it's hot as I'll get out. So, I'm like, anything to get some AC. I pop in the car and he asked me two very profound questions that gave me the chance to choose if I was going to live a different life.

The first question was, what is the difference between a rich man and a poor man? I responded with money. He responded with absolutely not. It's the way they think. And the next question is really what I think began to turn my corner, because it began to tell me that I had a choice and how my destiny would play out long term while I'm on this earth. He said, "Do you want to learn to think like me? Or do you want to continue thinking like your father?"

The reason that's powerful in a lot of respects is because most of us don't realize we have a choice at any given moment to choose life over death, so to speak. Choose an abundant life of peace and freedom, over settling, living someone else's life, not being authentic, being congruent. I could have chosen to continue in the track that my father had been on. Or I could choose to go and become more of what Steve had shared with me that was possible.

Steve was wealthy. He was very generous. He was always giving to other people, always giving to the community. It was nothing for him to leave stuff under a basket of hush puppies and bless a single waitress, that had a child at home or whatever. Meanwhile, my dad was always borrowing and never repaying. So, it was an interesting dichotomy of what possibilities lay before me, and I think that's what started the journey overall.

So, at any point in time, we have a choice of lack and limitation, or growth and abundance. The tension between the two is what actually gives you the wisdom to create the other.

[00:22:09] LW: Did you have a big family? Was the Scoggins family a big family? Or do you have a bunch of cousins and nephews and uncles and all of that? Or is it just –

[00:22:18] SS: We had a good-sized family and my grandparents, my father's father, we would have a Scoggins' Sunday function that I did attend off and on, while my parents were separated, which is always really cool. My dad had four brothers and one sister. Then, by the time, I was the first grandchild of – no, second grandchild on that line from everybody. I think they ended up with 32 grandchildren. So, ended up becoming quite large after the fact.

[00:22:44] LW: Was there evidence in larger family that Scoggins, you get by or in contrary evidence to that statement?

[00:22:52] SS: Yes. I did an ancestry thing a number of years ago, and began to kind of dig back in our history. I know we came from southern Scotland, moved into Northern Ireland, moved into the west coast of Europe or England. Then, from there, over to the United States. As I was doing my digging, one of the things I discovered was is we ended up here because of shooting a deer on the Lord's land as part of a penal colony. So, England was coming here to

populate the United States, they're sending folks to populate the United States as a whole, at different times in history.

But at some point, in time, we came here to basically become sharecroppers based on a serving at of indebtedness, so to speak. That trend continued all the way to me, in either construction, farming, or somehow a lot of heavy manual labor. So, Scoggins historically, have always been really hard workers. They get up super early, they work super late, and they do their best to scrap out a living. That covers 400 years. My grandfather, my uncles, my aunt, that was my father's sister, she married a really good dude, and they managed to do pretty well in life overall.

But for the most part, in fact, I'll tell you this, wealth was evil in the Scoggins household. If someone had wealth, there was an assumption that they must be evil to get that wealth, to have generated that well, even though numerous times my grandfather and my father lived off the generosity of Steve Myrick. You see what I'm saying? It was a really weird mindset.

[00:24:22] LW: What was your dad's job on these construction sites?

[00:24:26] SS: They did a variety of different things. So, it started with my grandfather. In fact, Steve Myrick actually used to work for my grandfather as a laborer, which is kind of nuts. Then, because of alcoholism within my grandfather, the tables end up getting turned. Steve Myrick becomes a home builder, who hired my grandfather as a framer, and then my dad learned the framing trade accordingly, and they did framing, interior trim, and basically anything you cut or nail up, that was wood, they did on a regular basis. That was kind of like the generation.

[00:24:55] LW: So, Myrick is a residential developer, basically.

[00:24:57] SS: Yes. Well, he was a residential home builder, all the way up until 2003 before he passed away.

[00:25:03] LW: You dropped out of high school as you were going on these construction sites and whatnot. I guess the legal age you can do that is, what, 16?

[00:25:10] SS: For us, it's 18. I was able to do it two months ahead of my 18th birthday.

[00:25:14] LW: But you were working at construction sites while you were a teenager?

[00:25:18] SS: Yes.

[00:25:19] LW: You don't want to go to school?

[00:25:21] SS: This is where things get a little tricky. This is right after my dad, his business failed, foreclosure happened. Repossessions happen. Steve Myrick puts us in a mobile home that he owned, to try to stabilize us a little bit. Then, through my dad's best efforts of working, working, working, working, but not being a good steward of money kept putting us in financial hardship on a regular basis. So much so that we lost whatever car we had. And after walking enough times to the extended length of time to a bus stop, that was about two miles from the house, doing that day, after day, after day for a while. Water getting shut off, electricity getting shut off, having to constantly kill cockroaches, all those types of things, I think, just weighed on me, weighed on me, weighed on me.

At the end of my junior year, I remember having this kind of like moment where the water had gotten shut off the last time, waking up, wanting to take a shower, I couldn't take a shower, where I just realized that we are just getting by. We're not doing anything better than that. I told myself whether it was a lie at the time or a lie now, that if it was to be, it was up to me. So, I went into the school that morning, I forged my dad's signature, and basically dropped out of high school and then went to work full time, literally the next day.

But I did so not in a construction company for this stage in the game, but as a trash company. A company called Waste Industries. And while I was there, I began to stabilize myself. I was able to get us a family car. I was able to kind of get the lights turned back on, get everything kind of stabilized, and all that kind of stuff in this mobile home that we were in, probably doing that another six or eight months, and began to kind of climb the ranks pretty quickly at the trash company, which was interesting. From there, probably moved out on my own, probably six or eight months after that. But when I say out on my own, I was literally like three trailers down at a different rental. But yes, and then from there, went back to construction.

[00:27:12] LW: So, when you're working in construction, or trash, or waste management, obviously, you're learning on the job skills. But what were some of the underlying interpersonal relationship skills that you were learning that helped you to move up the ranks?

[00:27:26] SS: When I was working in the trash company, it was interesting, because the value of work ethic was higher there. Where in construction, it was expected.

[00:27:32] LW: What do you mean by that?

[00:27:33] SS: So, when you're at least, and I can't speak for now, because I'm not doing physical construction anymore. But when I was doing physical instruction in my youth, showing up early, leaving late was expected. There was no additional thank yous for it or nothing like that. It's like, "This is what you do." I remember my dad, told me one time. He said, "Well, if you can learn to swing a hammer, do that and you'll never have to worry about eating. As long as you can swing a hammer. You can always fall back and go build something for somebody."

In the construction side of things, again, it was just day in and day out labor. Day in and day out labor. There was no expectation of opportunity. A massive advancement in construction was an additional \$2 an hour. Whereas when I went to the waste management company, it was an official business that has already been scaled into a regional conglomerate. There was already, I don't know, how many waste industries around the country, up and down the East Coast, specifically, that were actually home developed here, where my event center is here in Garner, North Carolina.

So, when I began to work hard there, they began to come and appreciate me, which made me feel good. I was like, "Oh, so if I do this, I get this reward." A lot of times, it was just as simple as a thank you, or thank you card, or a handshake, or a high five or something like that. And that slowly progressed in, well, if I can do that, then I can do this. And if I can do that, then I can do this. All the way to the point within my three-year timeframe with them, I went from delivering trash cans on a day in and day out basis, to end up being an assistant manager or what they call a roll off division, which is a large trucking side of things where I had people that were double my seniority, double my age, taking instruction from me. We had this guy named Hurley.

He was awesome. I remember this, I was getting a lot of grief from all of the drivers who were, I was trying to, like make strategic decisions, which is where I probably learned a lot of the strategic thought that I got. And Hurley piped up and said, “What Stephen just told you to do is genius. Go do it.” And he was 45 at the time. I think, I’m not even quite 20 yet.

Which was really interesting because when he came back in, I remember being in a meeting where he stands up in front of all these drivers, and he's like, “Stephen just saved you guys three hours a piece and you didn't want to listen, just because he was the kid.” That started the trajectory of maybe there's leadership qualities, maybe their strategic thought, maybe there's stuff and me that's – and I believe in a higher power, God, Jesus. That's my dog. But it has been placed in me that maybe I am capable of breaking through the ceiling.

In fact, a funny thing is at 13 years old, while on that trailer park, or about 14 years old, I went down to the park one evening, not thinking anything of it. Then, literally, under – this is before I actually had true faith where I started believing, believing, felt compelled under the stars, to just kneel down on the stars and say, “God, if you're real, please let me be the one to break the family curse.”

Now, if you look at hindsight being 2020, that prayer has been answered tenfold. At the same time, I had no idea how difficult it was going to be to change myself enough and unprogrammed years of negativity, bad programming, to shift myself in such a way to have hope and belief. And a lot of it comes down to Steve Myrick. A lot of it comes down to opportunities to lead. A lot of that comes down to not even learning, having to. Having to. You won't survive, unless you get super creative to solve this problem. I think that's at the core of what began to change me from the inside out, where one day I was able to build a couple of businesses.

[00:31:00] LW: Do you think, in hindsight, that's what Mr. Myrick was attracted to, within you? Is that ability to solve problems and also being young enough to take instruction and coaching?

[00:31:12] SS: I would like to think so. I wrote my first book in 2014. Part of that was getting some writing assistance, because I have dyslexia. So obviously, when I write things, it's got to be edited, pretty hardcore. But I got a friend, and one of the things that he went to go do was to

actually go an enter – because my personal story sounds so farfetched, in a lot of cases, with different levels of it, that it doesn't even sound like it could be real.

So, this is a good friend of mine. He still doubts that the stories I'm telling him are true. So, I send them out and he goes out and interviews a lot of people. And Steve Myrick had passed away by 2003. He went to go talk to Steve Myrick's widow. I said, "Well, when you get to talk to her and ask her, please ask her one question." And he said, "Okay, sure. Tell me what the one question was." I said, "Please ask Lona, why me? Why did he give me a chance the first time? Why did he give me a chance the second time? Why? Why me? Out of all the other people, the Scoggins, the other people that were on his crew, why me?"

A month goes by, he does a lot of interviews, he comes back and he's trying to debrief me on. He said, "Dude, I can't believe that most of these stories are true. This is wow, kind of thing." I'm like, "Well, okay, cool. Thank you." He goes, "Well, I did talk to Lona." "So, did you ask her the question I asked you?" He said, "I actually did." And he goes – well, I'm caught. I'm sitting on my chair. I'm like, "Well, what did she say?" She said that Steve chose to help you because you reminded him of himself.

So, Steve was a merchant marine, got into business with no professional training in business, and built a multimillion-dollar empire, and was very generous in everything, as I mentioned before. Something within me resonated within him. So, I know that one of the things that you're super passionate about is this word called purpose. I think a lot of people will think of purposes, what can I achieve, rather than what can I bring. What I mean by that is, Steve Myrick changed my life from the inside out, which led me to a certain truth on that one conversation that's now been – other people use this and set it different ways. But essentially, there's three great purposes in life from my perspective.

The first great purpose in life is serving the person you once loved, serving the person you wish you could have saved. That's where a lot of nonprofits come from. The one that holds true for me is serving the person that I used to be. Steve Myrick was serving the person that he used to be. He was serving the long shot, the underdog, the person that if taught well enough, would put in the work to bring the fruit to bear. Most of us close ourselves off to possibilities, because we believe those limiting lies, those limiting beliefs. I would have done the same thing, had

someone not had the conversations with, and numerous conversations, by the way. Numerous conversations where I'm sure there were times where he was like, "Why am I – this kid is killing me. Killing me, smalls." Because I did a lot of dumb stuff while I was trying to figure things out.

And then when I adopted my daughter, as an adult, of course, she had her first child, I remember with my wife at the time, when we were having a conversation about her. I was like, "Before she moves in, I just want you to know, she's going to make mistakes. So, while you think she's going to come in and be perfect and immediately learn from us and be able to apply these things to her life, she's going to make mistakes." And sure enough, six or eight months, same crap that I used to battle as a kid, limiting beliefs, toxic relationships, your circle of influence, like, same old – my wife at the time was getting irate. She was getting super mad. I was like, "This is part of the process." Meanwhile, my daughter would sit down with me, and I was like, "How did that feel?" "It sucked." I'm like, "OKAY, well, maybe next time listen to me." And you stumble enough times you're like, well, maybe there's some experience here that I should be listening to, because there's only two ways to learn in life. The experiences you have and the experiences other have that you choose to listen to and learn from. Those were it. One is less painful than the other from my perspective. You know what I'm saying?

[00:34:56] LW: Speaking of stumbling, talk about that. You made a bunch of money and then you ended up living in a car.

[00:35:00] SS: Around 19, right there at the 19, 20 ratio, I went to go work, back to work with Steve Myrick. He needed a siding contractor. I just left the trash company that I'd spent some time with. Maybe I was closer to 21, actually. Spent some time in the trash company, I had a falling out with a guy that they had bought a guy's company, and then they brought him into the operations manager. To this day, he was by far the worst leader I've ever worked for my entire life, to this day. The lowest amount of EQ I've ever seen in human being. I didn't know what EQ was then.

So, long story short, is I leave the trash company, and Steve Myrick comes to me and says, "Well, look, I've got this guy that's not working out for me. I want to put you on his crew. I'm going to let you work for him for a few weeks, you can learn, pick up what he's doing, and then let me know if you can do it." So, a few weeks go by, I learned about it. The guy stopped

showing up for work. So, Steve goes out and buys me all the equipment, everything that I need to basically put myself into business for myself. The truck, the tools, the equipment, all of it, insurance, helps me understand what basic tax level I would be at, because I was still obviously very getting started, very early in the journey.

And because of my work ethic, and because I admired Steve so much, I gave him all I had, day after day, after day, after day, which obviously allowed me to start having a lot of rewards. I started doing pretty well financially. But I was still very young and I never been taught how to handle the money.

[00:36:17] LW: What kind of money were you talking about? Six figures?

[00:36:20] SS: I'm six figures by this stage in the game, and this is the late nineties. So, six years went a long way, a long, long way. I didn't buy a house. I was still living in the mobile home that I bought a couple of years earlier. I had a Pontiac Sunfire at the time, which is like, a micro sports car, on top of whatever the company vehicle was. Yes, I was doing really well. So, I wasted all the money. I went out to clubs. I went out to – what we used to hang out with Putt-Putt Golf and Games, and spend a bunch of money in the arcades, and meeting girls and whatever. Then, I leveled up. I bought a brand new 1998 Camaro first one on the lot, paid way too much money for it, had like 18% interest, because I didn't know what the heck I was doing. That started a domino, because then the car attracts females, females that weren't healthy, and I've never, as a human being, been taught how to attract healthy individuals.

[00:37:08] LW: Were you sober? Or what was your relationship with alcohol?

[00:37:11] SS: I actually didn't have my first alcoholic beverage until I was 23.

[00:37:15] LW: Okay. You didn't touch the stuff, because of what your dad was experiencing.

[00:37:17] SS: It scared the crap out of me. The same with cigarettes. So, cigarettes killed my grandmother, from my mind. Both of those things scared the crap out of me. So, I stay clear of that. However, I think if we're honest with ourselves, all of us at least at one point in our time or another, had been addicted to something, and I was addicted to ladies. I was addicted to girls. I

wanted to impress them. I wanted them to think I was special. Hindsight being 2020, I realized now that I was looking for outside affirmation to feel special within myself, which I think we've all done at some point in time, and maybe still do, which has got to be kind of fleshed out over time.

But I met a brown hair, brown eyed girl, maybe an inch or so taller than me in my first book, because she's known as the Barbecue Girl, because I obviously don't use names anymore. But she took on a ride for my life. It wasn't long before she was cheating on me with boys and girls. It wasn't long before she had my credit cards, and she was charging them up on a whim. Of course, when she does the charge over here, I don't find out about for a month. Not to mention, at the time, my credit was strong enough where rather than shut off the credit card after you hit the limit, they just kept raising the limit of \$1,000 here, \$1,000 there, \$1,000 here.

Next thing you know, I'm tens of thousands of dollars in debt. My heart has been crushed. I don't know my identity. I don't know my significance. I don't have fulfillment. I don't have meaning. I don't have anything to anchor myself to. Then, all of those voices from my dad and the Scoggins don't get ahead, get by stuff starts coming in. Then, that failure window starts pouring in over like an overflow. Next thing you know, I show up at a job site one morning, and I'm so messed up that I'm literally – there's what's called a break machine that bends metal for residential house construction. I'm on the break machine and I'm in bending metal, but I can't stop crying and I don't know why. I wasn't feeling anything. There was no thought going through my head about I'm sad, I'm depressed, I'm whatever. I just couldn't stop crying. For some reason, I decided to take the tool belt off. I dropped it on the ground and I literally just walked. I walked away from it all.

[00:39:13] LW: Mr. Myrick wouldn't have been impressed with that, would he?

[00:39:16] SS: No, he wasn't impressed at all, which makes the second chance he gave me all the more valuable. But I walked away. I stopped answering the telephone. I shut the curtains. I stay in the mobile home for probably a good month and a half, two months. Obviously, all of my income dries up really, really fast. I didn't have anything in savings. I was spending all of it. Blowing all of it. I had my brother move into my mobile home and take over the payments of the mobile home which was 276 bucks. In that grand scheme of things, it was really interesting,

because my brother let me rent a room in the home that I owned, technically, with one condition, and that was that I would stop seeing Barbecue Girl. Of course, I didn't.

[00:39:55] LW: You were still seeing her?

[00:39:56] SS: Off and on, yes. Well, because she was like, "I'm sorry. I didn't mean it. I didn't know what I was doing. I love you so much. Please give us a second chance." That stuff over and over again. I was a sucker. There's no other way around it. I was a sucker. That didn't work out. He actually came home one afternoon and caught us both in the house together. That was the end of that. So, he kicked me out. I bounced around couch to couch to couch for a little while, and then ended up at a borrowed friend's car for a little while, and ended outside for a little live. My homeless journey was all over the place, and it was all because of pride and arrogance.

I think that one of the biggest things that gets us in trouble a lot of times in our life is either tied to ego, pride, or arrogance. Some of the biggest problems I've ever had in my life have come down to pride, arrogance or ego. Either my ego was in an unhealthy place, which kind of drove the arrogance because of self-worth issues. Because arrogance is another form of undealt with self-worth issues, from my perspective. But in almost every case, that's what kept me. Because I could have picked up the phone at any point in time and called my dad and say, "Hey, this is what's going on." And I could have couched surfed, but I was embarrassed. Because a year earlier I was golden child. I was the Scoggins that was going to break the curse. I was the Scoggins that was going to do big things, kind of thing. And found my faith around that same journey. And then, yes, I got a second chance.

[00:41:22] LW: How'd you find your faith? Was there a specific moment? Or is it just kind of an accumulation of little things?

[00:41:27] SS: It was a specific moment for me, and a lot of people have a hard time with it, because it sounds a little bit unbelievable. But after attempting to take my life at a bridge shortly after all these different events, because you get low enough, you start really, really dealing with major self-worth issues and voices, if you will. I call it the voice of failure and voice of lack or whatever. There's always a quiet whisper that tells you, you're special, if you'll listen to it. But for

me, it was a battle getting there. So, I escaped the episode of almost taking my life. A couple of days later, my brother gives me an opportunity to clean a litter box in the mobile home.

[00:42:00] LW: I think that's a pivotal moment because Barbecue Girl's mom was the one that helped you, right?

[00:42:05] SS: No. So, Barbecue Girl's mom was a good friend of mine. However, the woman that you're talking about, her name Susan Bats. She was my 16-year-old high school sweetheart's mother.

[00:42:20] LW: Got it. Okay.

[00:42:21] SS: So, still a girlfriend's mother, just a different one.

[00:42:24] LW: Let's double tap on the suicide thing. Because, again, it's people may be experiencing something like this, and I think it's helpful to hear how you kind of navigated that situation.

[00:42:35] SS: Well, I navigated because I had some help.

[00:42:38] LW: Did you have a plan? The plan was to jump off the bridge?

[00:42:41] SS: Going into that afternoon, it was no premeditated, today's going to be the day in my life. In fact, it was supposed to be the day in my life was going to change. I've been training for a number of months to begin to work on the process of starting to become a Navy SEAL, about to go to Michigan, to Great Lakes and pour myself into that. And what they were doing for me, specifically, was I was one of two people in our area that wanted to become a seal, a Navy SEAL.

So, what they did is they went ahead and started sending us a couple of, a retired Frogman, that was a Marine, and then also a retired Master Chief from Virginia Beach down to our area to start working with us on the physical requirements, specifically. Running, swimming, endurance, stuff like that. We did the whole – in scuba diving, they call them BCs which is like a big vest.

We were doing with basically with like straps and tanks, which they told me it was normal for the Navy. But we went through that training.

I spent, I don't know, probably eight or nine months getting in the best shape of my life. When I show up this to this day, I'm expecting to leave. I'm in great shape, six pack, got the arms going, got the whole thing going. My serotonin levels, I'm sure are high, because of all the training I was doing. In fact, that was one of the key things that helped me shake off the depression, if you will, of dealing with the Barbecue Girl, was this activity, getting out and just getting moving again. The first day, it was just starting getting out of bed. Then it was getting out of bed and going in the mobile home. Then it was getting out of the bed going into the mobile home, then walking around the park. You know what I'm saying? It was incremental, but it was intentional.

After all this training, I finally think my life is going to change. I go to the MEPS, which is the Military Enlistment Processing center. The one here in Raleigh is at the corner of Capitol Boulevard and 440 which is where this intersection is, and I show up there and I'm excited, I got my duffel bag, I got my red timberland t-shirt in there. I got my Walkman, my broken Nokia 5160 phone that my grandmother got me to call her when I got to boot camp. "You better call me when you get there", not knowing they confiscated it immediately, anyway. But hey, it didn't work out.

So, got the bag, got everything going. I'm sitting there chit chatting with all the people sitting there. Some we're going to the Army, some are going the Navy, some are going to Marines. We're all like, "Well, I'm going to go do this and I'm going to go do this." And we all think that it's where greatest thing since sliced bread and we're over there to start getting our shots and get sworn in and all this kind of stuff. Well, just before that was supposed to happen again, a guy comes out to me and he says, "Hey, Scoggins, come here." He kind of waves me over. I get up to get out of this chair with like the high school thing, it was kind of like shaped like a C, where you scooted in, which had a table in front of you. As I'm kind of going through that scenario, I'm sitting there and he's like, "No, grab your bag." I'm like, "Grab my bag?" Okay, so I grabbed my bag. He takes me to a back room and proceeded to tell me that I wasn't joining the Navy that day, unbeknownst to me, and there were really two factors.

The first factor was I had a GED, rather than a high school diploma. And at the time, because I had a GED, I had to score higher on the ASVAB than someone with a diploma. I don't know why that makes sense. But that was what it was at the time.

The second thing was is I didn't know it at the time that during part of my medical eval, they had discovered that I've got scoliosis at the top of my neck, however minor it might be between those two things. They basically assured me while I could take the ASVAB again, that I would have back problems for the rest of my life. And the Navy was not willing to take on the liability of having what could become a massive medical issue. Which is kind of weird, because I'm 47 years old now, and I'm pretty stinking healthy. But it crushed me. It crushed me. It was another example in a long line of examples why even though Steve told me I could do better, even though Steve told me I could – if I just learned to think different, that my life was destined for failure and mediocrity. It was just destined for it.

Between having numerous times of feeling mediocre, numerous times of not measuring up, numerous times of things that I put my hope and my sincere focus into, falling apart at the last minute, all of this kind of garbage. I think I had enough. I made it to the door of MEPS, just before – as soon as I opened the door, the waterworks started and I couldn't stop crying. I was weeping. I just started walking. I had my duffel bag and I started walking.

As I started walking, I found myself overlooking an eight-lane highway sitting on top of a bridge. This bridge had a tubular rail, and I remember taking my shoes off, and just sitting there. Now, in the walk to the bridge was what I could refer to as the – what you'd see in Bugs Bunny, where you got an angel on one shoulder and a devil on the other. It was a war. There was a flat-out war going on. What I noticed was in that moment, and this is something I think it's important, for anybody's going into a situation like this, hopefully, that they can work themselves out of, is the negative voice was yelling and shouting, if you will.

I use this word loosely, almost audibly. You know when your thoughts are intruding, and you know the vibration of the volume in which they're doing it at. Okay. So, the negative side was very loud, very apparent, super doubting. The other side was a bit more of a whisper. Every time the negative voice would say something mean, or hateful, or whatever, the other voice would say, "No, that's not true. You're this, you're that." Which is kind of weird. I don't know if that

happens to other people, but I think it must happen to enough people for Bugs Bunny to put it in a cartoon.

Long story short, I end up on the bridge, and then the quiet voice at the last minute, shows, "Well, if this is going to be it, when you're ready to leave, then you should reach out to people that you love and tell them goodbye." So, I picked up the broken Nokia 5160 phone with a cracked screen, dialed my dad, no answer. Got the old answering machine message or whatever. I tried my mother, no answer. I tried my grandfather, who had been trying for a long time to spiritually advise me on not giving up and stuff like that. I made one other phone call, and then I made my final phone call to woman named Susan Bats. And Susan bats was my first, I would call it, my first love, right? Because you have girlfriends and whatever, boyfriends, whatever, as you're growing up or whatever. But you have somebody that you just, you're just like, "Wow. You're it."

Well, when that relationship ended, I had built a relationship with her mother where her mother had actually clothed me. She actually paid for stitches in my hand. She took care of me. She actually mothered me when my own mother wasn't around. She nicknamed me Sugar Woga. I nicknamed her Woma. That was a beautiful thing. I called her, she had an old cigarette voice. She picked up the phone. She's like, she's trying to get me to tell her where I'm at. She already knows instinctively something really crappy is happening. She's trying to put her finger on it, and I would love to say that I was a person of integrity then, but I wasn't. If I shook your hand and gave you a yes or no, I may or may not follow through on it. Unless you were Susan or Steve. That's it.

Throughout the course of this conversation, she finally gets to get me off. I think she knew I was suicidal. I think she instinctively knew that I was in a very dangerous space, and she ends up getting me to agree that I would call her at 9am the next morning. Now, a lot of tug of war to get me to agree to that, because I had every intention of following through. Fortunately, she was more stubborn than I was in this particular moment, thank God. So, I agree to that, which gets me off of that crisis moment, if you will. But it doesn't change my trajectory. It's just, it's crisis management.

So, then she reaches out and she says, "I want you to repeat after me." I'm like, "What? It's crazy. Repeat after you what?" And of course, I'm whispering tears in my eyes or whatever. She says, "This too shall pass and what comes next will be greater." And I'm like, "That sounds cheesy." She says, "No. Say it." I'm like, "Well, this too shall pass and what comes next will be greater." She screamed at me. She said, "Say it like you mean it." I was like, you thought she was the drill sergeant.

Sure enough, it was something in that, in fact, when I speak, sometimes I'll have the entire audience stand up, especially if they feel like they're having low energy state. And I'll have them get up and scream to a progression, based on this one moment in time to shift the energy state in less than five seconds. Most people don't understand that they can shift their entire mental state and their energy state within five seconds or less. They think it takes hours of therapy and all this kind of stuff. No. This is what did it.

What I didn't know at the time was, within a week, I would find my faith. Within a week after that, I would get a second chance from Steve that I did not deserve, that turned into the first of the larger businesses.

[00:51:22] LW: How did you find your faith and what prompted that second chance?

[00:51:26] SS: You touched on a little bit, but I was given the opportunity to earn some fast money, and some money I desperately needed for my brother. I don't know about you, but 50 bucks in the nineties was equivalent to 100, 150 nowadays. It was good money. It was enough to kind of get me unstuck, so to speak. I hadn't yet been given a second chance, so I didn't have full time employment anywhere. I started doing odds and ends wherever I could for a little while, for literally a few days. Mowed a few lawns, washed a couple cars in the trailer park, or whatever.

[00:51:52] LW: What was Ryan doing at the time?

[00:51:54] SS: He was actually doing pretty good. He was working for a restoration company. He had a normal nine to five job, making decent money, and he's handling his own business. He got married, had his first daughter. They had their cat.

[00:52:06] LW: So, he got his shit together.

[00:52:07] SS: He did, which made me feel – at the time, I think it made him feel special. At the time, it made me feel like crap.

[00:52:14] LW: Yes, because he's three years younger.

[00:52:15] SS: He's three years younger, and he had always looked up to me at that time. Even when we were split up apart, when he was with my mom, and I was with my dad. In fact, when we were growing up, my name wasn't Stephen. It was Brother. So, it was just a really weird role reversal during that time. But he offered, and let me clean the litter box in my mobile home, that I technically still own in my name, but he's making the payments on, so that's obviously another guilt shame kind of thing. I had slept on my dad's couch the night before, agreed to go do it. I thought \$50 is great money for cleaning a litter box. How bad could it be? Get up the seven stairs in the mobile home, open the door, walk into the mobile home through the living room. Oh, gray shaggy carpet looking stuff, cross the linoleum, blue wallpaper on the left and the right, little cabinetry over to the right-hand side, grab a Walmart bag, pass by the little laundry room into the master bedroom. And I can smell ammonia all the way from the front door. Walked through the double doors into the master bathroom and there was this litter box.

To say it hadn't been clean is an understatement. What they did was they kept pouring sand on top of what was there. So, it was like a snow cone of Tootsie Rolls and stuff. It was just disgusting. So, I quickly see that. I took a quick glance at the Walmart bag and realize that this isn't going to be big enough. Go back into the kitchen, grab a full-fledged trash bag, go back into the room and then get to work.

Now, what's important to understand with regards to faith, specifically, and divinity, is at this time I had been professing that there was no God, there was no divinity for probably five years in a deep, deep level. Because I couldn't understand, I couldn't reconcile in my human brain, if there was a real God who really loved me and really want to spend time with me and really created me to do something, that I actually had created value, that I will be going through all the crap

that I had gone through up to that point. Because it seemed like I was the only one going through it in my general line.

Now granted, I'm the only one that asked for that prayer. But I remember just getting there and I started digging. I'm digging as fast as I can because I'm disgusted. The back of the handle catches a big clump, handle snaps off the plastic piece. I get angry, obviously. I mean, "Come on. Are you freaking kidding me?" Realized I still need the money. I remember having this thought as this what my life has come down to cleaning cat crap. I remember having that moment.

Because remember, a year earlier, a year and a half earlier, I was good. I could have bankrolled pretty much anything. The amount of arrogance here was indirect proportionate to the amount of humility needed to get me equalized from my perspective. So, what I do is I put my thumb in the back of the scooper to kind of use it, and it was course that was just like, it just made me had that stomach turning, thing. Of course, now I'm moving faster and faster and faster and faster and faster and faster as I'm trying to get it over with. Of course, through my haste the corner of the scooper, which was kind of a square edge on it, caught the corner of the plastic bag, rip the two-foot hole in the plastic bag, and everything that I had picked up was all over the place.

Something came over me in that moment in a big, big way. I always tell people a lot of times when I'm trying to explain kind of this experience that if you think about Rocky Balboa, and him fighting, Ivan Drago or Clubber Lang, the second time, where he's already got his butt handed to him. I know he's going to step back into the ring, trying to prove to himself that he still got what it takes, or whatever the thing is, and there's always this point in those early Rocky movies where Rocky is like, "No, hit me right here." He's like dancing around the and Clubber Lang smacked him in the face or Ivan Drago was popping him in the head.

When I dropped that scooper to the ground, I began yelling, every obscenity that I can think of, and every hurt feeling and every negative thing that I've ever could think or ponder at the top of my lungs, staring at the ceiling, yelling at a guy that I said not even a day earlier, I didn't believe in. When I did that, it was almost like there was a presence in the room with me, where it was like, "Just hit me right here. Come on, let's get it out of you. Come on. Come on, you're almost

there. Let's get this garbage out of you." I didn't hear it. I sensed it. And I remember having this moment where I said, "If you're so blankety blank real, why don't you prove to me you're so blankety blank real?" I was not expecting a response at all. I was not expecting it. However, all of a sudden, my legs gave way, my knees at the floor, and I couldn't move. I was paralyzed.

Now, to tell you what was doing that, I can't tell you in humanistic forms, basically, other than the quietest whisper, it was a very similar whisper that I remember from the bridge, and it just basically said, "Are you ready to surrender yet?" So much of my personal transformation has come down to surrendering over and over again, at different levels. That in that moment, I didn't really feel like I had a lot of options other than to surrender. But when I did surrender, it was like everything that I had been carrying for the prior decade, was coming out of me all at one time.

Simultaneously, it was like I was being filled up with a level of grace and mercy that I didn't deserve. Why I started to feel like I deserved it, after all the things that I had done, all the wounding that I had done to other people, all the wounds that I had done to this divine entity, if you will, and I'll never forget the rest of my life. While sitting there, the moment I said yes, it was like somebody had taken – a honey is a lot of times in the way – if you can heat it for tea and stuff like that, it's warm and gooey, and it can pour out. It was like somebody put a vat of oil or honey on top of my head, from the top of my head all the way down to my toes, slowly. And I don't know if it took 10 minutes or an hour. I could feel it with every little hair follicle of my body, transitioning down my entire experience.

Then, when it was over, I remember getting up off my knees, feeling the most peace I've ever felt my entire life, feeling the most contentment I've ever felt in my entire life, feeling the most sure I had ever felt my entire life. My personality actually changed that day entirely. It was not only the beginning, but it was a catastrophic switch in my personality. I remember getting up off the floor, looking at the mobile homes, they have these long rectangular windows and bathrooms. They're like maybe three-foot-tall by like a foot wide. And looking out the window and seeing this tree branch, pine tree branch that's flowing in the wind is, like it was slow motion. Like you would see it in a movie where it was just like, all of a sudden, there's fast motion, and all of a sudden, the camera just slows it down.

I remember, it was the first time I ever felt like I was me. I had somehow found a way to get back to center. I knew, that I knew, that I knew, that I never wanted to get away from center ever again. To this day, I don't remember if I ever actually finished cleaning the litter box. I don't remember. I do know that I was brought to that stage to confront it, to confront myself, and my decisions, and my behaviors, and my actions, and my thoughts, and be given a choice to do it differently, have a do over if you will. I do know I got there. But I remember that night sleeping, actually sleeping for the first time in months. I was so emotionally exhausted after the experience. I couldn't function. I think I slept for 11 hours straight. I was utterly exhausted. My body finally relaxed. My emotional state finally relaxed. My spiritual connection was connected, or had been broken, disjointed, or unaligned, or whatever. It was just different.

My dad comes home the next day in the afternoon and says, "You're not going to believe this, but I talked to Steve and he's willing to let you back on the framing crew. Are you willing to come and work with me again?" I'm like, "Well, I need work. Sure." So, we get up the next morning I go to work, and we're doing framing, we're building the house. We start with the first floor. We get the first floor basically down and start working on the second floor and whatever, and I'm you know passing up wood and nailing stuff off, and laying walls off, and just doing the construction thing. Going through the motions.

But at a corner of my eye, I would always look for Steve. Every time I would see his jeep coming my way, I would go hide. I would go hide the back of the house, I would go, all of a sudden, "Oh, I need to go move some studs." So, I'll go back where he couldn't see me. That went on the entire week. The entire week I was there. Then, on Friday morning, we go back out to the job site, we're doing our thing. The construction industry at the time, on Fridays at two o'clock, you get you knocked off. Basically, that's when everybody would go get their paychecks and go start their early weekend, basically.

Just before that was to happen, my dad sent me next door to reframe or straighten the garage door. So, a garage door guy could put a garage door on. But while doing that, I had to go and do that while listening to the guys that had taken me a year earlier. They were actually actively putting on siding, which is what my core company does. While I was listening to them, they were talking bad stuff about Steve that I knew was fraudulent and untrue. One of the things that they were talking about was how they were underpaid. Everything in construction works on

withdrawal schedule. You're 50% done, you can withdraw 50% of your money. These guys were less than 50% done and already withdrawn 70% of their money. They were already out of balance. But they also had an addiction, and they were trying to figure out how to creatively get Steve to do what they wanted them to do.

So, their broad idea was, well, if he doesn't pay us what we want today, then we just won't come back Monday. I overhear this. As I'm doing that, I finished what I'm doing on the house. I began walking back towards the house I was working on which was literally right next door to where my dad was at. And I remember being so mad at these guys for treating Steve like crap. I was scared they were going to hurt him. Even though they wouldn't have. All of a sudden, my emotional state went to protecting Steve. While I'm doing that, the same whisper that showed up on the bridge, the same whisper that showed up at the litter box, the same whisper that was like there with me in that moment, said, "Well, isn't that what you did?"

When I heard that, something inside of me lit up, and the guilt and the shame everything else that I've been carrying literally all week, trying to avoid Steve at all costs and not, whatever. It was a wakeup call. All of a sudden, about this time, Steve's bringing the checks and whatever. My dad and him are exchanging the checks and I just feel compelled my dad's going to get the checks. He's walking back this way. I'm walking this way. My dad's like, "Where are you going, dude? To be sure you're not going to talk to Steve." You can just tell in his eyes. I knock on Steve's window, he rolls his window down, and good old southern guy. He said, "What can I do your for?" Good old southern language, like you would see in any other movie for a southern guy. They go white pearly dentures. I said, "Well, I overheard these guys, dah, dah, dah." And he goes, "Well, how's your head now, boy?" I instinctively knew what in translation that he meant. How are you? Are you depressed? Are you screwed up? Are you still involved with this chick? Like almost all of that kind of subconsciously communicated. I just thought, "I'm good."

I'm sure my countenance was different than the prior Stephen, because I was different. Even though it was only a few days old, I was different. I knew I was different. He laughs at me. And he was like, "Boy, I'm not buying you tools. I'm not buying the equipment. I'm not doing that again. You burned me, boy. I'm not doing that again. You crazy." And he goes, "You don't have this. You don't have that. You don't have people. You don't have insurance. You don't have any of this stuff." I just said, "If you will give me a second chance. I'll figure it out. I will figure it out."

To be sure, it was interesting because he sits back in his chair. He goes I'll tell you what, "If those guys aren't here at Monday morning at 9am, I'll let you finish the house they're working on right there, and we'll go from there. How about that?" I said, "Done." He smiled at me. I shook his hand. He rolled up his window. I started walking back.

My dad obviously over here is part of this conversation. He's jacked, yelling at me. "What the hell have you just done? Are you crazy?" I had been on the framing crew, like literally a few days. And here I am putting my foot back in the big pile of manure in his mind. I just remembered something exploded inside of me. I was like, this is something I have to do. I yelled it. I have to do it for me. I just have to do it. I knew that, I knew that, I knew that, I knew that I had to do it. There was no uncertainty, whatsoever. He stops and he goes, "Hmm." And he walks over the old beat up van that Steve technically owned, that my dad was driving, opens the doors, and starts pulling tools out. I'm like, "What are you doing?" He's like, "Remember when we did stuff in the summers?" I'm like, "Yes." "What do we make the ladders out of?" "Wood." "What do we make the scaffolding out of?" "Wood." "Pump jacks?" "Wood." "Braces?" "Wood." Pretty much the answer was wood. He goes, "All right. We'll go start pulling stuff out the trash piles. We got stuff to build."

That's a first time in my life and my dad showed up. First time. And sure enough, we spent the entire weekend building the things that I would need, on a whim, in hopes these guys wouldn't show up at 9am in the morning, on faith, on trust. Being, where weeks, earlier days earlier, I had finally been authentically transparent with myself about who I was becoming and how disgusted with that I was, and how was willing to do anything to change that. Sure enough, Monday rolls around. I'm there super early. Steve goes by a few times. I'm like, "Can I go yet?" "No. You can't go yet." And 9:02 on Monday morning, he rolls over, looks at me said, "Boy, what you're waiting on?" Yells at me and I went to work. That was the first house of the large construction company that provides the live event center that I'm currently standing in right now, that employs several 100 team members across multiple states, because of a second chance.

So, my purpose in life is to give second chance to as many people that will allow it.

[01:05:26] LW: I love that, man. Sounds like a movie.

[01:05:30] SS: Angel Studios has asked for some interest in it. So, we'll see what happens.

[01:05:47] LW: Give us a little montage of all the things that have come from that. You mentioned the studio. What does that mean? Talk about the number of businesses you have and how it's all impacting the world.

[01:05:56] SS: Yes. So, at the time we're talking right now, I have seven companies total, generating high levels of revenue, depending on which business it is, eight figures or above, I mean, in certain categories. What I've discovered was that entire experience with Steve and that learning curve of faith, and all of that stuff, it let me learn how to use my hands, which taught me how to use my head, which then later taught me to use my heart. So now, I merge my heart and my head, to create transformational experiences for other people, in general.

There are three ways in which we do that. I help aspiring thought leaders, people that I built that have had a similar journey to mine, meaning they've been through something. They come out the other side, and their character was never shaken. They managed to be authentically congruently, and they're ready to serve the world. So, I'll do whatever it takes to help them with media and resources, and videotaping and stuff like that. I stumbled my way into doing events for other people. So, we did at next book launch and a few other folks. I discovered that I can serve and create impact just by allowing other people with a profound message to impact others. You become a linchpin in something greater. Then, we also have my own curriculums which are Unstoppable Live and then Unstoppable Startup. Unstoppable Startup, specifically, is designed to help that greedy entrepreneur build his eight-figure empire. And throughout the course of all that, you learn more about me, you learn more about the processes, the strategies, the techniques. You learn more about yourself. That's kind of the core of everything that we do now.

[01:07:19] LW: Going back to the original question that Steve Myrick asked you about, what's the difference in a rich man and a poor man, and he said that the answer was the way they think. Can you talk a little bit about mindset when it comes to – and I think, building an empire and all that it's just really, it's a healthier relationship with abundance, right? And it be abundant in all areas of life. So, it doesn't have to necessarily be monetary. But what does that mindset difference is like as you've evolved in your career trajectory, and building these businesses?

How are you thinking now that you reflect back in the early days, and think, “Wow, I’m still operating by limiting beliefs in this or that area?” And what does that process like, that evolution process like?

[01:08:01] SS: Let's change the word from rich man and poor man, let's change his words entirely. Let's change it to abundance mindset, poverty mindset. Abundance mindset lives a life of intention. Poverty mindset lives a life of reaction. Abundance mindset invests each and every day in time, talent, resources, and people. Poverty mindset says, “What can you do for me? How can you do it for me? How can you help solve my victim mentality?” Abundance mindset says, “I know that everything's happening for me, not against me.” Poverty mindset says, “Everything is against me. I can't win. There's no way for me to move forward.” Abundance mindset says, “I'm willing to learn from the greatest minds on the planet in any given category.”

For example, when it comes to meditation, I always consume your stuff. I want to be congruently me. Poverty mindset, doesn't do that. Poverty mindset, stiff arms, people that can actually instruct. They say, out of pride and arrogance, and again, I've been there. They say, “I know me better than anybody else. What could they possibly add value to me?” Abundance mindset says, “Not only do I understand the need for learning and growing, I want it.” So therefore, rather than doing what the poverty mindset would do, which is I’m consuming movies, books, TVs, all that stuff out of just sheer entertainment.

It comes down to the focus of intention, and I think when you boil it all down into one thing, it's what are you focused on? What is the intention behind what you're focused on? Because if you're focused on why everything is going against you, you're going to feel all that. If you focus on, no one's there to help you, you're going to feel that. It comes down to the intentional focus of your time, your talents, and resources. When you wake up every morning, I got this from Wayne Dyer. Granted, I didn't get a chance to meet Wayne. He was a virtual mentor. But to get up and just say, “Thank you. Thank you. Please let me be of service today. Please let me add value to someone else's life.”

Because each time that I have gone through that spirit of gratitude, and each time I've gone through that spirit of wanting to be of sincere service to other people, I have had no, what the Bible would call no “lack of gain”. It's not like I haven't had adversity, but I've been protected by

certain catastrophic events or relationships or things like that. I believe that's because of the – I think we share the vibrational frequency that I'm putting out to other people, that brings me opportunities. To work with Ed Mylett for the first time, and get to know him, and some of the other folks that he had on the stage with him. That was new. He didn't know me from Adam, when he first stepped foot in this building. But when he got here, he knew my sincere desire was to be of service.

I feel like if you come from gratitude, a sincere desire of service, and a full-fledged intention of wanting to grow, and call it self-actualization, self-enlightenment, call it whatever you want, but become the highest version, or vibration version, or whatever of yourself, in this lifespan, then no matter what you face, you will be successful.

[01:11:01] LW: So, if someone's listening to this, and they're thinking to themselves, “Well, I'm working in a service-based type of capacity, and I feel grateful. And I have great relationships with my family, but I don't make a lot of money, and I still have to work a lot.” Would that be interpreted as there's some scarcity happening there? Or does that not even really matter? It's really about how you feel internally? How do you think about that?

[01:11:29] SS: That was a really hard one, and the reason I say that is because some of them are most unhappiest moments, I've had a lot of money. So, I don't think that money drives happiness. I do think, in certain, cases that can make certain parts of your life easier. But with every dollar you earn, there's somebody else that wants a dollar from you, kind of thing. There's that, and they expect it. Like when I first started becoming or doing pretty well, my father started wanting to borrow money from me all the time.

[01:11:52] LW: How did you deal with that?

[01:11:54] SS: At first, I did it. I started saying no, and then I said, “I'll let you earn it.” And I would give him methodologies to earn it. As a result, he would have a healthy level of pride in the earning of a resource. Then, I got to where if you're going to take the resources I'm giving you and you're still going to squander it, I'm not giving you any more resources. So, it's been a tug of war. But now he operates in a pretty healthy capacity. He has no intentions of becoming wealthy. That's not what he wants. He's happy to be okay with where he's at.

That's why I say I think it's a personal journey. I think a lot of times, we're sold on the idea that we have to become wealthy, or a person of influence, or affluence to have meaning. But somebody is giving birth right now to a future president, most likely. Well, maybe not right this very second. But hopefully, it's a good one. Somebody right now has helped somebody break free from cancer. Somebody right now has just stepped up for the first time and become a father or a mother the first time for a child that's been craving it for years upon years. Some folks are teaching other people very instrumental things to have a healthier wellbeing. So, I think it's a very tricky scenario. If you feel like your frustration is not having money, then there's a high likelihood it's tied back to a poverty upbringing or poverty mindset.

Because the reality is, principles govern promises. So, if you want to become wealthy, you have to follow the wealthy minded steps. Spend less than you make, look for an ROI on everything that you do. Don't be wasteful. Be charitable. There are ways to get there. Another, I think, a super important one, is accepting yourself with where you're at. With entrepreneurs all the time, every entrepreneur on the planet thinks they should be further ahead than they are. It doesn't matter if it's a Monday, a Tuesday, a year from now, 10 years from now. That same entrepreneur is like, "I should be further ahead. I feel so behind."

What I've decided to do, and this happened about three years ago, as I've just decided to be grateful for where I'm at and where I came from. Because when you start looking at the back data, it's like holy cow, and you start having a healthy relationship with your journey. As you do that, I think good thing shakeout. So, I don't think is tied to money. Again, I think my most unhappiest moments, many times, had a lot of money attached to it or near it. What I've –

[01:14:01] LW: We also have somebody who's making like five million a year, and they're hanging out with the Ed Mylett's of the world, and they're thinking, "Well, Ed has a private jet. I need to have a private jet. I need to start making a \$100 million dollars."

[01:14:12] SS: Again, you're in comparison. You're trying to be congruent with somebody else's expectation. You're not being congruent with your own expectation. I just want to be the best version of me I can be, period. I may or may not own a jet one day. I don't know. Who the heck knows. One of my prayer meditation things that I've got a – I actually recorded my voice with

some [01:14:30] music, reciting a few things. One of the things that I've got in there, specifically, that I think holds me accountable is that I'm able to be blessed and have an equal measure of charitable contribution at the same time.

So, for example, this is what I mean by that. If I can afford to buy a second or a third million-dollar house, then do I really need the house? Because it's just an extra property. Maybe it's a tax write off. There are some benefits of owning real estate, no doubt. Or can I go feed two million people? So, if I have a dollar to invest in myself and my lifestyle, then I want to be to the point where I also understand I'm going to invest the equal dollar in becoming a better human to the marketplace.

Now, I may choose to invest this dollar differently because I don't want it to be squandered. So, with my dad, I don't give him money. I try to teach him to use money. I think there's elements of that. Most people don't actually find their meaning and their significance until they've gone far enough along into their journey, that they have wisdom and experience that blesses someone else behind them. That's what I've seen. It's the giving that brings joy. It's not the taking.

[01:15:41] LW: If you had to articulate your purpose in life, how would you say that in a succinct way?

[01:15:47] SS: Serving the person I used to be. When I say that, it's not just happy of pick a point. It's, who was Stephen at six? Who was Stephen at eight? Who was Stephen at 12? Who was Stephen at 16? Who was Stephen at 20? Who is Stephen at 25, 28, 35? So on and so forth. Because Stephen, along the journey, needed different things at different times. But I'm uniquely qualified to help past Stephens, just as Steve Myrick was uniquely qualified to help this Stephen.

That creates – I say this all the time, this another Myrick-ism, that everyone should be striving to create a legacy that lives them. And you do that through the correspondence of human interaction. It's not a book, it's not a podcast, it's not a movie. It's who when you're gone, is going to say, “They helped me change my life, and I'm better because of it.” And then takes all of that essence, and then does it again for someone else. Does it again for someone else. Steve Myrick, again, passed away in 2003. He never got to see CHE, my flagship company

become a good-sized company. He never gotten to see me write my first book. He never seen me speak on a stage. He's never seen me on social media reel, right? He's never seen any of that. He has no idea how many lives I've already touched, because of him.

So, if he can do it that way, and I can figure out a way to do what he did at scale, then the legacy, done, it's ridiculous. It's countless lives changed, because someone cared enough to care enough.

[01:17:16] LW: That's beautiful man. I just got chills listening to that. I think he did see the potential, and maybe he didn't consciously know that that's what he was looking at. But I think that's very powerful to serve the person you used to be. I think that's a great place to end it. I just want to thank you for coming on and sharing your story, and for going there with me. You have your own podcast, Unstoppable, which is great, and you speak a lot. So, you've talked about your story a thousand times, and when you're recounting it again, it's easy to kind of gloss over those pivotal moments. But I think that's really the gold in the story, because I'm sure the person listening to this or watching this on YouTube, is also feeling the same way I'm feeling right now, which is just, you feel hopeful listening to a story like that.

It inspires you to think about who in my life represents that person I used to be? And if I don't have someone, how can I find someone like that, and then that gives every day, every moment a greater sense of purpose. So, thank you so much for sharing so generously, and so openly.

I want to bring you back on to talk more about the financial stuff from a more spiritual perspective. I think that's really interesting, too. I want to talk about how you thinking about generational wealth, and when you just hand kids a bunch of money. So, let's have a separate conversation about all of that.

[01:18:39] SS: Anytime.

[01:18:40] LW: Thank you, man. Thank you so much. How can people who hear this and want to engage more with you, what are some of the best ways to do that?

[01:18:49] SS: There are a couple of easy ways. But before I do that, I want to just thank you, not just for the opportunity, but for creating an atmosphere of safety, where it's okay to go to those spaces again, and talk about those things. I think that's something uniquely – it's a unique gift for you, and I'm very grateful for that. So, thank you for that. People can find me at stephenscoggins.com. I'm on all the social channels, as you can imagine. The one I'm most active on, that I'm personally active on, my teams and my DMs as well from time to time, but is actually Instagram. That's where I spend most of my time currently. But yes, either one of those two places we can get connected for sure. It's an honor to just be invited to give a chance of serving your audience. Thank you.

[01:19:25] LW: Beautiful. Thank you, man.

[OUTRO]

[01:19:28] LW: Thank you for tuning into my interview with Unstoppable podcast host and serial entrepreneur, Stephen Scoggins. You can follow Stephen's adventures on the socials @stephen_scoggins. Of course, I'll put links in the show notes to everything that Stephen and I discussed. You can find that at lightwatkins.com/podcast. If you enjoyed that and you found it inspiring, and you're now thinking to yourself, "Wow, I would love to hear Light interview someone like...." Here's how you can help to make that interview happen, because I probably want to interview them, too.

You see, I reach out to my dream list of guests all the time, and some of them accept the invitation, but many more don't. That's because my podcast, while it's impactful, while it's inspiring, and all the things, it's still very much in its building phase. I've got less than a thousand ratings, and it's hard to tell whose podcast is getting the engagement. So, what potential guests or their gatekeepers will do, is they'll look at how many ratings does this podcast have. If it's between, say, 500 and 1,000 ratings, then the acceptance rate for that particular guest is about 50/50. If it's more than 1,000, then you're about 75% more likely to get an acceptance from the guest. If it's more than a few 1,000, then you'll get about a 90% acceptance from the bigger guests.

That's why you always hear podcast hosts say, "Please rate and review my podcast." The irony is it only takes 10 seconds. It's absolutely free. All you have to do is look at your screen, which you can do right now, click on the name of the podcast, which is the Light Show, scroll down, and you'll see a space with five blank stars and just leave a rating. Just click the star on the right if you want to leave a five-star rating. And if you want to go the extra mile, and you have another minute on your hands to write a one-line review about what you appreciate that we're doing with this podcast, then that will also go a long way. So, thank you very much in advance for that.

Don't forget, you can also watch these interviews on YouTube. If you want to put a face to a story. Just go to YouTube, search Light Watkins podcast and you'll see the entire playlist. Make sure to subscribe there as well, because people watch how many YouTube subscribers you have, and how many views you're getting per episode. If you didn't already know, I also post the raw unedited version of each podcast in my Happiness Insiders Online community. So, if you're the type who likes to hear all of the mistakes and the false starts and conversation in the beginning of the episodes where I'm prepping the guest, you can listen to all of that by joining my online community at thehappinessinsiders.com, and you will also get access to my 108-day meditation challenge which has an 80% completion rate, which in the world of online challenges, normally, the completion rate is about 3%. So, we're doing something right over there. And there's a bunch of other masterclasses and challenges that you also have access to.

All right, I look forward to hopefully seeing you back here next week with another story about someone just like me and you taking a leap of faith in the direction of their purpose. Until then, keep trusting your intuition, keep following your heart, keep taking your leaps of faith, and if no one's told you recently that they believe in you, I believe in you. Thank you so much and have a great day.

[END]