



Ray Edwards Show, Episode 298

Is Affluenza a Thing in Defense of Maximalism?

Ray: *Ray Edwards Show* episode 298. Is affluenza a thing in defense of maximalism?

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[music]

Ray: Okay. Here's what set me off. Cliff Ravenscraft. His podcast episode number 511, but you can find it at podcastanswerman.com/511. You can get the 511 on his podcast. Hit the 511 in the 509. We got Paul. What's up?

Speaker 2: Biscuits, guess what? I heard Rhett & Link talk about the other day.

Ray: What?

Speaker 2: They were doing their podcast and they made a joke. I can't remember what product or service they were talking about, but they're talking about how much they loved it as they often do and what kind of inspired our little comment. Link said, "Not a sponsor," which I jokingly said that because it was a joke on their show for a while and then that morphed on here to --

Ray: 100 bucks.

Speaker 2: Yes, because Dennis McIntee's philosophy is just invoice people in whoever pays you, those are your clients. We pretty much we just decided to start invoicing any company that we mentioned as a sponsor and just whoever wants us, it was a 100 bucks. It was like, "Oh, that's funny." Well, I'm listening to this podcast like literally their most recent podcast and Link says, "Not a sponsor," and they get into a conversation about, "You think we could just send them a bill?" Maybe that's how we should start doing sponsorships. We just start mentioning and then we just send them.

[crosstalk]

Speaker 2: [laughs] I sent Rhett & Link.

Ray: Red Link a bill.

Speaker 2: That was our idea. [laughs]

Ray: Here's the invoice for our idea. Thank you very much. Wow. Okay. Well, that's cool. Great minds. So Cliff's podcast episode is entitled, "Do I really need all this stuff?" I'm just doing this from memory because I listen to this very early this



morning. I don't have it in front of me right now, but it was sparked by an e-mail he got from a listener who had watched his YouTube video where Cliff was going through his studio and showing all of the equipment that he had purchased over the last years. All the video cameras, the gimbals, the stuff.

Speaker 2: The stuff.

Ray: The person basically said, and I'm paraphrasing, so if I get this wrong, give me some grace here, friends. He said something like, "Cliff, you're supposed to be this great Christian."

Speaker 2: Oh.

Ray: "Shouldn't you have not bought all that stuff and instead giving the money to the poor?" Now, that sounds familiar. That sounds very familiar. I would not want to be quoting that guy.

Speaker 2: [laughs]

Ray: I'm sure Cliff never brought that up in his podcast because he didn't want to call one of his listeners or Judas, but that was the message. He was like, "You should have not bought all that stuff. You should have given the money to the poor. You could have helped more people." Cliff made a very impassioned argument of about how that was not true and I think he is right. It makes me want to spend a little more time on this topic because Cliff touched on something that I think is really important to understand.

Cliff's episode sparked in me some thoughts because Cliff mentioned one idea that I want to expand on a riff a little bit. I also want to talk about this idea of how much is too much because he didn't discuss this topic, but it brings to mind a topic that was a show on PBS. It was a special on PBS called *Affluenza*. The premise of the show was, having too much stuff is a disease. Literally, that was their premise and it was tied together with a promotion of this, "Simplify your life," minimalism movement.

Speaker 2: How do you get this disease?

Ray: By buying stuff.

Speaker 2: Is it a virus?

Ray: A mind virus.

Speaker 2: Is it a bacteria? Is it a fungus?

Ray: It's a mind virus.

Speaker 2: That's not a disease.



Ray: Well, that's what we're going to talk about. They present the premise this way. Either you have affluenza, you have the disease of accumulating too much stuff, or you are a minimalist.

Speaker 2: I love it when people only give me two choices to live my life.

Ray: You're living simply so that others may simply live.

Speaker 2: Right. I love it when we come up with these worldviews and paradigms-

Ray: - either-or.

Speaker 2: - either-or.

Ray: There are no other options. Either you're an affluenzist or a minimalist. You're rich or poor, you're Democrat or Republican, you're male or female. You're selfish or selfless.

Speaker 2: No, not male or female. Gender is a spectrum.

Ray: I thought that just slipped past you. Okay. We're going to talk about affluenza versus minimalism.

Speaker 2: I don't care-

Ray: I've invented a new term.

Speaker 2: - what science says.

Ray: I've invented a new term called "maximalism."

Speaker 2: I like it.

Ray: You don't even know what it is.

Speaker 2: I have an idea.

Ray: Yes, you do.

Speaker 2: [laughs] I wonder how many other people will have business growth podcasts do this.

Ray: Not many. We got a critical comment ourselves in our comments on iTunes.

Speaker 2: I just want to give the listeners a note. I don't have any notes for this episode.

Ray: I virtually don't have any notes.



Speaker 2: I don't know what's coming.

Ray: Here's what happened.

Speaker 2: That's what I was referring to. I wonder how many business podcasts the co-host or even the host doesn't really know --

Ray: Okay. Just so you know, here's my notes.

Speaker 2: Oh, okay.

Ray: They're just sentence fragments played out across the page. It would mean nothing.

Speaker 2: You see when you don't give me any notes, I have no idea where we're going, which I already pull you off track.

Ray: Is this even worse?

Speaker 2: Just like, "Hey, man."

Ray: Let's move on.

Speaker 2: All's fair in no note land.

Ray: Here's what's coming. Is affluenza a thing? A podcast in defense of maximalism.

Speaker 2: I like it.

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Ray: Okay. The question is, this is unrelated to our main topic today, but spiritual foundations, this is important because this is something that I just stumbled across during my trip to Hong Kong. I stumbled across it because there was some indication that, the reason I was suffering so much jet lag and -- Well, okay. Let me back up. I suffered terrible jet lag when I was in Hong Kong.

Speaker 2: [laughs]

Ray: Wait, let me back up. I went to Hong Kong.

Speaker 2: [laughs]

Ray: Yes, I went to Hong Kong. I went there --

Speaker 2: Wait, let me back up. My mother met my father --



Ray: Let's don't go that far. I went to Hong Kong and I thought, because I don't sleep much anyway. I only sleep like five hours a night. I've been trying to do better, but my sleep mapper does not lie. My average night's sleep over the last six months has been five hours.

Speaker 2: Well, just don't use a sleep tracker-

Ray: - and then I won't know-

Speaker 2: - then you won't know-

Ray: - therefore, I won't have a problem.

Speaker 2: Right.

Ray: Because when I'm not aware of the problem-

Speaker 2: - it doesn't exist.

Ray: Correct.

Speaker 2: Because reality submits to your wants and wishes.

Ray: If only that were so. No, thank God, it's not so.

Speaker 2: Thank God, it's not so. [laughs]

Ray: Anyway, I thought that the time difference would not be a problem. I thought I was immune to jet lag. I was wrong. I was feeling terrible and I went through this little temper tantrum where I felt like, "Well, God, I'm here because I have work to do for your kingdom. Why have you made me have jet lag?" I realized, "Now, wait a minute. Wait a second. Hang on." That's maybe not me and my best thinking powers right there.

Speaker 2: You were the one that messed with your biology by flying halfway across the world in a few hours.

Ray: Ignoring the fact.

Speaker 2: Right.

Ray: Pretending you didn't have --

Speaker 2: Right.

Ray: That got me thinking about this whole issue of, "What does God cause and what does he allow and is there a difference?" I feel more clear on this subject than I ever have. I don't pretend to have the full answer because it's a big question, but I'll try to make this as short as possible. One of the verses in the Bible that gets brought



up, just to point out, that God does cause bad things to happen to people for his own glory, is the story of the blind man who was blind from birth. Because the disciples come to Jesus and they say, "Whose sin that this man is blind? Was it him or was it his parents?" Because that was their belief system in that culture, is that somebody sinned if you were born with this handicap. Somebody's saying that that was your punishment. That's not twisted.

Speaker 2: No.

Ray: Jesus said, shockingly, I mean, Jesus would not be welcome at anybody's church today.

Speaker 2: Very few.

Ray: Generally not, but anyway, that's beside the point. Jesus said, "Nobody sinned" -- Now, here's what the verse says in almost all the English translations. "Nobody sinned, but this is for the glory of God so that God's work may be displayed in him." That's what it says in English. If you dig a little deeper and you look at the literal possible translations of that phrase, it can be rendered in either what is sometimes called the "propulsive voice," which is this is a "because" thing. It's because God wants His glory to be displayed that this man was born blind or it can be in the imperative, which changes the meaning of the sentence if you interpret it in the imperative, which none of the translators did.

Now, the question is, why? Because they have a paradigm, if you're looking at the Scripture through, that they have a preconceived belief that doesn't allow them to think it's either-or. The imperative version of this would be, "Nobody sinned. That's not why this happened. Now, let the words of God be made manifest and the man received his sight." That totally changes the meaning of what happened.

Speaker 2: It does.

Ray: Then people will say, "Okay, then. Maybe you're right about that. I think you are because all those other scholars are right and you're not." Okay, maybe that's true. Maybe I'm incorrect about them having a bias based on their Protestant background.

Speaker 2: Right, because I'm sure they don't.

Ray: No, they have no axe to grind. Nobody does.

Speaker 2: No.

Ray: Then they throw up people who want argue that God makes bad things happen to people to either teach us a lesson, to purify our character or demonstrate His own glory. Just think about that. If He allows us to have some horrible disease so that He can be glorified, that doesn't seem like a flattering picture.

Speaker 2: No. It doesn't bring much glory to someone.

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Ray: No, it doesn't seem to me. The next chapter that gets brought up is John 11. I think I have this right. I may have them reversed. The other story is a story of the death of Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha. Jesus loved Mary and Martha. He loved Lazarus and he was elsewhere and He got a message that people came to Him and said, "Lazarus whom you love is sick unto death."

Jesus said to His disciples, "Well, the sickness doesn't lead to death," and then He waited a couple of days. When He got there, Lazarus was dead. He'd been dead for four days and Jesus raised him from the dead. He said, "I'm glad I wasn't here so that now you can see God be glorified and your faith can be increased," and He raised Lazarus from the dead. I'm paraphrasing.

Speaker 2: Right.

Ray: What people missed is, it seems extraordinarily likely that Jesus knew that by the time the messengers reached Him with the news that Lazarus was sick, he was already dead. If you do the math, it's possible to come to the conclusion that they got -- It took Him about two days to get there. Lazarus was dead and Jesus knew it, so He knew there was no hurry. He waited until the fourth day because, at that time, there was a belief that, in the Jewish culture, that the spirit, the soul, remain with the body for three days. After that, it departed from the body completely.

Only the Messiah would be able to raise someone from the dead after the third day. Some believe that Jesus waited intentionally until four days had passed so that He could raise the body from the dead. Thereby, giving a sign that He was indeed the resurrection and the life, which was the point of the whole story. Here's my conclusion. God does not cause bad things to happen to us. He does not cause it directly. I don't think He causes it indirectly. He does allow some things. What He allows is He allows us to make our own choices. Now, chew on that for a while. That's for my patience **[unintelligible 00:13:29]**

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Ray: Okay. Now, for something completely different. The tip of the week.

Speaker 2: Tip of the week.

Ray: I just got a drone, the DJI Mavic Pro. Two things I've discovered about owning a drone. First of all, it's very scary to own a drone. When you set the thing on the ground and you turn the engines on, the props spin up. You realize I'm about to send a lot of money hurtling into the sky. I'm depending on my iPhone connected to this little controller to make sure it doesn't crash. That was kind of rush of adrenaline. That's one thing to know. The second thing to know is there's a lot of places you're not allowed to fly your drone.

Speaker 2: All right.



Ray: A lot. They don't tell you this on the website where they sell you the drone.

Speaker 2: Of course not.

Ray: It talked about freedom and you can make all these beautiful videos of you doing fun things.

Speaker 2: Except that the FAA doesn't want you.

Ray: Well, it's not just the FAA. This is what I discovered. I have an answer that's going to, I think, make a lot of drone owners or sometimes called, this is funny to me, droners.

Speaker 2: Oh, yes. That's good.

Ray: They go droning.

Speaker 2: On and on and on.

Ray: I hate this terminology. I think this makes some of you happy. The problem is the FAA controls airspace. We know this. They say where you can and cannot fly your drone. They have authority over everything in the air, which is just interesting to think about. However, after the FAA rule that made their rules, then municipalities began to make rules.

Speaker 2: Oh, okay.

Ray: Then businesses began to make rules, and then private property owners began to make rules. Sometimes with shotguns.

Speaker 2: I'm not going to lie. I would thoroughly enjoy shooting a drone out of the sky with a shotgun.

Ray: Why?

Speaker 2: Two reasons. If it's hovering in my backyard.

Ray: Okay. If it's hovering in your backyard, I get that.

Speaker 2: I wouldn't just go hunting drones.

Ray: If somebody was flying a drone in your neighborhood and it flew over, it didn't stop and hover over your backyard and you didn't think it was taking video of whatever is happening in your backyard. It just flew over. Would you then want to shoot it?

Speaker 2: Not if it just happened once. If I saw that drone doing that several times, I might be like, "What is he doing with that done?" or she.



Ray: I think that's considerate. It would be considerate of the drone operator not to do that. That makes sense to me.

Speaker 2: Because if you're doing it multiple times, I'm wondering, "What are you doing with that drone?"

Ray: "Haven't you already had your picture or your video of the neighborhood or whatever?"

Speaker 2: Right, yes. "Are you spying on someone? Hmm. Let me get my 12-gauge."

Ray: Anyway. There's lots of considerations here on both sides. I think it's clear that the FAA should have authority over this and the municipalities should stay out of it because they're only making it more confusing. The state parks have rules and the federal parks have rules. It's confusing. Where the heck can I fly this drone? Now, there's an app for that.

Speaker 2: Oh, cool.

Ray: It's called airmap.io. It incorporates all the available information and it marries it together with Google Maps. You pop up a map on your iOS or Android device and it shows you all the different airspaces, who they're controlled by. Now, interestingly, the FAA allows you to request permission to fly near an airport as long as you follow the rules. You just have to ask permission.

Speaker 2: Well, that kind of goes with how they operate in general. I mean, they restrict air flight, but they're not like out to keep people out of the skies.

Ray: They're out to keep people out of the graveyard.

Speaker 2: Right, yes. They're just making sure that people aren't going to run into each other.

Ray: I think there needs to be some regulation because all you've got to do is go on YouTube and you find a bunch of idiots doing stupid things with drones.

Speaker 2: Right, yes. Personally, if I'm on an airplane, I like knowing that there are regulations in place that someone's big drone isn't going to fly into the turboprop-

Ray: - and kill me and everybody else on board. Yes, I do too. Anyway, airmap.io is the most complete solution. I looked at a bunch of different apps and it's really cool because you can figure out where do I want to go and make some video and you can see places that are clear, places where you can get permission, and then places where it's unclear about what the permission is.

I think there's going to be refinement on both sides of the FAA. They're coming out with a rule. I think it's called Part 107. Probably, I'm guessing, it's going to overrule



the municipalities in the states. They're going to probably send out letters saying, "We're the FAA. We're the boss and you're not."

Speaker 2: Yes. You don't have authority to regulate airspace.

Ray: I think that's what going to happen. I hope so. On the other side, I know people who have drones are upset about how much control is exerted, but I'm not. I mean, the government's legitimate job is to protect the citizen's from harm. This is a case where that would happen.

Speaker 2: I mean, it's almost like imagining if people were debating about whether or not when we invented the automobile if we needed to have roads and road laws.

Ray: We needed to make sure people knew how to operate the automobile.

Speaker 2: Right, and people were like, "No, that's impinging on my freedom." Well, not really. When you get behind of a 3,000, 4,000-pound vehicle that can go a 120 miles an hour, we need to make sure that you know how to use that thing.

Ray: Now, put that vehicle in the air and turn it into a projectile that can take down a jet airliner.

Speaker 2: Most obvious drones aren't that big and that heavy, but still the point remains. It's dangerous.

Ray: Well, yes. It is. What most people don't realize, like the one that I have, the Mavic Pro, as a drone owner, I'm only allowed to go 400 feet above terrain. The FAA begins controlling airspace at 500 feet. Of course, it's different as you get closer to an airport. They control all the way down to the ground.

Speaker 2: They control my head?

Ray: Yes, they do.

Speaker 2: Like when I'm walking around the airport?

Ray: Your feet as well.

Speaker 2: Really?

Ray: Yes.

Speaker 2: They can regulate that?

Ray: They say they can. What people don't realize is-

Speaker 2: Troubling.



Ray: - these drones, these tiny, little drones are actually capable of going thousands of feet into the air. Thousands.

Speaker 2: Now, you might not be able to get up to 30,000 feet where the 747s are flying, but --

Ray: You can send it straight up. Here's the dangerous thing. It can go far enough that it gets out of your radio control zone and then it's just flying up there. Bad, bad stuff. Anyway, airmap.io will help you a lot.

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Ray: All right. Now, to the main event. Affluenza or minimalism? It's a choice.

Speaker 2: It's a choice.

Ray: Either you have a lot of stuff-

Speaker 2: - and it's a disease.

Ray: They said it's a disease. The accumulation of stuff is a disease.

Speaker 2: Ever since I started reading *Opar*, which for those of you who aren't in the lingo, that's *Objectivism: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand*. O-P-A-R, *Opar*.

Ray: We just lost a lot of people right now because you said the words "Ayn Rand," which is the same as the devil.

Speaker 2: Right, yes. Well, when it's talking about words and what words are-

Ray: What are words?

Speaker 2: - it really becomes important. Words are little information in concept wrappers. They take all of these characteristics to something, or some idea, or some object. Instead of us having to list all of those things out when we're in communication, we can just say one word. Instantly, everyone knows what we're talking about because we've all organized our knowledge in the language and into words. Words are little information wrappers. Now, when people misuse words, it really bugs me because-

Ray: Words mean things.

Speaker 2: - words mean things. I realized that there are instances where it's poetic and artistic to have some creative licenses with how you're using those words. I think that can be really interesting and really creative. However, I just think it's gotten to the point that most people don't know what they're saying because a disease is a thing. It has a certain characteristic and you can't ascribe having lots --



Ray: Well, there is a mental disorder for certain people who are like hoarders, but not even all hoarders have a mental disorder. Some of them are just weird. They have habits that are outside the norm.

Speaker 2: Also, by calling it a disease, it really betrays so much about the worldview.

Ray: Well, it says that there's nothing you can do about it. You're helpless.

Speaker 2: You're helpless. You're the product of your biology and your environment.

Ray: Well, I think part of the implied premise of this special on PBS was that it's the fault of the capitalist for making so much stuff that makes people want the stuff.

Speaker 2: It's PBS. Of course, that's what they're going to say.

Ray: Oh, the People's Broadcasting System.

Speaker 2: Yes. Because capitalism doesn't like government-run-

Ray: No.

Speaker 2: - news outlets that it actually is contrary to the free market concept. Obviously, PBS isn't going to defend the system that it doesn't like it.

Ray: Now, here's the interesting thing. They present this as an either-or situation. Either you have affluenza or you're minimalist.

Speaker 2: That implies that you reach a threshold. At some point, you get enough stuff and then now you have a disease.

Ray: Yes, and who's at fault?

Speaker 2: Again, it's an external thing defining you.

Ray: I found the concept when I first heard about minimalism. I found that appealing. For a while, I had to wrestle with why do I find this an appealing idea, because I'm against capitalism. I'm not against consumerism because we have to consume in order to produce. We have to produce in order to consume. It's a living system.

Speaker 2: At its core, capitalism and everything is just people trading value for value. It's just people trading with each other.

Ray: Yes. Speaking of Ayn Rand, there's a passage in the *Atlas Shrugged* where they're talking about the amount of stuff that somebody has in their home and what kind of stuff they have. I'll get the quote probably wrong, but it's something like this, "I seek not the wealth of accumulation for accumulation sake but rather the wealth of selection." In other words, they carefully selected the things they owned. That's what

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appealed to me about minimalism. It wasn't the idea of just having very little stuff. I don't know if you've seen these websites. There's websites like 50 things like, "I only own 50 things."

Speaker 2: Really?

Ray: Including they count their underwear, their toothbrush.

Speaker 2: Whoa.

Ray: This is a thing that people do. Yes. It's not about --

Speaker 2: That's definitely not as weird as --

Ray: That's not a disease.

Speaker 2: Yes. Not as weird as having way too much stuff you don't need.

Ray: No.

Speaker 2: That's not weird at all.

Ray: It's not like over-correcting for errors so far that you've made the exact opposite error.

Speaker 2: Right. You're just on the same spectrum. Just the other end.

Ray: Yes. I just realized that I felt there was a conflict between the appealingness of minimalism to me. I thought that's appealing, but then I don't believe that this affluenza thing is a real thing. I think it's a made-up --

Speaker 2: I'm interested to see how you resolve this because I have a thought.

Ray: Well, my thought is I don't have a number of things that I'm allowed to have or not have. For me, it's not about how many things do I have. It's about the quality of things that I have and the quantity is up to me. I get to decide, well, how much is too much and how much is not enough. Yes, that's right. What was your thought?

Speaker 2: My thought is that minimalism requires intentionality and mental discipline.

Ray: Yes.

Speaker 2: Sometimes when we think of people who have "affluenza," who just have a bunch of stuff and they're always buying stuff, is that they have no self-control. That kind of sometimes the assumption. It's possible that when you look at the minimalist movement, you are seeing people who were saying, "No. I'm going to have this because this item serves a purpose in my life."



Ray: Exactly, that's exactly right.

Speaker 2: See, there's something very appealing and I believe morally right about living your life that way. But then to put the completely arbitrary limit on how many of those items you can have is completely ridiculous and shows that you don't understand why you have things. You have things to make your life better.

Ray: Exactly.

Speaker 2: Why should you put a limit on how many of those things you have? No. You should put a criteria on what those things are like you were just saying.

Ray: Now, this is something that Cliff explored because the further question that the person asked him was, "Cliff, do you really need all that stuff to succeed? You really need all that equipment to succeed in your business?" Cliff was saying, "Well, no. I don't need all this stuff. Obviously, I succeeded before I bought all this stuff. There come inflection points" -- I don't think he used that term, but I'm using that term -- "where I made a decision."

He told the story of how, at one point, he was spending so much time making tutorials for his audience because his computer kept crashing because it was not capable of rendering the video that he was trying to make. He ended up buying a better computer and that sped up his production of tutorials by about a factor of three. That was an intentional decision where he didn't need the new computer, but the new computer made him more productive.

Speaker 2: It served a purpose and it made his life easier and better.

Ray: Then the question that Cliff explored was, "What about all, I have a bunch of stuff here? Some of it, I bought that I'm not using, so how do I justify that?" Well, he said something that clicked with me and I've said this about books. People ask me, "Do you read all the books you buy?" The fact is no, I don't. Right now in my office, I have a lot of books. I haven't counted them, but I have probably 300 books or so in here. I probably read half of them, maybe. Maybe a third of them. I probably will end up reading two-thirds of them.

People might say, "Well, you wasted money on the others." That is incorrect because buying the book, whether I read it or not, served as a marker of some creative impulse that I had that maybe I didn't even know on a conscious level, "What is it that appeals to me about this book so much?" I bought it and I have it available to me. When I'm writing, when I'm creating things, I'll often go to the stacks and just pick a book up that I bought a long time ago and I haven't read it yet. I pick it up and leaf through it. I'll read a chapter or two. I may pick up a sentence that becomes the germination of an idea that becomes a whole new product. That is part of my creative process.

Cliff was talking about how he bought a DJI Osmo Mobile. It's the thing that you put your iPhone and it steadies the shots, so the video is not shaky and jumpy. It's

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smooth like it's a steady cam. He said, "I've used it three or four times. I didn't use it anymore. Some people would say that I wasted my money on it." He said, "That's not true because that inspired me to want to get my video game raised up to the next level. I got a new camera. I built my studio. I started making daily blogs, which has led to an infusion of new creativity and energy in my business which has made me a lot more money," because he started doing these workshops that he's done three of them now, I think.

He makes like \$20,000 every time he does a workshop. One could argue and he did that, "If I hadn't bought the mobile, it wouldn't have sparked all these other things in my process that caused me to jump to this next level. Maybe I would have eventually. Maybe this caused me to do it sooner, but it's part of the process of how I operate." What do you think of that?

Speaker 2: I think it's fine. I think there's also just a simpler explanation too. Sometimes you just buy things not because you're being impulsive, but-

Ray: - because you want them.

Speaker 2: - because you want them.

Ray: Beautiful.

Speaker 2: Because they're toys, but then there are also when you're talking about in the context of business purchases and buying something and using it three or four times. Now, I think, obviously, for profitability reasons, you should try to limit that as much as possible, but there is something to be said for R&D. In this kind of environment, this kind of business research and development looks like. Buying new pieces of equipment, seeing if it works. If it doesn't work for you, returning it if you can or just swallowing it and recognizing that, "Man, didn't really do what I thought it would do."

Ray: Or sell it in a back-alley transaction on Craigslist.

Speaker 2: Right, yes. One of those sorts of things. We can justify and explain, "Hey, this inspires me. This way has inspired me that way." I think the simplest explanation is the thing that we like about minimalism is that it's intentional and that it's directive. We don't want to be impulsive. Because being impulsive means you're out of control or you're letting your emotions and your impulses to control you. However, that does not mean you don't buy things out of pleasure or because they bring you joy. It means that you intentionally choose that that's what you're doing, that this is bringing me joy, and I'm okay with that transaction and that's what I'm buying.

Ray: Well, it's so interesting that you would bring this up. Because even though we didn't prepare together, you didn't know where I was going with the show, you didn't see my notes. I mean, you saw them, but you couldn't read them because you're across the room.

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Speaker 2: Right.

Ray: You didn't see this one at all because it was on a different screen. There's a book that I just got from Dan Sullivan, who's my new coach, and it's called, *Wanting What You Want*.

Speaker 2: It's so sad that we need books-

Ray: - to make it okay.

Speaker 2: Yes, because we've arrived at this place in our culture that Ayn Rand predicted, that we've come to this place we're saying "I want" is a dirty saying. It's a sinful admission.

Ray: Now, let me read to you from the jacket of this book. This is fascinating. "Wanting what you want. Leave behind a world of justification and scarcity and enter a world of abundance and creativity where you're always free to want what you want."

Speaker 2: Right. Now, I think Ayn Rand, she is not a hedonist. She doesn't say just whatever makes you feel good is right and good. I subscribe to her philosophy, which is you need to make sure that your desires are rational, meaning they're in line with life-promoting activities. Just because you like cocaine doesn't mean you should do cocaine because that will end your life in the long run. Just FYI.

Ray: I've misunderstood.

Speaker 2: She wasn't saying just do whatever the heck you want because it feels good. Her philosophy is, develop goals and ideas and values for things that better in advance and sustain your life.

Ray: Let me read just a little bit more because I think this is a great way to put a cap on this discussion, maybe. Maybe we have more to say, but Dan writes, "What distinguishes the top 1% of the world's entrepreneurs from the other 99%? The big thing I've noticed from coaching entrepreneurs for over 40 years is a real dividing line between extremely successful entrepreneurs and those who peak after reaching a certain level of success. The dividing line seems to consist of two words. Meeting and wanting. There are the vast majority of entrepreneurs who are successful as they need to be and then there's an elite group of entrepreneurs who grow and grow and grow with no apparent ceiling."

"The difference I've noticed from studying these two groups extensively is that the second group of entrepreneurs is as successful as they want to be. When you're as successful as you need to be, there's a stopping point you reach when you've satisfied your needs. It's unconscious, of course, so the entrepreneur won't even notice it happening. But when you're as successful as you want to be, you just keep growing and expanding. This is because the moment you reach one level of wanting, there's another level just beyond that. I began to see this distinction make a huge

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difference between people who get to a certain level and stop and the other entrepreneurs who keep growing all their lives. It all comes down to the difference between needing and wanting."

Speaker 2: Oh, I think that's really good, but I think it goes deeper than that because most people don't even know that they're allowed to want.

Ray: Well, exactly. That's why I want to circle back and I'm interested to hear your comment on this now. I'm going to read this to you again. The first sentence I read was just from the cover of the book. "Leave behind a world of justification and scarcity," that's the needing people, "and enter a world of abundance and creativity where you're always free to want what you want."

Speaker 2: Right. This goes back to the problem with the minimalists and saying like, "I only have 50 things," or, "I only have exactly what I want." Because if I have too much, then I'll get affluenza, which I know that people aren't consciously thinking that, but that is their ideology. It's like, "Well, I don't want to be one of those rich materialist consumers. I want to be a good person that doesn't have a huge carbon footprint and doesn't consume more resources than they need." That's how they're thinking and seeing themselves. It all comes down to this concept that, like you said, subconsciously, we've implicitly accepted these tenants of selflessness and altruism, which says basically your highest moral value is that you should live and help the person next to you. It's gotten to the point now that by saying, "I want this just for the fact that I want it because it will make me happy," is evil and bad and sinful.

Ray: So you have to justify it?

Speaker 2: You have to justify it. Well, I want it because it will help me help people. Oh, okay. Well, then now it's okay. Okay, so what we're saying is that man's highest moral virtue is that he would empty himself for the person next to himself. This manifests in all these implicit ideas because instead of looking at your material items as a reflection of your internal environment of what you value and the direction you want to take your life, now minimalism is a reaction to consumerism.

They're still allowing these outward opinions of others and expectations to derive how they should live their life instead of them themselves determining how they should live their life. It's like, "I don't want to be a materialist consumer, so I just won't own as many things. That way, I'll be a better person." Wrong. You're still letting other people control you.

Ray: Yes. There's a false dichotomy that says it's either-or.

Speaker 2: Yes, exactly.

Ray: We're both Christians and we believe certain things about Jesus Christ. Some people argue that we don't. They've done so in the comments to this podcast recently. Thank you for weighing in on the discussion-



Speaker 2: Yes, thank you.

Ray: - and keeping it mostly civil. Those people would say, "But Sean, but Ray, Jesus was totally selfless. He emptied himself."

Speaker 2: Oh, my God. I hate, hate, hate, hate, hate hearing people, Christians, say, "Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice." No, He did not.

Ray: What?

Speaker 2: He did not.

Ray: Heresy.

Speaker 2: Heresy. Okay. You know what? Let's not even talk about the word "sacrifice." You know what? Let's talk about the word "sacrifice." Because the word "sacrifice" literally means trading a higher value for a lower value. Let's think about that.

Ray: Boom. That's a mic drop moment right there.

Speaker 2: That's the literal definition. When we say, "I'm sacrificing," we're saying, "I'm taking this thing that is more valuable and giving it up. In its place, I'm taking this thing that is less valuable." I actually want to start a war on the word "sacrifice" because I don't think that's what we ever mean. We mean discipline because we are giving up a momentary immediate joy and taking on a momentary hardship for a long-term gain.

Ray: Now, you're not saying that's what Jesus did?

Speaker 2: That is absolutely what Jesus did.

Ray: Where did you come up with that information?

Speaker 2: In Hebrews. It says, "Jesus bore the cross for the joy set before Him."

Ray: Oh, it's from the Bible.

Speaker 2: He didn't selflessly give Himself on the cross. He was going to get something out of it. What was He going to get? A redeemed people. That idea, that redeemed people was such a joyful prize for Him that He was willing to not only just be beaten and crucified. He was willing to take on every sin. We don't often talk about that as Christians, but I think that that means that to some extent, He experienced the weight in some spiritual, emotional way of every sin that has ever occurred and would ever occur.

Ray: Well, that probably would explain things like the earthquake and the sky darkening and dead people coming out of their graves and the national order being upset.

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Speaker 2: And His, "Eloi, Eloi, why have you forsaken me?" Then He's completely cut off from God, which that's the only time in the triune existence that one piece of it was broken off from the other two pieces. He went through all of that. Quite possibly the darkest moment because He experienced the Holocaust, He experienced every genocide, He experienced every hate crime, He experienced --

Ray: Even the ones that haven't happened yet?

Speaker 2: Even the ones that haven't happened yet. The darkest moment, He went through all of that not because of selfless duty sacrifice, but because He was going to get something on the other side.

Ray: Because He valued us more than what He was going to go through.

Speaker 2: Right. Now, if we're going to say to really mean the word "sacrifice" to say that Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice, what would've had to have happened was He would've had to have died to save us and not been resurrected.

Ray: Which we just can't even conceive that happening.

Speaker 2: No, no. He would have had to have gone to hell and stayed there.

Ray: Now, let's step back from the theology.

Speaker 2: [laughs]

Ray: That was awesome by the way. I didn't realize it was going to go this way. Maybe we should from now on just do the podcast without either of us really knowing where we're going, or maybe the feedback will tell us differently.

Speaker 2: That challenges the idea of your highest value is to empty yourself for the person next to you.

Ray: Yes. Now, that does not mean that you cannot have a lot of stuff and still be helping people, but that's not the primary purpose of having this stuff.

Speaker 2: No.

Ray: When you do have a lot of stuff, let's go all the way. I've got five mansions. I've got three or four Gulfstreams. I've got a bunch of servants. I got a bunch of classic cars. I got diamonds. I got all the stuff. Well, people had to make that stuff. People had to have jobs to help manufacture that stuff-

Speaker 2: Absolutely.

Ray: - to maintenance, to maintain it, to fix it, to-

Speaker 2: - dig it out of the ground, to refine it, to engineer it.



Ray: Through buying it, through the act of buying the stuff, I helped those people. Even though my intention was just I wanted a jet, but I helped a lot of people by buying the jet.

Speaker 2: Yes, that \$10,000,000 jet. Well, it's not like one person just got a \$9,000,000 profit.

Ray: By the way, you don't just buy a jet and that's the only expense that ever takes place. People have to maintain the jet. They have to fuel it. They have to pilot it. They have to make sure that it's up to snuff and we employ FAA officials to give it a check-up. There's so much good that's done not as the primary reason for buying the jet but as a side effect.

Speaker 2: As the mere fact of doing business.

Ray: That means that business in and of itself-

Speaker 2: - helps people.

Ray: - is good.

Speaker 2: Right. I mean, again, I don't know how many times I've quoted this guy, William whatever his name is, but he says, "Before capitalism, the only way you could amass great wealth was by plundering your fellow man. Since capitalism, the way that you amass great wealth is by serving your fellow man." It's not you amass great wealth to serve your fellow man. It's you amass great wealth by serving your fellow man. Why? Because we're helping each other trading value for value.

Ray: The answer to the question that is the title of this episode is, "No. Affluenza is not a thing."

Speaker 2: No. The real problem here is people looking externally for their definition. Because they've emptied themselves of themselves because they've accepted a selfless ideology. [laughs]

Ray: I'm going to propose an ideology called "maximalism," which means that you maximize the intentionality of the things that you own and the pleasure they bring you within the bounds of what is legal, moral, and ethical. Maximalize.

Speaker 2: Maximalize. Because when you live maximally, everyone benefits.

Ray: That's also in the Bible because Jesus said He came that we could have life-

Speaker 2: - and live abundantly. I mean, when you're on fire, when you're living maximally, and what I mean by that is we're not talking about the impulse of consumer.

Ray: No.

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Speaker 2: We're talking about the intentional, the person who has the same mindset of, "Hey, the things I buy, they serve a purpose in my life, but they're wealthy and the things bring them joy." Those people, whoever they interact with, they're going to benefit them.

Ray: They're helping more people by doing that. Whether they ever donate money to a charity or to a church or anything, they're helping more people than they would if they've sold everything and just gave the money away.

Speaker 2: I told a friend recently. We were talking about these things and I said, "Just pay attention to how many commercials that the business justifies them being in business because they help other people."

Ray: They give back.

Speaker 2: Just pay attention.

Ray: We give back.

Speaker 2: It's like, "Oh, we're in business. I want to start this business to see if I could do this and help people." Almost like business was like, it's just, "Oh, God."

Ray: Don't be worried about getting affluenza.

Speaker: Yes. Because whether you have affluenza or you're a minimalist, you're suffering from the same crippling idea.

Ray: Know your own mind.

Speaker 2: Yes. Intentionally live to sustain and advance your life and however many objects that requires, that's how many you should have.

Ray: What a concept.

Speaker 2: [chuckles]

Ray: All right. If you found the show helpful, which I hope so, please go and subscribe to it in the Apple podcast directory, leaving us a review with your name and website and we'll mention you at some point. If you like the notes and transcript, please go to rayedwards.com/298.

Speaker 2: That's correct. Quote worth note?

Ray: "I seek not the wealth of accumulation for accumulation sake alone, but rather the wealth of intentional selection."

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