



Ray Edwards Show, Episode 573 The Secret Society of Success with Tim Schurrer

Announcer 00:00

Ray Edwards Show Episode 573. The Secret Society of Success with Tim Schurrer. The Ray Edwards Show. This is the podcast for prosperity with purpose.

Ray Edwards 00:19

It's Ray Edwards and welcome back. So good to have you here. Let me introduce my friend Tim Schurrer. Tim and I know each other through Don Miller and through our work together with StoryBrand over the years. And now Tim's got a new book. And it's got an intriguing title that when I saw it, I have to admit, I just kind of rolled my eyes. I was like The Secret Society of Success, oh, please. Then when I saw what it was about, I realized, this is important. This is good stuff. So that's a tease. We'll get to that. But let's talk about how you went from being at StoryBrand. And now you, you're on your own, you're on this journey, you've published this book that just came out. What, what happened?

Tim Schurrer 00:57

Yeah, so I worked with Don for almost 10 years. And about five years ago, I said out loud at an event that my friend Bob Goff was hosting, it was called Dream Big, and at the end of this two days, they go around the room, and everybody says out loud what their big dream is. And for the very first time, I said, I want to write a book. I'd never said that before. I thought it, but I finally said it out loud. And I started, at that point, just putting a little something on the plot. And it was just a passion project. It was a thing I wanted to do. What's crazy is I ended up getting a book deal. But even in that I never really intended for it to be a career transition. I always saw it as Oh, this is fine, I'll have a book. But I'm going to just keep doing my thing, which I'm operating in a dream job working alongside Don, which is incredible. So what's crazy is the closer I got to the book launch, the more I realized with firsthand experience being the actual author, I mean, I had been a part of book launches with Don before, but being the guy who's not only responsible for the marketing and the releasing of the book, but also the finalizing of it, going through the editing process, the audio book, all of that, the closer I got to the book launch, the more I realized, wow, for me to do this really well, launch this book well, I just wasn't going to be able to also keep everything moving with my job. So I felt like I was up against what I considered an impossible decision, which is do I leave a dream job to go chase a new dream. And after having spent that 10 years with Don, I just felt like this message was so powerful, and I'm so much an

advocate for it, that I just felt like I would have regretted not. And so I will after I finally made this decision, Don and I had been talking about this, of course, I said, Don, I gotta, gotta chase this thing. And he sticks his hand out in front of me to give me a handshake. And he says congratulations. And when we told our staff about the transition, we had set out 90 days. And you know, I wanted to really make sure the team was set up for success before I left and he told everybody in that Tim's helped make my dream come true. Now I want us to do everything we can to make his come true. And it's just been a remarkable last handful of months. And now the book is out. And Don has been a massive fan and champion for me. And you know, he wrote the foreword for the book, and but it's quite the adventure for sure. One that I did not fully expect.

Ray Edwards 03:40

Yeah, I can only imagine. I mean, in the immensity of what the message this book carries cannot be overstated right now, I think. It's because the title of the book is *The Secret Society of Success*, but here's the part that grabbed me. Stop Chasing the Spotlight, and Learn to Enjoy Your Work and Life Again. So clearly, this is not about some dark cabal that's controlling who's successful and who's not. It's about something more.

Tim Schurrer 04:06

Yeah. So, I'm sure a lot of people here are familiar with the stories of Apollo 11. You know, you have Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind. But what a lot of people don't know there's actually a third astronaut on that mission. And his name was Michael Collins. So you have Michael Collins, the guy Uber's meal and bus to the moon, he drops them off so that those guys can do the various tasks that they have to do on the moon surface, while he actually stays back in the command module, and orbits the moon something like 26 times until those guys are ready to be picked up and brought back to Earth. And what would make this a miserable story to me as if Michael were to get back and sit down with the press and say something like, Well, it sure would have been nice to actually walk on the moon and you know, acted like a victim and tried to take the spotlight from the mission as a whole. But what's beautiful to me is that's not at all what happened. He gets back sits down with the press and talks about how content he was to have had one of those three seats. He was happy to be part of the mission. So why is it that to be successful, we feel like we have to step into the spotlight, climb the ladder, be the boss, chase fame, money power, like, do we have to walk on the moon to be happy? And I've felt this cultural pressure to do exactly that, to chase after those things. But then I've really discovered this secret society of people that are showing me new ways to define success that isn't fame, money and power. So if it's not those things, what is it? And so this book, and the journey that I've been on, is really what I've been, you know, trying to put down into words and really explore.

Ray Edwards 06:05

I think what's really important about this is, this is where people get, I believe, messed up, because we buy into, I say, people, I mean, me, we buy, we buy into the story, the narrative that's fed to us about what success means- money, fame, power.

Tim Schurrer 06:19

Yeah.

Ray Edwards 06:20

And those, those are, can be good things.

Tim Schurrer 06:22

Yeah.

Ray Edwards 06:23

But are they sustainable things that have lasting deep value? I think, often the story reveals the truth. And that's when people have all the money, success, fame, and power that they dreamed of. And they're empty, and they're miserable. And they're depressed and often end up famously, there are many, we can name any celebrities, well-known individuals who had seemingly everything you could ever want, and were so much in despair, that they took their own lives. So clearly, they did not, they were not part of this secret society. They did not know a different way of defining success, that could make them truly happy and content.

Tim Schurrer 06:58

Yeah, and I think for so many people, what this looks like is they just feel like they need to get that next promotion. So they worked really hard grind away to be eligible for this, they actually get the promotion. And what's interesting is they get this new job, and they feel exactly like they did the job before, they still don't have enough, there's still another tier for them to go chase down, and I'm just sorry to say that I just think that we're not solving the actual problem, we are not chasing a version of success or pursuing a version of success that actually can bring about that fulfillment. And you know, when I was working at StoryBrand, I hired every single employee. I walked through every single candidate through our process and made offers to everyone that that we ultimately had on the team. And one day, there was an application that came through and on this person's resume was one of my favorite companies. I couldn't wait to talk to them and find out what it was like to work at this company. And in the first interview, I'm like, Okay, tell me everything. I was so excited. And they said something about this company that I'll never forget. They said, it's a really competitive environment. But here's the thing, nobody there has your back. And I just thought, What do you mean, nobody there has your back. And they went on to describe that everyone was so interested in their own climb, setting themselves up to win that they would never do anything, like give somebody credit, or give someone else recognition or even contribute to someone else's projects, unless it had something to do with serving their own agenda. And so it was clear nobody there had their back. And that is the exact opposite culture and community that I or anyone in the secret society would want to create. And in fact, what I have seen in people that I've been really inspired by is those in the secret society are more about the assist, they're willing to set someone else up to win. And what if we started to look at success that way? What if success is in the assist? And I just don't think very many people actually show up in that way. But more of us need to do it if we want to have lives and careers that are more meaningful and sustainable. Because to help somebody else win means a whole lot more than you know, we did the thing. And yet our teams, you know, maybe feel like, I don't have their back. You know, it's that's the world that most people are living in right now.

Ray Edwards 09:34

Yes. And I mean, I hear what you're saying, and I feel the truth of it. And then I also feel this little voice in the back of my head saying, Yeah, but it is competitive out there. And you know, there's a recession coming and we start thinking about all these things that are happening in the

external environment. And so there has to be some kind of, there's a there's a tension between striving for success, and then also being willing to let other people have the credit and to help them succeed. How do we find the balance between those two things?

Tim Schurrer 10:01

Yeah, it's a great question. And you're right, we we have to learn to live in the tension so much, and I think this is actually a very important point, the problem is not the position. The problem is not the place on the org chart, because I've actually met a lot of people in the secret society, a lot of those stories in the book are people who are in these massive CEO roles. The problem is not the position, the problem is our motivation for getting there in the first place, or even how it is that we do show up. Because I feel like we're all up against something that I call the spotlight mindset, this unhealthy desire for attention recognition. So it's this desire for attention and recognition that causes us to show up in the way that we do. And I think you are right, it is learning to live in the tension between that way of thinking, the Okay, this is all about me, I do just need to get my own. But then there's this other side of the spectrum, which is more in line with kind of the way of the secret society, this posture of helping somebody else when you know, those kinds of things. And so we do get to choose how it is that we want to show up. And I think that each and every day, we are given opportunities to choose. How are we going to show up? Are we going to make it about us? Or are we going to make it about somebody else? Are we going to demand the attention? Or are we going to be willing to maybe give somebody else the credit. And one of my favorite examples of this is from Tim Cook. So Tim Cook is the CEO of Apple before that he was COO under Steve Jobs. Well, we all know Steve Jobs passes away, the person who had been groomed to take over is Tim Cook. So they're at the release of the Apple Watch. And it's a pretty big moment for Apple, because this is the first new product that had been released since Tim had taken over as CEO. So on national television after this big announcement, Tim's asked, Is this the moment for you? The moment of your career at Apple? And just think about how you would respond if you're Tim, in that moment. Because you'd been under the radar for several decades, people have no idea all that you'd contributed to make Apple what it is, but he knew how big of a role that he had played. So the spotlight mindset wants him to take the credit, wants to do everything that he can to let everybody know how he is the man for the job, the one to take the company into this next era. That's what the spotlight mindset would want him to respond with. But that's not at all what happens. Is this the moment for you the moment of your career at Apple? Tim says, Well, it's a moment for Apple, I don't really think about myself that much. So would any of us have really faulted Tim, if he actually just takes a little credit? It's like, no, of course not we would have, it feels like such a human thing to do but, but that's just not the shadow that Tim is casting as a leader, what he is showing us is in the moment, when you really have all the right to take the credit, he just shows us a different path. So we get to choose how we show up. And so if there's somebody out there who wants to take the credit for having done the thing, like go for it, that's totally, it's not bad to want the credit, or even to get it from time to time. But I think that we also just need to check ourselves in why it is that we are wanting to take that moment for ourselves rather than using it as an opportunity like Tim did to shine the light on the company, the other people who also contributed to making that thing possible.

Ray Edwards 13:43

Yeah, so important because you know, Tim Cook as great an executive as he is he did not do it by himself. And had he not had the right team in place, I mean, he I think he was in an

unenviable position in many ways. He was very close to Steve Jobs and was very bereaved by the loss of his friend. And then also he was under scrutiny from people who said, Well, now's the collapse of Apple, because he's not Steve Jobs. And no, he was not Steve Jobs. He is Tim Cook, a master integrator, organizer, strategic thinker, and team builder, and look what he's been able to accomplish with his team. That's a great example. What about somebody who's maybe not as well known? I mean, it's kind of easy to look at Tim Cook and say, yep, that's a great example. I will never be in that position.

Tim Schurrer 14:26

Yeah, there's a, there's a nonprofit here in Nashville. It's called Thistle Farms. And it was started by a woman named Becca Stevens. This was in 1997. She had this idea that she would get funding for a house and help pull five women off the streets who were living in prostitution, had you know, experienced sex trafficking, you know, drug addiction, you know, she wanted to help these women recover and you know, find a new path forward. So she gets this house and what's been interesting to see with Thistle Farms, these women needed to find the ability to create living wages for themselves. And with this track record that they had, it's actually quite hard to find jobs because of that criminal record that they often had. And so they started making soaps and lotions and candles to really fund their own recovery. And Thistle Farms, now, they're 25 years in, they've now had a pretty massive, made a pretty massive splash. So many women have gotten off the streets and have recovered from, you know, their pasts. And what's beautiful about Becca's approach, a lot of people would say, you know, to be successful, you need to have a giant stage, giant platform, you know, impact 10s, if not hundreds of 1000s of lives, that's what success is. You know, you need to be a Tim Cook, where you are now standing on a stage in front of millions of people being able to make this big and massive impact. But what I love about Becca's approach, and what so many of us can learn about success from her is Becca looked at everything that she did through the lens of one life at a time, let that be enough. And so it's how she showed up in 1997, helping five women get off the streets. And it's the same thing that motivates her today. I have this podcast called Build a Winning Team, and I just interviewed her a few weeks ago and this one life at a time approach truly is how she shows up. And so this pressure that maybe we feel even for those listening that may be running a small business, you may feel this pressure of, okay, I have to be somebody like a Tim Cook, you know, my name in lights, I have to keep driving, driving, it's more revenue and more employees. And what I love is if what if we could just model more of what we do after Becca? What if we showed up helping and desiring to help one person at a time, one customer at a time, one phone call that you take at a time, let the results take care of themselves. Fall in love with the process of doing the work, and that may accumulate into a massive impact. But I just love that approach that more of us can take as we think about success. I think success can often look like one life at a time.

Ray Edwards 17:16

Amen. And that's a beautiful story. And you know, if we approach success like that, we might be able to stop feeling so anxious to stop being overwhelmed and stressed out and enjoy our work.

Tim Schurrer 17:28

You know, it's interesting. So I just released this book. And I'll just tell you like, this is a pretty raw thing that is happening for me right now where I am all of that what I have written down in this book is being challenged in my own life. So thank goodness, I have some tools to use for

the situation that I'm in. So I didn't sell as many books in the first week as I wanted to. I didn't hit my goal. So now what, right? Like everything in me wants to press to to feel like the whole thing was a failure since I didn't hit that one goal. And what I am, what I've been reminded of over the last week is that success is in the process. It really is I can't control the numbers at the end of the day, like what I can control is what I can control. So what it has me doing is taking a hard look at the lead measures the things that I can actually control to impact that number. So what I can do is continue to get in front of as many friends as possible to share and talk about some of this that so many of us are facing- the redefinition of success that needs to happen. And if that leads to book sales, fantastic, but what I want to do is just show up present in conversations with friends or in interviews like this, and just talk about what success can and should look like. So that's what I can control. I can't control, at the end of the day, the sales. And so I think so many of us are sucked into this trap of you're only successful if you make a best seller list, you are only successful if X, Y and Z and yet I wake up this morning and there's this beautiful email in my inbox because I give people my email address at the end of the book. And I get this beautiful email from a woman who's read the book. And she just shared with me his beautiful story about how her daughter has been developmentally delayed, and for so long she has served people in the background. She actually didn't make the basketball team you know, and she's just been the person who has been the team manager serving alongside other people. And so she said your book is a reminder of how special my daughter is. She's not somebody who needs the spotlight but just is willing to serve in the background. And I just feel like that's the, that's the good stuff. You know. So at the end of the day, I want to have really good sales because I want this message to impact people. So there is a good drive and a good thing there, but I think if I start to lose sight of the impact that it is making or the process, and I just bum myself out and get into a mental spiral on sales numbers, I think I've missed the point.

Ray Edwards 20:12

I just want to acknowledge how much I love the fact that you went straight at that, because one of the questions that was on my mind as I came to this meeting was, I wonder how this is playing out in Tim's life right now, because you're launching a book and I know what that's like and what the expectations are. And, and so there's a lot of temptation to be in the spotlight because it is a spotlight moment. You're the author of a book and you're you're selling your book to people. And I don't think there's anything wrong with that. I do it myself. It's interesting, though, I was talking with a mutual friend of ours, Jeff Goins, and he and I have been working on a book together, and we're doing a workshop on writing best selling books. And we've been discussing what's the best selling book and he brought up this example that he always brings up that I love, which is the *War of Art*, by Steven Pressfield. Great book, I've read it like a dozen times, whenever I get into a slump creatively, I tend to break that book out and read it. And he recounted the story to me about how that book had sold hundreds of 1000s of copies, but never made it to a bestseller list until Pressfield happens to appear on a TV show called the Oprah show, or Super Soul Sunday, or whatever she was doing at the time. And then it hit the bestseller list, like he had already been out there for a decade has sold hundreds of 1000s of copies already then hit the bestsellers list. But meanwhile, he had been quietly selling month after month after year after year. Because it was useful. It was good. It was an interesting idea that was powerful. And I think that's what I see in *The Secret Society of Success*, so I encourage you, you do it, you know how to do it, one book at a time, one person at a time.

Tim Schurrer 21:39

So I love that best seller story because I have one myself. And when Don, in 2015, released *Scary Close*, about 10 days after a book comes out is when you usually find out if it is going to hit one of these lists. So we're in the office, Don gets the phone call, he hangs up, lifts his hands in the air is like we hit number five on the New York Times, which is the highest any of his books had ever been on that list. And we high-five, we hugged, and then something really beautiful happened. We all went back to work. And I think some people would hear that story and say y'all are dysfunctional. You don't know how to celebrate wins, but it's one of my favorite memories. Because we had built a company and a culture of people who were content doing the work. The accolade is not bad. There's nothing wrong with best sellers lists or the aspiration to hit a bestseller list. But is that your motivation? Or are you content doing the work if you don't get that marker, and I'm sure everyone in their role in their life has a best seller list moment. A validation that maybe you would think would satisfy you. And so the question I have to ask today is Tim, are you content doing the work? Was the work worth it? Let's say you don't sell another copy of this book. What is success really? And when I flip open this book, and I read the dedication, which is to my two kids, Judson and Elle, says, "To Judson and Elle, may you learn to live in the way of the secret society." That's what it's about. That's it. So, if more people get to read it, like fantastic, but like I did it. I just think that so often, we show up, and, and we chase this version of success that is just so wonky. But when we actually get honest about what is success, the things that really matter come to life, and they come to light. That is what we should be focusing our lives doing- our life and our work. That's what we should focus our time doing.

Ray Edwards 23:51

Absolutely, yes. Yes. One of my favorite definitions of success was one originally penned by Earl Nightingale who said, "Success is the progressive realization of worthy ideals". If you think about it, that way, you can be a success today, if you just make progress toward a worthy ideal. And that's the secret as we move through challenging times. There will always be challenges, always be challenging times. There are challenging times around us right now. Some people are looking ahead fearfully. Some people are looking at the opportunity to serve and to build and to create and assist. And I love that about this book. It displays a model for moving forward without so much of the anxiety, the overwhelm, and the restlessness that comes from wanting that spotlight moment all the time. It's the reason entrepreneurs go from they have a victory. They're like, okay, that's, that's fine. Now, let's work on the next goal. And it's not that spirit of let's just go back to work because we're blue-collar people doing a blue-collar job and we love it. It's like, I got to have that next hit of fame and spotlight time. This is something different and this is the time for this book is perfect. It was planned perfectly. And I'm glad you wrote this book.

Tim Schurrer 24:59

Thank you. When I was working on this book, there is this broken soundtrack that I just kept hearing. It's like you're too late. You missed it. And what I've learned about some of these soundtracks from Jon Acuff is you need to replace a broken soundtrack with a better one. And the soundtrack that I started to tell myself, anytime I would hear that you're too late, you missed it was God's timing is perfect. And I cannot really con, I can control some of this, I wrote the book and we set a release date, like I hit the writing deadline, and therefore this was the release date. But I didn't know what was going to be going on in the world when this book comes out. It's like, I have no idea. So you just have to lean in into that. And if there's been a Northstar, for

me, in writing this book, it's this quote by Albert Schweitzer. And he says this, "I don't know what your destiny will be. Perhaps some of you will occupy remarkable positions. Perhaps some of you will become famous by your pens or as artists. But I know one thing; the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve."

Ray Edwards 26:15

I really don't know what to say, to follow that up, other than y'all should go get a copy of *Secret Society of Success*. Where can they find this book?

Tim Schurrer 26:24

Yeah, so, if you go to secretsocietyfree.com, I actually give the first couple of chapters away. Or I mean, you can go to Audible, I read the audiobook or on Amazon wherever you buy books, but that's a that's the a place you can go to if you want to go learn a little bit more first.

Ray Edwards 26:40

I think this is going to be one of those books like The Steven Pressfield book we mentioned earlier, that's going to sell month after month, year after year, and the value is just going to build and people are going to recommend it to their friends, like I'm recommending it to you right now, constant listener. *The Secret Society of Success* by Tim Schurrer. It's an important book, especially in the times we live in today. And it was planned perfectly and when I said that I didn't mean planned by you, Tim. I meant plan by the one to whom you gave the credit. Thank you my friend. It's always good to see you. It's been too long but I'm so glad we had this time together.

Tim Schurrer 27:10

Ray, I it's so fun hanging out with you. I always love seeing you and this is a really special one for me.

Ray Edwards 27:16

Same here, my friend.

Announcer 27:21

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