

Virtual Campfire Podcast S7 EP333

Transcript

How to Amplify Personal Impact

Achim Nowak [00:00:00 - 00:00:09]

I wanted to prove to myself that I could become a windsurfer. There was only one place where you could learn how to windsurf in Tobago, and I became a really good windsurfer.

Tony Martignetti [00:00:15 - 00:01:08]

For generations, we've gathered around the campfire to share stories, build trust, and pass along what we've learned. Welcome to the Virtual Campfire. I'm Tony Martinetti. Here, we go beyond the success you see on the surface to uncover the stories of transformation behind it, the challenges, pivotal moments, and small steps that led to big leaps. Because every journey has a story, and every story has something to teach us. Let's gather around the campfire where stories spark transformation.

It is truly an honor and a pleasure to bring my next guest, On Hakeem Novak. Hakeem is—he helps CEOs and C-suite executives to amplify their personal impact through his work that he'd been doing for so many years, and it's been wonderful to watch his impact.

Tony Martignetti [00:01:09 - 00:01:42]

He has written 4 books. He's a 2-time TEDx speaker. He's hosted an amazing podcast called My Fourth Act. He brings an eclectic background to what he does. And he has trained as a mediator at the Brooklyn courts. He co-founded an acclaimed theater company in Washington, D.C., and he draws on decades of spiritual exploration. Amazing. When he was 35, he left Manhattan to live on the island of Tobago and became a windsurfer, and a good one at that.

Tony Martignetti [00:01:43 - 00:02:02]

He has been featured in The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, The New York Post, Forbes, Fast Company, Entrepreneur, USA Today, and on NPR and NBC. I should just say where he hasn't been featured. He currently resides in Setúbal, Portugal, which I know I probably didn't pronounce correctly.

Achim Nowak [00:02:03 - 00:02:05]

You, you did really well. Well done.

Tony Martignetti [00:02:05 - 00:02:17]

Thank you. Wonderful. And Kim, it's so great to welcome you to the virtual campfire today where we're going to have such a wonderful conversation around Your journey. Thank you for being here.

Achim Nowak [00:02:17 - 00:02:19]

I'm honored to be here. Let's chat.

Tony Martignetti [00:02:20 - 00:02:40]

Yes, I'm so thrilled. We've had so many great conversations up to this point. Usually it's from your perch in Portugal, which I'm so thrilled that you're there and taking up all of the great energy from, from Portugal. And now we get the chance to really explore your journey through what we call flashpoints. So that's going to be fun.

Achim Nowak [00:02:41 - 00:02:41]

Okay.

Tony Martignetti [00:02:42 - 00:02:43]

Yeah. Are you ready to explore?

Achim Nowak [00:02:44 - 00:02:45]

Let's go.

Tony Martignetti [00:02:46 - 00:03:05]

All right. So flashpoints, for those who don't know, are the moments in your journey that have ignited your gifts into the world. You can share what you're called to share, and along the way we'll pause and see what shows up, what themes and threads we wanna pull. So with that, Hakeem, please take it away. Where would you like to start?

Achim Nowak [00:03:06 - 00:03:45]

Since we're in Portugal, my father was an architect. He builds buildings in different countries. I'm German, so he built buildings for the German government, like German schools. So one flashpoint, I mentioned Portugal because I actually lived here as a child, but the second country we went to was Turkey. And my dad would, every 6 weeks or so, he would take us out of school. And we would go visit archaeological digs. He was really into old ruins. And as a child, I got to see every little old ruin in the Middle East.

Achim Nowak [00:03:46 - 00:04:13]

And I'm grateful to my dad because it made me curious about other cultures, about history, not by reading a history book, but by actually walking down someplace and realizing People used to live here. And that's something that really shaped me. And I didn't realize it until much later because not everybody gets to do that as a child, but I did.

Tony Martignetti [00:04:14 - 00:04:36]

I love that angle that you take. I mean, 'cause it's so true in many ways that we remembering what came before helps us to think about being grounded in where we are, even though we weren't Part of that history, you still feel like that's our lineage, that's where we came from. And how do we connect with the past?

Achim Nowak [00:04:36 - 00:05:07]

And to build on what you're saying, and some things, because we live through 'em at a certain time and the deeper meaning in our life's journey only becomes apparent later as we make sense of it. So this retro— this retroactive meaning-making Is really interesting. And that's available to all of us, no matter how old we are, to go back to what was that actually all about. And I think it's a very positive thing we can do for ourselves.

Tony Martignetti [00:05:07 - 00:05:37]

Yeah, just having that willingness to open ourselves up to exploring. And even when it gets a little bit sometimes scary, because if it's a personal exploration, sometimes you worry about what you're going to find and what it's going to mean. So yeah. So where do we go next? Tell me about— it was such a wonderful way to open this up because oftentimes our parents, they open the door to some things that we don't necessarily know what they mean until much later. But I think it's such a great thing to be exposed like that.

Achim Nowak [00:05:38 - 00:06:14]

Well, when you read my intro, something I've done in my life that I very much appreciate, and it's almost like a cliché, but when I was 24 and I was a young actor in Washington, DC, and I was making my living as an actor. I had a job. I was kind of mediocre as an actor, but I was working. But a bunch of us said, let's start a theater company. It's a cliché. Let's start it. And we had access to a space that we didn't have to pay for, and we were all 24. And what are we gonna start with? And we came up with this double bill of 2 pretty intense plays, Sartre's No Exit.

Achim Nowak [00:06:14 - 00:06:47]

which is an existentialist classic, and had Joe Orton play Ruffian on the Stair. And I directed No Exit. And, you know, this was a time when the Washington Post reviewed it and said we were great, and suddenly we were on the map and we did some really cool work. But the instinct, the reason I mentioned it is the instinct, which I think we need to honor throughout life, was saying is, Hey, let's start this. And we didn't talk ourselves out of it. We, we talked ourselves into it and we did it.

Tony Martignetti [00:06:49 - 00:07:11]

I love that you say that because there's something about that, which is even if like it's not the forever thing, it's good to start and do things and make mistakes and, and trust the moment. Because even at that young age, it's like, that's exactly how things you learn. You learn by doing. And exploring, as we said earlier. So I love that you did that.

Achim Nowak [00:07:12 - 00:07:45]

But also you mentioned the young age because I think as we progress in our careers, let's say I'm suddenly in my 40s and I have accomplished a lot of things and the stakes are different, you know, which means I don't want to say something stupid that could mess up my career or the bigger price to pay. When we were 24, there was no price to pay. There

were only things to gain, but that mindset is always available to us. And I would say, let's maintain that mindset of why the hell not?

Tony Martignetti [00:07:45 - 00:08:29]

Yeah, I think there's an arc to that, which I, you know, I think you can relate to this because even thinking about your own podcast is, you know, the fourth act. I think there's an element of, okay, you do some things early on, the risks are low because you're just, you know, putting things out there. And then you get to a certain place where you're like, okay, now I've gotta be a little bit more discerning. And then you're a little more discerning. And then at some point you kind of flip to the other side and you say, why not? And now I've got all this experience behind me and I also can take more risk at this point. And because I don't necessarily have to be worrying about all the messy middle, if you will. Do you, does that resonate at all?

Achim Nowak [00:08:30 - 00:09:11]

Well, it does. And you know, when, you know, when it comes to taking risks, we all have our own thresholds and our own history that we carry. One of the biggest risks I ever took in my life, and when I tell the story, it can sound completely insane, but let me just give you the short version. Like I was in my mid-30s. I had an accomplished theater career in Washington, in New York at this time. I was the Artistic director of an educational theater company. We were known all over the world. I was diagnosed with some health issues and I decided that I probably needed to change my life and live more simply.

Achim Nowak [00:09:12 - 00:09:50]

I did some pretty wild experiments in the Arizona desert, but one thing that came out of that, and I chuckle as I tell this story, I had this vision of living in a white house. On an island. And to me, this wasn't a metaphor. This was a real house. Instinctively, this was a real house. It was on an island. I knew it was in the Caribbean, and I knew I had to go. 6 months later, I lived in a white house on a tiny Caribbean island, Tobago, and I wanted to prove to myself that I could become a windsurfer.

Achim Nowak [00:09:51 - 00:10:22]

There was only one place where you could learn how to windsurf in Tobago, and I became a really good windsurfer. And I'm a very accomplished person, but one of the biggest ones in my life was truly becoming a windsurfer and windsurfing every day in rough winds. And like, I go, damn, you really did that. And it started just having this vision of doing something that could look very crazy to some people, but I knew that that experience would shape the rest of my life.

Tony Martignetti [00:10:23 - 00:10:52]

Yeah, I mean, it's not even like— when I think about that experience, I think first of all, it's following through the commitment and seeing it all the way through. And what that says to other people is that if you have something that you really want and you really want to see it come through, You have to commit to it. And you, even if other people in your life, which

I'm sure there were probably a bunch of people saying like, dude, you're crazy. Why are you doing?

Achim Nowak [00:10:53 - 00:11:21]

But here's one of the most profound moments around this to build on what you were saying. I was terrified, terrified of calling my mom and dad. And here's how the phone call went. Now I really delayed it long. I said, mom, She picked up the phone. You know, I'm from Germany, so this was conducted in German. I said to her, Mom, you know, I'm giving up my job at the creative arts team. I'd been there for like nine years.

Achim Nowak [00:11:21 - 00:12:01]

It was a good job, and she said, Oh, and then she said, What are you going to do? I said, I am moving to Tobago. There was this long pause. And she said, what are you gonna do there? And I said, nothing. And there was this pause, and I'm getting emotional now. And my mom said, I don't know where she pulled it from. She said, well, you know what's best for you. And that was profound. For the rest of my life, my mom could do no wrong because in that moment she knew what to say.

Tony Martignetti [00:12:03 - 00:12:33]

That's wonderful. I mean, it's as a parent, you know, you kind of have to have that mindset of at some point you've done your job of getting your children to a place where you've given them all that you can, and then you gotta trust, trust the process, as they say, right? But trust them to make their mistakes, make their, you know, and I know that's saying this was a mistake because it wasn't, but to trust them to do the things that are going to get them where they need to go.

Achim Nowak [00:12:34 - 00:12:37]

Yeah. Yeah. It's wonderful.

Tony Martignetti [00:12:37 - 00:12:38]

And then do you have children?

Achim Nowak [00:12:39 - 00:12:40]

I do not. No.

Tony Martignetti [00:12:41 - 00:12:47]

Okay. I was gonna say, have you modeled the way for others in this, in this path? But I'm sure you have through your clients.

Achim Nowak [00:12:49 - 00:13:39]

Well, I think one thing I've done in my life, and I hope this is something, even if I don't speak about it, is that I believe in But I've done this. I believe in paying attention when our spirit or our soul wants us to make a change, meaning one cycle of life is over and it's time

to make a change because it's so easy to hold onto the old. And there are many reasons for doing that. I have made those changes. You know, I've done a pretty good job of paying attention. One, One really, you know, and you talked about all the messages we get from other people. So one example was when I founded an international training coaching company, I had 8 associates. I was very well mentored and coached by top people, and we were really successful.

Achim Nowak [00:13:40 - 00:14:12]

And we worked all over the world. We had amazing clients. And then I got to the moment when I felt like I didn't want to do that anymore. I wanted to work, but it in a different way. And I decided to sell the business. Now, number one, it was shocking to realize I had something that was worth some money actually, and somebody bought it. But down the line, everybody who knew me was trying to get me to not do that. They said, don't, just hire somebody who's going to manage the company for you.

Achim Nowak [00:14:12 - 00:14:56]

But the idea that don't hold onto something that's successful, It negated the mindset that it was time to let go and I can create something else that's successful. It's almost insulting to say, just hold onto something. And part of the maturing for me has been too, as I get older, is I trust my instincts around stuff more. So I knew I wasn't being self-destructive. I wasn't being a jerk. No, I understood that parts of the business I didn't want to do anymore and I was going to start a new one. But the voices who wanted me to not make that change, all people who loved me, the voices were very strong.

Tony Martignetti [00:14:58 - 00:15:50]

Yeah. I mean, you know, this comes down to, for me, what I think is intuition becomes informed by all the experiences and what I was going to lean into, and I think it's just going to take this a little deeper, is the emotions that are going— the emotional landscape for you around the pre-decision, like what's going on before you made the decision to do these things, and then the post-decision journey, which I know there's a lot of uncertainty, a lot of still fear. But tell me a little bit about what goes into The feeling you have before the thing happens, you know, you're making the change, making the shift, and then what happens post when you know you're like, okay, did I make the right choice? Do you know what I mean by that?

Achim Nowak [00:15:51 - 00:16:05]

Yeah. When making a difficult decision, I would just say for all of us, it behooves us to trust at the moment when it's clear. For me, when I knew it was time to sell this business.

Tony Martignetti [00:16:05 - 00:16:05]

Yeah.

Achim Nowak [00:16:06 - 00:16:54]

Had a good instructional designer who worked for me, and that 75% of the revenue was big leadership programs for boutique clients. Now, programs were amazing and we would customize them, but I remember sitting in my office with Kate, like, and she had just redesigned a slide deck to customize for a client. And I remember being in the office and thinking to myself, I don't want to look at another freaking PowerPoint slide deck. I don't want to customize one more thing. This is all about me. This is not about other people who do that work. But for me, I realized I was done with creating constant iterations of something for clients, even though it's a very noble thing to do. I just didn't want to do it anymore.

Achim Nowak [00:16:55 - 00:17:40]

It's funny, I don't have the after stuff, maybe because I'm very well supported in everything I do. I joke like I don't do anything alone. I had the same business coach for 15 years. I'm in a mastermind group with 4 amazing humans. I run everything by everybody. But when it was time to start a new business, which for me was going to be 100% coaching and no training, I had no fears truly about that happening. But I did have a pipeline of clients and I knew how to start. I mean, it's a whole other conversation we can have about, because I think the world is full of coaches who don't have enough clients because the field is gutted with a lot of wonderful talent.

Achim Nowak [00:17:41 - 00:17:51]

But I didn't have that fear, you know, and I, I don't have that fear today around work showing up or all this stuff. I just, I've been a manifester, so I just don't feel that.

Tony Martignetti [00:17:52 - 00:18:44]

There's something about being detached from the work. And, you know, like, as you said, like the word kept on coming up to me, detached and disembodied from the work at some point. And then you start to feel like, okay, now it's time to, I want to reconnect with what makes the work meaningful to me. And even though you're doing meaningful work, it's just at some point you feel like I need to get back in relationship with it. And I think that's what maybe calls you into something new and wanting to be more in relationship, a better relationship with whatever you're doing. I think a lot of people have that sometimes, you know, they get into something, they love what they do, and then at some point they fall out of love with it because it starts to create distance to the actual work. Does that resonate?

Achim Nowak [00:18:45 - 00:19:30]

Yeah. I mean, what I was thinking of from certainly because both you and I play in the corporate world, right? Which is that I love, but what happens very often is as we get promoted up the chain, we get more and more removed from the original passion, right? We manage more and more people. We're there to make other people be successful. We don't do the thing that we started with anymore. And at some point, that's something we have to come to terms with. In my journey, you know, I, I've been a serial entrepreneur for 23, 24 years now. That's shocking to me because when I started my first business, I truly had no idea what the hell I was doing. And I got a lot of help.

Achim Nowak [00:19:31 - 00:19:46]

to help me figure that stuff out. But part of my identity right now, I'm comfortable saying I'm a serial entrepreneur. That was not in my consciousness 25 years ago, but I had to change as a person to own that. Does that make sense?

Tony Martignetti [00:19:46 - 00:19:47]

100%.

Achim Nowak [00:19:47 - 00:19:55]

And to say that I own it and I love doing it. I love creating new things. If I didn't, this would be a miserable ride.

Tony Martignetti [00:19:56 - 00:20:34]

Yeah, I love that you say that 'cause there's something about that at first, that's not something you could feel comfortable saying. Probably not even comfortable saying entrepreneur until you start to do it a couple times and you start to embody it, thus to use the term that we've been playing around with. And then you start to like, oh my gosh, now I'm here, this is what I'm doing. And now we get comfortable with it because you've got the proof that you've not just like social proof, but your own body of proof that allows you to say, now I've lived it and I can feel it in my bones that this is what I do and this is who I am.

Achim Nowak [00:20:36 - 00:21:16]

But to build on that, it's also perfectly okay. For example, because we live in a world of lots of coaches, entrepreneurs, people who start their own businesses. If you do that and at some point you say, God, I'm not enjoying it that much, Or I'm not embodying it. And then I would say, then have the courage to get the heck out and move on to something else that you enjoy rather than forcing through something that for whatever reason is not the right container for you. You know? And that sounds simple, but we are, the temptations to hold onto an old version of ourselves are everywhere.

Tony Martignetti [00:21:17 - 00:22:13]

Well, and I think that's what you've modeled so perfectly. And I love that, you know, this is the thread we've been pulling here is the ability to know when to let go and knowing the signals for yourself, not letting other people dictate that for you, dictate that for you, but instead allowing yourself to say like, look, you know, this is time for closing this chapter and kind of be ready for the next thing, but also know when to still contain, you know, still hold on to something because maybe The thing that I want, that I'm doing is the right thing. I just need to hang on a little bit longer and see where this thread goes. But that inner knowing is what we need to start, we need to build for ourselves. We can't let people tell us the thing. It has to come from ourselves and from continuing to do things that allow us to know ourselves. Does that make sense to you? No, no.

Achim Nowak [00:22:14 - 00:23:12]

And you used the phrase, which I really adored earlier, when it comes to informed intuition, you know, and that's the key. It's not a hunch, it's not a whim, but when we know, then have the courage to act on it. You know, I feel like one of the differences between— I'll use a funny term— more successful and less successful people, and we all get to define success on our terms, so let me be clear on that. But people who are more successful, I think, are more able to have a sense of what feels immediate for them. They want to do it, and then they don't torture themselves with too much analysis and they go ahead and take action. And there isn't this 2 years of analysis about should I do this or not? No, let me just give it a try. And I, I'm definitely have become more of that kind of person, which is fantastic. So, yeah.

Tony Martignetti [00:23:13 - 00:23:26]

You know, I'll add, just know where the exits are. Yeah. So, you know, whenever you enter a room and you're ready to try something, know where the exits are so you don't necessarily get yourself in this place where you're like, okay, I'm stuck and now I don't know how to get out.

Achim Nowak [00:23:27 - 00:23:27]

Yeah.

Tony Martignetti [00:23:28 - 00:23:35]

So we've covered a lot of ground, but let me know, is there another flashpoint that you'd like to dig into that we haven't explored yet?

Achim Nowak [00:23:36 - 00:24:18]

Let me just say that 2 years ago I moved from the South Florida area. I lived near Miami to the Lisbon, Portugal area. It was relatively easy for me legally because I carry a German passport and I'm a European citizen. What was interesting about that, when you make a big change like this, people have a lot of stories about what that kind of change might be like. So a lot of stuff that gets projected onto making a big change is People will say to me all the time, gosh, that takes a lot of courage. And I'll listen politely, but it took no courage. It didn't. I keep my mouth shut.

Achim Nowak [00:24:18 - 00:25:22]

That's your story that takes a lot of courage. Or I'll hear people say, that must have been very difficult. No, it really wasn't. But I understand the difficult part for some people can be Invite all of us to look at all the things that we are attached to that we think we can't let go of, right? At some point, I owned this beautiful property in South Florida with 2 houses and a lap swimming pool, like a fantasy property. And I had it for 10 years, and then I got an offer I couldn't refuse and I sold it. And people couldn't believe I let go of something that nice. But it was the same idea that I've done it and now I can explore something else, to use the term that we're using here. So the interesting part is when I made a big change, that meant they were going to another continent, another country, the stories that other people put on it, which is all about them and their thinking.

Achim Nowak [00:25:22 - 00:25:52]

Like another thing classic is, gosh, I can't imagine learning another language. And we'll say, well, of course you can learn another language. It's not going to be easy. It's going to require some work. But the notion that you can't imagine learning another language, coaching me says, please look at that. You know, I've been studying for 2 years with a tutor, private tutor, 2 sessions a week. So I'm working at it. But then there are those moments.

Achim Nowak [00:25:52 - 00:26:28]

I mean, the rewards of committing to use the language you use. This happened just 2 weeks ago. I'm in this shopping mall in a suburb of Lisbon, and I'm in this cafe there, and I'm just having quick coffee and I'm ordering in Portuguese and just ordering my coffee. And then at some point I switch to English and ask about something 'cause I know they all speak English there. But the woman looks at me and says, she says, wow, I thought you were Portuguese. And I know she wasn't flat— she wasn't flattering me. People say nice things all the time about my Portuguese, But this was totally unfiltered. So those are the payoffs.

Achim Nowak [00:26:29 - 00:26:42]

But that came because I've been showing up for a tutor for 2 years. And I'm not special. Anybody can show up for a tutor and you put in the work and you will learn Portuguese or French or whatever you decide to learn. You will.

Tony Martignetti [00:26:42 - 00:27:21]

I mean, it's so great that you say this because, I mean, this is the other part of this. People look at everything through their lens and their story, but also they short strift the, or whatever the word might be, The effort that required— I mean, anything is possible if you're willing to do the work, but don't discount the work because the work is what it requires. And again, this is where the judgment comes in. People looking at the highlight reel of everyone's lives and saying, oh, look how amazing that is, and not really understanding that the work required to get there that informed Where they are.

Achim Nowak [00:27:22 - 00:27:22]

Yeah.

Tony Martignetti [00:27:23 - 00:27:44]

Which, that's what— and I look at your life and I look at the way things have moved and shifted along the way. It's like you've done a lot of the work to get there, and it's been through taking lots of risks. Sometimes I'm sure, you know, you've, you've been through some twists and turns that have had you wondering like, ooh, did I make the right choice here? So please validate that.

Achim Nowak [00:27:45 - 00:27:50]

Yes, but the longer I'm at it, I do trust my instincts.

Tony Martignetti [00:27:51 - 00:27:51]

Yeah.

Achim Nowak [00:27:52 - 00:28:42]

And if something doesn't feel good or right, I don't do it. But one new habit here in my life in Portugal, which I cherish, and I'm going to just mention it because it's not something I've ever done before. So in this city where I live, 40 minutes south of Lisbon, there's a group of cold water sea swimmers, and I'm a swimmer, But I'm not used to cold water sea swimming, but it sounded good and I joined the group and we make cold water swimming dates. So that's 7:30 in the morning. It's a beautiful beach. It's a 20-minute walk from where I live. And we go in and the water's really cold. We don't put on a wetsuit, but after about a minute or two, the thrill of being in there And again, the key is I don't do anything alone.

Achim Nowak [00:28:42 - 00:29:07]

I'm in there with like-minded souls who I adore. They're part of my tribe. If it didn't feel good at the end, I wouldn't keep going back. But it's something before I came to Portugal, I had never done it. It's a beautiful routine, but I, that wouldn't have happened if I hadn't moved. You know, the water in Florida is so warm, you just want to run out because it's too hot. Here it's cold.

Tony Martignetti [00:29:08 - 00:29:33]

I love it. That's a great story because it's also about the things that you try new things, but you're also doing it with others and it creates a bonding experience. So that's awesome. So as we come close to the end, I wanted to ask, is there something that's been on your mind lately that you want to share? Maybe an insight or something about the world today that you feel might be Helpful to share in this moment?

Achim Nowak [00:29:34 - 00:29:38]

Oh, you, you said that's, that was so wonderfully open. I could go in so many different directions.

Tony Martignetti [00:29:38 - 00:29:38]

Yeah.

Achim Nowak [00:29:39 - 00:30:29]

2 things come to mind. One of the things that I'm loving about living in Portugal, and I don't wanna make culturally simplistic statements across many cultures. I'm very Americanized, but I'm German schooled, German educated, German passport. What I'm learning from the Portuguese people, and I, I live in a simple fisherman's neighborhood, 4 blocks from a harbor, is Portuguese people, as I experience them, don't— they're not performative. They don't put on a show for you. They don't act happy when they're not happy. They don't do stuff to make you feel good. They're nice, they're polite, but It's liberating to be in a place where people don't perform for you.

Achim Nowak [00:30:30 - 00:31:14]

And I think we are culturally so conditioned to perform for each other, and we're not conscious of the amount of performing that we do. So it is liberating where people just sort of are. Other thing I wanna say, since I mentioned entrepreneurs, I've been blessed in the sense that once I put my mind to something and I make a strategic decision, I execute and I usually manifest. I joked about it. But it happens. In Portugal, I'm currently in a very emergent period, meaning I'm not trying to make anything happen here, but a lot of things are happening here. And my job is to just notice what's emerging. And I'm, I'm using myself as an example, but I'm speaking to all of the listeners.

Achim Nowak [00:31:15 - 00:31:40]

When we stop trying to make things happen, I actually notice more things that wanna emerge by themselves without us trying to make anything happen. And then we still get to decide, do I want to follow this path or not? Do I want to do this or not? But I'm doing all sorts of things here in Lisbon that in my wildest dreams I wouldn't have thought I would have been doing, only because I'm just letting them emerge and I'm showing up for that.

Tony Martignetti [00:31:42 - 00:32:16]

Beautiful. I just love that. That's such a great way for us to leave the audience. Not yet, but with this great Don't force it. Let things emerge. And, but also being, paying attention to what's emerging. So you can say, do I want to follow that or not? It's my, it's, I'm the author, right? You know, you don't have to be the one who just reacts to all the things, but you can think I'm at choice to figure out what I want to follow or not. So now we get to the last question, which I ask every guest.

Tony Martignetti [00:32:17 - 00:32:24]

And that is, what are one or two books that have had an impact on you and why? I'm expecting something fun from you, so let's see.

Achim Nowak [00:32:25 - 00:33:29]

And I don't think I'm going to give you fun when it comes to the work you and I do, which is around helping people be their most brilliant selves and unearthing their inner brilliance. You know, we both do that work. The book that I just love is by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience. And just the fact that the word optimal experiences in the subtitle, which says you and I are allowed to have optimal experiences, and why don't we have more? And how do we have them? And how do we have them at work and in every facet of our lives? So I, a lot of my clients have read it. It's a beautiful book. I recommend it. In my own personal life, one of the, so he's dead now, but one of the great American novelists of the '40s, '50s, '60s was an expat writer named Paul Bowles. He lived in Tangiers.

Achim Nowak [00:33:30 - 00:34:17]

Most famous novel was called The Sheltering Sky. Bernardo Bertolucci created, did the movie starring John Malkovich and Debra Winger. And he very much chronicled the experience of being an expatriate, a foreigner living in foreign countries. And when I read

his work, I felt like, oh, he's writing about what I know. You know, the suburban American novels, that was not me. That's not how I grew up. But Paul Bowles wrote about my life and it was very meaningful for me to read writing where I saw myself reflected. So my invitation to all of you is to find literature that reflects you and mirrors you and validates your journey in life.

Achim Nowak [00:34:18 - 00:34:25]

It's good to read other stuff, which I do as well, but for me as a young man, Paul Bowles really set me free. It was great.

Tony Martignetti [00:34:28 - 00:34:52]

So beautiful. I mean, I think it's so great. This is why I asked this question, 'cause I think it's so wonderful when you can kind of articulate some of the things that have led you to this point, but also give people an invitation to get out there and read widely, but also make sure you're finding some things that really reflect you back and get you to understand yourself better.

Achim Nowak [00:34:52 - 00:34:54]

Yeah. Yeah.

Tony Martignetti [00:34:54 - 00:35:07]

So, yeah, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for saying yes to coming on the show and And just having a wonderful conversation that I know will resonate with people on the show. So thank you.

Achim Nowak [00:35:08 - 00:35:10]

My pleasure, Tony. Anytime.

Tony Martignetti [00:35:11 - 00:35:24]

I love it. Well, I'm sure we'll have more conversations soon, so that that'll be for sure. But before I let you go, I want to make sure people know where to find you. What's the best place to learn more about you and follow your journeys?

Achim Nowak [00:35:24 - 00:36:06]

I mean, I have a I have a website, achinova.com. Ironically, part of my journey the last year is I've been shooting videos with a Russian filmmaker in Lisbon, little vignettes that are very much me. And I, I put them out on Instagram and I've been rapidly growing on Instagram and have people all over the world who watch my little videos. So go and look for me on Instagram. It's Achim_Nowak, N-O-W-A-K. Very easy to find, and you get to hear what I'm thinking about. And it's all but it's all shot in beautiful Portuguese settings.

Tony Martignetti [00:36:07 - 00:36:12]

Yeah, I check them out all the time. So yes, go. I say it's endorsed by me.

Achim Nowak [00:36:12 - 00:36:13]

Thank you.

Tony Martignetti [00:36:13 - 00:36:52]

I'm extremely grateful. Akeem Novak shared his stories, insights, and experiences so openly. And to all my listeners, thank you for joining us on this journey at the Virtual Campfire. If you want to learn more about today's guests, connect with their work, explore their books, organizations, and resources, you'll find links for each of them in the show notes for this episode. If this conversation resonated with you, I encourage you to reflect on the parts of Natalie's story and how it can help you transform your life. Thank you. Your life. Before you go, please subscribe to the Virtual Campfire Podcast.

Tony Martignetti [00:36:52 - 00:37:19]

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