Erik Averill ([00:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=TNlJuBIyzhQksruvxGXnRry-PGaSW0N6q2TZ6AAUG0H7ba-jVElwxyFlGbmmhpNWnHyhHsUi1nJJiXdzYZ8xYJHLqwE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=0.34)):

Hey, everybody. Welcome back to another episode of the Athlete CEO podcast. I'm your host, Erik Averill. I am joined by my cohost, co-founder, and of course, my older brother, Brandon Averill. And we are fired up today for our audience, for you as the professional athlete or the founder of a company or an investor in one of the venture capital space. Our guest really has experience across all three, and for us that are involved in the athlete community, this couldn't be a more exciting conversation because he is where we are turning for so much of our information today in these tumultuous times. And so with that introduction, please welcome Alex Mather, the CEO, co-founder of The Athletic to the podcast. Alex, welcome.

Alex Mather ([00:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ja25yvRLcGRqbQ8Z8pJ7v0ThZ1q_jBIllXwtNFEDmgK7xE8Jd6Fo-2yqAswdqr_GY8f8Nw8MBruRlZj-pZpgbdInhPc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=49.1)):

Thanks for having me.

Erik Averill ([00:51](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=YpOeGNqiWb_-5_7VigzEqG8kxjp5Ie7BCpblRF2_8NJ2OX40QX9eyJJBghq_a-w708sCFZ7IuRoAea_P7VGjHMpujo4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=51.44)):

We are fired up to have this conversation. It's something that is so fun to dig into and to listen of what you and Adam have built at the athletic really since 2016 of tackling an industry of sports in the world of journalism when so much of that industry was kind of moving into this. Can we survive? You see these companies laying off these incredible journalists and you guys did the complete opposite. You've doubled down and said, "Hey, we believe that if we bring a better product to the world, that people are going to listen," and so we're just fired up to hear so much more of The Athletic.

Erik Averill ([01:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=-1tbEWNfxBbLIw72fQkm2IA0r3GC7ev9ltrvxC0ACF-vDoCIUaKF6xb2FGCyKedhJG_xie4urZ89O_bMbMT3howgjK4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=93.63)):

And one of the things that Brandon and I talk about being co-founders is a lot of times when you set your vision for us over a decade of go of saying this is what we want to build, a lot of people don't understand it. They critique it, they say that's never going to work. They don't understand the vision but Brandon and I also know that so much of the way in which we look at the world is formed and shaped from our upbringing and from our childhood and where we want to start this podcast might seem strange to a lot of people because we're not going to talk about how many subscribers you have and you guys have had so much success.

Erik Averill ([02:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=G0JtXzCFpKNcL81_WKqYjmwI8tfemjNy7qnDKDXX5WtkaybRkNFGwl1f2mRV4Wh1o_0x5eNqW4vDJxp71poPF_nPayg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=126.08)):

But where we really want to start is we came across a tweet that you published in response to Landry Shamet that says, "Love Jovan, love Landry. Must read. I've been there as a kid in a bankrupt, money, not love, single parent home. That hard work and optimism is an amazing combination." And so we've got to imagine so much of how your childhood has shaped your thoughts about money and business and we just want to start there as if you can bring us into that is how has your childhood and your background shift the way you think about money in business?

Alex Mather ([02:41](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Dh4cjkdCp804bB5z1iGuzta6GGZQCEjNItP2qxdJR1NvNGD5TGl_n8T-OSw_KbNULlEjPkgvhaL5op-b_ivma26E7Bo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=161.55)):

Got it? Yeah, that was a wonderful story. I recommend folks read it on The Athletic. So my, if you kind of go back, I was born in 1980. And I think by 1985, my father had left this sort of classic, troubled father, served in Vietnam, got into drugs, and never really got off of drugs, and had a few kids with my mother. And at some point just kind of left and removed himself from the equation and left my mom with three kids under five years old. And I was the oldest of three, I have a brother and a sister and we were born and raised in Philadelphia. And just watching my mom handle everything, juggle is probably the right term, there was not a lot of slack in the system, if you will. There was you know, get as much work done as you can to support the family.

Alex Mather ([03:50](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vSYDC2lFlVblp5_egEcQc0qBQo9QPc_tbdIjJTMCxkptWz7fVURR5IKetZA5n8KdhtLJMACMD_c-OiozSvM2iPss27U&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=230.63)):

And when you're home, make sure the kids are loved and taken care of and there were many times when there wasn't enough money to take care of us or get us the things we wanted or needed, and she relied on Jewish Family Services, our family, even my father's family helped. And it was a world where everyone had to lean on each other to make it. And there wasn't really a lot of time for kind of the typical things that kids experience around selfish behavior and acting out. All that was just not even an option because we were fighting to keep ourselves clothed and housed and fed and all those things.

Alex Mather ([04:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=3Fxdl7eGRyFUbjpBbeg0z9UDhCG7C3BnRXc1FYW3-C2fCe1V2DiT5QB0SrZE2MFgAmOHyXnHqmAxUvp6OFxyPuDXCPU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=283.81)):

So, I think I learned just obviously, just incredible work ethic that my mother had and that optimism that I mentioned in the tweet, I think it's one of those things that sounds cheesy, it sounds like a lifetime movie. But the folks who really believe that there's a positive outcome tend to achieve some better results than folks who don't. So I think that combination has been definitely a big part of who I am and the company that I've built.

Erik Averill ([05:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=epVO6de-Q__DBPlbhY0oSJXRtMOAmBU3nDCeAvxLMmfiwUuwKVdKxUvOfCKZqJRw7zCeozxR1ESHJ7xj0A8kiTr6Kd8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=321.66)):

Wow. Well, thank you for sharing that. I know a lot of times it's hard to share those type of stories, especially when they're not the rosy ones. But one of the things that struck me is really this parallel, we've had the opportunity to read and to listen to some of your other interviews and I know how much that you and Adam care for your employees. And can you just talk about how that connects or where that parallel is? Because I've got to imagine that drive so much of you guys are well-known for being overly supportive of your employees. I think in one podcast there was an analogy of athletes have strength and conditioning coaches, our writers have content coaches, and just it seems the resources. Can you talk about how you approach your employees?

Alex Mather ([06:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=4cWK2R94jS6yzBhrStgYo2lRY6nrnL5LkjRfyGpatgHVJO0OgRlXfgRgaNFwLWjrlI4AAKIUXYu4ZfFvRaj-Gr-c-II&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=372.99)):

Yeah, I think if you look at the history of journalism it has not been the rosy relationship between the journalists and the business folks at companies, and we looked at that history and definitely saw that as an opportunity, given that folks who have not been treated well probably have a lot more to give, and their talents have not been maximized. And that seemed to us like a big opportunity to flip that script and trust people to do great work and do everything in our power to give them the resources to do great work. But if I pull it back, I think the focus for us, and it's just been a continuous focus from from minute zero of a company is just focusing on the longer term vision.

Alex Mather ([07:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=AWkUWlzivLcribfQDmZuhHFZ5W9XkiiThcq1z_qp5McPtI3Nebyv5XSAFMBT1fOJGYJZv5fPz_iDpzBRbhQs0D4FbjM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=432.58)):

And you mentioned this earlier on and I think so many companies all over the world, it doesn't matter the industry, but it is definitely an issue in media are focused on the short term, whether it be like correcting issues in their business and/or stopping the bleeding or whatever it might be. And they tend to focus on this month, this quarter of this year. And we just said let's think about things differently. What are some of the ways we can think about things differently, and it's taking a five, 10, 15-year view on things and that is just a massive advantage in that every little decision we make is focused on that.

Alex Mather ([07:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ME16OmfV0KMXZS1gWB-oTfc1gv58Z2bUOXz0QJJkmXUzNcaza-_oZwLxwP3cqmj1Gd2RumlbjLq0Q3JGJoz43rgqBss&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=477.99)):

And it might seem small, here, there, the seven decisions you make each day seem small, but really believe that the compounding interest of those decisions over five years makes a massive difference in not only the employees and their happiness, but the end product that reaches subscribers everywhere. And happy employees, employees that feel challenged, employees that feel empowered, employees that that feel like we've got their back are going to produce better work. And that's going to help the company. And then we have more resources to continue that process. And we knew that to use the sports analogy, like most of the editorial talent out there was was being poorly coached.

Alex Mather ([08:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=4ueKOq51akGufEfWkbHzPXUrGWrxsiP8yn5b8fHlPkjaIw1O2S1dlVubtDUqkyklvU1Mnnjk8JjqsVW7kksqy26IWjU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=527.69)):

And in a system that didn't work, and we thought that let's see if we can figure it out. We didn't have an exact playbook, but we knew that we would have to work very closely with the newsroom and figure out how to connect business and journalism into something that is going to last a really long time. And so far it's been a blast to get to understand the media industry, to get to understand how journalists work and think and act and they're incredible. And so far, it has led to a product that I hope our subscribers love.

Erik Averill ([09:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=uSUCp-03Fv3tjH4mwuVGjYSr-_NUtLoIqdS1DjcSAI5mLoslPa4Ek__hx6Yq-5Jmy6AjXNPj7eoXmT_MgAIHaPhkqNc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=566.05)):

Wow, that I mean, that's awesome. And super interesting. I think the thing that struck me there is your focus on the long game. And I don't think a lot of people understand that while that's probably a very successful thing to do, it's also a very difficult thing to do. And it's something we talked about here at AWM quite a bit, because the long game requires, as you mentioned, kind of the short term sacrifice. For us, it's working with a client, whether it be an athlete that's early in their career, hasn't earned that money that they potentially could, or a founder that hasn't exited yet.

Erik Averill ([10:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=X9X4Y27nvmSRRS3U2MwTUPm9IdKt_DHO9xEOEt53dxDpcu4IPZ0Bkfbf1tM4Z-AsS0ukKp-vqW1wFsMVTgCLKPo5kvw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=608.96)):

You're putting in years of work towards a longer term goal that inherently were more focused short term as humans. So, I'd love to hear just like what gave you the confidence when you guys were launching to say, you know what, we're going to make these investments, we're going to focus on the long game. We're going to focus on quality, the craft and kind of bring that back into journalism. That certainly couldn't have been an easy decision and/or easy path, and it probably still certainly isn't. It's got to be a challenge on daily basis.

Alex Mather ([10:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=oPHRPgEEP3Kdl8Vw7H8uPEKkEJIqeEEhFK_C8jPUqvVs_ty-Y62N9MMQwm9AGlZwfk4qc4IW-wd8xMsONQbklSjhqzo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=646.36)):

Yeah, I mean, a really important question, and I think there's a lot that goes into it. There isn't a simple answer as to what gave us the confidence but I think a few sources of inspiration ration, perhaps is how I'll frame my answer, which is looking at some of the things that I love. HBO is a really good example. HBO has been around for decades and produces really great content. And it's not for everybody. A big HBO show is a small show on network television. But the quality and care that goes into their product just doesn't get old. And they've continued to run a very profitable, great business alongside their great editorial or entertainment product. And I think that's one example.

Alex Mather ([11:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=XWa7pXIGRN9WMD8ha9ANlX5K8dkeK7aHQ91glss4tgCfpI7_o3Wu__8oYfNTwAur_XEPDrzMPh-z7knIi9UUwFj0AdM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=703.43)):

You look at a company like Apple that produces just really high end phones and computers and there was many years where they were mocked, where people ... As the trends went to cheaper and cheaper electronics and personal electronics, people were skeptical of folks spending $1,000 on a phone, but they had a vision where the phone was so much more. And I think you kind of just think about that. And it ties into that long term view, which is if you have a vision where you can create something that is really good, it doesn't have to be cool. It doesn't have to be trendy, but it's just really good and it fits into people's lives in an area that's important to them.

Alex Mather ([12:31](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=pZFwrE48BfYvRWLdq2sT3hDR7Sbxl6G-HFKcjRMXbTqedDXQKPGaJCp2ocNK58Gw7Scw1i0jO5GV0ecbEmoKw7fXywI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=751.24)):

Then you've got a formula for business then it doesn't mean you're going to go out and win but you have the, I should say the ingredients, and then you've got to go out and do it. And then the final point was we spent, my co-founder, Adam, and I spent time at Strava together and we saw firsthand what it's like to find a passionate audience. Strava folks don't know it is a social network and training tool for endurance athletes, and you pay for a lot of the product and hundreds of thousands of people paid while I was there. And we learned how to build something that people really loved, and it was a big part of their lives, and felt a lot of confidence in the sort of mechanics of building a subscription business from that experience.

Alex Mather ([13:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=JvrE3iNUR3xuPUTEj3-DvlsM_SZGrH3tc36_gSnNHwBjGiBSRQkx1KVE2gfJBZmiY9CBg0ZLHtlvnDWQffG2-zC5Lck&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=798.88)):

And so you combine all these things and sort of the landscape in 2015, when we're talking about launching the company. There wasn't really this shining light of a product that we could say, "Hey, we want to be that." And so that really felt like that opportunity to build something that filled that need, the place where if you're a young journalist you want to end up, right. Of course, there's places like ESPN, which are wonderful, but are more focused on television. There wasn't really this New York Times of sports, where people, say a college grad from Northwestern Medill and saying, "I want to be there." There wasn't a place. And so we said, "Let's create that, and we know fans are gonna dig it." So, off we went.

Erik Averill ([14:13](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=1BTzSXnTdQN-3kqU6ANF-1fgvMZAOv0F7MpOVUbyZLt38A-eMUnSETdL-AOY4uknvUvEeFlgX6W1veK0IksPSPEInJw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=853.57)):

Yeah, that's super cool and insightful. I'm a longtime Strava user as well. So definitely my wife wants the beacon. She can figure out where I'm at when I'm on the road. So totally get the passionate audience. And I think the influences make a tremendous amount of sense, and when I reflect on the companies that you just called out, HBO, Apple, Strava, The New York Times, the thing that comes to mind there, and I think would be of huge interest to our audience, your take is just brand. It seems like all of them have, at least what I would consider a very strong brand. I've heard you talk about the brand of the athletic.

Erik Averill ([14:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=BDx_4myLyPUaRX0aoA6qO7bYANUqFDNPNQw7eW0t0TL-3uTuBJ6acvdUS-OoadYYtglLVgkM7SZfzqwlHJAWeWgOAP4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=892.32)):

I'd love to get your take on certainly what you guys think of when you think of brand at The Athletic, but then also, for those other, the founders that might be listening just general brand, how you think about. Or even athletes, we talk so often to them and they want to build their brand. And so would just love to hear your thoughts around that.

Alex Mather ([15:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=qSI1Si2zeWZZJE8ci5LUKjJHld0VT_mOfTUhDzYF662TtMyrxVBQH_fscir9q8et7UYveGyJOIU4bBSxz1Ezif-Q_UM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=916.07)):

Yeah, I mean, we definitely don't talk as much about brand as we should. And we're beginning to do so more now that we have a little time. But I think brand really, at a company emanates from the people and products you produce. And it's sort of just is natural in the companies that are most successful, I think. What do people think of us is just a reflection of what we do. And what we what we do is we do really high quality sports writing, storytelling, journalism. And I think what people perceive as our brand is really like a connection to the importance of those things. People who might support NPR, right? People who might support the New York Times, they want people to know that, that they associated with those brands, right?

Alex Mather ([16:20](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=XFmBGIk9usfaaobn3btnqT4Ifw1NilB2yd-9VSIk2tHpCse-g5kkY75JTrkdfUIbjIvdTSw05AIWhL65E1kMiffcJpk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=980.84)):

It was the old example of The Economist or the Financial Times on your coffee table. Like, "Look, I'm worldly, and I follow up on things, and I understand the world or the the economic environment we're in," or things like that. People want to be associated with the things that they feel represent them. And I think we put an incredible amount of effort and care into the work we do. And there's a group of people out there who appreciate that. And there's a much bigger group of people who couldn't care less, who would rather just read headlines or see people getting dunked on, or see people making mistakes on the field or whatever. That's fine, too, but that's just not who we are.

Alex Mather ([17:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=D2N-FbpyOJQxBW69-tPZ4bmQ4Q4YZFnN1Tu3Z94jriVMKEfo6HgHc_TVu6xGy0bCekZh2t3yaMVl1KwxM6WV2VStjfM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1025.57)):

We want to take people behind the scenes, give them an opportunity to get to know the players, the coaches, the people behind the scenes. And we think that there's a lot of people who want to associate with a product that does those things because it's how they want to connect to the world of sports. And I connect it back to my childhood and just going to baseball games with my grandfather. He, no matter what, would take score during the game and would always have a rubber band around his wrist so that he could roll his scorecard up and wrap it up with the rubber band.

Alex Mather ([17:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=LTF2HmEse_gDs_eeDsewuVPDkBPlhNZmDqy-Vnl2AJ6kXxkdZnfYzjc8bRRXx_zqDGIQ4sr8aUzgovrhFxCFb95Hk-o&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1069.94)):

And it was just like a big part of his life and just, he was focused and attentive and just love the game and could talk about it unlimited amounts of time it seems. And that passion that formed that connection between him and I. And then like on the opposite end of the spectrum there's my wife and I watch basketball. And there's that moment last season where Dam Lillard in the playoffs hits that 37-foot, three pointer and ends the series and waves goodbye and is mobbed by his teammates.

Alex Mather ([18:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=yu6M2JHzDoeV8pksY1wmXTzHhrWnlFdABFU_AEnJwUUXnQB_iFdhuJpUKSWhDjb9kD255kIELzSonurauIm6SKKaUjQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1105.15)):

And my wife and I were just going crazy. And she still talks about that moment. I don't think she could name another Trailblazer. But if she saw Dam Lillard, she would get goose bumps on her arms thinking about that moment. And that's the brand, right? We tell those stories. We take you in and accentuate those stories in a way that hopefully makes you think of those moments with your grandfather or your husband or wife, and that's the brand that we hope to be.

Erik Averill ([18:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=lXTjn1Vii7vHkhWLmG8_gPfLK468GC2NUB3N3HdgYbbtdpF7ezw6q7ZvWHVk8ZVKl1Koed2foZ16FMbrBxIRdwcqQag&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1137.31)):

That's powerful. It gets me fired up and it resonates right. Because what I heard you say, especially at the very beginning of the brand is people in the product. So it's not something manufactured to try and just turn a profit. It's literally this is our ethos. This is who we are internally as people, and this is our tribe. This is our community of followers. And what I love about that is in the business world, a lot of times whether it's in the investment world that we live in, or even we're seeing this pour over in sports, is the human element gets removed, and all of a sudden it becomes just very algorithms or analytics.

Erik Averill ([19:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=hbv4ShRGujs7vHZsG2Wpy_QxqBIIIm6nIcFnvWw4jJ5l7yEMfI4VR4X_dmED1wQGufFzxF00BkTo2_KLf5B3bylhSyk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1186.48)):

And that's, to me, a very important piece of it, but holding first the people part of it of understanding that the analytics and a lot of the things that are going to come into efficiency drives the purpose. It's a means to an end to really serve the community and the client. And I think that's one of the things that I would love to hear the way in which you properly use analytics to serve the end user, the community, and it's something that is very near and dear to our heart because being on the investment side, right, we we make decisions that our clients are entrusting us with their lives, really their hopes and the dreams because that's what money represents.

Erik Averill ([20:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=DpH4oaKjNBKhSCuUrz8LM3vLnUGCjWkctY4YLbiSAO-c3jRqnmUrK6QfCVAZisy3LyaKMyu09-4rMEjNXh9OQ1uLvaI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1229.09)):

And we're very committed to not guessing based off of emotion or opinion, but what's the data say? But I just love to hear ... There's not a lot of conversation of marrying the analytics to the human element of of the business. And I feel like you guys do this insanely well. That's why all of us continue to turn to you as our trusted source and getting exposure to these incredible stories. Can you just talk about how you guys have leveraged the analytics In your business?

Alex Mather ([20:59](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=UyanKqf27CscRE9yGztoY5byp2W4QeCo7pC73TZ9-eYyH3XHQPOWF1Tg6w4xRQAqJlmYONv2pxH9MJd76VZHvXE8hM4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1259.33)):

Sure, yeah, I think there's a pretty odd history there with our company, because both my co-founder and I are definitely much more on the quantitative side of things. And we're more likely to be in Excel than Word or something. And we launched the company thinking, "Hey, let's just kind of take a 538 approach to local sports." And we learned pretty quickly that folks, there's an audience who really loves that, but it is a smaller audience than you think. And so what we learned very quickly is that there's a whole picture to look at. Analytics is one thing when you cover sports, storytelling tends to do much better, opinions tends to do much better.

Alex Mather ([21:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=X0DQQaa1JirGy5-xSb9nhCjMrehdf3Jh-CdukWctfqXAj1UDSxfQtdz9rmxbhFvGGAsLEJnEFCObwoi9h1tusG4i0-c&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1315.41)):

But if I think back like to how we think about the sort of combination of analytics and and gut, it really starts and you mentioned it, it starts with people. If you're making an analogy around cars, for example, the people are the engine, for sure. It really matters who you bring on. And you can tweak and optimize. But at the end of the day, the engine is the engine, right? You can shave things off and improve the aerodynamics, you can add a spoiler, you can add air intake, you can do whatever you need to do. But if the engine isn't strong, it doesn't matter.

Alex Mather ([22:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=5YGbP8QGJb8UVhWqAwiT8n-sBXcHz7IKQmwx2zKiEVRKN2Zqs8Ap7cJl4KfDCEwJYdCOi3Zj7oe1w4LZ8cNcDu-YZS0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1363.47)):

And so for us, the way we really think about that is we've got a set of core values and we really screen for those types of things first, and that's really how a person operates like are they one to cut corners? Or are they one to take on the real work? To tell a great story? Are they one to take chances? Are they one to analyze for months? Are they one to work with others? Are they off on their own island? These are some of the things that we think about when we screen people. And that's going to be 80% of your output. And then using analytics to do two major things. Number one is prove or disprove ideas. When we talk about one of our core values is moving forward fearlessly sort of a trailblazer type. Ethos of like being first.

Alex Mather ([23:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Zbibx8qfWLUR2dTWw-MzBKktdrqtwFMLKl0mKi-nwM7I2tPMIurrUWlZ2oECV3_Wmo4LGg_XULDb_msn1Ymivw--Puw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1425.08)):

Part of being good at that means having a hypothesis and figuring out if it works, because if you're going to be at the front of the pack, the tip of the spear, you're going to make mistakes. And you have to figure out how to get better at that process. And so we use data to create feedback loops where people can take chances. And if it doesn't work, move on. Next thing. And that next up approach is really great. It means that each person can take on their own philosophy and try things. And it also helps sort of breaking old habits.

Alex Mather ([24:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=1enWXl8HT_ftz5bLcVLDdN9MPv1ObU_E5UGLkcZoR_174C-CAM84LkctWHZKgUBRrJaqQ22EptzCDk2e3tmSoITyW28&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1465.79)):

Someone who's at a newspaper for 30 years might say, "Well, I need to do this because I need to, this is what I do." Then they do that for a couple weeks, and they see the data and it doesn't work. And they're like, "Okay, I understand. I understand why you told me not to do that. And now I can change on my own terms." And the second main thing in how we use data is to create the right incentives within the company. So aligning incentives is probably the most overlooked aspect of definitely connecting journalism to the business.

Alex Mather ([24:59](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=EFNL9JQnOQaY6S7PVpKgj-n74nfDS-mCHYfHVhBwMBZCdM3g9JqHyV4C2OV0CfVEmz5hEQurBgSl45N_jHDtkZ1ovmQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1499.86)):

And if you look at our advertising, focus competition, it's things like page views things, that are more breadth, not depth. It's more like not love. And so we wanted to make sure that the way we track data in our company and the way we provide data to our newsroom is such that the behavior that they optimize for is going to be optimal for the business and it's like business talk. But it's very much the difference in some of the newer analytics around like that [inaudible 00:25:36] versus ERA or something. Really understanding what you're trying to optimize for because there's a lot out of folks control and the things that are in control, we want to make sure we're properly optimizing for. So that's how we think about that connection. And 80% of the work, like I said, is really getting the right people.

Erik Averill ([26:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=9NOXFbhPmfCsrQrnyksuliS_R8bzYhUvd67f7HIU49vl05wE3gT7KuxuhR7UxmUl5jqnclpTe-erXfysYRoon2KmUfo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1560.06)):

That is very helpful. It's interesting speaking to the audience right now is the athlete of this is where I think there's such an opportunity for athletes to learn from people like yourselves who own businesses, and are using this data to do those two things that you would talk about. I love that, like moving forward fearlessly, because that's ultimately everybody who's trying to be a high performer is how do you get to this next level, and in using this information to help you on that path. It's interesting from what we see on the athlete's spaces, I would say, we're in inning one of understanding how to use those analytics as an athlete in real time.

Erik Averill ([26:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=UrfmKkYTFsK_S6BRgvDzOuOlcfXCZBlLaYTZvGRXulf2nQGq2nEE-F2brGR4ko6va96yLmDLg9m1btK5c4XHHQ6uMD8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1606.49)):

And so there's been this overwhelming amount of data that's come into sports through the front office, and you're seeing this on the economic side of things of it's completely reshaped the way contracts are done, and how players are being paid no matter what sport you're in. But if you talk to the actual client, the actual employee, the athlete, very few of them have an ability to interpret how to use the data. And I think that's something I'd love to hear you just press into is you've talked a lot about coaching your employees and using this data is just more information isn't better if you don't know how to execute on it.

Erik Averill ([27:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=kVuKJPwp8WnyGway9NrGU-Y8H589UISNHaMgLK56mttDWtl4IzOhkGJfPIPVXdHdv09R7nKu2gy-Q4leoMQ89jPGgyo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1645.51)):

Can you just share how you guys approach the coaching side, and this could even parallel into your own personal story of like your own personal health and fitness is we're big. You had mentioned Strava where you've come from. Brandon and I personally, we have the whoop on our on our bodies 24 hours a day, seven days a week of trying to use data to make improvements in our sleep X, Y, Z. Like I just love to hear about how you think through executing on this data.

Alex Mather ([27:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=QWBQAicKvGW_mHMfQew67l0FHWG7ofEXHDfXX3T0t_9wnkMGcohJI_8-JUt3AEmNmT7MqfFNXnZqMwlmyzZv3pFEcGU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1674.18)):

Yeah, I mean for us within the company. We've been really lucky in how it's happened. We wound up hiring a gentleman named [Akil 00:28:06], it's important to know his name because it comes into the story. And Akil was really passionate about what type of content we should produce, what type of content works, what type of content doesn't work. And it started with that passion. And he's very quantitative in nature. But he's also just has an incredibly soft touch when dealing with people. He's really optimistic. He's trying to find silver linings.

Alex Mather ([28:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=7WtmaqlonecVd9hnt3U-lDOleMUc-9IBHLKryey-BmrzTsLSlMX-OMeb6FIkQOcgu45_Vqca5BESzFfq_zlwsjjfobo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1713.22)):

And so Akil, when he joined the company, he's quite young. And when he joined the company, he started to just take a writer at a time and and look at the work they're doing. And basically, looking at the data, pulling three or four nuggets of information out to communicate to that writer that could help them, and then talking to that writer over the course of a couple hours. And just having a conversation like asking the right questions, what are the things that you tried that didn't work? Here's why this didn't work, or here's why this one could work. It was this really organic thing that was building within the company.

Alex Mather ([29:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=3Btow6rCm0qNlFGkocpffcSys3LScWuac3GRnhNRjqn-w6Rm2FwgN0_AdOVs7pjElqblNAi3Iq-wk01Q8jk6-zysEL4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1755.01)):

And what we saw pretty quickly was those folks who had spoken with Akil, the next two weeks were their best two weeks in the company. And so we call that the Akil bump. So when you work with Akil, you got better. And so we told Akil, "Okay, go build a team. Go develop processes here, interpret the data for folks. Spend time simplifying the dashboards of data that we provide to our writers." So it was this whole suite of things. And we dedicated an entire team to it and it's one of our more successful teams in the company. And we scale that out. We have people in the United Kingdom, people in Canada that focus on this full time to make folks better.

Alex Mather ([29:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Xk6K-RhzVwiDAHIPiWP3EZ4PU_6ImOp9zFA8Jg9YWd1qe8jmItJq02dIf-KABKSOVSUePJN-FiUSF8qO0N7Hx_k4s7Q&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1797.94)):

And so how I connect it to sort of the more meta question is it only works if people are open. And if I were connected to your world, my guess dealing with professional athletes, and this is not meant to be controversial, but professional athletes tend to think they're right all the time because they've been surrounded by people who are sort of pandering to them. And I think we're seeing right now with the president of our country what happens when someone goes off on their own path, and doesn't question are they right or not?

Alex Mather ([30:41](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=BKoyCFtIh6n_lzShCgAseGjzt0oysvX-k2DIyTFG2myF655QGq-tdLJ9FtKPKArK3UUL-erKl_fVdpDtf2CXXtV2bPM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1841.61)):

And that's not making a political statement. That's just stating that there's someone who doesn't believe that they need to be humbled by data or they need to learn and it's how I think about my own body and I'm sure the best professional athletes are always leaning on on experts in their respective fields, whether it be fitness or flexibility or specific skill sets to get better. And then they get into business and think they know everything. And it's a process of being really humble. And people who use data the best are really humble because they let the data do the talking. And that doesn't mean they're not aggressive. It doesn't mean they don't move forward fearlessly. It doesn't mean they aren't really good at their jobs.

Alex Mather ([31:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=kqd4mxw1y_ETbn5GBBsZVvIFaHh7J3nHxDdBR2Uj80_blJz9BBhbpeRZhjRg_qtMjAZFOx8NBbigkyMqRjSfMJN_LYM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1885.1)):

It means that they're ready to be proven wrong, and they're open to be proven wrong, because at the end of the day, it's not about being right. It's about winning. And the company needs to succeed, not for folks to feel good about themselves. So it's this real humbling process of this push and pull on how I can become better. We call it a growth mindset of always getting better. Because I think I always think about it's obviously super sad and I always think about folks like Kobe Bryant. Like just the ultimate example of this.

Alex Mather ([32:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ZHrjS5CWKYAilZTN9nZaCaYOnOSjhB1kL1j2oIJEJ6ZCpBBcKvKjJjfg2j0_avyGt8nskljdiwnVMC8096O69JQ68gs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1924.12)):

He talks a lot of trash, or talked a lot of trash, of course, but gosh, he put in the work. There's no question, that man was obsessed with getting better. And you see athletes like Kevin Durant. I think his idea of a great Friday night is cozying up with some film and getting better. And there's a reason he's one of the best players to ever play the game. And so that growth mentality kind of starts with that ability to be raw and get better.

Erik Averill ([32:36](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=yn7Yh1j1-2p3b75gn7EzkRkT3WJ3haGgfdoWTNG2UrXqE2lyC90x-WagLNqPmlEkUr1jVgKhuoDTumAFetIsfbli-yY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1956.78)):

Wow, powerful and so true. I mean, I think of my transition personally coming out of being a professional athlete into the business world, you learn very quickly, you don't know what you don't know, and the quicker you understand that, the more humility you have. And this carries through, I think every aspect of life, right. The closer you're going to be to winning when you have that ability to not be fearful of being proven wrong, but having that growth mindset of looking like prove me wrong, so I can make the quick adjustment, the quick pivot to get back to it.

Erik Averill ([33:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=cTktRWA8u1dMGajOpdkbklX5rw5jGG04EgnsWZpWL5oF1HQtgZ8t50YGShNU7c-QeZc_BoBEN1Erv1zzATa33nuSdwE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1992.09)):

And I think what you said about not being right, it's about winning and not the emotion is so huge. I mean, relating this back to what Brandon and I are doing right now over the last five weeks helping people navigate the public investment market is so many people are emotional of opinion-based, this is what I think is going on, and I can't handle this emotionally. And X, Y, Z that it's no, let's trust the data. What do the analytics say? What is market history over the last 100 years said? And those people that chose to follow emotion and not trust the data hurt themselves by pulling out of the market and then the market returns back.

Erik Averill ([33:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=z6rPyhcVes_MUTrDJpjaKXdVbyr88yQrbnZAm5aSvt-8oHsaWSGgeObzi_1RnxK--GwChckMNHuIQEQ5y2xTUEZgCQY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2037.47)):

And so I just think there's so much wisdom in that, and it's really hard to do. It's very much Warren Buffett making the comment of like, "You've got to have ice in your veins to be able to sustain that." But there's actually so much trust when you're not afraid of numbers. Internally, for our employees, and I think you had mentioned it on the podcast is we're big fans and implementers of the OKR method from ... And measure what matters. And I think that growth mindset in such a good warning for the athlete, in general, is to not be afraid to be proven wrong, because it actually is about winning. So thank you for sharing that. I would love to hear, do you guys implement any kind of KPIs, OKRs, that type of stuff internally?

Alex Mather ([34:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=sNUrDWoCDTGHkGxhqrWywGWJ68xcBK_G_zPw0p5eOtAahaT8N_iviTe9JHmu-umopNOQNfGRlraZAD_S8n3IvDOIUDQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2088.42)):

Oh, yeah, of course. I mean, we're based in San Francisco and I make sure that everyone in the company, at least in a direct position or above reads high output management and measure what matters. And these are not interesting books, but they are powerful books. And they're really important foundations for how we operate as a company, and it gets back to what you're saying. It's not about being right. And I think this is probably projectings, I don't know, but I'm guessing professional athletes are used to being the center of attention and want to be right.

Alex Mather ([35:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=yABe6yWDZjpLR23q-0a9QbRGPlcakwRT4GdrSD7B9KQT3ZJQI4nafMB1GhOcmP3cCc9M-WG8YwUpFtr2yWGkB0F0UeA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2132.59)):

And just really like as a CEO, I constantly have to make sure the culture of the company is not about that. It's not about pumping your chest out. It's not about specific people. It's not about MVP awards. These are not the things to optimize for. It's much more connected to the output of the company. That's literally all that matters. And when you hear athletes say it on the court of the field like, "I don't care about personal accolades/ I want to win championships," it's never more true than the corporate world where there are no MVP awards. There's no such thing, and it's literally about output.

Alex Mather ([36:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Lp97AowiU1kOb_7wDR9Cf6n89kUVoSGhtEy5HuIjodo6mJQ0UXu2PV1roB_JhBQmta2N8t-Wj7VFqQL7ipoTA8tTdII&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2177.69)):

Are you winning or not? Otherwise, shut up and get to work. And I think that that's the mentality we we have in the company. And we look at a much more balanced scorecard in terms of KPIs within the company for our editorial staff. It's a mix of some data, but it's also some of the core values of how we do journalism. Are you a good teammate? Are you at the front of the pack? Are you breaking news? Are you being fair? All these things that are really important journalistically. Are you working with your editors? All the things that matter to our company that perhaps aren't as data driven those are just as important if not more important than the KPIs we track.

Alex Mather ([37:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=8ZbzlA72hc080JtsFHofUJqvdCldJd6peZe3Da7Jaanvr4ytC-L0O6NOLajbiQnGOrPlVS7rU9fk-bguihv0K6j0P7U&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2222.13)):

And for us, like our business is a subscription business. So we tend to focus on two major things from a KPI perspective. Number one is engagement. Are you engaging our audience? Like we already have an audience. Let's make sure we're engaging them and that means are people reading your articles? Are people finishing your articles? How many people read a second article of yours that read that first article? Those types of things. If you cover the Golden State Warriors, what percentage of Golden State Warriors fans are reading your articles on a weekly or monthly basis?

Alex Mather ([37:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=TB7GrAEZKMQnmE6wP2ye_avqLoYSyMJJ-aSbvdr7XbYZ8bCMe72_1DE0sC7BX5l8orITW5Jh-_JnBCRz4lzo3o6nBfI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2255.22)):

And then the second one is, are you driving new subscription? And the ways that you do that are very different. It's about telling bigger, broader stories. It's about breaking news. It's about some different behaviors. But we look at all these things combined. And that's how we operate a 600-person company fairly efficiently.

Erik Averill ([37:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Sgjrlo9Wi9WTX-pzqUSbs7bij53zCsXPbylXetTQRWs9R9eCV6uXNApsJ3f6rdFAh8SXeyMRETqDuh5cu5X16KF3lQo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2275.33)):

Wow. Yeah, that's definitely insightful and I'd love to kind of build on that, but also turn it back to a little bit of the previous points that were made just around the speculation that athletes always need to be right. Or at least take that approach. And I think that's certainly a fair comment to make, and maybe this is the controversial part. I'll say is I do think a lot of that probably comes from insecurity. And the feeling that, hey, I'm in the spotlight, I'm supposed to know. And I think, certainly, CEOs and founders, I think are put in that position often as well. And to admit that you don't know and have that humility, I think is probably a battle for a lot of people.

Erik Averill ([38:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=o4AT-9ZUckGVdQhsHe_xphP6Y6m49AkwaFiTRDE6LnTUQA9l2y1vQmicutpO6I117cyCiox27URDThKzBPvgHdgehwE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2323.56)):

But I'm curious, you guys hit on at the athletics, some pretty sensitive issues, awesome that you're bringing them to light just around mental health. There's been several stories that you guys have published. I just love to know kind of from a founder perspective, obviously, the battle you guys go through how you support your employees and mental health and then how you deal with it. Yeah, just maybe lean into that a little bit, if you're willing.

Alex Mather ([39:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=SJ4ArKiPcRWhtZXANL8X3Z3En4o11GB9FJpob4nVGTU0mOeZcBh62uiZCjdHV2Vn2B6TbTqwUs5NnDIMLZ3igRGv9kU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2350.86)):

Yeah, of course, I think that's what you mentioned around insecurities is that I would assume part of it, right? I mean, it's really about winning is really hard. Being the center of attention is really hard. And it's something where we're all pretty much the same as human beings. There aren't folks who know everything and can just instantly be great at something. And I think being a founder is no different. You have to be really confident in yourself and I'm definitely not shy there. And it's very similar in the stresses. You take on the burden of more people than than most others. You take on the responsibilities of more folks than most others do.

Alex Mather ([40:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=t1gZfSzTM4g5YdroUTxMyY9PhugPcz27r4zwC3-BCDJBYTASlvDFHC-LEWpATdtCeotLAgmDPEqEAVmXwyxt6wqQVG4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2403.75)):

And the things that come to mind for me is A, acknowledging that it's really hard, and you're not supposed to be great at it every second of the day. Establishing a support system of people who are honest with you, and going to help you and be optimistic, but also real with you. And surrounding yourself with really great people to achieve your goals, to help share that load. My co-founder is amazing at this as well. And it's just not a game where you can play it alone. And then just like you work on your bodies, you work on your mind. It's just something you have to commit to it.

Alex Mather ([40:50](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=aaC1UV-nQJPNgGd9fjo60ZD0p3ISiANZYVp53hDQe5ASEqcMZo0rJ6-UZvaLnGBhscyWNfRGAxTPiLH3hTSoBf7HRng&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2450.83)):

And that means sometimes being open when it might make you seem weak, or necessarily weak, but perhaps not perfectly informed. And I'll admit it often that I don't know the answer to this question. I'm learning as quickly as I can on this topic. And let's talk this out and really figure it out together. And I think the realities of any of these really high pressure jobs is you need to find those support systems and outlets outside of it, too. And I think you've mentioned it a couple times, but for me, fitness is just that thing, the difference. Perhaps during the shelter in place my wife can attest the most to this.

Alex Mather ([41:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=guqSTT0VmhylM3vlj88SWEoNOfLymZ3QnqJOYx9Oaqn9VOQD1G0UWAFeU4guvU5XdTtFXo407kh9Ibv5853ilLk_OEI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2499.79)):

If I don't get my Peloton ride out of the way by 6:00 AM or 7:00 AM, I'm a different person that day. And I do believe that anxiety is one of the best things you can use in your life to drive performance, and that anxiety for me personally, and I'm sure everyone's different, for me, personally is completely managed by working out some capacity, whether it be getting on the Peloton or going for a run, or there was a world where we went to gyms, going to the gym. But those are the things that I think about and I think as a leader, is the crazy part.

Alex Mather ([42:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=nSiHRV85VKSmbJZuVohCdAvhhS3kbX4WKf5dKdgwcaWwcExq_7yKrYJIKVqG1WKDD_7apWfOjFJCp9nnKZAnj1HCABY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2546.39)):

And I'm sure athletes and folks and founding positions and companies will agree, as a leader, you are the one sort of table setting. If you're open, if you're honest, and you're real, and you're vulnerable at times, and most importantly, transparent and honest, then you're going to be surrounded by people who are as well. And I think that that tends to create an environment where people can not only succeed, but do so in a way that is taking the pressure off as much as possible. Of course, the pressure is still unbelievably high but that doesn't mean we all just get tight and get stressed out. It means that we talk about it, we assess it, and we work together on it.

Alex Mather ([43:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=0AHgdjczd8YjLfWf3PmUljbANHF7CtYg0NU3Y-xL6JXTNHFObDi3Z2SFk3mUx_2cJBDt0QgdTPULuvRxSI7-J8v0y2w&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2594.3)):

So I try to create an environment, whether it be on our board or our management team, where I'm open. I start the meetings off with as much openness as I can and showing some of that vulnerability and hoping that others do the same. And I feel like we work through problems much better that way. And the company is in a much better place, and the people trust each other. And that has been successful for us. And obviously that may vary for others. But I think it's one of the key reasons we've been able to scale from zero to 600 people in a couple of years.

Erik Averill ([43:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=3zoQiQg3MRkh8v6TmSNBGGF-S1ynI81V2bSok8BPuansIau-OZI3Zr_mP4AgymwDXqYknK3aPUXsPHEGTq-0uz_7feY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2628.64)):

Thank you. Yeah, thank you for sharing that. That's very helpful and I want to definitely be sensitive to your time. This has been very insightful. And just as we close out, I guess the one question I would ask is here you are being the CEO, you are leading a company of 600 plus people. You have hundreds of thousands, maybe even over a million subscribers at this point, but you're also a husband, you're also a father in the midst of COVID as we are, at the stay at home orders.

Erik Averill ([44:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=nL_BJyNlePoFLUTU2d6WHjK5kiv253wO5zRKWsW2VzKx0gygWjHx_aMyMoFjDI-4ny0SAMdLemCKqBGBPzkzRNZdyHo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2663.84)):

Like you said, I think anxiety is up. There's been some crazy stats that alcohol sales are up 55%, spirits are up 75%. People are now eating non perishable foods, they're exercising less. They're more isolated. Just as you're leading your company and your family through this very strange time, would you leave just maybe a few parting words what's top of mind of how you guys are staying healthy as a family and as a company? That'd be super helpful.

Alex Mather ([44:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=KhXFcT2QGsiOVyeALnLyF45sxcy63fN1YbJGk5MZTEr22MXrQMEvIQOqPC4tQedk9iqmWPVlswgumBnPGYGLmOgKuTA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2697.39)):

Yeah, I mean, this is probably my most important job right now, whether it be as a father or husband or a CEO. First of all, for us, I tend to look at optimism as my favorite word and really trying to find silver linings because you can get caught up in a lot of this. And I'm going to assume, if you're listening to this podcast, that you're blessed enough to be in a position where you probably still have your job or you probably aren't at risk of losing your home or your life, and those things.

Alex Mather ([45:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Oo-9jKTX9o7Xr_YvGa_ZRa6ZKlXH_5uwEzzuigN0hnj1x5xatHB7AjCaNb3VBwZhKO7pZF0RbEVi_tOS01UAgWCrH_U&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2739.55)):

First of all, just acknowledging that and just acknowledging how blessed you are, and how you can perhaps help others and really just take this moment and understand that the world is incredibly unfair. And to be on aside here where your complaints are I'm drinking too much whiskey or I'm putting on some weight are incredibly small. This is like a unprecedented situation where the folks affected by this disproportionately are lower income and more of the blue collar jobs, and it's really heartbreaking but finding those silver linings and finding ways to help. So that's number one, for me, across the board. Just being a CEO or a husband or a father is like being positive and seeing how we can help, stop feeling sorry for yourself and get to work.

Alex Mather ([46:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=TRHmMOkd-qIBo7MaJDEVAdq2u5wnko8VvjQTGncjxH8HE5xwdJknBU2F5ZoP2hfaetRfZn2QUIqFVJcrZBedoHOUugQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2797.66)):

And then in terms of like really how we're thinking through the mental part of this is, is triage. Is the business okay? Is the family okay? Yes. Okay, let's move on to the next thing. And our business has has been spared today. We feel lucky for that, and people are still reading an incredible amount of sports information. So within the company, we focus on four major things every single day, and I communicate to the company every single day about it. It's our little checklist. Number one is calling or FaceTiming or Zooming with a family member or someone you think might be lonely.

Alex Mather ([47:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=JHNctRTPugvK7OlxKuc2T30KbVUmPVceT2nVSpnNAstU12thkLluMxuof6HnNUDHmBhYRqt3d6aFDXrQLCa6FZuo3Og&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2839.43)):

And I definitely have been emphasizing the lonely part. It's easy to talk to your mom or your sister or your aunt. But think about someone in your network who is at home alone right now. And this is really hard. It's hard enough being a parent but I can't imagine being alone and perhaps at risk or something, and just give them a text and shoot them a text and say, "How are you doing? I miss you." So that's number one, is really just reaching out to folks that you love or think might be lonely and doing your part there to just keep talking. We're human beings. We're not like hermits. I think we want to be with each other naturally. So do as much as that as you can.

Alex Mather ([48:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=UsMSM_0ScFfv6fkLvg7bCo1aROJJ7PXz9BFeDYzznM1Luf3TgnhMbJIizHj4Uw8H6GWxrSYfe1jUDGRsur8POpXfCKw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2882.72)):

Number two relates to the fitness, just do 50 push ups. Do 10 sit ups, whatever. Do a Peloton class. Do SoulCycle online or something, I don't know, do something. It'll clear your head and you'll feel better. Number three is go for a walk, if possible. Just getting some fresh air. It helps. I'm in California, so it's a wonderful weather and I do have a big dog and I make sure that I walk my dog, and it's great to get outside. And then finally, this is the part where it's doing your part to help is just find a local business and support it, whether it be like ordering a meal, or a helping hand or something.

Alex Mather ([48:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=8uqyudLTyn6pCuq3tkrAywW6Imu2So9DqnPjFE6F0iQ0XEcVGJksNpMaN2koJJm6SefgyeQLWefcEHMa1GFAe6dPri8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2928.48)):

And those are the four things that I ask everyone in the company to try to do every day. And we talked about it openly and not everyone one's going to do everything every day but it's just really keeping ourselves accountable to these things. I guarantee, if you do those four things you'll kind of feel better. And the day is going to go by faster and before you know it, it's tomorrow. And we're hopefully one day closer to some semblance of normalcy.

Alex Mather ([49:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=dAPuYBWpwshH3apKWSH-gEcAuR9LeBszHtaN-qJaVna2u8trGkGvU1vf-pV9Xmm7T5ZOfh2O4dnJb9zj69u1PQ_fp98&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2951.15)):

So that's how I've taken it as like just focusing on the basics to use the sports analogy, when it's the fourth quarter or something like that. You're just thinking about those practice sessions at 5:00 in the morning and the things that you do that are really basic. That's all we have to focus on. And when you do that, the sun rises and sun sets and on we go.

Erik Averill ([49:34](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=qJtmDszbEffk3IciEjJ6lLqQ5OQp0Wg9eUJHpoVPR4q4FXefdsjbeAkIFrcgaNMw4dbzoxbDoeGIUl-DYvYn62ACAiI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2974.17)):

Yeah, so powerful. Clarity, discipline, and patience. And I think that was great. And it was also very others focused which goes back to your DNA at The Athletic of ultimately being about your community of subscribers and so, audience, this has just been a powerful and just a great conversation. If you're not already subscribed to The Athletic, don't wait. It's not a shameless plug because it's literally something we've benefited from for many years. It's incredible content. It's real journalism, it's quality, it's craft. And so, Alex, thank you so much for the time that you spent with us. We love hearing your story and what you're doing and wish you all the best of luck in the future. And we know that you're going to continue to do great things. So thank you so much.

Alex Mather ([50:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=0Te6pvL7C7DUBC4MJ1eRz42_IsBlgWU_zBthVykNV1-LKPHf2JO4Js_VEE8hvII0y1uxgE4fOXMnFXQqs3q0AjY8jus&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3029.6)):

Thanks, guys. Stay healthy, stay sane.

Erik Averill ([50:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=XkVDTZIfD1pDOoklsmkIAEQaiywNM28pE-tbgn5kH3hTmeGuXMwvqeOSvU9AOhHtaBIm0saprbVsS1XMqQBt5N4bbEI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3032.83)):

Yeah. And, yeah, and for the audience, as always, thank you guys for your attention. And as we sign off, as always, stay humble, stay hungry, and be a pro.