

Cec Busby [00:00:02]:

Hi, everybody. I'm Cec Busby, editor of Flying Solo. Welcome to our weekly podcast step inside the minds and lives of a soloist and small business owners. When it comes to performance under pressure, Andrew May is an expert. As a former assistant coach at the Australian Institute of Sport, Andrew has managed the mindset of Olympic athletes across an array of sports, from track and field to net ball and AFL, culminating with the role as the physical performance manager for both the New South Wales and Australian Cricket teams. He's also been the mental skills coach for the NRL. And with a degree in exercise physiology and a Masters in Coaching and Psychology, Andrew knows just what takes to align the body with the brain. Today, he's recognized as one of the world's leading performance strategists, and he joins us to share his top tips for performing under pressure. Andrew, thanks so much for joining me on the show today. Welcome.

Andrew May [00:01:02]:

Cec, I've been a big fan of flying solo over the years, and I have been flying solo for nearly 30 years. So, yeah, wonderful to chat to you today.

Cec Busby [00:01:10]:

Great. Great. That's great to hear. 30 years, that's a long time to of being your own boss. How's how's that?

Andrew May [00:01:17]:

Well, it started when I was

Cec Busby [00:01:19]:

15

Andrew May [00:01:20]:

in Dubbo, New South Wales, Central New South Wales. I had a lawn mowing business, back then, and I was charging \$5 an hour. And one of the neighbors, he was a doctor and made his lawns, and then he said, oh, you're doing a really good job. And then the next neighbor

asked, and then the next neighbors. So before I realized that, I was mowing multiple lawns. And Dubbo in summer, it gets up to plus 40 degrees Celsius, and then I thought one day can I can earn more than \$5 an hour. and I and I realized supply and demand at a young age without understanding the word. So I doubled my rates and, like, kept getting booking. So that was my foray into entrepreneurship.

Cec Busby [00:01:59]:

And how long before you got burnt out?

Andrew May [00:02:02]:

you're pardon the pun. Well, I bought my first car, which was a really shitty Cortina, Ford Cortina, that I made from, mowing lawns and weeding, but it planted in this entrepreneurial spirit from a young young age because, you know, did a bit of hard work, got the rewards, bought a car, they got me to Sydney to study sports science, And even just reflecting going way, way, way back then, it it let this spirit around business and starting businesses.

Cec Busby [00:02:30]:

So sports science, you've mentioned your your other passion there. Where did where did that come from? Because I I understand you used to be a runner yourself. So was there ever a decision between, like being an elite athlete and really pursuing that, or Was it always I want to be more of the background, understand the science, and performance side of things?

Andrew May [00:02:56]:

A very interesting question. You got me reflecting. 1st and foremost, I wanted to be like all young boys and girls, a a great athlete or, you know, greater whatever the the vocation they chose. So my goal was to represent Australia as a junior, I won multiple state championships, and then won a few state championship titles as a senior. So I was always good at running. Running shows me rather than the other way around. I I did play football, and I moved from 58 inside center, outside center wing fall back to the bench if you're following the story when I called the ball, I'd score, but I didn't catch it enough to stay on the team. So

running running shows me. I I got a pretty good market school, and I got into a law and at Wollongong, and that was my first choice at university. And then after finishing at Saint John's College of Dubbo, sort of reflecting and hanging out with my mates for a week or so, I'm gonna thought, I actually really don't wanna do law. I'm doing law. I think because people are impressed. I think my history and English teachers thinks it's a good idea, but I love sports. So I changed, and my mom was quite upset because at that stage, Sports science was really new. And, you know, the the mark was almost half of what law was. What's the best decision I ever made? Cause I chose like, a career path that I'm passionate about. And I say this to young people all the time now says in people saying, oh, you know, how do you start a business and make money Well, don't focus on the money. I think if you can do something your bike or or do something at least you can put up with. And if it's giving back and you're getting this intrinsic motivation, you'll do it for years years, and then the money comes.

Cec Busby [00:04:33]:

And so as you were saying, it was very early days in that, sports psychology sports performance sort of arena, you know, exercise physiology, those those degrees. Yeah. They really only did sort of come about you know, 30 or so years ago was very new field. So was it what you expected?

Andrew May [00:04:55]:

More. And I didn't realize how influential it was on me until a few years after. So going back to, yeah, your question, I was doing both. I I wanted to be an athlete and I was, So I I started running again through that period in, my first degree. So that's

Cec Busby [00:05:12]:

18, 19, 20.

Andrew May [00:05:15]:

And then I finished the degree, and I was working as a strength. I was working as a sprint coach then with New South Wales and Nepal and a few other sporting teams. So I was using what I'd learned about

performance with other sports. I thought, oh, this is pretty cool. And then my coach, when I was a youngster, at Little Athletics, John, he got a job with the Tasmanian Institute of Sport as the head coach. So it was Institute of Sport coach, and he was moving to Hobart, and he said, hey. there's a spot for you to come down here, both to run and also to be an assistant coach, through the Tasmanian Institute of Sport. So just all these sort of timings aligned so that I moved down to Hobart focused on my running, and then I started a personal training business. And because I've learned a lot about physiology and about nutrition and about biomechanics, but also what I didn't really understand, the most important part since is about people, and we did do a little bit on communication, but I think I'd always been naturally, you know, like, conversations like people. And then I just was in this era where personal training was starting, and it just blew up in a good way. And before I realized at 18 months 2 years into starting a personal training business, I make the joke. I used to take big plugs for walks, and it evolved because most of my clients were middle aged men, and they work quite large. but after, yeah, 2 years, I was running the gym at Respoint Hotel Casino in Hobart and the gym at Lonceston Country Club, they both had the same owner, federal casinos in Lonceston, and I was employing 5 stars. and I had no idea, but I was passionate, and it was the right place, right time. So, yeah, what I've learned about being an athlete, but then the study gave me the confidence to have a crack at starting a business other than mowing people's lawns.

Cec Busby [00:07:05]:

What was the biggest challenge in terms of running a business as someone who is, you know, you you doubled in it as a as a team, but nothing as serious as what you were doing then.

Andrew May [00:07:16]:

Yeah. There were 2 different parts. 1 was basic business acumen, and and the second one was P and L. So on the first big basic business acumen, there was a great man named Sean O'Sullivan, who was in charge of a company called North Forest Products, and I I'd met Sean at a fitness industry course I was lecturing at, and he was, you know, a very well paid CEO whose passion was fitness. He saw me present, and then he said, I like what you do. Can you come and talk to my team? Like, yeah. Yeah. Yeah. What about? He said, oh, well-being, corporate

health. I can remember going to the library I'm showing my aid sense and and getting on the computers there and sort of looking at Google wasn't around then.

Cec Busby [00:07:55]:

I thought it was you might have said the Dewey decimal going through the card catalog.

Andrew May [00:08:00]:

It was a little bit after that, but and I do know what you're talking about. And so and I've found a few articles about the corporate health, and they all tended to have 5 or 6 workshops. So I went back to Sean the following week and said, oh, we can do a workshop series and We'll do one on nutrition, and we'll do one on stress, and we'll do one on sleep, and then we can do one on exercise. I just made it up, and Sean said, that's great. what what do you charge? And then back then, I was charging

Cec Busby [00:08:28]:

\$275

Andrew May [00:08:30]:

for a 10 pack. So I've gone from \$5.5 an hour mowing lawns to

Cec Busby [00:08:36]:

\$27 50

Andrew May [00:08:37]:

a session. I can remember selling my first hand pack to Rhonda Langford, and I was so excited. I thought I just made it. So I thought I'd be really audacious and and at a

Cec Busby [00:08:47]:

0.

Andrew May [00:08:47]:

So I sent to Sean, oh, it's \$275 a session. And and I realized it was way too cheap when he said, oh, let's pay you now. I mean, literally wrote a check, a company check-in that session, and I was so excited So what that shows you, I had absolutely no idea. And then Sean started to mentor me. We're having a coffee one day at the back of Salomac at Square. I was training Sean for free. He was mentoring me for free. I definitely got a lot more out of the relationship. And and the first coffee Chap we had says, he said to me, no. I want you to start reading the financial review. And I said, what what's that? He said, it's It's a it's a newspaper that comes out. It's about business. It'll help you understand business. He said, because you're a big dream. I said, how often does that come out? And I can remember him just shaking his head. He said it'd come to that daily. Now, parallel to that, the second part, I had no idea about profit loss because I'm an overt optimist. So I thought if I sell a 10 pack, at \$275. I'm gonna sell another 10 because I'll back myself on sales. So rather than buying 1 kayak, I'm gonna buy a trailer, and I'm gonna get a welder to make a frame, and I'm gonna get 10 kayaks.

Cec Busby [00:09:59]:

Oh my gosh.

Andrew May [00:10:01]:

And this is actually true story. And I had baseball hats. I had bowling hats. I had jackets. rug bid tops. At one stage, we had over 30 different pieces of clothing with fully integrated training, which was my personal training business. So I almost went bankrupt, and then I got a good accountant who told me about P and L.

Cec Busby [00:10:24]:

Just in the nick of time, by the

Andrew May [00:10:26]:

you're you're thinking now why I love this guy on. He had no idea about business. He always went bankrupt because he bought 10 boats rather than 1, but but they were really good lessons that, you know, I was in the early is at that stage.

Cec Busby [00:10:37]:

But, you know, sometimes you can make a lot out of merch. It could have been a a good thing.

Andrew May [00:10:42]:

I'll tell you one more story on this and and perceptions, everything right. I can remember rocking up to the athletics track in Hobart because one of the guys I was training, his business partner is David Walsh. So Phil and David started this the gambling syndicate that has led to Mona. David Walsh has now used a lot of that money to start Mona, the art gallery, which is it has literally changed Tasman's economy. these business partners feel they had a cafe, and I met them there. And I ended up being Phil's personal trainer, and Phil had a few habits that he couldn't kick and if I found out he'd been out drinking and, you know, partying, we had a bet. I said, well, mate, the only thing I can take off you that really means anything is your Ferrari. He had a beautiful test across a Ferrari. I said next time I find you you've broken the grills that we've said, I'm giving you my Toyota highlights for a month, and you're having my fur I'm having your Ferrari, and we shook hands. I found out 6 weeks later, Phil had been on the bender. I'd lock up to his house on the Monday morning. He looked terrible. And I said, where are your keys? He said on the bench. I said, there's mine. You're in no shape to train today. I'll see you later in the week, and I drove off in his Ferrari. And then this is me at 25 and Hobart, and I had magnets, you know, the magnets you put on your car. So I put fully integrated training magnets on the Ferrari. And the following week, the this stage, A lot of the other casinos haven't really tapped into the Asian market, and they weren't specializing, but, Hobart was. So a lot of the big rollers would fly into Hobart, from China and Hong Kong, they get picked up, and they'd be limoed, out or they get a helicopter out to West Point. and I got to know the helicopter driver at rest point. And one day, just taking a piss, I put the magnets on his helicopter. And so and he didn't see them. So he's flying these Asian high rollers from Hobart Airport to West Point. with fully integrated training on the side. And I'd walk up to the athletics

track, and there's this young guy that he and I, I were always neck and neck. And he said to one of my mates, I won't say exactly what he said, but, you know, it's like, god. So he said, Bayzie's business is killing it. He's driving a Ferrari, and now he's got a helicopter. He was all smoking. He was not about his mind, but it was it was great perception.

Cec Busby [00:13:05]:

Yeah. Perception is everything in business, isn't it? So You obviously, it was a cracking start despite your naivety. So where did you decide you were going to go to from When did you decide to bring that whole, coaching psychology into play?

Andrew May [00:13:24]:

I I bumped into the personal training and then realized I had a currency, which was helping people with their body, and you're not just ahead on the stick. And I I saw my client sets who would lose weight get fit, get stronger, and they'd start saying, Andrew, do you do you realize I am much more creative on thinking? So I now know they had greater executive functioning or, you know, cognitive processing capacity. My business is going better. My wife said I'm nowhere near as much of an asshole at 8 AM on a Monday morning, and the kids all think I actually really nice. And I'm not giving them feedback and getting cranking. So it's a 8 AM Saturday morning test for all entrepreneurs. How do you show up to your loved ones? And are you giving them your best? So I realized there was a real currency to looking at this physiology, energy, stress, you know, workshop that I bumped my way through with Sean and Sullivan started seeing that they're all these pillars. I missed out on my running dream, which was to go to the Olympics, and and I also wanted to break the 4 minute mile, didn't either of those. And then I moved back to Sydney and started a gym. And, again, it was just right place, right time, But after a couple of years, Sassy, I was doing work on today's show. I'd written a book. I was starting to do keynote speaking. But I was very didactic. And with the clients I had, I started getting a few exec clients and business owners. And because sport, is very black or white. You know, do this, make the time, do this, make the team. And I was black and white with my clients. Some of them loved it, but some of them didn't come back. and that was bad for business. So I realized I needed to round out my approach, and it wasn't learning more about the craft the body in movement, nutrition, but it was actually

around conversation and coaching. And and I'd enrolled in psychology and hope but I got too busy with work and running and everything. And then I saw this master's in coaching psychology pop up, and it was a game changer. It was just foundation to taking, 1st of all, me and my view and my schema and my ability to write with people from a very diverse range rather than just relating to a certain type. And that's then allowed me to take my business to a whole different level. So that degree, city university, coaching psychology, it really did change my life.

Cec Busby [00:15:43]:

Mhmm. So what are some science backed ways then you can share with our readers about, you know, how to work smarter rather than harder, you know, what is it that the building blocks that kind of underpin productivity for for an entrepreneur.

Andrew May [00:16:00]:

Yeah. So if I take 3 areas, before I answer that question. So when I look at productivity, I look at what did I learn as an exercise physiologist and a fitness trainer? So there's a physiology of productivity. He said, what did I learn as an athlete and working with athletes? So then there's that personal. because someone can say, science says this, and other people can go, well, here's my experience and equals 1. I think both is a really good blend. And then the third part in the rounding out is, well, let's look at the psychology and, and what's happening in your mind. So they're, they're the 3 bed rocks that I come to productivity with. So it's a bit of a different slant. So that's the physiology of productivity, the high performance side, and then the psychology side. So from my end, says there's at least 5 different ways we can boost productivity. Number 1, it's about, it's a Canadian clock. So you fire up your body clock. Number 2, this is basic, but I learned this from sport. You plan your day before you start training and completing. 3, know your chronotype So no, are you a morning person, an evening person, or an afternoon person? And when you're aligned, high end cognitive tasks, to your energy spot, your energy sweet spot. You're about 30% more efficient. 4 is batching, and 5 is a process I've evolved called the better way. So You can pick whichever one in any order, but it's number 1, you know, wake up your body clock. 2, plan your day. 3, work to your energy personality. 4, batch tasks. and 5 create a better week.

Cec Busby [00:17:27]:

So can you dive into them a bit more? Like, what do you mean by wake up your body clock? Is it really, you know, knowing whether you're that morning person or the the night person, or what what do you mean exactly?

Andrew May [00:17:39]:

Yeah. That's number 3. your chronotype, but waking up your body clock, every morning when we wake up, we need to reset. And a lot of this research and methodology are adaptive from the neuroscientist, Doctor Andrew Hiebem, who's just amazing in this area. But our cortisol levels in the morning need to rise. And cortisol's got a bad rep, says everyone, because you gotta reduce your cortisol. Yeah. If it's too high, stress, but you actually need some calls out to get you working. So for all of our listeners, think and I'll ask you how many of these do you do as well, but to get your body's internal clock and and to ramp up alertness. There's 4 or 5 things to do every morning. So the first one is get bright sunlight for 10 to 30 minutes. So this helps with your cortisol level. It also helps with your immune system and your metabolism. The second thing is I get everyone to move for about 20 to 30 minutes just to wake the body up. Because if you go from lying down, and this is a challenge for a lot of entrepreneurs, right, who work from home, before it became part of our Lexicon with COVID. You slept, and you might have a coffee and then you start working and then go, oh, god. I don't feel good. Well, your physiology is not working for you. cold as our levels haven't ramped up, and your alertness and your immune system is not working as well. So getting that movement is really good first single in the morning. Now the next one, and this will challenge some people, but push caffeine back about 60 to 90 minutes. That is ridiculous. This guy's an idiot. How on earth can you have a business? Well, when you get bright sunlight and that hits you beneath your gland and bakes you up and gets cascaded chemicals. And when you move your body, that does a lot more than coffee. And then you can use coffee during the day as another little booster rather than relying on it first thing.

Cec Busby [00:19:27]:

Yeah. You, you know, you're probably right because I normally get up about 6:30 or something, and then I'll take the dogs for a walk And then I don't actually have my first coffee till I come into if I'm working when I come into the office, so that's like 8:30, 9 o'clock.

Andrew May [00:19:45]:

So you're following up?

Cec Busby [00:19:46]:

Yeah. I I'm doing that without knowing.

Andrew May [00:19:49]:

There you go. That's probably why you're so bright when I got onto you this morning. Another little one says, get get 1, 2, 3 for us, you know, get some bright sunlight and and sunlight exposure first thing of the morning without without sunglasses, get as much exposure on your skin and body as you can. That wakes you up. Move. push the caffeine back. And the next one, they try and have a cold shower, and this is where a lot of people just run away, but that cold shower does wonders to wake you up physically and psychologically. I've become addicted to cold water over recent years. Like, when you first do it, I know it's crazy. It's awful. cold and you're going, this is stupid. Cold water is bloody awful. Why am I doing this? I can have a warm bath, but then you breathe before the shower Do the breast work. Your body relaxes. You get into a parasympathetic, nice cold shower, bang. You're ready to work.

Cec Busby [00:20:42]:

How long is your nice cold shower? 60 to 90 seconds? Yes. See, there's the problem because what if you're a girl with long hair and you're washing your hair? Yeah.

Andrew May [00:20:53]:

if you've seen photos, I mean, I don't have a problem with me for watching. so if you my partner to do this, you put a hair up in a scrunch

or a tie. Just put a bit of cold water on your face on your body, and that'll still give you a lot of the benefits.

Cec Busby [00:21:08]:

Yeah. Alright. I'll give it a try.

Andrew May [00:21:11]:

So that's so that's the first bit, that's waking up people on the clock. And and and those 3 or 4 task. When I'm working with someone 1 on 1 or a whole team, SAS, I just say that's how you need to start your day. Get your body get your physiology working for you. I I was gonna jump around, and I'll go to number 3 next because you asked a question about Gazelle Bea Tiger. When do you work best?

Cec Busby [00:21:37]:

Oh, you know, I don't think there is really a specific time for me, which is probably gonna sound weird, but, I'm good in the morning, but I'm also good late at night.

Andrew May [00:21:50]:

You're a tiger.

Cec Busby [00:21:51]:

a tiger. Cool.

Andrew May [00:21:53]:

I better get this context. You got a man on the other side of the podcast calling you a tiger. Yeah. I, I, I talk about 4 different energy personalities. Gazelle, bear, tiger, and Dolphin, and everyone listening will be one of these or a hybrid. Now before I go into detail, there is a big science behind this, and the science is chronobiology, which is your chronotype, you know, knowing when your energy levels are higher, but whenever I call at Gazelle Bear, Tiger or Dolphin people remember it. Now the morning people or they're the gazelles, it's about 15 to 20% of the population. They'll wake up at 5 AM, 5:30, go walking around parks,

planes, tables, trains. They love exercising for morning. their concentration curve, the productivity sweet spot, is best in the morning, and they fall off a cliff after lunch. Now there's a bunch of people listening to success who think Gazelle suck, and they're called bears. You know, bears will, in a natural environment, go to bed around midnight. they'd wake up a bit later, like 8 o'clock, maybe even later than that. And then their concentration curve is best late afternoon to early evening. and and you're a hybrid. So you you will not probably wake up in the fives, but you can still wake up early. You'll have a really good concentration spam before lunch. I'd say you hit a bit of a dip after lunch, and then you have a second wind.

Cec Busby [00:23:23]:

Yeah. That would be right.

Andrew May [00:23:25]:

That's about 2 thirds of the population. the bears is about 15%. And then there's less than 1% are the dolphins, and I've only just added this recently. because dolphins are a mammal that sleep with one part of the brain awake and the other part of the brain asleep. So they're the insulniacs, the dolphins, and I can provide a link to your listeners, if you want. We have what's called a Dolphin pack, which is to help those people with insomnia. just a, you know, a tick down list of what to go through to try and help. A bit complicated to get into today, but I'll send you the link. So anyone listening to this going, yamadolphin, look at that link and there's a few tips there. So the majority though will be a morning person, a gazelle, there'll be an afternoon or evening person up there, or there'll be a hybrid like you, which is a tiger.

Cec Busby [00:24:13]:

Wow. Tiger.

Andrew May [00:24:14]:

Wow. Good response. Now here's the kicker. When you align high end cognitive tasks, that's just big words for when you do the work that really requires you to think and process and use your brain. When you align those tasks to your peak spots, your concentration curve, you're

30% more efficient. Now small business owners need this because we need every tool because we're under resourced, limited resources. So if you're a morning person, those thinking activities and high end tasks first thing of the morning, it changes your productivity.

Cec Busby [00:24:50]:

That's definitely, something to really think about it. And the batching that you were talking about is, is that also part of it? Like, group those tasks that require more mental activity into those peak times?

Andrew May [00:25:03]:

Batching you can do in different times because I'll often batch receipts or, you know, do some of my account stuff after lunch. I'm a more of a tiger. So when those energy drops, you can do the low end cognitive tasks. So batching, you can just choose different parts per day. but the research around this shows that if you're if you've got a meeting coming up and you've got a bit of a dead spot, and you've got nothing else. Well, that first, that hour leading into the meeting, you're gonna be 22% less productive because you're thinking about the meeting. So around this, if you can, you batch your sales meetings together. If you can batch your proposals together, if you can batch when you do your admin, all those low end tasks, And this makes a huge difference. I I swear by this. So I'm I'm fortunate. I've got a great EA name, Shannon, and she'll badge my diary. assess as much as possible during the wake.

Cec Busby [00:25:56]:

And I guess if you're an entrepreneur, that's a really good model to follow because you have so many roles initially when you're starting up so many roles and responsibilities. You're always trying to, you know, get the next deal or achieve the next thing and, batchy might help you a little bit with, your balance perhaps?

Andrew May [00:26:15]:

Massively helps with balance. And and I've I learned this from a few doctors. I was training way back in Hobart. who would see patients on a Tuesday Thursday. one doctor I was working with would operate, then

on a Wednesday Friday, and he had Monday as a a spillover day. And then when I started asking him, he said, well, if I say, yeah, I'm available 9 AM Monday morning, and then I have a meeting at 12, 1 at 3, I'm racing all over the place. I never get time to do similar activities. I went, ah, I now know that was is called batching. It really does make a difference. And the biggest challenge I find for small business owners on this SES is pushing back and saying no. So saying to people, oh, look, I can't see you on Monday morning, but what if I see you on Friday? So I coach some CEOs from top 30 ASX companies. And I explained that how I work, and, and, ideally, my coaching days are on Friday. And nearly every one of my clients can adapt with enough notice. So then I'll go into coaching mode on a Friday, and it leads me to run a business and all the digital work and the mental skills work I'm doing on the other day. So you can just achieve so much more by chunking or batching similar tasks together.

Cec Busby [00:27:24]:

What about rituals? Are you, you spoke about that morning ritual? You know, they're getting up. going for the walk, getting the sunlight. What are there other rituals that you think enhance productivity and will be?

Andrew May [00:27:37]:

Yeah. I'm a massive believer in habits because if you look at the research around this and habits stacking with James Clear, up to 80% of what we do is unconscious patterning or unconscious behavior as a business owner. If you can stack those habits to work for you rather than against you. It's gonna make a massive difference. So, yeah, a massive on habits. point 2, I know we're, we're jumping around to keep people on their toes. This is a habit. It's planning your day, or I call that a daily warm up. And I get all of my team. We've got a a small team since we've got 9 or 10 employees and a few contractors. But we onboard people in our team that strive stronger around this as well. So I get all of my team. well, I, and manages the team, Angela Poon. we have a team meeting on Monday morning. only for half an hour. But then every other day, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and and the team meet at 9 AM, some days, it's 10 minutes, some days it might be half an hour, and everyone goes through their day and what they're going to do. So it's a real daily focus. And there's loads of research around this Google have done a lot, but it's just basic sense in sport

where I'd spent 25 years. you don't go and play or train at a high intensity. You warm up, and that's the opportunity to get your body and brain and your physiology ready to then perform. Whereas people just in the corporate world or entrepreneur world just go from a sleep, not doing any of those wake up activities we spoke about. Start working and go, why do I feel so inefficient? So the daily warm up is you just sit down, and, yeah, I mentioned that you can do it in a team. environment, or you sit down by yourself if you're flying solo and just say, what's my diary look like today? what meetings have I got? How can I prune or get a few similar tasks together? Where am I finding a bit of time to think? And then what do I need to do? What does success look like for all these meetings? So planning that day, 5 or 10 minute daily warm up every day is a game changer.

Cec Busby [00:29:41]:

Yeah. It's it's interesting you're using, you know, warmer that kind of terminology as well because I guess that also applies to, you know, match fitness and stuff too. You know, people can't suddenly be at the top of their game in business if they're not putting that that warm up into play. So is there a a business equivalent of match fit?

Andrew May [00:30:04]:

Match fit does come from the world of sport, and and the book that Doctor Tom Buckley and I wrote called Match Fair. It's being physically and psychologically ready to compete Now drop sport, it's being physically and psychologically ready to compete for business. And as a small business owner, energy, YouTube Raiders Resort, your ability to use and restore energy. So all these tactics, you know, your circadian rhythm planning a day, aligning because they'll be as tigers and dolphins. and then batching. This is all about energy.

Cec Busby [00:30:37]:

And what about what role does culture, play in terms of business success

Andrew May [00:30:43]:

Oh, how long have we got? This is a different interview for another day to go deep. I think it asked him to an organization a a bigger corporate organization. Let's say it's a bank, a consulting firm, a telco, could be an FMC, And I could be working with a business leader, and he or she says, look, can you just gonna do a bit of fact finding and then come back and we'll have a discussion? And I say, okay. What if the problem is something you're not really happy about. What do you mean, Andrew? This is normally a conversation with a mid late smile. What if the problem's you Oh, I can't be that. But, you know, go go off fact finding it invariably when I get into a broken culture. I come back, hey, I found it. I found the problem it's you. So I'm a huge believer in culture, you know, is set from the top social contagion theory. shows that we have mirror neurons in the, in the front part of the brain. And, and, and the way this plays out, for people listening with the family or in a relationship. You shop home after a big day, you're tired, cranky, shitty, half an hour, your whole household is tired cranky shitty because those mirror neurons start to mirror each other. So culture really starts with how you show up as a leader. and then that permeates through. And and and where I take a bit of a different approach is feedback I get, but culture is also physiology. It's how you look after your energy. It's also your psychology. So culture really does come right back to the individual on how they manage that physical psychological and emotional state, because we know from that research, social contagion theory, if you turn up and you're in good state, growth mindset. And and it's not as black and white as this, I know. You're nurturing others. You're developing others. You're looking at opportunities. Guess what? you know, people fall five levels down, have a similar approach. You rock up. You're backbiting. You're looking over your shoulder. Everyone's an a hole. This problem, that problem. guess what? That also permeates throughout the whole organization, and it can become a toxic sex bit.

Cec Busby [00:32:49]:

They don't use my name like that. Sorry.

Andrew May [00:32:52]:

Sorry, sir. It'll take a bit out. Sorry, mate.

Cec Busby [00:32:58]:

So -- How not to

Andrew May [00:33:00]:

get asked on flying solo again?

Cec Busby [00:33:04]:

So it what do you do when you you have been brought into a business then and you encountered this, they go, oh, go ask the questions, and then you come back. And it's like, actually, The problem is you, the culture. How do you help a leader step into a new way of of doing things?

Andrew May [00:33:22]:

the critical factor, and it is the only factor that works out whether you go past, go get \$200 or don't even start playing monopoly with them. is self awareness. So if that person, normally, it's a male says, if that person is aware and says, Yeah. Look, this is uncomfortable. This is awkward. This is challenging, but but, Andrew, I think this is something that I want to address and can you help Absolutely. I love that brief. If it's denial and there's no awareness around it, I I will leave. And there was an example. I won't mention the name of the company. Big company just happened last year, and I just sent to the legal I can't help you until you help yourself because you're not gonna change this. And it's actually gonna be bad for me and my CV in my brand because I know I'm not gonna get a result. And he said, I'll pay you more. I said, no. No. I don't want you to pay me more. In fact, I I do this complimentary. I'm not here to make money. It's not my primary need. Money comes when you do really good work and connect with people and get results. I I said, I'll I'll even do this and not charge you if you can get your head out of your ass and actually realize the problems you And by by this stage, you know, I had a good report on a banter. And I said, come back to me when you're ready to have this chat. I haven't heard, but I'm hoping one day, he said, look, I appreciate your honesty. I think you might be right, but, this is the way we're getting results. I said, okay. Well, I'll leave it with you. It's hard because they did they're making lots and lots and lots of zeros, and that culture is prepared to have churn and burn and, dairy in an industry that is yeah, they've got a

really good percentage of their market, and I think they can just keep going.

Cec Busby [00:35:07]:

Yeah. That is a difficult situation, isn't it? Because it's as though there is no real desire to change because it's working for them.

Andrew May [00:35:17]:

No no burning platform. Now me, 10, 15 years ago, it says, I would have said absolutely. I would have done that. And then it would have caused me stress and anguish, and it was totally misaligned to my values, and it wouldn't have been a good ending.

Cec Busby [00:35:31]:

Yeah. And so speaking of values, do you think, there is more pressure now for businesses to make sure that there is that leadership leading from the top, you know, demonstrate that your your purpose and your values don't just talk them because that for, I think, the younger generation, it's so much more important purpose. aligning their purpose to their work?

Andrew May [00:35:52]:

It is so much more important. So I remember admiral Wendy Malcolm who's a wonderful leader that I'm blessed to work with Wendy is very high up in the Australian Navy, and we do a lot of work with Navy and defense. And and Wendy talks about your value, your values on the wall matching the values on the floor. I love that. So meaning you're living the values. Look, over the years, I've been in multiple boardrooms. ready to do a presentation or a sales briefing, and you're waiting for a few of the big dogs, the big weeks, and you look at your clock and it's a 9 AM meeting and it's 10 past 9. and then you get a bit distracted and you look up to the right and you see a mahogany case with the values, honesty, integrity, respect, then a quarter past, some of the leaders come in, they don't even say sorry or apologize, and they just carry on because they're busy and they're senior, and that's what they do. and I just feel like saying, Hey, you guys haven't read your values. There's a real misalignment. So, yeah, COVID has really shifted this. lot of the

younger generations. So you look at millennials and and younger. Gen Z's, they've probably seen mom and dad working really hard. And then question why? if they weren't there or, you know, why when mom and dad left work and they weren't looked after. So it's now much more around purpose and meaning. And I and I love that we've shifted this way. but I don't think it's either or. I think sometimes people jump and go, oh, look, I've gotta be value aligned and everything's about purpose, or I'm not gonna do it. And then others might say, no. It's just about money and wealth that Gordon Gekko agreed is good. I think you can have both. I I think you can have, a job that aligns with you. It doesn't have to be a 100% aligned, but the majority of it aligns with you and it fuels you. and you make money, and that's where I find a lot of people now want to be after this great realignment with COVID.

Cec Busby [00:37:41]:

you know, it has been a a great realignment, hasn't it? It's really made people look at their lives differently. What, if anything, changed for you during the pandemic?

Andrew May [00:37:52]:

Well, I'd left KPMG. I'd sold a previous business to KPMG, and I was on a really good base wage, ridiculous wage model back. but I left because of values. I actually wanted to go back and start a business and really make a difference. And it was going really well, and then COVID hit, and we lost 90% of revenue. because the old business model says I do 50 presentations on stages mainly in Australia and somewhere around the world, 50 cleanups a year. we'd run 3, 2 or

Cec Busby [00:38:21]:

3

Andrew May [00:38:21]:

high end leadership programs, and I do coaching. I, I feel archaic and like a dinosaur saying this do you realize it was all face to face? So when COVID hit, we'd lost over 90 percent of revenue, and we almost went under. but it's a combination of tenacity, stubbornness, but also just having some wonderful relationships with clients who were

supportive. and then we digitize the whole business. So we're doing online webinars around the world, digital assets. We've got a podcast now as well called performance intelligence. and it's just a total different business model. So COVID almost broke us, but it's totally changed the business. that what that did is it made me really step back and go, but it is about getting this, this, this dance, between periods of intense work and then dropping down. Cause I think I've had extremes of both. Like it's either all work or it's all play in recovery by getting that beautiful pulse in between is what's sustainable. And now on the back end of COVID, I would not want to go through that ever again, SAS, but I'm so proud of the team and, and the way we work through it, and it, it forwards this resilience and this real strength in our business. And now we've got the best of both worlds. We're doing live events again. We're doing coaching, but we've got a digital platform that we can scale. So you're COVID almost brokered us, but it's given us a totally different business model and a totally different perspective in looking at the way that we support employees now as well.

Cec Busby [00:39:54]:

Was there any kind of temptation now that live events are are pretty much back in full swing to kind of slip back into that old habit where you were doing all those those keynotes?

Andrew May [00:40:05]:

Well, because the business model has changed now that really the keynotes is a sales funnel as much as anything else. I'll speaking, I love live groups. But if you do a good job, you often have CEOs or leaders there to go, hey, can we catch up? And what else do you do? Hey, we've got this physical and psychological well-being platform with a score that we call live life score, and we can measure in 3 or 4 minutes, your employee's physical and psychological energy, and they go, oh, okay. Let's have a chat. So, yeah, that's actually been really good. So, I I don't think we're at risk now because the back end of the business, which is a much bigger part, is now is is fully focused on digital.

Cec Busby [00:40:44]:

So, we've gone well over time. I'm sorry for taking up so much of your time. Just one last question, maybe, if people just think about

incorporating one thing into their life to make themselves feel, you know, more productive and and more switched on, what would you suggest it is?

Andrew May [00:41:03]:

I'm going to give you an answer that you're probably not expecting. It's Had some play, add some fun. I think in business, I've been there where you get so focused on I'll just get this week done this month, done this quarter, done this year, done this decade, done. Sometimes a life can really fly away in front of you. Along the way, I think you gotta enjoy it. And I look at my kids, and I've got 4 kids So, so, it seems to be busy at home. The kids play. They have play dates, play do, play time, play lunch, and they watch play school. As adults, we often do meetings, and that's where their story stops. How sad is that? To tap into that in a child, and we're all kids at heart to add some play, add some fun, and I think that really keeps stuff in perspective.

Cec Busby [00:41:56]:

Good advice. We all need a bit more play in our day.

Andrew May [00:42:00]:

Yeah. What what what what's your advice? What do you say to people on that? if I flipped the question.

Cec Busby [00:42:06]:

I think, get out in nature, I think. Yeah. like, I'm, I'm, you know, I don't necessarily mean you've got to go into the bush, but, you know, go to your local park, get some sun, like, take pleasure in the simple things, take your dog for a walk, you know, help, have your kids help you cook the dinner, like little things. I think those those small things like that are really essential to fuel your energy, I think.

Andrew May [00:42:34]:

Yeah. I love that. There's a Latin word called biophilia, which is the feel good effect of nature. And, yeah, indigenous communities think we're all crazy. They've been doing this for 35 to 40000 years, and now we

have sign to say, hey. There's a concept called grounding. Go outside a few times a week and take your shoes. I can get in contact with the earth.

Cec Busby [00:42:56]:

Yeah. I love taking my shoes off.

Andrew May [00:42:59]:

Yeah. It's it's great. It just it connects you.

Cec Busby [00:43:03]:

Thank you, Andrew. I really appreciate you taking time to chat with us today.

Andrew May [00:43:07]:

Look, I appreciate, and thank you for your interview technique. You took me down path I didn't expect. I've got all these notes here I was gonna talk about entrepreneurs and doing this and that, and you just took me down a path about evolution where come from. So I've enjoyed reflecting today.

Cec Busby [00:43:22]:

Oh, great. I'm great to hear it. Thank you.