

## Let's GLINC Differently About Passion and Purpose at Work

Gerry Lewis:

Hello, everyone, I'm Gerry Lewis and welcome to another episode of GLINC Outside The Box. Purpose and passion at work are often difficult to describe, but we know it when we feel it, and we know it when we see it in others. We also know when we have passion and purpose at work, the time, the activities we do, and the commitment we need to deliver seem to happen almost effortlessly. Referred to often as state of flow. But we know for the majority, that's not often the case.

Gerry Lewis:

The ongoing pandemic has not helped by blurring the lines of personal and work life. We find ourselves in perhaps one of the most trying times as employees as well as employers. Workdays are feeling longer, and weekends seem to go by faster. It's not surprising to start questioning the purpose or meaning of the work we do. And perhaps you've heard others share with you or you might have even said it to yourself, "I'm feeling trapped. I'm bored. This is not what I imagined my career to be."

Gerry Lewis:

These thoughts are all potential signals that point to the likelihood that we may have lost our passion and questioning the meaning of work. Whether you've had these thoughts yourself or heard others say them, the goal of this podcast is to unpack and explore this very topic. I'll be asking our guests about how we can find or rediscover our purpose and passion for work and navigate our career in this period of uncertainty.

Gerry Lewis:

My guest today is Anatol von Hahn. He is a venture capitalist, angel investor and board member of numerous Canadian and US companies as well as an advisor to a number of mid-sized companies. Anatol is the chairman of the Group Ventures, a Toronto-based early stage venture capital company that invests in Canadian and Israeli technology companies.

Gerry Lewis:

Many of our listeners will recognize Anatol as a retired senior executive from Scotiabank, where he worked for some 31 years. And as the CEO of banks in Singapore, Chile, Argentina, and Mexico. In Canada, he was the group head of Scotiabank's Canadian operations, which encompass retail, commercial, small business banking, as well as operations and technology. Welcome, Anatol, it's wonderful to have you join us here today.

Anatol von Hahn:

Thank you very much. Great to be with you, Gerry. And I'm delighted to see us both having worked before, back in my Scotia days, and then the friendship and the professional relationship continues to now, some six years later.

Gerry Lewis:

Thank you. It's my pleasure to have you here as well. So Anatol, let's jump right in. You know, we've worked as you mentioned very closely during the time you were at Scotiabank, and I have personally witnessed and experienced your passion when it comes to work. I think we've all witnessed it. And that's something we always remember when we think of you Anatol. So let's begin. I'm curious how you would define purpose and passion when it comes to work?

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Anatol von Hahn:

That's a very good question. It's something you and I chatted some time ago about precisely purpose and passion. The more I think about it, my guess is everyone has a different take on what purpose is. And I think passion, we might all agree how passion has shown what it actually is, we may again be quite different. So I'll give you as you say, what is my view of purpose and passion and what's my definition.

Anatol von Hahn:

For me, I see purpose is starts first at a macro level, what is it that I really want to get done over a long period of time? And then I look at it, what do I need to do today to achieve that long-term goal? So purpose at the end is answering three questions. Why am I doing this? Maybe I don't even really want to do it. So why am I doing this?

Anatol von Hahn:

Sometimes I have to do it, but the why. The second is, when am I doing this? Is this really what I want to do now or should I have done it before or better yet should I do it in the future? Did I get the timing right of this? Because quite often, the purpose is right, but the when is wrong?

Anatol von Hahn:

And then the last thing is, how am I doing this? Which probably gets into also the definition of passion. But am I doing this? Am I all in? Something you hear a lot or am I doing this just to escape through or just to get the tick on something. So the purpose really comes down to me about what you as an individual or I as an individual really want to do long term then answering to myself, why am I doing this? When am I doing this? Is this the right time? And then how am I doing it? Am I all in or not?

Gerry Lewis:

Yeah, and it would be interesting, I guess what you're saying is if you have two of the three, so let's say you have the why right. But the how and the when isn't quite aligned, that could be part of the misalignment potentially.

Anatol von Hahn:

It could be. But I think for me, it goes into a much bigger question. I mean, you were talking about this in your introduction, you talked about, many of us find ourselves during this period, but to be fair, the pandemic might have heightened it. But before the pandemic, how often did you hear that I hear people saying, "I'm trapped, I'm bored. I'm not doing what I want to do. This isn't really what I'm meant to be doing."

Anatol von Hahn:

It's heightened now. But I don't think it is unique today. So the question about having two of the three elements there of what is purpose, I think we're constantly tweaking, I guess, now that I've hit 60 or 61, I get the benefit of looking back. And over time, our careers are about changes that happen to us, changes that we make and constant tweaks.

Anatol von Hahn:

And so it's not surprising that over a period of time in our careers, we will find ourselves bored, we do find ourselves trapped, we do find ourselves questioning what we're doing and why we're doing this.

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And are we in the right place? And then the question is, are we able to and do we have the guts to actually make the changes?

Gerry Lewis:

I very much like your approach regarding two points. One, that this is not just because of the pandemic, we have had this questioning of ourselves way before the pandemic, but the pandemic has heightened it. The other part is whether or not the why, the how, and the when, the reality is we do need to tweak it regularly.

Gerry Lewis:

So it is something that is ongoing. It's an ongoing set of questions for us, which leads me nicely to actually the second question Anatol and I call it the chicken or the egg type question here. Because I don't know which comes first. So here's a question. Does work drive purpose and passion? So is the work that really brings it out in you or is it the individuals purpose and passion that they bring that actually drives the work they do? Which one do you think it is?

Anatol von Hahn:

Okay, I'm going to ask to answer that in a nanosecond. But let me first so that you understand my answer, or the context of my answer, let me explain to you a little bit how I think of passion. So we define purpose, let me talk to you how I think of passion. Passion is answering the question, do I care? Do I care about what I'm doing? I may not care for it in the short term, but it is achieving my long-term objective.

Anatol von Hahn:

So I may get passionate about something I don't really like doing. But it's going to meet my longer term personal and professional objective. The other thing is, is constantly asking myself in terms of understanding if I'm passionate is, am I doing what I really want to do, irrespective of whether I'm enjoying it right now or not?

Anatol von Hahn:

Because I'm a firm believer that I don't know anybody's career that has always been on the top of the wave. Everything has been fantastic. Everything has been smooth, everything has gone well. And there have been no issues, no worries, no concerns, and no problems. I just don't know anybody that's ever done that.

Anatol von Hahn:

So you have to be prepared to go with the waves. But as a general rule, you want your waves to going in the right direction. So given my definition of what passion is, and what purpose is... Now your question about which comes first. I really don't know. But what I really do know is that to me, purpose and passion feed off itself.

Anatol von Hahn:

So if I look back at any of the jobs, positions, or even companies that I've worked with or in, generally I either had passion about the job and then the job became so much more interesting, or the job was really interesting and I became quite passionate about it. So there are maybe to give live examples that I

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had an opportunity, I was asked to go and manage a country, which I was really passionate about going to. But for a number of family reasons I ended up not going.

Anatol von Hahn:

Well I thought at that time, that was the end of the world. As it turns out, I ended up going to a country that nobody wanted to go to. And it turns out to be probably one of the countries I'm most passionate about. So things work out somehow. But which one comes first? I don't know. But what I do know is that it's like a virtuous circle that sort of feeds on itself. And you're constantly making changes. Because a little bit like my wave example before, there's no way that everything goes well, things don't.

Anatol von Hahn:

And so either you make adjustments, or you ride through it, hopefully consciously. And then the last thing, it's not in your purpose and passion, theme of today. But there is another, there's a third part, which if I look at just my own journey, is there's this concept of luck. And you can argue luck happens to some and not to others, luck is just truly fortuitous, or luck comes to those that work really hard and allow it to come. I'm more of that third category.

Anatol von Hahn:

I think there is an element of purpose, passion, and make your luck that comes into that equation for me. So I guess a really short way of answering your question is, I don't know which comes first. But I do know that they feed on each other. And you have to be the quarterback that manages it, and controls it. Because it's not all one, it really is connecting the two.

Gerry Lewis:

Well, what I take from that, then is the individual, because it is as you call it a virtuous sort of cycle or a virtuous circle, it is the individual taking control of it first and understanding that I may not feel like I absolutely love or I absolutely 100% care about everything that I do today. But know that if I keep going at it, it is something that will cycle itself back on top again. There is that sort of cyclical perspective to it that we need to take because there is no perfect day in a perfect career for a perfect life throughout.

Anatol von Hahn:

That's exactly right.

Gerry Lewis:

It's true then there really is no question about the chicken or the egg either, because no one really knows the answer.

Anatol von Hahn:

Yeah. And I guess the other just by adding to that, I guess for myself, I don't really care. Because I actually think you can start with a purpose and get passionate about it. And that is probably where I've started my circle, but there are times that I get passionate or think I'm getting passionate about something. And then I find the purpose. So I actually think that the same person in the same lifetime, and actually to kick start it with either the two which, in part, the objective, I think of today's podcast is also for people to think about their own situation during the pandemic.

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Anatol von Hahn:

And yeah I am bored and yeah, I am trapped and yeah, things aren't going that well. So maybe then, how do I start it? Maybe you start with something you're passionate about or you start with a purpose? So I don't think it's that important that there isn't... It's not a mathematical formula. It's a little bit more of an art. But it clearly has these two ingredients and in my definition, it has a third, create your own luck.

Gerry Lewis:

Yeah, let me jump to then, the next question really is about working with others. And I'm looking to see, you've described the three components really which I do agree with, the purpose, the passion and the luck. What does that look like to you? I'm curious... And I ask this question from an employer point of view or an employee point of view, when we try to bring our certain energy to work, we try to bring what we can to work, what are some characteristics that would demonstrate if I was a new...

Gerry Lewis:

Starting my career for the first time, what does passion purpose look like to an employer? What do they look for? What would make an employer say, "You know what, that Anatol, he's got passion and purpose." Because if you talk to any HR person, they will say we want to hire people with purpose and passion. What does that look like?

Anatol von Hahn:

So let me start off, they really do go hand in hand. So just if all of us think about something, how often have we met somebody that is all passionate about something with no structure, no analytics, no fundamental. It usually it dies there, you can't contain it. And you can't channel it. And you can't bring it to the type of result that you want to get to.

Anatol von Hahn:

So all passion, I don't think works. On the other end, all purpose doesn't really work either, without the passion part where people get excited about something. So just a pure purpose with no passion also doesn't work. So bringing the two together in a sort of one sentence answer is within a set framework. It's somebody who is really enthusiastic about driving to something, that to me is it. What are the characteristics of it, there are many and not limited to these.

Anatol von Hahn:

But it usually is, in the work context, whether it's an employer or an employee, somebody who has a very clear goal of what their long-term objective is for them, I'm not talking about for the company, they're very clear, this is what they want to be or become, they understand that it's a journey that has its ups and downs. That the third thing is they understand the context in which they operate in, sort of the macro world, you can't, go against a storm and win every time.

Anatol von Hahn:

So you've got to understand what the outside world is like, you got to understand what the micro or the inside world is like, these people, when purpose and passion are working in harmony, you can just sense energy around them. They're energized about whatever it is that they're doing. And quite often a lot more than that, it may not be their natural characteristic, but it is about these particular issues, a lot of

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enthusiasm. You've got to just make sure that it isn't too much, quite often over enthusiastic, yet has a very quick high and a very quick low.

Anatol von Hahn:

So it's got to be a contained and a consistent enthusiasm. Those people typically learn really well, they'll learn from mistakes. You know the old adage, you either hide a mistake, or you expose a mistake so everybody learns from it, they tend to be more of the latter. "Whoops. We made a mistake here, hey, guys, heads up, don't do the same thing because it doesn't work."

Anatol von Hahn:

They tend to share a lot. They tend to make sure that others understand not just what they do, but also some of the obstacles that they're coming across. Because they're hoping that the solution may also come from others. So they'll share but they expect to have sharing come back to them as well.

Anatol von Hahn:

Generally, it's some form of teamwork, but ironically, not always. Quite often, you have people that are very focused on one thing, where they have to work it out themselves. So in a work environment, you tend to see it as teamwork, but it's not necessarily that.

Anatol von Hahn:

The other interesting thing is that once that... Sort of thinking back on people who I would categorize who have that balance. They tend to defend points vigorously, and well argued, well analyzed, based on facts. They don't just sway one way or the other. They'll actually, they'll say, "Wait a second, Gerry, what you just said, could make a lot of sense. But let me show you why it doesn't make sense to me, because all the evidence's on this side."

Anatol von Hahn:

And they're not afraid to get into a really good discussion because they want the best answer. They don't want just an answer. They want the best answer, they listen, they're not afraid to voice their opinions, but they listen to opinions and are not afraid to change theirs if your opinion is better based, better founded because they want, "the best result."

Anatol von Hahn:

They challenge, they defend and they move on in a professional way. So it's perfectly fine to challenge your ideas and your thoughts and your analysis. Not the challenge you the person, and they they're able to draw that line. There are those people that have that balance, tend to have these characteristics, many other ones but they tend to be that way. They really want what's best. They don't want just an answer.

Gerry Lewis:

Really, what you've listed is an incredible list of competencies that I can actually self check myself with this afterwards, too. So I only wrote down a few of them. But I think a majority I captured, they listen, they care, they share, they learn from mistakes, they're willing to challenge the topic, not the person, they're generally enthusiastic. These are all things, I think, we could do a self check regularly to kind of

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say, "You know what? Which ones am I sort of... Do I want to fine tune? Which ones do I want to smooth out?"

Gerry Lewis:

Because you're right, these are the things that are, I think, very observable, and that's exactly what my question was, is what are the traits? What are their behaviors or actions, that I could see that someone is demonstrating purpose and passion? So this is a great list.

Anatol von Hahn:

There's one, I think, which is the genesis of this, which you didn't mention in your summary, without that, I don't think the rest works, which is putting it into the context of me. So starting with, what is my journey? What is my macro? Where do I want to get to? And making sure that everything I'm doing is getting me to my personal objective. So the easiest example, if I want to be a medical doctor, I may not like the hours that the interns have to put through for a year or two years, or whatever time period.

Anatol von Hahn:

But I understand if I want to save the world by being one of the best medical doctors in one particular specialty, I have to go through med school, I have to go through internship, I really am whatever, let's just say, I need 12 hours sleep a day. Well, guess what? You're working 18 hours a day, so you're not going to get it, you've got to go through it.

Anatol von Hahn:

So that may be a really tough period to be going through in your life. But it's towards the bigger objective. When they know what their longer term bigger objective is, going through a valley is a lot easier.

Gerry Lewis:

Right.

Anatol von Hahn:

Yeah. So I think it starts with that. And then the things that you've listed, it's the personal goals, it's the journey, understanding the macro situation, understanding the micro situation. So one is understanding the economy, understanding the competitors, the micro is understanding what my business is in, it's the smallest in a really competitive environment, whatever it might be, having energy, having enthusiasm, learning, sharing, teamwork, although not necessarily, as I mentioned, focused, they argue and defend points, but listen to get better points, then make a decision to go forward.

Anatol von Hahn:

They're not afraid to be challenged, and to challenge and to defend, and listen to others to defend in order to come out with the best thing. So that, that's what they're striving for. They're striving for the best not for a particular answer.

Gerry Lewis:

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Incredible. Thank you for that summary. And I am going to keep that because I think you're right, it starts with the macro and micro. And then if you have the macro and micro correct, the rest will probably naturally lend itself as you go along your journey anyway.

Gerry Lewis:

My next question was two part. But I think I only need to do one part of it. Because the first part was to say, how do I find purpose and passion for work? And I think you've just beautifully answered that for me in that summary. But what about people... And the second part of this question was how do I rediscover, because you will have people mid career and that's where I hear it the most Anatol, I often do not hear the, "I'm bored, am I in the right place? I feel trapped."

Gerry Lewis:

I don't often hear that in new starter careers. I often hear that in latter parts of careers when they have achieved, they've already reached a certain financial status, they've got the house here, the cottage here, the boat here, the vacations here. It's usually those people that come and say, "I've lost the umph." How could we rediscover purpose and passion in that scenario? I'm curious.

Anatol von Hahn:

So let me... This is going to sound really boring, but give me a minute.

Gerry Lewis:

Okay.

Anatol von Hahn:

If exactly that segment that you're talking about sort of mid career. Now if we ask them what is the absolute best business case you have ever written and try to go back and find it and read it and go through it. That would be the first thing I would do or if they can't find it, think about that business case that was just a killer business case, they may have gotten approved or not approved. But what did they do?

Anatol von Hahn:

And it's taking them away from them, and putting them into a subject or a market opportunity or a market threat, whatever it might have been. That's exactly what's happening to our career when we're in the middle of our career. And we're stuck for whatever good or bad reason, but we lost the edge. We're not excited.

Anatol von Hahn:

So what did we do in the business case? The first thing we did was a SWOT analysis. So let's take a look at the strengths, the weaknesses, the opportunities, and the threats, that's what we did in the business case. Well, now, let me start with the business case, and start with the most important business case, you're ever going to write, you're ever going to lead, and you're ever going to execute, which is your life.

Anatol von Hahn:

So do a business case on yourself. And understand the strengths, the weaknesses, the opportunities and threats, and which we'll explain, I think in greater detail why you are where you are? What is it that



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you're really good at? What is it you're not that good at? What are the opportunities out there? What are the things, the threats, including the things you don't like?

Anatol von Hahn:

And now pause. And just like we did in terms of strategy at business school, or strategy in business. Now, it's the strategy of you, the most important business case, and the most important project you're ever going to lead. And now bring that to reality. It goes back to what we were talking about earlier, when we talked about some of the characteristics that we see that I think forces you to look out if you're whatever, 40 something, and you're not feeling that umph, that edge that, "Oh, my God, I'm getting up in the morning. And the only thing I can think about is this project," is that you sit there and you say, "What do I want to look like when I'm 60 or when I'm 70 or whatever age but go well out there? What do I want to be like? What will I want to look like? What do I want to have done by that point?"

Anatol von Hahn:

And now do a strategic plan of bringing that vision to reality. So it brings the key elements, a vision, a strategy, a plan, a structure, the people I need around me, the benchmarks I have to hit, targets I have to hit and measuring every quarter from right then and there.

Anatol von Hahn:

And that's the business case. So I encourage you or the people listening to look at the best case they did, because that's probably what that case did. It looked at what do they want to achieve, the vision, how are they going to get there, the strategy? What is the plan to get there, the business plan? What's the organization structure, we got to set up to get there? Now the actual execution of it, measuring it and actually making adjustments just like we do in our careers.

Anatol von Hahn:

That I think is sort of the process that I would follow. But the content of those categories are uniquely different to each and every one of us. But it's something particularly in most businesses, all of us by the mid 40s, will have done something like that for somebody else. Now you're doing it for yourself. And guess what, it's not a product, it's not a service. It's not a business. It's a human. And it's the most important asset you have, you.

Gerry Lewis:

It's you, like I was just going to say, it's you and it's one of these things which aligns very nicely with something I read, which said, when you find yourself in that spot, which we were just talking about now, you've lost your mojo, you lost your edge, one of the strategies is to really what they call either take a real step back, give yourself some time, do some really good reflection, which is exactly what you're talking about is in this reflective period.

Gerry Lewis:

Because I find if you try to do it, while you're running towards your whatever project you're trying to finish or whatever, every day-to-day activities you're on, you don't have that space. You almost need that space to just think through this which I think is a really important part as well.

Gerry Lewis:

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I want to turn the tables, I want to... You are great at articulating purpose and passion and in all stages of the career. I want to turn the tables a little bit, I want to talk about you a little bit Anatol, because you retired from Scotiabank, you are, as you say, you have so much passion and purpose still in you. How did you navigate through your own process of rediscovery because what you're doing now is I think it's quite different from what you did as grouphead at Scotiabank. Walk me through the process. I guess that's what I wanted to know. What happened, how did you go through it? Were there valleys? I'm sure there are highs. Tell me a bit about that.

Anatol von Hahn:

Yeah, it's a roller coaster. So there are absolute highs and there are absolute lows. So I think if... Put it into perspective, overall I would say the 31 years at the bank, from one to 31 there are very few things that I would change. But there were plenty of times when I felt like oh my god, how am I going to get out of this.

Anatol von Hahn:

So I had learned by the time I left the bank at the age of 57, I had learned from others and for myself how to ride a roller coaster, how to, when you're high don't get too high. And when you're low, don't get too low. Try to find that middle balance because it's never as good as it is when it's high, never as bad as it is when it's at the low. And I'm talking about in a professional way.

Anatol von Hahn:

And so that that was probably a big lesson picked up. The other thing is, I sat back and saw that many of the lessons that I learned over those 31 years at Scotia and before that I worked at another bank for I guess, almost two years and in an accounting firm, as it turns out, which I would have never believed if somebody had said this to me. Lessons learned based on retrospective look backs are amazing.

Anatol von Hahn:

So if you can be honest with yourself and say, "Oh my god, did I ever do a crappy job over here?" And why that it was a crappy? Well, try not to blame somebody else or the economy or something. Now, are there things you could have done differently? Absolutely. So there were lots of lessons that I learned. So the first thing I did was exactly what I just described earlier was a SWOT analysis. What are the strengths, the weaknesses, the opportunities, and the threats, where I spent most of that time was the strengths and weaknesses, I found that really, really hard because you're naturally biased, sometimes too harsh on yourself, and some time much too soft on yourself.

Anatol von Hahn:

So getting a bit of help there by a trusted partner, and listening was really, really good. And whether that was a family member, a colleague that you trusted or a former colleague you trust that can give you that feedback in an honest way, was very helpful.

Anatol von Hahn:

So the basis was the SWOT analysis. If I look at my own journey, I had done something called a lifeline when I got out of university, now back in 81, I guess, and I was coming out of the Quebec angular schools, our university system. It was really hard coming out of the angular system getting a job that starts in the years post Rene Levesque.

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Anatol von Hahn:

And so somebody suggested that I do this exercise in a headhunting firm. It was magic, although I don't think I thought of it as magic back then with the benefit of time and then later, at Harvard, I did the same thing. It was a week long program that they had inside another program was Lifeline. In essence, what Lifeline is a little bit what I described earlier is put yourself sometimes well into the future, or that your date of retirement or somewhere in the far future.

Anatol von Hahn:

What do you want to have accomplished between now and then? And what is your journey? And it's based on three lines? What do you want to do for yourself? What do you want to do for what you consider family and family doesn't have to be blood family, it can be religious family, it can be your community, it's whatever you consider family.

Anatol von Hahn:

And the third, and in that order is your professional life. So the concept is, work is an enabler. Your career is an enabler to fulfill your personal and your family needs. And work is what's going to help you get there. It's not your purpose. So it's just a fundamental shift in thinking.

Anatol von Hahn:

At 57, as I say, I graduated early from Scotiabank, which is a great honor. I left 57. And I was too early to be retired. I just was not... But I did have this Lifeline exercise, which every year to two years I would look at and I would make tweaks and we would make decisions in line with what that long term objective was, and still is. And so 57, I sat back and said, "I knew what I wanted to do when I'd retire at whatever 63 or 65."

Anatol von Hahn:

Well, maybe I accelerate that. And that was to do something entrepreneurial, something charitable, and a lot family. And so those were the three elements, the problem was at 57, I had no idea. I knew what I wanted family. I knew what I was doing charitably. I didn't know what I wanted to do entrepreneurial. So I had to really dig in. And earlier, I'd mentioned the concept of forcing luck or bringing luck or inviting luck in. I think I was very fortunate with a finance or financial institution background that, that time, the whole tech wave had taken off, but hadn't taken off yet in the FinTech space.

Anatol von Hahn:

So I started getting calls, irrespective of what I was going through. My SWOT analysis and all these things, I was getting calls from people at companies, very small, early stage companies, saying, "I read somewhere that you used to work in a bank, and whatever it is, Latin America, or Mexico or Canada or this or that. "Could you spend the day with us, because we have this knockout product, we just don't know how to bring it to market," or others would call and say I have this amazing product, but I don't know how to... Does it work for a bank? Could you give us an opinion. So in any event.

Anatol von Hahn:

I started to take these calls and started to go, and boom, the path just opened. And before I knew it, I was helping these companies, before we knew it, I met others that were doing similar things, a number

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of us ended up investing together as angel investors, we respected each other, we have very similar values, both personal and professional.

Anatol von Hahn:

And so a group of us, a couple of these companies did exceptionally well, very early. And so we said, "Whoa, they need more money, and we can't give it to them. Let's set up a fund." And so we started a fund. You can sort of see some of the things were structured and planned and thought through. And some of the things just happened.

Gerry Lewis:

Just happened.

Anatol von Hahn:

And that group of six is today a group of six, we're now on to our next fund. And we make decisions, if all six of us don't agree, we will not do it. And there's a lot of respect between us. It's really interesting. Where will it go to? No time will tell. But I think it's in the right direction. The journey was one, there was some low points. At 57 being retired when you thought you were going to retire at 63 or 65. Now that wasn't a high, that was pretty low. But you work your way out of it, or I worked my way out of it. But there was a framework that I worked through. I didn't just let fate take its course. I helped it.

Gerry Lewis:

Well, I think that your reference to the Lifeline is the powerful one, and it seems like it's one of those things that have, it's part of your regular thinking process. And I think that it's in that thinking process that kind of guided you even in the low points and the high point. It was the beacon, it became a beacon for you throughout. And Anatol you say you are the receiver of luck I have heard or read that people who work very hard, often luck will appear.

Gerry Lewis:

So the harder you work, the more luck you're going to find. So I believe you are the personified version of that line because you're such a hard worker. So luck has come in and you've taken that opportunity. I want to conclude our discussion and I know we can go on forever talking you and I.

Gerry Lewis:

I want to end on something I value from you very much and it stemmed from a video we did, this many years Anatol called the Best Advice video and it was for a different reason. But the concept of the name of the video still, I would say was one of my favorite videos to ever do because the concept was very simple. What's your best advice? And I want to go to you now on that same premise of that title of the video on to fronts, what's the great advice you've learned from others, leaders, mentors, coaches along the way as it relates to purpose and passionate work?

Gerry Lewis:

And then I'm going to turn to you and what's your best advice, your own to part with our listeners. But let's begin with people you've learned from. What best advice do you take from them.

Anatol von Hahn:

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So let me give you one who I've never met in my life, I've only read about him. And this is a fellow by name of Matsushita who's the founder of JVC, Panasonic. He was in essence, orphaned, he was left to his own devices under the age of 10 with no education in Japan, in rural Japan, and he gets on a train, a true story, gets on a train, and ends up in Tokyo, and learns a skill on lightbulbs.

Anatol von Hahn:

And ultimately takes that which is sheer determination and energy. And when we think of a valley, what bigger valley can you think of than being a young individual in a country that's war torn, that has no education, no family, no money, and he's orphaned in a city, he doesn't know. And he turns out to build what is one of the world's biggest electronics company and a magnificent company.

Anatol von Hahn:

If I take a lesson, there are two big ones that I think are for me worth sort of looking at is not if he could do it anybody can... Anything we all face is easy. It's not. It's how he persevered and constantly took lessons that he learned, things that he observed, and intuition that he had to build what became the empire of JVC, Panasonic. A guy who's written a lot on it, Professor Christensen at Harvard, has written a number of books and there was one full day session on the life of Matsushita, where I just I still have the notes going back, this was in 1996-97 of just the nuggets of lessons from this one person who I've never met.

Anatol von Hahn:

The other which was interesting later in life, when things were going well in the company. So just especially, as we think of the pandemic, when things were going well, he would get sick, and would take a leave of absence as CEO of the group, when there was any type of crisis in the company or around the company, he would get healthy, and he would thrive.

Anatol von Hahn:

So imagine him if he was still alive, which he's not, if he was alive today during the pandemic, he would not be unhappy, he would not be bored, he would not feel trapped. In fact, he would feel liberated, he would feel empowered. And he would feel like the world needs him in order to improve it, as opposed to what generally we're feeling.

Gerry Lewis:

Correct.

Anatol von Hahn:

He's a really interesting person to read about. I imagine psychiatrists and psychologists go bananas on this guy, because he is so different. Yet, he is so amazing. So he's one. Another person who I would say I've learned a lot of wisdom from is I don't know if you ever met him, he was head of Latin America for Scotia, a fellow by the name of Roy Scott, who's now 80 years old, sells golf's. I don't think he runs anymore, travels around the world. He always had, I don't know if always but this whatever, almost 30 years that I've known him, huge amount of balance in his life, exceptionally passionate about why he did what he was doing for the bank.

Anatol von Hahn:

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He was opening Latin America for them. He was the first region head that they had in Latin America. This is going back in the 60s. And he made a point by the time I came to Latin America, which is 20 some odd years later, the amount of sharing of wisdom, sharing of knowledge, there was nothing that was held back. And it wasn't just to me, it was to all of us, to make sure that we would not make the same mistakes he did. We would learn from what he did. And we would take this and accomplish his long-term vision, which was to make sure that the bank had strong a retail commercial and corporate operation throughout Latin America, his view was by 2050.

Anatol von Hahn:

So well beyond probably his own lifetime. So he had a vision of his life and then brought the work vision in to be even past what would be his life and extended that, he after retirement sat on the board of a number of companies. I just have a lot of time for him plus he's a friend, but the wisdoms, the nuggets of wisdom, he'd never forced them on anyone but he offered them to everyone. That's a big lesson and was a big lesson for me.

Anatol von Hahn:

And then lastly you said in terms of my own I think the biggest thing I could maybe leave as much for myself for yourself and anyone listening is really understand what you want, not what others want of you. And once you understand what you want, live your life. Live by your values. And that often means having to say no to things that otherwise you would say, "Well why not? It's not in my value system."

Anatol von Hahn:

And then I would put my own squad in place, and constantly adjust. This is not one of these, I turned it on and then I turned it off and I turned it on. It really is about constantly adjusting because you don't... As surfers would tell you, the amount time you're at the top of the wave is less than 1% of the time, about 80% of the time you're sitting in the water waiting for waves, and about 19% of the time you're trying to get to the top of the wave.

Anatol von Hahn:

Do not expect to be at the top of the wave, you're constantly working to get there. And 80% of the time you're wading in the water until the right wave comes close to breaking, close to where you are, so you can ride it. That would be mine, live your values, do your own SWOT. And understand that there are periods that you're just going to have to ride through, just make sure that you're riding it through for the right reason to get to where you need to. And make adjustments if you need to. Try not to do them drastically, because they're painful, it's a lot easier to do small changes than one massive, large one.

Gerry Lewis:

Anatol, first of all, I am really glad you said yes when I asked you to join me in this conversation about purpose and passion. I'm even more pleased after hearing you speak about this, because I think it defines for me, certainly, and I hope to our listeners as well, that purpose and passion does not just happen, it does take work.

Gerry Lewis:

And I think the more work you do for yourself, thinking about it, planning it, reflecting on it, tweaking it, but always maintaining some sense of control is going to get you to where you need to go. And I think that what you have shared with us is something that I will probably re-listen to when I hit my valleys

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because I do as well. I have my highs, I have my lows. And I think this is one of those things that you need to kind of go through to reprocess, reflect, and rethink to make sure we're all on track.

Gerry Lewis:

So with that I thank you so much for your time. And I certainly hope we can have another conversation at some point, perhaps just on advice, because I can listen to that for a very long time.

Anatol von Hahn:

It's wonderful. And I've got to say it's as much fun doing this with you. And you're as great at summarizing as it was when we were working together going across the country and as you did for many others including for myself. Just an absolute treat that you're able to bring it together. Thank you.

Gerry Lewis:

Thank you very much Anatol. Thanks for listening to another episode of GLINC Outside The Box. I'm Gerry Lewis.