Evan Ryan:

We can allow the computer to be a great employee or a great assistant for you as you do your job. And then you can be even more of a hero to your customers or to your employer or to your team or to your employees or whoever it might be.

James Robert Lay:

Greetings and hello. I am James Robert Lay and welcome to episode 222 of the Banking on Digital Growth podcast. Today's episode is part of the exponential insight series, and I'm excited to welcome Evan Ryan to the show. Evan is the founder of Teammate AI, who is helping organizations scale their businesses using artificial intelligence.

And over the past five years, Ryan has helped hundreds of businesses save millions of hours using AI and everything from small task to very complex multi-day processes. Evan is also the author of, AI as Your Teammate: Electrify Growth Without Increasing Payroll, which is exactly what we're going to be talking about today.

So that together we can demystify the complexities of AI for you, the dear listeners and transform that complexity into simplicity so that you can identify opportunities at your FinTech or your financial brand to maximize your future digital growth potential. Welcome to the show, Evan. It is so good to share time with you today, buddy.

Evan Ryan:

Thanks for having me. I'm really excited.

James Robert Lay:

Before we get into talking about your book, AI as Your Teammate, what's good for you right now, personally or professionally? It's always your pick to get started.

Evan Ryan:

Well, what's not? I'm traveling the world right now as a digital nomad with my lovely girlfriend. We're both still running our company, so we're still working our jobs, but we're right now, I'm taking this call from Zagreb, Croatia.

A few weeks ago, I was in Barcelona for the month. I've spent a month in Italy and I'll be going to Turkey and then off to France and Switzerland, all sorts of fun places. But I guess, it's really, what's not? And on the professional side, I think we're shipping great products.

My team is shipping great products right now, and I just love, love, love working with them. Just actually the other day we shipped a product that's made a massive impact for one of our customers. I'm excited to talk about it. But yeah, I think everything's pretty much going well.

James Robert Lay:

Yeah. It's so important I think right now with all of the confusion and the chaos and the conflict that we perceive is going on, how critical. And may maybe we'll just start here and then we'll get into the book because I've got some thinking on this.

Maybe the most important technology to master in the age of AI as I'm calling it is the technology that sits between your ears. Because it's like how you perceive what's going on in the world around you and the need to find clarity. Because the lack of clarity, I think makes people feel very uncomfortable with the idea of AI. It's so big, it's so massive. Where do we even begin with that? You wrote the book on it. What's your take on that there?

Evan Ryan:

Yeah, there's enough chaos in the world right now and it doesn't matter if you're listening to this in 10 years, there's enough chaos in the world right now, there always will be.

James Robert Lay:

Mm-hmm.

Evan Ryan:

To kind of satisfy our need for chaos. I think as it pertains to AI, the most difficult part is defining it and understanding what it is and what it is not.

James Robert Lay:

Yes.

Evan Ryan:

So I think where anxiety and where hesitation comes in with AI is in not knowing what it is or what it could be. And so I think, yes, the best thing to master is to master your mind. But defining AI is a great start and in kind of overcoming the possible fear. And we just define it as data with a task.

So what that means is that we're taking something that is currently being done by you, but it's on your computer screen and we're saying, "Well, why does it have to be done by you? Why can't it just be done by the computer?"

James Robert Lay:

Yeah.

Evan Ryan:

Well, what would that leave for you? So let's go through the, what if. So if you take the stuff that you do on your computer and you just allow the computer to do that, well, what does that leave you doing? Well, it leaves you doing things that are creative. It leaves you doing things that have never been done before. It leaves you using your imagination. It leaves you communicating and creating personal connections.

James Robert Lay:

Yeah.

Evan Ryan:

Right? It leaves you doing these things that are, I think the real reason that we get out of bed in the morning. It allows you to not be spending so much time doing boring things like moving data from Excel into PowerPoint.

James Robert Lay:

Right. Right. And I think that right there is so important to cue in on. Because if you think of this idea of the doing and in my second book, Banking on Change that I'm writing, I write about the four seasons for exponential growth. There's a season to learn, there's a season to think, there's a season to do, there's a season to review.

Where I see so many people get trapped though is in the doing of the work. And we even attach ourselves to that doing. But now enter AI, the age of AI. And as you write about in the book, AI is boundless leverage. And so I think we roll this back to provide some first and foremost clarity. Let's define what this is from your worldview. Because as you write about in the book part one, it's important to understand AI and its potential beyond these two letters, artificial intelligence. What's the story behind the story?

Evan Ryan:

Yeah. Yeah. So when I was a senior in college, it was 2016. So yet another time with plenty of chaos, it was right before the 2016 election. And I went to a conference and they had the number one ranked AI researcher in the world. And they actually [inaudible 00:06:49] speak about what you could do with AI back in 2016.

And at the time, he had a company that could better diagnose cancer from CT scans and MRIs than a team of board certified doctors. I thought, "Well, if that's what you can do now, what are you going to be able to do in 30 years or 40 years or 50 years?"

James Robert Lay:

Right.

Evan Ryan:

And for me personally, I don't like doing boring stuff. So for me, I try to live my life as interesting as I possibly can. I don't like doing things that are monotonous and I don't like doing the same thing twice. And so I thought, "Well, could you use AI to just get rid of all the boring stuff in your life?

And if you do that, then either you have more boring stuff or new boring stuff that you've created or you're just left with only interesting stuff. That sounds great." Now that's just what we try to help other people see is that the stuff that you do during the day, the stuff that you do that you don't even think about the fact that you're doing, you just do it because you got to do it.

And that's how you were taught to do it when you are in onboarding or when you're in school or when you were training or whatever it might be, that doesn't actually have to be the case. We can allow the computer to be a great employee or a great assistant for you as you do your job.

And then you can be even more of a hero to your customers or to your employer or to your team or to your employees or whoever it might be. So that's really where we focus is it's not about this big, complicated self driving cars or the Facebook algorithm or the Twitter algorithm or how many Twitter bots are there versus how many aren't there. It's not about that stuff. It's about can I do less boring stuff and more interesting stuff and lead a more enjoyable life and lead a life that's more fulfilling.

James Robert Lay:

I appreciate the title of the book first and foremost, AI as Your Teammate: Electrify Growth Without Increasing Payroll. And I'm really inspired by the works of, and the writings of Issy Sharp, who was the founder of the four seasons hotel.

He frequently spoke about the need to systematize the predictable so that we can humanize the exceptional. Or in your case, let's just do more interesting work and let the AI, the computer take on the mundane, the boring, the repeatable rote, if you will.

I want to get your take on this, common misconceptions that people have about having AI as a teammate. If there are the things that you hear, that you just disagree with, what would a few of those be off the top of your mind?

Evan Ryan:

The easiest one is that it's very expensive. It does not have to be very expensive. If you're doing something really complicated, maybe it is. If you are trying to do self-driving cars, then yes, AI is going to be very expensive. But if you're trying to take your latest Stripe transactions and you're trying to put them into QuickBooks, that's not very expensive.

If you're trying to populate insurance documents, because you run a multi-family office and have them be prepared so that all you have to do is review them, but you don't have to have that team member write them, that's not very creative and it's not very expensive.

So that's the first thing, it is not expensive at all. The second is that a lot of people think that in order to use AI, you have to be a developer or you have to hire a development team, even worse. I don't know very many people. I run a software company, but my favorite thing to do is ask people, "When's the last time that you redid your website?"

James Robert Lay:

Right.

Evan Ryan:

And they'll tell me it was a year ago or two years ago or three years ago. And then I ask, "And how'd that go? Was it an enjoyable experience for you? Or was it over budget and behind schedule and it was a pain to deal with?" And all these kinds of things. And almost universally people say, "Oh, well, it was that. And I didn't really enjoy it." And I think a lot of that comes down to having the wrong people.

James Robert Lay:

Yes.

Evan Ryan:

On the bus. And they can't imagine bringing in a development team. They're not technical, right? They're not running a software organization. So they don't want to bring in their own technical team. But you don't even need coders to do it. You can do this stuff without having a single bit of code and you can start using AI. I mean, for free in minutes.

James Robert Lay:

Low code, no code. Drag and drop, right?

Evan Ryan:

Drag and drop. There are AI platforms now that are 10 or 20 dollars a month that'll use AI to write all of your marketing copy for you.

James Robert Lay:

And I think it's an important note through this context of using AI and really viewing AI as a teammate. Because this is a thought experiment. It's what can, maybe what are one, two or three things that we can look at within our own organization?

And I would say dive deeper within your own department, whether that be marketing or sells or operations or HR. Because I think that's where the complexity comes back in. We think of AI at a broad organizational scope and we try to fit this into the organization.

But maybe if we brought it down to a team level or even smaller, an individual level. There was an article on The Financial Brand that noted a recommendation was looking to hire external AI talent.

But I say it's not just a talent, it's really identifying the business opportunities and the use cases first and foremost, because we're talking so much about people, but we don't even have a place to put these people yet alone, a problem to solve. Am I mistaken with this?

Evan Ryan:

Well, let's go back to your four seasons. Yours were learn and then think, and then do.

James Robert Lay:

Mm-hmm.

Evan Ryan:

And then reflect.

James Robert Lay:

Yeah.

Evan Ryan:

And where people want to start is they want to start by doing.

James Robert Lay:

Yeah.

Evan Ryan:

They're, "Okay, let's do it." And then the next thing that happens is they say, "What do we do?" And then it's, "Well, how can we use AI?" And so they kind of back their way into the four seasons, I think. At least that's what our experience is. But AI is, it's a high level strategic viewpoint for C-suite executives, but it's something that the lowest levels of the employee of the organization can be implementing.

James Robert Lay:

Yeah, exactly. And I think that they go to a conference or they read a white paper and then they get all excited about the potential. They bring that back into the team, the team doesn't see what they see. So now it's really, it's a communication challenge.

But I like going deeper within the organization from the top level to the team, from the team to the individual. One of my experiences of working with financial brands over the last 20 years is to create frameworks to simplify very complex ideas. And in your book, you have an AI success formula that might provide some clarity here. What's the formula for AI success?

Evan Ryan:

Yeah. So it starts with just understanding what you do in a day or in a week or in a month. And writing that down. Even quarterly still. I've now been doing this for eight, nine, 10 quarters. Even quarterly still, I write down the things that I do and I'm shocked at how much busy work I'm doing and how much I could be automating.

James Robert Lay:

Absolutely.

Evan Ryan:

I mean, it's just, it's never ending. It's never ending the opportunities to automate stuff. So it starts by just understanding, this is what I do in a day and then kind of creating a score around it.

So score that activity from a scale of one to five, where one means I absolutely hate it. I never want to do it again. It actually makes me angry. And five means, I love it. I wake up in the morning looking forward to doing this and it gives me a fulfillment. Start with the stuff that ranks as a one.

James Robert Lay:

Yeah.

Evan Ryan:

Preferably start at the stuff that ranks as a one and takes the most time.

James Robert Lay:

Yep.

Evan Ryan:

And then from there, you don't necessarily have to be the person who automates stuff, you can hire people to automate things, or you can use a tool like Zapier or like Microsoft Power Automate or IFTTT or whatever you might want to use. But start with the stuff that you hate because nobody likes to automate fun stuff, everybody likes to automate boring stuff.

James Robert Lay:

Right.

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Evan Ryan:

And then you can automate the new boring stuff as that comes up. But I think it's the easiest way for the low level employees to feel like they're getting something out of it and the C-suite to do change management.

James Robert Lay:

Yes, because you're in involving the entire organization through a transformation experience. And that's one of the biggest reasons we look at digital transformation initiatives having a 60 to 85 percent failure rate. And this has been confirmed by all the bigs, BCG, McKinsey, [inaudible 00:16:45]

It doesn't matter, it's the pattern are the same. The problem's not the technology, the problem's the people who are having to implement the technology. And they resist that change. And so you're involving them. And I like your daily practice of inventorying all of your activities because that allows for some pattern matching.

And then we have a very similar exercise because you kind of go through and is this distracting me? Can I delegate and elevate this? Or should I just delete this all together, because it's not creating any value and I've been doing this because it's the way that it's always been done?

When you look at, particularly through the lens of banking and the risk aversion and slow adoption, what are some roadblocks do you feel that could be holding leadership back? And then I want to circle back to one specific tool. I know it's getting a little tactical here, but it's something that I think is interesting, would be very helpful to talk through as a practical use case going forward. Let's talk roadblocks first.

Evan Ryan:

The biggest roadblock that I find in finance, in banking and largely just in industry is what if the AI does the wrong thing? There are kind of like, there are a couple of angles to go at it. The first is when a human does the wrong thing, then you can either reprimand the human or fire them or whatever.

But how do you fire an AI? The second is when a human does the wrong thing, the human can fix it. And when the AI does the wrong thing, then it might be more difficult to fix. Or maybe it happens and it happens at a greater scale. The wrong thing happens 10,000 times instead of once.

James Robert Lay:

Right.

Evan Ryan:

My question is... Actually, I'll tell you a story and then I'll ask the question. So when Facebook was starting to scale really big, Mark Zuckerberg was asked, "What's the difference between running an organization full of all these people and being in your dorm room?"And he said, "The biggest difference is that computers do what you tell, exactly what you tell them to do every single time without fail."

James Robert Lay:

Yep.

Evan Ryan:

"And humans don't." And so my question is what if you could free your humans up while getting even better reliability? So what if you could lower your error rate inside of your world, inside of your bank, inside of your documentation, your paperwork, your logging, whatever it might be, and you could get better output out of your employees? Or and you could increase your employee satisfaction and you lower your employee's turnover?

James Robert Lay:

As you're talking through this, you've used a couple of what if statements. And my developer days are coming back. And this is where I wanted circle back. You've used some and or statements. And you mention IFTTT.

Evan Ryan:

Mm-hmm.

James Robert Lay:

If that, then this. Let's roll this back and make this really, really practical for someone listening, who they might be thinking about AI, the conversation's happening at a boardroom level, maybe at a team level, but it's still, "I don't really get it. I don't really see the practicality of it." I mean, I think this is a really easy use case in almost everyday life, even personally. Number one, what is if IFTTT?

Evan Ryan:

IFTTT or Zapier or Power Automate, they're all competitors. They'll largely do the same thing. It's a platform that connects different pieces of software together.

James Robert Lay:

Yeah.

Evan Ryan:

That's it. So it connects Stripe with Excel or Google sheets with PayPal to use financial examples. Or Excel to Outlook. So when something happens in an Excel document, send me an email or send me a Slack message.

James Robert Lay:

Yeah.

Evan Ryan:

Those kinds of things. I think the easiest way to kind of get an intro, especially a financial intro to AI at financial institutions, at banks in particular is not to try to do an organizational overhaul.

There is no hill for a bank to storm that is, we are going to go take on AI and we're going to be the most digitally enabled company out there. Right? That is not the thing to do, I think if you're trying to have a long lasting AI impact inside of your organization.

What I would say is I would challenge just a few of the young people inside of your organization that are technologically savvy. And I would say, "First, write down everything that you do in a day. And then

second, use one of these tools like IFTTT or Zapier to try to automate a couple of your workflows. Just do it for you."

James Robert Lay:

Yes.

Evan Ryan:

And those people, if they can automate those workflows, you can, they get longer lunches because they're getting the same amount of stuff done. Or there's some sort of incentive there. But start with the young people that are already technologically savvy and allow them to automate aspects of their day.

If it's something that they really enjoy, if they're finding a lot of value out of it, then the word can spread or they can become the people that are helping other people automate things. It's not something where you're going to say, "This is the North star and that's where we're going." It really is kind of a grassroots campaign inside of banks.

James Robert Lay:

As you're talking through this, and I think about those four seasons for exponential growth, learn, think, do, review. There's so much learning opportunity here to first and foremost, see things differently than how we saw things before.

Because when you see things differently than how you saw them before, you what? You think differently. And this is a fantastic exercise to create some awareness into what those opportunities might be. And then, like you said, there's no hill to storm, pilot program, small wins, incremental steps.

Progress is greater than perfection. But there's also opportunities for collaboration here. And Dan Sullivan, who's connected us together through strategic coach, he has such a great, simple model. When you're going through a lot of these thought exercises, the complexity arises when, how are we going to do this? No. Who? Who do we need to collaborate with to make said reality possible?

And if all creation begins in the mind, that's the whole thought exercise here. I know we're getting super philosophical, but I like going into this space. Who does not have to be a person anymore, who can be a platform. And that is a big transformation of thinking, I believe for a lot of leaders in the financial services space.

But if we can make that one small shift in vision, then the exponentiality begins to slowly open up. And what's your take on that? The idea of putting the, who before the, how in solving some of these, I would say smaller problems or ways to optimize something that we're already doing to make it even that much better?

Evan Ryan:

I think that you're right on the money there. I would say that let's go back again to the four seasons. So learn, think, do, and then grow. Well, it's very easy to say, how do I learn or where do I go to learn? Versus who do I need to learn?

So by implementing this type of a methodology where you take the couple of young tech savvy people inside of your organization, they're learning, but they're also learning how it could be broader spread throughout the bank, throughout the institution. And then once they, you can almost treat them as like little mini internal consultants.

James Robert Lay:

Yeah.

Evan Ryan:

And then once they present that to you, then you can think about, well, what are the ways to help spread this out inside of the organization to incentivize people properly so that they're starting to use this? What are the ways that we could see the benefits here? Or what are the priorities for something like this? But it starts with not, how do I learn or where do I learn, it starts with who needs to learn, I think.

James Robert Lay:

Yes.

Evan Ryan:

You can correct me on this. And then...

James Robert Lay:

No, you're spot on with your thinking.

Evan Ryan:

They're learning, they're thinking, they're doing, and then they take it to you so that you can learn, think, and do.

James Robert Lay:

Yeah. And that's the whole thing is the way that I'm thinking about this when writing Banking on Change is instead of trying to transform at an organizational level, then shove that transformation down to the team and then from the team to the individual where there's going to be a lot of inherent resistance, you start at the individual, then work to the team, then work to the org.

And it's this kind of ancient wisdom of sometimes you're the teacher, sometimes you're the student. Either way, there's always going to be a lesson to learn here. I want to come back to another very practical application when it came to your own experience of writing the book. I think this is such a meta perspective, but you used AI to write a book about AI. You literally and figuratively used AI as your teammate in this process. What's the story there?

Evan Ryan:

Yeah. So Dan Sullivan, co-founder of Strategic Coach is a great quote. He said, "The author and the typer of the book do not have to be the same person." And when I was sitting down to write the book, what I did not want to have happen was I did not want to stare at blank cursors in a word document and click, click, click and where did you start?

So instead I made a rough outline and then I had six or seven people interviewing me for two hours each about that outline. And they'd basically just say, "What do you want to say?" Or "What do you mean?" Or "Can you tell me a little bit more about this?" And we used AI to transcribe all that.

Then what I did was I copied and I pasted it into the word document, the transcriptions. And now, instead of being the author or the typer, I was the author and the editor. Then we went through 12 rounds of edits, all that took place, including 12 rounds of edits in six weeks. And it was off to the publisher.

James Robert Lay:

Wow.

Evan Ryan:

And I was still running the organization at the time.

James Robert Lay:

Wow. And I have a lot of connection to that because writing one book, working on a second book, we're leveraging AI as well from the transcription perspective. There's a speed there.

Same thing like this podcast, this podcast is going to go and get transcribed by AI for literally pennies compared to what it would take for someone to do the full transcription. And then that goes off to a writer, but I'm even looking for other ways to leverage all of the content that we create with AI.

So for example, then you can reverse engineer an article and then turn that into video content. I mean, there's so... Once again, the ideas, that's it. It's just, it's what do you want to do? What do you want to do? Really create a... And I think that's why vision casting is so critical.

And coming back to those four seasons for exponential growth, break free from the doing at least once every 90 days. To just stop and pause so that you can review what you've done, learn about those experiences.

And what's the kind of the one or two key insights. And then just take time to think about what you want to do to do even better going forward. And then really consider the who before the how, and that AI can be your teammate and there's collaboration opportunities.

It's really abundant. On that note, you've been collaborating with Bill Bloom on an initiative here within the financial services space, Diane Money. Bill and I have had some great conversation on the podcast about the journey so far. How has that experience been from your lens? Because it is a collaborative effort here.

Evan Ryan:

I think just like there's a lot of confusion and there's a lot of hesitancy around AI, I think there's also a lot of confusion and a lot of hesitancy in the minds of lots of people all over the world, especially as inflation is rising, hopefully turning over, but inflation is rising, as costs are going up, as it seems like there might be more chaos than usual in how do I handle my personal finances?

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James Robert Lay:

Yeah.

Evan Ryan:

And the mission of Diane Money is to put your financial life on autopilot. So really using AI to say, this is how you need to live your financial life in order to achieve your goals. I think what's been interesting for me in the collaboration is seeing how the legacy industry works and seeing, oh my gosh, there are so many ways that the legacy industry could modernize. Not just to create more value for their customers, but to capture more value that's been lost. One of the big things is all the data that could be collected.

James Robert Lay:

Absolutely.

Evan Ryan:

I mean, it is stunning to me as I learn more and more about the data that could be collected, that's not being collected. And then on top of that, the data that's being created. I heard a story. This is not part of the financial industry, but it's similar in the financial industry. I heard a story.

There was an airline that was valued at 10 billion dollars. They took all of their data and they put it in a separate company. They had that separate company valued and that company was valued at 40 billion dollars.

James Robert Lay:

Wow.

Evan Ryan:

Which means that the airline operates airplanes as a way to collect data. [inaudible 00:31:49] I heard that story from [inaudible 00:31:51]. And I think that's airlines.

James Robert Lay:

Yeah.

Evan Ryan:

What about finance? And so I think it's just been very interesting to see how slowly the legacy organizations move. I think what that means, if I'm a banker and I'm listening to this right now, bottom of the first inning, top of the second inning with AI, still so, so early.

The hype is still super real there, but I mean, there's such an enormous competitive advantage that can be gained by using this and by using your team to create an even more human connection with your clients or in new initiatives, or to expand your territory.

James Robert Lay:

That's a great point about your team, not just AI as your teammate, but also learning together, thinking together as a team, because we understand. I mean, we can go back a hundred years to the writings of Napoleon Hill and the idea of the mastermind and where...

I mean, that's why I'm getting so much, literally energy from this conversation today because our minds are syncing up here and we're creating. We're literally creating together. This happens so many times on this podcast. And you could have a hundred ideas, but it's just that one idea to leverage that next potential exponential leap as an individual, as a team, as an organization.

As we start to wrap up here, I want to bring it all back down really, really small, really, really tight. Because let's talk about next steps. To establish a habit of thinking about AI as your teammate, what is one small, simple step that they can commit to today to begin to establish that habit going forward on their own journey of growth?

Evan Ryan:

I think just to provide one clarifying point. What you and what your listeners are looking for is practical AI today.

James Robert Lay:

Yes.

Evan Ryan:

And the fastest way to never readdress AI again, is to dive into the research or to dive into academia or in the lower level workings of how AI works. That is not the place to start.

James Robert Lay:

No.

Evan Ryan:

The place to start is to read about who else is using AI and how are they using it. So what are the ways that people are automating things. Look at the case studies for a company called UiPath. UiPath builds a suite of software solutions for automation and for AI. Look at their case studies and start to understand how is everybody else using this.

And then you can start to think, you can start to orient your minds around it. Their use cases probably aren't going to be the same as yours. But if you're somebody who's looking to automate your accounts receivables in whatever form that could be, AR is AR.

And so you can apply that knowledge to your organization, to your business processes, to whatever your receivables model might be. So I would definitely, definitely, definitely start there and just read up who else is doing this, how are they doing this, how are they implementing it, I mean.

And then discussing it with your team. What are the ways that we could use this? Properly thinking about incentives for your team to be using it. I think that's really where you want to start and then let who's take care of the implementation.

James Robert Lay:

I can't help, but see some type of an AI summit or cohort come together with this to where it runs on a 90 day model. So over the period of 90 days as an individual, you are learning, reading, hearing. But

more importantly, you're also doing some thinking, reflective writing, really kind of distilling down the patterns.

That's the core essence of all of this. It's pattern matching. Because if you can distill down the patterns. And I'm a big believer by, and had a keynote about this a couple of years ago, called look outside to grow inside.

I think the more that we look outside of the industry, the more that we can gain inspiration of what we can do within the industry. So you learn and think as an individual and then you come together as a cohort every quarter and you block out a day.

And the first half of the day, what'd you learn? But you distill it down to maybe one or two, no more than three key insights. And then out of these three key insights, here's one practical application. Because I am 100% in agreement with you, it's the practicality here. It's like, okay, here's the practical application.

And then maybe you have five or seven people in this cohort, no more than 10, and everyone's presenting in the morning and then you up vote it in the afternoon. Now let's prioritize here what's real, what's maybe not so real. And then we get to our top three.

And then out of that, okay, we're going to pick one or three, no more than three, to begin to pilot over the next quarter. And then we're going to come back and repeat this process. I don't know, as you're talking through this right here, it's like something's developing in my mind to make this reality for the, to make it a practical reality instead of just all of this theory and academia, I think so many people get stuck in.

Evan Ryan:

I think that this is worth a further conversation. Yeah. We're actually seeing a huge need for something like this as well right now. And it's really interesting to say, I read your book. It was so good. Where do I get started?

James Robert Lay:

You know.

Evan Ryan:

Or how do I get started? And it's like, well, how do you want to do it?

James Robert Lay:

Right.

Evan Ryan:

And I think bringing it into people's offices or bringing it into people's work lives and saying, this is what works for a lot of people, but let's talk about what works for you, is a really interesting way of going about it.

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James Robert Lay:

And it's definitely worth another conversation because I think there's so much cross alignment. We can learn so much from others. And I think we particularly, when we get into a leadership position, it's like we think we have to know at all. And that just can no longer be the case in the age of AI. Transformation's happening too quickly.

Evan Ryan:

Right. And I'll tell you, I, this was a couple years ago, but I had a, we had a problem inside of our organization. It was a big problem. And I went to my team, I said, "I run the AI company." I went to my team, I said, "How are we going to solve this? Who do we need to hire to solve this?"

James Robert Lay:

Yeah.

Evan Ryan:

My team comes back two days later, they said, "We think that we've found an AI that could do this for us." That AI has saved us. It's $30 a month. It has saved us $130,000 a year.

James Robert Lay:

Wow.

Evan Ryan:

And so having that kind of a discussion surrounding I have this problem or I have this need, or this is a thing that we really need to be reliable, how can we do that? That kind of thing pays for itself and it pays for the investment of the time, it pays for the change management immediately because now I sleep well every night knowing that that AI is working for me.

James Robert Lay:

I think even it's deeper than that. And I think about this through the lens of financial services, whether you're in marketing or sells or ops or technology, or it doesn't matter what, where you're at. But something to consider as we wrap up this conversation in a question to take forward, how many millions or even billions of dollars are you losing because you just don't see something because you just can't see it, because you just don't know?

And that's okay. That's where I believe learning and growing and thinking together helps us see things different to think different. But it's also important that we feel different too, because otherwise the future becomes a predictable past. The desire to actually turn that insight into action has to be greater than the desire to remain the same.

But when we reach that tipping point to apply that knowledge, to view AI as a teammate, that is where we can act upon that knowledge to do even better and to stop losing those millions or billions of dollars. Evan, this has been a fantastic conversation. Someone wants to continue the discussion with you, what is the best way for them to reach out and say, hello, number one? And number two, where can they get a copy of the book?

Evan Ryan:

Email me, Evan@teammateai.com. I will actually get it. I do have an AI that works in my inbox, but I will actually get your email. And you can get a copy of the book, AI as Your Teammate on Amazon or anywhere where you get books.

James Robert Lay:

Get the book, connect with Evan, learn from Evan, grow with Evan. This has been a lot of fun, Evan. Thank you so much for joining me for another episode of Banking on Digital Growth.

Evan Ryan:

Thanks for having me. I really enjoyed it.

James Robert Lay:

As always and until next time, be well, do good and make your bed.