

Oona Rokyta:

... You build a community around your product. They're the ones that are the first to tell you when something is off the rails for what they expected, or when there's a need that's unmet, but they're also the first then to be your customer support.

James Robert Lay:

Greetings and hello. I am James Robert Lay and welcome to episode 218 of the Banking on Digital Growth podcast. Today's episode is part of the Digital Growth journey series, and I'm excited to welcome Oona Rokyta to the show. Oona is the CEO and co-founder of Lance the first smart business banking account for the self-employed. And I'm excited to share her story of growth with you today. Welcome to the show, Oona it is so good to share time with you.

Oona Rokyta:

Thanks so much for having me, really excited about our conversation today.

James Robert Lay:

It has been a long time coming for sure. And before we get into your digital growth journey and the good work that you are doing over at Lance, what is good for you right now, personally, or professionally? It's your pick to get started?

Oona Rokyta:

Oh, I am really enjoying getting back into the health circuit in terms of training. Jumped into my first marathon of the year in June and have another one coming. And just signed up for a metric bike ride with a friend too. So I'm trying to really keep that balance between work and health.

James Robert Lay:

So I'm not that far behind you. I've got a couple of marathons behind me, but my wife and I, we have four kids. And so, she told me, she said, "No more marathons till they get a little bit older, because as you know, those long weekend runs leading up to it."

Oona Rokyta:

Oh yeah.

James Robert Lay:

So I said, "I agree." But I need something to work towards, so I'll get back into a half. I'm 40 and so my next big health goal, fitness goal, half Ironman.

Oona Rokyta:

Oh man, I'll be right there with you.

James Robert Lay:

Well, let's do it together.

Oona Rokyta:

Yeah.

James Robert Lay:

So my sister-in-law, she's done a couple of halves over the years. Probably, I think she's done maybe four or five at this point. And then my brother-in-law, he's gone all out into the full Ironman spectrum, couple here in the states, one down in Mexico. So I love it, because there's such a connection and correlation between, as we were talking before we recording, like health, wealth, wellbeing, or as you have on your Instagram health, wealth, joy, right? It's all interconnected. And that's where I want to bring this back into just your own digital growth journey, your own story, going back to 2018, when you launched Lance and what was the inspiration, why did you decide to go down this path to start the first smart business banking account for the self-employed when you come from outside of the industry? What's the why?

Oona Rokyta:

Yeah, absolutely. Well, it was big strong, why of my own personal frustration. Like we were talking about earlier, just don't come from the finance industry and my parents themselves were artists. So really did not give me any sort of coaching as a young adult. They've got a lot of other skills, but financial management was not one of them, especially coming into this country from another, weren't familiar with the disciplines, let alone all the retirement planning that goes into managing your future financial health here. And as I worked for myself with a number of startups and coaching them in PR and marketing as a freelancer, I found that the irregular conversations with an accountant are those that were more tax related. Really, weren't doing it for me in terms of staying on top of my finances and kind of playing around with the metrics.

Oona Rokyta:

I mean, we have a common interest in terms of where athletic endeavors, when I was either a collegiate swimmer or now training for marathons, I can play around with my workouts and figure out how to reach my goals. And I feel like you can do some of that on your finances and we certainly have kind of budgeting apps and the like, but there's nothing to really play around in the palm of your hand in an app, in a banking setting even, how to address multiple income streams, how to appropriately invest in different needs along the way. And that's really what started kind of the conversations with friends of mine in 2018, serving people, I got excited kind of incorporating the company. Because, I know that it was a great idea to kick off and then it's really evolved into the last year of becoming a neobanking platform that does all those things

James Robert Lay:

And I think that's the key lesson to be gained here. Number one, it took some time and I think like any great endeavor, whether it's training for a marathon, preparing for an Ironman, it takes time leading up to the point to start that race. But then once you start the race, the race is really only just beginning. And so, there's a lot of, I think, mindset that goes into this. And I appreciate the perspective of looking at ways that we can continue to just like we can optimize our health or our training performance, we can optimize our financial performance as well. I want to stay kind of in this past to present concept just for a bit, because when you launch this, and it is a neobank, it is a neo platform and I'm greatly appreciative of the work that you're doing, because I think it is important work. It's meaningful work. What have been some of the biggest lessons that you have learned along the way, going back from like moment of conception to really getting this up and running and inviting people in?

Oona Rokyta:

Yeah, I think there have been a few and I was thinking about before we hit record, a few of those lessons. I think the first, is really digging into something you're passionate about. I think that can't be overstated. There aren't any overnight successes when you're launching a startup, great idea. And so, it has to be

something that you wake up excited about every morning and that you're committed to. And the closer it is to a personal need, I think the more that you can keep referencing that or referencing people that you actually know that need that kind of solution and falling closely on that is chase those high expectation customers, those HXCs as they're known in the startup space. It's more valuable than ever, especially in today's market to focus on a niche audience, that is going to have those high expectations.

Oona Rokyta:

And then by default is also going to be part of building that solution with you and even paying for that solution ahead of you having built it fully. I think that's really what communities and investors are going to look for today. And it's something that we focused in on. We certainly market ourselves to freelancers, independent workers, the self-employed. But if you look at who we're building for, who we're attracting, it's people that are very much in the middle class and highly scalable. And we have certain terms that we referenced for that type of audience. So really going small before you go big is a thorough approach we think. And then getting paid before you've fully built. I think that a lot of startups are going to go through that learning, especially the next two years as the there's these recession, current concerns.

James Robert Lay:

As you're talking through a couple of keywords stood out in my mind. Number one, you mentioned niche, you mentioned community and then also I want to maybe bring this back to your background of marketing. How do you think that has influenced you, your marketing background, your way of looking at things maybe a little bit differently than traditional financial services, because I'm hearing Allison Netzer in my mind with her book, that's about to come out, Think Like A Brand, Not A Bank. It's just like alarm bells are going off. What role has this maybe a marketing first perspective to growth played for you in this journey here?

Oona Rokyta:

Yeah. I think that there's been two standout ways we've really presented ourselves differently, than a lot of other neobanks and frankly than a lot of accountants would in this space, because our Neo banking aspirations are really to help people with their accounting and their wealth management. And the first, is really be thoughtful about the brand, about the presentation, try to stand out, try to be really accessible to people. And so, we took almost a gamified approach or game like even presentation.

Oona Rokyta:

You look at our website, you look at our app, repeatedly gets the comments of being super slick and exciting to play with and go into on a daily basis. And then two, is we really leaned into being active kind of spokespeople in the space and talking directly with people. So even from the earliest days, I was doing webinars and workshops and stuff, even with groups of 20, 30 people at a time about their finances, about how to get on top of them. And not only were those great kind of focus groups for us as a company, but there were a way for people to feel how invested we were in this space and how much we expect to grow with them over the course of time.

James Robert Lay:

What role do you think your focus around a niche of freelancers has played in this journey so far? Because, like you said, you got to go small before you can go big or to use the words of Dan Sullivan, "You need to simplify before you multiply." Where are the opportunities maybe, where have the opportunities been for you here, first? And then second, when thinking about other financial brands, I think they tend to shy away from niche. So let's start with you first and then we'll come back to the larger financial brand conversation here.

Oona Rokyta:

Absolutely. So in terms of our niche, we really focused on people, like I said, that our middle class. We put it in terms of income, because we find that independence kind of will work multiple jobs at once. And those jobs aren't always aligned with one particular vertical, if you will, like being a food truck vendor or a coffee roaster or a DJ, but rather people will partner those jobs with different skills and interests, even. Like the word that swims around in the space of being multi passionate.

Oona Rokyta:

And so, what we focused on is more so where can we be the most relevant with an app that helps organize your finances? It's likely not to be for low income gig workers. That are really dependent on marketplaces, nor is it likely to be highly relevant for high six figure earners who are perhaps a doctor, a lawyer and defaulting to just hiring an accountant. So our sweet spot is going to be with those folks that are making 50,000 to \$150,000 a year, maybe scaling quickly from that point, but are really confused about which patchwork quilt of tools they should be using and instead they can just use Lance from day one.

James Robert Lay:

Yeah. And how has this, we'll call it focus helped to, and I think it's important to note for the dear listener visit lance.app and you'll see the positioning here and how niche provides something and this is in your primary area of focus in your navigation. It's called community. Because, this is really about building a community or there's a fantastic book on the subject called The Business Of Belonging. When you have this level of focus, it does allow you to build a community as almost a moat, if you will, to invite people in through the drawbridge, but then also kind of build a protective stance and in the marketplace?

Oona Rokyta:

Absolutely. Yeah. I think that this is something that people are still trying to wrap their arms around today. There're great organizations that are focused on community building and coaching professionals. I was fortunate to work with some fantastic leaders in this space, HoneyBook, one of our portfolio companies of the VC I worked at and this really does become emotive over time. You build a community around your product. They're the ones that are the first to tell you when something is off the rails for what they expected or when there's a need that's unmet, but they're also the first then to be your customer support, when people have questions about how to use your product and to come to your defense, if you've been really open and transparent and working closely with them. And so, it goes both ways. I think that you have to be careful that you really engage people in a way that makes sense and to be transparent about things. But if you're willing to be those things with a community, then it's invaluable.

James Robert Lay:

I want to come back to the larger market perspective here of maybe other financial brands, we'll call them incumbent banks, incumbent credit unions. I was just speaking about the potential for growing through focuses or folk eye around niches, because the idea of community goes beyond the physical boundaries of zip codes and borders. But it's really, it's more of where it resides in people's minds, their values, their likes, their taste, their preferences. What are opportunities to build financial brands, quote unquote, through a focus of niche?

Oona Rokyta:

I'm a big fan of podcasts as a way to learn about communities. I think that they're one of the best ways to really hear the words of various communities, especially in the FinTech space around kind of goals

that people have or ways that they're approaching their finances. I think Twitter can be an okay vehicle for that as well, but you often don't get the color and the richness of hearing people's voices. I think similarly YouTube is where you can get and observe kind of communities at work and conversing with one another. And I think that there are a number of distinctions here around how people gravitate towards how they're working, the types of jobs that they're working, what their goals are over the course of their lifetime.

Oona Rokyta:

I mean, I think one of the most interesting examples of this recently has been the whole finance communities approach towards Slow FI, Low FI, and really thinking about how people want to acquire wealth and at what rate. And now you're seeing this proliferation of different terms around that, but really the terms hold a lot of weight for those communities of people. You see teachers gravitating towards one terminology versus doctors and lawyers gravitating towards another, and then you see a whole ecosystem of accountants now addressing those different approaches and desires and timelines.

James Robert Lay:

Yeah. And it's interesting as you're speaking through this about just these different approaches, there's the whole FIRE movement of financial independence retire early. I think for the dear listener, whether you're at a bank, a credit union, a FinTech, a fantastic community to plug into here is FinCon or finconexpo.com and just go to the website and you can take a look at all of the different speakers and literally the community that they're building of independent quote unquote, financial leaders who have no affinity, but they've built audiences, they've built communities around particular points of view.

James Robert Lay:

I even think about Chad Willardson, who is the author of Smart, Not Spoiled, who's been a guest on the podcast, The Seven Money Skills Kids Must Master Before Leaving The Nest and how he has teamed up to launch a neo called GravyStack. And so, we're seeing like you said, accountants and just different people from outside of the industry, financial advisors who are solving for very niche pain points, but they're building communities to learn from and then take that knowledge, turn it around to create products and paths forward that are prescriptions and cures to solving common pain problems causing common people pain. What might some of the roadblocks be that you've dealt with on your own digital growth journey to get Lance to where it is today, thinking back to 2018?

Oona Rokyta:

Yeah. I think that, we were just talking about niches, but there are different points at which ourselves and certainly other kind of banking platforms have struggled with that freemium versus subscription. Where do you side on that? How do you keep yourself open enough to capture different types of people that may have different applications or visions of how they might use you? And I think, much to the comment that you just made around kind of objectives driven banking, I think that is kind of the next iteration of all of this.

Oona Rokyta:

And an iteration that banking platforms or neobanking platforms should really approach with open arms. And I think it does cause a central tension around adopting an objective driven approach, but then knowing that some percentage of your customer base will shift over to other solutions and that's okay. I think that you have to be comfortable with having really strong retention for those people that will continue to have the same objectives year over year. And then some portion of those will shift into

another banking platform as their goals evolve. But I think there's been this unhealthy kind of focus on scaling and growing at all costs, which is now catching up with the industry.

James Robert Lay:

Yes it is.

Oona Rokyta:

And I think, very transparently we've had a slower growth trajectory, but the balance of that, is that we've had almost no churn within our entire system. It's low single digits, been below 3% since our launch. That's unheard of in this space, but it's because we've been so focused on servicing those people that we've had in our system, keeping the fraud low and continuing to grow at a more predictable stable rate.

James Robert Lay:

On that note of churn or slow or no churn, I think about the conversation that I had with Joey Coleman, who wrote a fantastic book called, Never Lose A Customer. And it is this idea it's very expensive to acquire a new customer, but it makes a tremendous amount of sense to slow things down, focus on retention, because as I wrote about in banking on Digital Growth, the Bancor's strategy circle B-A-N-C-E-R, build an audience attract leads, nurture those leads with content automation, convert those leads for loans and deposits, expand the relationship by the lighting accounts. But then most importantly, repeat that process through reviews, through ratings, through referrals, because people still trust people. And when you build a community, you're literally building a baked in referral system that will pay dividends over time, going forward.

James Robert Lay:

Another area that I want to focus on and I think a lot of it is a benefit of focusing around niche, is collaboration and how collaboration allows you to work alongside others. And I think this requires a bit of a mindset rooted in abundance versus say the traditional view in financial services, which is very competitive. And that takes us down a negative path of scarcity, but if we look at the world through abundance, how have you been able to work together, to team up with others who share a similar view? I know that you teamed up with a [inaudible 00:22:23] to kick off a collaborative initiative, independent economy council, can you give some perspective into what this is and how the idea of collaboration of community all really starts to come together here?

Oona Rokyta:

Exactly to your point around abundance. I think that there are more than enough customers in the FinTech space. You're looking at the entire population of say the US or internationally. I mean, there's more than enough money flowing into these great ideas that different companies are having. I think, when you're grounded in a growing need, like we are with the future of work, how are people going to continue working for themselves and in continuously iterative ways, then your mindset, isn't just about how do I capture all of these people for their entire lifetime, which is an impossibility, but it shifts more to how do I help people continue developing and evolving, and how do I create a resource that's great for them? How do we collectively in the FinTech space or beyond support people's growth and then benefit from it in a way that's aligned.

Oona Rokyta:

Yeah. And so, what Trent and I worked on with [inaudible 00:23:42] is through an early conversation talking about just how poorly mapped the future of work is. If you go to any conference or look online

around the future of work, what you find is a number of consortiums and events and summits about how large cubicles should be, how should hot desks work. Topics like this. And certainly there was a proliferation of those during COVID that then turned into webinars around retention of employees and whatnot. When the fundamental question is really, how are we tracking productivity and how antiquated is that model? And how poorly were we really tracking people's engagement and productivity through COVID where it was inherently remote and where people are inherently valuing more of a remote model that allows for them to work and live kind of in time blocks throughout their day and their week.

Oona Rokyta:

And so, what Trent and I started talking about, is let's collect more CEOs and companies and constituent groups like freelancers' union and others, to really have a more 360 degree conversation about how people are shifting, how they work, what are the priorities in terms of how they're working, how much more frankly, are they making across different job types, how much more fulfilled and productive are they across different job types or even chapters of their lives. And how do we quantify those things. And I think that's become increasingly important. And fortunately, we've been able to collect a number of CEOs and organizations around that, just released a report last month, we'll be having annual, as well as quarterly ones and creating resources for people so that they can more actively kind of understand the role that they could have in determining their future.

James Robert Lay:

Yeah. And once again, just another conversation to kind of connect this back for the dear listener, Joe Pulizzi we were talking through when he rerelease Content Inc. I mean, this is a massive market opportunity, because when you think about the freelancer or the quote unquote creator economy, it's made up of over 50 million independent content curators, 2 million would say that they're making six figure salaries. So, I mean, it's massive, but I think what you shared it's important to come back to, because people are going to move in, people are going to move out. And I shared this at the conference in Vegas last week when I was talking about niche, the days of the PFI are dead. This idea that you're going to be all things to all people, I think it's a pipe dream now.

James Robert Lay:

And if you're hoping on that, it's false hope, which is where once again, I think there's a tremendous amount of opportunity for incumbents to start looking beyond competition with the neo's to really begin thinking about collaboration. And I know you've been doing that with a quote unquote traditional financial brand. What has that experience been like? Because once again, I think these are a lot of uncharted waters for we'll call them incumbents, or maybe even community financial brands. There's a very select few right now who are thinking beyond traditional growth of working within the local community. But then now those select few are saying, ah, we could partner, we can collaborate with neo's to kind of provide all of the back end. We'll let them run all of the front stage experience, we'll be the backstage. What has that experience been like for you in this journey?

Oona Rokyta:

Yeah, I think that it's been largely positive, but also a bit hit or miss, with different partners that we've looked at along the way. I would say largely positive, because we've been really proactive in terms of articulating what we'd like, where we'd like points of flexibility, because we just don't know yet what people's needs are. And there have been some partners that have been more open to that. I think that there is a tremendous amount of fear from incumbents in today's space. And I think to some point appropriately around fraud and kind of this low cost of acquisition that we've seen the last couple of years. That some neobanks and some kind of newer options have really taken advantage of, but to the

detriment of having more compliant or stable basis. But I do think to your point, there's a huge benefit to neobanks and kind of newer players and incumbents working really well together.

Oona Rokyta:

There's always going to be a need for a stable system. And one that is mindful of compliance that is well equipped for all the regulatory needs in this country and abroad. I mean, we've seen the need of need for that in multiples today with all that's going in crypto. We're seeing the need for a regulatory environment, so that people who are close to retirement aren't losing their life savings on a silver bullet that they were looking for. But I think the value that neobanking platforms or financial health apps can provide, is really that incredible layer of marketing and virality and education that we've been talking about since the history of finance, FinTech services and what we'd like to do. But shifting that onus off of consumers to learn every discipline of finance, but more so look at their finances and their goals and apply them towards an app that can help them map towards their goals more readily.

James Robert Lay:

This idea of financial guidance, whether it be app based, or maybe it's a mix of app automation, AI, tie in some humanity, community into this. Where are some of those opportunities? Because, I think this brings our conversation almost full circle back to coming from a background of sports and fitness, coaching, it's like we have coaches to optimize our performance and sometimes it might be a human coach and that human coach provides a bit of accountability and positive or negative motivation depending on upon how you spin it.

James Robert Lay:

But there are also things like, for example, I'm wearing my Garmin right now, my Garmin watch that I use to track runs and other data points, recovery times and whatnot. So there's that idea of asynchronous automative AI coaching, but where could there be potential opportunities, whether you are an incumbent or a FinTech or a neobank to bring coaching as a core competency, human based, AI based, maybe a hybrid of both, what does that look like? Kind of just getting some future thoughts from you bringing the future if you will, into the present moment for just a bit?

Oona Rokyta:

Yeah. I think this is a tremendous question, especially in light of how much certain incumbents are investing in coaches and accountants, and really broadening out their workforces, especially over the summer. There were some great announcements in terms of Fidelity, Bank Of America, a number of others, kind of looking to hire tens of thousands of financial coaches. But what I think they're still struggling to understand, and this is from my humble opinion, is the benefit of layers. Integrable layers. You just talked about your fitness and the watch. And I've got a similar model in terms of slices of my watch, my Strava and now paying for a coach with my training towards a marathon. And I think we need to apply a similar model to finance. And those different layers can work in tandem and that we can apply them more or less in different chapters of our lives.

Oona Rokyta:

There's going to be more of a similar to athletic pursuits approach towards finance, where you may want to have that full time job while you are a new parent or caring for somebody in your life or straight out of college. And then there will likely be years of your life where you would like to work more remotely, because it allows for you to travel or invest more time in a hobby or a burgeoning idea of yours and then dip back in. And I think that those chapters are going to be iterative and they will need more or less use of different layers. And I think that's something that we really haven't gotten comfortable with yet, in the

FinTech space. Is that layering of, yes I will always need a custodial banking layer of sorts to hold my deposits and to feel stable about that and to have those insured.

Oona Rokyta:

And then I will want a layer of digitization that acts almost like a CFO in my back pocket for the business of me. Reid Hoffman's written a book, years ago about The Startup Of You. And I think that we are finally starting to really see the scalability of ourselves through all these marketplaces and tools, whether it's Squarespace, Shopify or whatever. And then I think there's also to your point, that person that you want to pick up the phone with maybe once a quarter or once a year whatever's relevant to you or feels comfortable and just review your stats. And I think, this is also happening in the health tech space, is this need for layering. And I think we should be thinking about these things more intuitively and almost pushing all of these resources and these tools through this ongoing conversation about which layers are most relevant to myself and then how do they integrate and lean on each other at different points?

James Robert Lay:

You talk about the layering and I think about the Lance triangle and how you have the different layers there. So that's, just one thing that kind of comes top of mind. But then I think about my sister-in-law and her triathlon or her Ironman training and how she has her Garmin that connects into Garmin Connect, which then all of that data gets poured into her coach to where she does have regularly scheduled, whether they be in person or remote conversations. And I see a lot of the coaching is more than... And that's where I think financial brands are falling short today, is there so much of an emphasis on financial quote unquote literacy and financial education, and I'm like that doesn't change behavior, that doesn't change like the core beliefs that we have about ourselves, about the way that we view our relationship with money, all of that's rooted in family of origin, environment, our upbringing.

James Robert Lay:

And the way that we have to transform that is our basic belief structures. That's where I think the coaching comes back into play to have those dialogues, that conversation. And I'm so encouraged by what The Financial Gym out of New York has been able to do and build an entire business model around that. And so, if you think about all of this bringing it all back together and just knowing what you know now, if you could go back to 2018 and maybe, I don't like to say do things differently, because I believe everything that we've done to this point has been for a reason. But if you could optimize just one thing in your own journey to do even better, what would that one thing be that you would just not do different, but I would say just optimize?

Oona Rokyta:

Yeah. I think that we've always had a great onboarding flow digitally, but I would make that more hands on. What we've found to your point about The Financial Gym out of New York and coaching, is that people do like that touch. And we've been working on that in our onboarding process now, but that phone call from somebody to check in and we did that more recently, just this last spring and going forward, is just call people once they've signed up with us and say, "Hey, how's it going? What's confusing? What's helpful?" And we've even started doing those in group settings. So it doesn't feel like that one on one questionnaire where somebody feels like they need to have the answers or the questions themselves, but they can listen to others and then layer on with additional needs or highlights as well.

James Robert Lay:

And I think it's that group setting, it's almost like group coaching, potential to continue, because you're basically welcoming a cohort of sorts. And that cohort, if they are like minded coming from a freelancer background, a creator background. So there's a common bond already established there. Well, you start to bring them together once a quarter and they're able to, "This has worked for me and this is what I did. And here's what I think I could do better. Oh, I have an idea over here." It's a collective consciousness that just continues to increase the more that they share and you become nothing more than a facilitator of their thinking. And then they're learning and all growing together and we're all getting better because of that. As you look ahead towards the future of, we'll just call it financial services as a whole, what are you feeling most hopeful, energetic, optimized about?

Oona Rokyta:

It just goes to the name of this podcast, but just the ability for growth that we have access to today on an individual basis and as a collective, is remarkable. Never before have we had so much access, that's at our fingertips, as long as you've got wifi and a phone or laptop or something, and there's no shortage of lending options to afford for those as well. But as long as you've got that, the sky's the limit and you can really apply your ideas and thought processes to scaling yourself and growing your ideas into tangible products and opportunities and then monetizing those. I think we're just at the earliest stages of people really monetizing all of their interests and their hobbies and their passions. And if anything, it's an exercise in focus for us individually and just doing short term testing projects. I wish that, or my hope is that everyone kind of reads a product manual of sorts on quick iteration testing and then applies it to their everyday life to really learn how to test things out, drop them quickly if they're not working and move on to the next.

James Robert Lay:

So I'm actually writing to that subject in my second book, titled Banking On Change and the subtitle is How To Maximize Growth In The Age Of AI. Because, if you think about all of the digital transformation we've been seeing within the financial services space and in other verticals too, 60 to 85% of those initiatives, either fail or fail to deliver, meet expectations, not because of the technology, it's the humanity involved in that. And I think where transformation begins, is not at an organizational level, but it begins from within, it begins with the self and then that then gets multiplied to the team. And then from the team comes out to the organization and then the organization that spills over into the community, which is where the idea of niche and focus there.

James Robert Lay:

Like you said, there's an abundance of opportunity and a great book on that subject, is Abundance, The Future Is Better Than You Think by Peter Diamandis and Steven Kotler, because I think it's so easy to get bogged down in the here and the now and the doom and the gloom, which is why in Banking On Change, I have a model that I'm writing to make sure that you have your morning tea or have your daily tea. How are you investing your time? What are you spending your energy on?

James Robert Lay:

And then what are you paying attention to? Those three things, time, energy and attention will directly impact how you continue to move forward either from an exponential perspective or kind of keep you stuck in the present moment or even worse, just pull you down into a very negative place, negative state of being. Looking ahead, let's bring all of this down to one thesis, one point of view for the dear listener, because we've touched on a lot of different things that they can do. What's one thing that you would

recommend that they commit to do next, the next best step that they can take on their own digital growth journey based upon everything that we have discussed today?

Oona Rokyta:

That's a great question to land on. And I was just thinking, as we were talking, is that what is uniquely human, is the ability to ask great questions.

James Robert Lay:

Love it.

Oona Rokyta:

And so, I think that's what I would land on, is that only you can apply yourself in terms of asking yourself really great questions in terms of how you want to grow, how you're able to scale yourself and what your goals are in life. How do you want to live, if the sky's the limit and there're no blockers, I was just listening to Colin O Brady in a podcast. And I think, kept reinforcing that point. "If there were no hurdles ahead of you. What would you do?"

James Robert Lay:

Yeah. And I'm going to give the dear listener just two more mental models to maybe take forward when you ask questions, because there're acronyms that are all over Digital Growth Topia, because it's the only way that this entrepreneurial ADD mind to keep things straight. So I follow an acronym as mental models. Ask, when you ask a really good question, what are you doing? Whether it's to yourself or to someone else you're always seeking knowledge. That's really, when you ask a question, you're always seeking knowledge. So always be the student and sometimes you'll be the student, sometimes you'll be the teacher, but there's always a lesson to be learned from either perspective.

James Robert Lay:

And then when it comes to goals, I just did a podcast about this, because as we look ahead towards the future, it might seem a little bit confusing and conflicted and maybe there's some chaos, but if we can get really clear of how we want to grow going forward, what are our goals, the roadblocks that stand in the way of them and then most importantly, the opportunities to begin to overcome those roadblocks, to achieve those goals back to your point. The sky really is the limit in this age of AI, in this exponential age. Oona, this has been just a fantastic energetic conversation. Thank you for sharing time with me today. What is the best way for someone who's listening to reach out, say hello, connect with you, learn from you?

Oona Rokyta:

Absolutely. I can be found on Twitter @ORokyta, O-R-O-K-Y-T-A. On Instagram Oona Rokyta. And shoot me an email if the need arises, oona@lance.app. And thanks so much for having me. This has been a great conversation as expected.

James Robert Lay:

Absolutely. Thank you for joining me Oona. Connect with her. Learn from her, grow with Oona. Until next time and as always be well, do good and make your bed.