

Theresa:

All right. I am so super excited for this episode of the Your Next Best Step Podcast. I am honored and so super grateful to have not only people that I've worked with for the past year, but people who have also become good friends of mine. We've been through a lot this past year, and, in fact, this is episode number 120, plus they are also my first ever client that I've had on this podcast that I've interviewed. Most of the people that, well, anybody that I've ever interviewed, have all been colleagues of mine or friends of mine or other business owners. But this is the first time I've actually had people that I've worked with on the podcast.

I wanted to just say welcome to Kenny Fisher and Victoria Brunner.

Kenny:

Thank you. I'm Kenny.

Victoria:

Thank you.

Kenny:

That's Victoria.

Theresa:

In case you couldn't figure that out. Thank you guys so much for taking time out of your schedule to join me on here and to really share your story because that's what this podcast is all about is it's about real people, real stories, real experiences. So thank you guys so much for joining me.

Victoria:

Thanks for having us.

Kenny:

Thank you.

Theresa:

I'm excited for this.

Kenny:

Thanks for helping get us to this podcast point.

Theresa:

Absolutely, absolutely. I wanted to bring them on, again, so they could tell their story. They have quite a story, which they're going to get into in a little bit. How they got started in the business and how they got to this point, which is amazing. Ever since I started working with them, I've learned so much about both of you as people, but as entrepreneurs and the drive and the passion that you have. I've worked with a lot of people over the past decade, and I will say that you guys are probably one of the most dedicated and passionate and purpose driven people that I've ever worked with, which has just been such a joy.

I'm going to read their bio, and then we're going to get started so you can learn a little bit about them. Kenny Fischer and Victoria Brunner are partners and cofounders of FattE Bikes located in Denver, Colorado. If you're definitely in Denver, check them out. Their line of electric bikes are one of the most customizable in the world, and they are one of the few companies to build their electric bikes here in the US. As they say, we build colorful bikes for colorful people. More than their bikes, their focus is to build a community of people that want to reduce their carbon footprint, break free from their car dependency and ride a form of transportation that is as Kenny says designed by you and built by us. Love that.

Their bikes and their passion make commuting and exploring effortless and enjoyable. Let's hear a little bit about you. Tell us how you got started in the entrepreneurial world.

Victoria:

That goes back probably a couple of decades. Kenny and I both are kind of serial entrepreneurs. I got my MBA in sustainability in a business school that was focused on sustainability, and definitely on creating entrepreneurs that... business people that were going to create businesses and become entrepreneurs but on a sustainability track. I think you just have always been a natural entrepreneur from a very young age actually.

Kenny:

It started with the lemonade like all the best. I moved from lemonade to your name on rice. I think that was one of my first businesses.

Theresa:

Your name on rice?

Kenny:

Yeah. It was a kiosk in a couple of different malls where we would write people's names on a piece of rice and turn it into a necklace. We sold a lot of rice rings.

Theresa:

Oh, my God, that's awesome.

Victoria:

That wasn't me.

Kenny:

No, that was myself and a friend of mine, and then that transitioned to bamboo floral arrangements.

Theresa:

I've never heard this.

Victoria:

Yeah. When I met him he had been doing it for a couple of years.

Kenny:

I may still have the kit, Theresa. I might spell your name wrong just because it's too long for me to actually get on a piece of rice. You might get a grain in the mail from me.

Theresa:

I want one. I definitely want one.

Kenny:

I thought that was awesome, just going where the people are and these kiosks you're always surrounded by a bunch of folks and start to learn what works and what doesn't and realizing very early on what you don't know. Over time, things sort of evolved where after Victoria and I got together, I realized that anything that I did had to have a little bit more social or environmental impact than just selling for the sake of transactions and profit. That sort of spawned our first business together, which was called Frfroneys spelled F-R-F-R-O-N-E-Y-S, Frfroneys.

Theresa:

Frfroneys.

Kenny:

And it stood for fruit, fritters and honey. That just came from making dinner one night with some friends, an entirely Thai meal, and we made fried bananas and honey for dessert. That's a really famous street food in Thailand. We just kind of put our Victoria twist on it and started doing bananas, apples, pears and strawberries. We essentially called it healthier than funnel cakes, LFEIFER.

Theresa:

LFEIFER.

Kenny:

Yeah. But then we even had fresh fruit bowls that we did one of those pay what you want type options for because that's really been our thing. If people need access to good food, we want to be able to give them that access. We had some folks come up and give us 10 cents for a bowl of fresh fruit, and we had some folks give us \$10 for a bowl of fruit. It was really that pay it forward method, and that was pretty cool. I don't know. Where did we go from there?

Victoria:

We produced one of the largest up cycle festivals in the country. It was called PalletFest. It's what you can do with waste when you look at it with a different perspective. Up cycling for people who don't know is one up than recycling in that you take something and you turn it into something else that we consider waste. Pallets, plastic, glass, you name it. We even had a trash fashion show at the end of one of the nights that we did it. There were tons of vendors, different up cycle vendors, a maze, a pallet maze, one of the largest in the world. Lots of stuff like that. That was our next reiteration of ourselves was this festival. It's definitely something we loved, and it was a passion project.

Then finally-

Kenny:

Well, before we go on-

Victoria:

Oh, okay.

Kenny:

Just to PalletFest a little more justice-

Theresa:

Are you going to talk about how you came up with it?

Kenny:

Absolutely.

Theresa:

The chickens.

Kenny:

It's those times... Here's the thing. I had kind of stepped away from business and was just like, okay, either you've got to get a normal job and things of that sort. This has happened to me a couple of times including to where we are today. Then you sort of find yourself back in that grind. Victoria and I at the time we had gone out of city. We had 10 acres essentially in the desert. It was in San Luis Valley. Life slowed down. We had chickens and a goat and a little small hobby farm. I was building a chicken coop one day out of wooden chipping pallets. Then I started building a fence out of pallets. I was like, man, you can make anything out of these. You can make a chicken coop or a fence or a wine rack or a whole house out of pallets. Why not one place that shows all the potential of how creative you can be when you look at waste with a different perspective?

For us, pallets were like Legos for adults. It's endless. I was like, well, I'll do that. I'll make that. The world needs it. Although I had no experience with any kind of festival promotion or anything like that, I was like, how do we make ourselves look bigger than we really are, some guy from San Luis Valley. I was like, "Oh, I should go to Denver and tell the City of Denver that they should get behind this." That's what I did. I brought down a couple dozen multicolored eggs from my chickens. I don't know if I had a business card at the time. I figured, yeah, they'll remember me this way.

I had a meeting with the sustainability director from the city. Essentially I told him, hey, I've got this great eco event. It's perfect for the City of Boulder because they're super green and super eco, and that's why we should have it here in Denver. They're like, yeah, yeah, that's right. From there, it kind of took on a life of its own. Once I had their logo, it gave us a little bit of credibility. We started getting digital billboards down here in the city. By the second year we had 15,000 people attend the event, seven bands, the mayor had come out. We had a reality show filming us at the events the entire time.

Theresa:

That's amazing.

Kenny:

Then we made the host of the reality show, a man, actually a model in our up cycle fashion show. So someone made him a kilt out of bicycle tubes and bike parts. It was awesome.

Victoria:

The bicycle and the bike tubes. That was probably some foreshadowing for us whether we knew it or not.

Theresa:

No, that's true. That's true.

Kenny:

Because where we are now our shop is designed and built out of wooden chipping pallets. Our accessories are often made out of repurposed materials from a company, in fact, that was at PalletFest at the time. We've come full circle with this, but it's really just more of we're seeing ourselves I think come out onto this more tangible vision that we're bringing to life in whatever business we've taken on.

Theresa:

Wow, that's amazing. From there, then FattE Bikes was born, right?

Victoria:

No. We kind of went back to the corporate world after we stopped doing PalletFest for a few years. Kenny was working a corporate job, and I was working at a nonprofit. We wanted to drop down to a one car household, and we started looking into options to only use one car, public transportation, regular biking, Uber, Lyfts, whatever we could think of. I was doing research, and I was like, hey, have you see these electric bikes? Even though we're both in the sustainability world, I had really not paid much attention to electric bikes. He's like, "No, but let me see this." You went down the rabbit hole, and you're like, "I've got to get one." He got one.

From there it was like this is something that could really transform transportation, could really revolutionize it.

Kenny:

Right.

Theresa:

Wow, that's amazing.

Kenny:

For us, I think it was less about biking more and more about driving less. That's what the electric bike kind of created as far as opportunity of this micro mobility that I never even knew existed.

Theresa:

So sustainability has definitely been... That's been kind of the theme in all of your... even back to the rice days because you were kind of repurposing rice, I guess.

Kenny:

Got it out of the pantry.

Theresa:

Exactly. Sustainability has always been a theme, but also as I said, you guys are hugely purpose driven. I think no matter what business you had, it was never necessarily... Even though everybody wants to make money, right? But it was never necessarily about the money, there was always a grander theme behind it. Am I right?

Victoria:

Yeah.

Theresa:

Or a greater purpose I should say.

Victoria:

Greater purpose, right. It's called social enterprise. It's kind of mirroring nonprofit and for profit world into one so that something called a triple bottom line people, planet and profit, so that you're doing good, but you're also still a business and making money. I think nonprofits struggle with always having to raise money for their missions and spend half their time just trying to raise money. So many businesses, they're making money, but they're really not... either they're not having any impact or they're having a negative impact. I think for us we wanted to be able to have impact and still make money.

Kenny:

Yeah, absolutely. I think we learned that with PalletFest. We essentially birthed this amazing thing into the world. When you create a festival or something like that, it takes you a year to produce just to be in the public eye for a couple of days, you're really vulnerable and you're putting yourself out there. You also don't necessarily know how am I going to make money doing this. Does it come from vendors or sponsors or the city or tickets? What we didn't want to do was charge the public because we felt like everybody should have access to learning about how to repurpose, how to make a chair should they need a chair and free wood via that pallet.

But then we also learned after the fact how expensive it actually was. It was really hard. We were up there being celebrated and we were so proud of what we created, but then at night you're like, I've got nothing to show for it. Part of that was either we were idealistic, part of that was we didn't have the experience and part of that was we didn't care. We just wanted to bring this into the world no matter what. I think if we did care or if we did focus too much on the money, maybe it wouldn't have happened or wouldn't have happened the way it did.

Victoria:

Right.

Kenny:

But we had to put it down. I think one of the hardest things as an entrepreneur is having to put down your baby. You've got so much invested into your heart, even more so than your money. I have a feeling that there're a lot of entrepreneurs out there who like me don't feel like they're putting something down as much as putting it aside for now because it was good, too great to not come back sometime when the time is right and when we've learned how to make money off of it. But that's what sent us back in the corporate world. For myself, the entrepreneur spirits were faded away for a moment. It was so hard having to put PalletFest down, and then the moment Victoria was like, "Are you seeing these E bikes?" It was boom. I was like, "If I'm only just learning about this now, I know so many other people don't know about these. That's it. I'm in."

Victoria:

The one thing I wanted to say about entrepreneurship is with each of the businesses we've started, we had no idea about that. We didn't know anything about mobile food or food trucks or that world. We didn't know anything about throwing a festival. We certainly didn't know anything about the electric bike world. Each of those endeavors it's not for the faint of heart starting a business, period. But then really not knowing that world is even tougher. I think it's just something that you have to be passionate enough about to barrel through all of those challenges.

Even if you're just good at something, it's different than actually creating a business out of it.

Theresa:

Right.

Victoria:

That's a whole other ballgame.

Theresa:

What do you think your biggest... And that kind of leads into the next question I was going to ask you. What do you think your biggest challenge is that you faced now building FattE Bikes? You've had FattE Bikes for four years, right?

Victoria:

Correct.

Kenny:

Yep, just started our fifth year.

Theresa:

What do you think has been your biggest challenges that you've faced?

Victoria:

Well, we've created a business that is already a difficult business to create in that it's a widget, but it's a widget with a lot of different components and a lot of different parts, and it involves technology, it involves components, and it involves a lot of labor. We've kind of taken a difficult industry and made it

even more difficult by building them as well by customizing our own bikes and added even more complexity onto it.

I think over the years just learning how to manage a very top heavy supply chain heavy company has been a lot to learn. We're not a tech company. We don't just have to hire bodies and have them all work on computers. We are an electric bike company that custom builds our bikes. So there's a huge line curve there.

Kenny:

Yeah.

Victoria:

And I'm sure you have more to add.

Kenny:

Very much so. Learning how to do international business, how to import. Learning local shipping, how to navigate when politics gets in the way with tariffs and pandemics. There're a lot of components.

Theresa:

Yeah, you went through COVID.

Kenny:

Yeah. It's a constant roller coaster. I think that if I had known the actual capital requirements that I would really need to be able to launch with comfort, I would've either taken an entirely different approach or like I said a moment ago, I wouldn't have even approached it at all. Sometimes ignorance is bliss. My personal motto is I'm not worried about jumping the gun, I'm just focused on being the bullet. That's what I do. Sometimes you find that, wow, that was great, and it's been a couple of years. Now how am I going to turn this into a profitable business?

Theresa:

The universe works in mysterious ways, Kenny.

Kenny:

It does. It does. Law of attraction though. We're trying to put it out there, and we're trying to put ourselves out there and not just create what the other guys have, but be a company of substance, which a wise woman once told to us, that's Theresa. Because actually that's really resonated with me. It's one thing to have a great product, a product you believe in, a product that's different and better, but it's not enough in my opinion. We're voting with our dollars, every dollar that we spend. Who's it actually going to? For us, it's like we want to be that company that other people want to do business with. We're the company I want to do business with. We're real people, we're good people. We offer great value, great service. I tell our customers, we do it, it's harder the way we do it, it's more expensive the way we do it, but it's the right way how we're doing it.

That's been huge, and it's been rewarding for us to know that we're coming out in our business who we are and what's important to us, but it's hard. It's really hard work, and the commitment, the tenacity, being resilient and not looking at a situation as the end of a road or something that's just going

to stop you in your path. It just is what it is. It's part of business. It's part of life. You push through it, and then there's something even greater on the other side.

Victoria:

The obstacle is the way.

Kenny:

The obstacle is the way.

Theresa:

That is true. Obstacles are given to us to either get us closer to the result that we're looking for or give us the lesson that we need or the detour that we need to get us closer to the result. One of the biggest challenges, and this is when I met you guys, you had, here you're going, you're growing slowly, and then COVID happens. With a lot of businesses closing and different things were happening, and you guys saw a huge growth, but you also saw a lot of challenges. What do you think was... Because the way that you got through it, grit, gratitude and grace. What was the biggest lesson that you learned going through? That was a big obstacle, but it was a good obstacle, but at the same time it was one that gave you a lot of lessons. What do you think was the one biggest lesson that you learned from that?

Kenny:

I wouldn't use the word grace just so you know. Grit, gratitude definitely, but not very graceful.

Theresa:

It goes good with graceful.

Kenny:

Sometimes you've got to scratch and claw.

Theresa:

Victoria was graceful.

Kenny:

Victoria is always graceful. Wow. Biggest lesson. Go for it. Do you have something?

Victoria:

Luck favors the prepared, and we were not quite prepared. Again, talking going back to the supply chain, I hate to harp on it, but it is. It's a big factor in our business and other types of businesses like this. Being to forecast into the future is important. Obviously, nobody could predict a pandemic. But plan B, C, D, you know? Plan it, forecast it, shred it, to expect sometimes unfortunately the worst in situations, and with the supply chains that's no different especially nowadays I think people are understanding that.

The biggest lesson for us was make sure that you can secure your supplies and have a strong relationship with who your suppliers are as well and have open communication with them because at least on our end we were caught off guard. We were super thrilled to have all these sales, but then we couldn't fulfill them in the timeline that we were trying to get them to people at.

Kenny:

I think forecasting is right because larger more experienced companies understand. They understand when the ebbs and flows occur, how they need to manage their ordering processes from there whereas budding entrepreneurs don't quite get it. You might be going off of your current, oh, it's a three month turnaround, and I tend to put this much money into it each time and so forth, and that can just be turned upside down instantly. In our case, it was. As much as the orders were coming in, our ability to fulfill them disappeared. Then the stress, the damage control, the service, the quality, all of that can suffer. So how do you manage through that and take care of your customers?

Thankfully, we had very little fallout in comparison to those who stuck with us.

Victoria:

Right.

Kenny:

I think a lot of people were understanding through COVID, but they were understanding because we were all experiencing this pandemic. Most consumers don't know what the businesses are actually experiencing.

Victoria:

That's true.

Kenny:

Because it's new to most of these businesses, and then the shipping industry, this is something new entirely.

Victoria:

I was really thrilled when the Suez Canal happened because it brought people to the world of shipping and to packing. Hey guess what folks? Everything comes on these giant, giant boats.

Kenny:

Comes on boats.

Theresa:

I remember watching that with my husband, and I was like, "Oh, my gosh, I hope their bikes aren't on there."

Victoria:

But it definitely backed up everything. The shipping industry was already backed up. I think in a weird way COVID and the Suez Canal and all these kind of did customers a favor by lowering their expectations. I think the world was already going that way, and I think COVID just kind of accelerated it. I think it's been in some ways looking on the Pollyanna silver lining of it all. It's like, hey, guess what folks? Now people get that when you say shipping delays, people are like, oh, yeah, I get it. They shake their head and they understand.

Kenny:

Right. For us, I think one of the biggest lessons now that we're talking about it is we realized that we needed to be able to control as much of our process as possible. That's when we really started pivoting from being like the other guys to evolving into who we are now and continue to grow to be. Because by taking more control, we said, okay, we're going to paint our own parts. We're going to build our own parts. We're going to source as much locally as we possibly can like our accessories and tire liners and other things like that. Then even though we still have to source components globally, at least we have more control when it gets to us. At least we're not dependent on what they produce on an assembly line there. We know that the quality control is higher, and we are building in some resiliencies and redundancies into our business by taking more control. Hopefully that continues to evolve further.

I think that was one of the smartest moves we made, and, again, it's harder that way because now you have to build the product yourself, but most of us want to support local or American made type companies, and there're really very few out there actually doing that kind of stuff. I think we would've taken this leap even if we knew it was going to be ungraceful at times.

Theresa:

Do you think that that was the biggest transformation that you had, that you experienced this year was really realizing how to be you and not worry about what anybody else was doing? Or was there something else?

Victoria:

I think we're still learning that, how to be us and who are our core audience and core market. You have a very young industry. The electric bike world is actually a pretty young industry. I'm sure you see this in each industry that's new that comes in. First people are kind of price conscious, and then as it develops and matures, they're looking for other things, kind of like the car world. We kind of compare ourselves probably what the car world was like in the beginning. You have different levels of cars where you have the cheap college car that you buy, and then you have the nicer car when you finally get a good job and then an even nicer car as you go on in your life and mature.

I think with E bikes right now it's still in that young phase, and so people are just kind of price shopping, but we think we're kind of on the next cusp for the next year or two when it matures and people are like, "You know what? I had this cool really cheap E bike at the beginning, but I actually want a much nicer one." So that's where we kind of start to step into our own and people start to look for FattE Bikes as the second or third E bike that they want to purchase from us because we've custom built this beautiful E bike for them, and they're not just looking at price shopping, but they're also looking at a company that embodies who they are and who they want to be. I think that's where we're really going to start to come into our own.

We're kind of almost waiting for the industry to catch up to us in a way, which is a little bit of an odd feeling.

Kenny:

The market.

Victoria:

The market. The market to catch up to us. I think we have some great core followers right now, and so we're just learning that core market and the people who are supporting us now and trying to grow that audience.

Theresa:

Awesome. One day I'm going to get a leopard printed E bike. I already told my husband because I have leopard pants.

Kenny:

Hot pink leopard?

Theresa:

Hot pink leopard like my pants.

Kenny:

Nice. If anybody can do it, Theresa, I mean... We're excited that He's All That movie is going to be coming out soon. We're really hoping one of our pink bikes is on there. It's a remake of the 90s, She's All That, so that's coming out later this month. We're just hoping to catch a glimpse of one of our FattE Bikes. If not, then I've got a pink bike available if somebody wants to buy one.

Theresa:

There we go. There we go. Okay. A little plug here, watch He's All That when it comes out. Right?

Kenny:

Watch it if we post saying, "Hey, check out our bike." If you don't see that post, don't even waste your time watching it. The movie is horrible. We could do pink leopard skin if you like. I think it's kind of cool because with us, we're not offering a much more expensive product. We're not saying, oh, we're building the most high end component product. We still want our product to be affordable and accessible to anybody. We don't want to just serve the affluent. However, what we're also doing is offering some people a chance to personalize their ride in a way that we've never had before. Cars are just too expensive to customize, and so we don't do it.

If we could pick our colors, if we could pick the steering wheel or the mirrors or the seats and all that stuff, the stereo and all that, we would. But in only certain cases do we get those opportunities. We're now bringing that to people through the electric bike. As we get to the pink leopard skin capabilities, we're close to, then it's game on. Do what makes you feel good. It's not about, oh, this one costs \$10,000, that's why I bought it. It's like, no, this bike was \$2,500, and it's bad ass. I designed it, and a local US company built it. That's us coming to fruition.

That's on the product side. On the business side, I think the, I wouldn't say biggest change, but maybe biggest understanding was how much we didn't understand, how much we didn't know. As we mentioned, everything from the kiosk businesses to Frfroneys and all that, it's like, you're just kind of going through it, and it's actually pretty easy in that first year or two because you know you're working to build momentum and get your product out there and so forth. That's not enough to actually have a sustained business. That's when you realize, oh, wow, there's a lot more from the forecasting to the budgeting, to the-

Victoria:

To the processes.

Kenny:

The processes, processes, processes. Management of the team and then the management of yourself. That's where, I think, we probably experienced our most growth. That didn't come from a how to run a business for dummies handbook. It came from a friend connecting us to a person who was far more experienced than ourselves and maybe knew nothing about electric bikes, but a whole lot about getting the foundations down in order to really have something that you can build upon. I think that's what came from working with you, and that's what we're continuing to build upon every day as we go now.

Theresa:

That's awesome. You guys from when we started working together until where you are now, I've seen a tremendous amount of growth in you. But you've also taught me a lot about your industry and that purpose, being purpose driven. As much as I may have helped you, you also helped me to see a different side of things. I've always considered myself to be purpose driven, but you guys just bring it to a whole new level, which I think is huge. It's one of the things that really sets you apart.

I was going to switch gears and talk about that for a minute because you have, and if you're comfortable talking about it, there's an idea that you have and something that you're going to be launching that we've talked about, the giving back. You also have two different things that you're doing with giving back. You want to talk about that a little bit because I think it's phenomenal?

Victoria:

You want to talk about it? It's kind of your idea.

Kenny:

Sure. I assume one is the leg up program.

Theresa:

Yes.

Kenny:

I'll talk about that for a second especially because that idea is actually evolving as we speak, which is really cool. Essentially, unfortunately, an electric bike isn't accessible to anybody, but people also don't realize, they don't have enough context and comparison, to know that they're already spending that kind of money. They're spending it on public transportation. They're spending it on Lyft. They're spending it on time if it takes them two hours to get to work. They're spending it on a broke down, beater of a vehicle because they still have to pay for gas and insurance.

Even though you might spend a couple of grand on an E bike it's one and done. Now, you have mobility, true mobility, effortless mobility, just like a car but far more fun. That's another part of the market catching up and really understanding that this isn't a bicycle, this is a light electric vehicle. That said, there're a lot of people out there that can really benefit from this. We're working with a local podcast and some friends to do what we call the FattE Bike Leg Up E Bike Giveaway where essentially we've got people who are riding these sort of heartfelt letters about somebody they love or a family

member or a friend, and it's like, hey, so and so is a single mom, and she hustles. She works so hard, she gets her kids to school. She goes to work. But she's got to sit at the bus for two hours a day.

These stories, let's be real, they could be repeated a million times over in this country. These people need access to something that we can provide. I think for the first time in our life we're like, whoa, we can give somebody something really, really special and really amazing, and an unexpected gift at an unexpected time is the absolute best thing you could ever do for anybody. That was the advice I got when it came to dating, in fact. An unexpected gift at an unexpected time. Forget the flowers when you're in trouble. Now, we're putting that on a far more grand scale.

Somebody's writing this letter, we read this letter, and it's like, wow, this really touches us. We're connecting with these people then on the street. We're saying, hey, here we're going to introduce ourselves, Ken and Victoria, from FattE Bikes. Sarah wrote us a letter about you, we're going to read you the letter and essentially tears, hugs and then we give them the electric bike. Then we're going to be following up with them from there too. How is this thing taking care of you? Is it working? Are there advantages? How can we learn from this? We're not just giving this to you and go, we all want to learn and benefit so we can connect with other people.

And this is definitely something that I think when business gets hard and stressful and I don't want to say you forget why you're doing it, but it's just not really driving you as much as it used to at times, it's things like this that can really help bring you back. If I know I'm going to change somebody's life with this, I'm going to create a moment that will last with them forever and last for me forever. It's not about the bike at that point, it's about that human connection which I think we all need more than ever and to show that good people and love still exist and that companies can actually still express that love. I think that's what we're trying to do is connect with people in our community.

We want people to see this. We want them to see it and see that, wow, this recipient got what they very much deserve. FattE Bikes is a pretty darn cool company. Maybe I should tell some friends about it.

Theresa:

Love it.

Kenny:

So something for all of us.

Theresa:

Awesome, awesome. I wanted you to talk about that because ever since the day you told me about what you were going to do, I was like, oh my gosh, I remember when we were meeting and you were telling me I felt like I had tears. I was like, that is such an amazing idea. It just really speaks to who the two of you are. Yes, the whole purpose of having a business is to make money, right? It's more than that for you, and it always has been. You've also been all about paying it forward, and it's such an endearing quality about the two of you. That's why I wanted you to talk about it a little.

What advice obviously or maybe not... The two of you are married. What advice would you give other people who are in business? You're COO, CMO and CEO. What advice would you give other people who are married and either going into business or have a business to make it successful? Make that partnership successful?

Victoria:

That's a loaded question.

Theresa:

Kenny's face.

Kenny:

I'm glad she's talking first. I don't know what she's going to say.

Victoria:

All the clique that they tell you, don't let your business bleed over in your personal life, all of that, don't let... Don't fight, don't get... We do all the wrong things all the time. We let it bleed and fall over. It's oozing everywhere. We're not good at that, but I will say what probably makes us work is that we complement each other's personalities, and one of us is good at one thing and the other is good at the other. If we were both good at the same thing, it'd be a lot of this and then other things that were really critical wouldn't get done.

I think for us the key has been that we play off each other very well. Again, we're both very passionate about what we're doing. When it's really hard and we're gutter nosed down in the dirt, it's like, yeah, but just remember who you are as a person. We have to tell each other that. We've got each other's back. We had an interesting experience once when we were first starting the company. We were trying to get into some of these accelerators that you hear about, you start your business... We were really afraid to tell this one accelerator that was interested in us that we were married. They said actually we like that you're married. We find that couples who start businesses are actually more successful contrary to popular opinion.

Theresa:

Interesting.

Victoria:

I did not know that. I think we make it work. I think it's not easy, and it bleeds all over our personal life, but I think just that we complement each other and our skills rather than having similar ones or being rubbing up against each other. I don't know. I'm sure you have some opinion.

Kenny:

Well, I agree with everything Victoria always says.

Victoria:

That's important.

Kenny:

That helps. I agree with that there. Yes. A couple of things, a few things, probably many things. First, as far as within the company, it's really important to define roles. Who does what, how do you communicate about each thing and not feel like you're stepping on each other's toes. You don't both need the same email communication from everybody. You don't both need to be on every phone call

and every this and that. Divide and conquer, but then come together and join forces and then you're that much stronger as a result.

Really defining each other's strengths. Victoria does far more brain related tasks. I do far more I wouldn't say brown related tasks. I've got people to do that. I was never good at that either. Hey, handshake. Hey, hey. No. We're good together. That helps. So on the business side, I think defining roles really helps. Then I think on the home front, a couple of things, first is know when to turn it off. I think early on working with you you encouraged me to create that email auto response. I'll get back to you within 24-48 hours. Something not only freed me up during the day with that, but it made me feel like when I went home I did not have to log back on to my emails.

Your head is always going to tell you it's either a fire you have to put out or somebody's there with a million dollar check. It's usually one more than the other. It's often not a fire either. It's just some BS that is now distracting you from being with your family. I think knowing when to turn it off when you go home or in the evenings is super critical. Giving yourselves time together, take walks, whatever it may be, that's what we do. We sort of decompress that way. I think the last thing that I would say on it is gratitude, sort of recalling the moments, the experiences and how far you've come. It's often easier for one of us to do that when the other is not in that head space.

Because when somebody's in a negative or stressful head space, you're seeing what's right in front of you right then right there on the micro, but you're not really acknowledging the macro. How far have you come? How many obstacles like this have you overcome? Is this really going to stop you? Absolutely not. It's that other partner there, which I think normal business partners you each go your separate way and maybe you don't quite get that. You might get it in the office or on the phone call when one's crying to another, but definitely in a relationship you're always around each other. The business is always around you, and that ability to sort of bring the other person back to center by being like, look what we've done. Let's feel good. Let's feel proud.

Victoria:

We've both had to do that many times for each other.

Kenny:

Absolutely. It doesn't make it easier, but it makes you appreciate more. It makes you want to keep driving, and I think that's what matters is getting up and going at it again and continue to build the dream but make sure that you take the time for what matters most.

Theresa:

No, definitely. I would imagine... My husband's not my business partner. I fired him. He was my manager. I fired him. I can imagine it probably makes... You go through stuff personally as a couple, but then also going through stuff with the business, and, yeah, you're both in it making your dreams happen. It makes you stronger. I can imagine from a relationship standpoint it makes you a lot stronger. It helps you to see different sides of each other.

Kenny:

Right.

Theresa:

You definitely, the two of you, do work well, very well together, and you do complement each other phenomenally.

Kenny:

Right. You can't have the dream without experiencing the nightmare and the yin and yang.

Theresa:

Very true.

Kenny:

I think that's where the complement comes in. When one person is like, this is a nightmare, the other is like, no, no. This is a dream. Sometimes that's what you've got to do.

Theresa:

That is very true. It's so funny because I had my hands in the position of the hard and soft, the yin and yang as soon as you said that. Isn't that weird? Kind of on the wavelength. One last question before I ask you some funny questions, sort of funny, I guess so. Funny for me. What advice would you give your younger selves?

Victoria:

I've always kind of followed my own path. I don't know that I would've done it any differently. I think the biggest advice I'd give myself is meditation and being in the present, and I'm still learning that lesson. Who isn't, right? Unless you're a monk living in the middle of nowhere. I think the biggest thing is being in the present moment and being in meditation. I know that's kind of a fad right now, but it's really true. As an entrepreneur, as a business owner, you're going to have a lot thrown at you every single day. You've got to have the mindset, you've got to know how to center yourself as Kenny mentioned a little bit ago, you've got to be able to center yourself with or without your partner. Otherwise, the monkey brain is going to do everything in its power to have you freak out on a daily basis.

Learning that lesson early on and starting that as a practice early on, I think would've been super helpful for me throughout my life. It's now just something that I'm really trying to start to implement. It's like this, trying to do that, but it's definitely an important key I think.

Theresa:

Yeah, absolutely. How about you, Kenny?

Kenny:

For myself, I would definitely tell myself, hey, Fischer, keep that motto, man. Be the bullet. Don't worry about jumping the gun. That said, I think that kind of how with meditation and being present is meant to do, I think that's the hardest thing for us to do is be present. For myself, I'd probably say, look, life is made up of these experiences. It's not the things that matter, but the experiences you have. Within that, experiences are made up of moments, just single moments, from a smile to a giveaway to something that makes you feel good to something that was really hard but you overcame and to not let those moments pass unacknowledged.

I don't care, journal that thing down because that's when you're going to go back and be like, oh, my God, 20 years ago, I wrote that. I went through that. Not only did I overcome that or whatever, but I had the same or similar type of experience here. I think just keeping a little track of our own life winds, life obstacles and hurdles, I think that helps you recall the moments. By doing that, you do realize that, wow, I've really evolved as a person. No matter how hard things may feel in that moment, this is what life is all about. This is what growth is all about. I think I would've been able to appreciate the journey a little bit more, which I'm learning to do now on the day to day, I'd appreciate it more from the start just by saying it's not about that destination.

So many of us, Americans especially I think, it's always someday, when I get there. That's almost like saying I wish I could just open this book and read the last page and know what the whole story was about. Who cares about the ending? All the juice, all the good stuff, is every page, every word, every letter in between. That's life. Life is every letter.

Theresa:

Wow. Oh my gosh. There's so many good sound bytes here, inspirational gold nuggets from the wisdom of Kenny and Victoria. Awesome. Before I ask you my last question, I wanted to do a rapid fire of just a couple of questions, getting to know you guys a little bit more as people. Victoria, what's Kenny's biggest pet peeve?

Victoria:

Not being appreciated.

Kenny:

I do need a little recognition sometimes. I was going to say when somebody doesn't always tighten the lid on a jar ever. That's part of it.

Victoria:

Kenny needs acknowledgement sometimes occasionally.

Kenny:

Like, oh, wow, you tightened that lid for me, honey. Thanks, babe.

Theresa:

What is Victoria's biggest pet peeve, Kenny?

Kenny:

Kenny's neediness in acknowledgement. Victoria's pet peeve? Really, just people... Look, if we don't do it Victoria's way, then it's wrong. Naturally anybody would be annoyed by somebody else doing it the wrong way, so I would just say other people doing things wrong would certainly just be understandably annoying to anybody.

Theresa:

Okay. Kenny, what's something interesting that people don't know about you?

Kenny:

Something interesting that people don't know about me? We'll play it safe.

Theresa:

Easy show here.

Kenny:

Right. How about I have a background in something called permaculture. This was definitely through Victoria. Most of who I've grown to be is through Victoria, and I think that's awesome.

Victoria:

Oh, thanks.

Kenny:

Permaculture is a combination of permanent agriculture and permanent culture. How to grow renewable, sustainable systems. How to mimic nature rather than manipulate nature so much. We don't want to grow a giant field of corn, a monocrop, because now you get one corn eating bug and now you've lost everything or you've got to spray it with this poison, and that kills all the good stuff. It's about biodiversity and companion planting and systems thinking, so really creating environments, living, productive environments, that I think are the true model for how we can sustain this life as we know it on this planet. Learning about growing food I think, and not just growing food but permanent culture because you have surplus. I think that just opened my eyes to so many things, and then I've carried that with me to the businesses I've had as well.

Theresa:

Interseting. How about you, Victoria?

Victoria:

I was going to say I used to be a belly dancer.

Theresa:

Oh, you did?

Victoria:

Yes.

Kenny:

Awesome, amazing.

Theresa:

Oh, my God. That's awesome.

Victoria:

This transcript was exported on Aug 10, 2021 - view latest version [here](#).

Recently I have another funny story is a documentary came out about the biosphere. Do you remember the biosphere back in 1992, 1993, when all those scientists went and lived in it for two years?

Theresa:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Victoria:

I actually worked for those guys as an intern.

Theresa:

Did you really?

Victoria:

As I was graduating from college. After they were out of the biosphere, and it was a few years later, I worked for all those guys. Let me tell you, they're an interesting group of people as you can possibly imagine. We watched the documentary, and I was like, yep, that's them.

Theresa:

I'm sure.

Kenny:

I turned to my daughter, I was like, your mom worked for those people, those crazy, amazing people.

Victoria:

Other than that, yeah, I used to be a dancer and mainly belly danced.

Theresa:

Oh, wow, I did not know that. This is the first time I'm hearing about that.

Kenny:

Oh, we'll break it out sometime soon.

Theresa:

Okay.

Kenny:

Probably in the post clips.

Theresa:

Yes. All right, well, funniest memory of Kenny, Victoria?

Victoria:

Funniest memory?

Theresa:

I know, there's a lot.

Kenny:

Daily funny memories.

Theresa:

There's a lot.

Victoria:

You go first.

Theresa:

All right, Kenny. What's the funniest memory of Victoria?

Kenny:

We still have to go home together after this, so I've got to be careful. Let's see. Funniest moment or memory of Victoria. Can I tell you my scariest?

Theresa:

Okay, go ahead. Tell me your scariest.

Kenny:

This wasn't me afraid of her.

Theresa:

Oh, I have a good one now.

Kenny:

Only because this is what pops in my head. I was going to propose to her. She went to school getting her master's in Bainbridge, in Seattle. She would go out there once a month from Colorado. I went out there to propose to her. I had this huge thing planned. I had so many people in on it, the right people in it.

Theresa:

We had a lot of moving, intricate parts to pull this off.

Kenny:

Yeah, across the country, a lot of moving parts. I'm there, and finally I'm ready to go make this happen. I just have to catch this ferry to cross the water.

Theresa:

To get to the Bainbridge Island.

Kenny:

And then something happened with the ferry, and it wasn't going anywhere. There were people like, oh, you know, I'm going to miss my show or whatever. I'm like, your show? I'm about to propose at 7 p.m. at this spot. That was just a personal fearful moment I'd say. I'll have a funny memory about Victoria sometime here.

Victoria:

I have a funny memory of Kenny.

Theresa:

Okay.

Victoria:

Speaking of belly dancing, I did a performance, and I had a lot of outfits. It was for Halloween. We had a costume for Kenny. Our daughter was like, why don't you dress him up in one of those feathered outfits and he can be Lady Gaga.

Kenny:

I looked like lady Gaga.

Victoria:

He looked like Lady Gaga.

Kenny:

There was a lot of midsection showing, pearls, boa flowers. I'm pretty sure I'm the last person to wear Victoria's belly dancing outfit.

Theresa:

It was awesome.

Kenny:

I was hot.

Victoria:

Blond wigs. You were definitely Lady Gaga, I think.

Kenny:

Yeah, I like to get into character.

Theresa:

Kenny is tall and thin, so I'm sure he had nice legs.

Kenny:

I kept my poker face.

Theresa:

Oh, my gosh. This has been awesome. Before I let you go, I want to know one last question. What is your grand vision for the future of FattE Bikes? What is your biggest dream with this?

Victoria:

World dominance.

Theresa:

You sound like Doctor Evil.

Kenny:

Somebody's like what's the big vision here? I was like, you know, I don't foresee going out there in E bike empire here. We just want to make something great and impactful. Victoria is like, I want an E bike empire. Yeah, man, we're ready to make that check swing up and for people to recognize who we are as a company, as people, the product we're producing, the care and TLC we put into it, the TLC we'll put into them. Put your support in us, and you'll see what a real company can do as they have the ability to really grow. None of this over capitalized throw money out there and just buy and market and promote BS companies, like a company that people can feel good about being part of.

We all want to be part of something. I think FattE Bikes has the potential to create that feel. The bikes are our common bond that can bring people together. It's a place to create connection. Wow, also, influencing the way people commute and really transforming that altogether, taking cars off the road, getting butts on bikes and putting smiles on people's faces. Life slows down on a bike, and it doesn't mean that you can't get where you're going just as fast as any other mode.

Theresa:

You also have the FattE... We forgot to talk about the FattE Bike membership. You also have the membership, which is also connecting people together and bringing that community together, and the bike is kind of the vehicle for two different reasons, to get you in there, but the community is more about the connection which is what you guys are so all about is having that connection with like minded people. Awesome. Where can people find you online? Tell the audience where they can find you.

Victoria:

Www-

Kenny:

World wide web.

Victoria:

Fattebikes.com, F-A-T-T-E-B-I-K-E-S.com. We're also on Facebook and Instagram, YouTube, Tick Tock.

Theresa:

Awesome.

This transcript was exported on Aug 10, 2021 - view latest version [here](#).

Kenny:

FattE Bikes stands for fat tie electric, so F-A-T-T-E electric, E bikes are called electric bikes. So fattebikes.com or you can call us at-

Victoria:

720-440-2971.

Theresa:

Kenny forgot his phone number.

Kenny:

Call now. Like GhostBusters. We'll build you a bike, man. Go time.

Theresa:

Well, thank you so very much. I am so grateful that you joined me today. Anybody who's listening to this show is going to get super inspired by your story and the next time they're in Denver, they can check you out, whether they buy a bike or rent a bike or just come down and see you. You guys are amazing entrepreneurs, but you're also even more so just amazing, amazing people, and you have a special place in my heart always. Thank you so, so very much. Like I said, I'm just so grateful to have gotten to meet you and to know you and to have been able to work with you. It's just been amazing. It's been an amazing journey. Thank you so much.

Kenny:

Thank you, Theresa. You've been amazing.

Theresa:

Thank you. We've been through a lot together.

Kenny:

We have. If I can go on for just a second, for anybody who works with you or another coach, but you chose wrong, you should've chosen Theresa if you do that. Just know you're going to have these frustrating moments. You're going to have the tears. You're going to have the combativeness with your partner or even with your coach. But, man, it's part of the journey. We're sitting here, we're smiling, we're laughing. We are connected. Not only have you helped influence us and grow us as individuals but helped us grow our business to the point where we're proud to be on your show. Sometimes you need other people to really help guide you through that. Thank you so much for everything, Theresa.

Theresa:

You guys can check out FattE Bikes at www.fattebikes.com, F-A-T-T-E-B-I-K-E-S.com.