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**Speaker 1:** There are a few things that make people successful. Taking a step forward to change their lives is one successful trait, but it takes some time to get there. How do you move forward to greet the success that awaits you? Welcome to Next Steps Forward with host Chris Meek. Each week Chris brings on another guest who has successfully taken the next steps forward. Now, here is Chris Meek.

**Chris:** Hello, I'm Chris Meek, and you've tuned this week's episode of Next Steps Forward. As always, it's a pleasure to have you with us. Our guest today is Stan Gibson, corporate executive turned author, entrepreneur, speaker, and success coach. Stan has become a sought-after speaker throughout the US for his message that both inspires and engages others to greatness.

Stan is a long-time corporate real estate executive with over 35 years of leadership with Fortune 500 firms, his ability to mix and communicate strategies on the athletic field and in the business world are timely to all leaders wanting a reset "at home in the workforce." Stan and his company, Oxygen Plus have a zeal for well-being as a consultant helping businesses, leaders, and their teams go through transformation and positive leadership training.

His passion for leadership inspired his bestselling book, *Living a Rich and Intentional Life*. Stan's been married for 40 years, and he and his wife share a passion for servant leadership that contains a spirit of enthusiasm. Stan Gibson, welcome to the Next Steps Forward.

**Stan:** Hey, thanks, Chris. I'm pretty excited. I guess I need to update that bio. We just celebrated number 42 two weeks ago. The fact that my wife and I met in 3rd grade, I guess I can add about another 15 years onto that. Anyway, I really appreciate it. I'm looking forward. Let's have some fun today.

**Chris:** Oh, we're going to have a lot of fun. Before we start, my listeners and viewers know that I'm an avid diehard sports fan, and they know my teams and they know what I **[unintelligible 00:01:54]**. I just want to shout out with a little how about them cowboys?

**Stan:** [laughs] How about them boys?

**Chris:** It's our year. Every year is our year. Stan, you spent 35 years as part of the leadership in several Fortune 500 companies, and during that time, you became a self-described, "avid researcher" of the neuro and physiological science, helping leaders create abundant energy through sleep, nutrition, exercise, mindfulness, productivity, routine, and healthy relationships. First, tell us about your corporate journey, and then share how your interest in wellness and well-being came about and what you learned from your research.

**Stan:** Sure, Chris. I'll tell you what, my journey like I said, I was in the corporate real estate world for close to 40 years, so asset management, investments, portfolio

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strategy, you name it. While real estate was my thing, leadership became what I really got passionate about. That happened about 10 years ago. Even though I was still working in the corporate world and was working for, and I don't mind mentioning Wells Fargo, 300,000 people, a huge, Fortune 250 company, I really got passionate about leadership and I started doing the research, the neuroscience and all the things that leaders need to do to show up at their best.

I took that path and I was doing it, as I always said, on my own time, my own dime, working before work, after work weekends, and I just developed this passion. It just came about three years ago that when I exited the corporate world, again, it was a smooth transition, and I love it. I love talking to executives about it. I love talking to emerging leaders. I love working with companies and organizations, and it's all about transformation and growth, and that's my jam. That's what I love most, Chris.

**Chris:** That's your jam. I love that. Before we go any further, do you still have any senior contacts at Wells Fargo?

**Stan:** I do.

**Chris:** Awesome. Because you mentioned their names, I'll give them a call for some corporate sponsorship.

**Stan:** There you go.

**Chris:** How do you define wellness and wellbeing?

**Stan:** For me, it's mind, body, and soul. Mind, body, and soul. I really believe that comes through a personal choice for everybody. I don't push my preferences on people as far as from religious aspects or things like that, but I do believe that people need to take care of their mind. I do believe that people need to take care of their body, and I do believe that they need to explore what life is all about, whether it's purpose, whether it's an afterlife. I believe that those three things become very important in what I call living a rich and intentional life.

**Chris:** As you research the different dimensions of well-being, did you say that one of them, whether it be physical, mental, emotional, or social, is more important than the others?

**Stan:** It's funny you say that, Chris because you know what? If you talk to most people they'll say, "You know what? You got to exercise, you got to eat right, and sleep is so important." They are, and we'll talk about those, but I will tell you that I've worked with leaders and we can work on those things. We can work on the physical aspects, and science will tell you that you'll live 20% to 25% longer if you work on those things.

However, relationships, the emotional piece, I never realized until I got into my research that the longevity of your life, having healthy relationships actually adds 60% to 65% onto your longevity. To me, that really was a big wake-up call for me in

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helping clients say, if things aren't going well at home, they're probably not going well at work. If they're not going well at work, they're not going well at home. You got to get the whole picture right, and a lot of it starts with relationships, Chris.

**Chris:** When you talk about things going right at home and at work, and that's your perfect storm, what are some other common barriers that prevent individuals from achieving optimal well-being?

**Stan:** I don't believe enough people get into routines in good habits. We make over 30,000 decisions a day, Chris. From the time we wake up in the morning, it's what am I going to wear? What am I going to do? What path am I going to take to work? Trust me, it builds up. Most of those decisions are made by about 4:30 or six o'clock in the afternoon, and that leaves nothing but Doritos and Cheetos for the rest of the night, and binge-watching anything just to be mindless.

I do talk a lot to a lot of clients about habits. I think habits are more important than discipline. I believe that a lot of people really need to work very hard on putting some very good habits in their life to almost be on autopilot. I think that that's something that I love to talk more about.

**Chris:** We often hear that we're our own worst enemy. How can we overcome those barriers and cultivate a greater sense of well-being in our own lives?

**Stan:** There's a lot of coaches out there. I'm not talking about me. I'm not talking about personal coaches. I'm talking about there's technology that can coach you now. I'm talking about wearables. I'm talking about, I don't know if you've ever worn the WHOOP. All NBA players wear them, all PGA players wear them on the golf tour. It will basically give you every metric taking place in your body.

The thing about it is those metrics every morning, then you can answer a journal of questions. Over the course of a month, it can tell you you probably were in red that day, you weren't getting enough hydration. You were probably in yellow because you weren't this. There are wearables that can help coach you. I've worn the WHOOP for a long time, then right now I'm using the Garmin because they have a similar one.

There's the Oura ring, and actually, I just read the other day that Samsung is coming out with a ring. I just put in my newsletter that yes, your next engagement ring may be from Samsung.

**Chris:** [laughs] A lot cheaper.

**Stan:** Yes, absolutely. What says, "I love you," like take care of yourself. Anyway, there's a lot of things that you can do to take care of yourself. The one thing that I always say too, our body, we have what's called an autonomic nervous system. Within our system, within our body, we have two chambers. We got the sympathetic and the parasympathetic. The sympathetic is really, it's that stress.

There's two types of stress. There's distress, which we don't like, and eustress, which is positive stress. It's that first date. It's that getting ready for something that just-- We need, Chris, a certain amount of stress in our life. We really do or we'd be sluggards. We'd be sitting on the couch all day, but the parasympathetic is the recovery.

There's a lot of things with nutrition, there's a lot of things with sleep. You need a healthy balance of both recovery and stress. When I was talking about the WHOOP, when I was talking about the Garmin, when I was talking about the rings, they measure what's called heart rate variability, which is my number one metric that I look at because what that does, it measures your sympathetic and parasympathetic. It measures how well you're treating your body.

Obviously, you want to be in green and you want to have a number that is positive. It always depends on your age range as to what that number is, but that's what I believe. I believe we can take care of ourselves, Chris. We don't need to rely on somebody else although it helps to have a coach and have someone keep us accountable.

**Chris:** We're going to go off script here a little bit because I know that you like to do that. I'm in financial services, not corporate real estate, but more on the banking side. You were in corporate real estate for 35-ish years?

**Stan:** Plus.

**Chris:** I know a handful of folks in that part of the business. Your energy is something I've never or felt before from corporate real estate. No offense to anybody in corporate real estate. I can imagine how boring it is, especially post-COVID when buildings are closing. It's just this whole aura and vibe coming through the Zoom screen here, like, what's going on? How'd you make that transition? What made you make that transition and what keeps you going every day with this high intensity, this high level?

**Stan:** I've never had anybody ask me that, but I think it's a great point. I always said this, when I work with individuals, we really take a look at their personal makeup. We're all wired and fired in a specific way. I always said, "You know what? The one thing about me, the reason I survived 35 to 40 years in the corporate world," and I was also an entrepreneur. I had spent a few years in there starting some companies and things like that. The thing about me was I'm just wired and fired that way. I was never the smartest guy in the room. I was never the guy that had the real estate solution that everybody said, "Oh my God, why didn't we all think of that?"

My gift, my wiring, my uniqueness, my genius was typically getting the right people in the room. When I came to the understanding that I had a gift of enthusiasm, of getting the right people. I call it connecting dots and connecting people, I do that very, very well. I realized that gift didn't need to just be harnessed within the real estate world. I could have been in the trash-hauling business. Pick any business and

my gifts become very ubiquitous along the way. The one thing I always had was I had strong teams.

I had a team of 15 people. We had global responsibilities all over the world. I had that team for 14 years. I didn't have anybody leave, and we had some very challenging personalities which is what made them so great. They were one of the best teams I think at Wells Fargo. It was that ability to realize that they're the ones, they're the experts, they're the geniuses. To have humility and say, "You know what? If I can just take your ideas and communicate them to the C-suites, that's my gift and I'll give you all the credit for it." It's that personal and self-awareness that I think everybody has to have. We've all got a swim lane, Chris, and we just need to find it.

**Chris:** I want to highlight that again. Realizing that you're not the smartest person in the room, but maybe more importantly, acknowledging it. It's something that's not easy to do just for personal bravado, ego, whatever but it's so important. That's something I learned early in my career. President George W. Bush always said that. He's like, "I'm not the smartest person in the room, but I'm going to surround myself with those people." I think that's just a great life lesson in terms of knowing your strengths, your weaknesses to your point. What lane you're in and what channel you're in, and then, I don't want to use the word exploit, but then just build upon that in terms of leveraging your strengths with the person, your left strengths, the person on the right, and the person in front of you. Then collectively, you're a lot stronger.

**Stan:** You said you don't mind going off script a little bit.

**Chris:** No, please.

**Stan:** Back in the late 1960s, Dr. George Land was asked by NASA to find geniuses. We need geniuses to get in a small, little piece of metal and go to the moon, and come back. We need people that are creative, they can think in the moment, that are just awesome. He created this assessment, Dr. George Land, you can look it up. He created this assessment and he did something really unique. He gave that assessment to preschoolers. Lo and behold, Chris, they scored a 98% on that thing, because you know what?

Think of yourself when you were in 2nd grade, 3rd grade. You were uninhibited, on the playground. I can tell you, I not only threw the pass, I caught the pass. I was all over the place. When I looked at-- I had nothing holding me back. Then Dr. George Land did that same assessment to those same kids, 1,650 kids. He gave it to them when they were 11 years old and now they scored 15%. Then he gave it to some random people when they were 30 and they scored it 2%.

We lose our creativity over time. We lose our genius. I always tell people, you can be the Michael Phelps in your swim lane. You can win that swim lane by 5/1000 of a second every single time. It's an unfair fight if you just know what you do best. Michael Phelps knows what he does best. If you get him into something other than the breaststroke, he might come in 2nd or 3rd. Keep in your swim lane. Know your swim lane.

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I work with a lot of people on what we call the genius spark. In fact, I just worked with a real estate team out of a global team about two weeks ago, and we did that very thing. We looked at everybody and identified their genius. When they all sat down, what's strong, not what's wrong. We're all used to getting beat up. When they all looked at their genius, and they started to look around the table, of course, we were on a Zoom because we were all over the world. They started to acknowledge it, and they started to say, "I see that Chris. I see that in you. Now I get it. I know why you are so strong."

Then we took those same strengths, those same things that make them a genius. When we're under stress and duress, they become kryptonite. I call it good stand, bad stand. I want to be good stand 85% of the time. I know that bad stand's going to be there 15%. Just ask my wife. She might even challenge that number, but I want to be good stand 85% of the time and I want everybody else to be 85 to 90% of the time. I want you to have awareness, especially as a team when that kryptonite comes out because it's not malicious, Chris.

It's the way we're wired. It's the way we respond under stress. When you know that, then you know what? We can coach and how we can go ahead and get around some of those stressors in life. Anyway, I didn't mean to take you off it. I just think the whole genius thing is obviously a very excitable topic for me because I think everybody's got one. You should have seen the faces light up on that team last week.

It was just like I threw some magic pixie dust across the Zoom waves and everybody was like, "Ah, now we get it." That's what starts trust. That's what starts trust on a team is when they have that awareness.

**Chris:** You said a lot of things I want to go over again, which was just amazing. I'm glad we're going off-script. You talked about genius. I don't think most of us are told, I know it's certainly not me, that there's genius in you. You go to work, you do your job, you stay in your lane, you punch the clock, and you go home, wash, rinse, repeat. I love what you just said is what's strong, not what's wrong. That's amazing. You talked about kryptonite and then figuring out your strength and your weakness. One of the things that we focus here on the show is resiliency. It's one of the pillars of strengths of the show.

Resilience is so important to success not to well-being. How do we build emotional resilience to cope with life's challenges and stressors?

**Stan:** Again, I think know who you are and know who you're not. Even working with teams, I can work with some people and we can tell right away, they're just a hotbed for stress, they are going to-- You know what? One of the gifts in strength finders is called achiever. If I told somebody, quit achieving, quit being that person. No, you don't want to take that genius away from them. I will say this, we have to work very hard at what can be the antidotes for these stressors. When you put three or four of these strengths together, let's just say achiever, let's just say, you've got three more.



There's four quadrants. One of the quadrants is people that get a lot of things done, and they're always active.

When people have two or three or four of those, they're typically going to burn out. Just knowing who you are and knowing who you're not, but when you know that you're the type of person that you can't sleep until, not only did you check all 10 things off the list, you're going to create an 11th and 12th. When you start to know that, is when you can start to say, "You know what? I need some help. Sometimes it's meditation, sometimes it's breathing, sometimes it's a lot of the different things that I help executives with to slow down.

Then there's other people that have very different types of stresses in their life. It really comes down. It's very hard. It's very challenging. It's very customizable as to what helps people relax. What makes me relax Chris may not make you. That's why we look a little bit at the kryptonite and we start to get some ideas as to what can you do different to slow down? What can you do different to get that recovery? Obviously, your distress is out of whack. Your eustress, there's not enough of it, but your recovery is something that we've got to look at.

Every recovery is different for everybody. For some, I can tell you right now, I work with a guy who he's a supercharged individual, and his recovery is actually working. We've got to change that. Is it working on your business or is it working on a hobby or something else that's related? It's very customizable, Chris.

**Chris:** I was laughing when you're talking about executives and people having their list of 10 things to do and then all of a sudden they get 11 and 12 and 13. Last night, my wife and I didn't connect until about nine o'clock. We're at the kitchen table, just recapping the day, and we're like, "Let's get ready for bed." She comes up and she's got her list and she's adding to it. I'm like, "Put that thing down. You're not going to be able to unwind. The list will be there tomorrow, I promise you." I can empathize, sympathize, all of that.

I appreciate that analogy. Stan, sometimes we like to blame genetics as a reason or excuse for something in our life. I blame my father for my receding hairline. I thank my mother for my blue eyes and my height. I can't help it. I got bad genes, my mother's fault or my dad's fault. How much do genetics contribute to our wellbeing and how much do lifestyle choices and environment contribute?

**Stan:** It's funny that you say that because you're absolutely right. We've all got some baggage. We've all got a mom or a father that they did too much. They didn't do enough. They did this. We've got something in our childhood that created a lifestyle or a way that we feel like we're wired today. I'm a very big believer, you've got to make a choice, Chris. Are you going to be a victim or are you going to own? You've got to take ownership. We can be a victim all day long. It's not going to change the future.

If it does, it's going to be in a negative way. You've got to make that decision. Am I a victim or am I an owner? When you take ownership, then you start to make some

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conscious decisions and one of the things that I talk about often is we have these parts of the brain, we've got the amygdala, and people have heard of that because that's fight-flight and it's an area that a lot of us want to live in in that, I would say out of 3000 things we take in a day, probably 95% all go to the amygdala.

The other part is the prefrontal cortex. That's the part of logic. That's the front part of the brain. Getting things to move from the amygdala to the prefrontal cortex, there's a word called a reticular activation system. That's within our brain and it helps us take things and put them in the conscious to where we can think logically about them versus just believe everything that everybody tells us.

Chris, you're this, you're that. We take it and it becomes truth/ Until we can bring it to the prefrontal cortex and put a conscientious note around it, that's when we can start to do something about how we want to show up. That's what I teach a lot of clients is that "Yes, we can do a lot of the genius spark and we can figure out how you're wired and fired but how do you want to show up? That's going to be very important.

**Chris:** We're always getting advice to change this or to change that, to improve our overall well-being. In your experience, what are a few of the top practical strategies or habits we should adapt to enhance our overall well-being?

**Stan:** Again, let's go back to habits. I'm a big believer in morning habits and evening habits. Morning habits, I always say that the best leaders need to be a little bit selfish to be very selfless. To be a selfless servant, You've got to take care of you in the morning. You've got to take care of that first hour and a half has to be yours because when it is, then you can serve everybody else the rest of the day.

Not to put a downer story on this but I will tell you this became firsthand to me back in 2018. The reason it did is because when my wife was diagnosed with cancer and it was a very sobering event for us and a lot of tears, a lot of this. Again, are you going to be a victim or are you going to be an owner? What are you going to do? For me, I knew that my life was going to change because I had to take care of her and I had a group that we managed over \$2 billion worth of real estate, and I had other commitments. I couldn't do that, Chris if didn't take care of me first.

I had to be a little selfish, mind, body, and soul. Every morning when I get up and I got up a little earlier. I was up by 5:00, 5:15, and I was taking care of the body. I was taking care of the mind, I was taking care of the soul and my wife was doing the same thing.

Fortunately, this is from 2018. Obviously, we're almost six years later and we've had ups and downs through that time but right now we're going through a good time. It's one of those things that we as leaders, the world will go on without us. It really will and it always has. However, while we're here and we want to take care of the people that mean most to us in life, we have to take care of ourselves and I really believe that. That starts with morning routines and evening routines and I'll just give you, I'll just a quickie here.



Morning routine, 10, 3, 2, 1. I quit. Sleep is very important and we'll get into that. I know we'll probably go off script here but sleep is extremely important. It's a foundation for health. If you don't feel good, you're not going to do things well all day long, so you got to get that good night's sleep but 10, 3, 2, 1. I quit any and all caffeine 10 hours before bedtime. It takes about six to eight hours for it to flush through the system but 10's a safe number. Come noontime, coffee's done for the day. That's the only caffeine I really consume is in coffee.

**Chris:** I shouldn't be having my coffee now?

**Stan:** I wouldn't do that, Chris.

**Chris:** Fair enough.

**Stan:** Especially with your to-do list your wife, I'm starting to see a pattern here, Chris.

[laughter]

Then three hours before bed, we try to make sure that we've already eaten, no wine, no nothing. People always come home and they say, "Oh my gosh," and they've made their 35,000 decisions and they come home and they say, "You know what? I just want a big meal. I want a few glasses of wine." It's eight or nine o'clock and they think that puts them to sleep well. They don't go into the four cycles of sleep when they do that or the four stages of sleep. Three hours is when we start to shut down.

Two hours before is typically technology. You got to shut it off at some time. It's just not doing your brain any good and there's another thing called digital dementia which we could get into but you've got to shut down the technology a couple of hours before.

Then an hour before is typically the lights are getting lowered. We're trying to introduce melatonin. There are certain things that I do to introduce melatonin into my body. I've just started drinking a little bit of tart cherry juice which has natural melatonin. Raisins actually produce melatonin but there are certain things that I talk to clients about in getting the melatonin right so that you can then go into sleep. I want to tell you something about melatonin. Melatonin helps you get to sleep faster but not longer.

It's really a great way if you have a hard time falling asleep. It's one of those things that just helps you get to sleep a little quicker. Those are some morning routines and some evening routines. I really didn't hit all my morning routines because I go through about five or six things when I get up in the morning but that first hour to hour and a half, that's all about Stan. The reason it's all about Stan is so that can be all about sharing my wife, those that I work with, my clients, and everybody else being a servant leader.

**Chris:** Stan, Jordan my sound engineer is telling me we've got two minutes to break but I'm on Page 2 out of Page 8 of my notes. Is it okay if we skip the break?

**Stan:** Let's do it.

**Chris:** All right, Stan, we're going to blow it through the commercial. That's all right. You talked about sleep, we'll get into that a little bit more. You talked about diet and exercise for overall well-being. You touched a little bit on tart cherry juice and melatonin. Are there specific nutrients that most people are missing that they could improve upon themselves or should just work with a nutrition coach?

**Stan:** There's not enough micronutrient doctors around, in my opinion. A lot of the people you go to, they'll take your blood test types and they want to sell you \$300 worth of vitamins a month. I'm not going to judge but that's just not my thing but I think people that can really test your blood types and know that what works for me Chris may not work for you and vice versa. Some people need a little more protein just because of their blood types. Some people need more carbs.

I try to regulate it a little bit with just good vitamins. There's tumeric. There are certain juices that I drink, the raw stuff. A Mediterranean diet. I just try to keep it pretty simple because it isn't until we start to ingest this Western diet that we start to get in trouble. Even in this Western diet so much of our food has been diluted. Chris, I was talking to somebody last week, he said that he was talking to somebody extremely credible and he said, "We need to consume over 200 carrots to get the same amount of nutrients that one carrot gave us 20 to 30 years ago." We have genetically modified a lot of the way that we grow our meats, our vegetables, et cetera, so trying to eat just as pure as you can.

Again, we can get into more on nutrition but intermittent fasting, certain things but I just try to keep it as pure as I can. My wife and I, Mediterranean diet just seems to work well for us and I don't know that we've ever got the right answer.

**Chris:** When we're so busy with work and family responsibilities and obviously so tired afterward, what's the best or easiest way to do what we should be doing with both, if there is a best or easiest way?

**Stan:** Restate that. With what?

**Chris:** When we're so busy with work and family responsibilities and then we're just exhausted at the end of the day, what's the best or easiest way for us to do what we should be doing with both to make sure that neither ball is dropping and falling and we're doing the best we can at work, the best we can with our family. Like I said before, they both affect each other, how can we as individuals, as couples, make sure we're focused on doing the best job we possibly can, given the limited window we have of them overlapping?

**Stan:** I tell you what, again, I truly believe in intentionality and you've got to have intentionality. Your calendar becomes very important and I get into systems a lot and

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I get into calendaring things. My morning routines are calendar. If they're not calendared, you're not going to think about them. I'll tell you what, even my date night with my wife after 42 years, that's calendared. You've got to compartmentalize everything in your life and calendar them. I don't want you to become a robot but on the other hand, I want you to really think about again, morning routines, night routines, recovery time, Saturday blocking that out or Sunday whichever is your Sabbath. You've got to be very intentional about your calendar. I'm very big into that right now.

I'm working with some expert consultants out on the East Coast who's even notching my game up even more considerably in this area because I'm very interested in not only consuming a rich and intentional life but helping clients have a rich and intentional life. A lot of it just comes down to basically seeing the week ahead. I always say this Chris tomorrow starts tonight, next week starts this week, next month starts this month. You've got to be planning and you've got to think ahead.

We get so busy that we just go on autopilot and we've got to take the time and everybody's got a favorite time. Mine was Saturday morning for an hour to have coffee before everybody got up. Look at what I'd accomplished the past week what I wanted to get done in the next week, and think a little bit. You've got to have intentionality. I really believe that's important.

**Chris:** I liked how you said next week starts this week. My phrase similar to that is tomorrow never comes because it's always today.

**Stan:** Yes, absolutely. Great point, Chris.

**Chris:** Absolutely agree with that. Stan, we've talked about physical and mental well-being. How does social connections and relationships contribute to overall well-being? How should we nurture and cultivate meaningful social connections?

**Stan:** Oh boy. I'll tell you what we are just getting so diluted, and you know what? Hey, I'm on social media. I'm not a prude. I like that stuff too. When I talked about digital dementia we are spending so much time on social media today. Digital dementia is a real thing. It affects short-term memory. It can affect actually your gut health. It affects a lot of certain things. I think you've got to be very, very careful about how you spend your personal time. That's probably the easy answer. I really believe that we've got to be somewhat consistent in how we dial that stuff down.

How do we keep more intentional about the relationships we have in our life? As I mentioned one thing I do and this is interesting, is I will have people tell me, give me the five or six things that are most important in your life. They'll go ahead and they'll jot them down. Then I'll say, "Now let's take those five or six things. How much energy do you put into each one of them? I want it to equal 100%." People always lead off and say family's my most important, blah, blah, blah. It's getting absolutely 5% because they get what's left at the end of the day. You got to be intentional about it.

Now, when I talk about time versus energy, now I can't give my wife or my family, or my grandkids I cannot give them the same amount of time I give my business, but I can give them the energy. When I'm with my grandkids there's nobody else around. There is no phone within sight and we're having a blast. I told you I'm grand Stan to them and we are having a wonderful time. You've got to be intentional about the various areas in your life to keep your relationships and emotions alive. Let me tell you about relationships just real quickly.

They say you can die of a broken heart. You really can. What happens is when you go through trauma, either a bad relationship you've lost a loved one you're going through a divorce, your veins start to constrict.

It's hard to get blood to the heart and to the brain. When that happens you really do. My mom lost my stepdad about three weeks ago. I'm most concerned about her being lonely right now because she's got a bad heart anyway. That's a time when again, we start to forget a little bit more. That's the thing about relationships and the blood. You start to forget a little bit more. You don't get enough blood to the heart. You really can die of a broken heart. You've got to be very careful about your relationships nurturing those that are good and removing or alleviating those that don't serve you.

**Chris:** I'm going to go back to the digital dementia you talked about if that's okay.

**Stan:** Sure.

**Chris:** I'm not a big social media guy. I post stuff when I have to mostly for the show or interesting articles on a couple of topics I think are important to me. Human trafficking, mental health, suicide prevention. I'm a big Apple fan and I live with my Apple watch and my phone and I pay attention. Every week on Sunday It gives you a recap of how much time you spent on your phone. I try and reduce that every week and I've got my wife who what I call doom scrolls with her thumb. She's lefty so she uses her left thumb and just doom scrolls through whatever social media feed she's on. I'm like, "You've got to stop this."

Now, I've got three kids with my wife. My oldest is 21, my middle one she'll be 18 soon, my little guy just turned 12 last week. They all went through COVID and had a different perspective of how they got through COVID. Social media was what kept them engaged. Zoom is how they went to school. Tiktok became a thing. You can't Google mental health and teens right now without seeing the biggest flag of social media damaging and causing harm to their mental health. We haven't gotten to that 10-year window yet where Harvard Business School is going to do some case study on COVID-19 and social media with teenagers.

How do we address that situation in terms of yes, social media is a thing that's with us now and will be going forward. That's how we communicate, that's how there's advertising. In terms of your overall well-being in managing that, any suggestions in terms and I know it's not your typical work but any suggestions you could have for

our listeners and viewers in terms of how to address that with that age group that went through school throughout COVID?

**Stan:** It's a great point you make. First of all, it's got to be a choice. It's got to be something that you want to manage. If you don't want to manage it-- I could tell my family "Hey, cut it down." You know what? Unless it comes from them, unless they can see the science around it, then they maybe will start to understand, maybe I should start to manage this a little bit differently.

They've got to understand the neurological effects. Again, it does affect gut health. It does affect the ability to short-term memory. It does affect a lot of different things. If you just want to Google, ChatGPT digital dementia and take a look and see what the effects are and there's enough science around it to say we need to dial that back. It's something that if the government thinks by getting rid of TikTok that we're going to quit looking at social media, they're just going to double down on something else.

I think you've really got to be very careful about-- There's a lot of great apps, for example, the Freedom app. I don't know if you're familiar with the Freedom App. It's one of the many, but the Freedom App and it will cost you but it's a great-- You can dial in it will shut down certain apps or certain parts of your computer or your phone during the day. I'll tell you what it feels like you're naked running around when you can't get into Facebook or Instagram or TikTok. I have used that in the past to start to dial me back on being-- You can't get in.

It's locked. Even if you want to cheat, you can't get in. There are apps out there. I also hit do not disturb a lot. I have really started making a very conscious effort even on my computer of hitting unsubscribe to a lot of stuff because again, it's just one more clickbait and people know how to get you, Chris. You know what you're after. All of a sudden I can say, "You know what? I've really been looking at a certain car. We could just call it a Chevy something." All of a sudden everything I look at is an advertisement for a Chevy something. Don't think that people aren't out there trying to get the majority of your attention.

You've got to just make that conscious choice that you know what? At the dinner table, boom, we're not going to have it. It just isn't going to be there. In the evening we're going to shut it down two hours before bed and we're going to hold each other accountable. I don't have a great suggestion. All I know is you've got to make that choice, and you've got to understand the science around what it's doing to you personally and professionally.

**Chris:** I'm laughing about the clickbait. My son's starting his little league season now, and last weekend we went shopping online for new cleats at one store, new batting gloves at another one Monday morning I go to wallstreetjournal.com and what were the two banner ads I have? The batting gloves and the cleats store, and I'm like, "You've got to be kidding me." I've got one more discussion point on sleep. I know how important it's for you. Now I work from home so I may be able to do this although my kids and wife would probably call me out. Do you recommend daytime

naps? If so it might be possible for someone like me that work at home, but how do we get the boss to buy into that if you're in the office?

**Stan:** Number one, yes. Winston Churchill took a nap every day during the war. If it's good enough for him it's good enough for me. I don't believe in naps going over 30 minutes. There's four stages of sleep and I think you want to get into just past the awake and light sleep, start to dream, and then come out of it. I think then all of a sudden you've got the equivalent of a two to three-hour nap and getting your sleep. I do think it's great for creativity. I do think it creates quality over quantity. The problem is I'm not a great napper. You can tell you talked about my energy.

How do I slow this machine down? There are other things that you can do. There is meditation. You talked about the boss. Yes, they might look at you a little funny if you're in there with a pillow. I will say if you can go find a quiet place and just plant your feet and just sit, I'm a big believer in box breathing. Box breathing is nothing more than picking a number, four or five, and inhaling through the nose for the count of four or five. I always say through the nose because the nose acts as a filter and there is a certain nerve in your nose that basically when you breathe through it, it expands your lungs even more than breathing through the mouth. Breathe in through the nose and let's just say it's a count of four. Breathe in heavily through the nose for the count of four, hold it for the count of four, breathe out through the mouth the count of four and hold that for the count of four.

If you have anxiety, always go to breathing and just do that multiple times until you start to feel the anxiety come down. There's nasal breathing, there's what's called the Wim Hof breathing which I have done before, which is quite amazing. There's a lot of different ways I think that you can slow down without having to take a nap. Then Dr. Huberman, a lot of people are familiar with him but he talks even about-- There's a meditation in the day you don't really go to sleep but you start to focus on every aspect of your body all the way from your feet to your knees, you work through your whole body. By the time you go through this 15 to 20 minutes, you are so relaxed. You haven't slept but it's the equivalent of two to three hours sleep.

There are different ways of finding ways to relax, as long as you calendar it and choose to say, "You know what? I want my afternoon to be just as awesome as my morning." You've got to make that decision about a nap. Since we're talking about it, I would just say this too. When it comes to calendaring your day, typically morning is going to be the green area for most of us. That's going to be the time when we're ready to work on the bigger projects. Then we slide into a little yellow where we get tired and we slide into the red where we're we just want to do mindless stuff. An email, anything, just get me through the day.

I think you've also got to know that keeping that yellow a little later in the day by taking a nap or by meditating. Laugh at this, but I even drink beet juice in the morning because it just wakes you up. It takes you deeper into the day than you normally would. There are ways to keep your energy levels high, Chris.



**Chris:** You touched on meditation and quiet rooms. We're going to shift gears a little bit here. I've seen recently a lot of major financial services firms on their floors adding meditation and adding quiet rooms. You're a corporate executive. Let's talk about the workplace. What role does workplace culture play in fostering our well-being or stifling it?

**Stan:** Plays an absolutely huge role and it starts at the top. Whether it's a walking meeting, whether it's creating these meditation rooms, whether it's the water. We need hydration. Our body is made up of 80% plus water. I think the corporations play a huge role in how we take care of ourselves. I think that sometimes the filler is to put in a gymnasium or get a gym membership.

The 20% of the people that use it are the people that are already in shape. You've got to really take a look at what's the return on the investment of the things that you do. I know this is going to really weird a lot of people out but even with me as a manager, maybe it was because I was well-versed in it but I think I can help other managers become well-versed too. I talked each week to my direct reports. "How are you feeling? How are things going at home? What's going on? You getting plenty of sleep? You're doing this, you're doing that?"

Not that I can solve every one of their problems but A, it showed I cared. B, I could give them enough things to think about to where it started with me. It wasn't relying on the organization. That's a low-cost, no-cost way of helping employees take care of themselves. Again, it has to be a choice to where people want to take care of themselves but as a manager, people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. You take that time.

I'm a big believer in either weekly or bimonthly meetings, not only with your direct reports. We call them skip levels, whatever you want to call them. I met with people, two or three positions were moved from me and those might be every 30 to 45 days. Keeping engaged and showing people you care and talking to them about their personal life is just as important as understanding what's going on in the workplace. I do think that the workplace plays a huge role in how we construct the way that we try to keep our employees healthy.

**Chris:** We've talked about your research of sleep, nutrition, exercise, mindfulness, productivity, routine, and healthy relationships while you're researching your book, *Living a Rich and Intentional Life*. What was the most surprising thing you learned during your research?

**Stan:** That I could actually write a book.

[laughter]

I guess as I went through it, Chris, my why had to be bigger than my what. What I mean by that is why I was writing the book had to be bigger than my what. I had been doing a lot of motivational speaking, a lot of speaking around the country for

the last 8, 9, 10 years, even while I was at Wells. People said, "You got to write a book. You got to put this stuff into a book."

Never let a good pandemic go to waste. All of a sudden I had a few hours that I wasn't playing sports or doing something crazy. Why don't I put that into writing a book? The most compelling thing was, my mom's up there in age. She's now 90, and she really wanted to see me write that book. She wanted that day where I would deliver her a book and that became my why. That's what motivated me to chunk out two hours before work, two hours on the weekend, two hours after work.

It put me on a path because my why became bigger than my what. Now I'm able to use something that I can give to clients and say, "Hopefully, you can get some nugget out of here that makes you your best version of yourself." I think you got to have a why. The research that I did, it was a lot of stuff. It was an accumulation of stuff that I'd done over 10-plus years, quite honestly. I think your why has to be bigger than your what. I just love the research. I don't know that I want to write a second one. I've had a lot of people tell me that I should but writing one was pretty laborious and I would rather speak than write. Anyway, that was a lot of fun. I will say that I spent one year writing it.

**Chris:** Right there with you, it was a COVID thing for me too. I wasn't commuting to New York three and a half hours a day so understand your joy and your sorrow through that process. *Living a Rich Intentional Life* is your first book. There will be another, I know that. I know you, I know your energy. Where can people find your book and where can they find you if you want to come speak?

**Stan:** They can find the book, again, *Living a Rich Intentional Life* on Amazon but they can always go to my website. My website, which I just changed the name of my company. It's not Oxygen Plus, we just changed it actually to StanGibsonSpeaks.com. Stan Gibson Speaks. I was somewhere a few months ago and somebody said, "Speak or speak." I thought, "That's what I do." That's what I need to brand myself. StanGibsonSpeaks.com, you can go there and you can actually watch a five-minute, what we call a sizzle reel on me speaking.

If I'm your jam, then you know what? There's a place to hit a button on there and say, "Hey Stan, can you come and speak to our company? Can you come speak to our organization? Can you come hang out for a day?" I just love meeting people. Anyway, that's where you can find me, StanGibsonSpeaks.com. I'd love to hear from you.

**Chris:** Earlier in the show, we were talking about rings and Fitbits and all that good stuff for your physical well-being. What productivity tools or apps do you recommend for managing tasks? You talked about calendaring, scheduling, and collaboration.

**Stan:** Number one, being in the corporate world it's death by meetings. It's unbelievable. I literally was in meetings 90% of the time. I will tell you, I left a meeting 15 to 20 minutes early because I was already double booked for another meeting.

Your mind, anytime you're interrupted, it takes 21 minutes to go ahead and either get back to the topic or get hooked into the new topic.

I'm a really big believer in asynchronous meetings, Chris. I believe that apps today allow, especially younger people who enjoy it more in the Gen Z, millennial, they love asynchronous meetings because they're not afraid of technology. We can call a meeting and I might give you an answer at ten o'clock, you might give me an answer at one o'clock, I might respond at three o'clock and you've got some time at five o'clock.

Anyway, we somehow figured out the solution to a problem without having to schedule a 45 to 50 to 60-minute meeting. I believe a lot in asynchronous meetings. The thing that I would say with asynchronous meetings, whether you've got Salesforce, whether you've got Trello, whether you've got Slack, there are a lot of different systems out there today that will help you create asynchronous meetings. Notion is the other one. I'm playing around with a lot of them right now too. I'm playing around with Notion, I have started using Trello. I do use Slack with my vendors or the people that support me. I think there are great ways of having meetings without getting killed with the death by meeting.

**Chris:** Obviously, your success coach. Who do success coaches listen to or work with for their inspiration and personal success? Who coaches the coach?

**Stan:** You know what? I would be a hypocrite if I didn't invest in people to coach me because I asked people to obviously invest in me. I've had everything from a business coach. At the same time, I had somebody who actually, she was wonderful. She coached me at the same time, but she taught me something very different. We got into ontology, which again, is the science of how to show up and how does your brain work? You got to make that conscious choice of do you want to be coached? Do you want to continue to learn As part of my business plan I will continue to invest in me.

I will continue to invest in me every year that I'm alive. I believe that that's what people have to do now. I still read books, I still listen to podcasts. I have a newsletter. One of the parts of the newsletter is what Stan reading, listening to, or doing. I'm always throwing a documentary out there. I'm always throwing a book out there. I just have an insatiable desire to want to learn more. I think that that's very important that you have to make that decision to always either invest in you, invest in a coach, read, do the things that excite you. I have no regrets. My coaches have been really, really awesome. There's been a great return on that investment.

**Chris:** Stan guess always the final word. We've got three or four minutes left. You've already shared some very practical and uplifting advice. Maybe it's a matter of summing up everything, or maybe you have something else to add, but please take our conversation with advice to help our audience become less stressed, more resilient, and more empowered.

**Stan:** When I talk about *Living a Rich and Intentional Life*, Chris why do we wait to get sick to get well? Why do we wait for some really horrible event because we haven't taken care of ourselves our whole life to decide, you know what? I wish I'd taken better care of myself. I'm not trying to make this quick, but my wife and I were having dinner about 12 years ago, and this is when I decided to get into coaching actually. We were having dinner and one of my very close friends walked up and we hadn't seen him in a couple of years and had a great conversation.

He walked away and he came back over and he said, "I feel like I need to tell you this, but," he said, "I've got cancer." He said, "I've got a 50-50 chance of living for five more years." My jaw dropped and I didn't know what to say. Before I could get anything out, Chris, he said, "No, no, no, no, no. I didn't come over to make you feel bad. I wanted you to know that it's been the best three months of my life."

He said, "You know what? I'm having conversations with my wife that I've never had before." He's the CEO of a company. He said, "I've now assumed chairman and I promoted somebody into being CEO that's really better at it than I am. I've taken all my kids on separate vacations." He said, "What do you want out of dad before he leaves this world?" To me, that was where I had the idea around writing a book called *Living a Rich and Intentional Life* because when death becomes certain, life becomes rich.

He said that to me and that resonated. That's what I would ask those of you that are out in the audience today. Is to not wait to get sick, to get well. Take care of you now. It's a great journey. Every season of life is awesome, and enjoy the season you're in right now and make it the best.

**Chris:** Stan Gibson, author of *Living a Rich and Intentional Life*. Thank you so much for being us today.

**Stan:** Oh, it's been my pleasure. Thank you. You've got a wonderful program. Love your audience, and again, [stangibsonspeaks.com](http://stangibsonspeaks.com). Just love to hear from you. Take care and do live a rich and intentional life, please.`

**Chris:** Thanks. For our audience, I'm Chris Meek. We're out of time. We'll see you next week, same time, same place. Until then, stay safe and keep taking your next steps forward.

**Speaker 1:** Thanks for tuning in to Next Steps Forward. Be sure to join Chris Meek for another great show next Tuesday at 10:00 AM Pacific time and 1:00 PM Eastern Time on the Voice America Empowerment Channel. This week make things happen in your life.

[music]

[00:55:12] [END OF AUDIO]