

The Brave Files Podcast
Timothy Yen: Decision Making, a Learned Skill
Episode 165

Heather Vickery 0:04

Hi out there, this is Heather Vickery. And you've tuned in to The Brave Files Podcast. Welcome and curious, what kind of decision maker are you? Do you agonize over decisions all day long? Or maybe all week long? Or does it take you months or years to finally make a decision? Or are you the kind of person that decides on something jumps quickly into it? Whether or not it was a good decision or not? Personally, I'm more of a jumper most of the time. I know what I want. And I go for it. But that's not always great. Of course, neither is being stuck in a decision cyclone and not making any decision at all. And then what about decision fatigue? I fight with this one a lot. As a business owner and a single mom, I am required to make decisions all day long. And sometimes I just don't want to make another decision. Have you ever felt that way? Well, the good news is today's guest is an expert on learning to make better decisions. Let's keep in mind, though, that better is up for debate. And it's up to each of us as the decision maker to decide what that actually means. So no one here is making a judgment on what's better, you get to decide what's better for you. And by better. This week's guest, Timothy Yen means something that's better aligned with your values. And the values of those people with whom you spend your time and love and care for is a great conversation. And it's a really incredible system. I want to know, if you're going to start implementing it if it's helping you make decisions more quickly, more thoughtfully, something you feel more comfortable with. So take a listen. And then be sure to give me an email or a call or respond in the comments. And let me know how you're going to move forward making better decisions for you.

Timothy Yen 1:58

Excellence, blessed, purposeful.

Heather Vickery 2:02

This is Heather Vickery. And you're listening to The Brave Files, stories from people living courageously. When we choose bravely in big and small ways, it powerfully elevates our lives. I hope these stories connect with you and encourage you to embrace bravery in every possible way, day after day. Together, we could build a movement of courageous living that enriches both our lives and our communities. And if you enjoy the show, I asked you to please share it with others. Maybe think of someone who you want to choose bravely right alongside you. Thanks for tuning in. Now, here's the show. Hi, everybody, I once heard someone say that they thought their way into a situation. So clearly, they could think their way out of it. And I love that. But wouldn't it be nice to just make better choices in the first place choices that will make us happy the first time we try or at least some of the time. Today I'm talking with Dr. Timothy Yen about his work helping people choose better. And because he has this really cool system that makes decision making easier and more authentic. I thought this would be a great conversation to have about how choosing better is brave, and how choosing happier is brave. And we're going to learn all about very cool. Dr. Timothy Yen, welcome to The Brave Files.

Timothy Yen 3:32

Thank you so much, Heather, for having me.

Heather Vickery 3:34

I'm looking forward to this because I think you've been doing you're on a book tour. You got a lot of stuff going on. I think you probably find yourself in a lot of really stuffy spaces. Is that true, Tim? Am I right about that?

Timothy Yen 3:45

That's fair to say even though I welcome every opportunity, obviously I've created them. So yes, they're, they're great.

Heather Vickery 3:52

We are not going to be stuffy today. So I'm kind of looking forward to seeing you in a way and learning about you in a way that we we haven't if people have been listening to your podcast or checking out your book in other ways. So I want to know a little bit about you and about your background. And I mean, how does one become an expert in choosing better?

Timothy Yen 4:13

Sure. So quick background, I am born and raised in Southern California, have two wonderful parents have a younger sister. And to be honest, I've never thought I would be a psychologist. But that's its own story that we may get into a little bit but I kind of stumbled upon it. Because I was colorblind. So that's its own little story, but I did because. Yeah and love what I do. I'm married to this wonderful woman and have a one and a half year old son. I reside in the Bay Area in Northern California now and I do counseling and coaching.

Heather Vickery 4:53

Okay, counseling coaching. So you got into psychology because you're you're colorblind?

Timothy Yen 4:59

Correct. So originally, I wanted to be a communications major, radio, TV, that sort of thing. And I didn't want to pay for my own college. So I asked Uncle Sam if he can pay for me by enlisting in the army and turns out during one of their medical examinations, which is funny, right, it took 18 years to find out something like this. Bizarre, right? But whatever, that's kind of what happened. I wasn't like kind of colorblind. I was like, severely colorblind. So...

Heather Vickery 5:32

How did you go through your whole life and not know like, when your parents are teaching you like this is purple. And this is pink. And you're like, No, it's not. It's red. It's red and green. Like

Timothy Yen 5:41

I somehow made it through the world in one piece. And that's when they told me, Hey, you can't be a journalist if you're colorblind. So you have these four other options that are left over. And mental health was one of the selections. And so I thought, Hey, give this a stab, you know, it's

only eight years of my life, right? So let's, let's give it a shot. And it turned out to be a really cool thing for me.

Heather Vickery 6:09

I love that I love that we never really know what is going to lead to the next big thing in our life. And it's funny because you're we're here to talk about your book, choose better and your your system for doing so for decision making. And yet sometimes, we just the most unexpected things present themselves to us.

Timothy Yen 6:32

So true. I think we set ourselves up with an idea that we're making these decisions. But hopefully, there are some grounded values, things about who you are that it becomes almost unconscious that you make the better choice, but that does require some intentionality. And then definitely there's some faith that is built into that process.

Heather Vickery 6:57

I actually really, really liked that, can we can we talk about that as far as how someone makes this sort of, quote unquote, better? And I'd like for you to define what it means to make better decisions, because that feels a little judgy. But I also love the idea of it. So like, what does that mean? How do we make that habitual, I'd love to hear more about that.

Timothy Yen 7:20

So let's start with the definition. So when I say better, I'm not talking about better in a all encompassing, objective kind of way, my hope is better means better for you for for the individual. And however you want to define it. And of course, in my book, I do provide some parameters that I think have a universal quality to it, especially when I talk about values, you know, what's meaningful to an individual. And the better would be decisions that are aligned with who a person is, what what matters to them, and being in tune with how they feel and, and being respectful of other people that are involved. I would say those are those better choices. Of course, you can always debate me like if you have another definition. very open to it.

Heather Vickery 8:13

I like that. Because what I'm what I'm hearing you say is choose better for you, instead of doing what you think other people want you to do or pleasing other people, am I that's what I'm hearing.

Timothy Yen 8:25

You're hearing it correctly. And it's not that you dismiss what other people say or maybe even want for you. It's just one of many data points to consider. Yeah.

Heather Vickery 8:36

I like that. Okay, so I do a lot of coaching and speaking and talking about balance, about creating balance, and it's a hot topic, people, they're like into it, or they're like, oh, balance is bullshit, you can't have balance. And I define balance as the way you feel at the end of the day,

the week, the month, the year. And as such very similar to what you're saying about this concept of better. It's personal. It's not like, Oh, I'm 50% of the time. I'm working 50% of the time, I'm with my family. It's just, am I making choices and spending my time in a way that feels good when I check back in with myself?

Timothy Yen 9:13

Yes, and we don't live for a feeling per se, but our feelings do let us know if we're on the right track. Oftentimes, not always, our emotions can be deceiving. But a lot of the times, Yes, that that feeling is an indicator that you're you're where you're supposed to be.

Heather Vickery 9:35

Yeah, see, I'm a bit of an intuition kind of person which you're a science kind of person. So I'd be curious how those things balance in your head. I I get gut feelings. I get feelings in my solar plexus. I get feelings in the back of my neck and I know that where ever the feeling presents itself, it tells me whether or not it's a good thing for me or a bad thing for me. There's not a whole lot of science. But it has led me very well, in my life.

Timothy Yen 10:05

I love it. And I'm a science person. But I think a good psychologist has to have some level of intuition, for sure. And intuition is essentially science that hasn't been articulated. That's probably what I would say. I like that, right. It's just your feelings have already helped you guide to make certain kinds of decisions or ways of seeing things. But I'm sure you can slap on some science, when you take the time to really look deeper into what led you to that place. So I don't they're not competing, you know what I mean? It's just the language.

Heather Vickery 10:45

My energy friends, I have a bunch of clients who are in energy work, they're gonna look, they're gonna love that. Yes, we just don't have the science for yet. I would love to know. So you got into psychology and you started doing this work. What led you down this particular path. And before you get there, I will say it's all I find it all very fascinating. I've done a ton of work in, in the study of gratitude and positive psychology, certified in positive psychology, I've written two books on gratitude. And I have come up with folks who were like, Oh, that's a bunch of woowoo. Bullshit. And I like no, it's that that's there. We've we've actually identified the science behind that. We know why this works, a lot of science behind it. And so it's been such a treat for me, because I really partner mental mindset work with actual, you know, proven things that will go create change in your life to be able to say, No, look, this is this is real. There's science behind this, you don't even have to believe me, just try it. So how did you go down this path? And what surprised you most about it?

Timothy Yen 11:52

Yeah. It still surprises me, to be honest, as I'm like, reflecting on it now. Like, at this time of recording, I just left my salary job two days ago. So

Heather Vickery 12:05
Congratulations!

Timothy Yen 12:07

Thank you, I really appreciate that it was a big move for me. Since we're on the brave files, podcasts, like that took a certain level of guts, right to be like, you know, I'm gonna burn this bridge, and I'm not looking back, I'm going to build my own thing that has my unique signature on it. And holding on to the day job, I worked for a hospital. rewarding work, it was great. I just didn't have enough time and energy in the day to do both. So I was building my own thing for a while. And then it just got too much. And so I say goodbye to the thing that was really secure, had healthcare benefits. 401k and all these different things, my parents, particularly My Mother, she looks, I think to this day, like I'm crazy. She's like you, you arrived. Why would you? Why would you ever give that up? Yeah. Why would you give up? People are clamoring at getting into the hospital in the middle of a pandemic, and you're going to leave it? Yes, mother, Yes, I am. I did. Actually, I just two days ago, two days ago was my last day. So it's just yeah, it continues to surprise me. And I'm excited to see what the future unfolds.

Heather Vickery 13:27

Absolutely, it is brave to leave a regular steady job, but more than brave to leave. I think it's brave to leap. It's brave to trust that this other thing that you feel passionate about is worthy and valuable, and that you can not just survive, but thrive by pursuing it that feels way more brave than letting go of the safe thing to me is embracing the unsure thing. And did you use your own system to make this decision to leave your safety net job?

Timothy Yen 14:05

I think I would be lying if I said yes. Only I only say that because this system that I have put together is so much a part of me now that I don't necessarily use the framework line by line.

Heather Vickery 14:21

Sure, but that doesn't mean you don't use it. But I have the brave method. Yeah.

Timothy Yen 14:26

That's right. Okay. So I take that back. Yes, I do use what I wrote in my book to make this decision, but maybe not in its kind of line by line format that I reveal or show for the readers because at this point in time,

Heather Vickery 14:42

You don't need to.

Timothy Yen 14:43

It's intuitive, like you said.

Heather Vickery 14:46

I mean, I'm gonna have you in a second, I'd love for you to do the high level description of the book and what that system is, but I do feel like, at least for me, so I guess that I have the brave method. It's my coaching method. It changes lives, it changes businesses, it does that I do it I always say it doesn't have to happen in order, I just put it in order because it worked with the acronym brave. It stands for boundaries reassessment, reframing, resilience, action, accountability, vulnerability, expand and empower. Except for that last one, when you do all the rest of it, you end up expanding and empowering yourself. But the rest of it, you kind of jump in where you need to depending on what's happening in your life. And and I want it to become second nature for people, I want them to go afterwards. Oh, that was, I was totally using the three R's there. I was, that was a boundary, I didn't even realize I was setting a boundary. So so good. Tell us about your system. And then is that what you want for people, you want it to become second nature for them enough that they don't have to do it line by line either.

Timothy Yen 15:51

So true. And I remember talking to some of my, my clients who I've introduced this framework to? And I've heard it said, Dr. Tim, like this, this is so exhausting, I have to kind of go through these, these questions to to help me, you know, uncover what the best choices for me. And what I tell them is kind of what I'm saying. Now, at some point, it becomes second nature, you got to start somewhere. But when you do it over and over again, at some point, it just takes seconds to to arrive through the framework, not even in its particular order. There is an order to things, but it's more like a suggestion, I suppose, yeah, don't have to necessarily use it in this order.

Heather Vickery 16:35

So what is the system?

Timothy Yen 16:38

So the system what I call the optimal decision making framework, It comprises of what I call the four pillars, there's this, there's four pieces to it. And then there's like an invisible fifth piece that I'll talk to you in a little bit, which is about courage, bravery. So that's actually, that's gonna be the last one. The first four is, and there's a reason why it goes in this order, because it usually happens in this sequence in your mind. So the first question has to do with your emotions, your feelings, what are my feelings, trying to tell me at this moment, I start with that, because emotions hit your brain at 1/10 of a second, it just happens so fast. And depending on your family or cultural upbringing, we've kind of learned not to listen to how we feel. Feelings are unacceptable. So we don't talk about those feelings, we don't acknowledge them. And that's the first thing I'm trying to kind of rewrite, which is, your feelings are actually a key, a very important key to unlocking. The next pillar is these next parts. And so each feeling has a purpose behind what the feeling or message is trying to tell you. And I encourage people to identify what these feelings are, because it's telling you something important. So that's,

Heather Vickery 18:03

I like that

Timothy Yen 18:04

high level, right? That that's the emotional piece. And then it leads to your values, which is what's most meaningful, what, what matters to you. And in every situation, there's something that it's important to, that's why you're kind of struggling with this decision.

Heather Vickery 18:22

And in the research that I did, prepping for this conversation with you, I believe you ask people to really look at their values, why are these your values? Do they actually serve you to be your values, and that's a little, I like that. That's a little fun, because I'm really, my values are really important to me. core values of my business are very predominantly listed on my website, like your you know, I'm a very open book, you know what you're going to get that some people's values lead them to do really hateful and hurtful things. And I don't always understand why I'm like, why, why is that important to you to be hateful and hurtful.

Timothy Yen 19:00

And these values don't always come from us. So I love what you said, which is take the time to reevaluate, examine what it is that seems to be after your heart, but they may be misinformed. It could very well be this is such a psychologist answer, right? But it could be that you want a approval from your mother. That's why you care about I don't know, hating on people of color, let's say for example. So is it really that you don't like people of color? Or is it that you want the approval of your mother so you have a scribe to her values of hating on people of color, and that's a huge distinction, right? It doesn't necessarily mean that that is your value, but your values really the approval piece right there to be affirmed, which is everything.

Heather Vickery 19:51

To me, I feel like that I don't even know. You haven't even gone through the rest of the stages yet. But that's so eye opening and I do a lot of coaching with folks in that space like, wait a minute, why is this important to you? What is it that you really want from this? And when people realize that, oh, it's not what I thought it was, it's a complete game changer.

Timothy Yen 20:13

Yes. Yes. And it takes bravery, right to ask those questions, because sometimes is kind of paradigm, earth shattering realizations that Oh, my gosh, I've been chasing the wrong thing. Right? My whole life, I've thought this is what I really wanted. And now I've come to a place where I realize it wasn't. And that could be kind of scary. Yeah, you know, whatever emotion comes up for them. But it's so beautiful at the same time to realize, hey, maybe it's time to shift goals and aim for something yeah, something more fulfilling for my life.

Heather Vickery 20:56

Okay, so we've got emotions, understanding your emotions, and then values, what's next?

Timothy Yen 21:02

So values, I should have specified values of self. So what's important to you? And then the third pillar or stage would be values of others. So decisions that you make typically involve other people or affects other people. And I kind of half jokingly say that if people learn the framework, and they become really selfish, self absorbed people, then I totally failed at what I was trying to do, like I just like,like utterly failed. So no, yes, your your voice matters, your values matter. But so do other people's right, especially the people are going to be affected by your decisions. So I also encourage people to create a win win type of solution as much as possible, which means that it's, it requires you to ask some questions about the people involved in what matters to them, as well. So that would be stage three.

Heather Vickery 22:01

I like that. And I think questions are really, really important. I know that don't believe there's any growth possible without conversation and questions,

Timothy Yen 22:09

Because we just don't know enough. We have our own very finite perspective, based on what we were exposed to so far. Questions really open things up, allows us to see things more holistically, which helps us make better decisions and choose better. So yes, that is part three. And then stage four is what I lovingly call reality factors. So there are things in our world that have nothing to do with how we feel or what we think about the matter is simply is the way it is. So it could be that the house next door is painted a ugly, red. Well, that's just what it is. Right? You could not like it, you may not agree with it, but it's still red, and everyone else who sees it sees it as red. So there's certain things in our lives that

Heather Vickery 23:04

you just picked red, because you can't see any other colors.

Timothy Yen 23:10

Call that my handicap. You got it. That's right. I'm hating on the red because I can't see it.

Heather Vickery 23:16

I'm sorry.

Timothy Yen 23:19

I pretty much set that up for you. You had to go for it, right? It's all good. It's all good. But again, like I was saying, the reality factors are just acknowledging that there are certain limitations, certain rules. I use the example of gravity a lot. Like gravity just exists, it doesn't really matter if you like it or understand it.

Heather Vickery 23:42

You can't do anything about it. Yeah,

Timothy Yen 23:44

Yeah. Yeah. So so those are things that we want to factor into our decision making, because they're going to affect our outcomes as well. So also listing out hey, these are other variables at play, will help us be more informed about whatever decision you make.

Heather Vickery 24:03

It goes back to knowledge. Knowledge is power, the more we know, the better decisions we can make the better choices we can make the braver we can be. I don't buy that. I don't know. You can know, you just have to do the work to know.

Timothy Yen 24:19

And that's what people don't want to do. Yeah, I don't want to research, I don't want to ask someone that probably has the answer, because I'm too proud or whatever. Right. So so it's the I don't know, is really a cop out. In my books.

Heather Vickery 24:32

Super cop-out.

Timothy Yen 24:34

There's a choice element to the not knowing. Yes, there's situations where no one knows, because it hasn't been, you know, unfolded uncovered. But there are lots of information out there that can help you make a better decision, if you choose.

Heather Vickery 24:49

Yeah, I mean, and I guess we should I feel compelled to caveat that because it does sound a little bit like a privileged conversation from our perspective. You can't imagine something that you've never dreamed of. Right? Like, you know, if you are from culturally from an area where you've never ever, ever seen a person live past a certain age or have a job, where they're not worrying about bills every day, or where there aren't people getting gunned down on the streets, you can't imagine you got you can't dream it. So I do feel like I don't know how, as a cop out, or I don't know this as a cop out, because you can learn it with the understanding that not everybody has the ability to gain the knowledge not everybody can get to the library, not everybody has access to a TV or the internet. You know, I just have to throw that out there.

Timothy Yen 25:45

No, I appreciate that. That's absolutely true. It's not meant to be a an unempathetic, lack of compassion type of statement. But if they're listening to this podcast, I'm gonna take a wild guess, they're not you. We're not talking about you. If you're listening to our voices, we're not talking about you, you got access to this this episode.

Heather Vickery 26:07

So yeah, via my own coach used to say there's no such thing as I don't know how when you really want to figure out how.

Timothy Yen 26:14

Mhm. Absolutely

Heather Vickery 26:15

So you're right. I love that you said that you're like, if you're listening, though, it's probably not you. But my listeners are social justice warriors. And they would be like, Heather, not everybody can do that. So I just need to be clear. But I do understand we're talking from a place of privilege, probably to people of privilege. But nonetheless, we're gonna call you on your bullshit.

Timothy Yen 26:34

No, that's right. I do believe that the framework is applicable still, to those who may not be as privileged, because there is a lot of data points that they have access to, they may not have all of the stuff that privileged people may have in terms of information. But they have enough to make a better choice. So

Heather Vickery 26:57

I agree. I've seen it at work. Somebody has to love them, though, like have enough to have shown them. That there are other options.

Timothy Yen 27:09

True. Very true.

Heather Vickery 27:11

That's a whole nother podcast interview. But I feel really strongly about it. All right, we are not through pillars yet.

Timothy Yen 27:17

We're pretty much through. So those are the four and a bonus, right? So these four major pillars. So again, to review rights, like your feelings, values of self values of others, reality factors, as you're gathering these data points, I like to call it, there's going to be options that are going to emerge as you're working them out. And that's usually what I tell people is okay, now that you've gathered all this information, then list out your options, even list out the ones that you're probably not going to choose just listed out because we just want to put it on the table. And among those options that you've listed out, there's going to be a best choice for you within that list. And again, back to the visible fifth pillar, which has to do with courage, or bravery, which is just because you know, better doesn't mean you always do better. And there's other forces at play that keep us stuck or keep us in fear or whatever the case may be. So I have to add that fifth pillar, because there may be some conscious or unconscious things to work through as to why someone would not act upon an optimal decision. After all the words that they put into it, why would they do it and enjoy the benefits of that choice? That's where courage comes in.

Heather Vickery 28:47

Yes, that's where I come in. Okay, let's talk about what we're actually afraid of. And what's the worst thing that could happen? That's my favorite question is ask people who are having a hard time doing the scary thing, like what's actually the worst thing that could happen? And usually, I say something glib, like, if somebody is going to die, then don't do that. But if you just think somebody might not like you, or they're gonna think you're dumb, or they're not gonna buy it, or they're not going to be interested, do you actually care that much? Like, what's the worst thing that can happen? And then we ask them, what's the best thing that could happen?

Timothy Yen 29:28

I love questions. I love those questions. And that's part of the framework, which is, now that you spelled it all out with the options and the possible outcomes with those options. It really does decrease some of the anxiety and fear because fear is about the unknown. And when we shine light on what we do know, some of that fear kind of dissipates with it.

Heather Vickery 29:54

Yep, it does. It really does. All fear lives in the future. And when you can put truth to it, I love to find evidence to shut those stories down. I think that's so cool. So, Tim, how did you end up becoming an expert and writing a book? In this particular topic? What led you down that path?

Timothy Yen 30:19

So the short version is having a conversation with a CEO of this tech company, about how I could serve her company better with consulting and coaching opportunities. And she's the one that came up with a topic. She said, can you help my employees and managers and supervisors think better, make better choices? So that's where it came from. She was like, if you can do that for me, then you're hired. figure that, figure that out, and you're hired. So that's where it came from. Was was through that dinner that that conversation.

Heather Vickery 30:57

And you did. You figured it out. Is that your is that your new business that you're going into? is doing that type of work for other folks?

Timothy Yen 31:02

Yes, absolutely. Well, I still have a private practice, I'm still doing clinical, I guess, normal counseling, whatever that's called, whatever that looks like, but also trying to branch out to people who have influenced that, that hold certain kind of positions of authority that can affect culture around them, I want to help those people support them and making choices that really benefit not just themselves, but the people around them. So yes, I'm starting a consulting firm aimed towards those people as well.

Heather Vickery 31:40

I love that. And here's what I really loved the most about that story that you shared is you took a conversation over dinner, and not only did you lean in, you wrote the fucking book about it. Folks, your dinner conversations matter. Like we never really know when the light is gonna shine on something that's really impactful and important in our life. So tell me about the book

writing process and coming to the decision to do it. And then I actually love to hear the nitty gritty details of like, how did you write this book?

Timothy Yen 32:14

Sure. So I was thinking more from her perspective, because the way that she talked about it was there are a lot of different experts within her team. But everyone is so insistent that their point of view, is the right point of view. And therefore you should go with my specialty. So engineers are very stubborn about how they should you know how this product should be executed. And then the designers have another opinion. And there's a timestamp on these projects. So there's a lot of unnecessary slowdown, because people aren't communicating and people are not listening. And and that's where the idea came from. And so I started pondering about a little bit more, and I realize, I don't think decision making is a tech company issue. I think it's a human issue. So I brought in it right, I opened the scope up, like as I was, you know, jotting down some notes thinking about what would that would sound like, I realize my book is really aimed towards two kinds of people. And this is reflecting on all of the clients I've seen in my, in my time in practice, and I realized that it kind of comes down to two groups of people, there's either one group of people who are very indecisive. I mean, you put a gun to the head, they still can't make a choice. There's people like that. And I wanted to provide a simple framework for them to get unstuck in whatever situation they may be. So they can own their voice, and make a choice. And then there's a second group of people, which I call the kind of the impulsive, emotional decision makers. So people that feel a certain way they act upon it, and then they regret it shortly after, because they didn't factor in other data points in their decision making. So I wanted to help them also slow down before they make a decision. So the framework is really aimed toward those two groups of people. And then of course, everyone in between, because right decision making is a skill, right? It's not something that people are just born with and can do excellently right? It's something that can be honed in, I truly believe everyone can improve in their decision making.

Heather Vickery 34:39

Yeah, me too. I love that. I agree. decision making is a skill. And it's one that's very often overlooked, or people go, Oh, I just suck at making decisions. I get so frustrated when people will tell me they just suck at whatever it is. And I'm like, how do you even know how do you even know you suck at that? What does that even mean? Yeah, okay, so What was your writing process like?

Timothy Yen 35:01

So the writing process, I'm gonna give a shout out to my publisher, which is lion Kress, they, there is a company called scribe or scribe media. And they're excellent. By the way, if anyone wants to write a book, I would highly recommend this company. And essentially what they do is they give you this little retreat, like this weekend retreat, and they kind of sit you down with your little cohort of writers or potential authors. And we work out all our fears. In the beginning, we just worked out all the fears like imposter syndrome, whatever, right? Like all these things that come up for us, putting yourself out there being vulnerable, sharing your stories. So that was pretty much like day one. It's just like, working through all of those paradigms and in programs.

And then we got into the nitty gritty with our editors on the team. And I loved the way that they, they formatted it, because they helped you create a blueprint of your book first. And then you go back home and you write it. So that's kind of their scribe method, which is, essentially you, you take your high level idea, whatever it is, and then you kind of think through it's like chapter headings, essentially, like kind of the title of your chapter. And you kind of write all those out kind of in a flow, right? So if you if you read my book, it kind of starts with, you know, what, why people make bad decisions to begin with, and what's the cost of being indecisive, really on your life, you know, introducing the framework, understanding what each part of the the pillar or stage means. So such as like a flow into how you unpack these ideas. And then you kind of write down one or two stories or things that you want to use to illustrate that point, the evidence and all that stuff. Once you have that blueprint down, the kind of sign off on it, then you go home, and you literally take each word documents that you I think my book had 12 or 13 chapters, each one was saved as a separate document. And then you just went with document number one, we just

Heather Vickery 37:10

Break it down.

Timothy Yen 37:13

Exactly. And that's the only way to write a book is to do it one bit at a time. And something that really stuck with me, for those who are listening, that are even considering writing a book is this idea that I got from a psychologist named Jordan Peterson. I don't know if you've heard of him before, but he's a quite prolific he, he just tells it how it is. He's kind of crass in a way. But his psychological insights are on point. But something that he said, because he wrote some new york bestselling books, he essentially said, you can either be creative when you write, or edit. But you can't do both. And that sounds like that's like the death trap for most people is that they want to write. They want to write it right the first time so that they save time, quote, unquote, so they don't have to go back. But it doesn't work like that. Because you're it's two different parts of your brain. Either you're being creative and just putting your ideas out. Or you're editing it so that it's kind of fine comb and sounds the way you want. You just don't want to do a simultaneously. So that was now process. The vomit, they call it vomit addition, you just kind of throw all your ideas out, per chapter. Like, it doesn't matter how silly it sounds, you're not allowed to go back and edit it. You just kind of throw everything out. And then when that's done, then there's like, multiple route and you go back then you do it. That's right.

Heather Vickery 38:41

I'm in the editing phase for my book right now. And it's absolute torture.

Timothy Yen 38:47

It's painful.

Heather Vickery 38:47

It is absolutely awful. I just telling, y'all, I still think you should write your book, but just be prepared. Because it's so painful.

Timothy Yen 38:59

It is it is.

Heather Vickery 39:02

It's like how can I get somebody else to do this for me? You can't right, because it's my book.

Timothy Yen 39:08

They can't say it the way you say it. Only you can edit it. However, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Because even that thought process is how can I say the same thing? shorter, clearer. right, that that's the process. You go through each line and you're like, Okay, is there any fluff in here? Like anything that really doesn't need to be there. And your book just ends up sounding a lot sharper, because yeah, conversationally we say all sorts of fluff stuff. But it doesn't need to be in your book. And, and you, you will feel better about your end product by going through this editing process because that's what you're putting out in the world.

Heather Vickery 39:49

That's cool. Thank you for sharing that with us. We I have a lot of writers and authors on the show. And it's always fascinating to me how everybody really does it just a little bit different. So kind of fun to hear that. Well, congratulations on the book. It's it's out. Right. Everybody can get their hands on it?

Timothy Yen 40:07

Yes. Amazon and other booksellers correct.

Heather Vickery 40:10

Other bookseller. So we will actually also have it I have, if you guys go to Vickeryandco.com/books, , you can see the brave files, podcast guest library. So we'll have Tim's book there, as well as anybody else who's ever been on our show, plus, my favorite books for having leading up braver life in business, and just my favorite books in general. So you guys can go check that out. This seems like a really good time to him to ask you how you like to celebrate? Because getting a book out into the world? Is like birthing a human? I can tell you, because I've done that four times. And you probably don't know that firsthand, but I won't make that assumption. But yeah, how do you like to celebrate?

Timothy Yen 40:56

In general, or you're talking about something more monumental for my book?

Heather Vickery 41:00

Well, really, it's I love that you asked that. Both. I love to bring people into celebration on a consistent daily basis. To me, it feels a lot like gratitude. And the more we do it, the more we spread it, the more connected we are to the people around us and to ourselves. And the more

motivated we are to do the next big thing. But also, of course, we should celebrate really big things like publishing books.

Timothy Yen 41:24

So we did both, I say we because it was me and my wife. So we went to Hawaii. So that's a very privileged way of celebrating us. We did do that. So that was really cool. And in small ways, you're absolutely right about the gratitude. I mean, I have the book next to me. And sometimes just looking at it and holding it does give a certain level of, of pleasure or contentment, that this is a real thing. And looking at some of the opportunities like even today talking with you, this kind of thing would not have happened if I didn't put forth the work and believe in my message. So definitely seen what kind of opportunities have arisen and the cool people that I got to meet along the way. Those are all things worth celebrating.

Heather Vickery 42:13

Absolutely. So how do you celebrate those little things?

Timothy Yen 42:16

I celebrate by giving myself space to watch my favorite TV shows, I celebrate by doing little dances and listening to my favorite tunes. Like those kind of things. giving my a hug to my wife is very gratifying hug to my kids. Just because you know, not necessarily because of my book in particular, but just to celebrate. Yeah, just celebrate life. Yeah, those are all things that I thoroughly enjoy going outside, hiking, traveling, eating new foods, these are all ways that make life that much more rich and textured. And I unashamedly go and do those things. I don't apologize, nobody. I love doing those.

Heather Vickery 43:01

That's good. That's what I'm talking about. I love that. And that is celebration, it is celebrating all of the moments of our life. And it shouldn't there should be no apologies for any of that. I love that you said it that way. That's fantastic. Okay, Tim. So as we get ready to wrap this conversation, I get to ask you a question that I feel really passionate about, which is what's your favorite charitable organization to support.

Timothy Yen 43:24

So the one that I am supporting right now is called compassion, Compassion in Jesus Name, which is a sponsoring children all over the world, to make sure they have education and clean water, food, that sort of thing. So that's probably my favorite organization that that we support.

Heather Vickery 43:42

I love it, we'll make them our charity of the week. And y'all I always ask you to give them a little love, whatever that means to you. If it's social media likes shares, if you've got some money or some time to spare, that would be great as well. And actually, we're, we're getting to the end here. But you said something that I wanted to ask you about earlier, a lot of what you're talking about feels a little aligned with Kristin Neff self compassion work is she is someone that that that you have done research with or on. Not in particular, but definitely read up a lot of articles or

works about self compassion in general. So I may have come across their work and not even know it. Well, I urge you to check it out. She's like, she's like the queen of self compassion. She did all the research on the science behind why self compassion can change your life. It's actually very cool stuff. So there you go.

Timothy Yen 44:33

Thank you.

Heather Vickery 44:35

Go check that out. Yeah, I'm a big fan of that work. And I'm a big fan of you. And I appreciate so much that you chose to spend some time here with us. Was it a little bit of a lighter, different interview for you than all these other podcasts you've done?

Timothy Yen 44:51

I would have to agree this was definitely one of the more enjoyable ones.

Heather Vickery 44:56

I appreciate that. Well, you share your three words, but that was one last time.

Timothy Yen 44:59

Sure, Excellence, blessed and purposeful.

Heather Vickery 45:03

Yeah, I love those. I feel like we've really touched on them. I'm the only one I'm curious. When you say excellence, I'd love to hear your definition of that.

Timothy Yen 45:12

Excellence is a mindset or a value where I do the best that I can in whatever I put my hands towards. So so it's knowing that I have, in a way, strive for a certain standard, because that is who I am not for anyone else. But I do it because it reflects on me as an individual that I want to be someone that does excellent work, whatever that may be.

Heather Vickery 45:45

I love that. And I'm really glad I asked you about it. Because of what again, what I heard you say was that it's a very personal thing, to me kind of how I tell people about success. Success isn't about doing what you think other people want you to do, or doing it in a way you've seen other people do it. It's very personal. And that's what I hear you say about what excellence is to you, personally. So that's great. Tim, thank you so much for being here with us today.

Timothy Yen 46:10

Thank you so much for having me on your show.

Heather Vickery 46:13

Alright, listeners, I hope you enjoy this conversation as much as I did. If you want to get a copy of this awesome book, we'll put the link in all the show notes. Again, just go to VickeryandCo.com/books, and you will be able to find it there along with all of the other brave files, podcast authors. I want to know what you're choosing, how are you choosing? are you choosing bravely give us a call 312-925-2468 and share all those goodies with me. I personally respond to every email and every phone call. And I'm so delighted to be on this journey with you. Thank you. This is Heather Vickery reminding you today and every day to go out and choose bravely.

Heather Vickery 46:57

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Heather Vickery 49:00

Have you ever thought about starting a podcast? Maybe you've had this thought and then quickly shut it down? Because who has the time? Or you don't know how or gosh, it just all seems too hard. If you have something to share with the world, we want to encourage you to get your message out. The world needs to hear it Did you know that 50% of all homes are podcast fans. If you've ever wondered about having your own podcast or how it can increase your business, or get your message across, then please join me and the other experts from the Podcast Power Academy for our monthly free q&a session. It's called, So You Want to Start a Podcast. This casual live conversation will help you understand how podcasting can be a great decision. Why now is the best time to get started and how to get into action with it. Visit PodcastPowerAcademy.com to learn More.

Heather Vickery 50:02

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