

The Tim Ferriss Show Transcripts

Episode 60: Arnold Schwarzenegger

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Tim Ferriss: So we are live and, kind sir, I wanted to start with a thank you for welcoming me to your house number one, but number two, I've felt awkward all morning because I don't know how I should address you and I wanted to ask you how I should address you.

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: Well, you can address me any way you want. You can call me Governor, Governor, schnitzel, Arnold, anything.

Tim Ferriss: Okay.

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: But I think Arnold will be right.

Tim Ferriss: I'll go with Arnold. I felt like my first year in Japan when I was fifteen because I didn't know how to address anybody. So I figured we could start with a favorite topic. Well, it's become a favorite topic because I've been thinking about this, which is big balls and cow balls and bull testicles. So you've mailed sculptures of bull testicles to people before, is that right?

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: Well, there was one incident in particular that was when I was Governor and there was one of the legislative leaders, Darrell Steinberg, and I. We both had a huge challenge. California was hit by an enormous economic decline and there was a world-wide recession that was hitting us in 2008 and everyone was caught by surprise by what effect it had. All of a sudden we had \$20B less in revenues; therefore, we had to make big cuts in education and in various different areas that really hit the vulnerable citizens of California. When we did the budget, I basically sent him up before we negotiated a set of balls with a note that said, "I hope you have that when we negotiate the budget because it's what we both need. It's what we all in this building need in order to get this budget done because it's not going to be a pretty budget because people will hate it. They will hate us. They will be making those cut, but it's all the money we have." He didn't take it lightly.

Tim Ferriss: Did he take it well or did he take it seriously?

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: No, no, he took it seriously. What happened is, like you said, I have done it before and these kind of things that I do, I do always in pranks to people and jokes and stuff like that, but it's always meant with a sense of humor.

Tim Ferriss: Right.

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: I always have a tendency when things get really intense and when people start freaking out, I try to make a joke or something to lighten things up and just say, "Look, you know ten years from now we're going to look at this day and laugh about it. Right now it's very serious and now we have to really concentrate on this and we have to do something that we don't feel comfortable, whatever the situation is." This was the situation. It was a terrible situation and I thought it would loosen it up before the legislative leaders come down to my office and we start negotiating. It just didn't go very well. I mean, he felt insulted and he felt hurt and he felt how could I do this and all that other stuff. I said, "Look, I'm sorry. I did not mean it that way. Don't take it so seriously. It was meant to be a joke, that's all." Those things happen, you know.

Tim Ferriss: You're no stranger to adversity, of course, when you grew up in a very small village in Austria. You had, I think, the splash toilet, or what was the nickname for it? Basically, a chamber pot.

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: A splotch toilet. Exactly. And basically it's like an outhouse but it is in the house. And you know you sit there and you hear maybe a second later after ... You know, you go number two you hear "splotch" and that's why we call it the splotch toilet. So that was a common thing in old buildings. Our building was like two hundred and some years old and there was no flushing toilet and there was also no running water in our house where I grew up. We had to get basically the water from around a hundred to two hundred yards away from a well that we had to pump in winter and summer. It didn't make any difference. We had to carry the buckets of water to our house, to our kitchen, and then it was used very sparingly. We drank from that water. We washed ourselves with that water. There was no showers so we washed with a washcloth with soap and everyone had their precision. My mother went first and washed herself and then it was my father's turn and then it was my brother's turn, and by the time I washed myself, the louver or the vase that the water was in was pretty black, so it was not pretty anymore. I maybe got more dirty from the water than I actually cleaned myself.

Tim Ferriss: Good idea to drink first; make sure you sate your thirst first.

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: The interesting thing about it was, it was that other places had exactly the same situation. We were not the only ones, so we didn't feel like, wow, we are really growing up poor. As a matter of fact, I never felt when I was a kid that we were poor. I always felt like we were like everyone else because we were surrounded by farmers that had very little money. They had little farms. Or workers, the working class where workers made actually less money than my dad and my dad didn't make much money at all because he was a police officer and there was much more of the benefits, the pension that you get, the healthcare and all that stuff, but not much salary. Just enough that my mother could buy the groceries and could buy some things and once a year could buy clothes at Christmas time for us or to knit some clothes for us and stuff like that. But I mean there was like the neighbors were living the same way and everyone when I went to school, all the other kids were kind of in the same boat.

Tim Ferriss: Which brings up a question for me that I've always wanted to ask you related to confidence because I was looking at ... Of course, I think your name is almost synonymous with confidence for a lot of people and people look to you to try to borrow confidence and that's part of the appeal of a lot of your movies and your successes. But I was looking at a very old photograph of, I think, your first major bodybuilding competition in Stuttgart. I think it was the *Junior Mr. Europe*?

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: Uh-huh.

Tim Ferriss: And I looked at this photograph and what stuck out to me was if we had just looked at the faces and not the bodies, it was so clear to me that you were going to win and that you knew or believed you were going to win. Your face was so confident compared to every other competitor. Where did that confidence come from?

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: My confidence came from my vision because I am always a big believer that if you have a very clear vision of where you want to go then the rest of it is much easier. Because you always know why you are training five hours a day, you always know why you are pushing and going through the pain barrier, and why you have to eat more, and why you have to struggle more, and why you have to be more disciplined. And all of those things become much more clear. It's not like, "Oh my God I have to do another, two hundred sit ups." It's more like, "I can't wait to do another two hundred sit ups because that will get me one step closer to the abs that I need to win the *Mr. Universe*." That's my goal. I see myself clearly on that stage winning the *Mr. Universe*. I see myself very clearly of getting the trophy, standing there with the trophy, raising it above my head, and having hundreds of body

builders around me, below me, on stage looking up and idolizing me, including the thousands of people that are watching the event. So that was always my clear vision and that always inspired me to go all out. And so when I went for a competition, you have to understand that I went to the *Junior Mr. Universe* during my time in the military. And so what it took for me to go and to get on that train, [foreign language], which was the people's train, meaning was not the [foreign language], the fast train. It was the slow train that literally stopped at every train station to let workers off and to bring new workers on and that's what the train was. And so with that, you went all the way to Stuttgart because it was the cheapest way of going because I didn't have much money.

Tim Ferriss: You didn't get hit by any Customs Officers or anything like that?

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: We got hit by them and we got through it. I didn't have my passport because you have to give up the passport when you go into the military, right? So you pass. I didn't have a passport. We got it afterwards after we were finished with the military. So we got through and we got through to Germany, to Stuttgart. There was this will there that no matter what it takes, and even if I have to crawl to Germany, that I will be there at that event because that was my shot. When I saw the ads about this *Mr. Europe Junior* competition, [foreign language], in German. That was my opportunity to really go and make my first kind of entry into an international competition. And I felt that I could win it and that was what I was there for. I wasn't there to compete. I was there to win. And so that's why you saw that facial expression. There was a certain arrogance there, there was a certain way I posed with the other competitors. I always felt that during the pose off that I had my act together much more than the others did and that I'm going to kind of make them feel inferior, and I will win, and I will look facially and physically to the judges that I am the champion.

Tim Ferriss: So you touched on something that I really want to dig into which is the psychological warfare of bodybuilding, of life in general. I really feel, I mean it as a compliment, you're a real master. If anyone has watched *Pumping Iron* or anything, I think, comes away with that as a take away. How did you develop that? And for instance, when you were, I guess, seventeen or eighteen, how did you get inside the heads of those people at that point?

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: I think that it came about when I trained in the gym. I always felt that people are really vulnerable in certain areas. So that someone that comes to the gym and works out because he wants to have a better body that he most likely will be vulnerable. It's during conversations like I discovered in Munich when I was training in the gym, they were vulnerable when you said something like, "Well, you're fat." There was not even like there was a doubt in anyone's

mind if ten people had looked at that guy or a hundred people, they all would have said that this guy is fat, but he was outraged. He says, “What? Do you really think I’m that fat that you’re mentioning it?” I said, “Well you’re in the gym.” I go to the doctor’s office and say I have a cough. I don’t go and beat around the bush. I say I have to tell him what the problem is and then he can give me the medication. I said it’s the same thing in the gym, that you come here because you’re fucking fat. And so now let’s solve the problem. And so there’s no beating around the bush there either. So I could see that they were kind of shriveling up and kind of shocked. So I could see the vulnerability and then I tried different lines on people and then I would talk about their hairline or I would talk about their hair color turning grey. And they would just freak out about little things like that. So it was natural that with all the experience I had gotten with being a trainer and working with people and all this, that I learned about people’s psychology and about their weaknesses and their strengths, and all this and how do you build people up because my whole thing was let’s first discover and talk about the weakness and then let’s go and rebuild everything. So that was the idea to give this guy a six pack, to make him feel great, to declare victory by next summer so that he can go to the beach and he can go and feel proud of himself and feel great and continuing training. So that was the idea. By the time I came to America and started competing over here, it was very clear when I said to someone, “Let me ask you something, do you have any knee injuries or something like that?” Then they would look at me and say, “No, why? No. I have no knee injury at all. No, my knees feel great.” And they say, “Why are you asking?” I said, “Well because your thighs look a little slimmer to me. I thought maybe you can’t squat or maybe there’s some problem with leg extension.” He says, “Really?” And then I saw them all for two hours in the gym always going in front of the mirror and checking out their thighs; if their thighs still exist or something like that. People are vulnerable about those things. Naturally now when you have a competition, you use all this. And so you ask people were they sick for a while, they look a little leaner, or did you take any salty foods lately and they say, “Why?” and I say, “Because it looks like you have water retention and it looks like you’re not as ripped as you looked a week or so ago.” It throws people off in an unbelievable way.

Tim Ferriss: And they get defensive.

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: They walk away like this didn’t bother them at all, but then you can see, you watch them as they walk around the pump up room, and when you warm up for the competition, and you can see them kind of thinking to themselves, kind of them going to the mirror and checking it out secretly and all that stuff. I just slowly developed it because I always felt that sports are not just a physical thing. As a matter of fact, I felt that the mentality and the mental strength in sports and the psychology in sports is much more important than the physical thing because, in reality, I see when I watch a *Mr. Olympia* competition or *Mr.*

Universe competition or any of those things, they all look pretty much the same, the top five guys. But what makes one emerge is the way he acts. If he acts like a winner, if he seems smiling, having a great time on stage and such. So I felt one should use the psychology; one should use everything in as far as food supplements are concerned, use your best posing trunks, try to use the sun out there and workout in the sun so you get tanned all around, use the best posing routine. When you give a 10 of everything then you have the best shot of winning and psychology was definitely part of that.

Tim Ferriss: You developed this arsenal of intimidation through the bodybuilding. Did you use that, for instance, in movies waiting in line to audition against other people who were going in to audition or anything like that? Did it apply to show business?

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: I never auditioned. Never. I would never go out for the regular parts because I was not a regular looking guy, so my idea always was everyone is going to look the same and everyone is trying to be the blond guy in California, going to Hollywood interviews and looking somewhat athletic and cute and all this. Okay, how can I carve myself out a niche that only I have? And so I always felt really strong about I have to get into the movie business, like Reg Park did or Steve Reeves or [inaudible] or Larry Gordon and all those guys that were in muscle movies in the 50's and 60's. That's the way I'm going to get in there. Of course, the naysayers were right there and they said, "Well, you know this time has passed. It was twenty years ago. You look too big, you're too monstrous, too muscular, you will never get in the movies." That's what producers said in the beginning in Hollywood. That's also what agents said and managers. "I doubt you're going to be successful in that because today's idols, I mean this is not the 70's Arnold. Today's idols are Dustin Hoffman, Al Pacino, Woody Allen, all little guys. Those are the sex symbols. Those are the hot stars. Look at you. You weigh 250 lbs. or something like that. That time is over." But I felt very strongly and had a very clear vision that the time would come that someone would appreciate that, and sure enough, when people saw me on talk shows, they got inspired. Directors like Bob Rafelson who then bought the book of *Stay Hungry* and then had it written into a script and then did the movie with me because he believed in me, that I had the personality, a certain strength, and a certain kind of a look that would be great on the screen, that the camera loves me, and so it worked. I did *Stay Hungry* and *Pumping Iron* the documentary, the *Streets of San Francisco*, and worked with Ann-Margret and Kirk Douglas in *The Villain* and then all of a sudden I got the contract for *Conan the Barbarian*. Bang, there we were with a \$20M movie which today would be the equivalent of a \$200M movie. Dino De Laurentiis producing and Universal Studio and International Studio financing the movie and John Milius, a first class director, directing it. So my whole plan worked and I was so right. Even John Milius said after the movie that if we wouldn't have had Schwarzenegger, we would have had to build one

because of the body. When I did *Terminator*, Jim Cameron said if we wouldn't have had Schwarzenegger, then we couldn't have done the movie because only he sounded like a machine. It was so believable that he actually played a machine. That's where people bought in when he says, "I'll be back." It's totally different then when I say, "I'll be back." Here was the greatest compliment that the very things that the agents and the managers and the studio executives said would be a total obstacle became an asset and my career started taking off.

Tim Ferriss: So the not auditioning is really interesting to me. I knew you were very successful in real estate but, correct me if I'm wrong, you had basically become a millionaire in real estate before your first movie. Is that right?

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: Not before the first movie; before my career took off.

Tim Ferriss: Got it.

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: I did not rely on my movie career to make a living. That was my intention because I saw over the years the people that worked out in the gym and that I met in the acting classes, they were all very vulnerable because they didn't have any money and they had to take anything that was offered to them because that was their living. I didn't want to get into that situation. I felt like if I am smart with real estate and take my little money that I make in bodybuilding and in seminars and selling my courses through the mail orders, I could save up enough money to put down money for an apartment building. I realized in the 70's that the inflation rate was very high and therefore an investment like that is unbeatable. Buildings that I would buy for \$500K within the year were \$800K and I put only maybe \$100K down, so you made 300% on your money. You couldn't beat that. I quickly developed and traded up my buildings and bought more apartment buildings and office buildings on Main Street down in Santa Monica and so on. The investments were very good and it was just one of those magic decades. Today you couldn't do it in that same field. There's another field in real estate where you can do it, but in this particular field I don't think you will see those kind of jumps ever again. I benefited from that and I became a millionaire from my real estate investments. That was before my career took off in show business and acting, which was after *Conan the Barbarian*. In 1982 that movie came out. We shot it in 1981 and in '82 it came out. From that point on my career took off because people saw that the movie was successful at the box office and then I signed a contract to do *Conan* number 2 and then that led to a contract for *Terminator* 1 and then *Commando*. The action genre was another fortunate thing. Each of those decades offered something very fortunate that was a little bit beyond my control, but I benefited from that. There was the action genre that all of a sudden took off in the 80's with Stallone and Van Damme and all

those guys coming in really was terrific. My salary was like \$1M for *Terminator 2* and then all of a sudden by the end of the decade I made \$20M.

Tim Ferriss: That's incredible. I wanted to talk about the mail order for a second because that was done with Franco Columbu?

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: Franco Columbu for those of you who don't know was an European champion in power lifting and also a boxing champion, and then became a bodybuilding champion and then I brought him over here with Joe Weider's help to train with me here in America. But at that point, there was no money in bodybuilding. That's the key thing that everyone has to understand. Unlike today where the top body champions make millions of dollars, in those days there was no money in bodybuilding. When we didn't have enough money, we literally had to go to work. Since Franco's talent was to be a bricklayer, and a very skilled bricklayer, and he learned that in Italy and Germany, we were able to go and start thinking about putting together the idea of putting an ad in the *LA Times*, creating a company and calling it European bricklayers and masonry experts, marble experts, building chimneys and fireplaces the European style. This was also a time where everything that was European was huge in America, so we benefited from that. Swedish massages and everything had to be kind of a foreign name. Japanese this and this. Europe and Japan and all these places; the names were used because for some reason or another people thought that it was better. So we used that in the ad and we put the ad in the paper and literally a week later we had the big earthquake in Los Angeles. The chimneys fell off the apartment houses and all that stuff and there were cracked walls and all this. One of the friend's of ours wife who was very smart and she worked in a supermarket, she did answering the phones and calling people back and all this just to make sure our English doesn't get all screwed up with talking over the phone. She gave us the addresses and then we got to do the estimates and I was kind of like set up to be the math genius that figures out the square footage. Franco would play the bad guy and I played the good guy. We would go to someone's house and then someone would say, "Well, look at my patio. It's all cracked. Can you guys put a new patio in here?" I would say yes and then we would run out and get the tape measure, but it would be a tape measure with centimeters. No one in those days could at all figure out anything with centimeters. We would be measuring up and I would say 4 meters and 82 centimeters. They had no idea what we were talking about. This is so much and we were writing up dollars and amounts and square centimeters and square meters. Then I would go to the guy and say, "It's \$5,000," and the guy would be in a state of shock. He'd say, "It's \$5,000? This is outrageous." I'd say, "What did you expect? and he'd say, "I expected like \$2,000 or \$3,000." I'd say, "Let me talk to my guy because he's really the masonry expert, but I can beat him down for you a little bit. Let me soften the meat." Then I would go to Franco and we would start arguing in German. [foreign language] This would be going on and on

and he was screaming back at me in Italian. Then all of a sudden he would calm down and I would go to the guy and say, "Okay, here it is. I could get him as low as \$3,800. Can you go with that?" He says, "Thank you very much. I really think that you're a great man and blah, blah, blah and all this stuff." I'd say, "Give us half down right now and we'll go right away and get the cement and the bricks and everything we need for here and we'll start working on Monday." The guy was ecstatic. He gave us the money and we immediately went to the bank and cashed the check. We had to make sure the money was in the bank account and then we went out and got the cement, the wheelbarrow, and all the stuff that we needed and went to work. We worked like that for two years very successfully. As a matter of fact, at the end, we had various different jobs where we employed sixteen different bodybuilders; all the laziest bastards that you can ever hire. They were all interested in working outdoors and getting a tan at the same time for bodybuilding competitions. They weren't interested in working. Anyway, we all had a good time and we all made money. I actually did this until I started my mail order business. Then that became the new source of extra income so we could afford everything and then save some money.

Tim Ferriss: I've followed you since I was a little kid. Also Franco though. I remember watching the replay of *The World's Strongest Man* competition with the Refrigerator walk [inaudible] when his leg gave out. But I was always impressed by how strong he was for his weight. I mean, I think he deadlifted more than 750 lbs. at less than 190 or something like that.

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: Well, at 730 he did like 5 reps.

Tim Ferriss: That's just amazing. What are the reasons the two of you have remained friends for so long?

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: I think we both come from Europe. I think we both were struggling in the beginning. I met Franco the day of the *Mr. Europe Junior* competition. That same day he won the powerlifting championships in the lightweight category. He was up there on the stage getting his trophy. I was up there on the stage getting my trophy and then the category of bodybuilding championship of the world, past eighteen years of age, which they called the senior division, but it was not really senior what they consider now here, senior being over forty-five or whatever it is. Then it was just someone older than eighteen. He was up there, the winner on stage. So there was all three of us on stage and then Franco worked out in Munich and I said to him I want to come to Munich after the military is finished. Franco said, "I'm there if you ever want to come and we can work out together." I told him that I admire powerlifting and that I do powerlifting and weightlifting and bodybuilding and that I want to work out with him and get stronger. So when I basically moved to Munich, Franco

was one of the first guys that I went to see and asked if he wanted to be my training partner. Now Franco didn't train as much as I did at that time, so I used several training partners, but Franco was one of them and we just developed a really great friendship because he was a foreigner in Germany. He was what they called a Gastarbeiter. And I was considered a Gastarbeiter, a kind of guest from the outside from Austria coming to Germany. We developed a really close relationship. We trained for two years together. He helped me with the powerlifting; I helped him with the bodybuilding. By 1968 I moved to California and I convinced Joe Weider then to give him an airline ticket over here and he would not regret it. He's really what I am in bodybuilding, except in the short man category, the champion. He's like the ultimate. There is no one better and he's a great strong man. He bends steel bars and blows up hot water bottles and breaks wood and steel and everything and he's a crazy guy. He has tremendous power. He has the sunshine here and the training equipment and he food supplements. He would blow everyone out of the water. He will be unbeatable. That's exactly what happened. Franco came here in 1969 and we trained together and he won every championship after that. He won *Mr. Universe* and *Mr. World* and eventually even *Mr. Olympia* after I retired. We always worked out together; we always were very good friends, and we were supportive. I am very proud of him because he spoke no English, unlike me who spoke a little English. He spoke absolutely none. He went then and passed the entrance examination to chiropractor college and went with me to take some classes at the community college and got his English better and his command of the language. He passed the entrance examination to the chiropractor college, became a chiropractor, and then passed his board the first time. Not like some of the guys I worked out with in the gym that tried it two or three times and then finally passed it the third time. So I was really proud of him. He became an expert in actual manipulation and working with the body. He had a special talent for that. That's why he had so many patients today.

Tim Ferriss: I remember watching his just catastrophic leg explosion on video and then he's calmly lying on a stretcher and he says, "Well, just by looking at my leg I can tell it's not broken. It's a dislocation" and he went on. People thought he was, doctors included as I understand it, that he would never walk again. Then he came back and then after he retired in '80 or '81, that's when he won the Olympia.

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: That's right. It was one of those unfortunate things at Universal at the backlot where they did the strongman act. There was a hole in the road, in the parking lot. No one saw it. It was just one of those unfortunate things. Franco had to pay for the mistake that the organizers made. But he came back. I think Franco knew that I had a few years before a heavy knee injury in '72 when I hurt my knee down in South Africa doing squats and posing. I came back from that knee injury and my thighs were bigger and better and more cut in

1973 at the Olympia and I won the *Mr. Olympia*. So he knew that you can come back, that if you have a great surgeon and if you have great therapy after the surgery that you can come back and be better than ever. That's exactly what Franco did. He went through the surgery. He went through the therapy. He was squatting again with his 600 lbs. with great ease.

Tim Ferriss: So incredible. I want to talk about language for a second. When was the last time you spoke German privately in a conversation?

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: I sometimes speak with a friend of mine, Ralf Möller who is German. We sometimes speak German and sometimes I would say it's a mish mash between German and English because some words are more accurate in German and some words are more accurate in English. Or it's easier to use in English; you find more specific words in English. We sometimes, like I said, do a mixture of both. Franco also speaks German. Sometimes we will be talking in English and then all of a sudden he will get into a German thing and then all of a sudden we talk German. The same is also with my nephew who is now a prominent entertainment attorney here. I brought him over when he was eighteen from Austria and from Portugal. He speaks Portuguese and he speaks German and French and now English very well since he's been here all these years. He also sometimes slips into the German and then we talk in German and sometimes in English. So every so often I get to speak German also.

Tim Ferriss: I enjoyed listening to an audio *Total Recall*, your book. You threw in [foreign language] and then kept on moving. I liked it because I lived in Berlin for a short period of time and I really enjoyed it.

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: Also in the *Escape Plan* I used the German and we did this whole scene in German going crazy in German. That was fun to do. The Austrians have a different dialect. The Austrians are kind of like Southerners.

Tim Ferriss: Right.

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: Where people say, "Huh? What did you say?" People that have to hide German and live more north speak more perfectly. When you go to Berlin, it's like totally the way you write it.

Tim Ferriss: Hochdeutsch.

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: Yes, Hochdeutsch, exactly.

Tim Ferriss: I was having a conversation not too long ago with Arianna Huffington and she was telling me about a conversation she had with Henry Kissinger because she was taking accent reduction classes. Kissinger said, “No, no, no. You want to keep your accent.”

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: That’s right.

Tim Ferriss: So I wanted to ask you. You’ve taken accent reduction classes before. Was there a point at which you realized, wow, this is actually a strength. I don’t want to get rid of this?

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: The objective was not to get rid of the accent. When you take accent removal and dialect classes and English classes, the whole combination is designed so you speak so everyone understands you. Sometimes foreigners have a tendency of pronouncing a word so wrong or with such wrong emphasis that people don’t know what they’re talking about and then when you correct them and they say it the right way then they totally understand it perfectly fine. So the trick is really to learn how to pronounce and to speak the language really well and how not to rush and throw words together that makes them almost impossible to understand. So Henry Kissinger is right. Everyone will always remember Henry Kissinger because of his accent and because of his brilliance. And I think everyone will always remember Arianna Huffington for her accent and for being this woman who set out this goal of creating this magazine and being highly successful, being politically-oriented, and becoming a policy wonk. There are many of those, but what separates her is the accent. The way she talks. She’s Greek, so she, of course, has a different accent than I have which makes it very funny when we had the gubernatorial debates in Sacramento. She was whining with the Greek accent and I was talking with my German accent. It was hilarious. It showed just how far the world has come, how far California has come. All of a sudden you have the two top candidates are all foreigners, with foreign accents running for Governor.

Tim Ferriss: I’ve been very fascinated to look at your film career and to hear the story of your *Twins*. I was hoping maybe you could tell us the story of how *Twins* came together and how you guys structured that deal because I didn’t know anything about that.

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: *Twins* came together because I felt very strongly that I had a side of me that is a very humorous side and that if someone would be patient enough and willing to work with me as a Director that they would be able to bring that humor out of me. It’s something that is very difficult because you can be humorous in your private life but cannot pull it off in a movie. There are

many actors that have tried that and were not successful. So I felt that I should really talk to Ivan Reitman because I really loved *Ghostbusters*. I said to myself, it was so well directed. I just happened to run into him when I was in Aspen. We were hanging out. There was Robin Williams and some other people and we were all up there at Snowmass and we were skiing and then at night before dinner we were all having a great time sitting by the fireplace and joking around. Ivan Reitman would say to me, "Arnold, I listened to you and I see a side of you that has never really been on screen." I said to him that I would love to do a comedy; I would love to bring that side out, the innocence of me of the naivete of me, or the humor of me. Whatever it is, I would like to see that on the screen. I think it could be good. I said to him that I want you to work with me and direct me in a movie; let's figure out what it should be. He said, "Okay, I would love to do that. I'm going to go home after Christmas, after this vacation, and I'm going to develop a bunch of ideas and then you and I will get together and you can pick the one you like the best." He developed within a short period of time a bunch of ideas. I think there were five ideas. The one that we both liked the most was called *The Experiment*, which then became *Twins*. *The Experiment* we didn't like because of my German/Austrian background so we thought that it would be better to call it *Twins*. We developed that project. I came up with the idea of Danny DeVito; that it shouldn't be someone who is acting totally opposite of the way I am, but he should also physically look totally the opposite of the way I am. Ivan loved that idea and then we went after Danny DeVito. Then I remember we sat around at a restaurant and we made a deal on a napkin and wrote down this is what we do. We're going to make the movie for free. We don't want to get any salaries and we get a big backend. Ivan should take this deal to the studio. He'll give it to Tom Pollack who was then running Universal Studios. Tom Pollack said this is great and we can make this movie for \$16.5M if you guys don't take a salary and you get a big backend. We're going to give you 37% or whatever for Danny, Ivan, and me. We worked out the percentage of what our salaries are. Whatever Danny got for a movie versus what I got for a movie versus what Ivan got for directing, we worked out percentage wise and that's how we ended up dividing up the pot amongst ourselves. Let me tell you, I made more money on that movie than any other movie and the gift keeps on giving. It's just wonderful. I remember Tom Pollack, after the movie came out he says, "All I can tell you is that this is what you guys did to me." Then he turned around and bent over and pulled his pockets out. "You've fucked me and cleaned me out." It was very funny. He said he'd never make that deal again. Anyway, the movie was a huge hit. It came out just before Christmas. Throughout Christmas and New Year's it made every day \$3M-\$4M which in today's term would be, of course, double or triple. It was just huge and went up to \$129M domestically and I think worldwide it was \$269M or something like that. So it was really, really successful. Like I said, it ended up costing around \$18M to make.

Tim Ferriss: So amazing. When I hear a story like that, I think of deal that George Lucas did for *Star Wars* where the studio is like, “Toys? Yeah, sure, whatever, you can have the toys.” They probably very much felt the same way. Wow, we’re not going to make that mistake again.

You have a new film ... you have several, but now *Maggie*. I’d love for you to tell people about it, but I’m also curious, maybe you can comment on this. In this day and age, why don’t you finance an entire film yourself or Crowd Source all the financing yourself so you’re the only, not necessarily the only producer, but you’re the sole owner of that film.

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: For some reason or the other I always felt that I should keep the two apart and that I should not invest and put money into films. This is a whole other business to be in, to finance movies. I think that my strength is to be a performer. I think there are people out there who are very good in financing movies and raising money for movies, or people that run studios and all this, and to let them do their job what they are doing and I do my job what I am doing. This is why I just never did that. It’s something else if someone has a great idea to do a documentary or something like this and says it costs \$2M and can you help us with this and I feel passionate about it. Like for instance, *Brooklyn Castle*. If someone would have come to me and said, “Hey, here’s a documentary we want to do about after school programs and inner city kids”, I’d say, “Wait a minute, those are two things I’m very passionate about.” I love playing chess, which is what it’s all about, right, the documentary. How kids in the inner cities play chess and how they become smart and how they stay off the streets and therefore not get into trouble with teenage pregnancy and get into juvenile crime and all those things. They have adult supervision and they get confidence. Those are kids that 70% of them are below the poverty line. So that’s a great story and it is something that both of them, chess and inner city kids and after school programs, I feel passionate about. So I would have put money into that. And I wouldn’t have been in it. I would have done it because I think it’s a story that ought to be told. So things like that is something else, but in my own movies, I don’t know. I never felt comfortable with that idea.

Tim Ferriss: Keep them separate.

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: That’s right, yeah.

Tim Ferriss: Now that I think about it, I do a lot of investing in start ups and sometimes people ask me why don’t you start up your own start up and I basically give them a very similar answer. I’m already heavily concentrated. I’d like to keep the two separate. I’m glad you brought up *Brooklyn Castle*. A friend of mine was interviewed on this podcast, Josh Waitzkin. He was the basis for

Searching for Bobby Fischer, so very well known as a chess player. And I've heard you talk about 3-6 p.m. is the danger zone. And I'm on the Advisory Board for Donorschoose.org and a number of non-profits related to education. Why are you so passionate about after school programs?

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: Because I felt that when I grew up, even though we were very poor, I had someone there 24 hours a day for me to improve, to learn, to do sports, and to get attention and to get the love and to get the discipline. It was a tough upbringing, but it was a combination of great discipline and also love. I felt like that having someone there with you 24 hours a day from the time in the morning that you get up to the time in the morning that you go to school, there were the teachers there, there were the coaches there, there was the school principal and all of them. And then you go home and there was your mother there helping you with your homework and then in the evening your dad comes home and he goes and takes you to the soccer field and does sports with you and then in the winter, ice curling and all those things. I just felt when I watch and go from school to school, which I did when I was the President of the Council for Physical Fitness and Sports, I traveled through all 50 states and visited one school after the next and always at 3:00 I felt that the kids are going out there and then I saw half of them standing around the school and then wandering around and then the other half were getting picked up and I said what happens with those kids out there? The teachers and the principal were always saying the problem today is that so many parents are working; both of the parents are working and they don't really have the ability to pick up their kids from school. What happens is that a lot of those kids then get into trouble. So then I started looking into it, the idea of after school programs. I saw that there were after school programs around, but they're not really well organized. So I stepped in and I started after school programs here in Los Angeles. We very quickly then spread them all over California and then all over the United States. Now we are in 13 or 14 cities all over the United States, including Hawaii. They have been really beneficial and we even passed an initiative in California in 2002, which was the After School Education and Safety Act that provides an additional \$500M for after school programs in California. Because of that, which started to go into effect in 2006, from that point on now every high school and middle school in California has after school programs. And then also churches and other organizations that are not connected with the schools can also get money for after school programs, so they can have their after school programs. It really has become one of my passions. It's just simply like I said, I had the upbringing, I had the attention 24 hours a day and it helped me to be who I am. And I felt bad for the kids when they don't get an equal shot because the only way you can be successful is if you really get this kind of attention and if you don't get into the kind of situation where you float around on the streets. Then you get involved with gangs and with drugs, with violence and, like I said, teenage pregnancy and juvenile crimes. You end up in jail and it doesn't

serve anybody and it costs the community a lot of money. The way I got Republican support for that in California, had them endorse my initiative, was because I showed to them that for every dollar that we spend, we save \$3 down the line. From a fiscal point of view, they endorsed it even though they don't like the Nanny State thing and to have government step in and do the job for parents. The Democrats endorsed it for that. They thought that government is responsible and we ought to do something because it is the new challenge that 70% of the kids come from homes where both of the parents are working and they do not have time for the kids in the afternoon. Who is helping these kids with homework? Who is helping these kids with tutoring and with sports programs and adult supervision and giving the kid the love that the kid needs and the confidence building that the kid needs? And for that, the after school program is the number one answer to the problem. We have seen it over and over with a great success rate we have had with after school programs and hopefully the movement will grow and eventually every child would have an opportunity to join an after school program if they don't have a parent at home that can help them with all those things.

Tim Ferriss: For everybody listening, I'll obviously provide links to all of the organizations that Arnold's involved with and I encourage you and implore you to consider becoming involved, supporting, or becoming a mentor, or a Big Brother or Big Sister of some type. I grew up on Long Island and I was a competitive athlete. I was a wrestler for a very long time and that kept me out of trouble and both my parents worked. Many of my friends there ended up overdosing on drugs, becoming involved with drugs, because they had idol hands during that period of time.

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: Right. The other thing you have to understand is that when you are a foreigner, an immigrant, and you come over here and you enjoy the unbelievable opportunities that America has to offer, it is natural that you feel like you want to give something back. I felt like when I was the Chairman of the President's Council and I was a trainer for the Special Olympics, and then with the after school programs. It was my way also of giving back because people listened to me because at that point I was a celebrity already and I had a tremendous power of influence because of my movies and all that. I might as well use this power of influence for something good and also give something back to the country. That's why I ran for Governor. I think it just feels good to do something for people that need help. That's what life is all about.

Tim Ferriss: Totally agreed. For those of you out there who have read my stuff, I get asked by readers a lot, "What's the key to happiness?" I think if you're not sure how to make yourself happy, make someone else happy. Help someone else and the payback is enormous. Arnold, when you hear the word "successful," who is the first person who comes to mind?

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: I think that people like Warren Buffet, Bill Gates, Larry Ellison, Elon Musk, I mean people like that, right? Because it's the first thing that you do think of when you hear about success. They are really worldwide known for their success. But then there are other layers. For instance, you cannot avoid someone like Nelson Mandela who showed to the world about forgiveness and showed to the world about tolerance and inclusion. The job that he did in South Africa was not only a great job for South Africa but was a great job for the whole world because inspired everybody to be remotely like that in that no one can really be like that because he was really very, very special. I was very fortunate to meet him twice and to work with him on Special Olympics in South Africa and to be at his prison cell, Robben Island, to have him show me around. I had time to talk with him and spend time with him. I spent a day with him twice. So he's definitely one of those guys. Mikhail Gorbachev, someone that grows up under Communism and then when he's on the top realizes that the system doesn't work and then dismantles it. I mean think about the chutzpah it takes to do that.

Tim Ferriss: Didn't need to mail him any bull testicles.

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: That's right, unbelievable leadership and vision and all that. Or if in sports, you think about Muhammad Ali. How can you not think about success and not think about him because that guy was so successful, but also not only successful in sports, but also in generosity. He gave everything away. He would go through the airport and if he sees someone that has no money, he would give him a \$100 bill. He was an extraordinary athlete. So there are a lot of people like that. I think when you go through history, also there is someone I just thought of that I should mention that is Cincinnatus. He was a Roman Emperor in the Roman Empire. Cincinnati, the city, by the way, is named after him because he was a big idol of George Washington. The reason why he is a great example of success is because he was asked reluctantly to step into power and become the Emperor and to help because Rome was about to get annihilated by all the wars and battles, so to step in there and to help them. He was a farmer. Powerful guy. He went and took on the challenge, took over Rome, took over the army and won the war. After they won the war, he has felt he's done his mission and was asked to go and be the Emperor and he gave the ring back and went back to farming. He didn't only do this once, he did it twice. They went back later on to him once again. When they tried to overthrow the empire from within, they asked him back and he came back, he cleaned up the mess through great, great leadership, which he had. He had tremendous leadership quality in bringing people together. And again he gave the ring back and went back to farming.

Tim Ferriss: Nice. That's incredible.

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: As we all know, it's very addictive to be powerful. I know how difficult it was for me to let go of being Governor and then all of a sudden you are not sitting there and making decisions about what's going to happen to the financial crisis, what's going to happen to the greenhouse regulations, what's going to happen to our high speed rail, what's happening with the University. You're not there any more making the decisions. It's very hard to let that go. So imagine someone like that to let go to be the Emperor. It's a whole different thing. So that's very admirable, so when I think about success, he's always somebody I would think to put in that category.

Tim Ferriss: I'll have to do some more research on him.

Do we have time for just a few more questions?

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: Yes.

Tim Ferriss: Feel free to not answer this if you don't want to, but this is almost the opposite of the last question. When you think of the word "punchable," what's the first face that comes to mind?

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: Punchable? I've never even thought about that.

Tim Ferriss: Most people don't walk around thinking about that.

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: No. I don't think there's anyone that I can think of right now that would be punchable.

Tim Ferriss: Okay. I was worried thinking about asking this that you might just reach across and knock my front teeth into the back of my head.

Do you have a favorite book or book that you've given people as a gift the most?

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: There's one book that I've given that it was just Christmas, that I've given away a lot of copies. This is a book about Winston Churchill by Boris Johnson. I don't know if you're familiar with him. He's the Mayor of London and he's a real interesting character. They think that he could eventually be Prime Minister of England; a very talented guy, not a party servant, but a people servant. He came up with the Boris Bike, the bicycles now all over London that anyone can just take and ride around on the bikes.

Now they have this all over Europe and France and Paris, Vienna, and everywhere. They all took this idea that people would drive less in the city if they just have the possibility of getting a bike from a bike stand. He's a very interesting guy. I did not even know that he is this extraordinary writer at the same time, but I was in London for a promotion and I saw on the bookshelf in my suite this book Winston Churchill. I admire Winston Churchill. He's one of those guys that I really love. So I took this book down from the bookshelf and I looked and I said, "Oh, Boris Johnson, the Mayor, he wrote this. I've got to get this." So I put it back and Daniel wrote down the title and all the information and then we got it as a Christmas gift for a lot of people. The other book that I have given hundreds of copies to is *Free to Choose* by Milton Friedman. It kind of lays out why the private sector is really the answer to a lot of problems that we have and not government. I think it's a real great philosophic kind of a book about how to approach our problems, if it is education, if it is economic growth, all of those various kinds of different issues. He lays it out. It's a very simple book to read, but it is very good and it makes an impact on you when you read it. The other one I think is California by Kevin Starr. Kevin Starr was our state librarian and he has written more books on California than anyone. If anyone is at all interested in a book about California, what makes California unique and special, and the history of it, the political history of it and all the little details, that's a good book to have. It's a great gift, especially when I was Governor and you give people gifts and you give it, of course, of California, a book about California. It's the kind of reading I like and that I like to share with other people.

Tim Ferriss: Wonderful. I have just one more question and then I'd love to hear where we can hear more about all of the projects you're up to. That is, I've heard you mention Transcendental Meditation in passing briefly. Do you meditate?

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: I don't meditate now, but I got heavily into it in the 70's. I remember there was a time in my life where I felt like everything was just coming together and I did not find a way, or couldn't find a way, of keeping the things separate. It was always when I was thinking at the same time about my bodybuilding career, I was thinking about my movie career, I was thinking about the documentary *Pumping Iron* that we were shooting right now and the movie *Stay Hungry* that we were just finished shooting, and my investment in the apartment building, and do I get the financing from the bank. All this kind of stuff was always coming together and at the same time I was training for the *Mr. Olympia* competition in South Africa. I was training right here at Gold's Gym and I remember there was all the camera equipment around five hours a day in my face and then someone in the middle of squatting was trying to change the battery pack on my lifting belt. Eventually it felt like I've got to do something about it because I have such great opportunities here and everything is happening and everything is going my way, but I'm just clustering everything into one big problem rather than separating it out and

having calm and peace and being happy. A total coincidence, I ran into this guy that I've run into many times at the beach. A very, very pleasant man who told me that he is a teacher in Transcendental Meditation and I said, "It's interesting that you mention it because I feel like I should do something because I feel like I'm just overly worried and anxieties and all that stuff. I feel certain pressures that I've never felt before. He says, "Oh, Arnold, it is not uncommon. It is very common. A lot of people go through this. This is why people use Transcendental Meditation as one way of dealing with the problem." He was very good in selling it because he didn't say that it was the only answer. He said it's just one of many. He says, "Why don't you try it? I'm a teacher there up in Westwood. I would not be able to teach you since we have friends. There's another teacher that will give you a mantra and blah, blah, teach you how to do it and then I can help you after that. Because I will be teaching, why don't you come up on Thursday? I will be there. I will introduce you to the folks up there." I went up there, took a class, and I went home after that and tried it. I said to myself, "I've got to give it a shot." I did 20 minutes in the morning and 20 minutes at night and I would say within 14 days, 3 weeks, I got to the point where I could really disconnect my mind and stay and find a few seconds of this connection and rejuvenate the mind and learn how to focus more and to calm down. I saw the effect right away. I was much more calm about all of the challenges that were facing me. I continued doing that for a year. By that time I felt that I think I have mastered this. I think that now I don't feel overwhelmed anymore. I really felt it was kind of one of those things where Transcendental Meditation was anxiety and pressure meeting around the corner tranquility. This is kind of what it felt. I was happy from that point on. Even today, I still benefit from that because I don't merge and bring things together and see everything as one big problem. I take them one challenge at a time and when I go and I study my script for a movie, then that time of day when I study my script, I don't let anything else interfere. I just concentrate on that. The other thing that I've learned is that there are many forms of meditation in the world. Like when I study and work really hard where it takes the ultimate amount of concentration, I can only do it for 45 minutes, maybe an hour. But then I have to kind of run off and maybe play chess. I play chess for 15 minutes and then I can go back and can have all the energy in the world again and jump right back and then continue on with my work as if I've not done it at all today. Right? It's like I'm fresh. That's another way that I think of meditation. I also figured out that I could use my workouts as a form of meditation because I concentrate so much on the muscle and I have my mind inside the bicep when I do my curls. I have my mind inside the pectoral muscles when I do my bench press. So I'm really inside and it's like I gain a form of meditation because you have no chance of thinking or concentrating on anything else at that time, but just that training that you do. So there's many ways of meditation and I benefit from all of those today I'm much calmer because of that and much more organized and much more tranquil because of that.

Tim Ferriss: This whole conversation makes me want to go tackle the world. I love it. I really appreciate all of your time.

Where can people, and of course I'll link to all of these things in the show notes for folks, where can people learn more about what you're up to? What would you like to share with people?

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: I think that people, they know my ambitions in the movie business. They know that I love doing movies, but I think because of my interest in public policy after my Governorship, I have started the USC Schwarzenegger Institute that deals with some of the issues that I have felt very passionate about during the time I was Governor. And even beforehand, which was political reform. We were very successful in doing redistricting reform in California and open primaries reform and so on, which now brings the politicians much more to the center. But this is not the only thing. There are many more things that need to be accomplished in California and nationwide, so our institute deals with that. It also deals with stem cell research, it deals with economic growth and opportunities, it deals with education, after school programs and so on, and especially also with environmental issues. I have an environmental organization on top of that which is the R20, which deals with subnational governments because I feel always very strongly that while we are striving towards a Quito II Treaty and all the nations in the world come together, I hope that they are going to be successful in Paris in December. At the same time I want subnational governments like California and other states and other provinces and cities to set their own goals and not to wait just for this treaty, but to have the top down approach which is what the international treaty will be, but from the bottom up, grass roots level approach from the bottom up because when those two meet we really create critical mass. That's what it's all about. I want to continue pushing toward a renewable energy future. It is my crusade. It's as much a crusade as my fitness crusade was for the last 45 years and we've been pretty successful with that. So I hope that we're going to be successful with that, too. It does need everyone to buy in and everyone to participate and that's why I go around the world and give speeches on environmental issues and try to bring countries together and make sure that this year it will be a huge success, but at the same time have subnational governments set their own goals and do exactly what we did in California. In California we didn't wait for Washington. We didn't wait for a U.N. treaty or anything like this. We set the goal of reducing our greenhouse gases by 20%, by 25% by the year 2020, and 85% by the year 2050. We created the extra million solar roofs in California, we lowered the fuel standards here, we set the goal to up the renewables from 25% to 48% by the year 2020. So these are all things that we did. We didn't wait for Washington and so we want other states to do the same thing. Luckily, California showed great leadership and now we see other subnational governments doing the same thing.

Tim Ferriss: And that's Regions20.org?

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: That is R20. Yes, Regions20.

Tim Ferriss: And people can find you on Twitter @Schwarzenegger?

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: That's right.

Tim Ferriss: Wonderful. All right, is there anything else that you'd like to mention before we close out?

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: Yes. Omaze. We're doing another fundraiser with Omaze. The last time we did it for the after school programs which we talked about earlier. I do fundraisers all the time because they always need money and for every dollar we can send more kids to after school programs, so we are always raising money. The last time we had a tank drive and destroyed things.

Tim Ferriss: Amazing.

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: There's a model tank right there behind you ...

Tim Ferriss: Oh, yeah there is.

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: The big tank, the real tank, the M47 from my military days, it's the real thing. So whoever won the bid, you can come out and sit with me in the tank and then we crush things together; pianos, toilet bowls, living rooms and everything that he picked that we just destroyed. We raised over \$1M from that which was really great and we had a lot of fun at the same time. This time instead of destroying things with a tank, we blow things up. So this will be the new fundraiser, which we are going to start very soon. In February as a matter of fact. So that's the other thing I'm always doing, raising money for the after school programs.

Tim Ferriss: Is the link going to be the same as the last?

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: Yes it will be omaze.com/arnold.

Tim Ferriss: omaze.com/arnold. I'll put that in the show notes as well.

Sir, thank you so much for the time.

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: Thank you very much.

Tim Ferriss: This has been wonderful.

Arnold

Schwarzenegger: Thank you.

Tim Ferriss: Until next time, thank you for listening, folks.