

Mick Batyske Transcript

Mick Batyske: I know where I want this party to go. I know where I want this set to go. I know where I want this playlist to go, right? For me, it's never about the next song, it's about a couple of things down. That's for me the same thing I try to do when we're working with startups.

Matt Britton: To thrive in a rapidly evolving landscape, brands must move at an ever-increasing pace. I'm Matt Britton, founder and CEO of Suzy. Join me and key industry leaders as we dive deep into the shifting consumer trends within their industry, why it matters now, and how you can keep up. Welcome to *The Speed of Culture*.

Up today, we're going to be speaking with a long-time personal friend, DJ, speaker, investor, and advisor, Mick Batyske. Mick, great to see you brother. How are you today?

Mick: I'm a great man. Thank you so much for having me.

Matt: Absolutely. It's been way too long. I know we've been trying to get this together. You've obviously had a busy summer, which we're going to talk about, but I'm super excited to finally get you on *The Speed of Culture* podcast. We're going to start by getting to know a little bit more about you. You've had really a storied ascent to where you are today, lots of different experiences that make up who Mick is. I would love to hear a little bit about that story.

Mick: For me, Matt, interesting, it took me a long time in life to really realize what my purpose was occupationally. For me, it was just like, DJing was something I've done since college in order to A, fulfill a creative expression but also to pay my bills. I looked at DJing as the main thing of what I did. Then what happened was, in the middle of my 30s, I'm 44 now, I realized DJing was just the output of what my true skill, which was just literally just being me, which is very cliché, I guess, to say these days of just your personal brand and the brand of you and all of that but, for me, it's literally been the truth.

By that I mean, my whole career, as you know, I've managed my own career, I've marketed my own career, I've done my own PR, I've done my own literally everything, good and bad and so what I've come to realize was my actual job and my actual skill set, my entire life has actually just been around putting the best version of myself out there. DJing was just the first touch point that people had of me. I wish I would've realized that a little bit sooner in life, to be honest with you. It took the birth of my son for me to really do a deep dive and figure that out.

Once I did that, the whole world started opening up to me in many different avenues because I realized that the same skill set and the same thought process and the same relationships, and creativity that I used to create my DJ career, I can use it in a million other ways, in a million other avenues.

Matt: You're talking about your son being born and obviously, you realized that from a career perspective, being a DJ, and you've told me this in the past. It requires you to jump on planes and be out late nights, et cetera. Now you have a family and you obviously had to rethink things. Where did you get your inspiration from to understand how to leverage your DJ career, so to speak, into other areas and what are some of those other areas?

Mick: Eventually, in life you get to a point where you realize what you're not, right? That's so much more important than what you are. When you hone in on what you're not, you're able to actually see that what you are is a lot stronger. Let's use DJing for example, but you could really apply this to any creative medium or maybe any medium in general. For me, I started questioning a lot of things about my career that weren't happening like, "Why am I not doing festivals?" or, "Why, when I go on Twitter and say I'm spinning tonight, why don't 1,000 people show up when I have all these followers and all the— Why are these things that happen for other people not happening for me?" I went through a little frustration with it, even a little depression about it.

What I realized was, that's actually not what my path was ever supposed to be. The reason I got my career in the first place was simply because I have a career that people— They find me through more human relationships. They find me more through brand relationships. They find me more from coming to me and just connecting with me just on a really holistic level, whether they love the music or they love the conversation we had at a dinner party or we met in the elevator and they liked my shoes, really, as a brand. All my opportunities never come from being a known DJ or "wanting to be famous" or anything like that. Everything has come from me simply because of how I live my life, who I live my life around, who I live my life with.

When I realized that, I was like, let me lean into the opportunities that can come from that, which are being the "best DJ" for people who like what I like and people who are into the other things that I'm into and people who want to just live their life with the same morals and standards and values of which how I do. Once I zoomed out— Actually, zoomed out wouldn't even be the right word. More like zoom out and then zoom back in somewhere else. I zoomed out on what I thought I was supposed to be doing because I'm a DJ and I zoomed in on just what I'm supposed to be doing as me and so I started getting all sorts of opportunities with investment opportunities and just expanding my circle and people.

It just changed my entire life because I was able to be around people who appreciated all the things I brought to the table and didn't degrade me for the couple of things I did not bring to the table.

Matt: It's really interesting when you say that, Mick, because I think a lot of young people, they look at influencers and they look at these big follower numbers or fan numbers and the first thing they do is compare it to themselves. What, I think, it's doing is sending a lot of young people down the wrong path. Really it's sending them down the path of quantity over quality, right? People try to collect friends as almost like some sort of point value or point system and they think that if they have enough of them, they're going to be able to advance to the next level.

As you and I both know, that's not really how life works. Instead, it's really about the quality of your relationships, who those people are, what is the context of your relationship and how you can help each other. It sounds like you went through that journey yourself where you're in a world of DJs where there are a lot of "famous people" and they may have a big high-level popularity, but maybe they don't have those high-quality touch points that will allow them to do some of the things that you're doing.

I think it's really an interesting lesson to sort of extract from your journey that took you some time, but maybe for other people that are listening to this, they can learn that it's really not about trying to go for being famous. It's about really those long-lasting relationships. It seems that those are definitely serving you. I've spoken to many people in the tech industry who know you well, where

you are at their company party or something like that, and all of a sudden, an opportunity will arise. Is that sort of how you're finding a lot of these opportunities surface?

Mick: Yes. For me, I just tried to create a spider web, if you will, where everything connects and I want to be able to be the guy that could be— It's funny, in school, I never got a lot of As. I got a lot of B-pluses but I was able to just phone it in and be present in a bunch of different places and get a B or B-plus versus really, really lean in and zoom in and get an A. It's the same thing I've done in my career, meaning, that, "Okay, I don't need to be the best DJ. I don't need to be the best at anything, but I could be pretty good at a bunch of things and find ways to make them all work for me." When you zoom out and you get the report card, the GPA is very, very good. It just comes from a bunch of different sources. That's exactly what I try to do.

I'll give you a great example. I spoke on a panel at a finance conference a couple of weeks ago in California, and then, they ended up needing somebody to DJ an event for them, so I ended up DJing that. Then I was able to invite the two founders of a company that I'm advising. They were able to meet great people at that. It's a matter of taking one thing that's not connected to this thing, putting it with this thing that's not connected, and putting everybody in a room together. Then the best part is, of course, I'm playing music, so at the end of the day, all of these people that I've met from all walks of my life who have never met, they're all drinking and laughing, having a great time together, and I'm creating this environment for them to do that, but I'm enhancing my life and their lives in multiple different ways. That's the weirdness of what I get to do and I love it.

Matt: Absolutely. I think one thing that you do such a good job at, you talk about you love playing music for people, and a big part of that and a big part of understanding who to connect is you essentially being a curator. The other day you Twitted out or put on Instagram a fall mix on Spotify. I don't trust my own music curation skills, but I certainly trust yours, and I immediately played it. It's found a heavy rotation in the household for the last week or so. Your ability to do something like that is something that really can't be taught.

The question I have for you is how did you learn how to curate sounds to actually meet a mood or meet an environment and what work goes into that on a daily basis to make sure that you stay fresh?

Mick: That's a great question. There's two ways I would answer it. One, as far as how I learned it, actually I learned that skill in almost in the opposite way of staying fresh, meaning, that when I was a kid and I was growing up loving music and listening to music, my curation is rooted in nostalgia, which doesn't mean necessarily that the music is old, but it just means how I consumed music as a kid was so different than how my kids, geez, my one kid— I don't believe there's another kid, a couple of years maybe. Your kids would consume music, right?

Let's go back even further. I played a lot of instruments as a kid as well. The way I fell in love with music, it taught me to singularly hear and see music in my head in a way, if that makes sense. A Pearl Jam song in '92 or a Snoop song in '94, a 2Pac song in '96, or a Neptune song in 2001, for example, I remember it shows itself visually in my brain. It's not like there's people, they can literally have that— There are people that literally see music as colors. Mine doesn't go that far. There's a scientific term for that, but I'm probably right before you get to that, on that spectrum of just how I see music and how it makes me feel.

I just have this weird mapping system in my brain. Then, when I started DJing, this was all way before I was a DJ, I was able to just lean on that and put things together from a vibe perspective that I think makes sense. Then when I coupled that with the fact that I grew up playing instruments, I was able to put that together in a really logical and musical way.

I think, also, when I DJ, a lot of times DJs get restricted by the boxes we put ourselves in as far as genres and also even BPM. You just think like, "Oh, I have to play 22 songs in a row that are 128 BPM," or if I'm playing a 98 BPM record, I can't go faster, I can't go slower, I gotta stay— I'm like, "No, no, no, no. I don't play off of BPM. I play off of vibe, and does the song make sense with the song before it." I have enough DJ tricks in my toolkit to get you to stay on a dance floor from any tempo change I need to go. I can go from a slow jam to a house song, to a rock song, to a funk song. None of those tempos make sense, but I can make that work. For me, it's just like I see the bridges between those songs. That, for me, is like my secret sauce.

Matt: Had you spent a lot of time in record stores and listening to very abstract types of music and things that normal people hadn't heard of? How are you discovering some of these new tracks?

Mick: My favorite ways to discover it are, honestly, the same ways as everybody else now. It's a Spotify playlist, things like that. I also love Shazam. I love being in a coffee shop and hearing something really cool that I've never heard before. Now they got the little secret function on your phone so you could Shazam without standing there holding up the blue screen which is great. You could add it to your little controlled center, or whatever, so I'm in there going nuts. It's not so much what happens for me. It's more the happenstance of like, it's not necessarily that particular song that I hear in there that is the one that influences me, but that sets me on the journey of finding the other stuff.

There's actually a song on that fall playlist you referenced that I actually did hear in my local coffee shop, and I was like, "What is this?" She wouldn't tell me so I Shazamed it, but then I discovered so many other random things from that, and then that sets the mood. That actually inspired me to do that playlist, hearing that person's song, believe it or not. I came home and I was like, "This song feels like fall," and I was like, "I'm going to make an entire playlist off of that, and the weather was changing and everything."

The other thing I do is I just stay in touch with a lot of different DJs and a lot of really creative people, some people older than me, some people younger than me. What I like to play in my sets is I try to, very rarely if I'm playing something new or popular, I try to find an alternative version of it to play, whether it's a really cool remix or a cool mashup, even though we don't use that term anymore, but the general populous that still does, or a really cool edit or version or something to really, really make it more unique and make it really, really interesting.

By doing that, it gives my sets a unique DNA because nowadays— Also, as a DJ, this is a side of what you're saying, but I think it's really relevant, our competition as DJs and as curators aren't other DJs anymore, it's every person in the world because every person in the world could make a really dope playlist and play it at their party and just choose not to hire me. I have to think that through now.

If you want to hear the same 40 songs that you want to hear, I'm going to come to your party and play those same 40 songs. How can I make myself stand out when I play those same songs for you? What versions of them can I play? What things can I do live and DJ anywhere? Can I change the beat or can I change the words or can I flip this live or— I've even had clients tell me they want to hear

stuff and I'll go through and we'll remix some stuff before the event. This, obviously, depends on the budget too. I'm not going to go to it, but if it's somebody or a client that's really important to me, I want to give you exactly what you want, but told through my lens and told through my musical goggles. I think it's important to have differentiation because anybody could just play a playlist.

Honestly, dude, 95% of the people at the party are going to be just as satisfied with that at this point. People are just like, "Oh, I'm listening to my favorite songs. I'm having a good time," so what can I do to elevate that? That's what I take very seriously in my job.

Matt: Absolutely. I think music is so important. You mentioned this in terms of saying a vibe, saying overall mood. It really even has a greater importance in terms of its impact on broader trends in society. We had Marcus Collins who's the chief strategy officer of Wieden & Kennedy, who's done all the Nike work, et cetera, just talking about culture, how culture is built. He used to work for Beyonce and her digital team in the early ages of her career. When you look at the brands that you're working with, because you've worked with everybody from Airbnb to Cadillac, to MasterCard, GQ, even done some work with NBA2K, one of my favorite video games, are you speaking with these brands in terms of where you think their brand and their brand ethos mixes with music? How are your collaborations with brands structured?

Mick: It's all across the board. I'd say, "I think Marcus is one of the most—" I'm a huge fan of that guy. I think he's incredible, so I just wanted to put that on the record. I think the way he connects culture with everything is just—

Matt: He's got a book coming out. You have to check out in May. We'll send you a copy of it on his behalf.

Mick: Yes. Actually, very few people see it as well as he sees it, but anyways. I think for me it's just like, first of all, I try to work with brands that get it first and foremost. That's the first level of it because you can't really sometimes teach an old dog new tricks in a lot of ways, and so sometimes there are people that it's just like it's not worth trying. Secondly, depending on what the opportunity is, sometimes I don't try at all, sometimes I just have to just, "Eat it man," and just be like, "You know what, I'm just going to do the best I can with the constraints you give me."

To your point, where the real magic happens is the third option of that, which is where we can say, "Hey, what is it that you're trying to accomplish?" Whether it's for a game or whether it's for a party, whether it's for sending playlists out to your consumers and to your audience. "What is it that you think you sound like and this is what I think you should sound like, and maybe we can meet in the middle." It's never 100% what I want. My best example of it is if we could get somewhere in the middle where I can improve it— I don't need you to do what I'm doing. I just want to improve what you are doing, and that's good enough for me because that's going to give your audience a better situation."

I've seen that happen through music. I've seen that happen through influencer partnerships. I've seen that happen to all sorts of things. I did a brand partnership with a huge auto automobile company. This was maybe six, seven years ago. The first time I did some content for them, they gave you the brand Bible, Matt. They give you the whole list of all this shit, all these things, and I'm just like, "Man, this sucks. This is brutal. This doesn't feel like me at all."

Matt: It's putting you in a box, right? It doesn't allow you to be an artist or exercise your creative juices.

Mick: Yes, it was bad. We did it the best we could and it turned out okay, and I was grateful. I got paid. I got the car. It was great. It was fine but it just didn't feel like me. We all make sacrifices and stuff. The second time around I started pushing it a little bit more. By the third time around, I just was like, once we reached a real level of comfort, I said, "Do you trust me?" They said, "Yes," and I was like, "Well, let me do this my way." They were like, "Okay." I did it completely my way and they loved it. It just took some trust and it took some honesty and transparency on both sides, but we reached a point.

Now I try to use that as, I think, my goal should be with every partnership and that I have to— Social media influencing, I don't like the word influencer at all. I think it's pretty corny, but I understand that's the word that people use for it, but for me, it's just like you have to be able to tell people the real version of your life. People know, people are in on the joke, people know you're getting paid to sit around in some sweatpants on your stoop next to a pumpkin, and I only know I'm saying that because I'm making that post next week, but the thing is like, what can I do to make it a little bit different?

Whether I involve my kid in it, whether I make a little joke, or whether— everybody knows why you're posting it. You write an ad in the post. This is a real thing. You let people know that they're in on the joke and instead of making them in on the joke, let's bring them into the world, and that's what I try to do.

Matt: You mentioned your son Miles who's, I think seven years old now, and I remember you've done really an amazing job in terms of authenticity talking about your journey as a parent and your relationship with your son. Talk to us about that relationship and why you felt it's important to integrate him into your overall image in some of the work that you do.

Mick: Oh, yes. I could talk about him for days as most fathers could about their kids and moms as well. For starters, he's just the north star to everything I do, right? It's not a secret that I figured out what my life and my career should be when my son was born. It's not a secret that all these other opportunities started happening both in my brain and in my network and in my world when I started living for something bigger and better than me, and I don't take any of that for granted. What I started to realize was rather than make my son, what's the expression, fit in or fit out? There's a fancy expression people use, but rather than—

Matt: Square peg in a round hole.

Mick: Yes. Rather than try to create an alternate life, where I have my home life and then I have my work life, and then I have my kid life, and all that, I was just like, "I don't want to live a compartmentalized life." I'm not my dad or your dad where we had these different stories and these different industries, a whole different worldview. We live in a world where we can have all of that at one time. Not everybody of our generation can but we're fortunate that we can so why not just involve my son?

I bring my son to events, bro. He was at an event with me last week, just chilling on the stage, and sometimes he gets up. He's getting to see that my dad would take me to, when he put in carpet and tile, that's what my dad did. I remember seeing that and I realized my son didn't really understand.

The second part of this is that my son didn't understand hard work. He's learning it now. Because I don't have a job that's like a manual labor like my dad did, where you would see my dad putting tiles brick by brick or sheet by sheet, or whatever, and build a wall and build a bathroom or because I'm not like a doctor, where I'm like, "I could save this person's life. You could meet him." He really didn't grasp what it was that I did. He just knew it was fun.

I was like, "Let me show you what really goes into these two hours of fun." All of these calls, all these podcasts, you could sit with your little Nintendo switch on this chair that you can't see on the camera and sit there with me all day and watch everything I have to do. You could come with me to these lunches, you could come with me when I'm on a call, when I'm walking you to school. You could see all of these things. Then I say, "I do all of that just to get to the part where you can go see me and have fun for two hours." Then he was just like, "Oh." Once he started appreciating that, he just started wanting to be around a lot more.

Brands started just noticing us together at things and on social, and all of that. Then we started getting opportunities to collaborate together, which was really a beautiful thing.

Matt: How cool is that? You guys wrote a book, right? *D is for DJ*.

Mick: Yes. It's right there on the wall in this video.

Matt: Tell us about that.

Mick: Sure. I just really think that our world now is so different and I just think any kid with the Beatles were to our grandparents and our parents, A Tribe Called Quest was to us and Drake is going to be for everybody else and so I didn't think hip-hop should be compartmentalized as far as an educational tool. It's not really anymore but everybody's wrote these books about rappers and all these other things and sneakers and basketball players for kids' books but nobody did it from the DJ culture perspective. I just thought every kid's going to say they want to be a rapper, but none of them are going to be a rapper but any kid that wants to be a DJ could literally be a DJ and still go on to do a million other things in their life.

I was like, "Let's give them some of the fundamentals of the culture and the history of it in a way where they could literally be two or three years old learning the alphabet but learning about how many books do we need, where it's M is for Michael Jordan or L is for Llama." We have seen these books a million times and they're great but I was like, "What would be the evolution of that that is told through—" I only know one way to live and the way I live is what's provided my life for my son. If this culture and this gift was able to give me this life for my son, I was like, "I wanted to share that with somebody else for their family. It's cool.

Matt: Incredible. We're going to shift gears a little bit to just the music industry, in general, and what you're seeing out there. You're at every big event I've been to whether it's been CES, South by Southwest. I know you've done a bunch of gigs for me there or can. The Super Bowl, the NBA, you're there and you're spinning the biggest parties for the biggest brands and celebrities. There's very few people in the world that have a front-row seat to the evolution of culture and music the way you do. What are you seeing evolve in the music space, whether it's with social media or rising types of formats, or even artists that you think are going to be big heading into 2023?

Mick: A bunch of things. For starters, it's almost like a played-out topic at this point. I think the music and NFT situation is just beginning to— It's just in its baby moment right now. I don't think we even know what it's going to be. I think it's in its Napster moment, where we're still trying to like we don't even know what the 10-year Spotify is on everybody's day-to-day life plan is. It's still confusing to some people. It's still new. There's barriers and people don't understand them. Some people are in, some people aren't but it's going to be ultimately where everything nets out.

That's the mindset I've taken and that if we're in the Napster moment of it now, what's going to be the iTunes moment of it? Then more importantly than that, what's going to be the Spotify title? What's going to be the everyday, every use case moment for it because when we get to that point, it's going to be fascinating but that's definitely, I think, the main thing. I get worried when people think it's not going to happen because it's definitely going to happen but it's just a matter of—

Matt: You know how it is, Mick. We were both around during the dotcom crash and there was people who were off the internet, and then there's people who were off crypto, there's people who are running off NFTs, and what happens is when things are new, they get super popular, everybody jumps in, it becomes inflated, the bubble bursts and then the real work begins. The real people who really know what they're doing, who aren't in it for a quick buck, that want to put them in the right route and technology and take the able amount of time that it really does take to build something with staying power, then that work begins.

It could be 5, 10, 15 years later and then you have these transformational things and it's those people who have been there all along, they are the ones who are going to really make wealth from it. That's just generally what happens with— I've seen this happen over and over and over again. Everybody thinks that these things happen overnight and they don't. Trends happen overnight, but sustainable business movements can take decades or decades to really impart on the mass public.

Mick: That's definitely I think the phase that we're in right now with that. You said it best. I think when you say transformational, that's where ultimately it's going to go. It's just going to be— I don't think it's going to be a 10 to 15-year thing like some of the past technologies because I think as we move forward into everything that window gets smaller and smaller. If it's like streaming and MP3 is a good 15 years to get from Napster to Spotify on everybody's phone, this is going to take 5. It's that. Then whatever the next thing is it's going to take two or three. That's the one thing I noticed. The other thing I noticed is that I—

Matt: How about TikTok? What do you think TikTok is doing for the music industry and how's that impact it?

Mick: I think it's fascinating for one of two reasons. One, I think it's just fascinating from a musical discovery point of view that people are discovering music from TikToks and Reels and people are creating literally short-form musical content, not for radio or streaming or clubs or parties or listening to in the car, they're literally just taking bite size things just for people to use. It's been fascinating watching the rise of the TikTok producer or the Reels producer, people who get big just remixing samples in just little 60 second bite-size increments that just have a good little energy and vibe.

It's so fascinating too from a right perspective because they're definitely not clearing any of that stuff. I don't know how that all works but it's really interesting and will, ultimately, that's going to all come back around on everybody but I think that's really, really fascinating in that regard.

The other thing, I think, is really interesting is, obviously, we've seen what happened with so many artists from the past that have gotten these random lightning-striking moments 20, 30 years later because of TikTok, where somebody's just like, "Oh, this random song from 1984, 1992 becomes huge again." Then, all of a sudden, there's a Spotify stream spike, an Apple stream spike, and a YouTube stream spike, and then who knows, maybe they're toward a spike.

It's fascinating how, whatever the newest of the new culture can go back and impact the old school culture stuff, that continues to build and bubble and inspire, and then it could keep going around in circles and circles. Maybe that inspires the next musician, that the same thing could happen— It's really cool. I like that for all. We call it just new. We're not looking backwards, and all that. There's still so many people from the past that are reaping the benefits of this technology and perhaps getting career extensions from it, and I think that's really cool. I love that aspect.

I just think, for me, I think it's fascinating. It's a device where you could learn, and by device, I mean, like a mental or emotional device where you can learn both new things and old things at the exact same time and it synergizes perfectly.

Matt: That was great. We're going to move on to our final topic and just talk about you being an investor. A lot of people dabble in seed investments. I know that you've made quite a few. You talked a little bit earlier about how some of these investments come together through some of your personal relationships. What is it about being a seed investor that you gravitate towards and what is sort of your role with some of these companies that you do invest in in terms of how you add value?

Mick: Sure. Thank you for asking that. I love talking about that. For me, I enjoy finding great people who are doing really unique things and identifying their promise very early. I look at investing very similar to how I would look at curating a mixtape or how a label A&R person would look at putting together their label roster or helping piece together an album. I think you never know what the finished product is going to be but you know how it's going to start. It means that the person and the team around that have to be good enough to get that, I'm going say album on purpose right here, to get that album from an idea and a studio to a finished product that everybody can enjoy that's perfect or is perfect as what we think perfect can be because there's no perfect.

That to me is what I think is so important that people neglect when they're doing angel investing or seed investing or even venture capital in a lot of ways. It's like that person— You're investing in the person, not the idea. There's been a few times where I went against my gut and went past the person and looked at the idea and that did not go very well but then there's been multiple times where I looked at the person and I was just like, "Oh, man. I'm in love with the person. They're fantastic. They're just amazing human beings. I want to have drinks with this person. I want this person to be friends with my family. I want to introduce this person to others—" When you meet somebody who's that great and you believe in them, that's how you know. I've been fortunate to meet some really amazing people that I was able to get behind.

That's one way I look at it. The other thing is from an investing point— My wife and I do a lot of this together now which is great because she's an amazing founder and she's an amazing operator as well. I have to shadow her company, Tiny Organics, the best baby food company ever. The one thing that's really cool is even if I don't invest in you right now, I could still potentially offer value by being on a board or advising or things of that nature.

What I try to do for me it's just like I'm really good at brand, I'm really good at relationships, and I'm really good at seeing a couple slots down the field if you will. As a DJ, my brain— The thing that people don't realize about DJs is you think when we're queuing up that next song, that we're getting ready to play that next song, in our minds— I'm speaking from just me and the DJs that I rock with or the guys who are really masters of their craft. I'm not saying I'm a master of my craft but I have longevity. I'll say that. We're two or three songs past that. When we're giving you song number two after you listened to song number one, I'm already three or four songs down. I know where I want to go.

I once went and took a racing class at some speedway upstate. They were just like, you're going like 200 miles an hour. Your shit was fucking insane. I thought I was going to die and you're in a car by yourself. The thing they tell you, it's changed my life, hearing this, that if you are only looking right in front of your car, you are going to wreck, you are going to die. You need to be looking like 100 yards down that track and trust that everything else is going to flow right in front of you if you're looking that far ahead.

They told me that, and I had to do that when we're driving, or it's not going to end well for me but man, I could tell you, first of all, getting back into my regular car driving home from that was a transformational experience because— I've never driven the same again in my life because you, obviously, got to look and see if a dog goes in front of your car or something like that. It's just like when you start to zoom out like that on things, it changes everything. I started realizing that's what I've done as a DJ my entire time. I know where I want this party to go. I know where I want this set to go. I know where I want this playlist to go. For me, it's never about the next song. It's about like a couple things down.

That's, for me, the same thing I try to do when we're working with startups. It's just like, "I know what your idea looks like now and I know what your brand should look like now but have you thought about it this way? Have you thought about it this way? Have you applied this cultural component to it? Have you thought about talking to this person and bringing this?" You are so focused on the now, as you should be as a founder, and as a creator, and as a CTO, and all of these things. You have to be focused on the now, but I can zoom out because I don't need to be focused on the now and I could potentially offer value in those other ways because that's how my brain works.

That's what we do. We're working with some really, really, really awesome companies right now and many more to come. The end goal is for my wife and I to eventually have our own fund. I think that's something that we're going to really start figuring out how we could do as a husband and wife team maybe in the next couple years but in the meantime, we just do it on our micro level and it's rewarding and it's fascinating. It's one of my favorite parts of my career right now, to be honest.

Matt: That's amazing. It's amazing how it's evolved to that level. Amazing. We're going to wrap things up here. You obviously, Mick, are always on a plane, always heading somewhere moving so fast. What in your life is worth slowing down for? I know you're going to talk about your son, you're going to talk about— You're newly married. Congratulations on that. How do you unwind with the craziness that is your life?

Mick: I like to go for long runs. That's very relaxing to me. I finally bought an Apple watch so I could listen to music but not have my phone. As a dad, I could never be the guy to go with like no communication. As a parent, I don't care if I die off the side of the road. They'll be fine. I worry about

if something else happened, like can I be reached. If I got hit by a bus, it'd be great but if something happened to somebody else and I wasn't reachable, I would never be able to forgive myself.

When you see those annoying people at the stoplight and they're running in place because they don't want to stop running, I would be that person but I'd be scrolling Instagram, or I'd run to like some coffee shop really far away to get a great espresso and run home and I'm still looking at my phone and I'm thinking about all the envy and all the jealousy and all the things that we all see no matter who you are when you look at Instagram and social media. That stays in my head. I've started thinking if I'm going to give myself some time, and I'm never going to remove music from my equation because that would just be very much against my DNA, I was just like, "Let me do this," and that was a real game changer for me.

The other thing I like to do is I just kinda— We started doing that. You'd love this too. We maybe want to be able to do this and invite people over. We started to do game night on Sundays where we just drink some wine, we play a board game. We're only playing vinyl records. We're only doing analog. It's very analog. I'm trying not to even put my phone on the table while we do it but we open up a great bottle of wine or Miles will drink some juice, and we're literally playing like Monopoly, and Life, and Sorry, and Battleship and we're playing only records. Then I just got to get up every 15 minutes and flip it over. It's a great Sunday night detox from the weekend and get you really prepared for Monday. It's beautiful, yes. That's what we do.

Matt: I love that. Well, listen, Mick, you've been a great inspiration, a sense of learning, a great friend over the years. I'm looking forward to doing more with you in the future. I just wanted to thank you for joining. On behalf of the Suzy and Adweek team, thanks again, Mick, for joining us.

Be sure to subscribe, rate, and review *The Speed of Culture* podcast on your favorite podcast platform. On behalf of everyone, thanks again and we'll see you guys real soon. Take care everyone.

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