

## **Eliminating Drywall Waste & Reimagining Sustainable Interiors with Nicholas Ndah | Transcript**

**00:02**

Speaker 1

Welcome to Green Building Matters, the original and most popular podcast focused on the green building movement. Your host is Charlie Cicchetti, one of the most credentialed experts in the green building industry and one of the few to be honored as a lead fellow. Each week, Charlie welcomes a green building professional from around the globe to share their war stories, career advice, and unique insight into how sustainability is shaping the built environment. So settle in, grab a fresh cup of coffee, and get ready to find out why. Green building. Green Building Matters.

**00:33**

Speaker 2

Hey, everybody. Welcome to the next episode of the Green Building Matters podcast. Every week, I get an interview with green building professionals somewhere in the world sometimes we've been talking tech, today we're talking construction. And when I got out of Georgia Tech, I worked for a construction company. So I'm going to have fun today getting to know Nick. Nick, welcome to the podcast, man. How you doing?

**00:51**

Speaker 1

Yeah, Charlie, thanks for having me. I'm good.

**00:53**

Speaker 2

Well, I know we've been connected over the last five, six years. You using some of our online e learning material, getting those professional credentials through GBS, and. And then we're connected on LinkedIn. I've seen some of the work you're doing, too, and just. Just help our listeners kind of take us back. So where did you grow up and go to school?

**01:10**

Speaker 1

Yeah, I. I grew up in a small town in Florida called Port Charlotte. You know, my dad was a dual business owner, owned a real estate brokerage firm and then also owned a construction company. So I've been, you know, growing up. I'd like to say I was helping, but I was probably getting in the way since I was about 8 years old. Really enjoyed my time kind of, you know, that's that pretty

small, inclusive town environment. Ended up going to University of Florida for college. Go Gators. And, you know, from there did nothing with construction, to be 100% honest with you. I went and got a public relations degree and I had dreams of being a crisis communicator and realized I don't make a lot of money right out of school, to be fair.

**01:57**

Speaker 1

And then I went to the career fair and met a national home builder. Talked to them for a little while, and they were actually looking for folks to go back to the area in which I grew up. And I said, yeah, you know, I'm from the area. My parents still live there, you know, and, you know, that was my first job in construction. And then the rest has been history.

**02:15**

Speaker 2

Okay, full circle. Yeah. Go getters. That's okay. I'm a. I'm A Georgia Tech ACC guy. So we won't talk about bulldogs and stuff like that.

**02:23**

Speaker 1

We can have a love hate relationship.

**02:25**

Speaker 2

That's fine. First day of school at Georgia Tech. They brainwashed us. What's the good word? To hell with Georgia. How about them dogs? Piss off. You and I can, we got that in common, so I'll get it. Okay, so that was early construction around the family, went out, came back construction. So when did like sustainability start showing up in your life though? Was it, you know, early on? Was it later in your career, like green buildings? When did you first start learning about that?

**02:52**

Speaker 1

You know, it was probably about the back third of my career. Right. If you split it up into, you know, to three pieces. Right. I was coming out of, you know, a pretty large stint industrial construction and then got fully back into large scale residential and commercial, you know, for probably the last 10, 12 years of my career. And being in sort of an equity partnership position that you realize pretty quickly that two things about what I loved and hated was I loved, you know, I love to find ways to save the material that were using. And I hated throwing it away. Right.

**03:32**

Speaker 1

So, you know, every I looked at it from a perspective of everything I didn't use was a dollar or a penny or some sort of, had some sort of nominal value that weren't able to, you know, achieve or, or see the realization of it, you know. So from that sort of like fiscal thinking, right. It also just got me to start exploring like better ways to recycle, better ways to, you know, have adaptive reuse with some of the products that were going into, you know, your traditional construction components, whether that's interior framing on the commercial side or you know, ground up on the residential side, there's always, there was always things that I was looking for to recycle or reuse, you know, that extra timber, the extra, you know, drywall material, leftover paint, things like that.

**04:17**

Speaker 1

So that's kind of where that the basis of sort of that exploratory on like what, you know, what is considered green building today. You know, I kind of started from that kind of thinking in my career.

**04:28**

Speaker 2

Yeah, thank you for that. And just materials, the resourcefulness construction, they say is \$13 trillion around the world. I think the U.S. is like 1.3 trillion. And of the \$13,500,000,000,000 is wasted in labor, counting, recounting, and that doesn't include the materials scraps we waste. So I mean, that's a good place to start. And that definitely is a big part of sustainability. So we'll. We got to talk more about that and some of your green best practices in a little bit. But still, looking back, I like to talk about mentors. You know, sometimes a mentor is someone Nick, we see from stage, we read their material. We don't really know personally. Sometimes if someone. The challenges and this opens doors for us.

**05:08**

Speaker 1

I don't know.

**05:08**

Speaker 2

Have you any mentors so far? Yeah. Yeah.

**05:11**

Speaker 1

You know, full disclosure and not to sound cliché, right. But, you know,

watching my father try to march that transition from like, you know, this is something that I do as a job to, you know, actually turning it into a business, you know, and going through the, you know, the learning curve of how to make money and keep making money at a sustainable pace to, you know, create a lifestyle and be an independent business owner was. Is something that's always stuck with me. Right. You know, I'm in, you know, whether that's something where I was in my own entity or working for a business, you treat that ownership perspective the same. Right. And then it helps, you know, put a lot of things in focus. Like we talked about earlier with, you know, how we pro.

**05:56**

Speaker 1

What kind of material we use, what, you know, what we do with that material when we're done with it. It all had. My father taught me that, that all had a tie back to our name and credibility. Right. And so from a personal, professional perspective, I carry that in everything that I do. Yeah.

**06:13**

Speaker 2

What a great mentor there, man. Love that. Okay, so one more look back. What are some of your proudest achievements so far? What's on the highlight reel?

**06:22**

Speaker 1

Well, it's. I call it a highlight. You probably, you know, most people don't think it has a lot of sensation or sizzle, but I will tell you the first time in my adult life coming out of college where I paid all of my bills on my own, it was a crowning achievement for me. And I'll tell you why. You know, there was. There was, you know, period of sleeping a poor college kid. And then as soon as you come out of college, you know, you start work, but you're not. You don't necessarily have money at your disposal yet. Right. You got to build up that. That security.

**06:56**

Speaker 1

And, you know, that adrenaline rush of, you know, having and watching the, you know, my electric bill, my car payment, those type of things come out of the cut out of my own account with my own money was like such an adrenaline rush. And I carry that with me still today, you know, even, you know, as a, you know, a man in his mid-40s with kids, you know, I still, you know, watch all the bills and watch the bills get paid and kind of hit that refresh button, right, to say, hey, look, okay, we did a thing. And you know, I think that to me, that's the ability to do that on a month in month basis. Not only personally, but now month in month out for our family is one of my proudest achievements.

**07:41**

Speaker 2

Dude, I love every bit of that. And I could tell if we live closer, we'd hang out. Yeah, I just turned 43, I got three boys and pretty humble upbringing and my first construction job when I got Georgia Tech. Let's just say I learned the hard way that I graduated December, early December, Christmas was coming up and I was like, man, I ain't got a paycheck yet. Turns out I didn't read the fine print, the offer letter. They pay once a month.

**08:05**

Speaker 1

So he's good.

**08:07**

Speaker 2

The lady was super nice that ran our all the HR side, Leah, and she gave me some petty cash because she could tell I was stressed. Chris was coming up. So, yeah, you got to get resourceful fast. But you're right. Yeah, you start. I made it. This was a good choice to go on this career path. So thank you for sharing that. You've got some credentials. So before we talk about present day. Right. That's part of how we got connected is, you know, these credentials lead and well, and there's a lot happening. But, you know, how do you go about passing some of these exams and, you know, what have they done for you?

**08:38**

Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah, I think, you know, my, I look at the education journey for a professional a little, you know, from my perspective it was, you know, try, do and then learn. Right. So the nosy, being a nosy kid that's, you know, morphed into an acquisitive adult. Right. I feel like the only way, the best way that you can understand if something works or doesn't work or get a complete understanding from a learning perspective is to try. So you know, my. Within reason, right. Within legal and health reason, I will say I'll try anything once and then take the time to understand what the resulting impacts or effects are with that. When it came to getting some of my certifications, you know, the PMP certification for me, I love the way.

**09:26**

Speaker 1

And even with leed, you know, you have to have some work experience before you can apply for those. And I think that's the best approach. Right? Versus, and there's no discredit to it or discount to it. But you know, you can become a

textbook champion and go to school for years on end, but never have any practical application in a work environment. So the fact that, you know those programs like that require you to have some of that work experience, I think is what I would lean and encourage young professionals to go after. Ton of value in getting your master's degree or secondary degree. Right. And I think those are supplements in they complement each other. But the work experience that leads you to gaining that level of understanding to get those certifications is unmatched in my opinion.

**10:17**

Speaker 2

Thanks for walking us through that. I would agree. I think these lead credentials force you to hurry up and level up your overall expertise. It may not teach you the project management. So actually, when professionals ask me, hey, what credentials do I get? Sure I'm biased. I felt lots of people earn their elite credentials, but besides just general AI, I'm like pmp, you gotta be a good project manager. Doesn't matter what you're doing. And there's. So, I don't know, what's your secret to great project management? And then we'll talk about your current business.

**10:47**

Speaker 1

Yeah, I think for me, try to, you know, trying to keep it simple. I like to say, you know, if people ask me how things are going, I said, I haven't figured out a way to make it easy yet. And that's not far for any other reason than I think if we get down to a base level of understanding in, you know, conceptually what we're trying to achieve. Right. It puts, it puts that basis of, in that framework together for anything that we can do that can get to any level of complexity. Right. But you gotta start with that basis. So I think that's, that's important when you're looking at project management because they, you can go through the entire pmbok. You can go and you can try everything in that pmbok.

**11:29**

Speaker 1

But if you really don't understand what it is that you're trying to achieve and have that basis and that principle upfront, all of it is just kind of productivity instead of progress. Right.

**11:41**

Speaker 2

So, yeah, you got some wisdom, you're swinging today. Productivity instead of progress. That's a good one. So, okay, let's talk present day. So tell us about your

company, some of the work you guys are doing and what's a day in the life of Nick right now? Yeah.

**11:55**

Speaker 1

So I'M working for a commercial interiors company, McCoy Rockford. We're based out of Texas and we, I run our architectural solutions division. So under my supervision and oversight, we provide the mountable partitions, glass. Glass partitions, you know, architectural paneling, custom millwork, and even unlike our flooring division, we do some, you know, some of our specialty flooring, raised access flooring, things like that. All sort of under my purview with the organization. So I like to say my day is full of doing the stuff that I think is, I personally think of fun is fun and cool like researching, you know, new products and new trends or different ways of installing or putting in a product.

**12:47**

Speaker 1

But I will tell you that a lot of my conversations and a lot of my day spent educating partners, clients and, and folks within the construction industry on how there's benefits to putting in some of these products versus your traditional drywall frame and drywall structures. Right. So I'd like to say that, you know, that conversation is always a challenge well accepted and I'll go and have that conversation with everybody because I think there's value from a sustainability perspective on putting in some of these products more than them just looking aesthetically pretty.

**13:23**

Speaker 2

Oh yeah, absolutely. So are each of your assignments, are they kind of design builds so you're going to custom fit to the project or some of that coming from the architect or interior designer. So in other words, like, where do you pick up some of your scope and have a little flexibility on design? Maybe?

**13:40**

Speaker 1

Yep. So a lot of our conversations are with the AMD partners in the commercial space. And the number one thing, or a lot of what we talk about is how, what the design intent and understanding is. Right. And then layer in some of those sustainability goals, some of those adaptive reuse practices that they're trying to achieve, waste elimination, carbon emissions, all those things have applicable pieces to the products that we sell and install. So that's where we spend a lot of our time and ultimate goal becoming sort of basis of design. Right. And I like to

say, to be fair, I like to say that I go on a personal mission to try to eliminate as much drywall as possible within a project scope. Right.

**14:28**

Speaker 1

So, you know, being able to have those types of conversations, it really, if nothing else, it educates or continues to reiterate some of the importance and some of the benefits to the products we sell versus, you know, look, thinking about it from a more traditional perspective.

**14:44**

Speaker 2

Understood. Yeah. So with sustainability, with these projects you're working on, you know, every now and again, is there like a lead project or well, or do you just try to bake in some of your own green best practices? Sounds like a lot around waste and over design for sure. But you know, how do you approach it and have you seen some lead projects lately?

**15:02**

Speaker 1

Yeah, we get, you know, from when we get the opportunity to be in the conversation for some of the new construction stuff, we are seeing a lot of lead and well, initiatives come into play in that. So we two of our primary markets are Houston, Texas and Austin, Texas. And you know, Austin is a very forward thinking city as it comes to some of those green and lean practices. So we, and of course it's a rapidly growing city as well. So you're, we're getting a lot more opportunity on the front end to have those conversations with ground up project activity. Houston is growing by leaps and bounds as well. It's a lot of it is new build but there is a fair amount of retrofitting and reconstruction that happens there. So there are opportunities for that as well.

**15:50**

Speaker 1

But you know, when you get into those types of conversations it's really more about, you know, can we put a product that's going to be here in 10 years. Right. And we're, you know, what is that going to do from a long term quality of work perspective?

**16:04**

Speaker 2

Thanks for that peak. One of my best green building clients over the years is Heinz right there in Houston. So, so with materials, one more question, then we'll move on is, you know, I've been on lead for a while. We have our EPDs,

right. Hey, how is this material eco friendly? But then we have this other thing called HPDs and the healthy side of it. So, and I would argue that the pandemic kind of slowed some of that, but we focused on air quality and some other things and maybe it's back. But, but as you're selecting materials, is it still just, is this an eco friendly material? Are you seeing a big push still on manufacturers to even make sure this is healthy? It doesn't have chemicals, it might interact with some glue over here. I don't know.

**16:44**

Speaker 2

What are you seeing on the material selection side?

**16:47**

Speaker 1

Good question. So you know, in Houston, our Houston division, we, a very large part of our customer base is the healthcare sector. So we do see a lot of that conversation, you know, and how we, how they're applying the materials and how those materials are being selected, being the leading factor for what they're doing and how they're designing. Right. So going back to that conversation around, you know, things like eliminating drywall. Right. Drywall is quickly becoming, you know, a construction material that is, you know, a dust and contaminant producing material in the environment. Right. So being able to sort of again, go back to reducing some of those areas for potential, for, you know, potential carbon capture and things like that is where we spend a ton of our time there. And then some of our other products.

**17:41**

Speaker 1

When you talk about the mountable partitions being a replacement for things like traditional surgical curtains or patient, you know, patient room curtains. Right.

**17:54**

Speaker 2

Those.

**17:55**

Speaker 1

You're eliminating those areas in which that again, some of those hazardous materials or waste or carbon or whatever can be captured in those curtains. So we do see a ton of that still. I believe the HPD is kind of a thing that is still very prevalent and it's primarily driven from our healthcare clients that we work with.

**18:16**

Speaker 2

Thanks for that. I've been a little removed from it, so that was helpful. So I understand you might be involved with the non profit. You're on the board there. Do you want to talk a little bit about Camp for All?

**18:25**

Speaker 1

Oh, man, I'm excited. I'm excited you asked me about that. Yeah. So I have been on the board for an organization called Camp for All, like you mentioned, for about four years now. And it is a organization where we have independent campsites that create a bear barrier free camp experience that probably you or I, you know, enjoy it as children for kids and youth and disadvantaged adults to have that same level of camp experience. So we have one active camp right now, and then we have a second camp that we're in the process of constructing. But the camp is designed to support any sort of ailment or, you know, issue or condition that a kid may have. So we have simple things that you probably don't think about on a daily basis.

**19:16**

Speaker 1

Our sidewalks within our campsite are purposely built so that two people in a wheelchair can wheel nick side by side to each other the same way you and I would walk down a normal sidewalk together and have a conversation. And even things like our pool and our equestrian center. We have special harnesses that allow for anybody or any child with an ailment to be able to have that horse riding experience the same way, you know, you or I can. And then we have a very high functioning, adaptable health facility on site so that it has the ability to work with any sort of, you know, issue or ailment that a child may have. And we have the ability to Break that down and reconfigure that healthcare or the health center with every single camp that comes through.

**20:08**

Speaker 1

So if we have a camp for cystic fibrosis one week, we can quickly adapt and change that medical facility on the campsite to support like the American Cancer Society the next week or something to that extent. So very proud of that. I know this is a podcast, but you can probably see the smile on my face that it's. We're giving experiences that are. Wouldn't normally be afforded to people that are born with unfortunate circumstances. I get the energy ever since single time I go out there or talk about it.

**20:39**

Speaker 2

Well, I'm glad I asked. And that's some important work you're doing too. You might have guessed it, but I, I did. I grew up in the North Georgia mountains and camping is special, you know, and you're right, might take it for granted that what people haven't done that or can't do that. So keep up the good work. It's great to hear that it's expanding and maybe even another site. So. Well, everybody, our listeners, we'll put a link to camp for all. Check out the great work that nonprofits doing and Nick's doing. So. All right, let's talk about sustainability and what's next. Any in this kind of green building movement you're kind of excited about? It's, it's coming at us next?

**21:14**

Speaker 1

Yeah, I mean, I think, you know, when you talk about coming out of the pandemic and, you know, this, everybody getting back to, you know, being back in office spaces a little bit more than they were, you know, you're, you're absolutely seeing, you know, that renewed effort or a continued effort of reducing, you know, embodied carbons and, you know, designing adaptable spaces that improve indoor environment qualities, you know, you're still seeing where, you know, that space or segmentation is still the thing. Right. But people want to have that flexibility, you know, with. Inside their spaces from a material perspective that support not only natural light in the housing, but then also sound quality as well. Right.

**21:58**

Speaker 1

Part of the big things that we help solve is, you know, even though they want this open work environment that allows for that appropriate spacing, still they want to be able to have a private feel to that open look in concept. So we're, you know, with the materials and processes and partners that we have where we can create a space that feels open, looks open, but then also has high quality from a sound attenuation. Perspective as well. So I think that's where you're seeing a lot of that, some of that continuing trend and some of that new trend happening in the space.

**22:34**

Speaker 2

I'm excited to hear that too because I think the pandemic, you know, we had programs like fit well and well, has quite a bit around acoustics. And again, I think, you know, to the lay building, next thing you know, they might have had better air quality, better cleaning, some change, but we got to get back to like

green walls and stand up this and better acoustics, better lighting in our learning spaces. So, you know, it sounds like, hey, all that's coming back around and hopefully full force. So yeah, thanks for that. Well, let's go to the rapid fire part of our Q and A here. I'm enjoying this. Nick, what would you say is your specialty or gift?

**23:13**

Speaker 1

Good question. And I'm hesitating because I, you know, I'm very poor at, you know, self promotion, but I would say, you know, the ability to use my simple mind to provide simple understanding and simple solutions to people, places and things. You know, I think the world professionally and personally can get complex pretty quick. And if we can go back again to that baseline of simple understanding and build from there, that's where I focus my time and energy and I feel like that's my specialty.

**23:45**

Speaker 2

Great, you said that a couple times. Let's keep it simple. I'm gonna guess that maybe you don't write super long emails. Let's just get to the point.

**23:53**

Speaker 1

I'd rather pick up the phone.

**23:55**

Speaker 2

Yeah, even better. Even better. Yeah. So, all right, let's say we have a complex thing. You know, a building in a tier builder can be complex. I mean, do you break it down into phases, bite sized pieces or just, or do you just pick up the phone and say, hey, you know, this is going to be a lead project, Mr. Mrs. Subcontractor. Don't worry, don't freak out. I only need you to do these one or two things. We got the rest on the green side. I don't know, how do you keep it simple?

**24:21**

Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah. And I think you touched on the latter part. Right. I think conceptually a lot of people understand, you know, what lean and green mean, but how you get there and how you achieve, well, you know, there's a lot of layering and consideration that goes into that. Right. So we are skilled at bringing that simple, you know, bringing that simplification to where it's quite, you know, in your, you know, just general management training. Right. We can

give you tools to make a decision, not tools to have analysis paralysis when it comes to how you want to achieve those, you know, those. Those points within your building system. So we're pretty good at doing that on our side with the products and the. And the approach that we have.

**25:02**

Speaker 2

Oh, look, man, I can tell you probably technology there too. So. Okay, how about good habits, routines, rituals, you know, got a peek into kind of anything like that keeps you on point. Yeah. Yeah.

**25:15**

Speaker 1

I would say for me, starting the day, you know, with, you know, 15 to 30 minutes of silence is. Is critical. Right. And I. It is. I don't meditate. I won't say it's. It's for meditation, but it is for. It is for. Okay, what is my brain telling me, you know, about yesterday? And what is my brain and. And what is my mind telling me that I need to, you know, I need to focus on for today and sets that. That basis. Right. You know, and I. I look at, you know, what I consider what are daily wins and losses from yesterday and how do I want to avoid or accelerate those daily wins and losses from yesterday into the. Into the day ahead of me.

**25:59**

Speaker 1

So I think, you know, that, you know, being purposeful about the 15 to 30 minutes every single morning before my kids get up and it starts getting rowdy, you know, puts me in the best mindset for a successful day and approach to life.

**26:14**

Speaker 2

That's really good. Sounds like. Even if you have already planned your day, listen to yourself, listen to your subconscious. In a way, it's like, hey, what. What is most important here? And. And then maybe as your day gets a little crazy, your subconscious will get you back. Like, don't forget that thing. You know, we already talked about it. So kind of priming your day. All right. Hey, thanks for sharing that. This. So as we get to know each other more, I'm a fan of the bucket list. I think my wife and I watched a show or movie recently called the Life List. But, you know, the idea is, hey, is there any adventure travel? Maybe write a book? I don't know, just something cool. You. You want to do. What might be on your bucket list?

**26:51**

Speaker 1

Personal bucket list is, you know, very simple. It's, you know, try to incorporate more travel into my. Into my life. I've been very professionally focused and career focused and, you know, through the strength of my wife, she's. She. She told. She tells me all the time, there's no good in working this hard if you don't. If you can't see the benefit of it. So, you know, taking more time for myself, more vacations with my family is. Is going to be a forever bucket list. You know, professionally, you know, my goal is to, you know, is to, you know, continue to lead and accelerate an organization that's at the forefront of, you know, sustainable thinking and green thinking. Right.

**27:31**

Speaker 1

So I feel like where I'm at, we have the appetite in the, in the belief in that system that we can do some really good things, not only in our respective markets, but, you know, from. From a global perspective as well. So I'm pretty excited about that.

**27:47**

Speaker 2

All right. I can tell you got a big vision there. That's exciting. So on the travel side, though, is there. Is there, like, a destination, though, you definitely want to get to eventually?

**27:55**

Speaker 1

Yeah. I mean, obviously, being a fan of construction and, you know, being a lifelong practitioner, I, you know, I like the places. I want to go more around architecture and structure focus. So, you know, Australia is on the bucket list. Sydney and Brisbane and, you know, looking at some of those fantastic structures over there. And then, you know, of course, going to the Middle east and seeing sort of how they're pushing the envelope on, you know, how they're constructed and stuff. And, you know, I would say from a, you know, from a, you know, how are we maximizing space and, you know, utilizing some of the densities and living patterns? You know, being able to explore and see some of that in Tokyo and, you know, in China is going to be pretty interesting to me as well. Right.

**28:41**

Speaker 1

So I'm always intrigued by, when you look at a plot, Atlanta, it doesn't look that big. And then when you see the finished product, you're like, holy fit. They fit how much in that little space? Right. So, you know, those are. Those areas of

travel that I think, you know, from my nerd, the nerd in me, that's. That's. Those are on the bucket list.

**28:59**

Speaker 2

Some of those places sound absolutely amazing. So good stuff. When you put Japan on the radar, reach out to me. I was fortunate to take my family there about a year and a half ago.

**29:08**

Speaker 1

So show me more.

**29:09**

Speaker 2

Yeah, that was great. A magical place. Okay, so, you know, I like to ask my podcast guests, is there a book you'd recommend? It doesn't have to be about buildings, if not a book, a podcast or documentary or anything like that. Any pro tip here.

**29:23**

Speaker 1

You know, I read for education to be fair, but I have in probably the last 10 years, really dove into listening to books on tape. And one of the recent books I read in the last couple years, I have two. It's from a personal perspective. It's called the Algebra of Happiness by Professor Scott Galloway. When you talk about putting things in life in perspective. Right. That really. That really, you know, drives home a lot of the why behind what we do. And then, you know, professionally, I always give my teams this book called Rework, and it. It's kind of a satire on sort of the traditional structure of, you know, business in an office, but it also talks, you know, some of it's very applicable. Right. So we talked. I mentioned a little earlier, I'd rather just pick up the phone and call you.

**30:15**

Speaker 1

That came from that book. Right. And it make pokes fun of things like saying notes are toxic, but it's really saying, like, if you have time to take a note, basically you have time to solve the problem that you're trying to. That you're planning to solve later. So I apply some of that still in that book, and I try to incorporate a lot of that in my teams on a daily basis as well.

**30:38**

Speaker 2

I haven't read that for a long time. That one was out before the pandemic. I think even in a post pandemic, even virtual world, maybe more of that's even relevant. So that's pretty neat. Another good one. Death by Meeting by Patrick Lee.

**30:51**

Speaker 1

Very good one.

**30:53**

Speaker 2

He writes a lot of good fables in there. So. All right, well, we'll put links to those books in the podcast. Show notes. All right, just two more things as we start to wind down. Nick, as you look back on your career so far, is there any. Anything you wish you'd have learned earlier or any career advice you were. You wish you would have been given earlier?

**31:10**

Speaker 1

I got the best advice when I was probably about 32 years old, and the gentleman told me, never bet on an entity more than you'll bet on yourself. And, you know, from that time I saw, you know, in listening and digesting that and, you know, having the courage to apply that, I think it has really taken, you know, my career in a completely different direction. And it's not necessarily from a professional success perspective, but it's more from, like a fulfillment perspective. Right. Taking away, you know, what I should be doing or what I think people want me to do and focusing more on, like, what. What I feel is fulfilling to me and what I enjoy has really put me in. In a.

**31:55**

Speaker 1

In probably the best place I can ask for professionally, you know, because I feel good about What I do every single day. And I don't have any regrets in that regard.

**32:04**

Speaker 2

That's. Sharon, that's a good attitude towards it in career. Right? That's good stuff. All right, so let's say there's someone listening right now and maybe they're just now getting into construction, maybe they're getting into green buildings. Any words of encouragement for someone jumping into our industry right now?

**32:19**

Speaker 1

Yeah, I will say treat life like a project. Right. And when I say that, you know, from an agile perspective, work in life and projects should be like a series of sprints. Right? We're gonna, we're gonna have a target, have a personal target, have a professional target, go hard at it, take time to reflect, regroup and learn from it and then pick something, pick it up again, or pick something else up and go hard at it again. Right. I think there's the cliché of, you know, life is a marathon or, you know, it's a marathon, not a sprint. And I don't believe in that. I think you can apply everything you have to something and then by nature you have to take some time to sit down and understand that like, did I do a good thing or do I just need more energy?

**33:12**

Speaker 1

Do I need to regroup? And then gives you that refuel to go ahead and go hard at something else again. So that would be my advice for the unprofessional man.

**33:21**

Speaker 2

Well, but that's awesome. Yeah, you're in it. I love how you said this is kind of a third cycle in this career, but you're doing cool things. I love your entrepreneurship, I love the non profit work you're doing and that you're baking in sustainability anywhere you can, man, under your influence. So. So, Nick, thanks for being on the podcast today to our listeners. Make sure you connect with Nick on LinkedIn. Check out the good work that he's doing there at his company. Thanks so much, man.

**33:46**

Speaker 1

Currently, it's always been a pleasure, man. I'm a big fan of you. Love the work you've done and anything I can do to help or if there's anybody you want me to talk to, I'm always here for you. Thank you.

**33:56**

Speaker 2

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