

Building for the Next 100 Years with Timber, Wood Fiber, Already Embedded Carbon with Jonathan Orpin | 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 Matters.

00:33

Speaker 2

Hey, everybody. Welcome to the next interview of the Green Building Matters podcast. I've kept this up for a long time. It gives me energy every week when I get to interview someone that just has an incredible story. Today I've got Jonathan with us. Think he splits time a little bit between New York and Oregon. We'll unpack that, but I believe you're in upstate New York right now. I've got some family a little bit up that way, but Jonathan, welcome to the podcast.

00:58

Speaker 3

Thanks, Charlie. It's a real pleasure to be here. You've been doing some good work, and I feel honored to be here. By the way, I'm actually in Oregon right now. Noodle.

01:06

Speaker 2

Okay, you're out in Oregon. All right, there we. So yeah, just give us that origin story. So where'd you grow up and go to school?

01:13

Speaker 3

Sure, sure. Happy to. I'll try to do it fast because this is actually our 40th year in business. Wow. And we're celebrating 40 years as a New York state corporation because we started in New York and still is still very active. And probably the larger part of the business is up in the Finger Lakes region of New York outside of Canandaigua, little town called Farmington. So if you want to fly in, you fly

into Rochester. And that's where I grew up, is really Rochester. I'm a. I went to a all boys Catholic school there and graduated and went to Geneseo College right down the Genesee river in that area. And during that time, I actually became completely enamored with environmentalism. I'll be really honest with you. That's really what it was about.

01:59

Speaker 3

So we started New Energy Works as a small group of kind of people with big eyes and a desire to save the world. And were going to insulate the world with cellulose. And then we got into solar energy. And when Reagan killed the solar taxes in 1984 or 5, I think that was. We were already in the midst of pivoting towards timber framing.

02:26

Speaker 2

Okay.

02:26

Speaker 3

Which is, you know, timber framing is this amazing balance of craft and environmental considerations because you can insulate it well and it lasts forever. We're not just building a house and then tearing it down 30 years later or wishing we hadn't built it 30 years later. I like to say, nobody's going to tear down one of my houses to build a Walmart parking. If you build a house to last, it's because it's structurally sound. It's good insulation, but it's also gorgeous and well crafted. And so all of that stuff was inspiring right from those. Right from the mid-80s on. And as still, I mean, honestly, Charlie still inspires to this day.

03:10

Speaker 2

I could tell you got good energy towards it. While this is an audio podcast, I see behind you a lot of different timber products. We'll have to get into that. So, upstate New York. Yeah, My dad's family's from New York. My mom's, Charlie's from Oregon, and we're in Georgia. That's where they ended up in the early 80s. For what it's worth, my dad lived in the 70s on a commune in Ithaca, New York, so we could.

03:31

Speaker 3

Oh, man, I know the place. Are you kidding me? That's great.

03:34

Speaker 2

Hubbard Hill was the name of his commune. So, okay, so you had that just early passion for energy efficiency. It's shifted to timber and just this beautiful. And for those that haven't been to upstate New York, I mean, it really is God's country. There's beautiful up there where you are. And in Oregon. Right. It just gets even better on the other side of the rocky. So. So timber, like, man, 40 plus years, like, I'm sure you've seen it all. So just give us a little bit of what's kind of changed in your industry.

04:03

Speaker 4

Sure.

04:04

Speaker 3

A lot has changed, and a lot is still the same. You know, one of the things that is our DNA and our heart, as I like to say, is timber framing in a traditional style where you're joining wood to wood posts and beams. And there's a certain lyricism, at least in our style of doing it. There's fine finishes and all of the timber shows on the inside of the structure. And then we wrap the outside of it insulation and insulation methods. We have a couple of different ones. And that's evolved a lot over the years. And, you know, all of that, it's like throwing a blanket over a piece of furniture. Charlie. So the beauty of the furniture, this timber frame is inside so that you see it and you celebrate it all the time.

04:49

Speaker 3

But it also works from a green builder Standpoint because the insulation on the outside of the structure allows for a less thermal bridging of studs, less thermal bridging of all of the normal stuff that's on the outside of a structure. So as I say, I like to say it's like throwing a blanket over a piece of furniture and the furniture's all inside. Where you see, you know, where you live and you see it. It's been, it's been great in that way, but it has evolved quite a bit. You know, in the early days, there were insulation methods that we're not using now, like structural insulated panels with polyiso cyanurate or polyurethane cores. Well, we're not really seeing that much anymore and I'm thankful for that because of the global warming potential or GWP of polyurethanes is really not good.

05:46

Speaker 3

So that has evolved quite a bit. The sips we use now, we use less of them than we do because we're doing our own off site panelization. But the SIPs we use now are more sustainable using expanded polystyrene, which has surprisingly a

pretty low gwp, which is, you know, kind of surprising when you really look at it. But it is true. And so it feels good to me to use those because they offer me short span structure, some overhangs and on a roof, which is where we pretty much the only place we use them, or mostly the only place we use them, it allows me to put on big rectilinear pieces of insulation on top of the rafters very quickly with a crane. So we're in and out in a hurry.

06:28

Speaker 3

And while, you know, I love our coworkers, I want them back in the shop, not on the field. And the clients don't want to pay any more labor than they need to. So it's a pretty efficient.

06:39

Speaker 2

Well, arguably it's one of the earliest forms of some modular construction. Right. So it makes sense. Let's get out there, let's get this stood up and let's get back if some of that was put together, the trusses and everything off site. Is that what you're alluding to? Some of that?

06:54

Speaker 3

Yeah. All the timber framing, we build the whole thing off site and then we go and we raise it. We'll raise an average, whatever 2400 square foot house in a week or less.

07:04

Speaker 2

Oh, okay. So you're doing the full timber framing, I see.

07:07

Speaker 3

Oh, yeah, yeah. I mean, you could check out our website at New Energy. It's got way too many pretty pictures 40 years worth of pretty pictures. It's overwhelming.

07:18

Speaker 2

Well, some beautiful homes and more so. Okay, so I'd like to ask too, just about any mentors. Is there anyone? Sometimes a mentor, Jonathan, is someone you read their material, you see them from stage, they influence you. Sometimes it's someone that challenges you, opens a door. I don't know. Have you any mentors in your career? Some haven't. Some have.

07:39

Speaker 3

Yeah. You know, if I was saying this to the. So, so as I said, we're in our 40th year and I'm supposed to give a big speech at our day of business where we all gather and talk about the year and the year ahead and the year behind and projects and finances and all because we're 100% employee owned company.

07:56

Speaker 4

Oh, wow.

07:56

Speaker 3

You know, we're very wide open and very open book about everything and it's been wonderful to build community that way. But so this year I have the dubious honor of getting up there and talking about what it's like to have been doing this for 40 to all of my co workers. There's no hiding from them. So, so when I was saying the other day, I said, you know, if I could do it all over, I'd do a lot of things differently. But one of them is I would get stronger mentors earlier, maybe coaching and stuff. But like other entrepreneurs, you know, we just bullheaded and we just pull forward and you know, run as fast as you can until you hit the wall and stand up and look for another wall to run into.

08:40

Speaker 2

No, that's.

08:41

Speaker 3

Deck said. I mean, there have been some powerful people in my community. Ted Benson's always been a big light for me out of the New Hampshire area. A friend of mine, John Abrams, has led me quite a bit in the world of triple bottom line. He wrote a book recently that I'll refer to called From Founder to Future, which talks a lot about how the silver tsunami of a lot of people my age who are going to be turning over their businesses one way or another to the next gen or to whoever you know, that's coming quite strong. And so what does that look like from people like me who's a founder? How do we transition to the next generation to keep our legacies going and to make sure that business is still viable after we leave?

09:32

Speaker 2

That's so important. There's, there's so many businesses right now that are successful, doing great. But yeah, what do we do? What's that next chapter? Maybe there's not a succession plan and.

09:42

Speaker 3

It's so I've been working for maybe 10 years on this.

09:45

Speaker 2

Okay.

09:45

Speaker 3

And about three years ago, we became 100% employee owned.

09:49

Speaker 2

That's what you said. Okay, great.

09:50

Speaker 3

And we did it with a tool called an ESOP Employee Stock Ownership Plan, which is a very powerful tool supported by bipartisan, you know, maybe the only bipartisanly supported thing happening right now in Washington. Because, you know, as I like to say, the right likes it because it's a powerful tool for capitalism, which I'm a capitalist and, and believe in it. And it's a strong economic tool. And the left likes it because it becomes employee owned. And so the people who are actually doing the work get, how do I say, a piece of the action. You know, it's an. They, they earn shares in the company and when they retire have a secondary or tertiary retirement plan. So. So it's a really great program, the ESOP program. Not enough people know about it, but it's a really great program.

10:42

Speaker 3

And so we became that about three years ago to help that transition.

10:46

Speaker 2

Congrats. What a, what a. Well, I know the Yvonne Charades of the world would be proud of you there too. So that's good. You know.

10:54

Speaker 3

Yeah, he took a but.

10:57

Speaker 2

But I'm just saying is there's options. Right. Okay. So thanks for letting us know about mentors. Anything else you want to connect the dots on as you look back? Some of your proudest accomplishments, maybe?

11:09

Speaker 3

Well, I want to circle back to enclosures for a minute, if you don't mind. Sure. You know, we talked a little bit about structural insulated panels or SIPs, but really they don't represent the major effort that we're making towards insulating homes. And that is we're actually pivoting towards and have pivoted towards using a wood fiber insulation. Okay. And yeah, so we build an off site penalized wall and roof system and we insulate the cavity with basically chewed up trees with a little borate in there to make sure that there's a fire retardant and anti fungal element. But by doing that, it's very cool process. In Europe they've been doing it for 30 years. But here in the States, only recently have we opened up the first true domestic plant making wood fiber insulation. It's called Timber HP out of Maine.

12:05

Speaker 3

And what they did is you might know that Maine was at one time a huge pulp manufacturer because they've got a lot of lower grade trees. Like 85% of Maine is trees. And so they made. The timber industry was huge in Maine. Unfortunately, of those 35 pulp mills that once existed, there are only six left. And so that's kind of made a mess of the Maine economy as well as, frankly, the woods, because they're not being harvested and managed the way they once were. So by using wood fiber insulation from lower grade trees, adding a little borate, as I say, we're making wood fiber insulation that is incredible. It works well. It's got the lowest carbon footprint of any of the insulations and it's good for the economy, the US economy, and it's good for the forest. So we've switched to that.

13:04

Speaker 3

We use a loose fill, wood dense pack, you could say wood fiber insulation for the cavities. And then we have rigid wood fiber insulation on the outside to

break that thermal bridge. And I don't. And I'm assuming with your audience that all I'm talking about is pretty not, you know, it's normal language. Sounds like you've got a pretty knowledgeable.

13:26

Speaker 2

Yeah, a lot of green building professionals, some architects, some contractors, some engineers. No, definitely should understand what you're talking about.

13:34

Speaker 3

So many of them have heard of it, that's for sure. That's right. And it's exciting. It's really exciting stuff. So we've basically made that evolution over the last 10 years and are really doing a lot offsite panelization using and using the wood fiber insulation as our infill.

13:50

Speaker 2

Got it.

13:51

Speaker 3

So that I'm excited about.

13:52

Speaker 2

And was there a demand for more efficiency or what sparked that innovation? Like, why'd you go in that direction?

14:01

Speaker 3

It's because I don't sleep. You know, the bottom line, is there a demand?

14:07

Speaker 1

Demand?

14:07

Speaker 3

You know, sometimes you have to create the demand. Right. So we do. Beautiful, beautiful home, highly crafted. And not all of my clients care that much. So what I do is I kid them and I say, well, you're going to get the best insulated, most ecological home you'll ever have, whether you want it or not.

And they laugh and I laugh. And then we go out and build this gorgeous, highly crafted home. But it's well insulated and it's a low carbon footprint, as low as we can get. So you know that sometimes you have to inspire people as you know, inspire your audience. And so I think there's some of that. On top of that, though, there is always additional knowledge being created. You know, obviously there's more and more demand. Passive house is an increasingly valuable and important tool that people are using.

14:57

Speaker 3

And the whole issue with carbonization and the carbonization of our atmosphere, you know that people talk about it all the time. It's not a China hoax, it's a real thing.

15:07

Speaker 2

Yeah, no, I've been doing green buildings a long time. My background, Georgia Tech, construction, real estate. And I built up two green building companies. Now I'm building an AI startup that helps architects and real estate developers fast forward from their previous design files and BIM. So we should talk separately. We're doing some neat things. So let's talk present day. So you've built up this business. It's employee owned. I see behind you some diagrams. It looks like you're still probably engineering some systems and innovating. But what's a day in the life of Jonathan right now at this stage of your career?

15:40

Speaker 3

Well, it's a little bit crazy right this minute because, you know, I'm heading towards transitioning out of my leadership role.

15:47

Speaker 2

Correct.

15:48

Speaker 3

And we're in the middle of recruiting a new CEO and all of you people who are listening to this, we're recruiting a new CEO.

15:55

Speaker 2

There you go. Nice.

15:57

Speaker 3

And so anyway, I've got a recruiting firm looking and so the, the plan for me personally is in six months or so I'll be transitioning out of the CEO role into executive chair, which means my, you know, theoretically my 60 hour week goes to 40 hours, which I'm pretty excited about. And, and I start to look at more big picture stuff only. But right now, for instance, I mean, to tell you the truth, the, my favorite thing is working with clients. You know, you asked me earlier when we were chatting, he said, what's a magic saucer? I don't know how you worded it like that, but I think for me, what gets me excited and what I think I'm good at is loving my clients. Can I say that?

16:43

Speaker 2

Yeah.

16:45

Speaker 3

You know, it's just such an amazing process to help somebody figure out where they're going to live or. We do a lot of commercial work and I know there's this cliché about it's only lowest bid and all that sort of stuff, but it's not, you know, even in the commercial world, people care about doing a good job. And so out here on the Oregon coast, about 50% of our work right now is commercial and glulam and mass timber work, which you probably have talked about on this in your podcast, the whole mass timber world. And I love that part of it because we're doing some really cool stuff. That might otherwise have gone to concrete and steel. Much higher carbon footprint. The GWP of that is significantly higher than wood.

17:31

Speaker 3

So the fact that we're able to bring wood to these new commercial structures like at Oregon State University and Zoo here in Portland and structures like that is just so fun. So, yeah, that's what I, that's what's been lighting my day to day these days, as well as, you know, recruiting for some positions and occasionally I get to go out on a timber frame raising, but not as much as I used to.

17:57

Speaker 2

Well, there are some beautiful homes and buildings on your website, so we'll make sure we put that in the podcast. Show notes. I know you love it, you've built it up. So I'm going to throw a curveball because I've run my own small

businesses, built them up to 65 employees. We exited those and now I'm building the startup. What advice do you have to the next CEO that you haven't found yet? Where do you suggest they? How will they be successful?

18:20

Speaker 3

Well, so there's two different kinds of CEOs that you know are out there or that are needed. One is the one that come in and fix things and the other is the one that come in and just continue and make it better. We're looking for the latter. We actually don't need to be fixed. Right. So we're looking for that collaborative person who is better than me as a manager, maybe more on the accountability area, but also who, you know, we've checked with our leadership teams over and said, well, who does replace me? And over and over, the answer is, first off and foremost, we want somebody to continue our vision of community. The triple bottom line that we operate on of People, Planet and Profit, all three of being important.

19:08

Speaker 3

We want somebody to follow our five core values that include People, Planet, Profit and the beauties of wood. And so that's really important that we have that. My suggest to the new CEO is listen, learn and then lead.

19:27

Speaker 2

Oh, that's good, man. All right.

19:30

Speaker 3

You know where the seat post as opposed to come in here and you know, slash and burn and it's my way or the highway. So that person probably isn't, you know, going to make it here. Now that I imagine there's a place for that person, but not here.

19:43

Speaker 2

Sure. Yeah. Well, I mean, I'm big on leadership, Jonathan and you know, John Maxwell also here in Atlanta, where I'm Five levels of leadership. Level one, people follow you because they have to. The org chart says they have to Right. Level two is people follow you because they want to. Level three, people follow you because of what you've done for the company. Maybe been around a while, and you've done some things at level 4 is people follow you because of what you've done for them. And then level five, leaders, your leaders, recruiting other

leaders. And so. So you definitely want that. Not management, you want leadership. You know, a CEO, I was told one time, does three things.

20:19

Speaker 2

Cast the vision, repeat it often, hire and retain top talent, and make sure you got enough money in the bank to do one and two, something like that.

20:28

Speaker 3

And four things.

20:30

Speaker 2

Okay, four things. I'll go back to the guy that wrote that book.

20:34

Speaker 3

I totally, I totally get that. I, I can appreciate all of that. You know, it's that vision that's so important.

20:41

Speaker 2

Yeah. So, I mean, you're in and around the green building movement. I agree that green buildings still need to make good financial sense. Right. Just, you know, we're here in the us we have opportunities, we have innovation. You've built up a business, employees. So, you know, what's next? I mean, you're in the timber frame business, but is there any other tech that's coming? We got AI over here. I don't know. What are you excited about? What's next?

21:07

Speaker 3

So I think the most important thing for everybody to realize is that we have to do better at what we know now. I don't know that it has to be a next thing as much as it has to be a now thing. Which means to me, that good building that we know has to be spread more. And you know, of course there are some. There's numerous things going on. As I mentioned, I'm very involved in the mass timber movement. You know, that's a really good opportunity to cut back on the carbon input, the carbon costs of building today. Absolutely. But is that next or is that now? I think it's now. And I think we need a certain amount of, frankly, anxiety towards the whole thing, you know, so, for instance, we talk about insulation, but you know, the carbon footprint of.

21:58

Speaker 3

To me, and I tell this to my clients all the time, the carbon footprint of the build is probably much more important than the carbon footprint of the operations, simply because I don't know how much time we've got and we need to be doing things better now. And we know how to do those things now. So I think a certain amount of anxiety, I guess, is the word I would use, but there's probably a better one to just say, wow, let's not Wait, let's do stuff. Better stuff now.

22:27

Speaker 2

Yeah. My, my dad went to Woodstock in 69. Then he, before that he went to Iona College, got an English degree and he taught English to Spanish immigrants coming into New York. And so growing up, Jonathan, I had to be really good with my grammar. And, and it's an interesting comparison of the word eager and anxious. Right. Eager and anxious. Right. So anxious. I'm a little nervous about that. It's coming. And eager is. I'm looking forward to it. And those. Sometimes we got to think which word is best in that moment there. And it's interest.

23:00

Speaker 3

Yeah, I think that's really well said.

23:05

Speaker 4

You spent months, maybe years earning that lead certification. Don't let it go unnoticed. Building Plaques creates custom lead recognition plaques that tell the story of your project sustainability achievement and put your design or operation team's work front and center. Their online plaque designer lets you build a fully customized plaque in under 10 minutes. Just enter your lead project number and you're off. Plaques are made from architectural grade anodized aluminum using sustainable materials and subsurface printing. So they're built to last as long as the building itself. Recognize the work, educate the visitors, show the world what green building looks like.

23:46

Speaker 2

Check them out@buildingplaques.com okay, so to the person listening that maybe just is like, you look at these beautiful homes and buildings we built. Like, what don't we know about the timber industry, man? Like, is there? Have you cut down on waste? Have you perfected the cuts? Have you behind you?

You have all these beautiful pieces of timber? Like, I don't know, what don't we know? What doesn't the layperson know about your business?

24:13

Speaker 3

That's a great question. Probably a lot. One of them is that while timber is a renewable resource and it's a well done renewable resource and wood construction in general, however, the method is whether they use a heavy timber like ours or not, the growing of trees is the least carbon intensive way to build with things. There is still the opportunity, when possible, to get various certifications. So for instance, we're forest certified, Forest Stewardship Council certified, you know, FSA certified. And so what that just implies is there's a third party looking over the shoulder of the sourcing of the timbers for increased sustainability. And so that's kind of interesting.

24:59

Speaker 3

A lot of people don't realize that we're FSC certified and that's why we were able to do the zoo recently and out here, Oregon State University, you know, because there's a lot of Institutions that actually do care about that certification. And so that's kind of fun. We don't force it on any of our clients at all. But we are available to supply, you know, the more certified lumber in that. I think another thing about us particularly is we don't have. We might be the largest or one of the largest timber companies that really don't do pre made plans. You know, for us, each person, site, budget, set of desires is very different. And we just believe that the custom design process is sacred.

25:51

Speaker 3

And so, you know, we're probably old fashioned in that way or I'm not really sure if that's the right term, but annoying in that way for sure. You know, we make, we. We want to work with architects because that's where the creativity come and as opposed to just trying to force somebody into a lowest common denominator set of plans. So that's been sort of different and interesting and probably a lot of people don't know that about us.

26:16

Speaker 2

Oh, you're right. It's not like you look in a catalog and order and each one and a lot of times, like you said, some of this can be exposed. Just beautiful wood too. Right. It's not just the structural component and there's a lot of beauty there. You want to partner with the architect. So. Okay, well, we've talked business, we've talked about your company here. It's in good hands and we've talked

about what's next. I'd love to get to know you a little more. We kind of have a rapid fire part of the interview.

26:43

Speaker 3

Oh, no.

26:44

Speaker 2

So let's see what you got. What would you say is your specialty or gift?

26:49

Speaker 3

Caring about details, including people's details. I'm a total geek when it comes to that.

26:54

Speaker 2

Okay, I love that. Okay, so do you have any good habits or routines, rituals that help you stay on point?

27:03

Speaker 3

2 Cups of lattes today. I'm not sure about that one. Can we talk about motorcycling? That's a good habit.

27:11

Speaker 2

Yeah. Actually when we logged in to the Zoom, I saw a bike there before you came on camera. So tell us about that.

27:19

Speaker 3

Oh, God. You know, if you off road motorcycling, man, my real passion these days is getting out into the woods and out west. People don't realize this, but there's tons and tons of forest service and BLM land. You can just go and go on and, and so, you know, off road motorcycling is a real passion that has really kept me sane and also connected me with My kids quite a bit. My daughter and I just motorcycled across Peru together. Wow. So, you know, not everybody can connect with their kids.

27:58

Speaker 2

Like, that's fantastic. Okay. Yeah. I mean, you know, you pack light on the bike, what a gallon of fuel can take you, I don't know, for a day. I mean, you just.

28:08

Speaker 3

Yeah, about a day or so. You know, we did recently also, my son and I motorcycled across Namibia and then Mongolia and there. A gallon's not enough. You gotta go. You gotta pack more than that because you just do not know where the next gas station is or if it's open or if it's polluted. The gas.

28:31

Speaker 2

Oh, dude.

28:32

Speaker 3

So, yeah, so gas is an interesting. I mean, my cars are electric, so my. My guilty habit is these ice motorcycles.

28:42

Speaker 2

Well, we can do those carbon calcs, I think. Good job on the electric cars there. And all the embedded carbon you've put in, all the timber that you've stood up. So a little credit there maybe related to that. Are you ever asked to calculate the. How much maybe CO2 might be in this timber or not?

29:03

Speaker 3

It's related. And really timely question because we've started the process to become a certified B Corp. Oh, fantastic. Yeah, yeah. Be lad.

29:11

Speaker 2

I told you, a voucher. I'd be proud of you. That's great.

29:15

Speaker 3

And it's a dickens, actually. There's a lot. It's a steep hill decline to become B Corp certified, but for us, it's a third party that will verify that we're walking our talk. But also it's internally, it's a way for us to know or think, yes, we can do a better job next year. We're doing good, but we can do better next year if this and this. And so it's really good. And anyway, my point is one of the things, one of the hills that we have to climb is we now need to start doing some internal

calculations which we've actually never done. Yeah, we sort of take it for granted that we're doing the best we can from, you know, the carbon footprint and other aspects. But they're gonna. They actually require us to. To prove it, which is interesting.

30:00

Speaker 2

Okay, well, let me know if you want to huddle on that, spend a little time doing some of that, so be happy to help. I appreciate you spending time on here today, inspiring our listeners. So. Okay, so I like to ask about a bucket list. When my mentor 15 years ago, I was in a small business group called Vistage at the time, and this guy Tim Fulton said, yeah, Charlie, what's On your bucket list? I was a little younger than. I'm 43 now, Jonathan. So I was a little younger and I said, Tim, don't you think I'm a little young for a bucket list? Well, I realized that was pretty arrogant. So the next day I texted Tim. I said, Tim, here's 10 things I just put on my bucket list. He was all excited. Today I've got like a hundred things.

30:39

Speaker 2

Some I could go do tomorrow, but some are going to take quite an effort. For some people, a bucket list is travel, adventure, write a book. And you've been. Is there somewhere you want to bike next? What's on the bucket list?

30:52

Speaker 3

Well, unlike you, I'm 70, and so my. I've actually achieved a bunch of bucket lift stuff.

31:01

Speaker 2

Nice.

31:02

Speaker 3

However, right now, the most important thing is a really good quality transition of leadership in our company. There's nothing that I could be more proud of if we pull this off or as we pull this off. But then once I get on my own. You're the first to hear it, Charlie. I want to put up a greenhouse, grow organic vegetables, and have a stand in a farmer's market. Can you imagine?

31:31

Speaker 2

That's awesome. All right, well, I'm gonna make sure you have my cell phone

number. I want you to text me a picture when you have that first farmer's market produce. One of my. My cousins in upstate New York, near Hudson, has apple orchards. So I always admired them taking the peaches and the apples into the local farmer's markets. I know it's worked, but I know you'll do it right. I'm sure you're going to engineer the greenhouse. You probably already got plans for it, so that's good, man. I love that bucket list. I think it's important. The bucket list, in my opinion, can evolve. You know, it's. It can change, but it's just some things that you think would. Would be fun. Sometimes it's experiences. A business friend of mine, several years ago, I showed him on my bucket list.

32:13

Speaker 2

I wanted to sit courtside at a Hawks game. I didn't know that he had courtside tickets to a Hawks game. He gifted them to me for my 40th birthday. I'm like, so make sure you share your bucket list. You never know who might say, let me help you with that. So, just a few more things as we wrap up. I'd like to ask about books, if not a book, a podcast. But is there a book you'd recommend to our listeners? Jonathan, it doesn't even have to be about buildings.

32:36

Speaker 3

Well, you know, I mentioned earlier, one of my closest friends and a mentor as a man named John Abrams started South Mountain Company out in Martha's Vineyard. I have no question that numerous of your listeners know John or have heard of him. He has written a couple books. The most recent, though, is From Future to Founder. And that book is all about this transition that I've been talking about and my transition and that. From Future to Founder. Sorry, from Founder to Future. I had it backwards. From Founder to Future. Talks about what it takes and different options and stories about how to basically properly transition your company when it comes time to retire or move on or in any way. And so that one, I think is super good. A Suggestion From Founder to Future by John Abrams.

33:31

Speaker 2

Okay, well, a lot of wisdom there. I'll put a link in the podcast, show notes. We'll make sure everybody can check that out. So, last two things. Is there anything you wish, looking back on your career that someone would have told you earlier? Just some career advice you wish you'd have known earlier in your career?

33:48

Speaker 3

Well, the biggest one, and I'm embarrassed to say it, but it's true, and I have a pretty hard charging personality. The biggest one is be nicer.

34:00

Speaker 2

More. Look at that. You can use that in a lot of areas of life, right? That's good, man. All right, thanks for sharing that. All right, well, last thing. Let's say someone's listening right now and maybe they're making a career shift. They're getting into green buildings, maybe on the timber side, or maybe they're a young professional, but they're just now jumping in. You're at the end of your career. I'm kind of mid career. Any words of encouragement to someone that's just now jumping in?

34:30

Speaker 3

Well, the cliché is find something that you love and you never have to work a day in your life. And that's not true, of course. I mean, there are a lot of days we'd rather be at the beach, we still put our pants one leg at a time. But nonetheless, people want to work in places where they can believe in that. They care about what the vision is, but also that the place cares about you. So find those two things. A place to work where you feel nurtured, and a place where yourself can nurture.

35:05

Speaker 2

Well, I can tell you're big on making a great place to work. It sounds like that's what you've built. I know your company's going to be in good hands. I'm sure you'll be around and you'll show up at some job sites and be like, hey, I got my gloves on. Let's go. I'll help. You know, it's just fascinating, just the business. I'm going to put a link to your company and I just want to say, hey, thanks for being on the podcast today. You know, hopefully someone listening that maybe is getting maybe even closer to a transition. Maybe they have a business successful. You know, you put things in motion years ago that are just now happening, and you seem pretty happy about it. So I'm happy for you. Jonathan, this is great.

35:40

Speaker 2

But thanks for being on the podcast and I hope we get to see each other soon.

35:44

Speaker 3

Charlie, it's been a pleasure and best of luck to you.

35:48

Speaker 4

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