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whoop, people, sleep, heart rate variability, stress, building, company, measure, overtraining, day, product, body, feel, big, slow wave sleep, hard, number, performance, technology, data

SPEAKERS

Will Ahmed, Jacob Morgan

Jacob Morgan 00:00

When in video, you got it. Gonna let you go over here.

Will Ahmed 00:06

Believe it or not, I've been a podcast host for the last couple of years

Jacob Morgan 00:09

now I know a lot. You guys have your own podcast you've been on appearing on a bunch of podcasts. What platform? Do you guys use? This one? Oh, use Riverside to? Yeah. Okay, so you already know how it all works. Alright, I'll jump in if that works for you. All right. Hey, everyone. Welcome to another episode of leading the future of work. My guest today is will Ahmed founder and CEO of whoop, will thank you for joining me.

Will Ahmed 00:40

Thanks for having me, Jacob.

Jacob Morgan 00:42

So I read is this figure correct that you guys have raised over \$400 million from investors?

Will Ahmed 00:47

That's correct. Okay,

Jacob Morgan 00:49

we're definitely gonna talk about that too, because that's an amazing and astounding number. But before we get into some of the fun business stuff, give us a little background information about you. Take us back to the days of baby will, where you were raised influences that you had. I know you

played squash at Stanford, I played racquetball at UC Santa Cruz. So somewhat related sports. But how did you get to where you are?

Will Ahmed 01:17

I grew up on the North Shore of Long Island. Two very different parents, my dad, an immigrant from Egypt, very extroverted. streetsmart kind of run through walls as a personality, my mom, American, very well educated, very book smart, very analytical, more introverted. So, and I was an only child. So I spent a lot of time with my parents or with adults. And I think my parents especially taught me that there were different ways to solve problems on quite an extreme spectrum. And I ultimately went to a boarding school in New Hampshire called St. Paul's, I played lots of different sports, both in growing up and in high school, sports were something of a retreat for me, and I loved exercise, I loved being around teammates, I ultimately played squash at Harvard, and became captain, the Harvard squash team. And that experience of being a college athlete, I think, really guided my work today. As a college athlete, I felt like I didn't know what I was doing to my body. While I was training, I got very interested in physiology and what you could measure about the human body, I got very interested in indicators that might signal optimal performance or training properly. Overtraining under training, fitness peaks, what were what was sleep was recovery. These are the questions I was asking myself as a student. And I ultimately read about 500 medical papers while I was in school and wrote a paper on how to continuously understand the human body. And I would say that became the business plan for whoop, which I founded my senior year.

Jacob Morgan 03:15

Very cool. I just realized when I introduced you did I say you played squash at Stanford?

Will Ahmed 03:20

You did, and Harvard's better than Stanford by sort of a margin. So I, I took some offense to that, but not too much.

Jacob Morgan 03:27

I know. It's funny, because I have another interview that I'm doing later today. And he's a professor at Stanford. So that's why I mixed up the Harvard and the Stanford. So yes, Harvard better than Stanford, for all of you listening

Will Ahmed 03:40

at squash just to be clear. I'm not. We don't need to get into the education side of it. But just I was just emphasizing squash. Yeah, no,

Jacob Morgan 03:49

very cool. Yeah. I tried playing squash a few times. It's it's got some similarities to racquetball. But both I mean, I love both those sports for sure. Okay, so you, you ended up creating this company called whoop, and for people who are not familiar with whoop, it, can you give a little bit of insight around what the company does? What are some of the things that you measure and track? And how are people actually using it.

Will Ahmed 04:12

Whoop builds wearable technology to improve health. So you can see this small sensor on my wrist, if you're listening, we'll create a sensor that's about the size of your thumb. That's continuously measuring a variety of metrics about your body. I'd say the biggest differentiation between whoop and any other wearable product is its focus on coaching and behavior change. So if you've been on whoop for a year, you are on average spending about an hour more sleep, you have a lower resting heart rate, you have a higher heart rate variability, you've probably changed three or four different things about your behavior or your lifestyle. We can get into why that is the case. But at the end of the day, I think that's the hardest thing about the wearables. Space is not just the adoption of having someone wear a product 24/7. But having that product then truly drive, behavior change and health improvement. So that's what we're most proud of the origins of whoop, we're working in and around very high performance. So with the world's best athletes, two of our first 100 users were people like LeBron James and Michael Phelps. And we've become partners with a variety of the best sports leagues and teams and, and even today, we've worked with lots of professional athletes. But I bring that up just to state that we built a product that had a real attention to detail when it comes to accuracy and performance. And now today, whoop is primarily worn by everyday consumers. But I think the common thread amongst whoop members is that it's an audience that's looking to improve and is aspirational in nature.

Jacob Morgan 06:01

In how many employees do you guys have now?

Will Ahmed 06:05

Roughly about 700 700. Okay,

Jacob Morgan 06:08

I love this space, because I remember, you know, when I was in college at UC Santa Cruz, like, none of these things existed. I mean, even like, five, six years ago, we really didn't have access to a lot of data about ourselves how we sleep. What stresses us out when we're stressed, like, it just this stuff didn't exist. And I feel like over the past five years or so there's been like this huge push towards really understanding how we live, how we work, peak performance. Why do you think this change has happened? And why are people so obsessed now with just like tracking all these things about themselves and understanding all this data?

Will Ahmed 06:52

I think that the technology has caught up to the promise. I mean, that was part of what excited me so much, 10 years ago about the prospect of building whoop is that I realized I had a supercomputer in my pocket, you know, in my smartphone. And it just, it would have been very hard to get access to this data in a productive way. In a pre smartphone world. If you think about walking into a doctor's office, and just how antiquated that whole experiences of taking your blood pressure and your resting heart rate and your pulse ox and maybe getting, you know, standing on a scale, and you've got someone writing stuff down on a clipboard. I mean, all of that is going to be done with wearable technology. Not once a year, but 24 by seven. Yeah. And I think that's what's so exciting about the space today. You you talk about how consumers now on a track more than anything, I actually think we built the company

with the assumption that people didn't want to track everything, which is ironic. But I think that you're speaking about a very motivated person, which is likely your audience, you have a motivated audience, it's successful business leaders, etc. I think that the the power of health monitoring, especially continuous health monitoring, is it tells you what you need to know when you need to know it. And otherwise, you don't actually need to be looking at the data every minute or every hour. If you if you actually look at the web interface, many of our screens only have one number on them. We tried to use a lot of restraint in designing an interface that collects by the way, the most data of any product on the human body. So in a given day, we collect about 1000 times as much health data as a Fitbit or an Apple Watch. And yet, you'll go to a screen within the whoop app, and it'll have one number. So now you can peel that number back and you can go deeper and deeper and deeper and sure enough, you can get to a screen that's got 20 numbers on it. But my point is that the one of the keys for us in building a I think a product that people have, have really been able to change their behavior from it was was not oversharing information, but instead focusing on what you really need to know,

Jacob Morgan 09:44

which I think is an important lesson just for business leaders across the board because I think a lot of especially in the business context, people are very obsessed with the data and numbers and we can get kind of overwhelmed with it. I was funny, I went to go stay in Cancun at a hotel a couple of weeks ago at and prefers vacation I took with my wife and three years thanks to COVID. And you know that in one of those hotels, they're like, Look, let us give you a presentation for a little bit. And if we give you this presentation, you'll get like kind of a spa, we'll give you free like session at the spot. And I'm like, Alright, fine, whatever. So that the sales guy comes out. And he's talking about just all these different numbers and investments you can make, and just so much information and data, that at some point, I just lost, like no clue what he was talking about. And he gets very similar to something like what you guys are trying to build, right? I mean, if you just from the outset, just bombard people with information. It's kind of like analysis paralysis, and you don't know what to do. But if you have that like one number, then it makes a lot of sense. And I know a lot of people who listen to the show, they probably have an Apple Watch, or a Fitbit, a whoop, some sort of a tracker. But a lot of people probably also don't know what a lot of the things are. So I thought what we could do, and we can use whoop is kind of the base of some of the numbers that you track and what they actually mean. Because I think that's very important. So for example, something like heart rate variability. What is heart rate variability? And what does that actually tell you about yourself? And why do we need to know that?

Will Ahmed 11:17

So heart rate variability is this lens into your autonomic nervous system. And your autonomic nervous system consists of sympathetic and parasympathetic activity. Okay? sympathetic activity is heart rate up, blood pressure up, respiration up. That's what might be happening when you're exercising, or you even think about something that gives you anxiety, even when you inhale. That's sympathetic. Parasympathetic is all the opposite. So heart rate down, blood pressure down, respiration down, that's helps you fall asleep helps you relax. When you exhale. That's parasympathetic. Interestingly, the more balanced, sympathetic and parasympathetic, the higher your heart rate variability. And what you want is for sympathetic and parasympathetic activity to be balanced. Okay? So you ultimately want a higher heart rate variability, because it's a sign that your autonomic nervous system is balanced. And when it's balanced, it's a sign that your body's rested, recovered, ready to take on the world, so to speak. If you

were say sympathetic, dominant, be assigned that your body's rundown when you get sick when you overtrain, even when you have injuries or enormous stress, your heart rate variability will decrease meaningfully. This was probably one of the single most exciting statistics that I read about in college and ask myself, why doesn't this have mass market use cases today and 10 years ago, I was reading studies that war dating back to the 80s. And and keep in mind this this was around when the electrocardiogram was, was invented. And heart rate variability is primarily used for electrocardiograms. Which is, of course, the like sophisticated hospital medical equipment. And use cases included Olympians. And professional cyclists using heart rate variability to determine how hard they should train every morning. So they would get hooked up to ECGs every morning and figure out based on their heart rate variability, how hard they should train. The CIA had been using heart rate variability for decades to do lie detection tests. Doctors had been using heart rate variability on former or former heart failure patients to predict heart attacks. And so saying to myself, Wow, this is a very powerful statistic. Why isn't everyone measuring it all the time? And of course, it just turned out that the technology was expensive and large. And anyway, I believe that the time it could be much smaller, which is one of the things that we brought to market.

Jacob Morgan 14:37

Are there also applications in a work context as far as like stress and anxiety and overworking being burned out things of that nature?

Will Ahmed 14:48

Absolutely. One of the fascinating things about heart rate variability is just how much it changes on a minute by minute basis. Oh, it's that quick? Yeah. So we actually measure heart rate variability continuously. And we're doing a lot of research right now all around stress, and how we can help quantify different moments in your day as being stressful or restful?

Jacob Morgan 15:14

Are you seeing any common trends around what moments in the day are stressful or restful?

Will Ahmed 15:23

Well, it's hard to generalize that too dramatically, because you could talk about a whole host of different occupations. If you wanted to standardize for a an executive who works at a desk, for example, you tend to see stressful moments. At the onset of caffeine, you also tend to see stressful moments at the onset of, well, stressful meetings. So but but the powerful thing is, you'll be surprised by certain things that's true. That triggers stress in your body that you may not necessarily feel. And this is, this is an important theme. In general for whoop, like, I founded whoop, in part because I thought feelings were overrated. You know, part of part of the reason that I would overtrain as an athlete, is that I would tell myself, I feel fine. I can keep going, I can keep pushing. What did we just see from COVID-19. For the last two years, people who felt fine, could very well be carrying a virus, right? That's what made it so complicated. And so everyone was doing tests all the time, because you could be asymptomatic. So I think people are waking up to the fact that there are certain things you can measure about your body that you can't feel. And that is part of what's so exciting about health monitoring. And I think what's so exciting about whoop today,

Jacob Morgan 16:58

what were some of those hidden things that you were referring to?

Will Ahmed 17:03

Well, in terms of things, you can't feel that you can measure. Yeah. I mean, let's take sickness, for example. Like, you can have a lower respiratory tract infection without feeling it. And part of what was fascinating during COVID, is that measures respiratory rate, so that's the number of breaths you have in a minute. Okay? It's typically very static statistic. So call it 10 to 20 breaths per minute is what most people have, but it's very steady. So your average might be 13 breaths per minute, and almost every single night, you'll have 13 breaths a minute, it could be 13.1, could be 12.9. But it really doesn't change. When you get COVID. That number will jump to about 15 breaths per minute. And it'll jump that high even before you feel you're sick. So all of a sudden, you can have an alert that says you've got this elevated respiratory rate, and that might mean you're sick. Before you feel it. Yeah, I mean, we've had people on whoop, realize they were having a heart attack from their data. Really Lyme disease, mono bipolar episode, all of these things that your body's sending a signal before you're feeling it or your mind perceives it.

Jacob Morgan 18:33

So what are some of the other things that that you're tracking? Okay, we talked about heart rate variability. But what are some of those other metrics that you guys pay attention to that will help you identify some of those things? I know sleep is obviously a big part of it. Right? A lot of companies track sleep is an important metric. Maybe we could talk about that a little bit because I feel like and I saw when you were a guest on David Novak show who people who listen to this show. Well, he was a guest here. He talked about how he was able to make sleep changes to go from five I think to eight hours of sleep. Yeah. Which you said is like a revolutionary like

Will Ahmed 19:09

that's, you know, life changing event. Yeah. Yeah.

Jacob Morgan 19:13

So and a lot of people I don't think understand the importance and value of sleep, they kind of just power through, like as much as I can just give me that cup of coffee, the Red Bull on good. What role does sleep play in making sure that we're able to, you know, do what we need to do, whether you're a leader or an athlete.

Will Ahmed 19:33

So the biggest misconception that hard charging people have about sleep is that they exclusively have to just add more time to their sleep in order to get more sleep. And I want to explain why you can dramatically improve your life and your quality of sleep by changing things other than just how much time you spent in bed now. If you ask someone who doesn't measure their sleep, how much sleep they got last night, they'll probably do something like, Well, I went to bed at 11. And I woke up at six. So I got seven hours of sleep. Now, what whoop will actually tell you is you spent seven hours in bed. And then within that seven hours, it took you 20 minutes to fall asleep for some period of time to fall asleep. And then throughout the night, you are in four different stages of sleep, you are either awake, in light sleep,

in REM sleep, or in slow wave sleep. Now light and awake, don't really do much for you. So you're not getting much benefit from that. Rem and slow wave, that's really where all the magic happens. That's where your body gets enormous benefits from sleep. Okay, REM sleep is where your mind is repairing. So that's cognitive repair. It's also where you will experience dreams. So people will say, I can't remember my dreams, or I don't, I didn't, I don't have dreams, they're definitely not getting enough REM sleep. Okay, slow wave sleep. Could be me. slow wave sleep is where your body produces about 95% of its human growth hormone. So that's pretty amazing. Like people think they get stronger in the gym, they actually break their muscles down in the gym, they get stronger during slow wave sleep, repairing their muscles. Now, let's go back to that person who spent seven hours in bed. That person could have gotten five hours total of REM and slow wave sleep, which would be an enormous amount, or they could have gotten less than 30 minutes total of REM and slow wave sleep. Now the difference in quality of life between someone who gets five hours total of REM and slow wave sleep at night, and someone who gets 30 minutes is profound. I mean, completely profound. And so there's a huge spectrum between those two numbers. And what whoop is able to do is help you identify what are the certain little things you can tweak, to go from being someone who's on the low end of that spectrum to someone on the high end. And then all of a sudden, you stopped thinking about it just in terms of when you went to bed when you woke up. And you start thinking about well, how late in the day to drink coffee? How much alcohol that I have that night? When did I eat? Did I eat very close to bed? Is my bedroom cold? Is my bedroom dark? Do I have a disruptive pet in my bed? You know? Am I having a fight with my partner before I go to bed? Am I being mindful before I go to bed? Am I staring at my phone for two hours before I go to bed? Like these are all things that can swing how you sleep one way or another even little supplements? Do I take magnesium to take melatonin is that helping me whoop helps you track all these things? And then you essentially get a recipe for this is optimal sleep for Jacob. And when you start measuring it, you can then manage it.

Jacob Morgan 23:10

Yeah, no, I like that. So you guys collect? It seems like a ton of data. How many different metrics do you say you're collecting over 1000?

Will Ahmed 23:20

Well, it I mean, we collect I said 1000 times as much data as other products on the market. But you know, your heart rate, heart rate variability, skin conductivity, body temperature, movement. Everything about sleep that we just discussed. So different stages of sleep light, awake, Rem slow wave disturbances throughout the night, your sleep latency, respiratory rate, pulse ox, I think the advantage to all these raw metrics that we collect is that we also summarize them. So whoop. Most people think of whoop to the lens of strain recovery and sleep. So strain is a measurement of how much stress you've put on your body during any period of time. So that could be activity that could be exercise that could be stressful moments throughout the day. We quantify all that recovery as a score from zero to 100%, red, yellow, green. And I think that's what people think that's what people gravitate to the most. So they wake up every day with a color. And mind you back to the theme we were talking about before that color doesn't always correlate directly with how they feel. And so that's a powerful phenomenon where you start to trust your recovery score more than your own intuition about your body, or it helps inform your intuition about your body. So these are these are things that people really gravitate to on the platform.

Jacob Morgan 25:00

What are the applications that you're seeing inside of organizations? Because I know lately, there's been a big push over the past few years, a lot of companies are giving employees fitness trackers and wearables to control or to measure their health and their well being. Are you seeing a lot of business applications for how something like whoop is being used?

Will Ahmed 25:20

We are we recently launched whoop, unite, which is our b2b platform, and allows teams organizations to effectively improve health and performance across a group of people. So what would be some examples of this, we have clients in the military who want to optimize the performance of, say, the Navy SEALs, right. And that's an organization that certainly knows something about red lining. In terms of a more audience, relatable group. We've partnered now with over 150, businesses, who are putting whoop on their teams, to help their teams understand sleep, recovery, strain, focus on health monitoring, in some cases, to keep an eye out for getting sick. So they don't come into the office, in some cases, to do challenges. So we obviously do all sorts of things with our own technology. But we have a variety of sleep challenges. Where if you get a certain amount of sleep a month, you'll actually get a bonus, based on how much sleep you get. So you know, there's things you can do to really make it fun, but make it also actionable.

Jacob Morgan 26:51

Yeah. Yeah, it's really interesting to see the applications there from a business perspective, because I know a lot of in this competition, peak performance, a lot of people are getting more and more interested in this. And one of the things that you mentioned, I think, is overtraining. And can you talk a little bit about that, because sometimes I feel like even I overtrain. And sometimes people feel like they can power through it, either through a work setting, or even through working out, right, working out six, seven days a week sometimes, which, you know, sometimes I do that, and I'm like, going, I feel fine. So can you talk a little bit about the negative impacts of overtraining and what we should be paying attention to? Like? How do you know that that's happening?

Will Ahmed 27:35

Well, this is an area that whoop has been, I think, really successful, in part because that was one of the reasons I founded the company was to prevent overtraining. Okay, and whoop, as a product is really the first product to tell you not to exercise. So you'll wake up some days, and it'll give you a red score, and it'll tell you to chill. And that's tends to be unusual for a product in the fitness space. Yeah. So we we do see and hear from our from our customers that doing less actually led them to getting stronger, or having a PR in their, you know, marathon or, certainly in the professional athlete space, we've got all kinds of testimonials, in terms of symptoms of overtraining, for people who aren't measuring their bodies, it tends to take the form of you essentially feel sick without many of the symptoms of illness, like your body's rundown, you may even feel psychologically a bit depressed. Those Those tend to be the signs of overtraining. I mean, obviously, you have to be someone who's exercising a fair amount, but that if you want to also include burnout in this equation, the feelings are quite similar. But I go back to your body has real, real clear physiological indicators for this. I mean, your heart rate variability goes way down, your resting heart rate goes way up, your respiratory rate likely changes your skin

temperature likely changes your sleep quality changes dramatically. I mean, these are all things that will signal whether something's up or whether whether you're fine, and maybe you just need a mental break. So that's what that's why I go back to the importance of measuring the body.

Jacob Morgan 29:33

Yeah, the overtraining piece, a lot of people struggle with that, myself included. I wanted to shift gears a little bit and talk, kind of from a business perspective. So obviously, you started this company. You raised over \$400 million from investors. Can you talk a little bit about what it was like to build the company? What were some of the big mistakes that you made as you were creating whoop,

Will Ahmed 30:00

Well, it's interesting that there were a number of enormous challenges to building this company. And, and certain directions that we took early on that I think, made raising capital for the business quite hard. Yes, we've raised 400 million in capital to date. But especially in those first five years, it was really hard to raise capital for whoop. And the common feedback that we would get is that we were what we were doing was essentially too ambitious. We were we were trying to build every layer of the technology. And at the at the time, that would have been perceived as a mistake, because it was taking longer to get to market. And it was costing a lot more than what we would originally have forecast, you know, but today, you look at our business. And an enormous aspect of what makes whoop unique is that it owns every aspect of the technology. So there were things along the way that made the journey much harder and more painful and more cost intensive. But today are our assets. I think it's also worth calling out that Wearable technology is just a uniquely hard market. Yeah, I mean, it's most businesses, you can be great at one or two things and build a successful business, wearable technology, you have to be great at like five or six things to even have a chance. I mean, you have to be great at hardware and software and analytics and design. And you probably need some notion of brand or community because someone's wearing it on their body all the time. And if you look at companies that have come and gone in the space, a lot of good companies have failed. I mean, there was the Nike FuelBand there was the Adidas me coach, there was a puma band, Jawbone raised over a billion dollars and ultimately went bankrupt. Intel had a failed smartwatch, Microsoft had a failed smartwatch. You know, Google's kind of start stopping the space a bunch, Amazon's had a lot of challenges with their recent Halo product. Fitbit IPO did a billion sold a 2 billion. So and then there's probably 20 startups that I could list off if I thought hard enough about it that ultimately went out of business. So I just bring that up to state that. It's an enormously hard space. And many of the things that I think whoop today views as an asset at one point along the way might have been perceived as as a mistake or too steep of a mountain to climb.

Jacob Morgan 32:51

And I suppose one of those would be kind of owning everything, right?

Will Ahmed 32:55

Yeah, I mean, we, we felt from the earliest days that people weren't focused enough on data and research in what they were collecting, we saw that there was huge variability amongst the data that was being collected by other products. If you were to compare the heart rate numbers, for example, from a Fitbit versus an Apple Watch versus a chest strap, versus a Chinese knockoff product, like they all

would just have totally different numbers. And so how do you build a standardized system using those numbers you couldn't and, and mind you, we started on this journey, even before many of those products came to market. So we were deeply committed to, to building the whole thing from scratch. And once you do, what's powerful is it gives you so many different layers, so many different areas to innovate on. When we say to ourselves, we want to go into a new area of sensing, we can decide whether we want to introduce that at the hardware level, at the data collection level, at the software level. You know, signal processing isn't there. So there's like all these different ways that you can sort of push and pull with your existing technology. And I think it makes the whole business more valuable. But more importantly, it allows us to create a better member experience. I mean, here's this very specific example. During COVID, we discovered that this metric respiratory rate was predictive of COVID-19. It turned out we were measuring respiratory rate on the back end, but we weren't even showing it to our members because it was typically a boring statistic. Now we realized that having it be boring, was informative. You don't want it to change, so keep it boring. Okay, now, I guess they're sharing it to him. But if we hadn't controlled the whole stack of technology, who knows how long it would have taken for us to get that to market? We're able to flip a few switches and have that in market within weeks when we discovered this

Jacob Morgan 35:01

So what are some of the things that you learned as you were building whoop that you think a lot of business leaders can apply in their organizations?

Will Ahmed 35:10

I think having a very clear orientation for why you're building what you're building. So, yes, whoop took on a lot of ambition. In certain aspects of the product, data collection, the notion of collecting hard of building hardware, and the notion of you being able to wear it. Those were all very hard things. But we also said no to a ton of things.

Jacob Morgan 35:37

Do you remember what you said no to?

Will Ahmed 35:39

Well, the most popular one people like to ask about is why whoop doesn't have a screen, or why whoop isn't a watch? And

Jacob Morgan 35:46

yeah, why can't you pull the time on there?

Will Ahmed 35:49

It's not a question of whether we can't it's a question of focus. So the second you have a screen your watch, and people won't wear two watches. So then all of a sudden, you're competing with a bunch of watches. And there's a huge scope creep, the second you introduce a screen, because all of a sudden, now you're asking yourself, well, what's going to be on that screen? Should you have some notifications? Should you have some apps? Should it be able to do GPS monitoring? Should you be able to communicate with other people through it? And next thing, you know, you're building an Apple

Watch versus a core health monitor. And that was like, one huge example of focus where we decided that actually having a screen would distract from a lot of what we were trying to do and be great at. Not to mention, it takes engineering resources. So we have a five day battery life versus 18 hours, right? All these different things.

Jacob Morgan 36:51

Yeah. Do you wear a watch on one hand and a whoop on the other? I

Will Ahmed 36:54

do. Yeah. Okay. And by the way, people will wear an Apple Watch and a whoop on the other side. So it just emphasizes the point, which is that whoop is not competing with watches.

Jacob Morgan 37:08

Yeah, yeah. Well, I wanted to use the last bit of our time to talk about some, some action items that people can do. And I have a couple of things here that I'd like to focus on. But one is I wanted to start with your daily routine first. Because as somebody who's been using whoop, you've probably learned a lot about yourself and made some changes to your life. What are some of the practices that you have implemented based on what you've learned about yourself? For example, one thing I read about you is that you don't drink any caffeine after 2pm

Will Ahmed 37:40

Yeah, caffeine is a big one, I used to drink too much caffeine and in, in building the company, I found that, you know, kind of around 2pm 3pm That was sort of the tipping point for your my sleep degrading pretty meaningfully later that I, again, this is an interesting phenomenon with measuring your body, but you start to realize that something you did in the morning, could affect how you slept 1215 hours later, right. And it just makes you start to appreciate all these aspects of your life. One huge theme for me is meditating. And I got into transmittal meditation, close to nine years ago now, and I've been doing it every day since. But even just meditating in the morning. versus doing it for you know, I do it for 20 minutes doing it for 20 minutes versus not doing it for the full 20 verses. You know, I almost never miss a day, but if I miss a day, you know, like, that will affect things later in the day for my body. So it just shows the connectedness of of, of your life and things that you eat and how those affect your body. Anyway, I can keep going.

Jacob Morgan 39:01

Yeah, I read that you also have your blue light glasses. Is it true?

Will Ahmed 39:05

Yeah. So I wear these blue light blocking glasses before I go to sleep. And you know, I think at my core, I'm still an entrepreneur and still a hard charging CEO, if you will. So I'm, I'm very focused on how I can build a business and, and as a consequence, I'm on my phone late into the night, I'll be looking at a laptop even late into the night. And looking at screens is bad for your sleep, because it's got blue light, and that blue light triggers your mind to stay awake television set, same thing. But what I realized isn't wearing blue light blocking glasses. It was like the ultimate Get Out of Jail Free card for looking at my phone and looking at these different screens, and they naturally make you sleepy. And if you want a

single one single hack to dramatically improve If your quality of sleep, blue light blocking glasses, you just wear them an hour before bed. And your REM and slow wave sleep will be meaningfully higher.

Jacob Morgan 40:10

Yeah, all right. I'm gonna have to check those out. Any other tactics or things that you've implemented in your life?

Will Ahmed 40:20

I drink a ton of water. Probably more water than anyone I know. constantly drinking water. I think most people are a little bit dehydrated. And and so that's an underrated life hack. I eat three meals every day. I almost never snack. I I take melatonin and magnesium before bed, which I find helps me sleep. I sleep in a really cold bedroom a really dark bedroom. I often how cold? Are we talking? About 65 degrees? Oh my god. Yeah,

Jacob Morgan 41:04

she set your AC down to 65. That's right. Yeah. Oh, man. I bet that makes a difference, though. Yeah, that's good. So let's spend last few minutes talking about some snacks and items that people can start to implement. So one of them. We talked a little bit about performance earlier on. What are some things based on what you have learned through all the data that you've been collecting whoop, that you think people should start to do in their lives to get better performance, whether it's more out of their workday, whether it's having more energy during meetings, if you had some specific actions for people to take what what would those be?

Will Ahmed 41:43

Well, I'll try to just speak about my own experience. Because I know these things can be different for everyone. I think grounding a lot of your work in meaning is really important. And so whatever it is that your job, whatever your job is, really trying to identify how the work that you're doing each day, contributes to something bigger than you, I think is both something that will generate serotonin and make you happy. But it's, it's also something that will make you more productive, because you'll have more of a charge for it. So for me, I think about every day how I'm trying to unlock exhilarating health and potential for the world and how the work that I do is contributing to that. And just even thinking about that saying that to myself. It gives me more energy, I think it helps overcome bumps in the road, work through challenges, because there's a sense of meaning that's much greater, or much bigger than me as an individual. It also ties back to being a member of a team, which I think is really important. The more I feel like I'm in a boat with a team, or, you know, pulling in the same direction as a number of people. Again, the more motivating it is and and the more aligned I feel.

Jacob Morgan 43:21

Oh, yes, that alignment, the purpose, the meaning. And I suppose part of the way that you can achieve that is through telling stories connecting the work that people are doing to the outcome that it's having, instead of leaving people in silos?

Will Ahmed 43:33

Absolutely, I there's no question. And one of the great things about whoop is we get to talk about how members are literally changing their behaviors and their lifestyles to ultimately improve their health. So it's easy for us to tie that meaning back to each individual's work. But it's something you can't forget about as a leader, you have to keep bringing it up and being repetitive. That's probably another theme that I've grown to appreciate more and more is that it's hard to be too repetitive with the things that matter. Like keep repeating the things that matter.

Jacob Morgan 44:11

Yeah, that's a good one. What about dealing with negative feedback? How do you deal with that? I mean, I'm sure when you were raising money for whoop, you were probably told no a lot. Maybe people thought your idea was crazy. So when when doors were closing in front of you, and when people were giving you negative feedback, saying you were nuts. How did you deal with that? And do you have any particular stories that come to mind?

Will Ahmed 44:35

Well, in the earliest days of the company, I think I put up a real wall to negative feedback. And it was a little bit of a survival mechanism. I think. Maybe it was the nature of being a 2223 year old. Not just the first company I was starting but really my first job. A lot of my identity was wound up in the company and If whoop was doing great, I felt like I was doing great. And if whoop was failing, I felt like I was failing. And that's a pretty unproductive association to make, I think it's really important for individuals to disassociate their performance with that of the company. And you can be getting a little bit better every day, independent from what the company's performance is. And, and when you take that mindset on, it actually makes you a better leader. But it also makes you much happier. Because you don't want to be on the yo yo, that is your company's performance, especially if it's an early stage company, where it really is a yo yo and and other members of your team will be looking to you during chaotic times to see how you're weathering the storm. And so you don't want to get more chaotic as the times get more chaotic, you want to have a level hand. And so back to your question of negative feedback, it was a, it was something that I struggled with in the early days of the company. And someone said to me, you know, you don't have to listen to what everyone says, but you should hear what they say. And that became a helpful framework for me over time, because you really do want to absorb and wrestle with dissenting points of view, and be constantly asking yourself why you feel so strongly about something that you do. But you do need to have a strong point of view on the world as well, and what your technology or your product or your service looks like in the world when it's successful. And the challenge for many entrepreneurs is that thing that they see may be something that a lot of people don't. Because that's what's ultimately going to make it a success. If everyone saw what they see, it would already exist, probably.

Jacob Morgan 47:14

Yeah, yeah. I like it advice of separating your performance from the company performance. I think, especially for leaders, they can sometimes struggle with it. I know, it's something that I struggle with. Oftentimes, as a business owner. separating those two out I think can make a big difference. Let's talk a little bit about how to reduce stress. Any advice or suggestions, anything that you've seen people doing that are that are using whoop, as far as stress reduction techniques?

Will Ahmed 47:42

I think breathing is really the most underrated piece of overall health. People don't really talk about breathing. But there's that simple, but there's so many different ways to breathe. Most people, their breaths are too shallow. They need too many breaths in a minute to function. They don't actually breathe properly when they're using technology. I mean, how many times have you seen someone hunched over on a phone, and it's like they haven't. It's almost like they haven't breathed in the last 10 minutes. So that's for at least for me personally, in dealing with stress, I've just become very conscious of breathing. I've been a longtime meditator. So that's something that I feel very close to, I think another way to deal with stress is to learn how to intentionally take it on. So that could be super high intensity exercise that could be contrast therapy, hot cold. Almost every day, I'm putting myself in excruciatingly cold water, I'll try to do a sauna or steam almost every day. So those are things that put yourself in a position to take on stress. And I think in turn, make unpredictable stress therefore feel less stressful. And I also think it's worth reminding yourself that stress isn't a bad thing. Think stress is an important thing to accomplish goals and to meet objectives that have never been done before. So I at this point, I've kind of grown to welcome stress. And I'll even look at it as a challenge of Well, can I overcome this moment?

Jacob Morgan 49:42

No, no, I agree. That's I think we tried to eliminate stress, but I think sometimes it's more effective to figure out how to use that stress to do what we need to do.

Will Ahmed 49:51

And by the way, just on that point, I think that's probably the biggest. I think that's the biggest misconception. I think it's also something that older generations are saying to young generations, you know, people between the ages of 10 and 25. And saying, you know, if you're feeling stressed take on less stress, rather than teaching people how to cope with stress. And it's really important that we teach young people how to cope with stress. Because life doesn't get that much easier over time, you only get more responsibility, and you need to be able to cope with stress.

Jacob Morgan 50:32

Yeah, well said. And maybe last action item for you is around better sleep. I think that's a super important thing for us to remember, I've been trying to focus on getting enough sleep a lot of CEOs and leaders I talked to really prioritize sleep. Any advice or suggestions on how to improve sleep?

Will Ahmed 50:56

Well, first and foremost, you have to measure your sleep to manage it, you need to know where you are as a baseline. It's like people saying, I want to lose weight without ever getting on a scale. Like you have to measure it. And then once you start measuring it, you'll start to identify certain things that you change or do that dramatically improve your sleep. I can make some generalizations here for things that I think will improve everyone's sleep, darker room, quieter room. Colder room, higher air quality. Those are things about your environment that tend to be positive, it varies, sleeping with your partner without whether that improves your sleep. Even sexual activity changes how you sleep. In terms of things before you go to bed. You're mindset, whether you've just gotten in a fight or whether you're being somewhat mindful, whether you've been staring at screens, how much blue light exposure, you're

getting, how close you eat to bed, typically, within three hours, it's going to start disrupting your sleep. Alcohol profoundly disrupts your sleep. Most people underestimate just how the degree to which alcohol disrupts their sleep. Hydration plays a huge role exercising not too late in the day. You know, these are these are all things that directionally can play a big role. And then there's certain supplements for some people, CBD melatonin and magnesium that are worth experimenting with.

Jacob Morgan 52:33

Yep, couldn't agree more. Well, where can people go to learn more about you and whoop and some of the cool things that you guys are working on?

Will Ahmed 52:42

Yeah, definitely learn more about whoop@whoop.com. If you're interested in a whoop membership, you can use the code will which will give you some deal at checkout. Hopefully a very good one. Will will that's pretty easy. You can find me on social media at will Ahmed and I tend to be pretty responsive on. I'm on Twitter and LinkedIn and Instagram.

Jacob Morgan 53:13

Very cool. Well, well thank you so much for taking time out of your day to share your insights. I really appreciate it. Okay, thank

Will Ahmed 53:19

you, Jacob.

Jacob Morgan 53:21

And thanks everyone for tuning in. My guest again has been will Ahmed, founder and CEO of whoop and I will see all of you next time