



Episode 87 - Business as an art form with Adrian Knight

Else Kramer (00:00:02) - All right. False brained humans. I am delighted to introduce to you Adrian Night. Welcome, Adrian, to the podcast.

Adrian Knight (00:00:10) - Yeah, it's a pleasure to be here. Thank you so much.

Else Kramer (00:00:13) - And I explained to you we're doing the card game. As always, my first card is what is your biggest frustration?

Adrian Knight (00:00:23) - Um, probably myself. Right.

Else Kramer (00:00:27) - Tell me.

Adrian Knight (00:00:27) - More. Yeah, undoubtedly myself is. Is is my biggest frustration. Um, I think it's a very acute awareness of my limitations and what I'm not very good at and which is most things, if I'm being truthful, it's. Yeah, there's a lot of. Okay.

Else Kramer (00:00:49) - Hang on, hang on. I'm gonna have to stop you there because you saying I'm not very good at most things and yet you have built like a string of very successful businesses, so. I mean, what is happening here? Is there like an alter ego behind the scenes or what's going on?

Adrian Knight (00:01:07) - There's there's a very good team of people behind me, very good team.

Adrian Knight (00:01:12) - And, um, I always would mean I can count on one hand, genuinely count on one hand the things I would say, um, you know, you know better at than, than like my other skills. Um, but finding good people who have real potential, um, and helping them to unlock that potential is one of those things I'd count off. So yeah, that.

Else Kramer (00:01:37) - Is a superpower.

Adrian Knight (00:01:38) - Not so much me, it's more. It's more them genuinely.

Else Kramer (00:01:41) - Okay, so back to the frustrations. Like one is what is one characteristic? You're like, if I could change that, I totally would. About you.

Adrian Knight (00:01:47) - Yeah, me. Um, I'm not a very operational person, so if you think in terms of like logistics organisation, I'm probably the worst person to, to, to be in that type of role. I always try my best. But someone, you and.

Else Kramer (00:02:06) - All the ADHD people in the world, right?

Adrian Knight (00:02:09) - Yes, exactly.

Else Kramer (00:02:10) - Yeah, exactly. We just can't.

Else Kramer (00:02:13) - Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. It's a very common like executive function. Functioning can be a real challenge, like just doing admin and being on time and all that kind of stuff.

Adrian Knight (00:02:28) - It really is. And, um, yeah, so, so to touch on what you mentioned there, I sort of diagnosed ADHD. There's three strands to a to my understanding that there's three strands to ADHD. Um, and I'm fairly sort of balanced across all of them. Um, but I've recently discovered actually through my, my seem to be wife that, um, yeah, there's actually a lot of government aid that can sort of support with that which I was completely oblivious to. So, um, yeah, very, very sort of curious and sort of exploring that and yeah, just seeing what's there really.

Else Kramer (00:03:03) - And what would you like if you would like to change the executive functioning, but what else if you could change another thing, what would that be? When you're saying I'm so frustrated mostly with myself, what specifically frustrates you?

Adrian Knight (00:03:15) - Um, often it's my patience again with myself, so wanting to be over there.

Adrian Knight (00:03:24) - But. But you're here and and a acceptance of that and that you have to put one front, one foot in front of the other in order to get over there can.

Else Kramer (00:03:35) - Be so slow, right?

Adrian Knight (00:03:38) - Really can. I've got better with it over the years, but there's still a lot of work to do there.

Else Kramer (00:03:42) - Yeah. Do you also have time blindness or is your experience of time pretty decent?

Adrian Knight (00:03:48) - I'm terrible with time. So we have a running joke in our family, which is called Night Time. So my surname is night.

Else Kramer (00:03:55) - And for the listeners, this is spelled like, you know, as a knight in shining armor. Okay.

Adrian Knight (00:04:01) - Yes. Okay. Yeah. Um, and so. So we run on night time, which is approximately 15 minutes late. Like, almost to the minute. It's like we're 15 minutes late. No matter how hard I try. Like many a time, I've left, like, an hour early and still end up being astonishing. Oh, it's just.

Adrian Knight (00:04:22) - Yeah, it's.

Else Kramer (00:04:23) - And yet you're still managing to do all the things, which is pretty cool.

Adrian Knight (00:04:28) - So. Yeah, yeah. So, yeah.

Else Kramer (00:04:33) - My next card is boundaries.

Adrian Knight (00:04:36) - Mm.

Else Kramer (00:04:37) - And I think this is a great one. Um, especially because you, you run a lot of businesses simultaneously, right? Or at least you're sort of overseeing stuff, which implies that you need set a lot of boundaries on your availability and your time, I guess, but also on employees. How do you do that? Do you said yes.

Adrian Knight (00:04:58) - So that's been a personal journey for me. Um, and I've learnt a lot about boundaries from personal relationships. So certainly, you know, I'm very happy, like, well, soon to be married. Congratulations. Thank you. Um, it's a very happy, you know, like, in our relationship. But in previous relationships there, I started to notice a distinct lack of boundaries from myself and that caused a lot of, um, uh, well, arguments and conflict between me and the previous partners, in part because they were frustrated with the lack of boundaries and, and

also from my side, like, frustrated that they couldn't see these boundaries that I wasn't putting into place.

Adrian Knight (00:05:47) - So I've learnt a lot from, from those relationships which I very clearly bring into my business life as well because, um, you know, we have a beautiful three year old daughter at home and um, yeah, there's some very strong reasons herby in the top of that list as to why actually there has to be boundaries. And, um, it's not all about work or business or, you know, anything else of that nature.

Else Kramer (00:06:15) - And what helps you actually learn that because you're telling a story is, you know, one day you realized, oh, this is not working out in my relationships and I'm going to do it differently and apply it in my business. That sounds like like a slight oversimplification. Like what were the steps to realizing you need to set more boundaries and then implementing it? Because it's very hard for a lot of people. I think it brings up a lot of fear. What if I set a boundary and someone gets mad or someone says, I don't like you anymore?

Adrian Knight (00:06:45) - Yeah, I think there you know, I've learned to look at that slightly differently.

Adrian Knight (00:06:49) - So if someone gets mad at a boundary on putting in place, which never happens, by the way.

Else Kramer (00:06:55) - Interesting, isn't it?

Adrian Knight (00:06:56) - Never happened. But at the beginning there is a fear that they will get mad. And if you say no to this person because actually, you know, they're trying to entice you to go and do something, but actually you just need an hour to yourself, that is absolutely fine. And if that person can't understand that, then there's probably bigger questions to be asking yourself as to, well, why don't they understand that? And and taking that a few steps further, you know, is that the type of people I want in my in my life or my close my close circle? And so, um, yeah, so it was very scary at the beginning. But as you, as I started to put those boundaries into place and saw success with, oh, they completely understood that. And in fact they respected the fact that I needed an hour to myself and that would show up a better person after that hour.

Adrian Knight (00:07:46) - Um, that fear quickly dropped. And then it was like, okay, yeah, this, this, this, these are my boundaries. And, um, yeah.

Else Kramer (00:07:56) - And this basically, this stuff works, right?

Adrian Knight (00:07:58) - It does, Yeah. It really.

Else Kramer (00:08:00) - Incredible. I was, like, diagnosed with burnout many, many years ago. Um, and I got a coach, I think this was back in the late 90s even. And she, one of the things she taught me was boundaries. And I was like, No, this is never going to work. And I just started

putting them into place. I got so much respect at the office was insane. I was like, Wow, I wish someone is always earlier, but good to know, right?

Adrian Knight (00:08:25) - Yeah. He seems so like, I don't want to devalue it because. Because it is a big thing when you know if and when you're struggling with that. But in hindsight it seems so simple and almost like, why was I even certain about that?

Else Kramer (00:08:41) - Why was this a problem?

Adrian Knight (00:08:42) - But when you're going through it, it it feels much bigger.

Adrian Knight (00:08:46) - And, and and I can really relate to anyone who may be struggling with with that. And all I would say is, you know, you're worth it. Like it's like you're worth it. So yeah.

Else Kramer (00:08:59) - You're worth carving out the time, prioritizing yourself, all the things. Absolutely. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And I think the reason it's so scary, it does make perfect sense, even though it's easy to sort of overcome it once you've taken the first steps. It's just almost like a physical thing, right? Your nervous system is like, No, don't do this. We're going to die. We're going to be cast out of the tribe. Nobody will love us. We'll end up under the bridge.

Adrian Knight (00:09:22) - Sadly, everyone's going to leave me and I'll be alone. So, yeah, but it doesn't happen.

Else Kramer (00:09:28) - Also whiskey or whatever?

Adrian Knight (00:09:29) - Yeah.

Else Kramer (00:09:31) - 100%. So you one of the things you started doing and we'll probably get to this a bit later, like the backstory of it, but you started buying companies, restructuring them and turning them around, which is fascinating to me because my brain is like, Wow, first of all, that sounds super fun.

Else Kramer (00:09:50) - Second, it sounds super scary. So how did you I can understand how you manage the phone. How did you manage to scary or was it not scary to you at all?

Adrian Knight (00:10:00) - I still manage to scary every single day the scary changes. So I'm going through quite and this past well since the I mean mid-May really I've been going through a very sort of significant phase of a business turnaround, quite a large business turnaround that I've been doing. And every day it's been a day of of like fear. And today is no exception like is and but the fear is changing. And I've started to recognize that as you move through that fear and bit of the boundaries, you look back and you think, maybe I was blown out of proportion a little bit. Yeah.

Else Kramer (00:10:40) - Was it that bad? Right? Was it that bad?

Adrian Knight (00:10:42) - And um, yeah, I just keep reminding myself of that. And, um, that's one of the first components of how I sort of handle that. But also the second component is that I've learned to really, um, structure my day so that I make time for myself and to put myself first for a portion normally, like in the mornings, um, because that gives me the clarity and it gives me the energy and it just gives everything to be able to go and deal with that fear more than the actual circumstances.

Adrian Knight (00:11:16) - So, oh.

Else Kramer (00:11:17) - I love this, I love this. Rather than just running around putting out fires, you are intentionally just carving out time so you can actually show up as like an amazing leader.

Adrian Knight (00:11:26) - Yeah, it's just. So, yeah, essentially, Yes. And it's and it's just all can show up as a better version of me that's more equipped to, to handle situations sort of good or bad, large or small. And since I started taking that approach to my life as a whole, like things started to take off like very quickly after making a decision to, to do that. Um, and I haven't looked back, to be honest. I just.

Else Kramer (00:11:56) - Love it. And another reason I love it. I have a lot of listeners who are. Thinking of pivoting, thinking of like leaving their career sometimes in corporate, whatever it is, and doing something completely different. And I mean, would you say like you're an M&A person or how would you describe.

Adrian Knight (00:12:15) - Well, I don't know how to describe myself.

Adrian Knight (00:12:17) - It's, uh. Um. For some reason, I've always, since my late teenage years, I've always had this sort of idea and this dream that what I really wanted to do was to buy and sell businesses. Um, but I mean, I've as a 17, 18, 19 year old. I certainly didn't see myself as qualified for that. So I went on a bit of a journey until I actually arrived. Then very much a journey of self-discovery. But I worked in corporate for a very long time. I left my I left my corporate role just before turning 30. I started a business which I saw as a stepping stone to buying and selling because there's certain I mean, I wouldn't necessarily recommend this for everyone, but my thought process at the time was that there's certain lessons that I would learn as from starting the business that would do me well for a career in buying and selling companies. And then it was in late 2019 when I found out we were expecting. Um. No, sorry.

Adrian Knight (00:13:23) - It was late 2018 when I found out I was expecting my daughter. And in 2019, when I started to really, like, crystallise in my mind, like, I'm going to do this and yeah, I haven't looked back and it's been extremely exhilarating, um, incredibly intellectually challenging and stimulating and just a huge amount of fun.

Else Kramer (00:13:49) - I love this and I love that. Basically, you created your own training program.

Adrian Knight (00:13:53) - Yeah, yeah, right.

Else Kramer (00:13:55) - You were like, okay, I can learn these things. Start my company, learn the first things, and then learn as I go along, which I think a lot of smart people don't realize that they have the capacity to do that. Right? You don't need to go get an MBA. I mean, if you want to, by all means do it. But it tends to be very expensive as well.

Adrian Knight (00:14:15) - So. So buying and selling businesses is a very it's a very funny thing because when you a lot of people when you talk to them about it, they initially think of, oh, you have to be an accountant or you have to have, you know, a numbers whiz.

Adrian Knight (00:14:30) - But yeah.

Else Kramer (00:14:31) - CFO, you know, track record, whatever, definitely.

Adrian Knight (00:14:34) - Exactly that. But in many, in many ways, I mean, when you're dealing, it depends on the size of the business. But the area I tend to focus on is businesses that are sort of below 5 million in annual revenue, and most of them are sort of 2 million and below. And when you're when you're working with owners of businesses that you know at that level that the numbers almost work against you because it's actually about relationships and building relationships and trust with people. And you know, in most cases you're you're speaking to someone about their life's work. They've spent 20, 30 years plus building this business. And, um, they reached a stage where they want to move on. It's a very emotional process for them and for a lot of them. They've got huge amounts of their sort of wealth and not just wealth, but pride and identity. It's like their.

Else Kramer (00:15:31) - Child, right? Almost.

Adrian Knight (00:15:32) - Exactly.

Adrian Knight (00:15:33) - So if you go in with a spreadsheet, you're not really respecting that that journey, but you go in as a human and an authentic one, and you sit down and you really talk to them. That's how you that's how you do it. And I sort of haven't had haven't started a business. I recognize I recognize that with other business owners. And so I felt that you can't learn to do this by theory. You certainly can't learn to do it by M&A. This was a case of going out one step in front of the other, putting aside the fear or feeling the fear and just having a conversation. And and yeah, it just sort of evolved from there.

Else Kramer (00:16:13) - And what about I think people will be thinking, okay, to buy businesses even if they're relatively small, you need a lot of money.

Adrian Knight (00:16:23) - So it is a big it's normally the first the the the first statement that comes to people's mind. But um.

Else Kramer (00:16:32) - Yeah. Are you a millionaire? Like what? I mean what gives.

Adrian Knight (00:16:36) - Yeah exactly. Mean so I've so. I've used this skill set to build a group of companies in the children's education sector, and my reasons for doing that is because it's not just about the commercials. It's about actually something more than that. But hands on heart, I haven't used like, I didn't have a big bank of savings. I didn't have anything really.

Else Kramer (00:17:03) - The reason I'm asking is because this is going to, you know, prohibit people from actually taking the steps of doing this while they think so many smart people would massively enjoy doing what you're doing and could add like an insane amount of value and it would, you know, be constantly engaging to them. But think this is such a massive barrier to thinking I need so much cash. This is never going to happen.

Adrian Knight (00:17:21) - Yeah, that's just it. And and I mean, the short answer is you don't because the key when you're when you're doing this is you have to recognize that there's risk and particularly there's risk in smaller businesses. And so, um, even if a business has a price tag that goes into the hundreds of thousands and even like the millions, like it's very often sitting down with the owner or owners of that business and saying to them, look, you know, essentially what I'm buying here is contracts and it's you've got your team in place.

Adrian Knight (00:17:52) - But I've never had a business where some at least some aspects of the team didn't leave, like there's no security here. And so you have to and this is the key. You have to structure the the deal for buying that business in a way that protects you. Um, because nasties will come up. And as you know, as someone who likes problem solving and those intellectual challenges like you kind of welcome them, but not when you've got like your house on the line or anything like that.

Else Kramer (00:18:22) - Exactly.

Adrian Knight (00:18:23) - Which is why you don't do that. And a lot of business owners, they will they will push back at first because they're expecting a big bag of cash so they can go off on their world cruise the next day. And I've literally had a a business owner and his wife go off on holiday the next day. And it was a night, actually.

Else Kramer (00:18:41) - You signed?

Adrian Knight (00:18:41) - Oh, my God. Yeah, literally within 24 hours. And it was a nightmare because there's so many things you need to know from them because they are the business to a large degree.

Adrian Knight (00:18:51) - And so it's about getting on a getting on a mutual page and into sort of a mutual understanding where you both recognize that actually this can work, but it means working together and this is where it falls back to the relationship and the trust aspect. So you don't need loads of of cash. I certainly wouldn't recommend putting like any sort of like real financial assets and, you know, even cash in the bank at risk here. There's much smarter ways of approaching this.

Else Kramer (00:19:22) - I love this in so many ways because as you said, it is this beautiful combination of puzzles, right? It is finding something that you want to buy. How do you go about that? Like, how do you scout for for for companies?

Adrian Knight (00:19:36) - It's one of the more. I want to say the harder parts of the process, but there's a lot of businesses out there that you don't want to touch and for various reasons. And the first step is actually understanding what do you want and what are you looking for? And, and and actually just articulating what good looks like.

Adrian Knight (00:19:56) - And then once you once you have a like a framework for that, then it's a question in most cases are being proactive so directly approaching um that the owners of businesses like that now I'm not talking about picking up the phone and cold calling. No one likes doing that. Yeah, there's much more softer, warmer ways in which you can approach people, whether that be sending them a letter as an example of that. Um, yeah, they, there's a variety of different methods, but it's all about I'm always keeping it at the forefront of my mind that I'm looking to build a relationship and a rapport with someone there. And so even the manner in which I approach people is very important to me. Um, but then as you start moving down this journey, you like the table start to turn, so these businesses start to find you out because they have sort of heard that you are, you know, sort of ethical, moral, and you're sort of, you know, always approach trying to do the do it in the right way and what's the best for party.

Adrian Knight (00:21:00) - So they want to work. They want to sort of speak to you and work with you.

Else Kramer (00:21:04) - I love that you're saying this because I just pulled the next card and it is values. Oh, isn't that beautiful? Yeah. So are you consciously do you consciously work with your values or is it more kind of underlying? Read threads through everything you do.

Adrian Knight (00:21:20) - So I, um. So last summer, I. So I've acquired several businesses over the last few years. And last summer I, I sold my very first acquisition, uh, which was nice. Um, and in many ways, the biggest mistake I made there was that I should have sold it sooner. Um, but either way, I had the summer off and we had a really lovely sort of three week holiday with Vicky. I seem to be wife and daughter and I spent a lot of time really asking myself some quite deep questions. And I went through like a, like a, like a certain process. And I came out of that with what I've sort of termed as my my personal Bible.

Adrian Knight (00:22:06) - So within that Bible and I'm not just like I'm not a religious person, I'm spiritual, but I'm I don't I don't. Yeah, like if you.

Else Kramer (00:22:17) - Have a problem with the word Bible, they can just translate it to manifesto or whatever.

Adrian Knight (00:22:21) - Yes, exactly that. So I created this sort of Bible manifesto, and within that I clearly articulated certain things, such as what was my definition of success. So success for me is being my integrated, authentic self. I listed all of my moving, my positive, moving towards value. So I value. So I value adventure. I value integrity, I value contribution. And then I listed all of my negative values that I move away from. And so things like embarrassment, humiliation, etcetera. And so I've reviewed that every week. It's in my diary every week. And so when approaching these conversations, I'm just so clear on where I'm coming from, and I think people pick up on that.

Else Kramer (00:23:11) - So I think this is a beautiful like process for listeners actually to borrow from you and go through them themselves, right? Get very clear on what your basic values are and then check in.

Else Kramer (00:23:22) - Am I moving towards or away from them? Yeah, Yeah, I love that. That's beautiful. And I think people feel that and they see that and think also this is where the difference between the short game and the long game comes in, right? Yeah. If you're in it for the long run, you better have values and and that is going to stand you in such a good stead with people because they're going to know. And as you build a reputation, as you said, it just becomes easier and easier and easier. Okay, next card is about challenging yourself. Now, you already said you like extreme things. Yeah. Yeah, right. Um, so pictures on LinkedIn of you in the cold. Tell us more. Does everything. What about challenging yourself?

Adrian Knight (00:24:06) - Um, yeah. So in in March of this year, I went on a like a small expedition with a group of people in the Arctic Circle. And we I'm very much into sort of like endurance events, but also, um, really like sort of weightlifting, like that intersection of strength and endurance.

Adrian Knight (00:24:26) - And I also love to travel. So I've started to sort of combine all of that. And so we spent, um, six days in the Arctic Circle. Uh, we were sort of cross-country skiing. We camped out. It was -17°C, which was a different level of experience. Um, we even climbed a mountain there as well, and it was just the most phenomenal experience on so many different levels. One, because you're in such a unique environment, but um, you know, I do this very, I say selfishly and I mean that term in the positive phrase rather than the negative phrases associated with. But I do it for me and for my personal growth. And every time I go on these trips or these adventures, I come back a change. And I'd like to think a better person, even if a small component. So so yeah, that was in March. I've done my first ultramarathon across northern England in June, which was great fun. Next year I'm.

Else Kramer (00:25:26) - Looking at okay, hang on, my friends like this don't compete.

Else Kramer (00:25:31) - Ultramarathon great fun. How many miles or kilometers is an ultramarathon.

Adrian Knight (00:25:37) - That was 70 so.

Else Kramer (00:25:39) - Like consecutively.

Adrian Knight (00:25:42) - Yeah without Yeah so yeah it was a so I'm very active on Instagram and I was doing like basically captured the whole event on Instagram. So like updating my story. So there's one where sort of crossing the start line, like touching the, the big inflatable above you as you cross at 7 a.m. And then one sort of touching the finish line as you came in. It was just gone 3:15 on some like the next morning. Um amazing just yeah so much fun amazing.

Else Kramer (00:26:12) - I think the beauty of stuff like this is, is I mean it's there's a couple of aspects to it. When I think back like on the couple of like physical things did like getting a black belt in Aikido, like just pushing yourself beyond what you think you're capable of. Right. Our bodies are so amazing. And we just, I don't know, our brains, like, no, can't do that. And then you do it and you're like, Oh, fuck me.

Else Kramer (00:26:35) - I could, right?

Adrian Knight (00:26:37) - That was it. And I was I was really making a point of capturing my state of mind on again on Instagram as I was going through this. And I remember and it's on my Instagram profile, like in the highlights you can see the exact video where I'm about 50 miles in and I'm sort of like walking along, like half limping and saying that my legs, you know, physically my legs went around 18, 19 miles. And ever since then, it's been a pure mental game. And so the physical a physical body astounds me. But our our mental capacity. Yeah, like no pun intended, blows my mind.

Else Kramer (00:27:13) - So that's so good. Yeah. And and when you get and it's a very I mean for some people it becomes a very dangerous game because they get addicted to the adrenaline and then they push their bodies beyond its capacity, Right. And they break things. So how do you how do you sort of dance in that sort of sweet spot where you push yourself beyond but you or maybe you do break things? Tell me.

Adrian Knight (00:27:39) - Well, no, I mean, I'm fortunate. Touch wood. I've never broken a bone in my body. But I go into these events where I'm I'm not focused on the clock. It's not about finishing in a particular time. Um, my I always go into every one of these events with is like me versus me. I'm doing it for me. Love it. Yeah. The I'm going to cross that finish line. I already know I'm going to cross it before I've even taken off. I don't care about the time and I'm completely open and relaxed to everything that will naturally come up during that. So whether it's, you know, your t shirts rubbing or if you twist your ankle, whatever that is, I'm totally open

and accepting of that because, yeah, these are the many tests that come up during this longer event. And it's and that's where the growth is.

Else Kramer (00:28:29) - Okay, Hang on. This is a perfect metaphor for building business.

Adrian Knight (00:28:33) - Yeah. Yes.

Else Kramer (00:28:34) - Yeah, totally. Mean, I'm getting goosebumps because this is first of all, you decide you're going to do it and it doesn't, right? It's like the decision because people are often like, I'm you know, I've started a couple of businesses as well and we were like, how did you do that? And like, it's not a question of like, is it going to work? It's it's going to work.

Else Kramer (00:28:53) - I'm figuring out how it's going to work. And I'll keep asking it until I figured it out. Like, you know, giving up is not an option. So that's like the first thing. And second, being completely open to all the bullshit along the way. Love that. That's beautiful.

Adrian Knight (00:29:09) - This actually ties back to the very first question, which is the frustrations with yourself. And I said it was the impatience and I've got better, got better at that with, with age. And actually, like if you dive into that a bit deeper, it's the releasing of any, um, you know, sort of preconceived timeframes. It's the time aspect that tends to cause the most stress and frustration. And so now I just completely like let go and just sort of roll with things in it and it seems to work out significantly better.

Else Kramer (00:29:40) - Oh, my God, yes. I mean, in coaching we would frame this as, you know, it's not better here than there. That is what people have to learn.

Else Kramer (00:29:46) - They think if I get there, I'll feel better. And that's why everybody's in such a rush. But, you know, surprise, surprise, when you get there, you still feel the same way usually. So you might as well start feeling good where you're at, which is exactly what you're doing during these challenges. I love it that that is such a beautiful, beautiful metaphor. Um, and also like again, you've designed your own education, like parallel, right? How do you expand your, your comfort zone? How do you become more resilient? Love it. Beautiful. Okay, next card. Trust. Trusting yourself and trusting others, which I'm also super interested in.

Adrian Knight (00:30:24) - Yes. So this has been a very, very special journey for me, actually, like a personal journey of, um, of really attuning myself to my instincts and uh, yeah, just my instincts over the years. And I've managed to do that largely through journaling. And so interesting, um, in the very beginning it was, um.

Adrian Knight (00:30:55) - I had a feeling that I should do this, but I wasn't quite sure because I hadn't built no real trust around my around my instincts. And then I'd write it down in my journal and then two weeks later, something would happen. And if I'd ever follow the instinct to haven't hadn't I could literally go back and read. And you started to connect these dots. And then it was that process combined with, um, again, just like pulling myself in different situations. I've done a

lot of traveling. Um, I've been in the most remarkable, uh, sort of like situations where even now I look back, I think, blimey, um, but just by purely following, my instincts have somehow managed to come out and come through those. And now can you.

Else Kramer (00:31:40) - Now we want. Sorry, but now we want an example of that.

Adrian Knight (00:31:44) - Okay, I'll give you the most I probably give you the most prominent one in my mind. So when I was 27, I was in a really unhappy place and everything in my life wasn't the way I wanted it to be.

Adrian Knight (00:31:57) - And I really didn't know what to do. And I've always had this great love for America. And so I decided that I was basically just going to go buy a one way ticket to America and go to America, which is actually harder. Like it's easier said than done because you need a ticket out to go into America. And I didn't know this until I went to the airport, but I had no money as well. So I had \$600 to my name. And I managed to get on this flight to Los Angeles. And I was sitting there thinking, I have absolutely no idea how this is going to pan out and I'm probably going to be flying home within a week because I've run out of money. Um, but I was gone for nearly a year in the end, and I managed to work my way up the West Coast. I spent a month, a month living and working on a hobby farm in Vancouver Island in Canada. And then I ended up in the Caribbean of all places. But within that it was very much a, um, like kind of hand to mouth.

Adrian Knight (00:32:54) - So I remember walking down the street in San Francisco and going into a 7-Eleven, and I literally had my last \$5 to my name and was like, they I used to love these Burrito's They, they'd done there for a couple, a couple of dollars each. So I bought two of those and I walked out eating them, but thinking I just have no idea how I'm going to survive this. And then I sort of carried on walking along and then I just had this hunch to actually just go off down a different street and take a slightly different, slightly longer direction. And so I followed it and I found \$20 on the floor and it lasted me the next hand on heart and it lasted me the next, you know, the next couple of days. And it was just this, um, it was just this case of I couldn't see far ahead, only the next step. And, and, and it was just following and that next step and trusting your instincts and yeah, it just built up.

Adrian Knight (00:33:47) - It built up this sort of trust and inner knowing where I don't even question it now. Like, it's just implicit trust in myself. And that's played a big part, I think, in, in kind of how things have evolved and think.

Else Kramer (00:34:02) - Did you when you were a kid, did you have lots of different like jobs to make money or did you never work?

Adrian Knight (00:34:08) - Yes. No, No. So I was, um. I've always been a worker. Yeah. I'm definitely more of a workhorse and a show horse type person. Um, so when I was just. Just turning 13, I was obsessed with cars. And I still love sort of cars and motorbikes now. And, and even though I couldn't drive until I was 17, I was I made a decision that actually I was going to

start saving. And and then. Yeah, but I wasn't old enough to get a job. And then the day after my 13th birthday, I managed to, to secure a paper round, local paper rounds.

Adrian Knight (00:34:43) - And then, um, which was great. And I was saving money, but I wanted to save more. And so by the time I was 15, I had five paper rounds that I had franchised out.

Else Kramer (00:34:54) - Scaled up. Yeah.

Adrian Knight (00:34:56) - And I was working in the paper shop, um, like dealing with local customers and signing new accounts. And then, um, yeah, I ended up winning Paper Boy of the Year.

Else Kramer (00:35:06) - Oh, my God. This is so going to go in the show notes.

Adrian Knight (00:35:11) - Newspaper cousin, actually. But it was.

Else Kramer (00:35:13) - Amazing.

Adrian Knight (00:35:14) - A classic case of one step in front of the other. Yeah. This goal.

Else Kramer (00:35:20) - But the reason I ask is because I think this also builds a lot of trust as it has might be my experience. I also remember getting very excited about being old enough to get my first paper round. Always babysitting, always working, always hustling, making money, buying and selling on like what used to be queens, all the things. And I also never worry about like where my next dollar or pound or euro is going to come from.

Else Kramer (00:35:42) - I just know I'll make it work because I know how to work, right? There's there's that kind of trust.

Adrian Knight (00:35:48) - That just it and and I've really got that and I found myself in so I recorded a video of. Video a few months back where with the group of companies now there's I mean, we've got 17 employees. And with one of them, the the the big turnaround quite an intense turnaround and doing at the moment. Our finance director was absolutely stressing because we had payroll due on the Friday. And like all of these bizarre and crazy things had happened that we had a lot of money owed to us, but it hadn't come in. And she was she was like tearing her hair out, saying, How are you staying so calm? How are you staying so calm? But I just instinctively knew that payroll would be sorted and so didn't worry about it. And then it was the day before, the day before payroll, we miraculously got a check in the post, which we couldn't reconcile. Like we didn't know where it come from, but it was enough to, to cover it, like, okay, like and that's sort of, yeah.

Else Kramer (00:36:48) - So good. Okay. And then trust in other people, which is very important when it comes to what you're doing.

Adrian Knight (00:36:54) - Yeah, I've probably struggled with this a bit more if I'm being honest. So, um. Yeah, there's, there's a very small circle of, of people who, um, obviously like Vicky, my, my partner and um, um, uh, like my mum for example, a very small circle. People who I again trust implicitly. Um, I say implicitly like. I don't think I trust anyone as much as I trust myself. Like being very, like, transparent there. Um, but certainly with as our team has grown from a work perspective with employees, um, there's been, you know, I've had my fingers burnt multiple times with people and even yesterday with someone when I found something out about one of our employees and it was like they've just been sort of deceiving us and it, and I think it can be quite easy. And I even said this to Vicky when I called her on the way home last night that I'm trying not to be cynical about.

Adrian Knight (00:37:55) - Like to have that sort of default cynical. Yes. Approach about people and trust because I really love people and I really believe in people. But um, yeah, so I probably struggle with that a bit. A bit more, I'd say.

Else Kramer (00:38:09) - And how do you manage it then? Because you're still hiring people, right? Like, again, I'm asking because I know so many false brained humans who are solopreneurs and who could actually really build something big and beautiful should they want to. But the biggest barrier to them is building a team. Of course, there's also like, you know, dealing with all that, especially with stuff like ADHD, but trusting other people as well as and think I'm sure it's going to be similar or it has been similar for you seeing someone else do something and then think, I could do this in like at least half the time.

Adrian Knight (00:38:42) - Yeah, yeah.

Else Kramer (00:38:44) - Yeah.

Adrian Knight (00:38:45) - Yeah. No, definitely. And. For at the beginning of my journey, I was very much wanted to do it myself because it had to be done in a particular way.

Adrian Knight (00:38:56) - And like as a business owner, you will always be the biggest bottleneck to the growth of your business. And to grow a business you have to as a business owner, you have to learn to delegate and you can only delegate on a foundation of trust, which is directly to your directly to the question. What I've I think I've got a lot better with this, but I've created a well, I'll say created. I don't know where I've heard it, but we have a mantra that we say in the business and I'm always saying this now, which is hire for attitude, train for skill. And so many times we've hired for skill, but the attitude wasn't there. And every time that's where the problem come from. Um, but now it's always about attitude first. Even if they have haven't got the direct skills we need, we will invest and train them up. And that hasn't actually let me down yet. Like get the right attitude from the right people in place and it's significantly easier to let go and to to trust them.

Adrian Knight (00:39:57) - And and I'm yet to be proven wrong against that.

Else Kramer (00:40:00) - So and I also want to flip this and say do you people listening, do you hear this as in so many people, especially women, don't apply to jobs. They're not like 100% qualified for. But if employers start hiring for attitude and you have the right attitude, by all means start applying. Seriously.

Adrian Knight (00:40:18) - I can honestly say the, um, uh, like the female employees that we have in our business, I just, I like, I don't want to sound bad against the men, but they, they are superb, but they are like, genuinely the best. And actually I had a bit of a problem, um, sort of last year where we didn't actually have enough men in the business. It was to kind.

Else Kramer (00:40:45) - Of balance it out.

Adrian Knight (00:40:46) - Exactly. And you know, that balance is, is important, but yeah, it just blows my mind that someone may or female may not apply for a job because I feel they haven't got the skills.

Adrian Knight (00:40:57) - If the attitude is there and if an employer doesn't see that, then, um, that's their loss and there will be employers that will. So.

Else Kramer (00:41:07) - Next card building a team. Yes, right. So how mean this is going to be your superpower because this shit is working for you, one of your many superpowers. How do you build a team that works? Because it's not just about hiring the right people, right? Even hiring for attitude, all that kind of stuff. Then how do you get them to work together?

Adrian Knight (00:41:30) - So you you mentioned the word earlier, which was the word puzzle and the many sort of like problems, like solving a puzzle. Well, building a business is like is like putting together a puzzle. And the starting point is actually recognizing, what piece are you in that puzzle? Um, so again, I look back on my, my earlier days in business and I was there trying to do things that actually I wasn't the best suited person to do that, but I thought it was what I had to do and I and I wanted to do it even though I was miserable at doing it.

Adrian Knight (00:42:08) - Um, and it, it just came to a recognition that actually, like, this is a bit joy doing. This is the bit that, um, I'm probably better at than the other like puzzle pieces. Focus on that and just find a way of getting the next puzzle piece in and the next puzzle piece. And, and that was and still is my approach to, to team building. And our puzzle is far from complete.

Else Kramer (00:42:33) - Far probably never will be. Right. This is like always shifting. It's a dynamic living thing. Yeah, but like I'm, I got disc certified. I don't know if you use disc a lot in the UK, but that was to me was super useful understanding like, oh, people just have very different qualities and different communicative styles and you really need to talk about that and be clear about it and figure it out. And then you can work beautifully together. And of course there's still going to be confusion, fuck ups, all the things, but that's part of the game.

Adrian Knight (00:43:03) - That's just it. And wouldn't, um, if, you know, if someone is listening to this and they are either thinking of starting a business or they have a business and they they want to start building their team, I like wouldn't overthink it because it's very easy to do that. Like there will be some part of the business that you are clearly not good at or you don't enjoy. For a lot of people, it could be finance. A lot of small business owners don't enjoy finance, so that's okay. Start with the finance piece and also recognize that not every person you hire is going to work out.

Else Kramer (00:43:35) - Exactly.

Adrian Knight (00:43:36) - Yeah. If it doesn't work out, that's okay because you're doing them a favor as well as yourself, a favor by confronting that reality rather than trying to, you know, put a square peg into a round hole. So.

Else Kramer (00:43:48) - And you're collecting data as in you're learning what works and doesn't work. Right? Because people can get so, so completely depressed, like, oh, I tried hiring people, but it didn't work out.

Else Kramer (00:43:56) - I'm like, Yeah, next, right? Like, what did you learn?

Adrian Knight (00:44:00) - Yeah. Yeah. I think the important part to build in a team is having a vision like why you're there. So I spend most of my day talking about why we're doing what we're doing rather than you got to do this or we got to do that and always really like reflect on it. I'm talking about the why probably more than anything else.

Else Kramer (00:44:21) - So why are you doing what you're doing?

Adrian Knight (00:44:24) - So for us, and particularly for me, it's about the kids. Um, so I was in a very different industry of, of mean just about three years ago. I was in a very different industry. Um, but having so was nearly one at the time. It was in 2020 and having been exposed to this whole new world, which is children. Yes. Fascinated and, um, extremely tired. But I was sort of fascinated with this whole new new world. And I've always seen business as a vehicle for not just making money, but for driving, like positive change, um, at more of a scale.

Adrian Knight (00:45:04) - And I never really knew where to focus that. But I saw this world of kids and I had always serendipitous events sort of happen that really made me recognize that actually those sort of first years of a person's life are so influential, influential and transformational. And that focus in. Like my time and my efforts on that part of someone's life journey would be a life well-spent. Um, and so when I say it's about the kids, it truly is. We are building a, um, an integrated learning experience for children because everything's quite fragmented. And so, um, with all of the major decisions, there's been some pretty big, tough decisions I've had to make over the last, over this month. Um, and with the team, like it's always first and foremost, this is about the kids and keeping that in context. And then from there, after the kids, it's about the team. And so forth. So yeah.

Else Kramer (00:46:04) - But there's a bit more about that because I know what you're building, or at least I think I know, but what are you building for the kids?

Adrian Knight (00:46:10) - So, so the company is called Spectacular Group and it's a, it's essentially a group of companies that come together to provide this this integrated sort of learning experience where we really want to shape someone's like a child's development and growth as they grow older.

Adrian Knight (00:46:31) - And so I started with buying a very small franchise network called Talking Tots, which does speech in language communication under fives. Um, and that was very tiny. But I done that as a commitment to myself that I wanted to play a part in this, however small. And then that sort of led to buying a much larger business called Joe Jingles, which provides music and movement classes again, to under five. And between those two businesses, we educate around 10,000 under five year olds every academic term. And then last year, I had the opportunity to buy a business that builds playgrounds.

Else Kramer (00:47:14) - And so fun. Seriously?

Adrian Knight (00:47:17) - And but but sort of gone into that. And there's a lot of things wrong with that business. And it's been a real, um, it's been an exhilarating ride. I've had a great time, but, but we've sort of turned that inside out. And so that business now builds sort of outdoor learning environments for mainly for primary schools and nurseries in the UK, but they are based around the like the national academic curriculum.

Adrian Knight (00:47:45) - So he says one key stage two eyfs And so, um, piece by piece we are, you know, sort of inside and now outside the classroom starting to shape these environments and these this sort of content that's being being delivered to these sort of young children. And yeah, I mean, this is less than three years old. Um, it's all been done through acquisition and yeah, we've still got a long way to go.

Else Kramer (00:48:12) - So what is your biggest learning? Because you said like, I've had to make a lot of tough choices over the past month and she's What is your biggest learning from, from that, from this sort of recent period?

Adrian Knight (00:48:23) - Um, so I was literally talking about this this week with Vicky, so. I've had to make some very tough decisions, toughest decisions in my life over the last 3 to 4 weeks. Um, and in the context, we've had a lot going on in our personal lives. We've had a close family member passed away and various other things sort of happen.

Adrian Knight (00:48:46) - And I was really struggling with these decisions. And the insight that I came to was that the decisions themselves were clear. Like commercially, these decisions were clear to make. And so that wasn't what I was struggling with. What I was actually struggling with was that in making these decisions, I had to lose an old part of my identity that, you know, that

was who I am. This is, you know, that part of me, that was me. But actually it was an acceptance that, no, that wasn't me. If that makes sense. Yeah.

Else Kramer (00:49:20) - Or at least that was an old version and you sort of transformed into a new version.

Adrian Knight (00:49:25) - Well, transforming, I would say. And, um. Yeah, so that was by far the biggest and a really battled with that, the biggest sort of struggle. Again, this all goes back to the personal rather than the, like the outside.

Else Kramer (00:49:40) - Yeah. And that that is the thing I think if you care because I'm guessing that that is something that happened here as well.

Else Kramer (00:49:47) - If you care a lot about the personal relationships and some stuff is also much harder. Yeah, yeah, yeah. So there is that that price to pay on the flip side. But I'm just looking at the next card because in our chat we talked about you said like, business to me also is like almost an art, right? It's, it's something creative and I love that, that I have the same experience when people are like, Oh, especially from the arts world where I've been active as well. Like business is just boring shit around money and like, you have no idea. So how do you see business as an art?

Adrian Knight (00:50:19) - Yeah, it's funny. I don't know where this has come from, but again, it's sort of, sort of I could trace it back to my late teens when I just knew I wanted to buy and sell businesses and to turn businesses around. And I always viewed business like if someone asked me like. Who I am, I would say, well, more creative than a business person.

Adrian Knight (00:50:41) - I'm more I'm far more of a creative than like, you know, some business person. And it just happens that business is my canvas. And so the different components of business, like learning how to market business or business finance suggests they're my paint brushes and a different paints and you know, you upgrade and you get new ones and and over the last maybe sort of 15 years I've been sort of experimenting I guess with, oh, I try this painting or that painting and had a lot of failures, but certainly with spectacular group is very different. It feels like, no, I'm actually approaching this blank canvas and starting to apply and build something that for me is a piece of art and that's genuinely how I how I look at it. Um, so yeah, it's an amazing creative outlet and it, it, it tests in all the right ways. Um, so.

Else Kramer (00:51:41) - I always say running a business is like free personal development training forever in, right? Like, it never, it never stops. But there was something else.

Else Kramer (00:51:51) - I just want to ask about that. And now it's gone. But it will come back to me. Um, when you come back to me, comes back to me ask. But I'm also curious. I always love to ask guests about any rituals they have or whether they've done something in their physical space to help them be more happy, productive, successful, you name it. What does that look like for you?

Adrian Knight (00:52:12) - Yes, and for me, I have a really clear structure to my mornings, so I've always enjoyed getting up early in the morning. Um, and I'll get up at 4 a.m. in the morning and I've sort of worked to that. Like when I've started to get up early, it was like, oh, 6:00 or 6:30 and then move back. But um, seven days a week, you know, every day of I'm up at 4 a.m. and I'm going through a particular routine, so I will, um, you know, go on stairs, make a cup of tea. Very British.

Adrian Knight (00:52:46) - Um.

Else Kramer (00:52:47) - Milk or tea? First we have to have that discussion.

Adrian Knight (00:52:50) - Do anything about cup of tea in hands. Um, but then I will read ten pages of a book every single day, and it's phenomenal just how many books I've read because of that one tiny little habit, um, will then meditate 15 minutes. I will then go and exercise. And so I'll go to the gym and I'll have a good workout and there'll be a number of other things I do within that first sort of three hours of the day, every day. And after that, so about seven, maybe half, seven at a push. My daughter's either up or she's getting up. So then I'll come back and I'm dad and I'm really enjoy that time at making her breakfast and just having fun with her, really. But I'm approaching not just my daughter and my family first and foremost, but the rest of my day. I'm approaching phone calls, meetings, emails, everything from a very different perspective. And I never fully appreciated the the significance of this.

Adrian Knight (00:53:48) - And I can't emphasize this enough like the word of significance. It wasn't until it was this the summer last year when we went on a family holiday, it was a week long holiday, and I'd really nailed and sort of worked on getting this routine right after selling, um, after selling my first acquisition. And we was on this holiday and it was a beautiful holiday, but felt awful, like, felt really awful. And I was getting loads of rest and enjoying time in the pool, but I just couldn't put my finger on it. And it was the last day when I got up and I was like, That's it. I haven't been doing my routine and everything, and it was just that it all clicked into place. And so ever since then I've been like hand on heart, the best part of my day, the best part of my day. And I go to bed at night genuinely like looking forward to waking to waking up. And it's had the most profound impact. Like more than words could could explain.

Else Kramer (00:54:42) - Really think this is a massive gift you're giving yourself every day?

Adrian Knight (00:54:46) - It is. It really is.

Else Kramer (00:54:47) - Yeah. When you talk about building self trust, right? Like you're also saying I matter and how the way in my health matters and my mental health matters like the way I feel matters and I'm going to prioritize it above everything else.

Adrian Knight (00:55:00) - This is this was just so profound for me. It was it just has such a massive impact that I've I had, you know, a few close friends and acquaintances come and say, what's happened? Like.

Else Kramer (00:55:13) - Are you okay? Basically.

Adrian Knight (00:55:16) - Yes. But things are noticeably different on the outside. And you know what's going on here. And I would always go back saying, look, this is the power, this is this is the source of it. And so I found myself in a position where they're saying, well, can you show us what you're doing? And so I started working with a couple of those and seeing how I posted about it on Instagram this morning and seeing how their lives have started to change.

Adrian Knight (00:55:37) - Has been the most humbling experience and just reinforce that this is the secret sauce. It's that first part of that day which you give to yourself. That is the key to all of it.

Else Kramer (00:55:48) - Yeah, 100%. And. Almost like allowing yourself that because we're so conditioned. Like it's selfish to want to carve out time for yourself, for things that seem kind of superficial in a way. I'm not I'm not saying there at all, but like, you know, shouldn't you be, I don't know, working, etcetera, etcetera. And this is actually the deepest work you can do. Think, right, taking care of you and growing learning, staying healthy, meditating 100%.

Adrian Knight (00:56:21) - This this goes back to the boundaries again. Having at this time like very like protect it. But before the reason I stumbled across this was because, um, like previously I was getting up at four but going straight on to emails and I had this complete sort of breakdown and the, the like severe anxiety. And that was kind of the precursor to this sort of journey of self-discovery.

Adrian Knight (00:56:47) - And now, having been on both sides of it, I know which side I want to be on. Yeah, you're not.

Else Kramer (00:56:52) - Going to go back right away. Never. Let's talk a bit about boredom. Mm. Do you even ever get bored, or is there too much going on?

Adrian Knight (00:57:04) - Um. There is. I rarely get bored. And I've always been the same, actually, because I will always. I'm so curious about life. About. Myself about everything that and also being yeah, quite strong sort of ADHD as well. Like I didn't really find myself in a situation where am bored, um, because I'm always, well, what about this? And I've always want to learn that and I think I just read this and so it really happens.

Else Kramer (00:57:37) - And I think you've also designed a life that is very not boring.

Adrian Knight (00:57:41) - Yeah, but then but then on the flip side of that, there are times when, you know, I feel like it'd be nice just to have a lazy Sunday today and to lay on the sofa and, you know, eat my favourite crisps and to watch films back to back.

Adrian Knight (00:57:56) - It doesn't happen because we've got a three year old at home and stuff like that. But it it's. Yeah. Try to get a sense of balance so that burnout doesn't doesn't keep it. But even then, like balance, like half a day of of doing nothing. Right. I'm ready to go again.

Else Kramer (00:58:15) - So I think it's an illusion again for so many of us that we should like there's this thought like, Oh, I'll take the whole week off or and I'll just sit back and relax and you'll be like, This sucks, you know, after like six hours, let's go do something.

Adrian Knight (00:58:35) - I always relate it to. I love like, I love reading autobiographies and I love, like, watching interviews and hearing successful people talk, particularly in like the latter part of their lives. And I'm not just talking about business. They could be, you know, success in any art, art form or whatever. And the common theme that they all say is, you know, when people ask them about retiring like they're in their 80s, never, why would I retire from something I love doing? And I feel like that like in like having sort of worked very hard to shape a life where, like, it's not work, it's my lifestyle.

Adrian Knight (00:59:09) - And why not want to spend time doing something I love? Like, it doesn't make any sense. It doesn't.

Else Kramer (00:59:14) - It just does not compute, right? I have the same thing. I'm like, Why would I want to stop working? I just don't get it. It's completely lost.

Adrian Knight (00:59:24) - It's that art form. It's a self expression. So why would want to stop expressing myself if I get enough from it? Which is a different I do appreciate it's a different headspace from if you are, you know, working in a corporate role, just as an example, doesn't have, you know, nothing against corporate, um, but you've not identified those passions.

Else Kramer (00:59:45) - Or if you're in a factory, I mean, of course you want to retire. That makes perfect sense.

Adrian Knight (00:59:49) - Yeah, yeah, exactly, exactly.

Else Kramer (00:59:51) - But if you do what you love, it doesn't make sense at all to, like, ever stop doing it and think it's just a constant, like refining and honing again as an artist would and getting even closer to what you're meant to be doing on this planet.

Adrian Knight (01:00:05) - Right? Absolutely. Yeah.

Else Kramer (01:00:06) - Yeah. So good. Okay. School books. Me First of all, how is your school experience and how has that effort influenced the work you're doing?

Adrian Knight (01:00:18) - Yeah. So I, um. So I was very bored at school. Not surprised. Very, very bored. Was often my head's in the clouds. Um, busy, like, sort of mapping out how I was going to expand my paper around Empire and stuff like that. But, um, no. So I have to see purpose in what I'm doing, and I just couldn't find the purpose in putting into my study. So I think it's typical of a lot of people with ADHD, like I did just enough to keep my head above water. Um, and this is when I was in sort of secondary school. I went into college, uh, wanting to be a doctor.

Else Kramer (01:00:59) - Oh, interesting.

Adrian Knight (01:01:01) - So wanted to be a doctor. And so my first term I was studying maths, chemistry and human biology and straight A's across the lot, which sort of made me think actually, maybe, like, maybe, you know, I'm not.

Adrian Knight (01:01:15) - Maybe I'm smarter than I think I am, but I think I'm just like not stimulated. And then at the end of that first term, I started to, like, look more into the journey of being a doctor and recognising that actually like who I am. I couldn't see myself studying for seven years and so I quickly dropped down to see straight CS again. Um.

Else Kramer (01:01:37) - Motivation gone.

Adrian Knight (01:01:40) - Completely gone. And yeah, I somehow found myself at university, but I dropped out after three weeks because again, I was looking around and I couldn't see myself doing or taking this path in my life, even at that age. Um, so I had a very different educational experience because even though I dropped out at university, I started a student business, um, and ended up and it grew and it was really fun, fun time. And I ended up staying for three years at university but wasn't a student, so run.

Else Kramer (01:02:16) - The business.

Adrian Knight (01:02:18) - Exactly like we had all of these like student things going on. And it was a, it was a great education.

Adrian Knight (01:02:24) - Um, but yeah, so.

Else Kramer (01:02:28) - I love this because I think so many people with ADHD are insanely smart, but they've been told all their lives, like at least their school lives, like, oh, you know, if only you'd apply yourself more and you just don't have your shit together and they start thinking they're stupid or incompetent or whatever. And, you know, I'll even, you know, they'll come to me and say, Well, I'm not sure I should work with you because I don't think I'm that smart. And I'm like, Hang on. It's just a massive lie because you didn't fit into the school system, right? You didn't sort of tick the boxes of being studious and doing things properly and taking all the boxes. You didn't fit into that narrative of what it looks like to be smart and bright and you've kind of

internalized all that disapproval and now you think you're probably not that clever, which is such a massive waste, right? When people then sort of live their lives that way.

Adrian Knight (01:03:21) - I just love that Einstein quote, which is everybody is born a genius and they're 99% of the geniuses. Um, it's a wonderful quote because I really I truly believe that. I think that everybody is born, um, a genius and just has so much untapped intelligence and potential. But it's, but it's themselves that keep themselves back. Um, and those self-limiting ideas or thoughts that I'm not that smart or I can't hold my concentration. Like maybe you just haven't found the thing that using your words like you were put here to do. Exactly.

Else Kramer (01:04:00) - And then you will be able to like use that hyper focus and everything else just melts away and you're like, Oh, is it 12 already? Yeah.

Adrian Knight (01:04:09) - Yeah, yeah. Wednesday, Yeah.

Else Kramer (01:04:12) - Yeah. Um, pivot. Like there have been so many pivots in your life, I think, like, how many do you see when you look at it?

Adrian Knight (01:04:20) - Oh, hundreds. I mean.

Else Kramer (01:04:22) - Medicine, right? First of all.

Adrian Knight (01:04:25) - Even before that, I mean, my my mum and dad, I think were at their wits end when I was, uh, coming out of secondary school into college because I wanted to leave college.

Adrian Knight (01:04:36) - I was like, do I want to be a doctor now? I want to go. And my dad somehow managed to convince me to, to stay. And um, from that point forward in particular, I just tried so many different things and I didn't stick at anything, which I'm sure ADHD had a role in that, but and they were at their wits end. But why can't you just, you know, stick to something? And, but I just sort of said to them, Why, if I've tried something and I know I don't like it, why would I want to stick at it? And I saw.

Else Kramer (01:05:05) - Okay, hang on, say it louder for the people in the back. Can you say that again? Because people need to hear this.

Adrian Knight (01:05:12) - But if you try something and you know you don't like it, then what's the. The logical sense in sticking at it.

Else Kramer (01:05:19) - Surely self torture, right?

Adrian Knight (01:05:21) - Yeah. It would make more sense to go and try something else that you you take that feedback and you use that or maybe this be more suited and there's nothing wrong with that.

Adrian Knight (01:05:31) - And like I saw this at university I saw so because I stayed there for three years but wasn't part of the university system, I saw so many of my friends in degrees that they despise.

Else Kramer (01:05:42) - Yes. Oh, my God.

Adrian Knight (01:05:45) - And they like to get a degree. But are you going to use it? Well, no. And I said, Why are you doing it? Like, just I just couldn't get my head around it. And time is so precious. And, um, yeah, I just when it comes to pivots, I really believe that, you know, there is a balance because sometimes you just have to persevere like something's painful. The natural response is to pivot, but you have to you have to know what end result you're going for and know yourself well enough to know, actually, am I just taking the easy way out here? Like, is this worth persevering? Um, compared to when, you know, pivot? I'm all for pivots. I'm all for it.

Else Kramer (01:06:26) - And actually, about this question, I have an entire podcast episode on like, should you change your mind or are you just being flaky? Right.

Else Kramer (01:06:34) - That is the question. So how do you know you're not being flaky in your case?

Adrian Knight (01:06:40) - So again, it comes back to trust in myself. Yeah. To trust someone. Intuition. Um, the last, the last two months have been incredibly painful with this turnaround. And so many times I've had the opportunity to walk away and actually to like, to come away quite financially, like to do well, do well financially. Um, and so every option was saying, well, why don't you do that? You can walk away from this pain and you can do financially well. But it came back to I'm in this for the kids and that is that path even though it might be better for me personally is not what this is about. And so it's been very much a combination of my my sort of instincts and intuition and um, also just absolutely clear on my why. And why I'm doing this and just so pleased that have stuck it out. And as again, some don't want to like like add all of these different sort of behaviors to certain labels.

Adrian Knight (01:07:48) - But someone with ADHD like sticking something out, it's probably the hardest thing. Um, um. Yeah. Strength of purpose. Really? Yeah.

Else Kramer (01:07:56) - Yeah. I think it can be so powerful to have, um, a purpose. Why? And this is my next card, right? Like carrying about the bigger circle, your bigger impact. I think as humans were almost wired to want to help. Right? Mean people are so terrified of asking for help and I always say like people love helping. Yeah. Look at all the unsolicited advice in the world. Yeah, people love helping other people. Um, so how does, like, in addition to what we've already sort of touched upon. How does this show up in your work? Like caring about the bigger impact of what you do?

Adrian Knight (01:08:41) - I think, is that I think that bigger impacts in about. And for me that I think of the individual person rather than, you know, a certain scale or geography or however you sort of define that that bigger impact.

Adrian Knight (01:08:55) - But um, that is what is, that is, that is the driving force. So prior to say spectacular group, it was more the traditional, well, I'm in business to make money and it was about making a, you know, a commercially viable business that generated a profit. And um, quite honestly, I was miserable, uh, because I recognize that it was the, it needed to be more than that, which is why a sort of found myself on this journey going into the children's sector. But even that has overspill further now. So, um, you know, my days are busy and there's a lot of moving parts in group of companies, but I really enjoy carving out time like daily and weekly to be like shown others. Well, this is how I do my morning routine. And then there's like, like when you look at it from a black and white perspective, people are like, why? Why you? Why are you doing that? Or why you spend your time? But actually it's about that.

Adrian Knight (01:09:52) - It's about that. Um, it is selfish because I get personal fulfillment from that service to others. Yeah. So, um, yeah, I don't have that answer to your question. No, no.

Else Kramer (01:10:03) - Not at all. But it is selfish. But being selfish means that you can actually show up as like, a fun human to be around. I think that's another part. People tend to forget that we also need to be selfish to be like our best selves. Yeah, that sounds very quotable.

Adrian Knight (01:10:19) - You can't fill up someone else's copies if yours is empty. Exactly. You just can't, no matter the best will in the world. So, um, you need to put yourself first in order to put other people. Bursts in.

Else Kramer (01:10:32) - Yeah, Yeah, 100%. And it is like I think especially our culture, like more Protestant culture is so like, you know, no, others come first and you come last and think that's really insidious and it's very hard to sort of shake off and not feel actually guilty about carving out this time for yourself.

Else Kramer (01:10:50) - But once you start doing it, you'll just notice such a massive difference. And also it's the same with boundaries, actually, the massive service you're doing to the people around you, including your loved ones. I think when I figured out that my husband preferred for me to tell him like what I actually wanted, yeah, that was like a massive, massive game changer in our relationship. So I would really like this or I would really like to be left alone now or whatever. Amazing. Yeah, amazing.

Adrian Knight (01:11:19) - And. And it sounds so like, why wouldn't you like when you of said like that. But it's so to be in that place where. Well they should know and.

Else Kramer (01:11:30) - Exactly okay one more thing I didn't make a card on this which is interesting money right? Because you just said which I love, like I was in it for like making the

profit. And I it was just wasn't engaging enough. How do you look at money now? Because money is to so many people is such a loaded topic.

Else Kramer (01:11:49) - And it's, you know, it's taboo to want it. It's taboo to have it in some circles, but it can also be super fun and useful.

Adrian Knight (01:11:58) - I at the core of my beliefs around money and going back to that sort of personal Bible and personal manifesto, I've listed out my beliefs around money and the other aspects that's in there too.

Else Kramer (01:12:10) - Amazing.

Adrian Knight (01:12:11) - There's four like books within it, so I've got like a two year vision. So this is how I see like my relationships and like and one of the books is the sort of belief, the belief component and accrued wisdom as well. Like quote. So, um, but the core of my beliefs around money is I truly believe money is there to make good things happen for good people. And so, um, I particularly within business and much to the dismay of my finance director, like when we make a profit, I'm immediately like typical entrepreneur sort of characteristic. I'm immediately like, Well, we could do this better or we can do that better.

Adrian Knight (01:12:54) - I want to reinvest it back into, um, like the mission. And it's not always to get a bigger profit out. It could be to simply deliver something to a better standard or.

Else Kramer (01:13:06) - To improve product, right? Yeah.

Adrian Knight (01:13:08) - Because it's an art form. It's a yes. So I've and again with my just like with that sort of inner trust, I used to really be focused on making money and I sort of learned that the, the harder you chase money, the faster it runs away. So now I just like, I just let go, like you don't need to. I learnt this when traveling like. Yeah, it means you got your next meal and a roof over your head. Yeah, That's all you need, really. And the love of people around you who, you know, you want to be around us. That's it.

Else Kramer (01:13:42) - So there is so much power in that because there's so much freedom in that. Yeah. Yeah. You're not bound.

Adrian Knight (01:13:49) - Exactly. And it tends to attract more, uh, because you're.

Adrian Knight (01:13:56) - I'm not indifferent to it, but I feel like I'm moving to a place of indifference where I'm not quite there in my personal growth yet, but I feel like I, at some point in my life there will be and I suspect at that point is when it will really flood in because. Yeah.

Else Kramer (01:14:10) - Isn't it ironic?

Adrian Knight (01:14:12) - Yeah.

Else Kramer (01:14:14) - You have to be able to completely let go to, you know, get the thing basically.

Adrian Knight (01:14:20) - The attachments and detachment more accurately. So yeah so so I mean with yeah, it's all about right now. It's all about this sort of art form and, and doing what we can to sort of touch people's lives, like genuinely touch people's lives.

Else Kramer (01:14:35) - Love it. Okay. Final question, which I always ask is, can you think of a person that you would love to put in the spotlight like that? You think, oh, my God, they're doing amazing work in the world and they deserve way more attention than they're currently getting.

Adrian Knight (01:14:54) - Oh, it's such a good question.

Adrian Knight (01:14:56) - Um.

Else Kramer (01:14:58) - And you can also tell me later and I'll just put it in the show notes, because I kind of sprung this upon you because. But this is my way of thinking. Oh, right. There's so many people doing amazing work in the world. Let's give them a bigger platform.

Adrian Knight (01:15:12) - Some of the most amazing people I've met. Um, truly the most like the most sort of interesting and like, amazing people I've met have been in the world of social business where they are founders or they are key, key members of a business that is primarily driven by making a social impact rather than a profit. But as you know, anyone in this world knows, you have to make a commercially viable business in order for it to sustain. And so, um, I know some just wonderful people around the world who have been doing this for a long time. And so, um, you know, people who brought water to, you know, hundreds of villages in Africa while giving local communities the chance to entrepreneurs within those communities, the chance to make a living for their family and many different aspects of, of our life.

Adrian Knight (01:16:07) - So it's not one person jumping out, but more, I would say, a community, a small like community, but growing community. So, um, and I could certainly introduce you to some of those people.

Else Kramer (01:16:18) - I'd love that and I'd love to share links to the work they're doing. Um, on the, on the website.

Adrian Knight (01:16:25) - Again, it's very sort of humbling seeing, Yeah, just seeing what they're doing. So yeah.

Else Kramer (01:16:29) - And I love that we all get to make like a different impact in our own way, right? Like, I am amazed that people go to different countries and help people and I love it and I could never do it myself. And that's okay. I get to do other shit right? We all have our role to play on this amazing stage, this blue crazy planet.

Adrian Knight (01:16:49) - Actually. And so just to comment on that, I think a lot of people when they sort of think about social business, they, you know, think about, oh, you know, to bring water to a village in Africa or South America.

Adrian Knight (01:16:59) - And that's great. You know, I really applaud that. But I also think that, well, what about England or what about America? Like the the more like Western countries. So one of my favorite organizations is actually the big issue is yes.

Else Kramer (01:17:13) - For people who don't know the big issue, like listeners who don't come from the UK may not know it.

Adrian Knight (01:17:18) - Yeah. So it's a so it's a magazine that for people who have been made well people who are homeless typically through their their own sort of like vices. So drug addiction, alcohol, alcoholism, etcetera. In many cases they've lost their families. They've really reached rock bottom to probably a level that many of us will never truly understand and appreciate. And the big issue is an opportunity for them who want to turn their life around, where they can start selling this magazine to become a local distributor. They have a spot on the high street and they will essentially, um, like the finances are engineered in a way that they can buy like a bunch of these magazines and then they can sell them and can keep the profit and then they can start to build up and to work themselves up.

Adrian Knight (01:18:09) - And I always, when I see them, I always spend time talking to these people. And some of the stories like people have lost their family and they've they've managed to get themselves. So they now have their own bedsit, which gives them an address so they can go and really work their way from the ground up. And I just think it's just the most phenomenal organization, really. And so, um, yeah, I'd highly encourage anyone who hasn't heard of it to look into it and just like, it's really touching. Really. Yeah.

Else Kramer (01:18:38) - And buy it when you see someone selling it.

Adrian Knight (01:18:41) - Indefinitely by it. And even more importantly, spend time talking to the people, selling it, because very often they're sort of snubbed or looked down or, you know, slumped upon and people just walk past them as though they're they're insignificant, but they're not. And you listen to their journeys and they're just grateful that someone has actually taken an interest.

Else Kramer (01:19:00) - But I think you can also learn a lot from them, right? Like and I when I see this is actually one of the hardest things for me.

Else Kramer (01:19:07) - When I studied in London, when I moved there because I'd never seen a homeless people before and I was in shock. And like the first weeks I gave them all my money. And then I realised that being a student, that was not like a very, very clever idea for the rest of the term. So I had still do that, but I was just like, Wow, first of all, how can you have like

people sleeping on the street in such a wealthy country? Second, I was like, This could be me, right? Like immediately that sort of thought kicking in, Oh, this, this could I can totally see how this can happen to someone if you have just a little bad luck or, you know, whatever happens to you and things get out of control. Maybe some mental health issues also. And there were like kids there. It was really shocking, like teenagers. So I'm so happy that, you know, the big issue came and people are at least being helped a little bit.

Adrian Knight (01:20:01) - And the thing about the big issue is that it gives them people a platform to help themselves. That's what I love about it, because not everyone is in the space where they're ready to start doing that. But for those who are. There is a like there is a channel and there is a mechanism of being able to do that. And I just I genuinely find it so humbling and I'm greatly inspired by those type of organizations. And to a degree, like I wouldn't say to the same extremely spectacular group, but that feeds into why we're doing this. Um.

Else Kramer (01:20:32) - I love it. Yeah. And I think this is the most sustainable way of running a business, right? When you see the impact you make in the world, it's the best thing in the world. I remember doing something with my photography business, which had like an impact on thousands of people, and I actually said to my husband, like, it's not like I want to die right now. Like I have a child and I want to see you grow up.

Else Kramer (01:20:51) - And I love you very much and I love my life. But I could die happily, like having just touched so many people and brighten their lives. It is like there's no way you can translate that to money. It is the best, insanely good thing in the world. It's so fun.

Adrian Knight (01:21:06) - It really is. And is. It's almost worth more than money.

Else Kramer (01:21:09) - Oh, 100%. Totally. So good. Anything else you want to share before we wrap up?

Adrian Knight (01:21:18) - Not really. It's been, um, you know, just so thoroughly enjoyed the conversation and, you know, very grateful for, um, you know, you having me on your, on your, on your brilliant podcast. And, uh, thank you for the, the Lego in the background and we.

Else Kramer (01:21:35) - Can do the entire podcast about that and quality control and stuff as well, but maybe some other time. All right. Thank you.

Adrian Knight (01:21:42) - Thank you.

Else Kramer (01:21:43) - Thank you so much, Adrian.

Adrian Knight (01:21:45) - Thank you. Thank you so much.