

MAN ON FIRE PRESENTS
**THE COMBUSTION
CHRONICLES**

**EPISODE TWO
SURREAL ESTATE**

HOST: SHAWN NASON
CO-HOST: MICHAEL HARPER
GUEST: RYAN SERHANT

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EPISODE TWO Surreal Estate WITH RYAN SERHANT

In 2008, with the subprime mortgage industry failing, investment banks collapsing, and the nation quickly moving into financial turmoil, Ryan Serhant decided it was time to launch a career in real estate. One of the stars of Bravo's *Million Dollar Listing New York* and author of the bestselling book *Sell It Like Serhant*, Ryan has become one of the most successful real estate brokers in the world at just 35 years old. Join us as we combust with Ryan and engage his unique blend of wit, charm, and disruption to dig into the secret sauce of what it takes to think differently about an industry that affects pretty much all of us.


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THEMES & INSIGHTS

1. Even during tough times, opportunities are out there. Take a risk and grab an opportunity by the balls.
2. If you want success, take the risk. You will experience fear and rejection, but keep trying and improving until you make it.
3. Ignore what other people say and do. Focus on your end goal and keep striving.
4. Move towards your goal by doing what no one else is doing. When they catch on, you'll be in the end zone.

COMBUSTION QUOTES

 "I think it's one of the many secrets to success for anybody. You gotta have thick skin. You gotta roll with the punches. You gotta be okay with other people saying things about you. And you gotta understand that no one knows what's right and what's wrong."

 "So the creative disruption is that I don't create content in media about real estate; I create content in media about stories where the skeleton is the real estate. But I let people get interested in the story, and I entertain them. And in that entertainment comes real estate. And that's what people then wanna see."

 "So, you know, you gotta have a goal. Like, what's your goal? And it can't just be, 'I want 1,000 followers because Becky has 1,000.' Like, what's your endgame? Are you trying to sell something? Are you trying to tell a story about something? Are you trying to raise awareness about something? You gotta have a goal and then back yourself into the goal."

RESOURCES

[RYAN'S BOOKS](#)

[RYAN'S VLOG](#)

[GOOGLE TALK](#)

Shawn: Welcome to "The Combustion Chronicles" podcast, where bold leaders combined with big ideas to create game-changing disruption. I'm Shawn Nason, founder of Man on Fire, and your host for "The Combustion Chronicles." Throughout this series, we're bringing together the most unique and influential minds we could find to have honest conversations about not being okay with the status quo, blowing shit up, and working together to influence our shared future. We believe that when bold leaders ignite consumer-centric ideas with passion and grit, the result is an explosion that creates a better world for all of us. I'm here with my co-host Michael Harper, Chief of Radical Experiences at MOFI.

Shawn: On today's episode, we're speaking with Ryan Serhant. Ryan began his first day in the real estate business on September 15th of 2008. That's the same day that Lehman Brothers filed for bankruptcy in the wake of the subprime mortgage collapse. While the real estate sector has slowly recovered, Serhant himself has become one of the most successful brokers in the world at 35 years old, with agents under his leadership across the United States. And last year alone, he and his team sold just under \$1 billion in real estate. He is currently on Bravo's eighth season of "Million Dollar Listing New York." Ryan's debut book, "Sell It Like Serhant," launched September 18th of 2018. And Ryan's vlog has reached great success as well as his online real estate course, showing that there is nothing he can't do. Ryan, welcome today.

Ryan: Thank you for having me. How are you?

Shawn: Yes, so, Ryan, it is so good to have you. And I have to say, I've watched all eight seasons of "Million Dollar Listing New York" and...

Ryan: Oh, nice.

Shawn: Yes. So when my wife and I are ready to move to New York City, we'll be calling you.

Ryan: Oh, you're the best. I'll be here, hopefully.

Shawn: So, Ryan, let's go back to 2008. As the big crisis hit and the housing bubble burst here in America, we're facing, arguably, the most significant financial crisis since the Great Depression. At a time when most would be running the other direction from the housing market, not you, you jumped in headfirst. So talk us through that time in your life and what pushed you in that direction?

Ryan: Yeah. In hindsight, it's an interesting story. At the time, it was just because I had my back up against the wall. You know, I graduated college in 2006. I'd always only really had a passion for theater. You know, like growing up, I wasn't interested in math or history or tech or anything, like, being on stage, pretending to be other people, taking acting classes, like, that's just what I loved to do. And, you know, I saved up money from, you know, summer jobs, high school through college. You know, I had enough saved up where I thought I could make it for a couple years in New York City, and I told my parents, "Listen, I'm gonna try to go to law school

because I should probably become a lawyer," because that's what you do when you graduate college in the United States. But if I can't get in or bomb that test, I'm going to New York City and I gotta at least try. Like, I'll never be able to live with myself because I only have one life to live. If I don't try the acting thing, because then at least I'll know. So I took the LSAT, totally bombed it. I didn't bomb it on purpose. I tried. I studied, I took the course, I did everything. It was a tough test and not for me. So, bombed it and then said, "Okay." So I moved to the city in the summer of 2006. I had some success. I mean, I got onto a soap opera called "As the World Turns," I did some modeling stuff, but mostly I just burned through all my cash. I did a lot of auditioning, I got a lot of rejection. And it was tough.

And by the summer of 2008, so two years later, I was then at a point where, like, "I gotta get a job to afford my rent in New York or I gotta move home and refigure out what I wanna do with my life." And I knew that if I left New York City, I would never come back. It's too hard of a move. There's too much change. You know, there's just too much to think about. So I wanted to figure out how I could least prolong it. And instead of being a bartender or a waiter, getting a temp job as a receptionist or anything like that, a friend of mine said, "Listen, real estate is the greatest business in the world. Get your real estate license." This is the summer of '08, okay? "Get your real estate license, post ads on Craigslist, and sell apartments, right? And you can sell an apartment or rent an apartment every month, and that'll pay all your bills, and then some and then you can do whatever you want. Because as a real estate agent, you know, you're your own boss. You're an entrepreneur. You can make your own time." And now I know that that was a total lie, but it worked on me. And it convinced me. So I got my real estate license, which is pretty easy to do and became a real estate agent. And my first day, think I got my license, like, the 13th or something, and then I think it was a Friday, maybe, I can't remember, and then my first day was the morning that Lehman Brothers filed for bankruptcy. And it was all over the news, CNBC, and everything.

And I was at our main office for the company that I still work at today, in Midtown, and I was just sitting there. I didn't have any money, though. So, for everybody else who had a job or who had money, the 2008 financial collapse was really scary. You know, kind of like right now, right? Like, all of a sudden, you can't go to work, you can't get paid, you can't do anything. It's a scary time. For me, at the time. I didn't have money anyway. Like, I was used to living in New York City on zero dollars and cooking one little thing, a chicken on Sundays and having it last me six more days. Like, I was okay. I just thought that real estate was really, really hard. I thought that people just lost their jobs all the time. And so, only a couple of years later, looking back, once life kind of got back to normal, and I started really kind of getting into it as a career and not just a job, did I realize, "Oh, man, what a crazy time to get into this business." But it was the best time, right? I got into it when everyone else was getting out.

Shawn: It kinda sounds like, during that time, you know, balls to the wall, here we go. I love your perspective, what you said, you just thought that that's what the industry was, it was just tough, right? You were not scared of it. Like, talk to me more about, you know... You don't

seem to be... You're not risk-averse, you're not afraid, but during that time, were you afraid at all of what you were just getting ready to enter into?

Ryan: At that time, not really, man. Like, I was more afraid of getting evicted from my apartment because I couldn't pay rent. I was more afraid of not being able to afford food. And then, listen, I wasn't gonna be homeless, but I was more afraid of failure, in general, you know, just to, like, my parents. I was afraid of that phone call. Like, that phone call where I was gonna pick up the phone and call my parents, and say, "I fucked it up. I need help. I need you to send me money right away. I'm not gonna be able to make rent tomorrow and I don't have enough money for food. And I'm sorry, and you told me not to do this because New York City is the hardest city to live in, the most expensive, and the most dangerous, and I did it anyway." And, you know, they would have probably sent me a little bit of money but then made sure I came home right away. And like, that phone call scared me way more than the market or real estate or anything else. And I think that that phone call was really like my wall. Right? It was what I had my back up against was just kind of embarrassment and the fear of failure, and just proving to everybody who had so much hope for me that I wouldn't fail, and that I could actually make something of myself in New York City. And that chip, I think, is still on my shoulder to this day, consistently waking up, looking at what the world has to offer for me today, not paying attention to yesterday, not stressing about tomorrow, but today, what is the world gonna give me? What can I take from it? And let's go. And let's prove to everybody else that we're gonna do it better and that we're gonna do it bigger. And so, that phone call to my parents is way scarier than anything else.

Michael: So let's go there, man. Right? So, fear of failure absolutely is that motivator. But I mean, you've had to have had some failures along the way, right? How do you stack up those failures against each other? I mean, you can't get to where you are without taking your licks. Right?

Ryan: Yeah, man. I mean, you know, Babe Ruth hit all those home runs, but he also had more strikeouts than anybody else because he swung the most. Right? I think about that and, you know, things like that all the time. I don't know if you're watching "The Last Dance" on ESPN right now...

Michael: Yep.

Ryan: ...you know, with Michael Jordan but, you know, for all the buzzer beaters that he made that had been watched 10 billion times on YouTube and this, that, the other, he missed more of them. But no one talks about those because no one cares, right? People remember the good stuff. But yeah, my first two years in the city were just non-stop failure, getting rejected to my face. Like, as an actor in New York City or a wannabe actor, right, what you basically are, you're an unemployed person masquerading around as somebody of some sort of importance. And yet, it's all bullshit. So you go to these lines, you stand in lines, you try to get seen, you submit your headshots, your resumes, you spend all this money, and then I would go in and it's all

personal, right? It's not like real estate, which is pretty objective. You know, someone doesn't wanna work with me to buy an apartment, it's because they probably don't like that apartment. That's an objective reason. As an actor in the city, I got turned down so much because of my hair color, because of, you know, my nose, because of my face, right, or I'm too tall, or my voice. Like, it's so personal. It can beat you up. And so, when I got into real estate, like, my skin was already so thick from such personal rejection in Manhattan for two years that everyone else who gets into real estate and then gets out because they can't handle the rejection of someone saying they were gonna take an apartment then not taking it, for me, I was like, "Well, they're not taking it because of my hair. They're not taking it because of my nose, they're taking it because they found another apartment." I mean, I would love to make the money but at least, it's not personal. I think that's really what got me through those first couple of years in the real estate business that are so hard for others.

Michael: So, thick skin, I mean, is that a secret to success in all of this?

Ryan: I mean, it's not just my secret to success. I mean, I think it's one of the many secrets to success for anybody. You've gotta have thick skin. You gotta roll with the punches. You got to be okay with other people saying things about you and you gotta understand that no one knows what's right and what's wrong. I mean, look at anyone who's successful today. A lot of them you're like, "How the hell did that person make it?" It's because that person didn't give a shit what anybody else was saying or doing. They just kept going. They just kept going. They had a mission in mind. And one thing that I tell everybody, you know, they're like, "Oh, how did you decide to be a big successful real estate broker, be on TV, and books, and all that stuff?" And I'm like, "I didn't. I never chose to be a successful real estate broker. What I chose in the large part because of the fear of it not happening, I chose to be successful." Right? Success first. No matter what I do, I've got one life to live and I don't know what happens after it. Eventually, I'm gonna die and that is it, probably. Right? And so, how do I make the most of every single fucking day? And I'm gonna be successful.

And I hope it's as an actor. Like, that's what I initially wanted. Like, "I wanna be in movies, TV. I wanna do all that." It didn't work out. I ran out of money. So what? Like, it's okay. I didn't treat it like a brick wall like so many people do. You know, where it's like, "Oh, God, my passion, it's not working out, I gotta leave. I can't do this." Like, no, I gave it my best shot, ran out of money. "Okay, what's next? Real estate? That sounds terrible. But how can I also make it my own?" And that's really what I've done since 2008. I've disrupted the whole brokerage business in New York, which has now kind of trickled out to the rest of the country and, you know, created real estate teams, sold things over TV, and Instagram, and YouTube, which no one ever used to do. And, you know, done creative marketing, which no one ever used to do. You know, I helped turn a business that used to be retirees and soccer moms into a business that people actually wanna do when they get out of school instead of becoming lawyers, and instead of becoming doctors, and instead of going into finance, because we made it cool, and fun, and different. You know, it's entrepreneurial without having to carry inventory. So, I don't know, I figured out a

way to make it work but success first, right, choose success first, and let success back yourself into a career. You're much happier that way.

Shawn: I love that, Ryan. You know, I'm about 13 years older than you and in my fourth career, so kind of that same projection with a musician, actually got bored in that life, did other things, but it is this whole choice of success, and just decided, "I'm gonna be successful. And if I make a lot of money doing that in what am I successful at, well, fuck yeah. Like, I'm excited. I'm gonna live a good life. We're gonna enjoy it and enjoy it with those around us." I know for me, I loved where you were talking about those two years. There's two pivotal moments even in my life. I worked for a fairly big corporate healthcare company and I had a leader, she looked at me and said, "Someday you're gonna come back crawling asking for your job back." And I keep that. And then a couple years ago, I had a gentleman write me an email that basically told me that I was nothing and that just stay in the corner and stick to my knitting, is what this person said to me. And I keep that email in my email box, never leaves. Because when I start to doubt this moment, this mindset, I read that and it's kind of my fuck you to them, right? So...

Ryan: Yeah, man. It's like having that rejection folder, you know?

Shawn: Yeah, yeah, like, "I gotta go to the rejection folder to get my dose today," right?

Ryan: Yeah.

Shawn: And you started to dive into this and I love it because you have radically turned the industry into something, again, that's not just soccer moms anymore or, you know, old retired men. And you even talked about some of your approaches. I'd love to dig in. And just today when you're meeting with your teams, when you're doing the things, what mindsets are you looking for? What mindsets are you teaching them to say, you know, "You've got to do this. You've got to be this way"? And how does that influence your thinking with them and for them out in the market?

Ryan: With the agents and people who work for me?

Shawn: Yes. Yeah.

Ryan: The first thing I look for with anybody is energy. I need positive energy. I need good energy. I need live energy. I need awake energy. You know, I need unrelenting energy. It's really what defines, I think, right, the über-successful people from just everybody else. Because energy gets you up in the morning. It makes you wake up earlier, it makes you stay in the office later. It makes you think about different ways to pivot your business when shit hits the fan like it's happening right now. So I really look for energy and I preach energy all the time. On top of that, I look for enthusiasm, right? Like, one of the things that I really need out of people is I need them to be excited about life. When shit hits the fan... And in real estate sales, shit hits the fan every day, all day, right? Someone's suing someone, someone's pulling out of a deal,

some seller is firing you, some buyer is not calling you back. Like in a year, though, you're only gonna remember the good things just like Babe Ruth and Michael Jordan and, right, their amazing work. But during it, all you're gonna focus on are the missed swings and the missed baskets. And so you've gotta be able to have the enthusiasm every day to make sure that you are cool with it, right? Use it. Fire. Like, it's awesome. So I ask everyone who works for me before I hire them, I ask them to tell me about the greatest day of their life. And what I look for, I really look for them to open up to me, you know?

If they just say, "The day my daughter was born," like, that's not someone who has the enthusiasm in their personality to be able to connect to a buyer to be enthusiastic about that apartment that they really like, that they wanna purchase. Right? That person is gonna be like, "Oh, you like that? Okay. Great. Let's put it on our list." That's not somebody who can sell something, right? That's too much work for me. And then I also ask them to tell me about their worst day they've ever had. I need them to have empathy as well. I need them to be able to look at me and have tears in their eyes when they tell me about the day their mom died, or their grandmother, or their dog, or their divorce. You know, I need them to be able to open up because that's all we have. Right? All we have is the power of human connection. And as a salesperson, I don't sell real estate. I think that's why this ended up working for me so well because it's not really about the real estate and I don't really give a shit about crown moldings. I could care less. You know, I don't know all the different types of stone that you could put in a kitchen or a bathroom. I may have an idea, but I really don't care. You know, my job is to connect buyers to sellers, sellers to buyers, and to manage relationships, and to talk to people, and have them make choices on real estate with me that they were gonna make anyway, but they chose to do it with me. Because no one likes being sold, but everybody loves shopping with friends. And so kind of, like, all that combined is what I look for.

Shawn: Yeah. As I said, I've watched you in all seasons. And yet I think sometimes the other brokers give you a hard time about not knowing all the right terminology or when this was built and what stones, and all that, but that power of healing connection is even what thrives in our ecosystem, and within our consulting group, and some of our non-for-profit work. We actually have this concept, Ryan, that we call creative disruption. And you mentioned the word "disruption" a little bit ago. Do you see creative disruption playing a role in your work and how?

Ryan: I mean, I think that's what I do every day. I mean, I get business because I'm a creative disrupter. You know, I'm not just a real estate broker. We have a whole media company that's part of my team. There's no other real estate sales team that has a media company that they built out, paid for, and crafted. You know, I've got seven full-time people that support my entire team with new forms of media to sell our properties through YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and TikTok. Like, you know, the world is moving in different places. We just sold an \$11 million apartment through YouTube. No one else has done that before, ever, like ever. And so, you know, we're shaking things up, letting people copy us, which is great. Makes me realize that what we're doing is working. You know, and we're also growing through education. I don't buy agents like a lot of brokerages do. You know, I don't offer incentives to agents like a lot of

brokerages do to expand. We have a training program that's pretty massive and global. And agents who take it, who learned to sell the way I do and who have the same beliefs, same principles, and the same work ethic that I do, who are in it, are the ones who then help me expand. Like, we're now talking to a group in Singapore about kind of opening up our first Asian office because the group takes my course, and they kill it over there. But they need some brand exposure that attaches them to America. And I'm that guy. So we're having that conversation. I never would have ever gone there had it not been for the course and the connection to those guys. And, you know, that's an opportunity, right? Success first.

Shawn: Yeah. And so, just for the listeners of this, let's be clear that between Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, you have over 2 million followers, which is pretty impressive in the social media world. But to think about having 2 million followers that are watching your real estate group and what you do... And yeah, I mean, you just sold an apartment for \$11 million via YouTube. Like, that's just fucking unheard of. You know, everyone says, you know, "The person has to be there." But I've watched a couple of your vlogs and you talked about the Serhant Media Group and... Why did you feel like the vlog was something that you wanted to do or needed to do? What brought that about?

Ryan: Yeah. I definitely did not wanna do it, nor did I think I needed to do it. Actually, we put our vlog out last night, we do one, you know, on YouTube every Wednesday at 8 pm. And it was all about that, actually, the power of vlogging and how it's changed my business, and helped me really grow my business. But I developed a media team to help me honestly make property tours and videos for our properties that we had to do anyway. And to help me with social, right, because social, given our exposure on "Million Dollar Listing," social kind of become a business for us, and so I just needed help. There's only so much I can do by myself and I wanted to help the team, too, you know, a lot of people. And then, you know, they came to me and they said, "Listen, we really think there's an opportunity that real estate agents are missing on YouTube," and I was like, "Yeah, but YouTube is kids. The people that are successful on YouTube, really, they're either playing video games, playing with toys doing weird stuff, you know, goofing off. It's like kids. It's teens." And they were like, "Yeah, but the view counts are insane, and the exposure is massive, and YouTube is gonna be the next TV when this generation doesn't need TV."

And so I really kind of, like, push it off, push it off. And then I go on a trip, it's like two-and-a-half years ago, with my sister and her kids. Her kids are, like 12 and 16. And we go on a trip, and we go to a hotel, and the hotel doesn't have TV. And I'm, like, freaking out, right? "Like, what am I supposed to do? Just sit on my phone all day? You don't have TV with movies? Like, what are we gonna do?" And the kids couldn't have cared less. They had their Wi-Fi, they had their tablets. Everything they watch, they watch it digitally. They literally only watch TV when their parents have them sit down and watch something. So, I immediately then sent a message to the media team, I was like, "Hey, yeah, that vlog idea that's stupid, that everyone's gonna make fun of me for doing," which happened, "yeah, let's do it. Let's do it right away. There's a future in this and I wanna start doing it now before everybody else does it. Because sooner than later,

everyone's gonna do it. Everyone's gonna have a vlog, everyone's gonna have a YouTube channel, and then I don't wanna then be lost in the mix. Let's carve a path now. Let's get millions of subscribers now and be the first, right? Let's be a pioneer and not a follower." And it's worked out, and so, glad I went on that trip.

Shawn: Yeah, that is kind of a mind-blowing time. I have a four-year-old, soon to be five and he still walks up to the TV and tries to swipe it.

Ryan: Yeah, yeah.

Michael: Because it's just a big tablet. Right? It's not, "What's this TV...?"

Ryan: When was the last time you listened to a record, right? Like, it's not bad. It's just the way of the world. You know, it's like everyone looking at COVID right now blaming the pandemic on what's about to happen to all movie theaters. It's like, no, man, like, who wants to go and sit in a room with 100 other strangers and chairs that people drop popcorn on and watch a movie that you can just see at home? Like, that's way better. So COVID is not gonna kill movie theaters, people are gonna kill movie theaters, and the ability to stream, and have things on-demand, right? Our attention is gone. We have no attention anymore. And that's also the power of YouTube. Like, our longest vlogs really are like 10 minutes and 30 seconds. And those are long. Because people just don't have attention anymore. And they need immediate, immediate information. And they don't wanna watch commercials, they don't wanna be sold. They wanna consume entertaining content and then they wanna be sold stories. Right? So the creative disruption to go back to one of your earlier questions, really, is that, you know, I don't create content in media about real estate, right? I create content in media about stories where the skeleton is the real estate. But I let people get interested in the story, and I entertain them. And in that entertainment comes real estate. And that's what people then wanna see. Like, no one goes online and just watches virtual tours of empty apartments all day. That sucks, right? You watch HGTV and the shows that you do because the people are entertaining. There's an interesting story. "Oh, they're gonna redo that bathroom? Weird. I thought that bathroom was nice. I wonder what kind of tile they're gonna put in it." Like, that's interesting, right? That's an entertaining story.

Michael: So, now that everybody is using YouTube, like you say, you know, that's gonna be the new next thing. Everyone's gonna start following what you do. So, what do you tell listeners about breaking through the noise with what they're doing? How do you siphon through all this information and make sure that your story, your message, your platform is what people want to go to?

Ryan: Yeah, my answer to that is gonna probably sound a little cliché, but I think it's the only answer I can give, which is, your story is the only one in the world that is unique to you. You know, I used to think the same thing. Like, "I'm not interesting." Like, "I'm not doing..." I looked at everything that was on YouTube and, like, "I don't do that stuff. I don't have Lamborghinis. I

don't do crazy things all day. I'm not pulling pranks. I don't play video games. I go to an office all day. I'm on my phone all day. Yeah, I see some cool apartments. Is that really interesting?" And I didn't think it was. You know, "Million Dollar Listing" is different. "Million Dollar Listing" on Bravo is a dramatic docuseries that follows dramatic deals and the sales of tough, big apartments with very crazy people. And that's interesting. But for me, like, "Do...people are really gonna wanna see me talk about my thoughts and my life? That's weird." And I think so. Turns out, sure. And everybody can cut through the noise with their own personal story. Like, your own story, even if you just live in a house, you never leave the house, you got six cats, make content about your damn cats. Give them different names every day, see if you can remember them.

Put them under the blanket and see which cat comes out first. Make it a game. Like, people will watch that shit. It just depends on what you're doing it for. Like, what's your endgame? Right? Like, you kind of have to think about that, too. Like, for me, I wanna grow a brand, grow awareness. Eventually, I wanna get to a point where every single person in the world, when they think real estate, they think Ryan Serhant. I'm not there yet, by any means. I have a long ways to go, slowly but surely. But that's my endgame. And if I can do that, then a lot more people will pick up the phone or send me an email and say, "Hey, I'm thinking about buying an apartment. You're the real estate guy on the globe, I feel like I should talk to you." And that's good business for me. So you gotta have a goal. Like, what's your goal? And it can't just be, "I want 1,000 followers because Becky has 1,000." Like, that's stupid. What's your endgame? Is it to... Are you trying to sell something? Are you trying to tell a story about something? Are you trying to raise awareness about something? You gotta have a goal, and then back yourself into the goal.

Shawn: Yeah, that's awesome. And, you know, Ryan, I could probably keep going on and on here. But we've kind of come to this point. So, we do this little segment towards the end of our episodes now where we use these questions called the combustion questions. It's gonna be kind of rapid-fire, three random questions that, you know, we've run this very serious algorithm through to get these three questions and that algorithm is Michael's brain sitting over here. It's been churning. So, I'm gonna turn this over to Michael, and he's gonna just ask you three really fast questions. Just give us your first response and then I'll close this up here. So, Michael, go ahead.

Michael: All right, Ryan, here are your combustion questions. Number one, if we sent you a big box filled with rolls of duct tape, what would you do with it?

Ryan: I would put the duct tape in my storage closet in the back because you never know when you're gonna need a bunch of duct tape. And I'd send you a nice handwritten note thanking you for all the duct tape because you never know when you're gonna need all the duct tape.

Michael: And then if we needed some, you would lend it to us?

Ryan: Yeah, I mean at a price. You know, you sent it to me. It's mine now.

Michael: Always a salesman, right?

Michael: All right, would you rather climb a mountain or do an epic deep-sea dive?

Ryan: Climb a mountain. My ears are not great.

Michael: Would it be, like, a major mountain or, like, a normal mountain?

Ryan: No, I'm not climbing El Capitan with that crazy guy in that documentary. Have you seen that thing? That thing's totally insane.

Michael: Yes, it's crazy.

Ryan: That free solo, it's terrifying. That guy's nuts. Now, one, if I had a choice, I would do neither. But I can't dive because I blew out my eardrum in my right ear when I was a little kid and my ears have a really hard time adjusting to pressure. So in airplanes and underwater, it's really tough. And then in a mountain, I really have no interest in climbing Everest or any of those. I really don't. I'd climb, like, a mini-mountain, but I would not enjoy it the entire time. I'd fake it for you, though.

Michael: Sounds like we need to go find a beach.

Ryan: Yeah, much better. Dude, life is short.

Shawn: Yes, yes. Sweating and exerting energy is not good for you.

Michael: All right, question number three...

Ryan: Listen, I sweat a lot. I work out every single day at 5 in the morning for an hour-and-a-half. I definitely get my workouts in and I sweat a significant amount. I just have no reason to go climb a stupid mountain or go underwater and see a fish. Like, it's good, I'm good. I'm good.

Shawn: I love it.

Michael: All right, question number three. What do you think about beavers?

Ryan: This is now the weirdest podcast I've ever done. You know what? There's not a whole lot of beavers in New York City, man. I've never actually seen one up here. I think beavers are great, you know, let them do their thing. You know, trees should block up dams and rivers, right? Like, I guess.

Shawn: I told you we used a really good algorithm for this, Ryan.

Ryan: Yeah, I could tell, that brain's working extra hard right now.

Michael: And for you, Ryan, we have a fourth extra question. You're the special one. You were selected, the algorithm. Tell us about your best day ever.

Ryan: Oh, man, way to use my shit back against me. What is my best day ever? My best day ever changes all the time. I would say... And again, this is gonna sound like what everyone would say, like, I got married in 2016, and we had no idea how hard it was gonna be to have a kid. You know, we spend our whole lives really, really trying not to get pregnant, right? Like you really, really try. It's like because, you know, you watch movies, your parents, sex ed classes, you can get pregnant by sneezing on a girl. So, like, everything you can, don't get pregnant. Then you get married, and you're like, "Oh, let's have a baby." And then, like, a month goes by and then two months and then six months, and then a year. And now that you're frustrated, and upset, and there's no baby, and you don't understand. You see doctors and all that stuff. So, long story short, three years later, after undergoing a brutal IVF treatment for my wife, we gave birth to our baby Zena last February 26th. And, like, every dad will say it, right, you know, you've got kids. And I felt that just a lot more because the struggle was just so hard to get her. It was like this little miracle baby. You know, like, it wasn't like we got drunk or, like, our honeymoon night and, like, "Oh, shit, got pregnant, here comes a baby. Crazy." It's like we worked so hard for this little kid, and she came out, and she was perfect, and pissed off. And, you know, I just remember, like, holding her for that first time. And she just, like, looked up at me when I started talking, and she knew my voice, and, like, everything I'd read in the books and now, like, it was all real, and it was all so true. And she had this, like, little smile. And, like, it just blew my mind. Like for my wife's sake, I would not go back to that day because that day was pretty brutal for her. But for my sake, I would relive that day, like, every day. It's just unlike anything else I've ever experienced and probably will ever experience again until we have another one.

Shawn: Well, Ryan, thanks so much for being with us. It's been a pleasure and can't wait to talk to you more and hear what's going on in your world. But thank you again for being with us, and we look forward to talking to you soon, bud.

Ryan: All right, thanks, guys.

Shawn: Thanks.

Ryan: Enjoy the rest of your day.

Shawn: Bye.

Shawn: Thank you so much for listening to this episode of "The Combustion Chronicles." None of this is possible without you the listener. If you'd like to keep the conversation going, look up Man on Fire on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and at manonfire.co. Give us a shout. Let us know what you think. And please, subscribe, rate, and review if you like what we're doing and if you don't do it anyways. And remember, always stay safe and be well.