

# The Weekly Take

## It's My Life: The Ultimate Bucket List

### Spencer Levy

What do you, your colleagues in real estate, and a guy who talked his way into shooting hoops with President Obama, have in common? You all have the ability to do the impossible. That is, if you ask the upcoming guest on our show. On this episode, a best-selling author shares his simple, surprising, and somewhat morbidly inspiring perspective on how to make things happen.

### Ben Nemtin

If you look at the research, the biggest things that stop us from pursuing these types of goals, and I would call this like a personal passion, a huge, ambitious goal that you have, it's fear. And it's the fear of what other people think and it's the fear of failure.

### Spencer Levy

That's Ben Nemtin, the author and public speaker whose book of 100 bucket list aspirations *What Do You Want to Do Before You Die?* was a top New York Times bestseller. Ben, along with three of his closest friends, also created and starred in an MTV show called "The Buried Life", which documented their pursuit of impossible dreams, following the foursome across America and the acts of kindness they performed along the way. Coming up, a conversation recorded prior to Ben's appearance at the CBRE Institute in Arizona: Impossible dreams, practical applications, and yes, how it all fits into our lives and careers in commercial real estate. I'm Spencer Levy, and that's right now on The Weekly Take.

### Spencer Levy

Welcome to The Weekly Take and today we are delighted to have number one New York Times best selling author Ben Nemtin. Ben, thanks for coming out today.

### Ben Nemtin

Spencer. Thanks for having me.

### Spencer Levy

Well, Ben, we're excited to have you here today. And, Ben, for the purposes of our listeners, tell them who you are and what you do.

### Ben Nemtin

So I grew up in Victoria, British Columbia, and I speak on the connection between purpose and mental health and how to achieve big goals. And it's kind of an unusual story of how I became a speaker. I actually became a speaker by accident. I did a TEDx Talk about seven years ago, and it was supposed to be just a one time thing, but people saw it and they asked me to come speak, and now I do 100, 150 keynotes a year. And I write some books, and I try and get people inspired to live their authentic self so they can unlock their true potential and connect to their purpose. And I think that impacts your mental health, that impacts the people around you, and ultimately you unlock your greatest impact. That's

just been my experience through my story, so I try and reflect that through my keynotes and through the work I do.

### **Spencer Levy**

Let's just start here. You are what I would call, and I say this not selfishly, but I say this with respect, maximum you, right? I want to be maximum me. And I'm not, from the third party perspective, I may look similar from some people's, but you've gone way beyond. How do you take somebody who is happy doing a lot of what they're doing? But how do you get over that hump?

### **Ben Nemtin**

Well, I often find that the first step is often the hardest because we get in our own way. There's so many reasons why we shouldn't do it, and a lot of it comes back to fear. Like if you look at the research, the biggest things that stop us from pursuing these types of goals, and I would call this like a personal passion, a huge, ambitious goal that you have. It's fear, and it's the fear of what other people think and it's the fear of failure. And even if we have had successes in the past, we all feel that imposter syndrome when we try something new, it's just the human condition. So this fear of what other people think, the fear of failure stops us and it kind of freezes us. But, when you take action and even the trick is it's just the smallest step. If you take that one small step, what you're doing is you're starting to build momentum and you create this momentum and this energy that starts to move you forward and you learn as you go. So you're never ready to go. You need to sort of take action and learn as you go. So that's one piece. The other piece that I found that has been probably the key is accountability, right? Because there's no deadlines for something that you want to do. But there's always something else that has a deadline that you have to do, so these things get pushed. But ultimately what happens is, 76% of people, they push, push, push, and they realize too late that they've waited too long and they haven't acted on this thing that they've truly wanted to do. That it was this true reflection of themselves, because they've been living for other people or have been living this life they thought they should live. And so just like we have accountability in the workplace, it really works. So I got really lucky because when I was in university, I made this conscious decision to try and surround myself with people that inspired me, and it led me to three friends, and we started this bucket list of all of our dreams. These passions that we truly wanted to do, but we just had never, ever acted on any of them. And we thought, we're going to go after this bucket list, and we're also going to help other people achieve their bucket list items, and we're going to do a two week road trip, and we're going to tackle our list and help other people. And the only reason I did that from the beginning, and the only reason I've done a lot of my goals, is because I had three friends with me, right, that kept me accountable. So I still subscribe to that to this day. I try and surround myself with people that inspire me, and I create accountability by sharing my goals, by enrolling people. The more you share it, the more accountability you're going to feel. Asking for help creates accountability. Setting a deadline, giving yourself a reward. And I think there's this narrative that we have that it's selfish to do these things, you know? But ultimately I actually think it's the opposite. I think you can't really serve others if you don't fully serve yourself, and if you're not that full expression of yourself.

### **Spencer Levy**

Let's talk about your message. Just the message that I'm hearing, and I read your book. I've looked at some of your television work, which is becoming your maximum self, and that's kind of how I would put it. I'm sure you put it in different terms. But every time I was watching your TV or listening to your...reading your book, a phrase kept coming to me. It

says life gets in the way. How do you prevent life and its consequences from getting in the way of maximizing yourself?

### **Ben Nemtin**

Well, it's a great point because it's a reality for, I would say majority of people, is that you have obligations and you have to sacrifice some of the things that you want in order to give what you need to give. And I think that that is something that you should do. I also think that it's important to identify those things that you believe will make you feel like that maximum self. Okay. So ie., your list. That's why I like writing a list, because it forces you to slow down and think about what those things are and reflect. A lot of people don't take the time to reflect and think about it. I think a lot of people are subconsciously running on autopilot, just, without taking time to actually make sure that they are on this course, doing those things that fill them up because life moves so fast. And the reality is, as you said, life gets in the way. So if you take time to think about what those things are, you've identified what they are, then it's deciding, okay, how much time can I afford to give to these things? Okay. Because you're not gonna be able to do all of them. But what's one thing that I love to do? That even though I have no time, I'm busy at work, I'm busy with the family, but let's just say I want to write a book. Or for me, like I fell in love with playing tennis over the pandemic. So I love to play tennis. And I actually, you know, I'm on the road all the time. And how much... how can I prioritize one tennis game a week? Or how can I prioritize two hour block of writing a week on the weekend, on Sundays? Right? Okay, whatever that is. And it's different for everyone, but there is some amount of time that you can afford to put towards that, and you can protect that time, just like you would protect quality time with the kids, just like you would protect an important meeting and then communicating that with those around you. So they understand that this is really important to you and that you want their support in protecting that time.

### **Spencer Levy**

When I was reading through your bucket list journal, I thought that you were doing something backwards. And when I mean backwards is that you wrote this bucket list journal and you've got 100 really cool items, which I'll go through some of them. But you already did a TV show. You're already a keynote speaker. You already wrote a bestselling book. You've already fulfilled most people's bucket list. So let's just start from the beginning. Tell us about the TV show, inspiration for it, how it got started.

### **Ben Nemtin**

So I want to also just mention quickly because you bring up a good point about it looking backwards, because it is true. And the thing is, what I've realized is this list started as a list of all of these big goals that I wanted to achieve. And as I moved through them, I realized that really was a journey of self-discovery, of understanding and finding these things that make me feel more alive. So as you grow, your list changes and my list is now changed. Now it's, you know, starting a family and there's all these other things. So your list is a reflection of the things that make you feel more alive. And it's not necessarily about the big accomplishments. Because if you look at the regrets, the top five regrets of the dying, they're not these big accomplishments. It's little things. I wish I would've told people how I really feel. I wish I would have let myself be happy. I wish I would have worked less, right? So these are small things that I think, ultimately, you can think about when you write your list. So it can be big things, but it's not just about nailing these big accomplishments, and that's what I've learned.

### **Spencer Levy**

How do you go from okay, this sounds like something I understand and know to actually doing. What is that? That to me is the secret sauce.

**Ben Nemtin**

Yeah. I mean, to be totally candid, I think it's thinking about your death. That's why the question that is the cornerstone of this whole project is, "what do you want to do before you die?" I don't even know if you know Stoicism, Memento Mori, but it means that you understand that you're going to die, so that then you take every moment and live it to the fullest, right? You have this passion for life because you know that your time is limited. But typically we don't think about the end of our life. We just sort of act as if we're going to live forever, even though it's the only thing that we can count on in our life. It's the only thing that we can actually say is going to happen, is one day we will die. This is something that is a truth. And so by actually confronting that, it reminds us to live fulfilled. And so that, to answer your question, that is how you actually have it land, is by thinking about and keeping that idea of death close to you. And it's a liberating idea because it means that the things that you are stressing about, you're probably not going to remember on your deathbed. You probably can remember those things the next couple months. And so it really puts things in perspective and allows you to sort of live from that truth.

**Spencer Levy**

Let me push back on that, because when I think about death, I don't want to think about death.

**Ben Nemtin**

Yeah, of course.

**Spencer Levy**

Death is about the worst thing I could possibly think about. But you're saying to me that this thing that most of us, many of us, I wouldn't say most, but I would say a lot of us...

**Ben Nemtin**

Me included.

**Spencer Levy**

...think is the scariest thing imaginable, and I'm trying to avoid thinking about it, is actually a good motivator. Am I saying it correctly?

**Ben Nemtin**

Yeah. You are. Exactly. Yeah. And okay, so I've had friends that have lost a loved one. A father, a mother. And they told me, you know, when I lost my dad everything changed. It put things in perspective. I've had friends that have gone through near-death experiences. People that have been forced to look at death. And, you know, they had cancer and they came back and they said I live differently now. This brush with the end of your life or with death shifted things for them. And I think that you can have that shift without going through the trauma of a near-death experience or losing a loved one. And it is uncomfortable to look at death. But if you look at every other culture, they look at death and talk about it freely. In old Egyptian times, when they had a huge feast, they would roll in a dead body, like a mummy, and they would say, this will be us one day, so enjoy your food. Like have a good time because we're going to die one day. So it is morbid, but at the same time, when you start to separate from that emotional tie and you sort of look at it pragmatically, it's like, okay, look at your week's calendar. How many weeks do you have left? But you can actually sort of put a block for every week and you start to realize, wow, like, I don't have

all the time in the world. And whether you want to look at it now or not, you're going to have to look at it. So you may as well look at it now, because it's going to align you with those things. It's about coming back to purpose. And I just really think this is the big driver, is like, come back to the purpose of the work that you do in whatever industry you're in. But like, if you're thinking about commercial real estate, enabling people to work and create their impact in the world, create a space for them to do that. And how can you do that in the best way possible? And then coming back to purpose in your life, right, outside of work. And if you can connect back to those two purposes and just use death as this reminder like, okay, I don't have all the time in the world, I think that's the formula to live your maximum self.

### **Spencer Levy**

I'm glad you brought up real estate and work, because this is going to be probably one of the key topics that we're going to talk about here at Institute. Largest corporations in the world are sitting 100ft from us right now, and they do everything from energy to technology to banking to healthcare, everything under the sun. And they all have a corporate goal. And you know, the corporate goal maybe until ten years ago was maximizing shareholder value. And now the corporate goal has gotten to be maximizing stakeholder value, which is more of that. And then we've heard more about being purposeful in terms of the job that you have needs to be fulfilling to you individually, not just fulfilling the corporate goal. So these are all concepts that we put into the conversation. But at the same time, we're having this one massive problem in our business right now, which is simply getting people back into the office. And I have described this various times as this has nothing to do with the physical office. To put it in somewhat commercial terms, this is a labor versus management dispute. But the broader thing, maybe that you're not speaking to your employees in a way they want to be spoken to. You're not giving them a reason to come back beyond what might be considered a bottom line intent. What's your point of view?

### **Ben Nemtin**

So I'll preface this with, you know, I'm not an expert in this industry, but I can give you my two cents from talking with leaders in a number of different industries. And I think that where we are quote-unquote "post-pandemic", I think it's really important for leaders to invest in the people they are leading and understand who they are, what they value, and what makes them tick. And I think for leaders in real estate, that means giving them a seat at the table when developing and creating these workspaces and creating the experiences and this environment that reflects and fuels them, i.e., their workforce, to be the truest version of themselves. To be their authentic self. And I think to create an environment where people feel like they can be their true self, that's the win. Because that's an environment where people thrive and they want to be. And so you're talking about if you come back to being your maximum self, how can you enable your workforce to be their maximum self or their authentic self in the workplace. And a lot of times what I'm seeing is, after I speak, organizations will invest in their team's dreams. That doesn't necessarily just mean paying for their employees to do the thing they want to do, but invest in taking a true, authentic interest in what do their people want to do outside of work? And how can... so again, connected to passion. Passions outside of work and passions inside of work. And so I think that if you can create a workspace that fuels people to be that true self, then you're going to draw more people in and that will start to sort of shift the culture. I also think that's important to really identify what this human impact is that you're creating through the work that you're doing, and reinforcing that with the team to re-energize them around purpose, right? Like, how can you talk about this ripple effect that you're creating out in the world that is impacting people and sharing stories and narratives and bring the

team back to why, to help them overcome the challenges that they face. And so, again, this purpose at work and purpose outside of work.

### **Spencer Levy**

So the purpose at work, the purpose outside of work. We had a prior guest on the show, his name is Rob Lilwall. And his concept, and this is summarizing, is leading with vulnerability. And there's a lot of ways to put that. The way I would put it is not having a separation between purpose at work and purpose at home. Is that a fair way to put it?

### **Ben Nemtin**

Exactly. I think that's exactly what I'm saying. Yeah. So enabling people to be the same person inside and outside of work, and I think leading authentically and leading with vulnerability is huge, especially with the mental health challenges that at least a quarter of the workforce are experiencing right now. One of the main reasons I speak is because when I was in university, before I started this journey with my friends, I put so much pressure on myself to succeed professionally, at school, in athletics. I was on the national under 19 rugby team, and I just burnt out and I started to get anxiety thinking about the World Cup, where I was playing in France, and I started losing sleep and I couldn't go to school. I couldn't go to rugby practice, so I got dropped from the team. I dropped out of school. And this anxiety, this loss of sleep caused me to slide into a depression and I couldn't leave my parents house. And I was completely immobilized by this. And I ultimately, I was able to find a therapist that I love to talk to. I was able to start talking about this with my friends. I was able to sort of surround myself with people that energized me versus take the energy from me. I was able to learn about myself and understand what I needed to be to overcome stresses and challenges. And so this experience is part of the human experience. We have ups and downs, and that is just the way it is, right? And so to be able to share your story as a leader of the challenges that you've been through of any type and opening up about any vulnerability, what you're doing is you're building a connection, and you're also opening the door for them to come back in their time of need. You're creating a supportive environment again for the team to be their true self, right? So it's being who you truly are, going after the things that you love, and being who you truly are and not hiding those things that you're struggling with. Because what I found is those things that I thought were my weaknesses, they actually turned out to be my strengths when I embraced them, rather than always trying to hide them. I would never talk about my depression for 20 years. And then I started speaking and I was like, you know what? I think this is going to help people if I'm able to talk about my experience. The first time it was very hard for me. I was shaking on stage, but I could see that it impacted people. And the next time I was still shaking, but a little bit less and a little bit less. Until now, I look forward to the opportunity to share, because I know it's a tool that I have to help others, and I've seen the impact and I can see how many people, it affects everybody. Because if 1 in 4 people struggle with their mental health, we all care about more than four people in our lives. So this is affecting us directly or indirectly, and inevitably it's someone's daughter or son that just dropped out of school or is struggling with anxiety, it's a coworker, or it's them that is experiencing this. And so as leaders, I believe by opening up, you're really enabling the team to come forward when they're going through something and you're able to nip it in the bud a little bit earlier, right? And so I think that's important.

### **Spencer Levy**

So this conversation that we're having... a wonderful conversation, but it's much different than I expected. Just tell us about the way you write, the way you communicate these funny stories, and how that helps you get your message across.

**Ben Nemtin**

You want to connect with people and you connect through vulnerability. But the fastest way is through laughter. When we started this project, it was always about like, how can we inspire our friends to do the thing that they want to do, and we always thought the best way to do that was just show them how much fun we're having, like how much fun it is to live this way. And so that's when we wrote our list, we did everything from like grow a mustache to streak a field to, you know, try and play basketball with Obama or have a beer with Prince Harry. It was just things that we felt like were going to be the most fun for us to do, because they made us feel more alive and they made us feel like, ultimately, more like ourselves. Maybe not the streaking, because like, that was not something that I necessarily wanted to do, but yeah. So that was a.

**Spencer Levy**

That was an Old School moment.

**Ben Nemtin**

That was definitely an Old School moment.

**Spencer Levy**

Who was streaking. But I also notice that you had to do a sketch with Will Ferrell. You would've done a take off on that one.

**Ben Nemtin**

Yeah. Yeah, exactly. Yeah. We just pretended we had \$100 million and we could do anything. What would you do? And by the way, we had no money, right? This was bootstrap. We bought an RV. We got a second hand camera on eBay. We, you know, we would throw parties in Victoria to pay for gas. This was how we started this first tour in 2006, and it was only supposed to be a two week road trip where we make a short film, show our friends, go back to school. So we hit the road, but we didn't expect that people would hear about it and want to help. So all of a sudden we have all these emails coming in and people saying, I saw your list online. Ride a bull, you know, my uncle has a bull ranch. He can get you on a bull. Get up in a hot air balloon, make a toast at a stranger's wedding. We got invited to 12 weddings in the first two weeks. And then people started sending us their dreams, and they were like, can you help me play Augusta? Or ride a horse through a drive through. Or, you know, sing a duet with Beyonce. So we just kind of were like, wow, we didn't expect this. And that's what fueled us to keep going, was this incoming support to help us cross things off our list. And then other people's dreams asking for our help. So we're like, okay, I guess we've got to keep doing this. So this two week road trip lasted over ten years.

**Spencer Levy**

Amazing. And for folks who don't have a copy of the Bucket List Journal, I'm looking at the top 100 list and there are only, looks like 3 or 4 items you haven't done yet, and these include going to space. Some of these are fairly straightforward. Some of them are not. A lot of these are celebrity related. Being interviewed by Oprah, doing a sketch with Will Ferrell, having a drink with Prince Harry, swim with the sharks. What was the craziest one of these bucket list items? Like, there's no chance of me getting this one, but we did.

**Ben Nemtin**

Probably play basketball with President Obama at The White House.

**Spencer Levy**

Tell us about that one.

### **Ben Nemtin**

I mean, in short, we got 100 no's. I mean, we couldn't have gotten more no's. We drove to D.C., we didn't know anybody in D.C. we just drove, asked people in the street if they knew anyone working at the white House. We sent cold emails to politicians. We got a couple meetings. We would meet with them, then meet with their boss. We got all the way up somehow to a meeting with the Secretary of Transportation. He called The White House. He was like, they will cause no embarrassment to the president. We were like, we got this. And then we got an email rejection being like, we can't do it. We found out that the president's personal aide, a gentleman named Reggie Love, he'd play basketball at Duke. He was always on the court when the president was playing. He set up these games. And so we found his email and we challenged him and the president to a basketball game. So we sent emails to Reggie Love saying, you and the president versus us tonight, 7:30 at the YMCA. Be there. We'd show up at 7:30. No president. We do this for a week straight. Fail, fail, fail. We picketed outside The White House with signs wearing basketball uniforms from the 1970s. We sent letters. Like no one's meeting with us. And then finally, I get a blocked call and it's Reggie Love. And he's like, I keep hearing about you guys wanting to play basketball with the president. And we're like, yes, sir. And he's like, okay, let me, look, I like this. I think I can make this happen. Let me run it by the press team. They have to sign off on this. So we wait patiently. Finally, we get a call and he's like, gentlemen, talked with the press team. It's not going to happen. So we, again a no. And so literally he felt bad. He's like, listen, I'll give you a tour of The White House. So we're back in D.C. months later, we go for a tour. He shows us The White House, he shows us the basketball courts. And as we're shooting around the courts, we hear Obama stroll on the court. And he completely surprises us. And he's like, I heard you guys are in town. I thought the least I could do is shoot a basket with you and White House photographer, Obama. We shot hoops with them for like 15, 20 minutes. We were trash talking each other, trying to hit shots that we weren't hitting. It was just absolutely, our jaws were on the floor when he came out. I remember writing that down in the summer of 2008 when he got elected. And, my friend Johnny and I, we laughed. Like, this is, we live on an island in Canada. Like, this is the most impossible thing we could think of doing. And, three years later, we were at The White House, you know, and just you never know how these things are going to happen, but it's that combination of that relentless persistence, you know, being creative in that persistence so that you're trying different avenues. You're not, you know, bugging people the same way the same day. You're just continually moving towards this goal with persistence and creativity. And if you don't give up, right, at some point it will happen. And that's what I found again and again and again.

### **Spencer Levy**

One of the things I loved about your goals is they were not just audacious at times, but they were very specific. And if you go to your book, you have your do's and don'ts. Your do's are very specific. Run five miles, visit three new countries, be a vegetarian for six months. It's not prioritize love, get in shape, travel more. It's not these generalized senseless things. It's like, yeah, we all can do this. It's very specific. Why?

### **Ben Nemtin**

Because you want to know when you've achieved the goal, right? You want to have that finish line that you're working towards, that you know when you've achieved it and you want it to be measurable. And that's something that you can drive towards. Yeah, SMART goal. SMART goal.

**Spencer Levy**

So, we're in a professional setting here. You're about to speak to some of our largest clients. And by the way, we're super psyched to have you. What's the talk?

**Ben Nemtin**

I'll talk less about death on this day.

**Spencer Levy**

Well, you know, maybe it's me, but, you know, death might not be the number one topic of discussion today, but nevertheless, it's your speech. You know, go for it Ben.

**Ben Nemtin**

I always talk about the question: What do you want to do before you die? And it is one of those things that is, you know, it rattles you. And that's what you want. You want people to walk out and be like, wow, I need to take action, right? You gotta light a fire. So you've got to mix that with the levity, and you ultimately have to fuel it with inspiration, right? And that's the big thing is you can't just go out and just be like, hey guys, you're going to die. Peace. Like good luck with that, right? That's why I tell the story throughout the keynote. Which is the first, you know, two thirds of the keynote sharing stories of these incredible achievements as well as helping other people to show, like, look, I went from this place where I was depressed, but like to playing basketball with Obama, to sitting with Oprah, to all this stuff. And I'm no different than you, right? All I did was I just started to take action with some people that also believed in me. And we also gave without expectation. We just kept giving back. And that recipe right there, I think, is a recipe to win. You don't give up. If you find people that fuel you to be that maximum self and you give without expectation.

**Spencer Levy**

So the people you're going to be meeting with, not to stereotype, most of them are very senior leaders of corporate real estate organizations. Senior leaders, mid to later career. Let's call it that way. How is the advice you give them different than a person coming out of college?

**Ben Nemtin**

There's the application to the workplace, right? And even specifically to these folks that are managing and building out these workplaces and have this huge imprint. And there's also the sustainability conversation, which has a huge impact. I like to talk about how this idea impacts culture and can impact them as leaders, right? Talk about leading authentically and the mental health conversation, but also leading authentically and living the life that you want your team to live, right? If you're telling your team to have a work-life balance, well, you better have a work-life balance. Like you need to actually walk the walk and take time to do the things that you love so your team will also do that. And, you know, talking about investing in your team's dreams. So all of these conversations are specific to the workplace. But I think the thing that's consistent is like, look, as human beings, we all have ups and downs and that's okay. And there's these steps that you can take to achieve the things that mean something to you, regardless of if you're ending your career, your right in your career, you got it right out of college, right? And those are around getting over the barriers that I talked about at the beginning of the podcast, which is like, create accountability, create inspiration through action, and move through the fear.

**Spencer Levy**

I'm going to tie what you're saying here, Ben, to 2 or 3 of our other podcasts, because notwithstanding the fact you have a lot of goals, your goals are very specific. They're very purposeful. And some of the best guests we've had on this show completely far flung. We had a gentleman by the name of Marc Lore who owns the Minnesota Timberwolves, but is starting a new concept called Wonder, which is a mixed restaurant concept, puts it in residential neighborhoods. He's going to blow it out to the country. And I ask him, well, this sounds like a ghost kitchen. This sounds like... and he goes, no, this is very specific in what he was doing. It was laser beam purposeful. We had on the show a couple weeks ago, Roger Morales, one of the most senior people at KKR, one of the biggest private equity firms in the world. And where we were asking, well, the market's in turmoil, how are you changing your strategy? We're not. Like a laser beam, you know, purposeful. And so while starting a ghost kitchen or Wonder, being a major investor sounds like, well, it's nothing like this because you're hanging out with Will Ferrell. It's exactly the same thing. If you are laser beam focused on your goal, you have a heck of a lot better chance of getting there.

### **Ben Nemtin**

100%. And then all it is is just small stuff. You don't even need to know how you're going to achieve the goal, necessarily. And I think that's what stops a lot of us. It's like, well, how am I going to do a sketch with Will Ferrell? I have no idea. Well, what's the first thing you can think of? Take that step. Then you take the second step. You learn as you go. But what we're afraid of is we're afraid of that discomfort. We're afraid of being vulnerable. Right? We're afraid of asking for help. But that discomfort is growth, right? Change happens outside of your comfort zone. And that's when you really grow. So understanding that vulnerability, that discomfort, is allowing yourself to change and evolve is really important. And knowing that it's not going to go anywhere. That's like a tax you have to pay to just achieve anything that means something to you. If you know where you want to go. And you also understand that that discomfort is just part of the process, and you don't stop, nothing can stop you, right? And then you just check in every once in a while to make sure that you're still aligned with that goal, right? And that you're doing that thing for you, not for the validation of others or it hasn't. And if it changes, fine. Like I look at, my bucket list as just a list of all the things that I'm going to try to see if they energize me, and if they continue to energize me, I'm going to still do it. If I start doing something and I don't like doing it anymore, I try not to just continue to do it because I know that my energy needs to be sort of focused on that thing that really continues that energy loop.

### **Spencer Levy**

Just a couple more questions because we're just about out of time, and I could talk to you for hours, by the way. One of the things you mentioned earlier really struck me, which is one of the things that gets in people's way is that they are fear of how they're being judged by others. How do you overcome that fear of the expectation of others?

### **Ben Nemtin**

You just have to try and experience it, right? The only way that we crossed most things off our list is through the help of other people. And we would have never known if we never would have put ourselves out there on the line. And you have to move through that fear, as I said, and into that place of vulnerability. Something usually good happens out of that vulnerability. May not be the thing that you wanted, but I guarantee something good will happen. When I first did my TEDx Talk, I didn't want to do it because I was freaked out. And I did it, and I didn't "succeed" because my TED Talk didn't get a million views. But, someone saw it and they asked me to come speak, and it changed my life, because all of a sudden, and it led me down this new path. So, you know, just knowing that people don't

really care as much as you think and they're more supportive than you think, helps as you do that. You just got to just try and start to get comfortable with being uncomfortable.

### **Spencer Levy**

One little personal story and then we'll have the wrap up question. I had a very similar experience where, this was in 2014 or 15, and I was at the time leading America's research here. And the way that economists, research types, typically give a presentation, lots of charts, very clinical, a little dry. And I knew it was the wrong way to do it. I just knew it was wrong. And I had this opportunity to give a speech in front of 3000 people. And I said, I'm either going to get promoted after the speech or I'm getting fired because I said, I'm doing this my way and my way had a costume change. I had a fake interview in Times Square with fake people. I was calling senior executives out of the audience, and that speech changed my life. I would not be doing this show without that speech and showing the courage of my convictions. And sometimes you've got to do that.

### **Ben Nemtin**

You've got to have the courage. And, you know, look, I just got goosebumps because it's so true. You know, we have moments where we can step up and move through that fear and take that shot. Or not. And I've seen it again and again, when you do that and you express your true self and that's scary and you have to be vulnerable. But when you just own it and just do it, even if people don't agree with you, they respect you for doing that and being yourself. And ultimately that's going to lead you to more success.

### **Spencer Levy**

Given all of the things you've accomplished, is there any one thing you're most proud of, or any one thing that you say, this is my one thing I'm going to get done no matter what?

### **Ben Nemtin**

The thing that I'm most proud of, you know, would probably be the first person that we helped, which is a gentleman that we met in Kelowna in British Columbia, who asked to... his dream is to bring pizzas to the homeless shelter. And that was the first person that had written in through our website that we could actually help, because we didn't have any money for larger gives, but we could afford a couple of pizzas. And we went and interviewed him, and we talked to him about why this was on his list. And what we learned is that the reason he wanted to give pizzas to the homeless shelter was because he had lived in that homeless shelter. And he said when people came in with food, it felt like the best day because it just felt like someone cared about him in a world where no one cared about him. And he had sort of pulled himself out of the homeless shelter and he started a landscaping business. So this was his job. But his truck had broken down recently, and so his whole business was on the rocks. And when we asked him if we could help, he would always bring it back to the pizzas. So we huddled up, we're like, we got to figure out a way to get this guy a truck. But we had \$480 between the four of us, right? Canadian, so it's less. And we went to a used car salesman, and he sold us a \$2,100 truck for \$480. We didn't even know that you needed to buy insurance. We didn't. And so the used car salesman bought insurance for the vehicle. We drove the truck up to Brent, tossed in the keys, and just hugged us and started to cry. And that moment was pivotal for us, because that was the first time we had ever helped someone that we didn't know. And we realized that that's what this project was about and that we had to keep doing it. And that's when the two week road trip continued. And it's always been the thing that we always lead with the fun, but the heart of it, the core, it's always about helping other people. I think that's also been why we've been successful. And so that day and that story and that moment really changed the trajectory of my life.

**Spencer Levy**

And given all you've accomplished, again, maybe this is an impossible question, any one thing you say, I'm getting this done?

**Ben Nemtin**

Go to space. I'm set to go to space with a company called World View in 2025, depending on when they get the go ahead. It's a really cool company that uses helium balloon technology. They've been sending up satellites to space for a very long time. They don't use rockets, so it's actually one of the safest ways to go up to the edge of the stratosphere. And then you come back down, hopefully. It's like a three hour ascent. You're up there for an hour or two and you come back down. So that's what I'm really excited to cross off, and then the list item that's on the final four is to make a movie, which is The Buried Life documentary film that we've been doing for a long time. I was just working on part of the doc before I came here, so we're aiming to have that out in the next year or so. So that's also really exciting. And that's something that I think will just be the piece that hopefully will trigger people to think about going after that thing that they love, giving them that feeling that we felt when we started this and on that road trip of that spark of life.

**Spencer Levy**

Well, on behalf of The Weekly Take, Ben Nemtin, number one New York Times bestselling author. Terrific job. Thank you so much.

**Ben Nemtin**

Thank you. Spencer.

**Spencer Levy**

Now, if your bucket list includes learning even more valuable information about commercial real estate, stay tuned to this space. We'll be back with a run of shows filled with practical and tactical insights, including a conversation about hotels, a look at legal issues facing our industry, and coming up next week a sit down with leading investor Scott Rechler, and more. As always, we invite you to connect with us by visiting our website, [CBRE.com/TheWeeklyTake](https://www.cbre.com/TheWeeklyTake). Don't forget to share the show and also make sure to subscribe, rate and review us wherever you listen. Until next week, thanks for joining us. I'm Spencer Levy. Be smart. Be safe. Be well.