



## **Achieve Your Goals Podcast #121 - Wisdom from a Modern Day Philosopher (Interview with Brian Johnson)**

**Hal Elrod:**

Goal achievers, this is Hal Elrod and I have a very exciting announcement. The dates and location have been set for the first ever Miracle Morning Experience live event. That's right. It's the first ever Miracle Morning event. Just go to [miraclemorning.com/events](http://miraclemorning.com/events) to get all the details and to apply for a spot. When I say apply for a spot, it is a very unique event in that ... I would go as far as to say that this event would be unlike any event in history. Every person there will be working together to literally create history together by planning the future of the Miracle Morning movement. Each morning you'll start by experiencing guided Miracle Morning sessions to deepen and expand your abilities to benefit from silence, affirmations, visualization, exercises, reading, inscribing and more. That's the morning. Each afternoon you'll collaborate with hundreds of like-minded Miracle Morning practitioners to brainstorm, plan and execute the future of the Miracle Morning movement, changing millions of lives one morning at a time. We'll do it together and then every evening we'll celebrate together. Not too late of course because we're all early risers and we have to be up early.

From helping to guide the vision of the Miracle Morning movie, the documentary that we're working on, to initiatives that you will literally co-create right there in the room with each other. You'll truly be part of making history. Just a quick note before I wrap this up. Because of it's unique collaborative nature of this event, although we're expecting more than ten thousand people from around the world to apply, to attend, it is limited to only two hundred people. About seventy-five to eighty-five of those spots got taken up from attendees of our Best Year Ever Blue Print event. Anyway go to [miraclemorning.com/events](http://miraclemorning.com/events) to get all the details and to apply for your spot. I hope to see you in June which is when the event takes place. All right, talk to you soon everybody. Take care. Hey, it's Hal Elrod. This episode of the Achieve Your Goals podcast is being brought to you by FreshBooks, the small business accounting software designed for you. Stay tuned at the end for a really cool offer. You'll find out how FreshBooks it helping millions of small business owners make everyday accounting easy, fast and secure.

**Nick Palkowski:** Welcome to the Achieve Your Goals podcast with Hal Elrod. I'm your host Nick Palkowski. You're listening to the show that is guaranteed to help you take your life to the next level faster than you ever thought possible. In each episode you will learn from someone who has achieved extraordinary goals that most haven't. He is the author of the number one best selling book, The Miracle Morning, a hall of fame and business achiever. An international keynote speaker, ultra marathon runner and the founder of [vipsuccesscoaching.com](http://vipsuccesscoaching.com), Mr. Hal Elrod.

**Hal Elrod:** All right, all right, all right. Welcome to the Achieve Your Goals podcast. This is your host Hal Elrod. Goal achievers,

welcome to another episode. I'm pumped for today. It seems like every time I interview someone it's the same back story. It's like, "I admire this person from a far. They were like a celebrity to me on the internet or whatever, then I finally got a hold of them and here we are." This is like the same story. Our guest today is someone that I learned a lot from for a long time before I ever connected with him. Actually I'll kind of share that story here in a minute. Our guest today specifically loves wisdom. If there was any way I could define Brian Johnson I would say he loves wisdom. He loves it a lot and he really loves helping people optimize their lives so that we can all change the world together. He's that type of big picture, big mission, change the world through his work type of guy. I connect with him on that level for sure.

He founded something known as PhilosophersNotes and a light bulb might be going off. You're like, "Dude. PhilosophersNotes? I read PhilosophersNotes all the time." That was me. That was where I knew his work. I was like, "Dude. This is the guy that created PhilosophersNotes," which essentially are really killer book summaries. Extracting all the best wisdom from a book and turning it into a five or ten minute read versus a three week read. That's PhilosophersNotes. He also founded something more recently called Optimal Living 101. I'm sure he'll talk more about that to everybody. He's the author of a book called A Philosopher's Note. He teaches the fundamentals of optimal living which is integrating ancient wisdom, plus modern science, plus common sense, plus virtue, plus mastery, plus fun. If that doesn't sound like a recipe for optimal living, I really don't know what is.

He also loves long hikes, chatting with his wife Alexandra, going on adventures and playing blocks with their son Emerson. I've got to share a funny story with you Brian. I don't know if I told you this or not. For our listeners, Brian was featured in a documentary known as Finding Joe. By the way, I don't know if you know this Brian. We had Pat Solomon on just a few weeks ago.

**Brian Johnson:** Right on. I didn't know that.

**Hal Elrod:** Yeah. Coincidentally you guys were on within a few weeks from each other. Brian was in this documentary, Finding Joe, which if you haven't heard that interview with Pat Solomon, it's fantastic. Go look it up. It was a couple weeks ago. I was watching that documentary and I already knew Brian. Oh, no. I had reached out because Brian ... You did a Philosopher Notes and a video on the Miracle Morning. Dude, I'm looking at that right now. Your Miracle Morning PhilosophersNotes video on YouTube has sixty-two thousand views. That's crazy because no video I've ever done has sixty-two thousand views. That's crazy. Oh, wait. That's funny. Right as I said that, this video of a speech I did on the Miracle Morning has ninety-nine thousand views. All right.

**Brian Johnson:** There you go.

**Hal Elrod:** You're in second place on the views buddy. Here's the funny story. I'm watching Finding Joe on a flight back from this event. I was like, "Dude I've got to have Brian Johnson in the Miracle

Morning movie like the documentary. We've got to have Brian in it. He summarized the Miracle Morning book. He's been a huge part of the movement which is part of what this movie's about. I got to have Brian Johnson in the movie." I was like, "Do I have your phone number in my phone?" I looked up Brian through a phone number in my phone and I had Brian Johnson in my phone. I texted him and when I say him ... Okay. Dude, wrong Brian Johnson. I said, "Hey, do you want to be in the Miracle Morning movie? I would love to feature you in the movie?" I got a reply. He's like, "Oh, my God. I would never have expected this. Absolutely. Thank you so much."

I go, "Well dude, I'm watching Finding Joe and you stole the show. It was a no brainer." He goes, "I don't know. What is Finding Joe?" I was like, "The documentary." He goes, "I think you might have the wrong Brian Johnson." I was like, "God. That is terrible to invite someone to be in a movie and then go, "Oh. You're right, wrong Brian Johnson?" Yeah. Brian if you're listening to this dude, I love you. We need to give you like ... At the very least in the credits an IMDB. Something just because that was a really unintentional but mean thing to do. Anyway.

**Brian Johnson:** I'm sorry.

**Hal Elrod:** Yeah. You need to give me your cellphone number. I don't if I have that yet.

**Brian Johnson:** That's great.

**Hal Elrod:** That way I'm not texting the wrong Brian next time. Anyway, man. How are you doing?

**Brian Johnson:** I'm doing great man. That is such a good story. As you know mutual fan club members at Miracle Morning are still good, love everything you're up to and they're really excited to chat.

**Hal Elrod:** That's cool. It is good and mutual. That's funny. That's my M.O. That's the second time I did that. I was talking to one of my buddies from college right before I got married. I was like, "Hey, you coming to the rehearsal dinner?" He was like, "What rehearsal dinner?" I was like, "Dude, for all the groomsmen? The rehearsal dinner?" He was on the original list and he didn't make the final cut. I totally forgot. Yeah. Anyone listening, if you ever get a call from me or a text and it's exciting news, just don't count on it. I'm notoriously really bad at that, so don't count on it.

**Brian Johnson:** I'm happy to be on the right side of that. Thank you for the documentary. It sounds awesome. I look forward to connecting with you on that front as well.

**Hal Elrod:** Yeah, we're going to film that. I'm pumped. Brian, you founded PhilosophersNotes. That's how I discovered you. That's a big mutual connection with your Miracle Morning PhilosophersNotes that you did, the video that you did. You founded Optimal Living 101. These are all interesting. I want to

ask you, what do you do? If somebody asked you that question like, "What do you do? What do you do for a living? How do you answer that?"

**Brian Johnson:** Yeah. It's probably best to answer that with what I write down first thing every morning which is my purpose, which is I help people. On one line I write down purpose and then I say I help people. In the line below that I put optimize. I help people optimize their lives as you said in the intro, so we can make a significant difference in the world. We can change the world together. From a mission perspective, I read, I write, I teach. I'm committed to creating the greatest collection of wisdom I possibly can by sharing more wisdom and less time. My idea is let's take all these great ideas, create really discrete wisdom that's super practical, inspiring and help people really make a significant difference today. That's the basic idea.

**Hal Elrod:** I love it, more wisdom and less time. As you say that, I realize that you and I have essentially the same purpose. You use a cool word, optimize. I use a generic I help people fulfill their potential. It really is authentically what I feel. If we can all fulfill our potential, then that's how we change the world right?

**Brian Johnson:** Yep. That's exactly it, optimize and actualize when I extend it. Get a little bit better today, take one more step in the direction of your highest potential and enjoy the process right?

**Hal Elrod:** Yeah, dude. We are brothers from another mother for sure. Let's go back. It's rare just to have a purpose period. Most of you are

probably like, "My purpose in life? I have no idea." The fact that you've got that figured out ... That's pretty cool and you're acting on it. Take us back. What's the journey that led you ... The heroes journey. What led you to the work that you do now and this huge impact that you're making in the world?

**Brian Johnson:** Yeah. As I step back it's twenty years in the works now where I can see the theme. Emerson says that, "If you watch a ship sail from New York to London, if you step back far enough, you see a straight line. It's a lot of zigs and zags as it makes its way." For me that's how it's been over the last twenty years. I've spent half of the last twenty years building and selling a couple of businesses. The other half reading, writing, thinking and teaching, so kind of part CEO, part philosopher. I've always had a core passion for understanding what makes great people great? What is it about those people that go out and truly actualize their potential to make a difference in the world, that makes them tick? Yes, I build and sold a few businesses in between just to immerse in ancient wisdom, the modern science and then really just trying to understand it. I've gotten closer to really feeling like I'm living what I'm here to do which is these days being a hermit, reading, writing and teaching. That is pretty much my entire life outside of my family.

**Hal Elrod:** Got it. Okay. You say you built and sold two businesses. I'd like to dive into that a little bit and hear more about what were those businesses.

**Brian Johnson:** Yeah. The quick biographical steps, UCLA undergrad, first generation college student. Studied psychology and business,



thought I'd get my PhD in psychology. That wasn't it. Got swept up in Arthur Andersen's recruiting, did that, worked in four service lines for a year. Went to law school, dropped out of law school before the semester was over. The only thing I knew I wanted to do was to coach a little league baseball team, burned the resume. I moved back in with mom at twenty-two or whatever it was, twenty-three. Out of that I came up with my first business idea. This was 1998, first dot com boom.

**Hal Elrod:** Wow.

**Brian Johnson:** Twenty-three years old coaching this little league baseball team. I could see that in the future every single team and league in the world would be using the web for everything. At the time there were literally only a few dozen websites you could find on Yahoo. We built one of the earlier content management systems that made it really easy for team moms, dads and coaches to create a really cool site. That could put everything from schedules, standings and pictures that grandma and grandpa could check out, etc. We won a business [inaudible 00:13:22]. Competition at UCLA's Andersen school, raised five million bucks. I was a twenty-four, twenty-five year old CEO and hired the CEO of Adidas to replace me, just kind of that whole dot com energy.

**Hal Elrod:** Wow.

**Brian Johnson:** The market crashed and we wound up selling it to one of our two competitors who has raised fifty million dollars to our five

million. Went, integrated the business, kind of set the strategy and then left. Spent a few years just as a philosopher, a lover of wisdom. Came back, needed to make some money again and wanted to create again. Created my second business which was basically at the time MySpace was big. MySpace for people who wanted to change the world.

**Hal Elrod:** Huh.

**Brian Johnson:** Yeah. We raised a few million for that and wound up selling it to a company called [Gaia 00:14:09]. About nine years ago now.

**Hal Elrod:** What was that site? Is it still the same site or rebranded Gaia?

**Brian Johnson:** Yes. It got integrated. It was called Zaadz at the time. Yes. It's no longer called Zaadz and we'll have another long conversation on that whole process.

**Hal Elrod:** Got it.

**Brian Johnson:** I sold that when I got clear that I wanted to really go full time into studying life and decided to give myself a PhD in how to live is how I approached it. It wasn't a program that integrated what I wanted to study. It wasn't just a philosophy program or a positive psychology program. I also wanted to study business,

nutrition, creativity and everything else that goes into optimizing our lives. I spent basically four years, five years creating philosophers notes and again playfully giving myself my own PhD.

**Hal Elrod:** What year did you start PhilosophersNotes?

**Brian Johnson:** I started it probably eight years ago. I was on a flight home. My now wife and I had gotten engaged. We went on a little pre honey moon trip and I was flying home from Tokyo to LA. It was actually very close to this time eight years ago I think. I opened a sky mall thing. They had an ad for companies that did summaries of business books. I had been trying to figure out what I was going to do and how I was going to kind of make it concrete, what I was going to do in terms of studying. I just had one of those choir of angels moments like, "This is really cool. There's business books that are being distilled but who's doing this for wisdom books, for optimal living books?" I decided that I'd make that me.

**Hal Elrod:** Nice.

**Brian Johnson:** I got in. My masters project in my PhD track would be distilling a hundred of my favorite books and creating a profitable business in the process. Demonstrating that you can get paid to do what you love to do in service to the world.

**Hal Elrod:**

I love it. That was eight years ago. I feel like I've known about you for a long time, probably not too long after you started. Yeah. What did you do? You read a hundred books. You did a hundred PhilosophersNotes. Because that used to be like a package, wasn't it? I feel like I remember the number one hundred being how it was promoted.

**Brian Johnson:**

Yeah it was for quite a while. I didn't know how many I would do. I did a hundred. That was my quote masters. It took me two years to do that. I wrote a book which was my dissertation and then I started another set of a hundred. I got to about I think another eight, a hundred and eighty. I got caught by an idea after having breakfast with the author Steven Pressfield. He asked me if I ever considered creating a modern day Plato's Academy? The very short story to that is I got his question completely wrong. I went out and I created a business where we recruited literally hundreds of teachers from around the world, got a bunch of people excited about it and sort of moving on that track. I realized two years, maybe even three years and a couple million dollars raised into it that it wasn't quite it. It was working but not as well as it could and it was just slightly off.

Steven Pressfield would call it a shadow calling. It was not quite it. The deeper calling for me was not to go out and recruit all these teachers, but to really go all in on my own work. Again while I'm in the conversation ... Wound up pulling the plug on that about fifteen months ago and going all in on my work. Now I created like a hundred and twenty-five new PhilosophersNotes last year. I think we have like three hundred and forty-five. This morning I finished number three hundred and forty-five. My commitment and goal now is a thousand. I'm spending the next five years to get to a thousand. Yeah. Just

immerse myself in this wisdom, see if I can master myself in the craft and help people in the process.

**Hal Elrod:** Dude. I'd imagine hanging out with you has got to be somewhat intimidating. What in the hell am I going to bring to the table that this guy doesn't know?

**Brian Johnson:** Not at all. For example, The Miracle Morning. One of my friends and investors said, "You got to read this book. It's changed his life." I said, "Wow, it looks cool." I got it and it's awesome. Just as a direct praise to you of what you've done is amazing and my approach is as a very humble student. Everyone of these books you've thought about ... You're so passionate about many things. In the miracle morning you thought that through and you've really delivered something beautiful. I find that all of these authors have dedicated ... If not their entire lives. A significant part of their lives to really mastering a particular topic. I just feel blessed to be able to spend my time going through it and then trying to translate it in a way that allows people to really get access to the most actionable wisdom quickly and then drill in deeper. We've had so many people say they've gone in all the way with Miracle Morning and a number of the other books that I profiled. No, I'm always learning and I'm also pretty boring. I'm a hermit. That would be the weird part is that I don't do a whole lot beyond this.

**Hal Elrod:** Yeah. No. I'm the same way dude. I'm such a home body. If it wasn't for my wife ... God bless her. I would go nowhere, do

nothing. She's like, "Hey, do you want to do this?" I'm like, "No, but I will."

**Brian Johnson:** My wife's the same way. We basically read, write and have fun with our son. Go to bed as early as we can, get up, do it again and enjoy the process.

**Hal Elrod:** That's great. How old is Emerson?

**Brian Johnson:** He is three and a half.

**Hal Elrod:** Oh. My son Halston is three and a half. We'll have to get them playing together.

**Brian Johnson:** Right on. That'd be awesome.

**Hal Elrod:** Yeah, that's cool. I've got an older daughter, six and a half.

**Brian Johnson:** Wow.

**Hal Elrod:** Very cool. I was going to ask you something and I just drew a blank off something that you just said. About the movie ... Oh, no. Actually I was going to mention my wife and I are slowly

but surely coauthoring the Miracle Morning for Couples. The tagline was given to me by Robert Kiyosaki, author of Rich Dad, Poor Dad, when he and his wife ... We were interviewing them for the film. You're in good company in the documentary with them. They said, "Most couples grow apart as time goes on." They said, "The Miracle Morning enables us to grow together everyday so that we never grow apart." I was like, "Wow, that's beautiful." Actually I sent that clip to my wife. She had never done the Miracle Morning. She was like six years into it and she's like my night owl. I just finally accepted it and stopped pushing her to try to wake up early. I sent her that clip and she goes, "Wow, I don't want us to grow apart. Let's grow together." It was amazing and she's like, "I'm willing to do the Miracle Morning."

Within our first few Miracle Mornings together it was beautiful. The reason I spring this up is we're going to interview other couples. We're going to interview other couples doing the do away morning ritual together. Yeah. If that's something that ...

**Brian Johnson:** Right on. We used to do them together all the time and it was incredibly deepening for our relationship. Frankly I miss it a little bit because with the baby things change. No, I think that'd be awesome because what we do is we're so all in on each other's fundamentals. She's really taking the lead on the whole motherhood, parenting and what not. Also kind of the morning with him and so I go to bed super early, shortly after we put him to bed. She reads a little bit longer. I'm going to bed. I get up well before they get up, like an hour or two or even three hours before they even get up. I bust out my morning ritual and then when they get up there's a little family time and then I give her the hour to go-

**Hal Elrod:** Oh, that's beautiful.

**Brian Johnson:** Yeah. That's my time with my son and my time to give to her before we get into our day and all that good stuff. That's kind of how we've done it. That might be a fun first time.

**Hal Elrod:** Yeah, that's a great angle. That's one thing we get a lot with the Miracle Morning people like, "We have a newborn or I've got a small child, or my baby doesn't sleep through the night. How do we deal with that?" That's actually it. When the Miracle Morning was being developed my wife was pregnant, then she had one baby and then had another baby. That was kind of her thing too, "I'm not going to wake up early. I'm trying to grab every second of sleep that I can."

**Brian Johnson:** The night is her time. It's her time to actually-

**Hal Elrod:** Decompress.

**Brian Johnson:** Yeah. That's awesome.

**Hal Elrod:** Totally. That's a great approach that you guys have. I'd love to dive into some actionable content and you have so much wisdom that you've gained reading hundreds of books. Not just



reading them, but distilling them right. I always tell people if you really want to learn something, learn it with the intention of teaching it. Or with something on the schedule where you have to teach it to somebody else and that forces you to learn it at a much deeper level. That's what's really neat about what you've done. You haven't just read hundreds of books, right? Which in it and of itself would be great. You've read hundreds of books and then turned them into PhilosophersNotes. With all of that said, of all of the wisdom that you've gained ... Being that this is the Achieve Your Goals podcast, I always like to ask our guests what are your best strategies, tips, methods, rituals, whatever? What's the best actionable content that you can share with our listeners around how to achieve major goals?

**Brian Johnson:** Well I've read this great book by a guy named Hal Elrod. He talks about morning routines.

**Hal Elrod:** Oh, that's a good one.

**Brian Johnson:** We won't go into that. Let's just establish that as if you don't have a solid morning routine ... Also I'm a big fan of bookending as Darren Hardy talks about right?

**Hal Elrod:** Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Brian Johnson:** Bookending your days. You have the most control over your am and your pm and why I control my pm as much as I do ... I

do something called a digital sunset. It's probably the biggest habit that I've created that made Miracle Mornings for me so doable, which is I'm done. I get up early. I work hard and I'm done. It's 5:00 pm which is when the sun sets in the winter and now it's before the sun sets. Basically it's a digital sunset. Everything is done. My computer's off. My iPhone's off. We have funny lights throughout the house that are melatonin friendly, all that stuff. I'm in my family time getting ready for winding down and ritualizing that. That's been a big practice for me to make sure that I have a strong morning. Just making that decision that my actualization is more important than just being entertained.

**Hal Elrod:** Hmm. Yes. I love that. Say that again for everybody.

**Brian Johnson:** My actualization is more important than being entertained.

**Hal Elrod:** Wow.

**Brian Johnson:** That wasn't an easy decision to come to. Well it was easy once I made it conscious. I didn't realize that the days when I was just a little bit burned out, working a little too hard and grinding a bit, were the days that I tended to want to watch a little more of whatever. As I made that connection and realized that, that started to spiral where the next morning was a little bit flatter. It just became a very clear decision, which one do you want? Do you want to be entertained or do you want to actualize? For me that's not a tough question to answer. It's just aligning the behaviors systematically against that. That's one big one. My

big thing is if I had to capture my entire philosophy in one word it's a Greek word, [arete 00:25:44]. The Greeks said that, "If you want the deepest sense of happiness, the sense of flourishing, not just feeling pleasurable here and there.

Truly feeling the joy of flourishing ... Which isn't always positive There's a sense of becoming that which you're destined to be. You need to live with what they called arete. The word directly translates as virtue or excellence, but it means something deeper. It means something closer to expressing the highest version of yourself moment to moment, to moment. That's really my thing and it's actually become my mantra of when I meditate and when I'm going through my day. It's arete. Arete, this moment. What am I capable of this moment? I connect that "this moment," in a very active way to my destiny. I know that if I want to express the highest within myself ultimately, I need to do that as consistently as I can. The way to do that is to get to this moment.

For me the whole power of now, being in the moment and all that stuff was very abstract. When I think about it in the sense of what am I capable of in this moment? That just gives me a sense of power that's been really vitalizing. I could just feel that energy moving me in the direction that I want to go. I'd throw that out as a big part of my life, something that's been deeply meaningful for me.

**Hal Elrod:**

Wow, really powerful. I want to go back to the bookending your days starting with the Miracle Morning ... Got that. Finishing your day with the digital sunset. Just to reiterate and

make sure I understand, that's just turning off all electronics at a predetermined time each day? Is that pretty accurate or am I missing something?

**Brian Johnson:** Yeah. It's just shutting down. To me my morning starts at night and this is the biggest thing. It was really hard for me to start a good morning and get up before the sun rises. I wanted to do that for a long time, but it for whatever reason didn't make the connection that the only way to do that ... I haven't used an alarm in I don't know how many years. Is to have a good night. Cal Newport has a great line in his newest book, *Deep Work*, where he says shut down complete. When he ends his day he literally says to himself sometimes as he turns off his computer ... I literally just got off the phone five minutes before you and I chatted, chatting with Cal. He says hi.

**Hal Elrod:** Awesome.

**Brian Johnson:** He's a fan of *Miracle Morning* by the way.

**Hal Elrod:** Oh, very cool.

**Brian Johnson:** Yeah, super cool. He talks about in his book, "Shut down complete. You're done." I used to kind of never really be done. I'd want to check in, "Did anyone else come in?" You know?

**Hal Elrod:** Yeah.

**Brian Johnson:** What other work can I do? Just realizing that I put a lot of energy into my creative work and I need to isolate. I need to shut off. I need to be willing to be on and then to be off. The digital sunset is no electronics and then also we reduce the lights in our house. In our son's changing room we don't have lights with blue lights in it, WHICH is known to affect your melatonin which is going to help you sleep or not. If you have bright lights on, particularly the screens on an iPhone or pad or a computer, that's disrupting the quality of your sleep.

**Hal Elrod:** Yeah.

**Brian Johnson:** At least shut that off an hour plus before you go to bed. I'm all in so it's hours before I go to bed. We have literally red lights in his changing room and then these little friendly lights throughout the house. We're just very ritualistically shutting down and slowing down. That's kind of what it means for me and it's family time. I've turned on my iPhone. Literally today I think was the fourth time I've turned it on. I'm super weird, hermit and all that. I don't have my phone on in front of my son. That was a big thing for me and the research shows that. The iPhone effect is what they actually call it and you might be familiar with the research. Just having your phone out in front of you and you're interacting with people, diminishes the quality of those interactions. Imperially proven, even if you're not like that rat version of us that's checking every text that comes in and, "I'm really paying attention to you," not really right?

**Hal Elrod:** Yeah.

**Brian Johnson:** Even if you're not even doing that but it's just visibly present, that will diminish the quality of the depth of connection. That's another big practice for us is everything is off. We're present and we're spending time together. That's been great, both in terms of connection, then also in terms of resetting and easing into the night. Having a great night of sleep and starting again strong.

**Hal Elrod:** That's great. This is something that's funny. My wife and I just yesterday ... I was like, "Sweetie, we need to have a no phone policy in the evening. We're not consistent with that." She was like, "I was just thinking the same thing." You, Brian have ... You may be what pushed over the edge that decision. I just made a note, "Put the iPhone away to deepen the connection." I think that's so important.

**Brian Johnson:** Right on. Yeah, it's fun. It's a game right? It's like, "Other room, off." Your consciousness would thank you and it's a really cool practice that I'm excited to hear you guys are already on the edge of rocking.

**Hal Elrod:** On the edge. Yeah, exactly. You just got to be careful when you are on the edge which way you teeter. No. Literally it starts tonight. "No phone." I just wrote that in my schedule tonight and tomorrow. I wrote it in pen. Things in pen are no joke. You

can't erase them and I underlined it twice. All right, Brian. You inspire me. I appreciate that. Man, this is great. You and I could chat forever. I can continue talking with you. What you said that I can not get over, just such a profound quote. I want to riff on this for just a minute and then we can wrap up. I had you say it twice. I'll say it again for our listeners, "My actualization is more important than being entertained." This to me ... I don't know how long ago it was. Years ago I made a decision to make value based choices, meaning what do I really value? What's most important to me?

Making sure that my choices are simply aligned with those values. Nothing too profound, but that's how I went from eating whatever tasted good to asking myself, "What food will add the most value to my body, into my health, into my energy, into my vitality? Oh, that's the food I'll eat." Which most of look at a menu and we're like, "Um, what looks good? What do I feel like?" Same thing. People go, I can't wake up early or I'm up til 1:00 in the morning. I'm an night owl." I go, "What are you doing from the hours of 10:00 pm to 1:00 am?" They're like, "Netflix binging of course." Well there you go. Are you willing to give up an hour of mindless entertainment for an hour of radical transformative growth? Yeah. For our listeners, I encourage you to consider that sentiment from Brian that does your actualization ... I would call that fulfilling your potential, becoming the best version of yourself, whatever term resonates with you. Are you making that more important? Are you placing your actualization, putting more value on that than on being entertained?

Or on eating food that tastes really good despite the consequences of the foods that you eat, or the entertainment

that you consume? Are you spending money on things just to feel good about it? Or are you investing money in things that will improve you, your quality of life, give you security, freedom for you and your family, etc.? There's so much weight to that sentiment Brian and I really appreciate you sharing that.

**Brian Johnson:** Right on. I appreciate your reflection. Thanks for introducing me to Matthew Kelly too by the way.

**Hal Elrod:** Yeah.

**Brian Johnson:** As you were recapping that it just really reminded me of him in that best version of us. You know?

**Hal Elrod:** Yeah.

**Brian Johnson:** Every moment gives us that opportunity. Is this a step forward into the best version of us or is it not? Using that a compass kind of arete style is so impactful, so thanks for that.

**Hal Elrod:** Yeah. You're very welcome. I always have Matthew Kelly's book, *The Rhythm of Life*. For whatever reason it's always on this spot. I know exactly where it is. Right when you said that I looked up at it. I wanted to ask you, Did you know he has a children's book?



**Brian Johnson:** No I didn't. I've profiled three of his books now, Rhythms of Life, Perfectly Yourself and then Off Balance. I did not know about his children's book though.

**Hal Elrod:** Yeah. If you Google Matthew Kelly's children's book or go to Amazon I think it's called something around, Becoming the Best Version of Yourself. Yeah, it's a neat book. I read it to my daughter quite a bit. He asks his grandpa, "Why am I here?" He says, "To become the best version of yourself."

**Brian Johnson:** That's awesome.

**Hal Elrod:** He goes to school and then he teaches his teacher. She puts it on the chalk board and then the other kids are learning it. Some kids are mean and then the teachers asks ... Yeah. It's a really cool way to start teaching that to your kids at a young age. Of course, now you have that reference point which is when your child misbehaves or acts out of alignment with their integrity or their character, or their values or whatever. You can say, "Hey. Sweetheart, Emerson, is that helping you become the best version of yourself?" They, "No."

**Brian Johnson:** Right on.

**Hal Elrod:** Yeah, definitely.

**Brian Johnson:** That's awesome. While we're on that topic let's talk for one more minute about.

**Hal Elrod:** Yeah.

**Brian Johnson:** Other good ones, Rechargeables by Tom Wrath who wrote Eat, Move, Sleep. That's Emerson's favorite kids book. Basically teaching the kids the power of eating, moving and sleeping, getting your charge up. He goes out. He goes for a run and he says, "My charge is getting up." He eats brain foods. That's what he calls them, "My charge is getting up." Takes a nap, "My charge is getting up." If he's acting up a little bit I say, "Hey, you need to get a little bit recharge?" Really good book, The Rechargeables.

**Hal Elrod:** I'm adding it to my cart right now.

**Brian Johnson:** Yeah. The Fantastic Elastic Brain, kids book on neuroscience and neuroplasticity. It's awesome.

**Hal Elrod:** Interesting. Thank you for those recommendations.

**Brian Johnson:** Yeah.

**Hal Elrod:** My favorite book for kids is still, The Monster Under the Bed. Are you familiar with that one?

**Brian Johnson:** No. How do we not have that one?

**Hal Elrod:** Dude, that's a Sesame Street. I think that my parents read that to me when I was a kid. Dude, you have to get it. It's one of the greatest books. It's Grover and he says, "I heard there's a monster ... It's hard for me to do it without doing the voice. With my daughter I'm like, "It's Grover. I'm the monster." He says, "There's a monster in the book. Please don't turn the page or you'll get close to the monster." You turn the page and he's like, "No. I'm telling you, "Do you not understand there's monsters?" You turn the page and he's like, "I'm going to glue this page together," and there's all this glue everywhere. I don't want to ruin the punchline, but anyways it is a great book. They did one, Another Monster Under the Bed," which is Grover and Elmo. Anyway, yeah.

**Brian Johnson:** That was great.

**Hal Elrod:** I don't know if they teach our kids any great lessons. Those are the most fun books for me to read.

**Brian Johnson:** That's awesome.

**Hal Elrod:** This one's Your Fantastic Elastic Brain: Stretch It, Shape It. Awesome. All right. I'm going to add those to my cart. My children will thank you and my wife will say, "Why the hell are you ordering more books? They have too many books." Anyway. Yeah. I was going to say I guess PhilosophersNotes for kids, but their books are already so short that wouldn't work. Anyway, cool.

**Brian Johnson:** That's good.

**Hal Elrod:** All right, brother. Hey, Brian. Thank you so much for joining me today. It has been truly a pleasure and a honor. I appreciate you very much.

**Brian Johnson:** Hal, the feeling is absolutely mutual. Thank you. Can't wait to see you soon and let's do this.

**Hal Elrod:** All right, brother. We're going to do it. All right. Achieve Your Goals podcast listeners, thank you for tuning in. Go check out Brian's ... Well actually here we go. I almost forgot. Brian, what is the best way for people to get a hold of you? I want to reiterate for people PhilosophersNotes. They're must reads. I mean they're phenomenal and he does videos on YouTube now where he does the book summary via video. Brian, take just a minute. I wanted to ask you about this, your Optimal Living 101. I know that's like your baby right now. Take thirty

seconds, sixty seconds. Give us a quick summary of what that is and where people can go to find you.

**Brian Johnson:** Yeah. We'll start with the end there, [brianjohnson.me](http://brianjohnson.me). Brian with an i, [Johnson.me](http://Johnson.me), is the best place to find what we're up to. We have the PhilosophersNotes which as Hal described are simple summaries, or six paged PDFs. Twenty minute MP3s with the best big ideas from these great books across a range of subjects. We have three hundred and I think I said, "Forty-five," of those now. I take the best big ideas and I teach Optimal Living 101 classes. The ideas there is isn't it weird that we went from math to science, to history, but no one ever taught us how to live? I create classes on everything from masterpiece days, habits 101, to conquering procrastination 101, love 101 and that sort of thing. Top ten big ideas, etc. We have a ten dollar a month membership program where you get access to all that stuff. That's, that and then YouTube. We have a ton of videos, ton of free stuff, including that video that you found of yours. Yeah, that's it. Just trying to help people optimize and again have fun in the process.

**Hal Elrod:** By the way this is the other part of the story I didn't share, Brian. By the way ten dollars a month, that's like the equivalent of free basically. Anyway the story is that I was at an event, at a conference and for my opener I wanted to put this Miracle Morning video. I searched Miracle Morning on YouTube and your video popped up first. I was like, "No Freaking Way." I ran my computer over to my buddy Matt. I'm like, "You know PhilosophersNotes, Brian Johnson?" He's like, "Yeah, yeah." I'm like, "Check this out. He did a PhilosophersNotes on Miracle Morning." At that point it had like three thousand views. It was still pretty new. Anyway that just seemed like a

fun story. I was all stoked that Brian Johnson did a PhilosophersNotes on Miracle Mornings.

**Brian Johnson:** Right on, man. I stoked to have your support. Your community is amazing. Again, thanks for giving me the opportunity to chat with you and I can't wait to see you soon.

**Hal Elrod:** All right. You as well. I'll wrap this up, take two here. Goal Achievers, thank you for tuning in. You know I love you. I appreciate you, getting your messages, comments, emails and reviews on iTunes. I read every single one and it means so much to me that you tune in. Thanks so much. I will talk to you next week. Take care. I mentioned earlier that this episode is brought to you by FreshBooks. If you're not familiar with FreshBooks, I absolutely love the service. In fact, Nick Palkowski turned me onto it when he started sending me invoices from FreshBooks. It is so simple to both send in and receive invoices. It's great for you. It's great for your clients. You can create automated monthly payments and invoices that are sent automatically to free up your time to focus on growing your business. Right now FreshBooks is offering a month of unrestricted use to all of our listeners totally free right now. You don't even need a credit card for the trial. To claim your free month of accounting software at FreshBooks, go to [freshbooks.com/achieveyourgoals](http://freshbooks.com/achieveyourgoals).

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into the ... What's it called? How did you hear about us section.  
All right, everybody. Love you, take care, we'll see you next  
week.

**Nick Palkowski:** Thank you so much for tuning in to this episode of the podcast. Now we want to know what were your big take aways from your interview with Brian? Head on over to [halelrod.com/121](http://halelrod.com/121) for episode number 121. Leave a comment there on the [inaudible 00:42:15]. Page. Letting us know what your big take aways were. Also if you haven't done so yet, please go to subscribe to the podcast iTunes by going to [halelrod.com/itunes](http://halelrod.com/itunes), clicking the little subscribe button and then leaving a rating and a review, if you would. Rating and reviews truly are the best way for you to show your appreciation for the show, because they help more people who find out about the podcast decide if this is the one for them. Now until next week it's time for you to go out there, take action and achieve your goals.