



CTRL+CLICK CAST #23 Embrace the Suck with Chris Harrison

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Lea Alcantara: You are listening to CTRL+CLICK CAST. We inspect the web for you! Today we're talking to Chris Harrison about growing as designers/devs by embracing the things we hate. I'm your host, Lea Alcantara, and I'm joined by my fab co-host:

Emily Lewis: Emily Lewis!

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Emily Lewis: CTRL+CLICK would also like to thank [Pixel & Tonic](#) for being our major sponsor.

[Music ends] Hi Lea, how was your 4th (Fourth)?

Lea Alcantara: It was pretty good. Both were kind of funny because I spent it with fellow Canadian expats. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: And we were dressed up in all like Americana.

Emily Lewis: I saw some of your pictures, you were more patriotic looking than I managed myself. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs] I just wanted...



Emily Lewis: Even your nails.

Lea Alcantara: Well, no, actually that was my friend Maia's nails.

Emily Lewis: Oh.

Lea Alcantara: And we were...

Emily Lewis: I thought it was yours.

Lea Alcantara: No, and she was better at the nails than I was.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: But I thought like since I was already wearing stripes and everything, I'm like, "Okay, that might be just too much now. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs] So did you do anything to recognize the 4th, or was it really kind of like get together with fellow Canadians and reminisce about Canada?

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs] Well, we tried to go to a park, Gas Works Park, to see fireworks and stuff like that.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: But the weather was kind of crappy, so we didn't stick around that long, like we had some stuff from a food stand and we saw some guys parachuting. I don't know if that was like a 4th of July thing. They were parachuting down planes and had smoke coming out of their bodies, I don't know. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: Oh.



Lea Alcantara: But then because the weather was crappy we were just like, “Let’s just head back to your apartment and drink.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: And...

Emily Lewis: Like good Americans. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, exactly, and their apartment has a rooftop deck.

Emily Lewis: Oh, that’s perfect.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, so eventually we like during the fireworks, we just headed up to the rooftop and saw both legal and illegal [laughs] fireworks going off.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs] Yeah, we have legal and illegal fireworks here in the desert which just boggles my mind because we are under constant fire danger.

Lea Alcantara: Yes. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: And I do not understand why the State lets this happen every year. I see the stands and they just make me angry, the big huge fireworks stands.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah.

Emily Lewis: Oh, I mean, people lose their homes. It’s just bizarre to me why you would put stuff on fire in the desert that’s like ready to catch on fire. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, now, I know. I mean, it’s like sparklers, cool, but I mean, I guess in some ways some of the illegal stuff was cool because it was closer.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs] It was in people’s backyard?



Lea Alcantara: Yeah, yeah, but it was far enough that we were safe.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: But I was wondering about their neighbors. It's just like, "Hmm, what if something caught on fire?"

Emily Lewis: Yeah.

Lea Alcantara: Like plenty... [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs] Well, I'm glad you had a good 4th.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, it was fun.

Emily Lewis: All right, so today we're talking about embracing the suck with Chris Harrison. Chris is a talented illustrator, designer and front-end dev. He's also very involved in the web community founding RefreshAugusta and The Clubhou.se Cooperative as well as live tweeting many major web conferences in the southeast region. Welcome to the show, Chris.

Chris Harrison: Hello. How are you guys doing today?

Emily Lewis: Great. How are you?

Chris Harrison: Oh, not too bad.

Lea Alcantara: So Chris, can you tell our listeners a bit more about yourself?

Chris Harrison: Yeah. I live in Augusta for the past 18, well, 17 years. I've been married to my beautiful wife, Kim, for nearly 11 years. I have two kids, Tyler and Emily, and they are the joys of my life. They're basically who I spent time with whenever I'm not working or doing stuff in the local community. I like collecting comic books, *Star Wars*. I collect clone troopers.



Emily Lewis: Oh cool.

Chris Harrison: Yeah, and I like taking pictures of Lego stuff.

Emily Lewis: Do you do those – what is it called – tilt-shift stuff with Lego or like just macro shots?

Chris Harrison: Mostly macro shots.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Chris Harrison: And just playing around with my phone and Instagram and in some cases, really just trying to learn my SLR a little bit better.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, Lea, you have like a really nice camera too, don't you?

Lea Alcantara: Yes. Well, I used to have like a giant rig with Nikon and all these lenses and things like that, but recently, I downgraded/upgraded. I don't know how you would call it to a Fuji X 100S because I found that I wasn't really switching lenses and I wasn't taking as much photos because it was too bulky to bring around an SLR.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: So the Fuji film looks kind of like the tiny Leica, but it's all digital and it's fixed lens and it made me like to just be able to put it in my purse and take a ton of photos.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees] I think we've noticed when we've had guests on the show that there are a couple of common interests and hobbies.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: Music being one of them.

Lea Alcantara: Yes.



Emily Lewis: But I think photography is another major one that we see.

Lea Alcantara: Sure.

Emily Lewis: Everyone is really interested in it if you're in the web industry. Interesting. So Chris, we have sort of an odd name to today's episode, Embracing The Suck. It actually comes from a presentation you gave at Giant Conf. What is embracing the suck means?

Chris Harrison: So it came from a military phrase that basically means, "Face it, soldier, I've been there, this isn't easy. Now, let's deal with it."

Lea Alcantara: Oh.

Chris Harrison: And I'm not a retired military, but my dad was, but this concept has just really struck a chord with me because I've been in this industry for a long time. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Chris Harrison: And I've seen some things, and sometimes whether you like it or not, you just have to deal with the card you're given and make the best of it.

Emily Lewis: I mean, that's obviously something that you figured out for yourself, but why did you feel it was something you wanted to present and share with other people in a really formal way?

Chris Harrison: Well, last year I started entertaining an idea of trying to get into speaking a little bit more. I reached out to a few people on Twitter about trying to talk and it led to giving a few presentations on Sass to some music groups.

Emily Lewis: Like local events?



Chris Harrison: Yeah, I talked to a group in Athens, in Athens, Georgia, and then also at the Atlanta Web Design Group, RefreshAugusta and even RefreshColumbia, and during that time I saw Giant Conf had a call for speakers, and I knew that I wouldn't want to give the Sass talk but I wanted to push myself and for me that's part of embracing the suck.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Chris Harrison: It's a topic that really struck a chord with me just because I've been going through a lot of changes personally and professionally since the last year. I went from working full time freelance for 3-1/2 years to working full time again, and it took a lot of getting used to.

Emily Lewis: That's a huge transition.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Chris Harrison: Yeah, I went from being able to set my own schedule and having the chase down work to working for a major corporation, and at first it was a little difficult. Probably, it wasn't as difficult for me as it would be for others just because I have been contracting with them for about two years before I came on full time, but it was still weird having to come back into an office environment.

Emily Lewis: Did it also mean a lot more stuff sucked?

Chris Harrison: Oh well...

Emily Lewis: Or the way you got to work or the way you had to work? I mean, one thing I can think of for myself when I left my employer four years ago to work for myself, I hated it. I hated everything about the bureaucracy and with things that I had to do that didn't make sense that never made it to the public, and then working for myself which is a lot of hustling, but I also have the freedom to not suffer fools.



Chris Harrison: Well, in my case, I knew a lot of what I was going in, so there weren't things that really sucked per se just because I knew what I was getting into when I started working full time, but I did get kind of a curveball when I came on full time in that I was working on some very specific projects, and when I came on board, I was told that I was going to work on some Joomla and Drupal stuff.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Chris Harrison: And I've had very little experience with either of those CMSs, and my love is WordPress. I've been working with WordPress before I came here, probably seven years or so, and that's what I knew, and when I was told that I'd be working on Joomla and Drupal stuff, it was like, "Really? Can't we please entertain the idea of switching to WordPress. That's what I know," I was told that, "No, this is what we're going to use. We don't need to support a hundred different CMSs." I came to the realization that if I wanted to I could stay miserable or I could embrace the suck and embrace the opportunity being given to me to learn something new, and once I realized that that was the choice that I was having to make at the time, it really changed how I viewed everything here.

Lea Alcantara: So specifically with that, so you have the realization, did you start like writing a list? What did you do to move forward?

Chris Harrison: Well, it's been a struggle.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Chris Harrison: I mean, knowing WordPress and knowing what to look for if you hit a roadblock, it came pretty easy for me since I had quite a bit of experience with it, and I didn't have that with the Joomla or Drupal. I didn't know where to go to look. I mean, it's been a constant learning



experience, and here I am a year and a half later, I'm still trying to figure things out, but it's getting a lot easier.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees] Was that something that you're now employer just factored in that it might take you longer to do those things because you didn't have the experience to reference and that it was a learning process?

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Chris Harrison: They did. They've showed me a great deal of patience and understanding and gave me a lot of encouragement to learn these new things for me, and that's really made things better. I mean, they could have had an unrealistic expectation or I could have known beforehand that I'd be working on the things that I was, and I made the mistake of taking it on knowing those things, but yeah, they've been very understanding and it's been a good process.

Emily Lewis: So kind of touching back on Lea's question, getting out of the mindset of being kind of annoyed or frustrated that you have to do something. I mean, bottom line, whatever the reasons are, you don't want to do it. So what was it? Was it doing research on Joomla and Drupal? Was it talking to someone else who does that kind of dev, that's like, "Oh, it's not so bad," or was it just an internal thing that you were to just go ahead and just suck it up. It was just like a natural progression?

Chris Harrison: It was kind of a natural progression. I mean, I've been doing web design/web development since '96.

Emily Lewis: Well, was it that way for you in the beginning then, because I imagine that this isn't the first time you've been presented with something that you have to do that you don't want to do? Has it evolved as your career has lengthened?



Chris Harrison: I think so, yeah. I mean, I've definitely gone through stages where everything sucks and the clients were wrong to where I'm a lot more understanding of what needs to get done. I mean, it's a job and I realized that not all of it is going to be fun and sometimes the things we have to work on suck. It may not even be something that we're proud of, but I've got bills to pay, and I think there's a certain maturity that you have to have to realize just get it done.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Chris Harrison: Focusing on the negative aspects of like how much something sucks is counterproductive, and actually, it's funny so I mentioned I have two kids. My son is 8 years old, and I have been realizing with him that I'll ask him to clean his room or just to pick up the den or something like that, and he'll usually complain for like nine or ten minutes about what I've asked him to do. In that time he could have just gotten it done, and I started realizing that that's me in some cases. That's been me in some cases.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Chris Harrison: It's really easy to go to Twitter and complain about something than to do it, and if we just thought about it and just knocked it out, you could get back to the really fun stuff.

Lea Alcantara: In some ways, that sounds like to me, it's all about prioritization, like actually realizing that sulking essentially is not a priority. It's like getting the actual project done as well as you can as quickly as you can is a better priority because that allows you to have other things that you wanted to do in your life or your career happen faster as well.

Chris Harrison: I agree with that.



Emily Lewis: I think it's also, especially after having looked at your deck from Giant Conf, it seems to me that it's not just a matter of sulking, of being upset you've got to do something, but there's something that I wasn't aware of, but in your presentation from Giant Conf, you mentioned that there's this thing called active disengagement in the workplace.

Chris Harrison: Right, and it was something I learned about, because it's something like you see, but you don't really think about. I mean, so Gallup did The State of The Workplace survey last year, and in it they found that maybe 30% of American employees report that they're engaged and regularly inspired at the office. They're people that are happy. Then I'm sure you guys have probably seen the office space.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Chris Harrison: There is this whole idea of like people doing just enough to not get fired, and that describes as about 52% of the workforce.

Lea Alcantara: Wow!

Chris Harrison: That's kind of scary, but then the other 18%, those are the people that are actively disengaged. These are the people that are office cancer. These are the people that you don't want to become and you don't want them on your team because they're the ones that are going to sabotage you. They're going to make your job more difficult and they're going to make you hate the things that are being asked of you that much more because of their negativity, and this is a real problem because active disengagement cost businesses almost a half trillion dollars a year.

Lea Alcantara: So could you give some examples of it. What exactly is active disengagement? What kind of behaviors manifest with that?



Chris Harrison: Oh, these are people that they just don't care about their job. They don't care about what they're doing. Their attention is always focused elsewhere, and they might be unhappy because they're not doing the things that fit their capabilities or they're not being assigned the right things because of poor leadership or whatever, or they're not being challenged enough. I mean, there is a lot of different things that can contribute to active disengagement, but ultimately, these are just people that they just don't care about work. They're just collecting a paycheck and they don't really care about what's going on.

Emily Lewis: It seems to me that that's where you could end up if you don't embrace the suck. Do you know what I mean? If you don't try and sort of shift your own mindset, you could end up in that camp of just being – I don't know – kind of how I feel I was when I quit my job, which is just, I don't know, constantly pissed off and not really producing your best work and kind of being angry that you're not producing your best work and blaming everyone else. I mean, me quitting was the best thing I could ever do for myself regardless of starting my own business, but I was wondering if the people who fall in that 52%, the permanent case of the Mondays, the people who just are doing enough to get by, is that the majority of the people who just aren't embracing, who could still find a way to change the mindset and get engaged in their jobs?

Chris Harrison: I would think so, yeah. I do believe the 52%, they do have a lot more power than they realize in their workplace happiness if they do embrace the suck and just power through some of the things that they don't like doing. I mean, they'll find that they'll be happier in general.

Emily Lewis: Do you feel like a year after looking into Drupal and Joomla, that you actually got something out of learning them?

Chris Harrison: I do. I do. I mean, it hasn't been an easy road. The documentation that you'll find and discussions around a lot of what you need to do with both those platforms are a little bit more



difficult to come by, but I do find that a year and a half in, that it's a lot easier. I know where to go. I'm better at parsing through what I don't understand.

Emily Lewis: And does that success make it easier the next time?

Chris Harrison: I think so. I realized for myself that a big part of what was frustrating me is like not knowing what I don't know, and that made it more difficult and made me more reluctant to try to learn new things, because it's really easy to kind of get into the mode of, "Okay, this is what I do. This is what I know. These are the tools I enjoy using." And then you don't ever look outside that.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Chris Harrison: And I think that's a really easy way to get left behind.

Emily Lewis: What do you mean by that, get left behind?

Chris Harrison: Oh, well, I mean, our industry is constantly changing. There's always new stuff, and granted, you have to walk a fine line because there is a lot of shiny and it's really easy to get distracted, but if you settle on just knowing what you currently know and you don't push yourself, you're going to get unhappy, or something is going to become very important like responsive mobile design and you're not going to know it because maybe your job isn't challenging you enough or you haven't had an opportunity to incorporate that stuff into what you're doing, and then somebody is going to come to you and tell you, "We need this in a week," and that's not a good situation to be in so you always want to constantly try to improve your skills and just do what you can.

Lea Alcantara: So speaking of being distracted in the shiny thing, I want to talk a little bit more about why you think there are so much active disengagement in the workplace or work in general. Social media, do you think that has a role in it at all?

Chris Harrison: I definitely do. We see on a daily basis the things that people want to show us.



Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Chris Harrison: And most people tend to show the best parts of their life, and I don't remember the exact setting, but like I saw something where couples that are on Facebook 30% of those, where both of them use Facebook, will probably end up in divorce, and I'll find a link to that. I've got it bookmarked down to the system. I'm sure of that. But when you constantly compare yourself to how happy other people appear in the work that they're doing, you're not doing yourself any favors.

I mean, people show you what they want to show you. They're dealing with their own crap, and you don't always get to see that, and that's one of the big problems with social media, and Rogie King had a great article about it on his blog where he talks about how he kind of got addicted to the likes and the favorites and how he started designing for more likes and more favorites, and that's a tough cycle to break, I mean, if you get addicted to that, and when you start comparing yourself to other people without realizing all the different things that they're dealing with, you're going to end in defeat. You're going to get frustrated with yourself.

Emily Lewis: It also occurs to me that social media might contribute to this in another way in that it gives you a platform to vent your frustrations and kind of stay in that frustrated mindset rather than moving on and just doing what you need to do to get to the job done or get your bills paid or whatever. I know that I went through a period on social media where all I did was bitch and complain about my job and how unhappy I was, and it just almost fed into itself. It gave it life, and my company at the time didn't have a social media policies so it wasn't anything they could do about it, and everyone thought it was funny. But it just kept me in this really negative mindset and I didn't get past it for far too long.



Chris Harrison: Yeah, I mean, it's okay to vent, and I think some venting is healthy, but if that's what you do all the time, I mean, it's a destructive course to be on. No good is ever going to come from that.

Emily Lewis: You're certainly not going to grow, and I think that's what this idea of embracing the suck is about, it's that if we want to grow in our professional careers then there's going to be things that we don't always want to do, and we have to do them because it will make us better.

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Chris Harrison: Right, and sometimes the people that you work with, they may see things that you could be good at, and if you don't give it a chance, you're never going to be able to prove that to yourself.

Emily Lewis: Well, that brings up an interesting question. So if someone see something in you that you could do well with, but you don't see it in yourself, how do they encourage you to do it? How could you encourage someone to embrace the suck? Or is it really a personal thing?

Chris Harrison: I mean, in some cases, it is a personal thing, but you can encourage somebody else through like mentoring them, share what you know regularly, encourage them to work with new technologies, new things, and then also, there's this concept of jumping on hand grenades. So Crispin Porter + Bogusky has in their employee handbook this idea that at some point, you're going to have to jump on a hand grenade and that's for one of your coworkers, and it might be where maybe you screwed up an estimate or something took you a lot longer, being there for your teammates to help out. Hopefully if you do it for them, the idea is that maybe your coworker would be there for you if you need it, so it's kind of embracing the suck together when emergency calls. It also is a very personal thing. You need to constantly work on things you normally wouldn't or don't want to just



simply to teach yourself things that you didn't know about yourself. In doing that, you might find that you really enjoy it.

Lea Alcantara: So is there anything specific that you particular do to shift that mindset like exercises or whatever?

Chris Harrison: I do try to be a little more active so I am a big guy and three years ago I had weight loss surgery that helped lose a lot of weight. I think at my highest weight, I was like 540 pounds and since then I've lost about 170 pounds. So I've been trying to be more active. It's worth it just to monitor that kind of stuff. But then I also take pictures of silly things like Lego figures. I've been trying to draw a lot more, both physical media and then also digitally, and then like trying to do things like this and speaking in public. I'm just really trying to push myself in ways that are different than coding all day and doing front end.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: Yeah, I guess if there's a more well rounded aspect to your life, then the stuff, the sucks at work, doesn't suck so hard in the context of all of it, right?

Chris Harrison: Exactly, exactly. I mean, if you could find a way to balance all those things, you're definitely be happier.

Emily Lewis: Now, is there any situation where you would think that taking the approach of embracing the suck really isn't a good idea?

Chris Harrison: I mean, if you're constantly asked to do things that you would find morally wrong, I mean, I definitely would have a problem with that. But I realize that in some situations, your job is it might be, I mean, most people can't just up and quit their jobs. So I mean, it depends. I mean, if you are in a genuinely sucky situation with no hope of it ever improving, I would at least start to lay the



groundwork to try to find something else. You should probably always have your resume ready no matter what, but don't stop looking. I mean, there is always going to be a better opportunity out there eventually and you might need to look sooner rather than later.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, I'm curious. After you gave this presentation, did you have a chance to talk to any of the attendees, what they thought about it? Did anyone offer any of their own experiences?

Chris Harrison: Yeah, I actually had quite a few people come up afterwards and told me that they appreciated the honesty of the presentation, and that it wasn't something that they had heard before, and they shared a lot of the same struggles, even with having to work with Drupal.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Chris Harrison: So it was kind of funny that that happened.

Lea Alcantara: I went to a local like MobileUXCamp meet up here in Seattle, and one of the sessions was actually about conflict resolution within teams, and the main thing that the guy kept on reiterating was you have to take personal responsibility, even this other person is making things bad for you or they're upset, the best thing is try to understand their perspective, first and foremost, because most people aren't trying to be malicious, and that you can only affect your own reaction as well as your own action to your own situations. What do you think about that?

Chris Harrison: I completely agree. I mean, you never know what other people are dealing with in and out of work. Everybody has their own stuff, and it's important to have empathy.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, empathy is I don't think emphasized enough in the workplace or in life in general, but when Lea mentioned about taking personal accountability for situation, it made me think of another part of your presentation which is it sounded at least to me not so much of embracing the



suck of having to learn something new, but more like a situation where you don't get the opportunity to do the new thing you want to try, and you had suggested that you sneak stuff into projects.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Chris Harrison: Yeah, and to add to it, you've got to be careful with that because where I did that was one of the first projects I had to work on wasn't actually Joomla or Drupal here. I had to rearchitect some HTML templates that we're using and most people tend to hate HTML email stuff. I mean, it's...

Emily Lewis: What? It's awesome. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Chris Harrison: Well, I mean, yeah. I mean...

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Chris Harrison: It's kind of one of those things, but yeah, I hate using tables, but I realized, "Okay, I needed to quickly iterate. I was going to have to change the colors quickly on several different templates and I might have to flip things around really quickly." And so I started entertaining this idea of trying to incorporate Sass into it. We weren't using CSS preprocessors at the time and so I figured, "Okay, this is a very small project that only I'm going to be touching to start out with, and I'll be able to compile my CSS. We will be able to roll it in when we pull it into the provider that we're using." I was able to show by incorporating them into this project, even though it wasn't approved that this was something that we ought to be using. When I sat down with some of my coworkers, I was able to just change a variable and change several of the colors within the document instead of having to replace instances where the color might be mentioned throughout the document, and I was able to prove



through something kind of boring that there's some really neat stuff out there that we're not using that's going to make the rest of the stuff that we work on that much better and easier to do, and now we're using Sass and just about everything, and some of the Joomla sites that we're working on are using LESS. But there isn't a project that we are doing that doesn't use that technology, and now we're looking in other ways or other things that we can incorporate in.

Emily Lewis: So by basically putting something fun into something not so fun, you enjoyed it and now your employer is benefiting from it in a much broader way.

Chris Harrison: Exactly, and then another project that I worked on outside of work was itembrowser.com, so there is a game for iPhone called WallaBee, and it's kind of Gowalla, how it used to be in the beginning where you check into a location and you might find credits or you could find like unique items and stuff like that. So me and a friend, David [McCabe], created this ItemBrowser which is primarily used on mobile devices, and I had never done anything responsive and this was a great opportunity for me to learn media queries and trying to design things with different breakpoints, and I didn't have the opportunity to do any mobile or responsive stuff where I'm at now, but all the things that I learned on that side project I've been able to incorporate into what I've been doing here at my day job. So that was a great learning experience for me and I learned really a lot more than I might have learned on the job while under fire trying to meet deadlines.

Emily Lewis: Yes. Yeah, I think Lea and I can speak the same with just this podcast as a side project,

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: Although I think we think of it more as a main project. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. [Laughs]



Emily Lewis: But the work that we did on that from the branding to the ExpressionEngine with the front end was all stuff that I wasn't getting projects to do responsive work at the time. I wasn't getting projects to do XYZ, and so I could try that out in our own stuff. Having your own side project lets you grow when you can't grow somewhere else.

Chris Harrison: Yeah.

Lea Alcantara: And sometimes people wonder about the time invested in side projects. I never think it's a waste because the knowledge you gain is always going to be used elsewhere. It might not be immediate, but it's always going to be applicable elsewhere.

Chris Harrison: I completely agree with that, and everything that I've learned with side projects that I've been involved in, I've been able to incorporate in my day job and it just made things that much easier, and I've gone on to teach other people about Sass and then the other talk that I've given and it's made me that much more excited about it to see other people excited about those kind of things.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: You know what, I'm starting to notice here when we're discussing a lot about this is part of embracing the suck seems to also be trying to help other people move forward, make the best out of the situation, sharing your knowledge. So for me personally I feel like part of the benefit of this podcast is that we're in a position where we can help people or get people more information and encourage a learning and all those kind of things, building some sort of community. All those things I think are fundamentals of just being happy in life. So I feel like embracing the suck is just really how can you figure out how to help others, so that you're actually making some sort of contribution.

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Chris Harrison: Yeah, we are not on this rock alone. I mean, there are like seven billion other people here, and I mean, anything that we personally can do to help others improve themselves I think will help us too. I mean, I know I've grown quite a bit in sharing what I've learned, and that's a big part of why I started RefreshAugusta, I love the idea of having a community that's willing to share what they know, and that's not something I've seen in a lot of other areas. I mean, I won't say that it's unique to web design or web development, but we do seem a lot more willing to share just because we can, but it's for the betterment of everybody that does this kind of work.

Emily Lewis: I also think that part of what I'm taking away from this about embracing the suck, it's not just about finding happiness in yourself or happiness through sharing or educating, but just not adding to the negativity.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, right.

Emily Lewis: One of the things I can honestly say about me not being engaged on social media these days is that if I start feeling like I want to vent about something, I don't anymore. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: I vent to my friends and my family to their face, not on social media where it can be perceived in certain ways and it can add oxygen to things, and just not adding to the negativity like jumping on the bandwagon about how much I hate a software that I'm just starting to learn and I'm just frustrated about. Something as simple as that.

Chris Harrison: Yeah, and I mean, I still make that mistake myself, so I mean, I'm a constant work in progress. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs] Aren't we all?

Lea Alcantara: Yeah.



Chris Harrison: Definitely with regards to anything personal or professional, I would just try to, if you can, avoid adding fuel to the fire. I mean, usually very little good can come up with it.

Lea Alcantara: So considering our topic, I'm curious, what's your opinion of Pharrell's song *Happy*?

Chris Harrison: I don't hate it.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Chris Harrison: And actually the whole 24 hours of happy.com site, the 24-hour music video that they made for that is like one of the coolest things I've seen on the internet in a while, you know?

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Chris Harrison: And then it's one of those things where, I mean, it's not the greatest lines, it's not Queen or something.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs] But it's not Nickelback, right?

Chris Harrison: Exactly, it's not Nickelback or Creed. Anyway, if that's something you like, more power to you.

Lea Alcantara: Awesome. So before we finish up, we've got our rapid fire ten questions so our listeners can get to know you a bit better. Are you ready, Chris?

Chris Harrison: I guess. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]



Lea Alcantara: All right, first question, Mac OS or Windows?

Chris Harrison: Mac.

Emily Lewis: What is your favorite mobile app?

Chris Harrison: Oh, I will guess, whip me on WallaBee.

Lea Alcantara: So we kind of touched on this already, but maybe in the shorter way, what is your least favorite thing about social media?

Chris Harrison: The ease at which people can be negative on it.

Emily Lewis: What profession other than yours would you like to attempt?

Chris Harrison: I've got this eventual dream of maybe having a grilled cheese restaurant.

Lea Alcantara: Oh, it's cool though.

Emily Lewis: Oh my gosh, I would eat there. I love grilled cheese.

Lea Alcantara: What profession would you not like to do?

Chris Harrison: Oh, well, I don't know that there is one. I mean, it's one of those things where I don't know what I don't know, so it would be tough to answer that.

Emily Lewis: All right, who is the web professional you admire the most?

Chris Harrison: Oh man [laughs], I don't know that I really can name just one. I mean, I follow so many, and even you two are amazing.

Lea Alcantara: Oh.

Chris Harrison: Yeah, there's too many to name.



Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Chris Harrison: And I know that's kind of cop out, but really, I mean, there are incredible people out there doing amazing things daily, and it's going back to getting caught up in what everybody else is doing, I mean, it's really easy to do that when you see some of the amazing things people are doing, but yeah.

Lea Alcantara: All right, so what music do you like to code to?

Chris Harrison: I've been listening to this Disney like EDM album a lot lately.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Chris Harrison: Or like Nine Inch Nails. I mean, it really depends on my mood, the Inception soundtrack.

Lea Alcantara: That is a variety.

Chris Harrison: Yeah. I try to mix it up.

Emily Lewis: What's your secret talent?

Chris Harrison: I'm tall. I don't know.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: How secret is that?

Chris Harrison: I don't know.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]



Lea Alcantara: What's the most recent book you've read?

Chris Harrison: I don't even remember. That's sad. I don't remember the last book I've read. I tend to read all out of the blogs and whatnot, so yeah, I don't remember the last one.

Emily Lewis: All right. So I think I already know the answer to this one, but *Star Wars* or *Star Trek*?

Chris Harrison: Oh, well, I like *Star Wars* and I like both of them, but I mean, I'd have to pick *Star Wars* ultimately, but I love sci-fi in general.

Lea Alcantara: Awesome. So that's all the time we have for today. Thanks for joining us, Chris.

Chris Harrison: Thanks for having me. This has been a great experience. Thank you.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs] You're welcome. In case our listeners want to follow up with you, where can they find you online?

Chris Harrison: I am [@cdharrison](#) on Twitter or [@cd on Instagram](#), or you can check out my site, [cdharrison.com](#) and I blog kind of infrequently there.

[Music starts]

Emily Lewis: Awesome. We're so glad you can join us today. Thanks Chris.

Chris Harrison: Thank you.

Lea Alcantara: We'd now like to thank our sponsors for this podcast, [CodePen](#) and [Pixel & Tonic](#).

Emily Lewis: We also want to thank our partners, [Arcustech](#), [Devot:ee](#) and [EE Insider](#).

Lea Alcantara: And thanks to our listeners for tuning in! If you want to know more about CTRL+CLICK, make sure you follow us on Twitter [@ctrlclickcast](#) or visit our website, [ctrlclickcast.com](#).



Emily Lewis: Don't forget to tune in to our next episode when we'll talk to Sean Smith of Caffeine Creations about super-charging your text editor. Be sure to check out our schedule on our site, ctrlclickcast.com/schedule for more upcoming topics.

Lea Alcantara: This is Lea Alcantara ...

Emily Lewis: And Emily Lewis ...

Lea Alcantara: Signing off for CTRL+CLICK CAST. See you next time!

Emily Lewis: Cheers!

[Music stops]

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