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Considering Career in COVID-19 | Andy Chan & Michael Sloan

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The Veritas Forum

Andy Chan (VP for Innovation and Career Development) and Dr. Michael Sloan (Associate Professor of Classical Languages), both professors at Wake Forest University, engage in a conversation about practical steps to pursuing a career and finding purpose during this time. A virtual Veritas Forum hosted by Wake Forest University. • Please like, share, subscribe to, and review this podcast. Thank you!

Transcript

Welcome to the Veritas Forum. This is the Veritas Forum Podcast. A place where ideas and beliefs converge.

What I'm really going to be watching is, which one has the resources in their worldview to be tolerant, respectful, and humble toward the people they disagree with? How do we know whether the lives that we're living are meaningful? If energy, light, gravity, and consciousness are a mystery, don't be surprised if you're going to get an element of this involved. Today we hear from Andy Chan, Vice President for Innovation and Career Development at Wake Forest University, and Dr. Michael Sloan, Associate Professor of Classical Languages, also at Wake Forest University, as they engage in a conversation about the practical steps to pursue a career and finding purpose during COVID-19. A virtual Veritas Forum hosted by Wake Forest University.

I'd like to first welcome Andy Chan. Andy is our Vice President for Innovation and Career Development at Wake Forest, and since coming to us from Stanford University, and for Andy has been instrumental in helping students reimagine the purpose of a career as they pursue a vocation after graduation. Andy is fresh off of a recent National Veritas Forum with other thought leaders in entrepreneurship and economics, and so I think he's ready to go.

Andy, thank you so much for joining us tonight. Great. Hey, it's great to see you, Coleman.

It's great to see everyone. I have so many different friends, both co-workers, faculty, members, students at Wake Forest, and we do happy to see. So thanks so much for joining us.

We're really glad to be here. Absolutely. Thanks, Andy.

I'd also like to welcome in his colleague and friend, Dr. Michael Sloan. Dr. Sloan is an Associate Professor of Classics at Wake Forest. He is widely published, an active advocate for the liberal arts and a favorite among students, and one of my favorite things about Dr. Sloan is his ability to put current events in context with ancient history and his ability to apply classical wisdom to our modern realities.

And I had a student tell me today, they were coming to the Veritas Forum because Dr. Sloan is one of the, and I quote, "Why is this in funny as humans I've ever met?" And so the bar is high, and we are excited. You can join us tonight. So welcome, Mr. Sloan.

Yeah, that is really high praise, honestly. Thank you so much. What a privilege to be a part of this.

Thanks a lot for having me. Absolutely. So let's just jump in.

Dr. Sloan, I want to start with you again, some background in classics and econ, of course. And I want to cast a wide, you know, wide question for where we are right now. So what can we say on the state of our economy right now and the state of the world during this pandemic? And how do you think it compares to other times in world history? Okay, fair enough.

Yeah, this state of the economy, that's the easy one. It's on a hard pause. So obviously, things have slowed because they have to.

But the, I think better question to answer here is how does it compare with other events in history? And I'll use two examples. One that is professionally personal and then one that is more highly personal and modern. I think that it compares moderate.

I mean, obviously, everything has its own nuance and its own distinct differences. And certainly COVID is very different from anything else in many aspects. But the two I would come to events in World History I compared to is one is the plague in Athens, which was it happened in the second year of the Peloponnesian War.

And that killed roughly the obvious of these are guesstimates. But you're talking about the third of the Athenian population. So they're in the middle of a major awards against Sparta and Spartans allies.

And, you know, maybe 75 to 100,000 people died, and which at the time is roughly a third of the entire city state. And you know, that what happened there is very similar to

what could have happened at Wake Forest Center in any college that, you know, has red brick buildings and close proximity people as they actually shut down everybody went into the city and they did not practice social distancing. And so the plague spread quickly.

And really, the fascinating thing about that scenario is that since they're in the middle of the Peloponnesian War, at least one or two years in, the miraculous thing for the Athenians is that they still stayed alive for 30 years, at least they still seem to battle for 30 years. But yeah, you're talking about an entire third of the population. So that's very different than what we're experiencing now.

I think it's really important to remember that plagues and pandemics diseases are not new, right? So that one kind of hangs in the back of my mind and certainly poignant to our point in history. But certainly we don't experience the same death toll. And we're not seeing one out of every three people die.

At that time when that was happening, Thucydides writes and comments that people have basically forsaken all law and all religion because they just assumed that they were going to die immediately. And so people were not saving money. They were living licentiously.

And culture shifted immediately within a year. The entire culture shifted. And because it changed people's entire worldview, or at least their worldview came into view.

And it actually impacted how they're going to live out their days because they assumed that if they weren't going to live for another 20, 30, 40 years, if they could die at any moment. And that, and if they assumed that this life is all they had, that really impacted how they're going to live their last days. And so you saw a massive shift in Athenian culture just because of that plague.

The second thing I would compare it to, which is more modern, but certainly more personal for me, is the great influence of 1917 and 18. And in that influence, and my grandfather actually was orphaned. He was one of a number of kids, but both his parents died.

And so then he became an orphan. And that really affected his life. And I think ultimately affected mine.

But one of the cool stories about him is he really just became self-taught. So he never graduated from high school. He ended up joining World War II.

Then he ended up passing two different insurance exams, got to the CPA. And then he was in convalescence for six months. And he passed the bar.

And so, and I think that has a lot to do with what we're going through today. This is a

forced convalescence for a lot of people. And I think that it's really important to know that this is actually a blessing not in disguise because it allows for some different opportunities.

But I'll save that for a little bit later. But yeah, those are the two time periods I would compare it to. Certainly it has the power and capacity to shift how we think about the world.

Certainly death and the economy come into view in a very prominent fashion. But you know, these are big questions and certainly a serious time. But it's also not the first time that we've been impacted in this way.

And we need to keep everything in its proper perspective and know that in the course of human history, earthquakes, natural disasters, plagues, wars, this is a natural part of the human experience. And so we should bear all things with the same hope or with the same worldview. And that should not shift.

And those are the types of things we need to establish in a cold and sober hour. Absolutely. Thank you for that context, Dr. Sline.

And I definitely want to get back to that idea of the forced convalescence and the self teaching later. Right now, I want to ask you, we can zero in a little bit more on the job market. What can we say about the current job market and how does that, what's happening right now compared to any of our other market downturns in recent history? Well, Coleman, I wish I could say, and here we're talking about facts and words, you know, I won't mention it.

Most people would say it just sucks. Like it is really bad. I wish they were different.

I mean, it's unprecedented what has happened. The fact that we have unemployment at a level that, you know, is sort of the worst that it's ever been since the depression. Like that's just a shocker.

And the fact that a month ago, we were actually in the probably one of the hottest job markets in many, many decades. So I want you to know, like, I more than anything just feel so badly. I feel so badly for everyone who's out there who's unemployed right now.

I feel for every student who actually is like, what the heck just happened because we had to win behind our sales. We had all these options. We were thinking about like all these different plans we had.

And now it's sort of like it feels like they've all been crushed. And the thing about that, that is really hard is it feels like we are in this particular kind of crisis where we're alone in a way. Like we aren't actually on campus in community.

We aren't actually able to go see each other in person or give each other a hug or figure out ways. We actually have to be more creative. We actually have to be more inventive in terms of how we think about how we help each other, which is both strange, surreal, but also really pushing us to our limits of our creativity and our limits of our generosity and our limits of like, what does it really mean to be a person who is a good steward of the world and a person who's trying to help other people.

So I wish you were different. You and I know that it is not a good situation right now. What I will say though is that what is really super interesting is that there are places where there are job opportunities.

So we actually still have companies putting jobs on our job system. Everyone knows using handshake. You can find them on LinkedIn.

You can find them on Indeed. They may not be exactly what you were thinking, but there are jobs. And actually it's not as dramatically negative as you might think.

The second thing is that we do have right now, I sort of bucket into these general numbers that wake for us. About a third of our students have some opportunity in hand that they're either going to go virtual. They are being delayed.

And in some cases, they're being rescinded. So those people if they're rescinded, then they move into the I'm looking bucket, which I would say like a third of our students are pretty active in their process of trying to look for something and we're really supporting and helping them. And I'm really proud of our team.

Like in the last month, essentially, we have some we have been able to get information on 95% of the students that wake for us to know like where you in this process. And we're here to help you when you're ready. The hardest part is that there's about a third of the students who I think are really trying to figure out like, what should I do? I'm trying to figure out a finished up school.

All my plans have shifted. I'm not really ready to go look for a job. And what I would say there is that when you're ready, we're ready for you.

But don't allow your sense of what the market is telling you that there's nothing out there, prevent you from taking action. Don't like the reality is that there are ways that you can get engaged and there are a lot of ways that you can learn certain grow that we're going to talk about later that we will help you figure out what to do that's different than what you were thinking. But it's not like there is nothing.

And I think that's actually one of the biggest battles that we all wrestle with is that in our heads, we start hearing and believing in narrative that all of a sudden it gives our truth, which actually is not the truth of what many of the most active people in the marketplace are finding. So this is a time for it to go sort of go go at it if you can,

knowing that you've had a lot of supporters who will help you at wake for us. So again, big message is that the system shocked, as Michael said, it's a pause.

But there are opportunities in particular sectors. And I will say actually, people always ask what are those sectors? And you can find them actually all on our website. There's a lot of resources out there where you can see where people hiring.

It's on LinkedIn, it's not a bunch of other websites that we give to students. But what I will say is that, you know, there are areas in healthcare that is happening, things that are in supply clean and logistics, where you're trying to deliver materials and supplies to people and companies, areas of retail, where there are specifically things where people learn high demand for essential items as well as food and things like that. And also areas of technology and e-commerce where anything that's enabling businesses to work in a collaborative way or any way that is helping build the infrastructure to be stronger so we can do more online work.

Anything where we're doing things 100% online, those businesses need people. Again, these may not be areas you thought you wanted work in. And this is the truth is that we have many, many, many college students, not just wake for us everywhere that want to work in sports and entertainment and media.

And the reality is those industries are crushed. So you might actually say I'll never get to do it. But I think Michael's story just gave you an example of how when something doesn't work out the way you want, and you just sort of hang in there and that over time you'll have other opportunities that you'll be able to get there that will definitely happen.

I do believe that in general, our world and our economy are designed in such a way that we can be inventive to figure out how to come back. But as an individual, you can't give up. You can't actually also say, I'm going to dream for this thing that I wish I could have when it's not the world's not going to give it to you.

So you got to actually think about how we're going to be creative in this moment. Thanks, Andy. You know, you're, like you said, your team's been really great to provide students with proximity to resources, and another thing y'all focused on is proximity to these questions of what is the purpose, what is the arc of my work, what am I entering in, what is my posture towards that.

And so, I mean, this time, how should recent graduates Andy in undergrads who are looking for internships or jobs, not only think approach not only the job search, but also these ideas of vocation and purpose and the time of recession. And I know students who are watching will be in different perspectives. Like we've said, some people might have been looking for work, be confident in their work, might have had a job rescinded.

So how should students think about purpose and vocation during this time? Another

question and one that I think is sort of really interesting deep question that I'll just unpack a couple things. So a lot of times when you think about, and a lot of people know actually on this call, so my background is Christian. And as a result, the words, vocation and calling oftentimes are utilized in how to think about like, what am I supposed to do? You know, where am I supposed to be serving in the world or working in the world? There are a lot of different ways that you want, you can cut it.

And I guess I would say in particular, I find that the concept of vocation, purpose and calling end up getting a little confused. So I think oftentimes what at the core of it is that the idea of vocation is actually who are you meant to be, not what are you meant to do. So what people get confused about is I need to figure out my vocation, so I know what job I should have.

So then I can actually live into that job and have a career for the rest of my life. And actually, I'll be taken care of because actually I lived out my interest and my skills and my passions in a way that was serving God because actually it was really, was it really actually what God wanted or was it actually something that I wanted because that's what I felt was my purpose, because it was a more self-centered thing. And I actually think it's not actually about that.

That might be, that is a component of it, but the most important thing is who are you meant to be. So I think an interesting thing that I found in this moment for me is that I have, I have like sort of secured back about a dozen hours a week that I was using before to actually have to commute to go places to have to actually like travel between places. And now I actually have that time to be more reflective about like what am I actually really spending my time doing.

And what are the things that I can do to learn more about what in my case, like what does God want me to be doing? Who's the person he wants me to be? And I do think that there's something in that, that if you have more time than you ever thought about it might be about this question about who are you meant to be in terms of your character, in terms of your values, in terms of your roots use, in terms of your behaviors. Those are really interesting questions that if you've ever not taken a self- inventory of that, that might be something worth doing. In a more secular context, one of the ways that is done is you think about Stephen Covey's seven habits of highly successful people.

He basically asks you to take like a calendar and look at your whole calendar and map out your values and see where your values are happening and exposed in your calendar. You actually start to realize it might actually spending time on things that I really value. That's actually a really helpful thing to do.

But oftentimes we don't ever do it because we're so focused on doing things. So that's the first thing. The second thing I would say is it's actually maybe less about what you do than it is about how you do what you do.

So a question might be is, again, in a Christian context of the fruits of the spirit. Love, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control, like all of those all of those different aspects of the fruit of the spirit are those being exhibited in all aspects of your life with your siblings, with your parents, with your friends online, with your teachers online. How do you, how you treat yourself? Like those are all question marks that I would say, hey, that's actually an interesting lens.

Now for different religious backgrounds, it might be actually a different set of fruit of the spirit. But what are those virtues and how are you living them out? I do think that's another question mark that's really we're being asked to maybe think a little bit more deeply about that. Do we do that in a normal day to life when we actually have all these checklist of things to do? I don't know if we always do that.

So that's a second. And then I do think it's about this one around. What is my vocation in terms of my work? And I actually find that oftentimes the answer to that comes through trying things and doing things and learning from those things as to what it is meant to be.

But it's always about what is it that actually is available to you in the market as opposed to this belief that everything's available to me. I can do anything I want, but all of this now very few is going to be professional basketball players. So we take that off the list.

And then we go, well, actually I could be do marketing at any company in the world. It's like, can you really do marketing at any company in the world? Like what would it take for me to be like a really great marketer at Netflix? I have a lot of things I have to learn or people I have to meet or doors I have to open to actually get there. So we tend to be, I think, in today's western world thinking like all like satisfaction and meeting come from what I do in my work.

And I actually think it comes from like your whole entire life, all aspects. But then also this one piece of how you figure out what your vocation is oftentimes comes through trying things and getting better and smarter at making the next decision to figure out what it is as you go as opposed to, I had to have it all figured out in college because then once I had in college, then I just did this one thing and it was just like smooth sailing from there. And I think we all know that that's not the way it is.

I can tell you like when I graduate from college, I definitely wasn't at all thinking I would be working at university. I didn't think I'd be working at university in North Carolina. And I actually didn't think that I'm so I'd have friends like classics professor Michael Sloan, you know, it's like in my mind, I was actually I'm going to be a business guy just like my dad and you know, have a nice safe life in the suburban town.

And actually my life has been nothing like that. So and it's been great. Like that's the thing it hasn't gone according to what I thought my life was supposed to be was actually

what I felt the doors I got open for me and the ones that I ended up stepping into with his, you know, provisions and blessing and trust.

So Andy, those thoughts on just kind of the the odd path that you know you have taken and and then you know, Dr. Sloan has taken certainly his own path. And you guys are, you know, both successful people. Dr. Sono, I want to ask, you know, success, I think like a lot of things are being is being redefined right now.

And the western world, I think has taken this idea of success and done something crazy with it. And especially our, you know, our 21st century idea of it. And so what perspectives from history, could we use to form our posture as we define career and success during this shocking interruption in this new time? Yeah, so, you know, the phrase shocking interruption is you're right, it is shocking, it is interruption, but it is so temporal.

I mean, I think Andy alluded to it, but in February, every most everything was normal on campus. And then probably I don't really remember, I've been unsyvatical, but I'm guessing around early March. Things started to shift, is that right? And so we're, you know, we're six weeks into it.

There are wars that have lasted a long time, years and years and years. And certainly, the pandemic in Athens was the plague. I mean, you're talking about for 30 years, they were fighting in a war and then had this pandemic.

I mean, we're six weeks, so I just want to reemphasize the need for a little bit of patience and then also a perspective. And that's what I would offer for the larger question that you posed. And I think it's a great question.

And even the shocking interruption is a very poignant phrase. But honestly, I don't think it shifts. I don't think it depends on your worldview.

Success should always depend on your worldview because really success, the presupposition of success is that you're doing or completing a specific task. And so if you take Aristotle, for example, maybe the word tell loss, which is the end or the goal. What's your end or goal? And you can ask that by who's the authority that you report to.

And so for a Christian, that authority is going to be God incarnated through the person of Jesus. And so that's an easy model to look to and learn about. To the rest of the world, I mean, you might have an atheist or any number of religions, but at some point, everyone has to decide to which authority am I responsible? And then after you identify the authority, then you have to identify, okay, what are the mandates or dictates of that authority? What are the guidelines, rules, what kind of relationship am I in if it is relationship? For Christians, that's really easy.

That's a covenantal relationship. And that's maintained for really thousands of years. But

the success there is that you're always working and operating and living every relationship, every perspective, every conversation, every endeavor, how you prepare for the world.

That's always aligned to the purposes of a specific God who has a specific purpose for your life. And so if you complete that purpose, then you've been successful. And so the term for success should never change for you under any circumstances, because it's always going to look different, because you have a different authority.

You have an authority that measures things differently. Now, how the world thinks of success and how they define success is obviously very different than how it's been defined by a Judeo-Christian worldview. And so on that, and actually, everyone coming out of college kind of has to get out of jail free card here, because the bar's been lowered so much.

Really, if anything, it takes pressure off. You say, yeah, well, I graduated in 2008, was everything that was recession. So it doesn't matter what your first job was.

Well, I graduated during the COVID crisis. Well, then you have an excuse, right? And so success for you all. I mean, really, people that are coming out of college or preparing for this world after COVID first of all, I think the world's going to be very similar to the one that we have.

Obviously, they're going to have certain precautions, maybe long-term plans. I really don't think in the long-term things are going to shift that much. I do have to believe I heard Larry Kolp say recently he's the CEO of GE, I heard him say recently, everyone needs to remember that there is going to be a back end to this pandemic, that the world and the economy will eventually come out of this.

I think if you invested in your money in 2008 and just held on to it, you would have, well, I don't even know how many triple X or whatever X you would have. But the reality is the economy and the people are going to grow, the GDP is going to grow, and everybody's going to be fine. The reality is, if you're thinking about success as a specific human being entering into this crisis, it should already have been defined by you and by your third authorities in a cold and sober hour.

That actually doesn't shift anything at all. You have to decide, am I doing what I'm supposed to be doing? Am I preparing for what I'm supposed to be doing? I will say to Andy's point, I'll keep brief, but I do think there two, maybe three really important things to think about. Again, I think that COVID crisis helps this, particularly.

But when you're thinking about a job and when you're trying to enter into a very difficult job market, I think the two most important things are number one, what I would call experience equity, and number two, I would call it maybe a network equity. And I think

those are the two most important. The last or the least most important thing is monetary.

I think too many people are afraid of being poor. Don't be afraid of being poor. I'll tell you right now, my first job, I taught, for example, right now Wake Forest, they expect us to teach a three, two, two, or at least my department.

So that means I'm teaching five, seven, nine classes in a two year period. My first teaching job, I was trying to finish my PhD, I wanted to get married. I taught five, five, five.

I taught 15 courses, finished a PhD, got married and had a kid. And I made the grandson of 18,000 US dollars with no health insurance because I was part-time. And so I think I paid \$150 rent.

I was living with another married couple that was extremely poor. And then someone else, I think there's one married couple, two other people. I might have paid \$100 to \$125 a month.

And I didn't have health insurance. I'm not advising this by any means. I'm just saying you would be shocked of what you're capable of.

But the reality is, I grew my experience. I had a really good teaching job at Baylor University. They didn't pay peanuts, but I taught 15 courses.

And that's really where I honestly learned how to teach. I had some good mentors that increased my network. And then those people ended up, when I did finish the PhD, I think a year or two later, they wrote raving reviews.

And then my first job after the PhD was Wake Forest. And that time I didn't make any money. But I grew my experience, what I would call experience equity.

And I grew my network equity because I increased my network in the United States. I was getting my PhD from Scotland. And even though I ate peanut butter and I ate peanut butter sparingly and I was dirt poor, honestly, I'm really thankful I didn't get sick.

But I had no cash whatsoever. But it's like, hey, you're young, you're resilient, you figure it out and you have fun. And honestly, the poor you are, the more creative you get.

So don't be afraid of poverty. Don't be afraid to go after the thing that you know will increase your experience or your social network. And that, you have to take a long term view, you have to take a long term view in the past to have a proper perspective.

In fact, this is, I wasn't going to do this, but now I am truth. Okay, the word for truth, it's from Homer. Homer uses it, Plato uses it, Paul the apostle using the New Testament.

And this kind of three major writers and actually that's every 400 years. You have 800 BC, which is Homer 400, which is Plato, and then roughly, I don't know, called early 50s, 55, 56 for Paul the apostle. They all use the same word for truth, which is *alētheia*, which is that which is not forgotten.

Okay, so the truth in Greek as they constructed it and it gets used through this whole 800 year period is that which is bringing everything to bear. That means everything that had occurred. And then also, particularly if you're a Christian, this is why when they say that Jesus is in John 1, they say, he is full of grace and truth.

This is the word that's used. And this is the funny thing about Jesus. He's actually a really funny guy.

He always has the eternal perspective. It's not just everything that which did happen, but everything that he knows will happen. And so, for example, in John 1, where his mom comes up to me, he says, "Hey, they ran out of wine." He says, "Woman, you're the way a woman.

What are you talking to me for?" And then he says, "My hour is not yet come." But she only says four times in the entire New Testament, my hour is not yet come. Because he's talking about his blood turning into wine, which prefigures the resurrection, right? And then, of course, people that have the sacrament. So, he's already in the mode of, "I'm going to die and be resurrected." And this is the, his public ministry is really just starting.

And so, but he has the eternal perspective when it says he's full of grace and truth. He's always mindful. This is what I would call the Jesus perspective.

He's always mindful of everything that God did do and everything that God will do. And so, that is what it means to be full of truth. And it's not leaving anything out.

And that's the great testimony. And so, as students, you need to be mindful of everything that has happened and everything that can and will happen. And that means take a long perspective.

Don't, I mean, we've been six weeks in this. Don't worry about it. The whole world has gone through many, many, many bad things.

And we usually come out of it. And I guarantee you, keep your nose to the ground, grow a little, what I would call, butt muscle, which is learn how to sit still, you know, concentrate, enjoy some alone time, force convalescence, grow a certain skill set. You'll be just fine.

Be patient. Grow your network equity. Grow your experience equity.

Worry about the money later. That'll come and it'll come in hoards way more than you

should worry about ever in your life. You'll have plenty to give away and give.

And then when it hurts, give a little more. Dr. Slan, thank you. That is a good word.

I especially like the idea of those different types of equity as well as fitting that all into that eternal perspective. You also mentioned word resilience. And Andy, I want to bounce over to you and ask, you know, a lot of what the OPCB DUT, Office of Career and Personal Development, is that personal development set side of stuff.

And I want to know, how can a student use this trial to become more emotionally resilient for future challenges? Great question. And we're definitely bordering on something that's a little bit more in the world of psychology than maybe like careers. But I have a few thoughts on that.

I actually want to add one other thing that what Michael was saying. So first, Michael and I actually are really good friends. We have a lot.

And so, you know, we'll actually do, we'll play this card game that many of you haven't seen in this card game. It's called Hanavi. It's, it's Masterclass.

It's really tricky game. And actually, the reason why I'm bringing that up is like, I can listen to Michael talk about this. And he's basically giving me all this wisdom of stuff that like, I feel like I should have studied somewhere in school, but I didn't.

So there's probably one message, which is fine. Some of your really smart friends and make sure you hang out with them because they're both fun and they're funny and you learn stuff from them all the time. The second thing is actually, I feel like his point about success is really great.

And sort of the eternal perspective. And I think it actually is really helpful to decide can what would it take for you to embrace an eternal perspective? Because I think everything changes when you actually have that. And then the last is we do a lot of comparing like how we're doing relative to everyone else.

It's sort of a natural human sort of foyerable. And the thing is, is that we get to that place where we think about who is our authority, who's our king, who do we actually report to, like who's measuring us, we start to realize, well, that person's actually the one who's the only judge. Well, what, what, how's that person judging me? And that's actually really helpful because if we actually make ourselves our own judge, it's a pretty dark, dark judge.

And also, we actually always compare against the number of times I hear students say to me, well, if I do this this one year, I'll be one year behind my classmates. And then at the five year reunion, I'll be embarrassed because I'm doing this, that, the other. And all honesty, those people aren't really friends of all the rooms comparing like how much

better off they are than you are than to them.

I mean, it's really, that's really dark. If actually that's what you think is that that's what like true friendship is about is how do we race to compare how good we are relative to each other. So I think that's a hard thing.

Like we have to find a way to release that sense of self judgment and that sense of we're racing against someone else in society because what we all know, there's always someone else who's actually better off and worse off than we are. There's no doubt about it. And the reality is none of us know actually what's going on in any other people's shoes.

I mean, that is something I've had in my life whenever I feel like people don't understand me. I realize, you know what, no one's walked in my shoes and they don't know how I feel and what I've done. And I've not walked in yours.

And that's why I feel like some of our coaches that wait for us are the most amazing people because they hold that with each one of you, which is that everyone is unique, everyone's different. You've got your own story. And there's no judgment.

We just want to help you like move forward and like find your way. And it's not about like quote unquote being successful because I mean, you guys all know this like all of those folks who actually had jobs back in 2008 and all those who missed some banks look good when they have the job and then two years later they had no job. So was that success? Was that not success? You know, like, was it their fault that that didn't happen? Like, it was no one's fault.

It's just what happened. So we have to find a way to let go of that kind of judgment. So back to the emotional question.

I want to actually mention this is one way because it'll be a little more personal. So they asked me to show props. I showed the Hennabi game.

So here's my other prop. So these are my three kids. I have a son and two daughters.

My son's 26. My daughter is 21. She's a senior in college and my daughter is 17.

She's about to be 18 senior in high school. And the reason why I put them here is that last week I talked on the Veritas Forum about in particular my daughters, but all of them actually in some ways are unemployed. My son happens to be a computer programmer.

So he can program his way to sort of gig employment, which is actually a really important thing to know is that some of you may have to be open to just doing gig employment for a while. That may be all that's available. That's essentially what he's doing.

And actually he actually wants to run his own business someday. So he doesn't even want to really work for an employer. So that's actually an interesting idea to have can you be your own boss.

But with my daughter, my heart is breaking. Like seriously, if I talking up about my daughters, the senior high school who I would love to go to wake for us, but it's her decision, the reality is that her whole senior year in high school shattered. No prom.

No senior word night. No graduation. No friends.

No teachers. Like she's so close to all those people. Like it just just makes me want to cry.

And the reason why I actually bring that up is that each one of us has stuff like that going on inside us. And whether it's about us or it's about our parents or it's about our siblings. It's about sort of our friends.

It's it's just a whole wake force community. It's like it is rough. And so I actually have an executive coach and her name is Sheila Madden.

And she actually wrote a blog post that she told me to read. And I actually posted it. If you want to see on my Twitter feed, my Twitter feed is Chan Fuchsia.

So @chanfuchsia. And if you find that, you'll see the link to it. I just posted it before this.

But she wrote up a blog post that said a couple of different things that helped me actually work through this because it's some there's some days where I wake up. And for some reason, I feel like I'm ready to go to work, but I'm actually feeling like off balance. I just feel like I don't want to do anything.

Or I feel like I'm really sad about thinking about my daughter situation or all the challenging questions that we have to answer about like what does the future look like for my team for wake force, etc. And so she brought up just five really quick things. So one was when you actually have really hard emotions, don't run away from them.

But actually don't be afraid to just sit with it and just realize this is how I feel. And that's okay. I can tell you when I was young and growing up in a Chinese family, I was never taught about that kind of think about emotions.

Mostly it was suppressed them and don't let them come out. Like that was just in my way. So it's taking me a lifetime to actually figure out actually understand what a hard emotion is.

And that that's actually normal as opposed to those are bad and I shouldn't feel them. I used to not even be able to say things like I'm disappointed or like I'm mad. Second is that sort of what's the language I use.

So when someone says how are you doing, you've actually I lean too much and talking about like my negative emotions, all of a sudden it becomes like reality because I'm talking about them. I just have to think through like am I 100% like really sad or I'm actually 40% really sad, like really be aware of the real scale of it. It's a third point which is just that emotions don't own us.

We own our emotions, right? Emotions are smaller relative to us but a lot of people, the emotions get so big that it feels like I have to sort of what is it that I think a 7-up or sprite used to say you know obey your thirst. Like whatever you feel do it and and Mike can tell you a story about a bull sometime that actually is related to that. Do not obey your emotions.

There are peace that you can do what you want. I thought this was another good one. This is the fourth one.

Make a decision. Do you own your narrative or do others own your narrative? So actually if you really think about it right now, the mega narrative, the meta narrative is what the media is saying about the state of the world, the state of employment, the state of our health and we can either just go this is what is truth because that's what's being told me or actually I have my own truth. I have my own way.

I'm looking at it. I have to listen to the facts but actually I don't have to actually be owned by that particular narrative which actually relates to what we've been talking about this whole time. And then finally learn to focus on what you can control.

A lot of us have read this already prayer and that is one where you should definitely look it up and it's all about like really knowing what you can control and letting go of what you can't but at the end of the day, it's actually really leaning in and figuring out where you are spiritually which I think will be something we'll talk about in a little bit but like how will I actually navigate and all these types of things so that what I'm thinking about isn't a bigger perspective than just how I feel and through that and through the sort of practice of this you actually learn okay I can learn how to be more resilient in my emotions no matter how good or bad they are because a lot of times what we're always seeking is like I want to feel good I want to feel good I want to feel good so we seek experiences that allow us to do that and in this moment it's harder to do right and that the weird part is that what we all know and this is the thing you guys all have learned like your whole lives the more time we spend on Instagram playing video games doing stuff that sort of gets my reactions and my dopamine such that actually I want to do more of this because actually that's what keeps me up then actually that's all you end up doing and when you actually like intellectually know that's not the right thing to do your your like the whole system gets wired to actually do this stuff that actually is really effectively not very good for you because your emotions are getting controlled to do that as opposed to you taking control of that yourself so I do think that's what this moment is

about is actually asking you to be reflective about where do you want to be on that spectrum thanks Andy I appreciate the stories and that vulnerability as well and in that that word to to take control of your emotions like again I think we're all being exposed right now kind of our obsession with certainty that we want to be in control there's a lot of things that we're not in control but we are right in the control of the way that we present ourselves and whether we speak and stuff like that and for a lot of us who have a lot of time we have control about that as well and I know I want to kind of touch on this with both of y'all at Dr. Slin I know you have a lot of thoughts about how I know your kids spend their time I feel like y'all don't have a TV that's just a guess I know your kids are always grinding I know there's sponges of information but and also how should we be spending this time like what are some knowledge some skills some habits and some mindsets that students should consider cultivating during this time especially to prepare them to return to community whether it's a workplace or or a place of higher education when the pandemic subsides and then what are you personally doing differently and is this me or Andy this is you Dr. Slin and we'll bounce back oh this is me nice nice I was I was getting a little jealous because I thought maybe we're kicking back Andy so I'll show you I'll show you this this because Andy showed a prop so here's my prop this is uh that's my family so I'm the dad of uh I can't remember how many knives can that's uh uh man that'd be so good I'm actually one of seven kids and so uh then out of the seven kids a lot of us have big families I have four kids uh you know a lot of them have four or five kids anyway the point is that growing up on a cattle ranch we had roughly a thousand acres under head of cattle there are two things that if I was doing my dad wouldn't stop me and that was if I was reading a book or playing baseball if I was doing either one of those things my dad would just kind of let it rip and so I became uh really good at one and average at the other and that's why I'm a teacher so uh yeah I mean I uh I think that this time I said it before this is a phrase that I'll repeat because I think it's true I think this is a blessing not in disguise I think that if you if you consider what is education and then also what does Wake Forest do so one of the best things about Wake Forest is actually one of the things that uh because we always talk about education being holistic I believe it is holistic I think one of the best things about Wake Forest is not just the teachers who care so much about mentoring and then I think there's a ton of content that's really good that is offered on your curriculum but I think the network of students that you get to go to school with and that you get to socialize with and that you get to increase uh from getting to know them but also the parents uh I think that that for me is one of the best things that Wake Forest has going because honestly there are a lot of Dr. Sloane's in the world there are a lot of well not too many Andy Chan's but there there's definitely a lot of professors for sure and you can read a lot of the same books and the laws of the same places so on on one hand Wake Forest is extremely unique and some of that has been taken away from you but on the other hand what education can offer if you're to boil what is education what what does it really mean I think it's the transformation of the mind okay and I'm gonna give you a quick three people use this word Plato Jesus actually we'll go in chronological order Plato oh here we go Plato Cicero

then Jesus Plato said Metanayo and he said if you want to change how you are you got a reorient how you think it's Meta plus not at all which is to think and then Cicero tells in the middle of this disaster for Rome Cicero tells the worst guy ever cat line he says Muta istam mentum and that has changed your dastardly mind you little rascal is what he told him he said you're there's something wrong with you and you need to change your mind and then this guy Jesus comes to earth and he says meta not at all and it's the same really one's Greek ones Latin for and then the New Testament all the translations read they always say repent for the kingdom of God is a hand but really it's not repent really that word is Metanayo and it's reorient how you think about the world or it really means change your mind and that's what education is and that's what Andy was talking about a minute ago it's you have to format your brain and so for the way I grew up the way I really try to raise the kids the way I spend my time is you have to understand there are certain senses you have your eyes your ears your taste all of this these are senses into your mind and then that in a way formats your brain this time is such a blessing because it is forcing you to be monastic in a time where you have no other responsibilities like you all get to do things I can't do I still have to work and have money and raise kids and you know till the garden and do a bunch of things that when you're 18 to 22 and the world ask you to pause that is amazing and the one thing that Wake Forest is amazing yet is also kind of this thing that the tracks from what I would consider your intellectual or humanistic education and since that you all get so busy from this really wonderful social network and these really amazing social activities that sometimes you forsake what is your mind doing and you haven't actually hit the pause button you go through four years we were at a school through the amazing library and amazing professors and then when you are at the leg check well we ate a lot of pizza we might have drank some beers we played some guitar and I built really good relationships but the reality is you have a limited time to develop your mind and you know I think that when I was in high school they had this really ridiculous a mind is a terrible thing to waste and then they would put an egg and a fried egg and that was your mind on drugs but I think a lot of times that's what happens to people's minds when they're when they're in kind of the modern scenario of college and what you have before you is a blessing beyond any other blessing that you can imagine in the sense that you're in a stage of life where the world's not asking anything of you most of you are coming from parents to say yeah just stay here live there's roof over your head here's some food and you're in like no one's expecting you to go out and be already have a job you were in school and now you're at home you should have a pile of books you should have some quiet you should learn how to think deeply you should read richly here's the key to reading it's not read fast it's read slow and read often and then reread if you do that and you can transform your mind then you're doing the thing that Plato and Cicero and this little carpenter Jesus have begged you to do they're the three people from western civilization that most human beings point to and they all had the same central message it's reorient what you think and how you think and the way to do that is to be careful little eyes what you see be careful little ears what you hear I know we believe that we have really good filters but

they're not as good as we think and so everything that goes here and here affects you and so read it's not just the action of reading but it's the content what you read matters and there are thousands I don't even have to tell them to you you can find them on the internet if you really want to know email me say hey dark son I heard you talk I want a book list I have about five different book lists so it depends I'll try to gauge how serious I think you are and then because I kind of grade them out I'm like this person needs book list too but I was into a book list there you can find a thousand good books but read read slow reread read often listen to music listen to music that basically this is a time to develop everything that this is a really good thing okay mr. Chapman he's from Winston Salem he wrote the five love languages you have the Enneagram stuff people always want to talk about knowing yourself what are my strengths this is a time to develop your weaknesses understand that a lot of people find beauty and a lot of things that you don't like if you don't like opera expose yourself to learn about it if you don't like Jane Austen because here's the things people find a lot of beauty and a lot of things that you never really appreciate they have developed a taste for things that you don't have a taste for so you say well I don't like that that's not an excuse what you should be asking yourself and the same thing you should be asking yourself in that book the five love languages it's not which love language am I it's why do I not respond to love in these other four ways that's what we need to understand is because love is full love is whole right and so the question is why do I not fully receive love and so how can I grow in such a way to receive it we're all five are my love language right it's not that I am this way alternatively pick out book list and then whichever one you think you won't like read that one whatever kind of music you think you don't like listen to that whatever kind of art you don't think because there's no better time to develop to develop your weaknesses and develop your mind develop your taste because what you're going to develop is your taste for beauty your taste for goodness and your understanding of truth meaning the long history because there's a long history of people liking a lot of things that you don't have the taste for there is a long history of people that said this is a beautiful thing this is a good thing this is a classic thing you should appreciate this or you should learn from this and people are in conversation but you haven't developed that taste and so now maybe it's six months maybe it's three months but really if we think about okay let's call you back in school in september now it's what mill of april's you have may june july august four we'll call it half one half the other you essentially have five months where the world is saying you know what hit the pause read all of the books you should be reading rapidly you should be listening to classical music you should be looking up that's the great thing about the internet i hate the internet nine times out of ten but here's where it's fantastic i can look up almost any piece of art and study it and sit in front of it right i can have exposure to so many things in this world that i normally cannot have exposure to i'll tell you one person when i was in texas tech i didn't have any friends that was my grad school i didn't i i know it's surprising i didn't have any friends maybe it's not surprising but i remember looking up i had just gotten a book list from my mentor and i looked and i had probably 20 books and they're all in the bookshelf i didn't have a tv the

guy said you want tv it's like not a one team never had one never have never will i swear i have a tv but it doesn't have it's not plugged in you know what does it you know what i remember staring at bookshelf and looking at the authors i had all these authors that were recommended me i said i'm going to make these people my friends and i did and for two years i made those bookshelves my community that's what you guys need you got five or six months social distance from human beings that are living don't just respond to the oligarchy of the living open up the democracy of the dead this is a blessing you're lucky so embrace it just find a great book let's get after a music or this is a rare opportunity three great human beings have said change your mind now is your opportunity you got five or six months get after it there we go all your feet of living right there all right in this we have about five minutes left for you to to round this out um anything that to build off of again those habits or mindsets that students should be looking at right now um anything else you'd like to add or questions that students can be asking themselves right now as they're thinking about the why of their career and their work going forward um yeah sure i will first say um i love where michael just went with that and because it is really about you know we talk about this phrase educating the whole person and sort of assume like uh because i went to college and because i did the divisionals and i did all these different things i college i was educated as a whole person but i think we all know that um education as a lifelong pursuit and we're hoping it more than anything that you know by being in college you're actually like getting going we just want to learn more and grow more and um you know michael's really pushing us to think about how do we grow in ways that maybe we didn't think we wanted to so we gave me actually more whole people i actually really applaud that i also will say that you know one of the things that um it's interesting there's one which is that this whole thing around the the job stuff what a lot of people worry about is if i don't have like a traditional job like how will that look and i totally agree that michael said is that i think the world is going to look and say what did you do with your time and how did you do it to grow yourself or actually help the world so i tend to like think about it very simply one would be um if you could start with is there someone i can help you know is there someone i can maybe provide service to that might need it whether it be a young person an old person an orphan a widow like what is it and it's not traditional like you might have to do it in a new kind of way i think that's how the student work really thinking about being creative with i can think of some students who've actually got some sewing talent they're making masks i think of some students who actually are really young young kids and they've come up with like little videos to actually send to moms who actually have kids who need to be entertained um i've actually heard about some wake force alums and um staff workers who are working over at Home Depot because they actually want to um help people in a service capacity even though that wasn't really something they thought they went to the college for um and i can think of actually some some wake force students who are actually serving um the homeless and trying to help people at food banks because most of those people used to be 70 or over who work at those volunteering and everyone's got their own sort of limits as to what they think is

dangerous or safe but i just do think serving is one thing second is what michael said how can i learn i think there's one way which is learning in a very holistic sense liberal arts around your character around history and around classics i can't i can stand up about that and i in i case i can say michael has not been nice enough to give me that book list yes i think i'm on the zero list so i feel bad about it i have a lot of time now so but the thing is that what can you learn and this is another profession and learn like i had an alum say to me this last week today's world you can actually choose anyone you want to be your mentor so he goes a while a warm up he said i've read everything warm but it has actually written i've attended everything he lets the public go to i've actually followed every single like time you make a presentation and now actually i can invest like the way he invests if you're interested in finance why wouldn't you go do something like that and there are people in every single field in the world that you could follow learn from and probably say hey this is something that i did tons of ways that you can learn to get certificates and areas that you will be better in front of me hey you didn't have a job you said yeah actually i learned all about all these marketing tools that i wouldn't have learned otherwise because i all went online and figured out all by myself tons of stuff that wake forces have actually bought and secured for you to be able to use of your current student and and so i do think that's another whole nother area that i think about is how can you serve and help others and lastly is you need to make money okay what can i do that just actually makes a bit of money and and like maybe it's actually a little bit better than minimum wage right now and maybe it's something that's a gig gig exactly for part time online but it's less of a what will the world give me than what what's actually out there that i can just sort of go and do something with because again in the fall when i think you know things hopefully we'll get back to more normal from the employment standpoint employers are not going to say you didn't do anything they're going to say what did you do and if you just said i did a few things that actually were in helped and i actually had to make a little money because i needed to you know sort of be able to live people really respect that okay so that's sort of habits things that you can think about i definitely can put in structure into your day it's really important like really really structure like you wouldn't when you were actually at school so the other side is that sort of why questions and i i sort of had three so one would be what are experiences or relationships over your life would you say matt have mattered the most and why so if you could just spend a little time just thinking about experiences and relationships not where the funnest but actually that mattered the most at a deep level in your heart and in your soul what were they and why were they and actually through that to receive what that says to you that's sort of one two is i would say if you were to look ahead 40 or 45 years from now and your most beloved family of friends were with you and they were to actually honor you at your birthday and actually give you a bunch of toast what would you hope that they said about you and and really lean into that like what are that what is it that you want the people who love you most to actually like feel and say about you and really think about like am i doing those things now that actually maybe could help me to find like what do i value most and how do what who's the

person i want to be and how do i want to be with other people and then the third thing i think is um if how can i understand who i am as a spiritual being if i actually believe that i might be not just a physical like set of cells that is just gonna go away but there's something more there's something bigger who am i who am i is a spiritual being and if you're actually like say i have no idea where to start think about where wisdom has come from from wise people around you and people over time where they have studied this they've thought about this they're people that people have read about all the people that michael have mentioned these are all names of people who have actually like changed the course of history because of the way they think go explore like learn learn learn like do not do not waste a moment like this is actually the question around when you get to why you actually have to get your own place to figure out like who are you and why are you and it's not going to come from what i want because what you want to do more with it's going to be different in six months it's going to be different in one year it's going to be different in one half years it's going to change and change and change and change just like sort of people's values change because actually their circumstances change and you will be like searching and searching for that north star like every single time your circumstances change you get some money something different you don't have any money it's something different you have a child something different you have a girlfriend they break up it's something different it's like it's going to keep changing so you have to find something that you can have is an anchor that you will rely on and i think you should like try to find like what are the places where that's been done in history another wise people have done it and go on your journey like make that something that you like go with intent just as intently as you would as you wanted one of marathon next year like go on this journey and figure out like what is my why what is my spiritual like that what's my north star if you like this and you want to hear more like share review and subscribe to this podcast and from all of us here at the veritas forum thank you