

1 INSIGHT

with RICH LITVIN



Episode 5: The worst night of my life. Ever.

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Rich: Welcome to 1 Insight. My name is Rich Litvin. I grew up in London and I now live in LA. And this is a podcast for extraordinary top performers. You see, I've coached some of the most successful and talented people on the planet. I see what most people cannot see and I dare to say what most people wouldn't dare to say. What I know about success is that on the other side of it, it can actually be lonely. You can feel like more of an imposter the more successful you become. And when you're the most interesting person in the room, you're actually in the wrong room. I coach around insight. Life looks one way, something happens, the world looks different, and your entire world changes. It can happen in an instant. This podcast is called 1 Insight because a single insight can change everything.

This is an interesting episode of the podcast, to be sure. I didn't ever imagine I'd be writing or speaking this into the world. And I have no choice, but to call this episode the worst night of my life ever, because this is what happened the other day. Monique and I took the kids away. Eight months of locked down. Life was just too intense being in one place. And we found a nice home in Joshua Tree, near the national park here in California, and we drove two and a half hours. We needed a few nights away. It had been almost eight months of barely leaving the house.

And on the first night there, just before bedtime, I took a medication and I was tucking the kids in to bed and started to read them a bedtime story. Everything felt fine and

normal, and then something began to change inside of me. I just didn't feel very good. And I laid down next to Monique in the bed. And I didn't want to worry her, but after a few more minutes, something began to feel seriously wrong.

My vision was confused, and my arms and legs started to twitch and move, and I couldn't stop them. I couldn't speak very clearly either, and then my face started making these involuntary movements and twitching too. I was seriously scared. And I was scared enough that I asked Monique to call 911.

And then after that, it got really blurry. I remember the paramedics coming to their house. I remember them putting me on a gurney and wheeling me into an ambulance, and I was strapped in. I wasn't tied in, but these three seatbelts strapping me in. And then in the ambulance, I remember seeing my reflection in the window of the ambulance, but I couldn't really respond very well to the paramedics questions.

All I remember is seeing my arms and legs twitching, uncontrollably, and thinking, "Oh my God, this is a horrible way to die." And I still had a bit of a sense of humor because I remember thinking, "I really should have finished my book because now it's too late." It just felt horrible to not really have control of my mind or my body.

I just finished an article that I really am proud of, it's called Rich's Rules. It's a manifesto for life. And I was thinking, "Well, that really, really sucks. It would have been great to have that as a legacy. And now, no one's even going to know I've written it."

I got into the hospital and the doctor started trying to interview me for the hospital intake, but I couldn't really speak by now. My mind got the answers to his questions, but my mouth wouldn't work. And I heard him saying to me, "I'm going to give you a sedative to calm your anxiety and I'm going to draw some blood test you." I remember thinking, "Oh my God, I'm not anxious. This isn't stress related. You've got to do better than this."

But they gave me the sedative intravenously and I passed out. And when I woke up, all the tremors had stopped. I felt exhausted, but I could speak again. I remember talking to the nurse and I was incredulous. The blood tests were all fine and about an hour later, they checked me out of the hospital. It's three in the morning and I feel awful. I have to ask Monique to come. She had to wake up the kids, drive to the hospital at three in the morning and take me home.

And then when we got back, I was afraid to close my eyes because I was scared to sleep. I couldn't process what happened to me. Eventually, I passed out because I was exhausted.

When I woke up, everything was carrying on like normal. Monique was making breakfast for the kids. The kids were playing. They were throwing Lego at one another. It was like nothing had changed. Yet inside me, everything has changed.

Now, when I look back, I don't think I'd really been near to death that night before. Even in my confused state, I could see the doctor wasn't worried, but I've never had my body be that out of control before. And at the time, it felt like I was somehow witnessing the end of my life. Maybe I'm not physically dying, I thought, "Oh my God, maybe having a mental breakdown."

And I remember being terrified, and I was so scared that I had thought, I needed to somehow tell my family that I love them. And I sent texts to Monique saying I love her, and to the kids, and texted my mom and my brothers saying, "I love you." It was a little bit embarrassing the next day. But at least if I had passed away they had known that I loved them.

I looked it up. I used Google and discovered that apparently what I experienced was an adverse drug event, that's what it's called. When I Googled that and I found out a bit more about it, I'm not alone. Apparently, in the US, adverse drug events, ADEs, account for more than three and a half million physician offices visits a year, and a million emergency department visits. And they can be caused anything from antibiotics to cardiac medicine to prescription medication.

What happened to me a couple of days ago was hands down the scariest experience ever in my life. I'm still trying to process it. It still feels a bit of like a dream right now. It's hard to really bring myself back into it. I just strain to remember it. It's hard to imagine I was taken to a hospital strapped into a bed.

And I'm a coach. I'm really good at extracting distinctions and reframing dark moments into learning opportunities, but I'm not there yet. All I have right now is a lot of gratitude. I'm grateful to be alive. I'm grateful to the medical staff. I'm grateful to the doctor, to the nurses, to the paramedics. And I'm more appreciative of my family and my friends than ever before. And I'm clear that what is really important in my life needs to take center stage more than ever before. There are some things I've been a yes to that I now have to be a no to, to make the really important yeses to be a hell yes. Thanks for listening. This was an intense one.

For most of human history, it wasn't called coaching, it was called a leadership; and it's what I love to do, to coach people, to lead people and to mess with people's thinking. If you'd like more of this, or if you'd like to learn more about our community of extraordinary top performers, go to richlitvin.com/1insight.