

SKIN TO FUR

Takes on Fantasy Sports, Gambling, and Life



A D A M L E V I T A N



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TAKES ON FANTASY SPORTS,
GAMBLING, AND LIFE

Adam Levitan

For my wife Lauren, who has put up with these takes for the last 14 years. And my two sons Ben and Sam, who will have to put up with them for the rest of their lives. And my parents, who can't believe they bred these takes.

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Online Resources: For more information and analysis, visit Adam on Twitter [@AdamLevitan](#) and EstablishTheRun.com.

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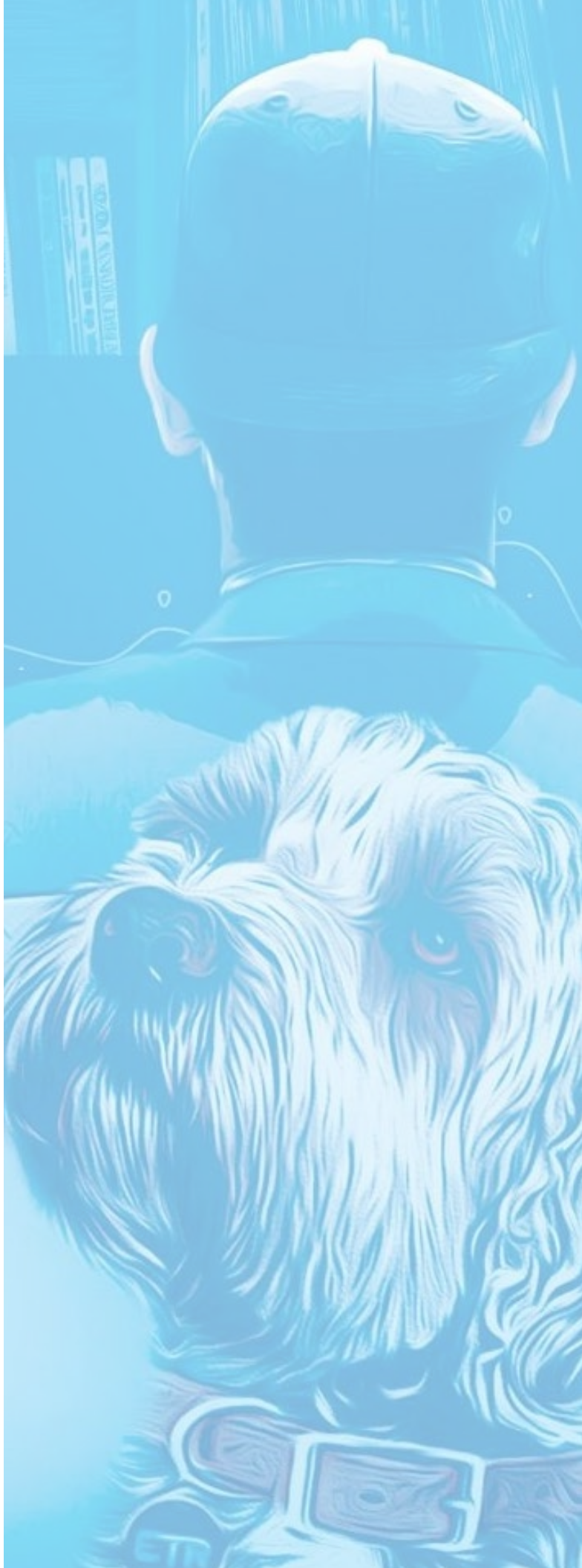
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Introduction

For the past decade, I've spent the majority of my time researching, talking, and writing about how professional football players will perform on Sundays. And for the last four years, I've taken questions from fantasy players about strategies for living their best life. How are these topics related? To the untrained eye, there's no overlap whatsoever. But to serious poker and daily fantasy sports (DFS) players, it's painfully obvious there's a strong correlation.

That's not to suggest I have all the answers. Far from it. In fact, among all people on this planet, I'm among the least qualified to help others with relationships, day-to-day lives, and thought processes. But when listeners to my solo podcasts on "[The DFS Edge](#)" started asking for help with these things, I figured I'd give it a shot. And the response was overwhelming.

It was actually shocking to find out so many people connected with my takes on such a wide array of topics. I always thought I was all alone out there – no one else could possibly think of using medical-grade gloves to change a diaper, right? No one else had spent hours upon hours researching gender optimization, or the Deathbed Theorem, or the Pre-Tipping Movement. But by talking about these kinds of topics publicly – all in the name of trying to live a happier and more efficient life – I found there are a ton of people out there like me, which is comforting and inspiring and, if we're all being honest with each other, a little bit terrifying.

The reaction to these Q&A sessions made me realize I need to capture them on paper. While podcast episodes come and go, get deleted, and fade into the never-ending ether of the Internet, a book lasts forever. (And by "book," I mean a self-published e-book. And by "e-book," I mean a loose collection of thoughts from the mind of a deranged individual.)

What you'll find in the pages that follow are truly honest takes from someone who can't help but obsessively analyze every single one of life's decisions. I spend as much time contemplating how many kids I should have as I do optimally plotting germ avoidance when going to the bathroom or projecting snap counts for third-string wide receivers. But what I've come to understand is that no matter how well we can analyze life or sports, a massive amount of our happiness and success will come down to variance. And by studying or playing the skill-based gambling games of poker or DFS almost every day for the last 15 years, I've been able to wrap my head around this form of luck.

Truly successful gamblers will have edges over the common population in a lot of spots. Learning how to use data, applying lessons from past defeats, emotional control, thinking in terms of long-term expected value rather than immediate return, and understanding sample size are all examples of these edges. But the most important lesson we can take from games like poker or DFS is probability. The question isn't can I drink this milk that expires today; it's how often do I get sick plotted against the reward of drinking that milk.

So while much of society thinks about circumstances and decisions in black and white, DFS shows us that's just not reality. Saquon Barkley's median projection against the Redskins in Week 4 may be 24.2 fantasy points, but his true projection is a range. He might get 30+ points 5% of the time, 20-25 points 25% of the time, and 15-19 points 18% of the time. Barkley finishing with 2.5 fantasy points happens a very low percentage of the time, but it's in the range of outcomes. Maybe it will happen 2% of the time. And as DFS players are well aware, sometimes 2% outcomes happen in sports. And guess what? They also happen in life. Applying this probabilistic understanding on a broader scale can have huge benefits.

For example, when I was born to two loving, incredibly supportive middle-class parents in northern Virginia, I had already won the lottery. I didn't do anything to deserve or earn this – I simply ran pure in the face of massive odds against. I could have easily been born in war-torn Syria or into a poverty-stricken family in north Philadelphia. After hitting the jackpot of my birth circumstances, complaining about getting unlucky ever again would be insane. (Of course I still do, but that's only because I'm a terrible person.)

And it didn't stop with my birth. I was fortunate to already be playing poker when the Chris MoneyMaker boom hit in 2003. I somehow met the truly perfect woman in 2004. I was about to give up on sports journalism until former Rotoworld head honcho Gregg Rosenthal emailed me in 2009. (More on that in the career chapter.) I was about to give up on fantasy sports until DFS injected exponential financial life into the industry in 2014. I have two healthy and happy sons (shoutout GenderLabs). I crossed paths and was able to start a business with the best football analyst on the planet, [Evan Silva](#). It's never lost on me that while talent and effort have played a role in my life, I've run incredibly hot from a probability standpoint. From being born into favorable circumstances to whatever "career" I've created for myself, it's clear to me that while you can manage and plan your life to the best of your abilities, it doesn't hurt to be in the exact right spot at the exact right time. A little bit of luck, in other words. Variance, if you will ...

So as I look back on the thousands of questions people have asked me, it begins to make more sense. People who play DFS know the best way to make any decision is to examine it fully. Take all the information we have, weigh potential outcomes probabilistically, and compute the optimal decision. After that, the outcomes in both DFS and life are out of our hands.

DFS Game Selection

Knowing which players to roster in Daily Fantasy Sports is not enough. That's particularly true in today's contests, where the level of play and quality of available information has risen sharply. The fact that the core skill of the game (picking the right players) is important – but not everything – upsets a lot of people.

We see this in all kinds of games. James Holzhauer “ruined” Jeopardy because he figured out the optimal strategy for wagers, clue selection, and buzzer speed. The Rockets “ruined” basketball because they were the first to figure out that heavily emphasizing the 3-point shot is mathematically correct. The bottom line is that in highly competitive markets where skill sets are close, there's always going to be a bigger edge in “soft skills.” The expected value gained from having Tom Brady projected for 21.3 points while our opponents have him at 22.4 is negligible. We need to find other ways to create edges.

I believe the most important “soft skill” in DFS is game selection. It also happens to be one of the easiest leaks to plug and quickest skills to learn. Game selection simply means which contests to play and what kind of lineups to put in those contests.

Neil Borders: Let's say I want to play \$100 in cash games. Is it better to do one \$100 entry, two \$50 entries, five \$20 entries, etc?

Our top priority in most game selection situations is finding the weakest opponents. I'm talking about people who don't understand depth charts, who haven't researched usage, who aren't using projections, who aren't aware of injuries, and who haven't thought about optimal roster construction. We shouldn't feel bad about employing strategies to find these opponents because there's simple effort inequality. There's no shame in out-working and out-smarting someone.

So if I wanted to play \$100 in cash games I'd play 100 \$1 entries. Some of the very best DFS players are ineligible to play those stakes on DraftKings and others have an entry limit. For example, most users can only play 50 \$1 games per slate in NFL. Many other good players simply won't waste their time at the \$1 level. So at those stakes, we can maximize our roster's chances of heading into Sunday's games with a big edge.

I'd also play about a third of that \$100 in head-to-head games, a third of it in single-entry double-ups, and a third in 3- and 10-man contests. The head-to-heads reduce some variance, the double-ups capitalize best on 60th-percentile lineups, and the multi-player games allow for a bit of upside.

Kevin Love: What type of ROI do you need for a season in order to call it a “good” season? Trying to think big picture instead of sweating week-to-week.

An NFL season is a tiny sample and the big-event nature of the scoring introduces even more variance. It's actually possible – albeit not overly likely – to have a positive expectation on an entire season's worth of action yet still come out a loser in actual dollars. That said, if you're playing multiple slates a week and playing a high volume of contests on those slates, you could reasonably find a true return on investment (ROI) in cash. In guaranteed prize pools (GPPs), you'll need a much larger sample given that one or two tournament wins would skew your data massively.

Given today's game conditions on DraftKings, a good ROI for the season would be in the 10-20% range. That number would likely skew much higher if you're limiting your action to only \$2, \$3, and \$5 games. That number would skew much lower if the majority of your action is coming at \$215 and up.

Miroj: How many cash game lineups do you typically set each NFL week?

I run one cash lineup for each slate. It's amazing how many people think this is insane, dumb, or simply don't believe me. The truth is I really don't want to hedge within the same slate. Think about what our realistic edge is over our opponents; it's 10%-to-20% in a best-case scenario. Then factor in the rake and we're really capping our ceiling by hedging in cash. We just have to understand and be willing to accept the volatility that comes with playing a single lineup in all cash-game contests.

There are a lot of ways we can mitigate that volatility without hedging in the same slate. The simplest way is to place a focus on head-to-heads rather than 50/50s or double-ups. In head-to-heads we can have an ROI of 100%, 60%, 40%, 2%, and every number in between. The risk in 50/50s are far higher as our ROI will either be 100% (get inside the cash line) or 0% (miss the cash line). A 49th percentile lineup returns \$0 if only playing 50/50s.

We also can hedge in other ways, albeit more indirectly. Let's say we like three of the players in our cash lineup, but think the ceiling on them is low. Or maybe we think they'll be over-owned relative to their floor/ceiling projection. In that case we can stick with them in cash if we think it's optimal, but completely remove them from our GPP pool for the week. For example, in the immediate wake of Emmanuel Sanders' 2018 season-ending injury, Courtland Sutton was underpriced relative to his role. In cash, it was difficult to pass on a sub-\$4K price

tag and a target floor of seven. But in GPPs, with projected ownership above 30%, Sutton was a tough sell given his quarterback play and raw skill set. So by playing Sutton in cash but completely fading him in tournaments, we hedge our position in the optimal way.

Another indirect way to hedge is to play multiple slates. There is a lot of action available in the 1 p.m.-only and 4 p.m.-only subsets and playing our optimal in those will naturally lead to a more diverse player pool. We'll own some players we're fading on main slate while simultaneously reducing the share of our weekly outlay tied to our main slate lineup.

Matthew Evans: Should we be putting our cash line-ups in GPPs?

The short answer is an staunch “no.” The long answer is “it depends.” Let's start with the short answer. My cash lineups are built to finish in the top-30 percent of a contest and are mostly based around median projections. They eschew volatility in favor of consistency and lean toward a high floor rather than a ceiling. The players in my cash lineup are selected completely independent of each other, whereas my GPP lineups are correlated around if/then statements within teams and games. So since the overwhelming majority of the GPP prize pool is in the top 1%, using a cash lineup in them is far from optimal. My cash lineups are very unlikely to reach that top 1% consistently enough to return a profit in the long-term.

However, there are situations where playing your cash lineup in GPPs can work. An obvious example is a small-field tournament (70 or fewer players). Another situation is if your cash lineups are actually somewhat contrarian. For example, you may find that you are way off the board at 2-3 spots in your cash lineups every week – not on purpose, but because your research has told you it's optimal. In that case, you should definitely be putting that cash lineup in GPPs, particularly the single entry variety. A final way to get exposure to your cash team in GPPs is through a slight tweak. Change your quarterback to get a QB/WR stack. Go with a 2v2 swap from what you expect to be very high-owned to something far lesser owned, but with only a slightly lower ceiling projection.

Brian Boudreau: When should you realize you're a losing tournament player?

This is more complicated than it appears. Because the large-field tournaments are so incredibly top-heavy, the amount of variance in them is difficult to overstate. So let's say you've played 500 tournaments at a \$5 buy-in and you've failed to cash in 499 of them. But in that one you cashed, you won \$5,000 giving you a net profit of \$2,505. Do you have a positive expectation going forward in that tournament? I'd say it's far more likely that you're actually negative-EV and the (likely fluky) \$5,000 score is just masking that fact. In other words, you can be a lifetime winner in tournaments and still be a “losing” player in terms of expectation.

So how do we know if we're winning in tournaments? We can start by eliminating overall win rate (or ROI) as evidence. I'm stuck \$10,945 playing tournaments in my DFS career, but by the time you read this I could actually be up money in tournaments – rendering ROI virtually irrelevant. The impact one first-place score has on your ROI is so massive.

A better way to see if we're a winning tournament player is to examine a large sample, at least 200 slates worth, and look for a trend line in our profit graph. If we're among the few GPP players consistently trending up, we're likely +EV. If we have a couple big spikes but have a downward trend line, we're in trouble. We can also look at our ACO (average cumulative ownership) and make sure we're not playing too chalky of lineups, resulting in a high cash rate but low top-1% rate.

What makes all this so hard is that a big part of playing tournaments optimally is losing – a lot. If we're playing correctly given the top-heavy payout structure, we're often taking Ricky Bobby “first or last” kind of lines. We're purposefully eschewing Player X's 19-point median projection in favor of Player Y's 17-point median projection in the interest of differentiation. Even when everything goes our way, we still need a lot of luck to get to the top of a large-field tournament. The bottom line is that game formats like the Milly Maker should mostly be played for fun and not as part of the profit grind. It's a chance – albeit a tiny one -- to turn a little bit of money into a lot. And that's always going to be fun.

Stillers247: Do you notice a difference in win rate at different head-to-head levels?

This is something I'm constantly keeping tabs on. I was a bit apprehensive and frankly scared to move up in stakes at head-to-head, but watching the data as it crept in gave me a ton of confidence. Here are my NFL head-to-head ROIs, sorted by buy-in level on [RotoTracker](#).

The screenshot shows a RotoTracker interface with filters for 'Sport: NFL' and 'Category: Head to Head'. The main table displays the following data:

Fee	Contests	Entries	ITM	ROI	Av Score	Av Win Scr ?	Waged	Profit
\$1	74	74	86%	55.68%	116.9	117.7	\$74.00	\$41.20
\$2	8230	8230	60%	7.05%	128.1	135.7	\$16,460	\$1,160
\$3 - \$5	10373	10373	62%	10.81%	132.6	139.9	\$46,237	\$5,000
\$5.50 - \$11	5124	5124	63%	13.33%	130.6	138.2	\$51,240	\$6,828
\$12 - \$27	2700	2700	64%	13.84%	131.6	138.9	\$60,150	\$8,322
\$28 - \$55	1159	1159	62%	10.81%	128.5	137.3	\$57,950	\$6,265
\$56 - \$109	737	737	62%	13.03%	127.5	136.7	\$80,333	\$10,467
\$110 - \$215	98	98	60%	12.01%	140.8	148.8	\$21,070	\$2,530
\$216 - \$999	89	89	53%	2.93%	122.0	129.3	\$31,575	\$925.00
\$1000+	18	18	67%	28.64%	144.9	147.5	\$23,320	\$6,680

Some notable observations:

- My second-worst results in terms of ROI is surprisingly at the \$2 level.
- My worst ROI at the mid-stakes levels are at the \$50 range – the level where the rake is still 10% (\$50 to win \$90). The next level up is raked at 8.2% (\$109 to win \$200).
- I've likely run incredibly pure on the tiny sample above \$1,000, but in talking with other high-stakes players this kind of result is not uncommon. Much like in poker, the “grinder” stakes are often the toughest. The people working really hard at DFS, trying to squeeze out a living and not giving anything away, are mostly in the \$5 to \$109 range. The people giving action at the nosebleed stakes are typically not grinders. They've likely been very successful in other forms of business and are just looking to splash around and have some fun. The best poker games feature rich businessmen at the highest stakes and DFS is no different.

PabloKnows: Do you alter the amount you put in play on weeks you don't like as much or don't have a good feel for?

It's an interesting question. I suspect most people overrate their ability to determine how “good” or “bad” their lineup is before lock. We need to remember it's the same pricing structure and set of matchups for everyone – it's likely that if we're struggling to land on a lineup we feel good about then others are struggling as well.

That said, I'll will sometimes alter how much I have in play on a week. The weeks when I try to get more action is when there is a very narrow pool of players who I consider quality plays. If I believe there is a huge difference between running backs A/B/C and the rest of the running back player pool, that's narrow. I'll often zero in on one or two quarterbacks and one or two tight ends. So in weeks when I can't fathom not rostering five or six specific players in cash, I'll want to extend my bankroll. Now I know what you're thinking: “But Adam, if there are five or six no-brainer plays then everyone will have the same team.” I've learned that I (and possibly we) live in a very small bubble, a niche of sports inside a niche of a football inside a niche of fantasy inside a niche of DFS content. It's important to realize that many of our opponents are not inside this bubble and won't agree on the “no-brainer” plays. So I'm always going to make my opponents prove it. Make them prove they know this alleged no-brainer roster construction and core. Because I've found over and over again people will show up with players and lineups I never even considered.

On the other side of the coin, there are weeks when I could make a case for six or seven running backs. Weeks when I have a hard time separating a half-dozen wideouts from each other or a gaggle of quarterbacks from each other. In weeks like that, we're going to

get a wider range of outcomes and results because it's harder for our opponent to screw it up. If I'm not zeroed in on a core, I don't have an issue scaling back my action.

Peter Dankwortz: It is more GTO to post or scoop head-to-head action?

It is far more optimal to post your own head-to-heads rather than take a head-to-head someone else has posted. First and foremost, the overwhelming majority of people posting games are professionals and people focusing on cash games. They are willing to take on all comers and will rarely have egregious mistakes in their lineup. These are the opponents we want to avoid for the most part.

By posting our head-to-heads, we give ourselves a chance to capture random people just darting around the lobby clicking buttons. We'll get action against opponents who don't understand the difference between a cash lineup and a GPP lineup. We could get games against opponents who don't react to late injury news and people building lineups on their phones. Also be sure to use the "preferences" on DraftKings when posting head-to-heads. Click the box that allows opponents to take only one of your games at each buy-in level. Use the "block opponent" function to prevent the best players from scooping your games.

Picking the right players is one aspect of generating a positive expectation in head-to-heads, but there's a lot of off-field strategy that goes into helping our ROI as well.

Mr. BroTBible: What day of the week do you join contests and load lineups on to DraftKings? I'm trying to expedite my process, feel I'm doing too much on Sunday mornings.

The softest action we'll find is on Sunday mornings and it's not even close. Detail-oriented, hardcore, well-prepared grinders are registering for contests on Wednesday and Thursday. The opponents we prefer to play against are waking up half in the bag on Sunday morning, scrolling through some info on their phone, and entering some random contests they find in the lobby. Meanwhile, those serious professionals and grinders don't have time to grind the lobby for soft action close to lock on Sunday mornings – that's when they're making the final adjustments to their lineups and allocations across multiple sites. So if you're only trying to get a little bit of action, registering for your 50/50s, double-ups, and small-field tournaments should be done on Sunday morning.

Pete Halpert: Should I be playing higher stakes? I keep seeing people with lower scores than me posting screenshots with much higher winnings (#howrich). Where am I going wrong in game selection?

No matter what kind of tournament you play, the vast majority of money is going to be at the top. Of course, it's far easier to get into the top-5 of a 300-entry tournament than a 100,000-entry tournament. In other words, a 99th percentile lineup would finish third in the 300-entry tournament for a very nice score. The same lineup would project to finish 1000th in the 100,000-entry tournament for a very small prize. That's just the nature of the top-heavy payout structure we see every day in DFS.

So even though it's fun and exciting to chase the top of these wildly large fields such as the Milly Maker, the steadier and truer path is in smaller-field tournaments. Now that doesn't mean you should go jump in the \$5300 buy-in Thunderdome. Find a 100-person tournament, find a 500-person tournament at a buy-in level that suits your bankroll. There are endless types of contests on DraftKings; don't fall into the trap of sorting the lobby by the largest prize pool and going from there.

Pete Winkler: I play in a 20-man DraftKings league every week with friends. Should I put my cash line-up in there?

Yes. First of all, 20-man fields are certainly small enough to win without incorporating contrarian plays or correlation. But more importantly, you need to realize that your group of friends likely has no clue what the optimal cash team is. It's unlikely they're grinding projections, following every shred of news, and understand lineup construction. So trying to project ownership in a contest like this is silly. You can simply play what you think is correct and it's not going to be owned.

Remember, we are in a bubble on #DFSTwitter and in the podcast space. We are the hardcore, the true fantasy grinders. It's a dangerous mistake to assume everyone is super sharp and is grinding as hard as we are. Getting FPS (Fancy Play Syndrome) in a league with 19 of your buddies is likely a disaster for your expectation.

Chapter 2

Germs

About 20 years ago I was traveling with my dad. We were sharing a hotel room and he went in the shower first. Much to my dismay, when I got in the shower the only soap option available was bar he previously used. I assumed it was totally normal and standard to ask for a fresh bar, so I called out for him to get me one. When he couldn't find any other soap options available, he told me to use the bar he already used.

It blew my mind to even think someone would consider this an option. You're telling me the product you just rubbed all over your armpits and nether regions is the same one I should use on my face? Come on. So I start yelling for him to go ask the maids for a new bar and he's yelling back at me that soap is – by definition – clean and therefore safe to use.

You know what's safe? For me to say I'm an undiagnosed germophobe. Some of my first memories are being wary of germs. I remember going to Pizza Hut as a young child, all my friends sharing a straw, and me being both mentally and physically incapable of doing so. I've let people borrow roll-on deodorant before, but when they give it back to me I simply throw it in the trash.

It turns out that a lot of people have similar thoughts about filth running through their heads. The following questions are about strategies for germ avoidance.

Chris B: Is peeing in the pool acceptable, either in a public or house pool? It takes too much time to dry off and go to the restroom in my opinion.

I have not put my head under the water in a pool since 1995. Pools are simply floating vessels of bacteria. Of course it's not acceptable to pee in them. It's incredibly perverse, unacceptable, and flat-out disgusting. But I know it's very commonplace.

For me, it's not just the urine and the occasional fecal matter that's in there; people's bodies are simply filthy. Armpit hair falling out, sweat, spit, feet juice, toe hairs, boogers, various skin disorders – it's all in there with you in a pool or ocean.

And I know what you're thinking. "Oh Adam, you're such a baby. There's chlorine in the pool! It kills everything!" Stop it. If chlorine was this magic chemical that kills

everything, we wouldn't even be able to go in the pool. We definitely wouldn't be able to open our eyes under the water. So I highly recommend taking my advice on this: If you have to go in a pool, don't put your head under water in any circumstance.

Hubert Cumberlandale: What's your policy on public toilets? Do you trust those seat covers or are you a nest guy?

I'd rather go home than defecate in most public toilets. You're at the bar, you're having a few beers, a few laughs, and all of a sudden nature calls. In most spots I'll just go home. If I really wanted or needed to stay in this public place, then I always spend the time to build a nest. Optimal nest construction includes using a ton of toilet paper, so be sure the stall you're in is stocked. Lay one piece horizontally across the front, then long pieces vertically along the sides. Keep repeating this process, criss-crossing your pieces like a Jenga board. It's going to give you far more protection and comfort than those thin, ill-designed seat covers.

Troy Rapson: What Halloween candy is best to give out, and which is the worst?

It's really quite simple: Anything wrapped is the best. I don't want some disgusting M&Ms that comes from some dude's hand when I ring the doorbell. I don't want to sift through a bunch of loose, bacteria-infested candy corns in a bowl. It has to be wrapped.

On a related note, I never drink from a glass in a bar. If you've ever closely watched how a glass gets cleaned in a bar, I suspect you'd employ a similar bottle-only strategy. Basically, they take the glass – which has just been in the mouth of a patron sporting heaven knows what pathogens – dip it in one pot of disgusting water for a half-second, dip it in another pot of even dirtier water for another half-second, and then put it on the counter to dry. And then it's “clean,” ready for the next customer. Stop it.

Matthew Puskarich: Should I adopt an adult dog or get a puppy?

I wanted a fresh puppy. I wanted a dog that would be mine and no one else had cuddled with before. I wanted to be the first to press my human flesh against the fur of the beast. One that knew me and me only, that loved me and me only, that wouldn't miss their old owner.

I'm aware this is a borderline insane take, but I can't stop it from permeating all aspects of my life. For example, I get almost every meal I eat fresh. In other words, if I want a turkey sandwich I'll go to the grocery store and ask for half-pound of sliced turkey and half-pound of cheese and then consume it immediately. I can't get a couple pounds of turkey and then eat it the next day. If I want some strawberries on a Monday, I go buy them and eat them. When

Tuesday comes around and I want strawberries again, I go back to the store. I know this is sociopathic behavior, but it's the same thing with dogs. I wanted mine fresh and clean.

So while I know there's a lot of merit to adopting an adult dog, especially a rescue, I still think a freshie is the way to go. A lifetime, solitary bond is something special and, perhaps most importantly, we maximize our time with the dog by getting him/her at infancy. Our time with an adult dog will be cut far too short.

Anonymous: What is the optimal towel strategy? Do you designate certain parts of the towel to dry certain body parts so you don't inadvertently dry your face with a part of the towel that previously touched your nether regions?

If you think this isn't a situation to be aware of, you've never been to a gym. These wrinkly old men with extra-large guts and corresponding extra-small penises are out of control. They aggressively slide the towel back and forth across their grundle. They penetrate their backside with the towel. They hit the armpits, the feet – no region is safe. The towels are then thrown into a big bin, washed by the staff, and then put back on the shelf for me to grab. Is a simple machine wash enough to rid this cloth of the unthinkable treatment it's been through? Of course not. So I really try to not use the gym towels on my face, ever.

As for our own personal towel strategy, I think the biggest mistake people make is leaving their main bath towel too close to the toilet. It's a fecal matter trap. But generally speaking, I actually think going from nether region to face is perfectly fine – as long as it's shortly after a shower or when we're reasonably clean. My own personal filth does not bother me like the filth of another human.

Ryan Noonan: If I'm going to pee, isn't the optimal move to wash my hands first before holding my junk? This feels especially necessary in public restrooms.

No, not optimal or necessary. Of course we enter the bathroom with dirty hands, there's no doubt about that. But when we hold our "junk" to pee, as Ryan said, we aren't entering any orifice. We are merely touching skin. That's no different than touching our arm or face – and we don't wash our hands before that.

In reality, the activities we need to wash our hands before partaking in are nose picking, eating, rubbing our eyes, or anything that will allow germs to penetrate our system. That's why we must wash our hands after the bathroom, in line with standard practice. Then we have germs and we have this general fecal matter from the bathroom air on our hands and those must come off because we know we're going to scratch our nose at some point. We know we're

going to go for a pick at some point. I think that post-wash is far more important than pre-wash, and I would actually argue that the pre-wash in this situation is not all that necessary.

VinaPenny: I expect you never took a dump in your high school bathroom. What was your process behind that, and was there ever a time where you just had to?

Like most schools, the situation in my high school bathrooms was a complete disaster. They were filthy, run down, and we actually had a unique problem in which the school braintrust decided to take the doors off of all the stalls. It was so absurd. I believe they feared people were having intercourse and/or selling drugs in the stalls, and taking the doors off would discourage those activities. It wasn't like my high school was bad, though, so it seemed like an overreaction.

Anyway, the problem with this no-door policy was in the event you actually wanted to defecate in the toilets at my school, you literally had to do it in front of everyone in the bathroom. I wrote for my high school newspaper and during my junior year I had a monthly op-ed column. It was kind of similar to my podcast, but obviously way tamer. So when the school instituted this no-door policy, I wrote my column absolutely ripping them to shreds for it. I talked about how humiliating and ridiculous this was that we couldn't even have privacy when taking a dump. This was really the first time I realized the power of the press. I had people I didn't even know at school coming up to me and saying, "Great column, man! That was awesome!" Everyone loved it. Before long, the school put the doors back on. Probably not because of the column; it was probably because so many people were complaining or whatever. I don't know. Maybe I should take the credit. Anyway, I'll always remember it.

Back to the question though. Anytime you're in a familiar place, you should be aware where the good bathrooms are. I mentioned there were some bad bathrooms at my high school, but there were a few good ones as well. Frequently we have to look for ones off the beaten path. I used the basketball locker room one a lot. It was a pain because you had to walk all the way to the gym and then go underneath into the locker room, but there was rarely anyone in there. There was also one by the teacher's lounge that was always clean. The janitors probably paid more attention to that one.

Nate Wible: I just went through two weeks of one-year-old diarrhea with my kid. New sheets and bath every morning. With your aversion to feces, how have you handled this? #Dadlife

Before my first son Ben was even born, I went to CVS and purchased medical grade gloves. They're basically the rubber gloves doctors wear and I got a huge pack of them. So each time I was about to open a diaper, I would just glove up. It's really not that hard. You glove up and then you throw the gloves away when you're done. At times I was going

through five pairs of gloves a day, but so be it. That's the only logical strategy. As for the smell, the no-brainer play is a standard T-shirt nose tent. Simply pull the front collar of your T-shirt over your nostrils, setting up a thin, yet remarkably useful, barrier.

AWarren82: Are you also neurotic in regards to health concerns like radiation from an Apple watch, bluetooth headphones, carrying phones next to our junk? I've bought and returned a cellular Apple watch because of fear we will look back on all of this the same way we do cigarettes.

I've thought about your concerns and have actually chosen to disregard them. It's probably because I trust our government, our health departments, and our doctors too much. I trust they tested this stuff out on mice, they've run the sims, they've put the data through the solver. I trust they did the work, but honestly I should probably do more research on it myself.

When we get into spots like this, there is so much value in reading a book from someone who is a specialist in the field. Say somebody has spent 2,000 hours a year for their entire adult life working on the results of radiation, or the effects of cell phone emissions on our brains. We can take one week to read a book by them and upload so much of their intelligence into our heads.

Anyway, I keep my phone in my front pocket, so it is very close to my "junk," which is certainly scary. I wouldn't handle any medical issues well, but anything testicular would really bury me. One of my biggest fears in life is a needle around my ... I can't even type it.

Another concern I have is that I've become addicted to listening to podcasts every single night as I fall asleep. It's gotten to the point where I can't sleep without them. I put one earbud in, put my phone under my pillow, and just listen until I fall asleep. It's really effective in shutting off my brain; I rarely make it through 4-5 minutes of the podcast before falling asleep. Which leaves around seven straight hours of cellphone pressed against my head, which is scary. So I hope history doesn't look back on tech as the cigarettes of our generation, because I'll for sure be dead.

EverythingIsGeese: I used a toothbrush I found in a public restroom. Odds I have a disease now?

I don't believe you actually used a toothbrush you found in a public restroom. But this lie does provoke some thoughts on toothbrushes in general, as the rancid germ infestation of a toothbrush goes so overlooked in our society. Is there anything else in the world that we get dirty and then use again without really cleaning? And not just merely dirty – the whole idea of the toothbrush is to literally go into these crevices and these gum

lines and these spaces between our teeth and brush out the actual bacteria. Then we quickly rinse it off with some tap water, put it back in the holder, and use it again.

I'd actually bet that a lot of people go months, maybe even a year, without changing their toothbrush, using it as a germ sword the whole time. It's so wild because if we did this with dishes or clothes, people would say we're insane and disgusting. If we use a fork once it's, "oh well, have to put it in the dishwasher." If we wear a T-shirt once, it goes in the laundry basket and we're not going to see it again for a few weeks. But the toothbrush? No, we just keep using the toothbrush over and over again until we contract some disease.

JMorrisMCM: What do you do about haircuts? There's no shot the liquid they put the combs in does anything to disinfect.

At least the combs sit in that blue disinfectant stuff, so the haircut place is pretending they care about cleanliness. The worst part isn't the combs – it's the buzzer clippers. If you look closely at it, when the guy goes to grab the clippers, you can actually see the little hairs from the last guy, or the last two guys, or the last five guys. Those are other peoples' tiny little hairs he's about to rub over your head. It really is disgusting.

I've mostly succumbed to defeat when it comes to haircuts. The germ issue can't really be solved, and now that I'm going full Ubaldo Jimenez, the whole process is so humiliating. I get there, I have my hat on, and I wait my turn. Then the dude or the chick is all excited to get to work on my hair and I take my hat off. It's just utter disappointment as I reveal very little hair. I meekly ask for a No. 1 all the way around, they look at me with annoyance like I'm wasting their talents, the deed is done in less than five minutes, and we go our separate ways. Not a good situation.

Yoni33: What's the most disgusting thing you've ever seen at the gym?

I joined a gym a few years ago so I could train for the fitness props I've done. It's a bit of an old-school gym; it's somewhat expensive, it's right downtown where there are a lot of fancy office buildings, and there are a lot of stiffs around. Everyone in the locker room is old and naked with no regard for human decency. Which surprisingly doesn't upset me at all; it's just a generational thing. When old men are in a locker room, they must be nude – even if they're brushing their teeth, chilling in the sauna, wherever.

One day last year, I'm walking to the bathroom in the back of the locker room and I spot an old dude shaving his face while completely naked. That didn't even faze me; as I explained, it's standard in this gym. He had a towel in front of him. I assumed it was to prevent his body from leaning against the germ-laden counter when he leans forward,

which is actually a pretty sharp move. But as I got closer, I realized this dude had actually taken his penis and placed it onto the counter top. Guy had some serious balls.

Rick Polster: Do you trust the cleanliness of napkins at a restaurant that people keep in their laps?

Cloth napkins at restaurants are absurd. We know people wipe their disgusting mouths on them and spit their half discarded food in these napkins. My friend, who is a caveman-esque individual and lacks basic etiquette, blows his nose massively into these cloth napkins all the time. There's no recovering from that if you're the napkin. I don't care how many times you wash it – once a sick person blows their full nose into a cloth napkin, it should be over for that napkin. And I don't think my caveman-ish friend is alone in that practice.

Justin Dunn: How did you handle watching childbirth?

My first son was breached in the womb, which essentially means his head was upside down. It's not an issue at all, he was totally fine and it was never a real concern. It's just that the doctors highly recommend the mom in this situation get a C-section rather than have a standard birth. For those of you not familiar with what a C-section is, it's the stone nuts. My wife did not have to go through some of the pain that comes with a standard birth. There was no screaming, no legs getting held back, no pushing. She was awake the whole time and we were talking and joking.

The nurses put a sheet up between us and the action so you can't see what's going on as they literally slice open her stomach. Before I even realize what's going on, the doctor is telling us he's pulling the baby out and it's time to take pictures. Now I've got my wife and the doctor yelling at me to take pictures, which is just an absurd request – I don't want to see this thing getting pulled out of my wife's guts. So I grab my phone, stick my arm as high in the air as I can above the sheet, and start snapping blindly. It was so obvious I wasn't willing to stick my head above the sheet; the doctor must have thought I was so soft.

That wasn't even the most humiliating part. A few minutes later, the nurses come over with the scissors and the baby and they say, "Dad, it's time to cut the umbilical cord. Do you want to do it?" And of course I don't want to do it, I have zero interest in slicing flesh. So I say something ridiculous like, "nah, I'm good," as if someone offered me a piece of gum. Now the nurses are really looking at me like I'm a total clown.

When you have a C-section, you get a longer stay in the hospital so the mom can recover from surgery. We were there for three nights and the staff was constantly bringing us food, which is really nice. But there was also no way I was going to eat food from the hospital cafeteria with the sickly

hospital utensils. There's just no chance it could be good. So I was constantly leaving for breakfast, lunch, and dinner to go get food and I had to be buzzed and signed back in every time carrying these big bags of food for my wife and I. They already had the read on me that I was this absurd and pathetic human from the delivery room incidents. Now they really knew I had a lot of problems.

Billy Bats: What do you think of dudes who text while using the urinal?

I think that's standard these days, I do it and so does everyone else. Out of everything in the world right now, phones might be the most germ-ridden things we touch. And it's not just people taking their phones into the bathroom. There are two types of people in this world – those who admit they have watched pornography on their phone and there are those who are lying. The bottom line is if you find yourself in a spot where you have to touch someone else's phone, be sure you glove up first.

Justin Gunn: Do you sleep in hotel rooms? Can't imagine your thoughts on hotel sheets, used towels, and more.

It's a major catch-22 for me. Of course hotel rooms are filthy, probably some of the most disgusting places on Earth. People do things in hotel rooms they'd never do at home, wild things they get hotel rooms explicitly for. Not only are they obviously on rampant and careless #TeamSex in hotel rooms, but they're also far more free with the disposal of boogers, feces, and the like. And no, I don't think a simple washing of the sheets or vacuuming of the room is enough.

However, I really love traveling and the idea of hotels. It's great to be away and not have to worry about picking up after yourself. So I bite the bullet and I lie in those sheets, I touch that remote, I stand barefoot in that shower. The reward outweighs the risk in this spot.

EButts: What is your take on chewing tobacco and smoking cigarettes? Have you tried either and if so would you ever do it again?

Sure, I've tried both when I was young but I never got into it. I'm not really sure I see the point of cigarettes or chewing tobacco. You're not getting high, you're not having fun, you're not enhancing an existing experience or having a new one. You're just killing yourself (as repeatedly proved by data) and making yourself smell like death. I'm willing to accept some health consequences if it's in the name of mind expansion. We've seen Denver decriminalize mushrooms and there is a lot of research which suggests positive [effects of acid](#). But I'm not accepting health consequences in the name of tobacco.

Danny: Are annual physicals a good idea or waste of time?

A great idea. It's insane to me that people don't want to be out in front of illnesses. Preventive medicine should be standard, just a way of life. There's simply no reason for me to wake up one day and realize I have some disease that could have been diagnosed five years earlier. Let me pay for extra testing, let me pay for scans that aren't covered by insurance. I can't think of a better use of money than finding out in time that I have something curable. And having annual blood work done is the first step.

Building DFS Lineups

If DFS was a simple game, we'd all take our nine highest projected players who fit under the salary cap and call it a day. But it's nowhere close to simple. The game is incredibly deep because we have to think about how the players in our lineup work together, what kind of contests we're putting this lineup in, what our opponents are doing – and that's just the start.

Lineup construction is another soft skill, similar to the game selection topics I hit on in Chapter 1. It's very possible to know everything there is to know about the NFL, be a great season-long fantasy player, and still be a loser in DFS.

An important factor to consider in all formats (but especially tournaments) is upside. Ideally we want every single player on our roster to exceed his salary-based expectation a high percentage of the time. In other words, if we simulated a player's outcome 100,000 times and plotted those results on a graph, more than 50% of the dots would show up on the right side of that salary-based expectation.

One way to ensure we are not missing out on players most likely to achieve upside on their salary is to start at the bottom. The \$4000 running back who suddenly projects for 20 touches is rarely someone we should be passing on. The \$4800 quarterback projected for 10 designed runs will always have upside.

The bottom line is all successful players have a repeatable process for building lineups each week. I often get asked for insight into mine.

Money JCS: How do you balance what the models are telling you versus football knowledge and experience?

Football is a difficult sport to model. The sample sizes are tiny, the difference between a good week and a bad week can be one yard, and players rely tremendously on their teammates. While I think it's very difficult – if not impossible – to beat DFS basketball or baseball without a model, figuring out football is more plausible.

With that in mind, I always find it humorous that many people use a word like “algorithm” or “model” as a dirty word. These tools are not an answer key. Any model we’re using is underlined with projections, and projections are inherently subjective at some level. We have to decide how many carries the Packers will give to Jamaal Williams as opposed to Aaron Jones. We have to decide if Aaron Rodgers will shy away from Davante Adams because Patrick Peterson is in shadow coverage. These subjective decisions are baked into a projection, so there is no program out there spitting out the answer to the test.

So I prefer to combine data I’m seeing in models with softer information I uncover. Coaches ready to change the role of a player is something we can find via studying beat writer reports. Predicting flat spots for teams – typically as a road favorite – is something that’s tough for models to account for. Models are often built on median projection, which threatens to spit out a lot of low aDOT, high-catch rate but low-ceiling players. The bottom line is if we’re doing the proper amount of research and work, then we can stray from models more in NFL than NBA or MLB.

Michael Wynn: What percentage of the time do you use the full salary cap on DraftKings?

It varies by sport and game type. Generally speaking, leaving anything more than \$200-\$300 on the table is a mistake in any cash game. There’s a bit more leeway in large-event NFL, where a player’s range of outcomes is wider and therefore each dollar is not as important. But in a small-event sport like the NBA where our projections can be so accurate, I’d rarely leave anything more than \$100-\$200 and I’m trying to spend the full cap on every slate.

GPPs are a bit of a different story. One of our goals when playing a GPP is not to have a duplicate lineup as someone else in the field. If we do, we immediately cripple our expectation because we can never win the full first-place prize. Since so many of our opponents are spending the full cap (or nearly all of it), an easy way to reduce the chances of a duplicate are to leave \$200 or more on the table. Those dollars left behind in GPPs are not as valuable as cash games because we’re no longer in search of the optimal lineup – we’re in search of a unique, highest-ceiling lineup. That said, 42 of the last 45 Milly Maker winners (93%) on DraftKings have used at least \$49,700 of the \$50,000 cap. All Milly Maker entries have used at least \$49,700 just 81% of the time.

Julien: How important is it to project ownership in cash games? Should mega-chalk always be owned?

I do not project ownership in cash games at all. What other people are doing is completely irrelevant to me. I’m going to play what I think is the optimal lineup and if I have heavy overlap against some opponents, then so be it. The best cash lineups are

the ones that come together so easily that we can't see how anyone could possibly play anything else. But our opponents will invariably play something else, leading to slates I like to call "prove it" weeks. What we think is so obvious often isn't so obvious to our opponents, and we need to make them prove they can find their way to the optimal.

Not worrying about ownership in cash can go the other way, as well. I rarely roster a player I know will be high-owned just for the sake of "blocking." If we are confident in our process and our research, then not rostering a high-owned player could be a massive edge. That's particularly true if we're focused on a large volume of head-to-head matchups because having a 90th percentile lineup rather than a 55th percentile one is extremely valuable. Those 90th percentile weeks are the ones where we make our money.

Michael Maggio: Do you ever feel the need to be contrarian to yourself in cash?

Absolutely not. That's a huge mistake I see on a weekly basis from people. I think the idea of "being contrarian" has permeated the DFS space so squarely that it's in people's minds when they make every lineup – even cash. So instead of trying to be contrarian in cash, I try to practice game selection, which allows me to profit on people going the contrarian route. I want to play head-to-heads and 50/50s against opponents who accept really low floors and a wide range of outcomes at a high cost. Just being solid and avoiding FPS is step 1.

Centaur83: When do you build most of your NFL lineups?

I typically don't build any lineups until Saturday night. My process is to gather as much information as possible in the form of prior week usage, current injury news, coaching tendencies, potential matchups, and likely game flows. The whole idea in DFS (and life) is to make the best possible decisions we can with the best information we have at the time. The information we have on Wednesday, Thursday, or even Friday is incomplete. So once I have a full picture of all the data points, then I start building lineups. That's why I think the Friday night show I'll be doing with Evan Silva on [EstablishTheRun.com](https://www.establishtherun.com) will be so valuable. By the time Saturday comes, it's typically very clear and easy to develop a player pool for cash games. I then work on getting the lineup combos right, which takes me through Sunday morning. If we get surprise injury news close to lock, I won't hesitate to add/remove players from my pool and start over.

Dre Smith Jr: Explain understanding line movement and how it relates to DFS.

The goal of this concept is simpler than most people realize. All we're trying to do is figure out if a team will play well or perform poorly. Knowing that information before a

game has significant value when trying to project the statistical performance of individual players. One way we can gain data points on this is through line movement.

Let's say the Patriots open as 8-point road favorites at the Jets. If you walk into a bar and ask 100 random guys who will cover, at least 85 will say the Patriots. We can quantify this better by using the data on Sports Insights, a service which tracks betting trends. They can tell us that 85% of the bets made on this game are on the Patriots, so sirens should be going off in our head when the line goes the other way. Even if it goes to Patriots -7.5, my eyebrows are raised. If it goes to Patriots -7 I know with good certainty that sharp people think the Jets will play well. If it moves through the key number of -7 to -6.5, my head is exploding from the alarms going off. While the public (dumb) money continues to pour in on the road favorite in the form of small bets, the professionals are betting massive amounts on the home underdog and causing reverse line movement.

We can't be certain the Patriots will perform poorly in the situation described above, but we can be confident the Jets are the right side. So by being underweight or fading Patriots players in DFS – many of whom will be highly owned – we can gain expected value. Short road favorites, every time, all the time.

Michael Feteira: How do you start a lineup? I start with quarterback, tight end and defense first to get an accurate price remaining.

This is not the process I would recommend. I think the best way to build is through a “bottom up” method, which means we start with the best cheap values. While it's painful to miss out on a great play in the \$7K-\$9K range on DraftKings, failing to roster elite plays at sub-\$5K is nearly impossible to overcome. So as a thought exercise it's worthwhile to start a lineup with the cheapest viable play at each position slot. Then start upgrading from there based on higher priced players you want and the cheap ones you don't feel good about. This method will ensure that when a \$3700 player goes for 30 points, we'll have him on our team.

As for positional prioritization, the way running backs are used in today's NFL has changed optimal DFS lineup construction. In 2018 Christian McCaffrey, Saquon Barkley, Ezekiel Elliott, Melvin Gordon, and Todd Gurley all averaged at least 14 carries and 5.5 targets per game. Alvin Kamara was at 12.9 carries and 7.0 targets. James Conner and Joe Mixon were among the running backs not far behind. So what we're getting with these versatile running backs are essentially an elite RB1 who gets a huge share of his team's rush attempts, plus goal-line work, plus the target rate of a reasonable WR2. In a full-PPR format like DraftKings, jamming in these running backs is a weekly priority. So the optimal build in a vacuum would be to save money at the volatile wide receiver spots, save money at the tightly clustered and projectable quarterback spot, save money at

the wildly unpredictable D/ST spot, and unload the clip at running back. Not every week will play out like that, but in a perfect world we'll have quality cheap options at those QB/WR/D spots.

Scott Hightower: How do you walk the fine line of being contrarian in GPPs and not being stupid?

This is precisely what makes GPPs so hard. The first thing I did when I started playing GPPs was to try to find low-owned plays. Not *good plays*, mind you, but simply low-owned shots in the dark. And that's not our goal. Our goal isn't to randomly find a guy who is 1% and be like, "Hey, I'm playing him, he's 1%! Look how smart I am!" Our goal is to find players who will be underowned for unwarranted reasons. Perhaps it's a perceived difficult matchup that really isn't that tough. Or a poor string of box score results but with strong underlying usage. Or a subtle change in the depth chart the public hasn't spotted. Regardless of reasoning, we need to be sure all our GPP plays have both a reasonable floor and a strong ceiling. Sitting back and hoping a wideout breaks a long touchdown on one of his four projected targets is not good enough.

Note we should strive to make our lineups contrarian as a whole – not each player. When we think of differentiation in that sense, it's easier to make realistic teams. Perhaps we wanted to play a really chalky stack in 2018, such as Matt Ryan and Julio Jones against the Bucs. We knew a lot of people playing this stack would also have Calvin Ridley and Mike Evans. We could've been a bit contrarian by using Tevin Coleman and Chris Godwin instead. And in our other roster spots, we could've focused on less popular plays we thought were strong.

And that brings me to something I call Average Cumulative Ownership, or ACO. We can calculate the ACO of a lineup by simply adding up our players' total ownership and dividing by nine (the number of roster spots in an NFL lineup on DraftKings). In the 45 Milly Makers between 2016 and 2018, 37 of the winners had an ACO below 15%. But 84% had at least one player who was more than 20% owned, and 46% rostered at least one player who was more than 30% owned. In other words, winning GPP lineups very often have chalk plays, but they're almost always balanced out by low-owned plays to lower the ACO.

Rupesh: I have a question about 3- and 10-man contests. Is a cash game lineup optimal in those? Should I introduce stacking?

Three-mans and 10-mans (where the top-3 get paid out) are an underutilized game type on DraftKings. These are formats where it's optimal to play our cash lineup but introduce a bit more upside than a standard head-to-head. A lot of our opponents in this format will be rolling out variants off their optimals in the form of "leagues" lineups, giving us an immediate +EV spot. Perhaps more importantly, a lot of users who are intimidated

by the head-to-head lobby (or aren't interested in simply turning \$10 into \$18) will play in these contests, which fall somewhere between cash and GPP. So we gain access to a new pool of opponents while still being able to use our cash lineup profitably.

Andrew Gadzik: Could you share some info on how to forecast touches and targets per game?

I suspect a decent portion of our opponents aren't even projecting targets and touches. A smaller portion are doing it based simply off game logs, which will introduce a ton of recency bias and holes. So there is certainly a lot of value in doing our own projections because we'll have a more mathematical basis for decisions. We'll also naturally be a bit contrarian because so many people are blindly using projections from FantasyLabs or Daily Roto or ESPN.

Of course, doing our own projections is dangerous for three big reasons. First, not many of us have experience building models and all the issues that come with that. Second, it is incredibly time consuming because it requires careful attention to every piece of news as well as constant adjustments. And finally, being on an island is great – as long as they are solid projections. It's OK to be wrong in gambling, but there's nothing worse for our bankroll than being extremely confident when we shouldn't be.

All that said, if you're interested in doing your own projections I think it's important to make them opportunity-based. Start with how many plays a team projects to run in this game – a number generated by pace, likeliest game flow, and run/pass ratio. Then adjust each player's market share for this matchup. If we project the Packers to throw 40 times and Davante Adams to see 30% of those targets, his target projection would be 12. But maybe Patrick Peterson will be shadowing Adams this week so we only project Adams for 20% of the targets. And since Peterson is on him we need to build in a lower catch rate than his average. Maybe the Packers are 17-point favorites so Aaron Rodgers' attempt projection isn't 40. All these potential inputs are just the tip of the iceberg when building a projection model, so it's easy to see how crucial a role automation can play.

JKC: Do you have advice for moving up from min-cashes in GPPs? I can consistently turn three dollars into five or 10 dollars, but I want to get to \$100 or \$1,000.

If there was an easy answer here, we'd all be on our own private islands by now. Unfortunately, there is not an easy answer, and thus no private islands await. That said, thinking about your GPP lineups through a lens of roster construction rather than player selection will make a difference.

The most important factor to wrap your head around is understanding the payout structure of GPPs. In most cases at the low-dollar level, a massive portion of the prize pool goes to first

place – often 25% or more. So we need to reverse engineer our lineups in order to optimize for this. In order for A.J. Green to be in the first-place lineup, Andy Dalton will likely have a huge game. If Sony Michel is the key to the slate, Tom Brady will almost certainly not perform well. When building your lineups, you should constantly be thinking about these if/then statements. “What will have to happen in this game for this lineup to finish in the top-1% of the field?”

It’s a liberating feeling to project players in the top-10 percent of their outcomes. The median projection becomes irrelevant because if it lands there, we’re likely drawing slim to win the GPP anyway. Of course it’s unlikely that Aaron Rodgers, Aaron Jones, Marquez Valdes-Scantling and Packers D/ST all go off in the same game. But since we’re optimizing for a top-3 finish in a GPP rather than another min-cash, those kind of constructions are in play.

JRobbie6: Any ideas on how to work on your NFL DFS game during the offseason?

It’s an absolute no-brainer to upload your results to RotoTracker and plug leaks. What site are you performing better on? Which sport do you need to raise your volume at because you’re winning there? Perhaps you’re beating the \$5 and \$10 level but buried at \$20 and \$50. Maybe you’re crushing in 3-mans but a loser in head-to-head. You can go through all your head-to-head opponents and see who you’re beating and who you should be avoiding in the lobby. The amount of actionable information we gain from closely examining our results data is incredibly powerful. It really adds to our bottom line.

I also think there’s a ton of value in following the NFL really closely throughout the offseason, something we’ll do on [EstablishTheRun](#). Coaching changes, free agency, OTAs, the draft, and training camp can all give us clues about how teams view players. The key is to ignore silly hype like, “LeGarrette Blount is in the best shape of his life,” or “We think Adrian Peterson will catch 60 balls.” If we focus on actions rather than words, we can learn a lot. For example, the Bucs moving on from DeSean Jackson and Adam Humphries says how they feel about Chris Godwin. The 49ers adding Tevin Coleman tells us Jerick McKinnon (ACL) won’t carry a full workload if/when he returns.

JKC: I’ve been getting burned hard by my D/ST every week in cash. Any advice? Do you target defensive sacks?

Throw out the “points allowed” category. Just don’t think about it. Only a small portion of a defense’s scoring each week on DraftKings comes from the points allowed category, and as the NFL continues its trend toward flag football, that number is only going to decrease. We want to focus on opponent pass attempts and pressure when selecting

our defense. By making these two factors the priority, we maximize our chances at interceptions, pick-6s, sacks, strip sacks, and fumbles returned for touchdowns.

In fact, a team that projects to score very few points likely won't have the ball very much and will likely want to be run-heavy. Those are two disasters for a D/ST as they can't generate points when they're sitting on the sideline and run plays are the enemy of defensive scoring. They eat up clock (bad) and we can't get any sacks (also bad).

The ideal matchup for a D/ST is a facing a pass-centric team which is likely to be trailing. It's even better if that offense has a leaky line and the defense is blitz-happy and/or generates pressure with its front four. For example, I rostered the Chiefs and Saints defenses more than any other team in cash during the 2018 season. I didn't care that the Chiefs were 24th in points allowed per game and the Saints were 14th. Because their offenses were so strong and capable of scoring so quickly, they faced the most and 11th-most pass attempts per game. They were both top-5 in sacks. A strong offense which generates big leads – thus turning the opponent one-dimensional and allowing the defense to focus on the pass rush – is gold.

Will McAdoo: What's the optimal process for mass-entering GPPs? Do you reserve entries and then manually enter, or do you load line-ups and then tinker when necessary?

If you're serious about DFS I think prioritizing an understanding of Mass Multi Entry (MME) strategy is important. Why? Because all our weakest opponents are in the small buy-in, high-payout contests and that's where the money continues to trend. I do think people get easily overwhelmed by the actual practice of MME-ing when they shouldn't. If you can simply handle copy and paste in an Excel sheet, you can do it. I like to reserve my entries with a dummy lineup, build my lineups offline using a lineup generator, download a .CSV of those lineups, and then paste them into the downloaded copy of my entries off DraftKings' "My Lineups" page. After about five times doing it, you'll see how easy it is.

What's not easy is winning while MME-ing. A small mistake multiplied 150 times is very expensive. A failure to have really good projections combined with optimal lineup construction rules can be a disaster. Understanding range of outcomes vs. median projections is extremely important in MME tournaments as they are wildly top-heavy.

Doublej65: Other than Twitter/Internet, do you use other mediums such as radio or podcasts to keep you up to date on Sunday morning?

I do not. The best information we can find is on Twitter and on the pre-game television broadcasts. I'm exclusively paying attention to the people who have unique information via access to the coaches, GMs, or players. I'm not really interested in any radio or podcasts because opinions, quite frankly, are meaningless to me. I don't really care what someone thinks. Even beat writers who say they think X player is going to have a big game are utterly useless. Unless it comes from a source within the team who has revealed a part of the game plan, or involves something the beat writer has seen in practice, I'm not interested in it. What I'm trying to do is gather unique information and make the best possible decisions on Sunday mornings. I think Twitter and reports from guys like Adam Schefter and Jay Glazer on TV are the best ways to do that.

Dartanian280: How do you cope when results defy all logic? I can't help but go on full tilt.

We would all benefit from embracing the unpredictability of the NFL, particularly if you're trying to get to the top of GPPs. Instead of worrying if Ezekiel Elliott will get 19.5 or 21.9 points in a median outcome this week, think about how hard this game is to predict as a whole and then think about how we can benefit from that. In other words, profiting from the randomness instead of getting frustrated by it. That's a subtle shift in thought process and an extremely difficult one to make (I haven't been able to fully execute on it), but it's one that all the best tournament players have. I'd highly recommend the books by Jonathan Bales if trying to build what he would call "antifragile" lineups.

Even if you take a more straightforward approach – a.k.a. a more cash-game based approach – to lineup building, it's important understand probabilities and variance to avoid tilt. Perhaps our projections show that Elliott scores under 15 DraftKings points just 20% of the time in a given week. Of course he's a great play at \$7,000, but he's still going to fail 2-out-of-10 times. It still happens. Once you internalize that, you can be at peace when things don't go the way we expect.

BannedFromIhop: It's time to just fade coaching staffs until they show us they will change, right? We can't go into every week hoping they will get their heads out of their asses.

Sigmund Bloom of FootballGuys coined a great phrase to describe one of the biggest leaks fantasy players have: Assumption of Rational Coaching. Our job is not to figure out what the coaches should do, it's to figure out what they will do. So if we assumed Ken Whisenhunt would use David Johnson as a receiver in space because that's one of his dominant skills, we actually failed at our job because Whisenhunt was incompetent.

If a coaching staff is sharp, it's easier to figure out what they will do. Examples that come to mind from the 2018 season include the Bears featuring Tarik Cohen against the Patriots' extraordinarily slow linebackers and the Rams riding Todd Gurley up the middle to avoid the Broncos' edge rushers. It's far harder to project what the dolty coaches will do. Oakland should have been featuring Amari Cooper in the slot, Adam Gase should've given Kenyan Drake more run ahead of Frank Gore, and it took a Theo Riddick injury for the Lions to realize Kerryon Johnson is a three-down beast. Riding players from the projectable, sharp coaching staffs is going to raise floors.

Crunchypeanutbutter: Adam, can you talk through your physical set up and rituals during main slate Sundays? Are you on #Teamwatchthegames or are you mostly refreshing DK & Twitter?

I get to my desk around 6:45 a.m. and start by going through all the news from late Saturday and early Sunday morning. I digest that, make sure both statistical projections and ownership projections are up to date. Then I look through the DraftKings lobby to try to find some good games and re-post head-to-heads if I need to. Note that a lot of the best players aren't awake yet, so I can usually get some soft 3- and 10-man action at this time.

As long as there's no big injury news out there, I'll finalize my player pool for cash by 9 a.m. and then finalize by main cash lineup by 11 a.m. I'll also finalize my lineups for the 1 p.m.-only slate. Throughout this time I'm glued to Twitter and the pregame shows to see if there's any information I can use to make better decisions. I'm also constantly registering for games I think are soft, right up until lock.

While the games are going on, I keep two screens up. One is the Red Zone channel and the other is a simple scoreboard with written descriptions of the play-by-play for each game. I'll also have a window open where I'm keeping track of my highest-stakes contests. Once the early games are over I'll head out and get some food, typically a nice linguine with clams and a toasty pasta fagioli soup. Get it to go and head back to my desk for the late games. I try to stay off Twitter because I don't see much benefit in watching people tilt their faces off and be ridiculously results oriented. Hindsight analysis after the games start is really the nut low.

Andy Steinberg: Does your way of thinking week to week change slightly when you're running hot?

Confidence is a big part of a lot of things in life and that's especially true in gambling. I don't really believe in hot streaks – even with things like hitting a baseball or shooting 3-pointers. But I do believe that when things are going well, humans can execute more optimally.

We can make clearer decisions, we can trust what we've studied, and we won't second-guess what our brains are telling us. We're far more likely to stick with our convictions.

A clear example of this is in poker. Most competent players at mid- to high-stakes can play really well and are reasonably tough when they're winning. But for some, as soon as they get stuck or lose a couple big pots, they fly off the rails and turn into a stone disaster. It's really difficult to control, and I struggled with it as well and in the end decided to simply play shorter sessions when losing and longer sessions when winning. In DFS, making decisions with confidence can be enough to play bigger than normal – as long as your process doesn't suffer.

BeanotheKid: Can you explain the RB/DEF stack for me please?

There was a time not too long ago when the DFS community was obsessed with correlation. Thought it was the skeleton key for beating large-field GPPs and anyone who rostered poorly correlated players was a donkey. Since then, the strategy has evolved to the point where the sharpest players are now looking for correlation within games as well of correlation between players.

The basic idea is to figure out what positions work well together. In other words, the top correlation is obviously between a QB and his WR1 at +0.53 (via FantasyLabs). The correlation between a QB and his RB1 is also a strong +0.42. It's also worth noting that a QB and the opponent's WR1 have a very solid +0.37 correlation. The RB/DEF stack comes in at a very weak +0.19.

But it's important to remember that these are average correlations. No one is winning GPPs with median or mean outcomes – they are winning with outlier performances. So if a defense dominates by forcing a ton of 3-and-outs, forcing turnovers deep in an offense's own territory, gets a nice lead ... then there will be more total attempts and red-zone attempts for a running back.

If we only thought about correlation through the lens of averages, playing a QB with both his WR1 and WR2 would be a disaster. The WR1 and WR2 have a correlation of just 0.12, but think about what it takes to win a GPP. You typically need your quarterback to go off for a top-5% outcome, which means it's likely both his receivers will perform well above their median projection as well. It's a good reminder to think of what it will take for a lineup to actually win the GPP and then work backward from there.

Mike Moore: I'd love to be on #TeamWatchtheTape: What is the most efficient way to do so?

Wow Mike, I really can't believe you want to be on #TeamWatchtheTape. It's an odd thing to aspire to, but if you really want to go for it, the condensed games on

NFL Game Pass are the way to go. You can watch full games, every single play in 30 minutes. You can also tee up a certain drive or play and watch that.

However, you could do the sharp thing by looking at data and usage to be more efficient with your valuable time. When #TeamWatchtheGames tells me Tyreek Hill was really close to a big game because Patrick Mahomes barely overthrew him and he was open all day, I already know. I already looked at his Air Yards, I looked at his NextGen stats to see how much separation he had from his defender on his targets, I can see what percentage of Mahomes' attempts went to him. So while I do think there's some value in watching games, I don't think that value is enough to equal 20 hours of your week. And, in some cases, watching games can actually bring biases into play. I'm not an NFL scout and I doubt you are either, so we could very easily draw wrong conclusions from the tape.

Relationships

One of the first times I met my wife she told me she was looking for someone who would pick a T-shirt up off the floor, smell it, and then decide whether to put it on. That was way back in 2005 and we've been together ever since – and we've somehow barely fought or had any bad days in between. I know what works for our relationship, but that doesn't mean I know what works for someone else's relationship. That's something each couple has to undertake on their own.

I also know that I'm much better at talking on podcasts or joking around on Twitter than actual, real-life interactions. I've long struggled with meeting new people, identifying with others who don't have the same interests as me, and connecting with older generations. Maybe it's because I'm an only child, maybe it's because I find superficial chit-chat a massively inefficient use of our short time on this planet, or maybe it's because I'm just scared money with people. Regardless, I can assure you you'll be nothing short of disappointed if we were ever to meet in real life.

All of this makes it ironic that people have asked me so many questions about their interactions with other humans.

Justin Bailey: When and how do you bring up DFS when it comes to a new relationship? Do you go into detail about volume, huge time commitment, etc.?

This is all about framing. When I worked at Rotoworld and somebody asked me what I did, I would do a quick calculation in my head. If they were an older person who wasn't into fantasy, I would say, "I work for NBC." (Rotoworld is owned by NBC, by the way.) I'm not lying, but it's something a more stiff audience can wrap their head around. "Oh wow! You work for NBC, that's awesome!" Now, if I met some dude who I know is into fantasy and he asked me what I did, I would say, "yeah, I work for Rotoworld," and I'm a hero.

Now that I'm in the DFS space, it's essentially the same thing. If my audience is older family members or people who wouldn't completely understand, I say, "oh, I'm in predictive

analytics.” Sounds really fancy, sounds like I have a real job. They don’t know exactly how to respond and rarely follow up. And if they do ask me what “predictive analytics” means, I simply tell them I try to find smart ways to figure out what’s going to happen in the future with sports. Easy. I’m a real adult, ask anyone. I even have **my own business**.

I think when it comes to a new relationship, it’s also all about framing. You tell them you have a hobby – just like they might watch the Kardashians, they might go to knitting class, whatever they do. You say “hey, I have this hobby that I’m really into, I like to try to figure out how sports players are going to perform in the future and I like to see how I do against other people.” The right girl will understand. If she doesn’t trust or accept your interests, it would be a long and miserable life with her anyway.

By the way, I know it’s tough out there in the dating world. One thing our lord Sam Hinkie has mentioned and that’s stuck with me is thinking about the qualities of a woman and if you’d want them in your kids. I’m kind of going through this now with my sons. And I know that’s super dramatic and we are getting way ahead of ourselves in the context of a new relationship, but it’s important as this woman is going to be the ultimate role model for your kid. This woman is going to be representing you everywhere with your kid, going to PTA meetings, soccer games, game nights. You don’t want some psycho chick that’s going to be doing drugs and smashing beer cans against her face. Maybe that’s cool when you’re out at the bar, but not in adult life. So it’s hard, really hard, to find a woman who you actually want to be the mother of your kid *and* who you find attractive *and* who’s willing to accept someone obsessed with the athletic performance of other men. It takes a special woman.

CurlyLatin22: I am currently engaged, but my girl is about to leave me. I love her to death but we can’t seem to get along. Do I fight for her?

If you can’t get along when you’re just dating and young, then you’re in big trouble. Because things are only going to get harder. You’re going to begin to grow triceps hair, then back hair, then belly hair – while also losing hair from the top of your head, Manu Ginobili-style. Believe me, I know from first-hand experience. The kids will come and put a massive strain on your relationship, both financially and, more importantly, from a time perspective. So are you fighting for her just because of looks and sexuality? If so, you’re heading down a dangerous path.

Peter Lu: What to do when you need to decide between DFS and a person you just started dating? Let’s just say you’re profitable, but the girl is a definite no on it.

I would dump her immediately. Hard pass, you're headed for a disaster. This isn't about DFS, gambling, or if you're a winner. This is about freedom, independence, and happiness. I couldn't fathom a relationship working out when one side is immediately telling you how to spend your time and money. I couldn't accept that lack of trust from someone I was dating for years, let alone someone I just met. If she's willing to put her foot down right out of the gate on something as small as fantasy football, who knows what she'll be saying you can't do next? Maybe you won't be allowed to have beers with your friends. Perhaps she'll insist you're not allowed to do skin-to-fur with your dog. The potential assaults on your freedom are endless.

It's women like this who give marriage and relationships a bad name. There is someone out there you will love you for you and won't try to tell you what to do. When I hear someone say, "Welp, the old ball and chain won't let me play DFS," I am just perplexed that anyone accepted that. Not every woman is like that.

JJCatrysse: When walking down a hallway or sidewalk and you see someone walking at you who you don't want to talk to, what's the play?

This is something that I've been thinking about and dealing with ever since high school. It's something that everyone has encountered. Just a couple blocks from where I live, there are people set up on the corner all the time. Clean Energy people sometimes, Save The Planet people, Planned Parenthood people, different organizations which I actually think are generally doing good stuff. In theory, I'd want to help them. But in actuality, I'm not stopping. When I spot them, I just go to the other side real early on. We just need to have our head on a swivel when we pull that move because you can run into another person from the same organization on the opposite side. One time I got hit with "Hey, I saw you cross the street. Don't you want to save the planet?" It's so embarrassing. She saw me purposefully cross the street to avoid saving the planet. Actually, I'm not crossing to avoid saving the planet. I'm actually crossing to avoid the interaction.

In terms of more personal interactions, I think the standard play is to go to the phone. You see an acquaintance and they want to do the dreaded stop-n-chat, but they can't because you're engrossed in a very serious phone conversation. We now have license to give a wave and keep going. That's pretty weak, but it is what it is.

I also think it depends on the person you see. If it's a thin acquaintance, you can power through with a "hey man, how's it going?" and keep moving. If it's the kind of person who you really know then you shouldn't have to go through the total snoozefest conversation. "Hey, how about this weather? It's cold out, huh?" and maybe somebody gives a, "Man,

how about those Eagles?” The thought of that time-wasting small talk just pains me. If I’m stopping to chat, we’re going to talk about something interesting – dogs, gambling, or sex.

Blake Waddington: My Father-in-law is at my house putting in flooring while I sit on my ass. He’s saving us about \$2,500. He doesn’t accept money. Should I bail from the house? Act busy? Hover? Or should I just keep sitting my lazy ass on the computer while he does hard labor?

I have a lot of experience in this situation, perhaps more than anyone in the field. It’s obviously extremely emasculating, but that’s what comes with being unable to fix things and not being a real man. There are no good plays here. I choose to hover, wait to see if I can help – and by “help” I mean go fetch a tool, get a glass of water, read the instruction book or something equally simple.

Honestly, the worst part of this (and the only motivation I have to learn to actually do stuff around the house) is that I’m setting such a bad example for my kids. We got my son his first bed when he was around 3. It’s a car bed and, of course, the thing comes in a zillion pieces. I’m on such tilt. Nothing fits, you need to drill, you need to do all this crazy stuff, the holes don’t line up. I give it 10 minutes and then I call some dude and pay him to come and put it together.

I do this for two reasons: One, because I’m obviously incapable. But the second, more important reason is because of my philosophy on time vs. money. I pay people to do all kinds of things for me – not because I’m rich as I’m certainly not – and not because I’m lazy. It’s because the most valuable thing by far in life is time. It’s the only thing we have no idea how much we have.

Time the only thing that is so finite. We can’t *literally* buy more of it, but we can *practically* buy more of it by paying for all kinds of things, like cleaning services, getting groceries delivered, putting together beds, laundry service, having somebody else do your flooring. So while I often feel some guilt and embarrassment about not doing things I should do myself, I’m still never going to feel too bad. I’m always going to be willing to trade money for time because while I can always generate more money, my time here on earth will be over at some point.

Matt Swanson: How do you deal with relatives who want to buy you holiday presents when you don’t need anything and you don’t want them to waste time buying you junk?

My first instinct has always been the same as Matt’s. I say, “Thank you, I appreciate it but I really don’t need anything. I don’t want anything. Please don’t get me anything.” I used to do

that all the time. Then I realized A) that's not the holiday spirit and B) people are offended. They really want to get you stuff. So I think the play is then to not ask for things but for experiences.

Everyone wants to know what they should get the kids? I always tell them experiences, tickets to the aquarium, the zoo, take them to "Disney on Ice" with you, "Sesame Street Live," whatever. They have enough silly toys and games.

It's the same for me. I don't need anything but it's great to get experiences. A Sixers game, go to a show, go to dinner, or something like that. I think once we start looking at gifts as not material things but as experiences, it becomes more enjoyable.

TimTim: I could barely get out of bed after Carson Wentz tore his ACL. Any advice for a lifelong Eagles fan?

Yes. Don't become emotionally invested in something you have zero control over. I get that it's fun to follow a team, go to games with friends/family, talk about what moves they should be doing – those are all cool experiences. But once you get to a point where the performance of a bunch of guys you don't even know affects your mood and happiness level, you've gone too far. When the Eagles win, you didn't do anything and you won't receive any reward. When they lose, there's nothing you can do to change it. I know this is a harsh take but the feeling of caring so much about something I can't have an effect on would drive me insane. We should be having fun with sports, not sending Geno Smith death threats because he once started over Eli Manning or cursing out reporters on Twitter because they say something negative about "your" team.

Austin Derberry: What is it acceptable to use the Irish exit?

I can't even count how many times I've done an Irish exit. For those who don't know what that means, it's simply leaving a gathering without saying goodbye. I actually only do it in one situation, but this situation comes up a lot, especially when I was younger: A bunch of people are at a bar and everyone is drunk and I want to leave, but I don't want to deal with the "oh, you're so soft! Don't leave! You're the worst! Drink more! Smash this can of Natty Light against your forehead! Keep drinking until you can't speak!" I don't want to hear that garbage and I don't need that guilt. So, I would just Irish exit and it's so, so good. But in most other situations, where people aren't being guilt-tripping drunk idiots, you say goodbye. You be a gentleman.

Justin Bailey: When combining married life and finances, do you think the optimal setup is separate accounts, all in one, or a combination of the two?

The biggest hurdle in marriage for a lot of guys is independence. With that in mind, I am a huge believer in separate personal accounts and then a joint account for commonly-held expenses. For me personally, I've grown to understand I can't be happy without freedom. So there's just no way I'm explaining to my wife what this charge to Coinbase is, or why I bet a Hyundai on a one-mile race, or what these transactions to DraftKings are. The whole idea of a marriage is ultimate trust – if I think playing a former pro tennis player in a frying pan match is a good idea, then my spouse has to trust that it is. If I think dumping my life's savings into a new website is a good idea, then it is. And it goes the other way too; my wife isn't explaining to me why it's worth \$300 to meet *The Real Housewives of Idiocy* or why that purse costs \$900.

Of course, a big key to making this work is handling your finances well. The higher percentage of funds that come out of your personal account rather than the joint account, the smoother things will run. Dinners out of your account, babysitter gets paid out of your account, vacations out of your account. If we can handle all that as well as a good share of the regular household expenses, then there can't be any questions. In a way, this goes back to the old mantra of “money equals freedom.” It's not about buying nice things or acting like a #howrich asshole. It's about having the freedom of time – or in this case the freedom to spend on anything you deem worthy.

ProSportsCity: Justin Verlander shuts down sex with Kate Upton the night before he pitches. Thoughts on sexual dismissal the night before lock to have all the energy and focus for the slate?

Let's think about the Justin Verlander thing like this: If he weren't so good at baseball, would he even have the opportunity to have intercourse with a woman like Kate Upton? Of course not. You think Kate Upton is willing to have intercourse with Justin, your friendly CPA? Or Justin, the local exterminator, or - heaven forbid – Justin, the fantasy football writer? Come on, no shot. So Verlander has to know he's blessed to be great at baseball and he better do everything he can to protect that because baseball gave him Kate Upton in the first place. If that means turning down intercourse the night before he pitches, yes, by all means, be dedicated to your craft.

In all seriousness though, I really do think there's something to be said for relentless focus on a very narrow and niche aspect of life no matter what it is. Give 100 percent of your brainpower, energy, and time to one thing and I bet that you'd get really good at it relatively quickly. Things like chess, bench press, talking to women, making pizza – anything. If you study it, if you read about it, if you run simulations, if you think about it 24/7 with relentless focus, you will get good.

Trevor Savage aka Trey Money: Now that you have two kids, are you going to join #TeamSnip? I have three and think I finally convinced my wife to end the madness.

I do have the green light from my wife to get a vasectomy. The problem is this intense fear I have of needles around my penis. Honestly, just thinking about that, merely uttering the words, makes me cringe and hold my penis tightly. I'm currently typing with one hand. I can't even imagine going through with it. That said, I think it's worth it and maybe one day I'll work up the balls (pun intended) to actually do it.

I'll add a lesser-known fact that women can actually get their version of a vasectomy, also known as getting their tubes tied. So ...

So I'm with my wife at the doctor for one of the first appointments after she got pregnant with our second child. We're all chatting and then the doc asks if we have any other questions. Of course, what's on my mind is stopping a potential third kid while suffering no pain myself because I'm a selfish, horrible person. I blurt out something moronic like, "How hard would it be to tie her tubes once you're already in there?" The doctor starts laughing, my wife just hates me. I'm the worst.

PimplePopperMD: Should I coach my seven-year old's flag football team when asked? Could be fun, but I run the risk of crazy parents, no?

Yes, 100% you should do it. Emphatic yes. You certainly expose yourself to some downside from psychopathic parents saying you don't play their son enough, or you should be running play-action here to set up a fullback dive, or whatever nonsense they want to complain about.

But I think the upside of doing stuff like this is so massive.

First, you get to be a really big influence on the lives of all the kids on the team, which is really rewarding on a lot of levels. For me, I lived for sports growing up like many kids did. It was all I thought about. I have a terrible long-term memory, but I remember all of my coaches growing up. Just shows how impactful and influential youth sports coaches can be.

More importantly, I think coaching this team has a lot of upside for your own kid. Set an example of how to be a leader, be fair, work hard, play really hard, how to take a loss, how to act like a professional, how to treat other people – sports is such a great arena for all that stuff. I was lucky that my dad coached me in basketball from ages 5-to-9 or so, until we started playing some of the travel stuff. I didn't love it at the time, but looking back now it was amazing.

DanGood34: When going pants off and skin-to-fur with Gerri, do you prefer the big or little spoon?

Let me quickly tell the story of where the phrase “skin-to-fur” came from.

Within five minutes of my first child being born, the nurses and doctors were frantically telling us, “You have to do skin-to-skin with the baby. You HAVE to do it.” I honestly thought they were joking. I had no clue whatsoever what they were talking about. Then they tell us they’re serious, there are big health benefits for the baby by doing this. And by “this,” I mean you literally take off your shirt and press the baby’s bare skin against yours, which is so wild to me. Honestly, I couldn’t believe there were medical benefits to this and even to this day I’m not sure I quite buy it. You’re suggesting pressing another human against my pale, doughy, hair-infested chest is good? But the doc knows best, so I did it.

So there I am, sitting there with my wonderful, lovely, adorable newborn baby boy pressed against my bare chest, and I think the only logical thought imaginable: Nobody ever told me to do this with Gerri. How was I supposed to know? I’ve been depriving Gerri her whole life of skin-to-fur. So, once we got home from the hospital, I started to get into this routine with Gerri where we do skin-to-fur every night, typically before I shower.

So, to answer the question, I don’t really do skin-to-fur in a spoon formation. I do it more like a baby because that’s what the medical people say. I just grab the beautiful beast, throw her paws over my shoulders, and press her chest against mine. For medical reasons, obviously.

Jeff Edelstein: I have a wife and 3 small children. Sometimes I will “fake a poop” in an effort to get five minutes of alone time. Is this a reasonable move, as long as my wife doesn’t start thinking I’m suffering from a gastrointestinal malady, or is this just the behavior of a selfish lout?

There’s a really thin line in life between selfishness and self-care. If you go to a therapist, many times they’ll reach the conclusion you need to take care of yourself before you can take care of other people in your life. And I believe that – my wife is an angel who always puts everyone in her life before her and it catches up with her at times. She forgets to take care of herself.

Of course, the question becomes are we taking self-care too far by faking poops? I think not.

While I'm almost always on #TeamHonesty, sometimes the more direct and simple path is a white lie. They did a bit about this in the movie "This is 40," which really hits home for me as I approach that age milestone. (Of course no movie will ever hit home harder than "Marley and Me," which is stunningly a near-biography of my life. I literally cry through the whole movie.) Anyway, in "This is 40," Paul Rudd fakes a poop so he can mess around on his iPad, his wife barges in and demands to see the actual feces because she knows he's faking it. Once a strategy like this hits mainstream in a Judd Apatow movie, you know it's a standard play.

RBorg26: Does your wife ever listen to your pods? Guessing no or she probably would have divorced you by now.

I think she listens to them intermittently, but she doesn't need to. The way I talk on the podcast and write in this book is me. It's the way I am with my friends, with people I work with, and for sure with her. I do think that's a big key to a good relationship. The woman has to love us for who we actually are. She can't be trying to change us, she can't be willing to merely deal with all our issues. She has to actually love them.

When I met my wife, I was grinding \$6-\$12 limit hold'em, which has an expected profit of minimum wage. I had some crappy part-time job at a newspaper on Friday and Saturday nights. She had no idea that one day I'd be answering questions about Dak Prescott's sex life or talking about penises on sinks to thousands of people, you know? It's really difficult to believe, but she loves me for me.

Aussie Scooper: What is the most repulsive thing you have ever done where you were disappointed in yourself?

I was a junior in high school and I had an issue with this kid Brian. It was a dumb spat over my girlfriend and a keying of her car incident. So it was the weekend and I was having a few Natty Light cans and a few laughs with my friends. We decide we should egg this guy Brian's car as some sort of revenge for the keying incident. So we went to 7-Eleven and got a ton of eggs – at least 100 of them – and pelted his car/house with them. To be clear: I certainly don't feel bad about messing with Brian or his car, and can easily argue he deserved it. But at one point his dad opened the front door and he got buried with unborn chicken babies as well. And in hindsight, that's the part I'm disappointed with myself. The parents didn't deserve to go through that, to get their house bombarded with eggs. They did nothing wrong. And now that I'm a dad, I can't even fathom opening my door and getting hit with yolks

because of something my kid did. So to Brian's mom and dad, if you're out there, I hope you accept my apology. When your house got egged in 1998, that was me and I'm sorry.

Chris Costaras: My wedding is Saturday, one day before Week 1 games. How do I manage my DFS habit for Week 1 and the coming weeks while I'm on my honeymoon? What advice would you give a younger you if you were in my spot? I have to focus some on DFS, right?

No Chris you don't have to focus some on DFS. You're only going to get married once in your life (hopefully) and you're only going to go on one honeymoon. Please don't burn that experience. In spots like this I invariably turn to the Deathbed Theorem. When you're taking your last breath, are you going to think, "Man, I'm really glad I was fully present and engaged for my wedding and honeymoon," or will you say, "Boy am I thankful I sweated that Latavius Murray goal-line carry while my new wife was bored on my honeymoon (and possibly eyeing up the gardening crew)."

I can see it now: Chris' new bride bought a special outfit to wear on the honeymoon, she's all revved up to be on #TeamSex while it's still fresh, and instead he looks straight through her at the TV. Instead of a moment of intimacy, he nears orgasm (sportsgasm?) from football. "Ah ahh ahhhhh hold on honey, here comes Christian McCaffrey! He's about to score!! Ahhhhhhhh!!!"

My advice is don't play DFS at all during this unique experience in your life. It's not worth even the slightest risk of being distracted. There are always more slates.

AidenKueter: What's your dream vacation, if money wasn't an issue?

Going to outer space and walking on the moon. I know that sounds crazy but thanks to people like Elon Musk I don't think it's that far-fetched. I believe regular citizens will be able to make the journey to the International Space Station for a price in my lifetime. I'm certain I'll be #TooPoor to do it, but going somewhere so few people have ever been would be really exciting to me. More realistic trips on my bucket list are climbing to the top of Mt. Kilimanjaro, rafting down the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon, and seeing all four tennis Grand Slam Finals live and in person.

One thing I've learned about myself is that I don't enjoy vacationing like most people do. Going to a beach and staring at the waves is not for me. I just get bored out of my skull so fast. My wife and I have done really cool trips to Zion National Park in Utah, Iceland, Barcelona,

and other unique places. Those exploratory and adventure trips are life experiences that you can only have when not you're working and taking care of young kids – a.k.a. vacation.

So when I think of dream vacations, I revert back to the Deathbed Theorem as I do in so many other situations. When I'm about to die, am I going to say, "Ooooh man, remember that time I sat in the sand for six hours and talked about the weather? That was so great!" Or am I more likely to say, "Boy, that trip we did to Kilimanjaro when we got attacked by a lion, made it to the highest point in Africa, that was something." It's a no-brainer.

Jim Jones – I just spent \$700 for a pair of tickets to see U2 and they only played six hit songs. They played nine songs off their new album. Shouldn't a band publish their setlist before a tour so you know what you are paying for?

I really don't understand people going to concerts for the music. I have a friend who is always telling me we have to go see such-and such a show at this place called the Tower Theatre in Philly because they "have the best acoustics." If you want to hear perfect sound, pop the CD in your car and blast it. If I go to a concert, I'm going for the atmosphere. Hopefully it's outside, I'll have a few beers, bask in the peace and love, perhaps partake in some out of line activities. The music is just the background. So I understand the frustration – you want to hear the hits and sing along. But U2 is likely sick of playing those songs and the concert is just a way for them to shill their new stuff.

Tactic101: Do you like couples massages?

Absolutely not. First of all I feel terrible for the masseuse; no one should have to put their hands on my pale, hairy back. Second, I always feel like I have to make small talk with the masseuse, which I definitely don't want to do. I'd pay not to have to talk. And then we add my wife into the room; are we supposed to talk to each other? In front of the two masseuses? That's incredibly uncomfortable. And if we're not going to talk to each other, then why even be in the same room?

Broto: Since we had a kid, our dog has become seemingly (understandably) jealous and noticeably sad. She still gets love, just not as much attention as a human. Advice on managing this/lifting her spirits?

Don't bring this garbage into my space, Broto. If you were going to ignore your dog when you had a kid, then you shouldn't have had a kid. Or you should have never gotten a dog. I know having a kid can be overwhelming, but you can't let the poor beast suffer.

Of course you don't have as much time for the dog, but you need to make that time more impactful. So here's what you do: Get fully nude, just like your dog. You pick the dog up and hold her chest to chest with you, much like you would a baby. And then you sway, you slow dance. You do this every day for about 2-3 minutes, a special, pants-off bonding time. And that will work, trust me. Your dog will be a happy pup again.

Peter Overzet: 15 years from now, you see video of your son jumping off of an RV onto a folding table at the Ralph. How does that conversation go?

Peter – aka The Manz – is referring to a tweet I made about the infamously drunken #BillsMafia. Give me a minute here to clarify: So I'm on Twitter and I'm watching the pre-game shows ahead of the 2017 playoffs. Everybody is talking about the Bills Mafia taking over the parking lot in Jacksonville.

They're posting videos like, "look how crazy and fun these guys are! This is awesome! Isn't this so great!" Now please don't get me wrong – I do think it's awesome so many Bills fans made the trip to Jacksonville to support their team. Travelling to events like that is so fun. I love travelling for a purpose. Instead of just going to a city and wandering around, going for a specific activity as part of it is a great move. I love that the Bills Mafia gets hammered and has a good time. It's great.

What tilts me – and the reason I made the tweet – is the coverage of this. They're glorifying these dudes getting blackout drunk in the parking lot, lighting stuff on fire, jumping onto tables. Alcohol abuse is so glorified in our society all the time; you're only cool if you drink. Every social event has to have alcohol. Alcohol, alcohol, alcohol since you're in the eighth grade. It's crazy.

I don't think I'll ever bring my sons to an NFL game. We have people beating each other up because they're wearing the wrong uniform, screaming at other fans, driving home drunk. It's just not the right environment.

Foxy265: Can you discuss what it would be like to be Philip Rivers with nine kids & what your mental state would be?

I'd be melting down to the point of needing medical help. It's just insane. Taking care of nine kids sounds borderline impossible. I do think the fact Philip Rivers is incredibly wealthy – he's made almost \$200M in NFL salary alone – makes a big difference. Rivers isn't doing the laundry for the 20th time this week; he's paying someone to do that. Rivers isn't cleaning the toilet after one of his kids defecates on it; he's paying someone to do that. He gets to swoop in for the good

stuff. Presumably he rolls in and plays with them and wrestles and coaches sports. He's getting the best part of having kids without having to go through a lot of the things that make it hard.

Robert Slockett: How involved is your wife when it comes to DFS wins/loses? Is it rough after a losing week?

I strongly believe it's worth trying to explain the concept of expected value to everyone close to us. Not just wives, but anyone who cares about us. What I mean by expected value, in this case, is that every time I play NFL DFS, I'm winning money. Not literal money, not actual money, because believe me, I lose all the time. Lose a ton some days, have awful weeks, even bad months. But in terms of expected value, or money in the more theoretical sense, I'm winning every time I play.

And I know that's a tough thing for people to grasp, particularly people who aren't in the gambling world. "Adam you lost \$10K today, how in the hell can you say you made money?" The point is that if I'm sure I have an edge on the field – even if it's a very small edge – then I'm winning.

It's the exact reason I almost never play blackjack, or craps, or bet NFL spreads at -110 against closing lines. It actually gives me a sick feeling in my stomach to even make any of these so clearly negative-EV bets. Even if I win actual money on them, I know I gave away EV.

When thinking about gambling like this, we need to be very careful. First and foremost, we can't overestimate our own abilities. Being unsure if you're +EV in a DFS contest is fine, you won't lose a lot. It only becomes a disaster when you're certain you're crushing when in fact you're not. So the only way we can say we are +EV is by tracking results and by having a really large sample.

We also need to understand bet sizing and our bankroll. We can't punt off the mortgage money and then say, "Well you see honey, we can actually pay the mortgage with this theoretical money I won just by playing in those contests." That doesn't work. We know the edges are small in most contents, and so our bet sizing needs to leave enough room for the variance to smooth out over the long haul so we can realize our expectation.

Another important note is that your expectation in a contest could change. Maybe the game has passed you by, maybe you're +EV against certain opponents but -EV against others, or perhaps you can beat 7% rake but not 12%. All these factors are constantly changing and we need to be very aware of it. We must be constantly making sure we are a favorite.

Really though, the key to the question is to have a smart, amazing, trusting wife who gets it. My wife knows it doesn't matter if I win a bunch this week or lose a bunch. It's irrelevant because she knows I'm never going to knowingly play games I'm -EV in and I'm never going to put money in play that would come close to affecting our lives. So we don't even talk about results.

Daniel Covault: Thoughts on letting the dog eat the scraps off your dinner plate? My wife thinks it's disgusting that I would use the plate again even after a cycle through the dishwasher.

You can't trust this woman. I'm sorry Daniel, but you need to find a new special lady. We just can't trust anyone who doesn't love dogs, who don't treat them like a true member of the family. Of course we let Gerri lick our plates clean, lick our faces, and stick her tongue in our kids' mouths. So good luck with the divorce and have fun out there on Tinder.

Tipping

I don't tip because I'm a good person or overly generous. I tip almost exclusively out of guilt and fear. I'm afraid the UberEats driver is going to rub my gyro all over his body if I don't tip. I'm afraid the maids are going to put dirty sheets on my bed if I don't tip. I feel so bad for the woman who has to shave my disgusting scalp that I have to overtip.

That said, my inherent fears have made me one of our nation's preeminent experts on tipping. Yes, I often err on the side of generosity to the service industry, but I strongly believe that is the correct path anyway. Of course we will make some mistakes and give a few extra bucks to people who don't deserve it. But in the end we've been good to our fellow humans, didn't lose any money that will actually impact our long-term wealth, and we've hopefully ensured respectable treatment.

Another way to think of tipping is through the lens of paying for time and an overall philosophy on money. I have an app on my phone that reminds me five times per day that I will die. It's not meant to be sad or morbid; it's meant to confirm a simple fact that should influence decisions. Should I take 45 minutes to drive to and back from the restaurant to pick up my sandwich? Or should I pay a few extra dollars to have that 45 minutes in my life? Should I do my own laundry or have someone pick it up at my house and bring it back clean?

While we can always make more money, we can't generate more time. So maybe it's silly that I've tipped other people to do my laundry, cook my food, put together my IKEA furniture (hey IKEA – please use words on the instructions for the love of all that's holy), and countless other tasks I don't want to do. But I don't look at it as lazy; I look at it as maximizing our finite time as living beings on this planet. So tip away, friends!

BlackCoba3: How much should I be tipping the valet parking guys? Does a tip amount to depend on the value of my car?

I absolutely hate valet parking. Despise it. I don't want some sweaty dude who has been smoking cigs and running back and forth all day in my vehicle. What if he has body odor, "Seinfeld" style? What if he picks his nose and adjusts my stereo or touches the wheel? Lord knows where this dude's hands have been.

In almost all situations, I go self-park. I know that's not the baller move, I know it's a lot less convenient. It takes more time and, in these kinds of spots, I almost always take the time saver, but I'm just so anti-valet. I would hope that every place has a self-park option.

The other thing about the valet is it's a double tip spot. It has to be. Of course you want to tip the guy who greets you and takes your car, because he's the one driving your car. He's the one taking care of it initially. You don't want him doing weird stuff in there. Then when you pick up your car, obviously you have to tip again because it's just standard to tip the guy who got your car.

As for the amount of the tips, I think I would go with \$5 on the initial because that's the most important. We have to employ a pre-tip strategy in this spot. Then I think \$2-3 on the pick-up is fine. The after tip isn't as important when we have our car back anyways. The exchange is over. The relationship is over.

As for BlackCoba3's question, I think for 99% of cars, the answer is the tip amount is static. I currently drive a Nissan Rogue, but even if you drive a Mercedes or BMW or some other kind of sled, it's all the same. I think when you get into the really sick cars like a Tesla or Ferrari or Lamborghini etc., then it's assumed you're #howrich and you've got to be throwing \$20s around to valets. If you're going to be a baller and drive a Lambo with the doors that go up, you can't even have \$1s or \$5s in your wallet - \$20s only.

MarkJAllDay: What's the optimal hotel housekeeping tip strategy? Drop a five spot on day one and then ...? It's a rare instance where you can tip ahead of future days.

Yes, Mark! This is one of the prime examples of where pre-tipping is socially acceptable. And as both the founder and president of the pre-tipping movement, it is my job to bring light to these situations.

When I get to a hotel, the first time the maids come in (whether it's turndown service or full clean) I make sure I give them the biggest daily tip that I'll give. Maybe \$10 on day one, maybe a little bit more if it is a super nice place. This encourages them to handle your stuff well throughout your stay. Don't drop the toothbrush in the sink, clean your hardest, give me the freshest sheets, give me the softest towels, etc. By pre-tipping, we immediately trigger the housekeepers' subconscious to say, "Hey, this is a really good dude, he already gave us a ten-spot. Let's take care of him." Even if you plan to give \$30 at the end, how do they know you're going to do that? So many people stiff them, there's no way for them to foresee you taking care of them.

So by implementing a pre-tip strategy, I believe we actually incentivize the housekeeping staff in the traditional way. I know the standard argument is humans will work really hard to get that carrot (tip) at the end, but so many people stiff them that I don't believe it's applicable.

Lorenz100: At the barber when it's a \$15 cut and he hands you a \$5 bill back in change on a \$20, does that mean he doesn't expect a tip?

What it means is you have a sharp barber. It's a simple math problem for him once he has the data. The question is if he gets the full \$5 from 70% of people and get airballed by 30% of people, he nets \$350 in tips out of 100 haircuts. But if he gives \$1s back as change and the average tip is \$2.50, he ends up with \$250 in tips on 100 people. So I'm sure he's figured it out that giving \$5 back on \$20 is the optimal strategy.

Of course as the consumer, I hate this. It puts me in such a tough spot. Do I want to tip \$5 on a \$15 haircut of my bald head, which took him five minutes to shave down? Absolutely not. Do I want to look super cheap and ask for \$1s back after this dude had to just shave the back hair bulging out of my collar? No. So, I just typically give the \$5 back in this spot.

Adam Rosay: I recently noticed some back hair beginning to form on my upper back. The last thing that I want is to end up looking like that guy in the basketball scene in "Along Came Polly." What is the GTO move in this spot?

It's a bloated tipping situation at the barber, simple as that. The crazy thing for me is I had no chest or body hair until I was about 21. I was as smooth as a baby's bottom. Fast-forward about 14 years and it's just a full-on blanket. You know you have a problem when all your hair connects. That hair on your big toe grows over your foot, connects with the leg hair, into the pelvic region, up through the belly button, spreads across the chest, reaches up to the neck, links up with the beard and all the way to the top of the skull.

I take the standard, yet embarrassing, line of asking the girl at Supercuts to get below the shirt collar and shave as much of my neck/upper back as she can. Believe me, asking her to do that is utterly humiliating, I feel bad for both her and me. So that's where the bloated tip comes in, out of pure guilt for what I put her through.

Ryan Brody: Should tip amount change on the type of drink I get? For example: a \$5 beer over a \$12 glass of wine.

It's an excellent question worth examining. I'd estimate that 99% of society tips 15-20% on the amount of a bill at a restaurant. I do as well, but I actually don't think it's right. Is the waitress at IHOP not working as hard as the one at Capital Grill? I'd actually argue the IHOP one is working harder. She probably has more tables, the customers are far bigger assholes, she doesn't have a busboy or a food runner or a drink pourer. It's not her fault a plate of pancakes from IHOP only costs \$4; she's still working incredibly hard – at least as hard as the people delivering that \$50 steak.

I am a big proponent of consistent tipping, pre-tipping, and/or over-tipping in almost all situations.

The one spot where I suspect I undertip relative to the field is with alcohol. It takes very little effort to pour a \$5 beer or a \$12 glass of wine to someone standing at the bar. These bartenders are just smashing – if they work at a reasonably popular place in Philly, their hourly is certainly better than a lot of DFS pros. They also probably go home with beautiful women (or men) nightly. These are not the people who need the bloated tips I've referenced a lot in this chapter. They're not the Uber driver keeping us safe for \$15 an hour. They're not the people taking care of my kid in daycare for \$12 an hour. They're not the poor soul shaving my back hair for \$10 an hour. So I think \$1-\$2 on each drink – regardless of how much the drink costs – should be the societal norm.

Ben Little: Should you tip the bathroom attendant in the strip club that literally does nothing but hands you a paper towel that you could have easily gotten yourself?

Ben has found a spot where I'm actually anti-tipping. I can get the paper towel myself bud, thank you though. I don't want to cook for myself, I don't want to drive to get my food, I don't want to do my own laundry, I don't want to paint my house, I can't give myself a lap dance – these are things we clearly want to tip well for. Getting a paper towel? Nope. I'm actually OK with stiffing the bathroom attendant.

I will also say this guy probably is in that bathroom for security more than handing out towels. The gentlemanly establishment doesn't want people fighting in there, blowing lines, having intercourse. And I do feel for him – his job is literally to sit in this small room surrounded by drunk people, urine, and feces. So I'm not against giving him a couple bucks just to be a human, but I don't think it's necessary.

H.J. Adams: Heading to Taco Tuesday at a new restaurant tomorrow. They offer \$1 full size tacos. What's the GTO tip amount in this situation for a bill of \$4-\$5?

You've encountered a universally minimum tip situation. If someone is bringing you food, getting you drinks, and cleaning up after you, then the 20% rule cannot apply. You can't give a \$1 tip because it's 20% of \$5; that's insulting and asking for spit in your food next time. The minimum tip for any food service is \$5. You go get some cheap tacos or a quick sit-down breakfast – doesn't matter what the bill is, you leave \$5. #MakeTippingGreatAgain

Lenny The Duck: What is the right amount of money to give as a wedding guest? I'm a good friend, but I'm not a groomsman.

I hate that the whole wedding system has come to this. It seems some of the guests feel like getting an invitation to a wedding is akin to getting a bill. And on the flip side, some people treat getting married like a fundraiser. That's really shameful – it should simply be a celebration of something really emotional and somewhat sacred. If money is at the forefront of your mind when getting married or attending a wedding, I hope we can all agree your priorities are out of whack.

As for the question, there's no easy answer here. I think the standard line is your gift amount has to be at least as much as your plate costs. If you think the wedding costs \$100 per head and you go with your wife, girlfriend, or random chick from Craigslist, you have to give at least \$200. You can adjust from there based on friendship level. And if you really want to get scientific about it, you could establish an amount based on friendship level. Give \$X when you're a groomsman, \$Y to a regular friend, and \$Z to a co-worker.

DougAppleby: What is an appropriate amount to spend on a Christmas gift for your kid's teacher? Are gift cards acceptable or does it need to be more personal?

If you're certain you can get something the teacher will actually use and enjoy, then going for something personal is the clear-cut play. But in most cases, I suspect the majority of teachers simply prefer cold hard cash. That's particularly true in a daycare situation because while all teachers are underpaid, daycare teachers are grossly undercompensated relative to their job.

My younger son is 1 and when I go into his daycare room it's literally hell on earth. There are 20 screaming babies, they all need to be held, fed, and get their diapers changed. And these poor teachers taking care of these kids for up to 10 hours a day are making a barely livable hourly wage. It's tough because daycare is so expensive, but just like in most industries, the overwhelming amount of profits go to the owners, despite the fact the most valuable people in the company are the workers. And that's probably doubly true in a daycare situation.

The bottom line is that the teachers in our country – from daycare workers to high school teachers – spend as much or more time with our kids than we do. They're literally molding our kids lives. The least we can do is show our appreciation with a gift. The proper amount will vary relative to your net worth, but whatever feels right on first blush – go higher. They deserve it.

Chapter 6

Food

When I was growing up, people would ask my parents what I eat. My parents would say, “Adam only eats beige foods.” And it was true. For as long as I can remember, I only truly liked to eat the starchy grains that come in the color beige; Cereal, bagels, waffles, pancakes, toast, potatoes, pizza. I went through a decade-long stretch in the 90s where I literally ate plain pasta with butter and parmesan cheese every single night.

While a lot of kids also seem to eat in the beige format, most grow out of it. I did not. The first time I worked up the courage to try red meat was late in college. I tried fish for the first time on my honeymoon. And while I didn’t hate those foods, they don’t do it for me like the beige ones.

I was once asked how much I would pay to never have to eat again. It’s an interesting hypothetical because the journey to find great food is incredibly interesting. It’s also exhausting for someone like me, who could simply be described as “picky” when it comes to food but more accurately be described as “truly sick.” The amount of time and money I spend seeking out and buying the food my twisted brain deems as edible is seemingly infinite.

The comical aspect of food discussion is everyone’s certainty. “I like this bacon-wrapped scallop, every other person on earth will as well.” It’s as if there’s no chance another human’s taste buds or preferences could be different. I think that’s why people find my honest opinions on food so shocking – they just can’t fathom a person who doesn’t want to chomp on some turkey bone.

LOLXTroll: What is the most disgusting food that people normally eat?

Tuna fish out of a can and it’s not close. If it looks like vomit and smells like vomit, then I’m not touching it. When my wife eats that slop, I actually have to leave the house. And I know there are a lot of tuna lovers out there who say, “Just try it Adam. You can’t judge a food by how it looks and how it smells.” Believe me, I’ve heard that rap my entire life. My mom got so tilted when I was growing up because I wouldn’t try stuff if it looked/smelled bad. I actually

think that's the optimal approach though – the way a food looks and smells are a big part of its overall worth. Don't give me vomit in a tin can and tell me taste is the only factor here.

ViddySmalls: You don't seem like someone that would eat leftovers.

What's your take on bringing home food from a sit-down restaurant?

Come on Viddy, be a man for once in your life. As famously noted in "Seinfeld," if you ask for the doggie bag of food on a date, you may as well just have them wrap up your genitals as well.

Of course I don't ever ask for a to-go bag. Chances are high that if I didn't finish the meal, it wasn't that good anyway. The worst part of this is when you leave half the food on your plate and then the waiter comes by and asks what was wrong with the meal. I don't need that guilt, don't need to explain my psychosis to them. I made a bad decision, it's on me, let me pay for my mistake and move on. I gained the knowledge of not ordering that dish again or not coming back to the restaurant. It's a bit similar to when I roster a player in DFS who fails – it's not on him for playing poorly, it's my fault for making a bad projection. No whining or complaining is needed.

Ward6923: Thoughts on open kitchens when out to eat? Would you rather not see/ think about it, or does it provide an extra layer of comfort and accountability?

Of course you want an open kitchen. Not because I'm going to sit there and stare at the cooks, but because they know they're exposed. There's no dropping a piece of fish on the floor and putting it back on the plate. There's no picking your nose and then adding it to the cheese on the sandwich. There's no sneezing into the salad. There's no being pissed because your girlfriend dumped you so you angrily wipe the French toast on your underwear before you put it on the plate. The cooks back there know they could get caught in an open kitchen situation. It's similar to the situation at my kids' daycare because they have cameras everywhere. We can access the monitoring system at any time. And although we never do, the workers know they can be watched. We're pretty confident they're not out there beating the kids because there would be video evidence of it and they know the cameras are there. So yes, no-brainer to prioritize open kitchen when possible.

Geoff Goebel: I think we would all like to get your take on the Thanksgiving abomination that is the Turducken.

Add Turducken to the list of things that makes Thanksgiving is the ultimate nut low holiday. Just the stone worst. Let's all gather around and celebrate the time we came to a foreign land, massacred the people who lived there - literally, men, women and children, killed - and just

took over. In order to celebrate this momentous occasion, we're going to serve turkey. But not just any turkey, of course. We're going to take the literal carcass of meat in the actual shape of the animal, literally stuff its anus with lord knows what and put it in the middle of the table and everybody will say, "Oh, that's a beautiful bird! Look at that beautiful carcass in the middle of the table! I can't wait to eat that!" It's not bad enough this full size carcass is on the table in the shape of an animal, but it also has to have the blood sty marks on the turkey. Then we'll sit around and eat disgusting things like green bean casserole and cranberry sauce. If these dishes are so good, why are we only eating them once a year? Normally if you like something and it's the best thing in the world, you make it more than once a year.

On top of all this absurdity with the food, the holiday puts my family in a tough spot. "Oh, Adam's going to be late for dinner, he has to work." And in their heads they're thinking, "What? But Adam doesn't work, he watches football!" Which, you know, they may or may not have a point. Regardless, I'm sitting there fake eating, making late swaps, sweating the games so hard, and they think I'm a disaster. They're probably right. I get it, it's fair. I certainly have a lot of guilt there as well. I know I should be in the moment with my family on this allegedly very important day. I should be on #TeamSmelltheRoses, or at least #TeamEatTheCarcass. But it's just not reality.

As for the Turducken, this is just another gross example of the gluttony and the insensitivity of our society about animals. Lets kill three animals, wrap them together, be proud of it.

Jamie Palzkill: After the bird carcass is consumed and dessert done on Thanksgiving, what's the appropriate amount of time to hang for family time? And how do you politely suggest it's time to go without making it an issue?

You can't. You just can't suggest to leave in that spot, it's not an option at the in-laws. Generally speaking, I will always suggest a restaurant in these situations over in-home dining. Obviously it's not an option for bird carcass day, I get that. But there are so many benefits to going to a restaurant. First of all, you can order what you want. There's no need to choke down some mutton or hide it in the decorative pillows. There's no need to pretend this thick carcass in the shape of the actual animal is appetizing. You don't have to explain to people why you're not eating the anal stuffing. If you go to a restaurant, you get a good meal and you get what you actually want.

The most important point, though, is that the restaurant provides a beginning and an end. I think people miss this concept a lot. We're going to meet at the restaurant at 7 p.m., that's the beginning. Now you're on the restaurant's clock and no longer on your own clock. You get seated, you get drinks, you get food, you get dessert, you get the check and you leave.

There is no loitering. The meal is over and that provides a natural endpoint where you can part ways comfortably, end on a high, and go home to your respective beautiful beasts.

Asnipes3: A co-worker of mine just got back from a trip where he ate dog. What would you say to someone who tried to eat Gerri?

I'm not even going to dignify that with a response. Nobody is eating Gerri. What I will say is that I find it interesting where we draw these arbitrary lines in society. "Oh, you eat dog? You're subhuman! You're the worst! You should go to jail!"

But cows? Oh, that's OK. Chickens? No problem. Unborn chicken babies? Totally fine! Chug them raw like Rocky.

I don't think history is going to look kindly upon the carnivorous state of our society, upon the way we treat animals. And believe me, I'm not trying to throw stones -- I'm certainly to blame as well. One of my favorite lunches is a lovely chopped salad with blackened steak on top. I just really struggle with some of the seemingly obvious hypocrisy that permeates our civilization. For instance ...

It's OK if you believe in some dude up in the sky deciding the fate of the world, but if you have an imaginary friend, they're going to put you in a mental institution.

It's OK to bet on stocks all day, that's a really stand-up and pride-filled job. But if you bet on sports or play poker, well then you're the scum of society.

Doctors prescribe us with these crazy narcotics like Oxycontin and Percocet, that's standard. But if you smoke marijuana, you're a dumb druggie.

So along those lines, the "dog as food" thing is hypocritical as well. So I'm not going to go overboard on your co-worker, Asnipes3. Morally, I don't have much to stand on here as I eat animals all the time.

Peter Montefusco: What is the cut off for getting food from a restaurant before it closes? Can I get Chipotle at 9:45pm if they close at 10pm?

There is a big difference between somewhere like Chipotle and a real restaurant. At Chipotle, the food is already made, it's just sitting there, there are no waiters or cooks or hostesses or bus boys. I think it's acceptable to go in right before close.

But at a restaurant, when someone comes in 15 minutes before lock, you're really burying the staff. The waiters have to serve you, the cooks have to make the food, the bartenders have to stay longer. You're just asking for your food to be messed with at that point. I actually wouldn't blame them. So I'm never asking for a full meal at any restaurant just before close and it's not because I'm a nice guy. It's because my top priority at all times is not to get my food messed with.

Chris Petersen: My wife took me to a zoo this weekend. I couldn't help but think that history won't look back kindly on us for imprisoning wild animals. What is your take on zoos?

It's a serious internal battle in my mind. My kids love going to the zoo and I actually really like it as well. I absolutely adore animals and love seeing them, especially the large mammals like lions, zebras, and giraffes. But the whole time I'm at the zoo, I feel an anvil of guilt over my head because we've taken these animals – who did nothing wrong – out of their natural habitats and put them into cages. All so we can graze by for a few minutes and stare at them.

And I understand they're typically taken care of extremely well at zoos. They have great doctors, eat good food, and are provided with quality shelter. But they're not free and that's what any and all intelligent lifeforms deserve. I know that in my own life, independence has always equated with happiness. So it's a tough thing to lock these beautiful animals up for our own entertainment.

It all ties in with our society's overall treatment of animals, in terms of both zoos and the food chain. It's a difficult cycle to break, but one which I'm sure future generations will look back on us unkindly for. I don't know what the right answer is, but I know it's incorrect to do anything simply because that's what the people before us did.

GatorMAB: After a long day of sweating line-ups, what is your drink of choice for the Sunday Night Football game?

I assume you're looking for some kind of alcoholic response from me here. Like, "oh, after a long day of tilting my face off from sweating Ricky Seals-Jones, I like to take eight shots of Cuervo. Yee-hah!" Only problem: That's not me. I actually think our society's dependence, promotion, and admiration of alcohol is a huge problem. It's yet another thing history will not look kindly on our

generation for. When I do drink, I normally just drink Crown Royal on the rocks. I'll have two or three, feel legit terrible, and hate myself. My drink of choice on Sunday Night Football – and basically all other times – is water. I drink an insane amount of water. If my pee is not clear - and I mean really clear, like not off-white and not light yellow, I mean mountain stream-like levels of crystal clear – then I start chugging water. I would say I try to drink at least 60-70 ounces of water a day, sometimes more. It just makes me feel good, makes me feel healthy and makes me feel strong.

Chapter 7

Career

I use the term “career” very loosely when it comes to my job. Essentially, I do what I’d normally do to get ready to play NFL DFS, but I share it all publicly and reflect on my decisions publicly. It’s really that simple. I strongly believe any career success I’ve had is because I’ve stuck firmly to that process.

If I’m trying to figure out who will be the biggest beneficiary of an injury, I’ll read through newspapers for clues from practice. I’ll research relevant historical situations. I’ll take into account speculation from beat writers following the team. And if I find something useful, I’ll share it on Twitter, include it in an article, or talk about it on a podcast.

This process ensures authenticity and that’s the obvious key when it comes to media.

Authenticity is always going to shine through to the audience – every time you beg them for a positive review on iTunes, or promise to follow back on Twitter if they follow you, or ask them to unsubscribe/resubscribe to make it seem like you gained a new listener, you lose authenticity. Every time you do something just to get a click instead of doing good work and therefore getting clicks, you’ve lost.

I’ve certainly made plenty of mistakes when it comes to career. My first instinct when I found poker in 2002 was to simply get as good as I could at the game and play. It never even crossed my mind that poker would become a billion dollar business and the real money would be on the business side, not in trying to eek out \$80 an hour in a \$5/\$10 game.

As I’ve gotten older my goals have changed. At first I thought covering a team as a beat writer was the best job I could ever have. Thanks to my good friend Jordan Raanan I was able to do that in a minor way with the Sixers and realized it’s not about sports – it’s about kissing enough player/agent/coach/GM ass to get information. Then I thought, “man if I could just be full-time at Rotoworld I’d never want to do anything else.” But when you’re making \$50K a year and have a family plus a long list of life experiences you want, it’s just not enough.

These days my only goal is to bet on myself no matter what while trying to surround myself with people smarter than me. If we perform well, we will succeed financially.

If we don't, the market will let us know and we'll fail. I wrote about this a bit on my personal blog when we announced the launch of Establish The Run. Win or lose, I want to bet on myself and work with people I respect and like. That's it.

Tactic101: What's it like being a celebrity in a niche market? I went to Philly recently and seriously considered reaching out for a meet & greet/picture.

I don't think someone who has been recognized in public a total of 10 times in his life qualifies as a celebrity. That said, I am hesitant to meet "fans" in real life because they'll be so bitterly disappointed. I think a good strategy in life is to underpromise and overdeliver. I'm constantly trying to do that in life, work, relationships, everything. So I really am humbled that so many people enjoy my podcast, the Twitter feed, the shows, and the articles. But I can guarantee you'll like the real-life me way, way worse. It would be an unintentional overpromise, underdeliver situation.

Peter Air Barrett: What is your outlook on the future of DFS in reference to the likelihood that it will be profitable for grinders moving forward? Seems the last couple of years, the field is sharper and it's harder to win.

Of course it's harder to win today than it was a couple years ago and it will undoubtedly continue to get harder every year. Anytime there's significant money on the line as there is in DFS, very smart people are going to put in a lot of time and effort. The amount of available information and tools has also increased exponentially in both quality and quantity. People who aren't working hard will quickly fall behind. But that shouldn't surprise anyone and it's really nothing to whine about. We can either complain about it – which accomplishes nothing – or we can try to improve our skills.

Going back to the question, I get tweets and emails from people all the time telling me that they want to be a professional DFS player. The overwhelming majority of people who want to do this fail to realize how difficult that would be. Let's say you're really strong and can generate a 15% ROI across all cash games. Think about how big you'd have to play at that win rate to support yourself and a family. If you want to make \$225K a year, you'd have to get \$1.5 million in play. That's \$28,846 per week – no easy task when it's not NFL season or if you're trying to practice optimal game selection. In fact, to get that much money in play you would have to battle some other very good players and your projected ROI will get slashed quickly.

From a bigger picture perspective, of course GPPs are where this DFS thing is going and in a lot of ways where it already is. It's not exciting to turn \$10 into \$18 or \$50 into \$90. People want to put up a little bit of money and have a chance at a big prize – and there's nothing wrong with that. It's fun and that's the way 99% of the field should look at it. So from a grinding perspective, I'd say it's not a very bright future. But from a large-field GPP perspective, there's still a good outlook for DFS.

AndyPants47: If DFS is still popular in 15 years and your sons tell you they want to pursue being a full-time player, how would you react? Would you try to talk them out of it?

A really tough issue for me as a parent is trying to set the right example while also being myself. For example, I make offensive, off-color, often mean jokes all the time. I think it's funny. But I know the time and place for it, I know what audience to do it with. I also know that not everyone does – I can't have my kids emulating this before they understand the right situations.

And it's similar in DFS. If my kids truly understand expected value, the work it takes to win, the variance that comes with the game, and all the other downfalls – then I think it's great. But if they somehow turn into these arrogant, entitled idiots who think they deserve to win because they've watched some football, then absolutely not. The vast majority of the DFS field doesn't understand how to manage a bankroll, how to game select, and how to take losing like a professional.

I'm hoping I can instill what I think is the right way to play and to think about DFS one day, but we'll just have to see.

Ben Guthrie-Stewart: You've talked about how future generations will view eating animals and religion. How do you think they will view football? I was thinking about it after the Ryan Shazier injury.

When I was a kid, a friend's mom wouldn't let him play football. I thought she was the worst, most overprotective, loser mom ever. Now fast forward 25 years and there is no one I know who would let their kids play football, myself included. I was on the fence about it for a while, but I think the science and research is very clear now. It's just not worth it. Of course kids can get seriously hurt playing basketball or baseball, but from a probabilistic perspective football's risk/reward is out of whack.

As for the “future generations” part of the question, it's hard to zoom out on things like this when we are in the moment. Consider: The Romans didn't think the gladiator games were barbaric. At one point jousting was a normal activity. Bull fighting was extremely popular at one time. Eventually, I'm sure football will sputter out just like most other sports, and the health risks will certainly play a role.

Think about how early we are in the age of modern sport. There have only been 52 Super Bowls in the history of the world. If NFL football goes on for another 200-300 years, it's still such a small slice of history. So when people look back 2,000 years from now, much like we view cavemen and the gladiators and medieval times as absurd, I think people will view our

society similarly. Definitely when it comes to sports, the treatment of animals, and religion, they'll likely think we were unevolved. That's just the way it's gone throughout history.

Bobby Dentine: Do you ever worry that having such a unique job causes uncertainty for your future, financial or otherwise?

I actually like the uncertainty. If I knew that I was going to make exactly \$XXX every year until I retire regardless of my performance, I'd be bored out of my skull. There's a level of excitement and adventure in not knowing exactly what the future holds. That may sound scary to some, but I'm always going to be confident betting on myself. I'm confident that if I do the best I can in what I'm working on right now, everything will work out. And if you told me when I started at Rotoworld in 2007 making \$12/hour that one day Evan Silva and I would [start our own business](#), I would've said you're insane. If you give yourself optionality in your career, you never know what might happen. (And yes, I do understand I'm likely looking at this through rose-colored glasses because I've been incredibly fortunate to be in the right place at the right time throughout my "career.")

I often think about what hedge fund dominator Bill Perkins has preached on Joe Ingram's podcast. Of course the best basketball player in the world is super rich and the best stock trader is super rich. But if you're the best at something – no matter what – you're always going to be successful. The best pizza guy is also extremely rich, as is the best trash man. So I just try to be authentic, not do anything with the intent of getting famous, never do anything just to get clicks. If I try to give the best information and make +EV bets in both life and sports, then things will work out.

Sterling Smith: How did you develop your brand?

I never consciously thought about it. I think people make the mistake of doing branding backwards – they first think about who they want to be and then act like that. This isn't the WWE; that's a wild line to take. The better strategy is to be yourself, do what you do best, and see what that brand becomes. For me, it's simply someone who plays DFS seriously, puts out information serious fantasy players need to know, and jokes about inappropriate topics like #TeamSex and #GenderLabs. It's someone who stays in his lane and is consistent – you're not going to catch me scouting the talent of players, talking about politics, or writing about college football.

Trevor Jones: What can I do with my journalism degree if I don't want to be a reporter?

This is a topic that hits home for me. When I was a journalism student at Penn State I thought it was about writing, being really knowledgeable about a subject, and helping educate the public. Once I started actually trying to be a reporter, I quickly realized those

skills are a mere fraction of the job. I was a disaster because the meat of the gig is actually engaging with people. That means trying to develop sources who will give you information off the record, chatting people up so they're comfortable with you for an interview, kissing the ass of athletes (and politicians) who you need quotes from. It just wasn't for me.

That said, journalism students have skills that can translate to loosely connected fields really well. An ability to write clearly, persuasively, and concisely while backing it up with actual facts is something so many fields need. We need the logic that a simple, no-nonsense who/what/when/where protocol provides. So even though I don't directly use my journalism degree now as I spew thoughts about fantasy football and think through the strategy behind a peer-to-peer game like DFS, I still use it indirectly.

And honestly, I use it more profitably. The first job I took out of journalism school in 2004 was at a place called the Sports Network. I was "reporting" about European soccer from the office in suburban Philadelphia, a.k.a. watching games on television and writing blurbs. Anyway, they offered me something around \$24,000 a year before taxes to do it and I happily said yes – I couldn't wait. Actual money to write about sports! And that's a big problem in sports journalism: It's just so popular and so many people want to do it that companies aren't forced to pay for staffing. So it's really easy to be young and idealistic and say "money isn't important, I'm going to do something that's fun." Then you hit your late-20s and realize adult life is expensive. I was getting married, was getting ready to have kids. Making \$30,000 a year with some side income from poker just wasn't going to be enough.

At one point I took a GMAT course, took the GMATs, did reasonably well, and thought pretty hard about going to business school and then pursuing some kind of Wall Street job (which in my opinion is just another form of regulated gambling). A game where hopefully the people working hard, the smartest people, the ones with the best strategies come out on top – just like DFS or poker or real estate. Luckily for me I caught a couple lucky breaks with Rotoworld right when the business school thing was getting serious and I've been in the fantasy space ever since.

John Trifone: Did you ever consider a career in poker before you found DFS?

Not really. I played a decent amount of live cash poker between 2005 and 2012, roughly 500 hours per year. Early on I really loved to play and I actually needed to play, as my first few jobs did not pay well.

Anyway, I started out playing \$6-\$12 limit hold'em – there really weren't any no-limit cash games at that time. I would work freelance journalism gigs for \$8 per hour, go to Wawa to eat cheese sandwiches, and then go to Atlantic City to play poker. I somewhat quickly

moved up to \$10-\$20 and then \$20-\$40 limit. I switched over to no-limit once the boom was in full swing and played in some really incredible \$5-\$10, \$10-\$10 and occasionally \$10-\$25 games around the east coast. I think my natural poker talent was a little above average, my mental game was incredibly fragile, and my technical skills were a tragedy. But at that time, just being competent was easily good enough to be a solid winner.

There were certainly moments at that time when I honestly thought about going for it full time, but the truth is I really didn't want to disappoint my parents to such a degree. It sounds so crazy for me to say as an adult, but I just have so much guilt about letting them down. As George Costanza once said, "I had so much promise." While spending my days writing, talking, and playing fantasy football doesn't seem much better from a moral perspective, I could at least argue I'm in the entertainment/media business.

I'm also not sure I had the mental strength for full-time poker. It wore on me to try really hard, put a ton of energy into it, give up my weekends/holidays (because that's when the games are best), deal with all the miserable mopes at the tables for 8-9 hours at a clip, and then still sometimes lose money. The isolating nature of casinos were not a great place in general for my mental health – particularly when I was losing. So as the games got tougher and my win rate started to sharply decline – from making nine big blinds an hour to six, then five. By the time I stopped playing seriously, I was all the way down to a three big blinds per hour rate over a decent sample and at that point it was very obvious and easy for me to move on.

It was around that same time my eyes were opened to how big the ceiling is on the business side of gambling instead of the playing side. My first thought when I heard about both poker and DFS were, "man, I can't wait to play and outwit people and work hard and make money." In hindsight my first thought should have been, "how can I position myself to capture the boom of interest/money that's about to come into this industry?"

Now that I play poker casually when I have time, I enjoy it a lot more. For 99.9% of people, I suspect playing poker or DFS as a part-time hobby rather than a full-time job is the right call.

Mark: Do you have a Bucket List? If so, what is the most likely thing you'll do?

I think it's really important to have lists and goals because otherwise life just screams by and you turn around and you're too old to do anything. Or you never do it. Or, god forbid, you wake up one day and you're diagnosed with some terrible disease and you never did any of the things that you wanted to do. In terms of Bucket List items, I'll give you three that are for sure at the top of my list.

No. 1: Climb Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. This is the highest peak in Africa and you don't need technical climbing/mountaineering experience. You're not using ropes or anything like that. It's not like Everest; you're highly unlikely to die. You do a tough hike for around a week to get to the top of this peak.

No. 2: Raft down the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. I consider the Grand Canyon unbelievably beautiful, one of the most amazing things you'll ever see. I think rafting through it would be a pretty cool experience and a really cool way to see the Canyon while also getting some rafting in.

No. 3: Go to all four tennis grand slam events. I've been to the US Open up in New York, but I've never been to Wimbledon, the French Open, or the Australian Open. I think it's a pretty realistic goal, and all four cities (New York, London, Paris, Melbourne) are world-class.

I think the most important thing to keep in mind with bucket lists of all kinds is aging curves. We think about them in sports all the time in regards to players' production decreasing as they get older. But we can think about aging curves in our lives too. "Well, I'm not going to do X because I don't have time right now. I'm not going to do this because I don't have money. When I retire I'll climb Mount Kilimanjaro. When I start collecting Social Security I'll go to all four tennis grand slams." Actually, no you won't. You'll be 65 and you're not going to be physically capable and have the energy to do these things. As we get older the likelihood of dying through disease is mathematically higher. So waiting and putting things off is something I really want to focus on avoiding.

Kyle Whitmire: A comment you made on a podcast hit home to me. A very subtle comment from you said, "Instead of worrying about the hair on the toilet seat at your job, it may be time for the #EntrepreneurLife." I agree 100% with this comment, but I have not found a way to get there. Help turn this corporate America dude into the #LevitanLife.

I wouldn't say #LevitanLife; it's really not that exciting. You're probably looking for the #SmizzLife. Anyway, this is really tough and it's something I've spent a ton of time thinking about. To me, life is so short and fragile that spending the majority of your time in a cubicle living out someone else's idea/dream is a brutal way to do it. And let's be honest, most of us spend more time at work than we do with our family and friends. But at the same time, I also realize that everybody needs to make a living, and not every skill set or career is right for going out on your own and starting your own thing.

I will say not enough people – myself included – take enough risks with their career when they're young. It's just so much easier to rationalize and recoup from failures when you don't have a wife, kids, and other people depending on you.

That said, the most important thing to me – and the biggest reason I wanted to start Establish the Run – is because I want to bet on myself. If I make the best decisions and perform well and have something unique the market wants, I want to be rewarded. If I perform poorly and fail, then it's a meritocracy and I'm on my way to Bustoville. It's a really empty feeling in corporate America to feel like your performance and work ethic doesn't really matter. If you do well your compensation barely increases, if you do poorly but manage not to get fired you just keep collecting checks. That's tough to swallow, especially given how much time and effort we put into our jobs.

Ben Donovan: What type of game do you think we'll be watching in 20 years? What will football look like in 20 years?

I'm not even certain the NFL will still be America's number one sport in 20 years. I know that sounds crazy as the NFL draft is beating NBA playoff games in ratings and the long trail of bad off-field press hasn't affected popularity whatsoever. But remember, at one point baseball was America's game, and before that horse racing was incredibly popular, and before that boxing. If we stretch way back through time we'll find jousting and gladiator games. They all fell by the wayside, one way or another.

The player-protection rule changes the NFL has implemented has good intentions. They know the game is too violent and they know the damage being done to the players' health is terrible. Recently implemented rules like “don't lead with your head,” “don't hit a defenseless receiver,” and “don't hit the quarterback in the knees” will almost certainly help. The problem is these rules make it an almost unrecognizable form of football to purists who love the physicality. It's no longer football as we know it. And that doesn't bother me – I don't want guys' lives ruined for my entertainment. I'd be happy to watch flag football as long as we could play fantasy with it. But it's at least possible these rule changes eventually catch up in the form of ratings.

Daddyschalk: Give us your Ten Commandments for DFS Twitter?

I don't have ten. I'll give you three:

1) Be humble. We can look really smart one week and really dumb the next. So when you start taking victory laps for a prediction or a win, it's not a good look. It's a flashing sign that lets sharp people know you don't understand the true grind.

2) Don't engage with people who don't get it. There are so many people out there who simply don't understand what's going on in gambling or DFS. They think if they lose it means someone is cheating them and DraftKings is out to get them. They can't comprehend variance and/or think they're entitled to win. These are people whose first, second, and third instinct is to blame someone else for losing rather than be accountable for their own results. It's never going to be worth engaging with them.

3) Provide some value: The Twitter accounts I want to follow are either really funny or give me good information I can use. That's about it. Value could be defined differently by different people, but if you're just on Twitter to sell something, be mean, or be the "well actually" guy, then you're doing it wrong.

ASnipes3: How important is it for touts to be transparent? They all talk a big game, but a lot don't have the screenshots to prove it.

First of all, I really hate the word 'tout' as it relates to what I try to do in DFS. When I think of that word, I think of some cheap salesman in "Two For The Money," a.k.a. the worst movie of all time. A tout would say something like, "Here are the five-star locks of the week! Pay me \$499 and they are yours, can't lose!!!" "Oh, those five star locks lost? Here's the 20-star lock of the year! Just give me another \$499!!" I think people reading this – and the vast majority of people out there – are smart enough to see through that kind of crap.

If we're looking for the best information and not picks, is transparency of DFS results important? I'd argue it's not. For example, Evan Silva gives us an unbelievable amount of information each week, the best information in my opinion. Do we really care if he's winning at DFS or not? I know Evan is, but it really doesn't matter. It's all about applying the information in the most optimal way possible. I think the point of the content industry should be to help people who don't have a lot of time to get up to speed quickly. I do all this research, I do all this work all week, and I present the information to you in articles, podcasts, and Twitter, and then you can do with it what you like. I hate telling someone who to play; I try to never do that. So yes, I'm always willing to be totally transparent about my results because I have nothing to hide. I don't see much downside to it and I think part of my job is to show the public what is a realistic win rate and ROI is for someone who's working really hard at this.

The bottom line is just don't be fooled. To me, a tout is someone who says things like, "Hey, give me \$100 and you'll win 90 percent of the time on DraftKings." If you believe stuff like that, you were likely drawing dead to ever win yourself anyway.

Shane McCarthy: Why do you go to an office when it appears you have a solid setup in what looks to be a basement? Do you just want to be 100% that no distractions arise?

I worked exclusively from my house between 2006 and 2017. I decided to get an office before the 2017 NFL season mainly because my first son was simply getting too old. If I'm in the house, he wants play with me and I want to play with him. It breaks my heart to tell him no. "No son, I'm writing jokes about mice having intercourse for GenderLabs right now, I can't play basketball..." "No son, I'm clicking through every 3-man in the lobby to find some good action, sorry I can't do a puzzle with you."

So it just made sense to get the office, generate some separation between "work" and playtime. Ideally it creates a situation where the kids know when I'm at the office I'm doing what I can do to make a good life for them, and when I'm home it's full-on playtime.

Ryan Racantore: If someone offered you \$1 million today, but you could never wager on sports again in your life - betting, DFS, survival pool, whatever, would you take it?

This is an interesting thought exercise, but it's pretty easily a no for me. I know it sounds obnoxious but \$1M isn't close to enough for me and my family to live on for the rest of my life – not even close, unfortunately. Kids are expensive, the #TeamSmelltheRoses experiences I want to have are expensive, trying to eat healthy is expensive. So if I accepted this \$1M offer, I'd have to get a job in the real world. And could I really be a part of EstablishTheRun or do the Edge podcast or write fantasy articles if I wasn't playing? In theory I could, but it wouldn't be nearly as authentic. And I think a big reason for any success I've had in the content game is authenticity. So in order for me to stop speculating on sports, you'd have to give me enough money for me to never have to work again.

Michael Mussett: I'm curious on how you decide what is something you want to put out there in a tweet. What is your process and how do you track what is relevant or not to the public?

I keep it very simple. I am constantly researching, looking for information, data, nuggets, or news that will help *my* lineups be better on Sunday. When I find something relevant, I share it on Twitter. That's it. It's not rocket science, there's no grand plan, and there's no manipulation. I just do the normal research I'd do for a slate for myself and then share that information. If it's relevant to me, then it's very likely going to be relevant to other people playing DFS.

Aside from being in the right place at the right time, I think that's a big reason my Twitter has been able to grow. I'm actually playing DFS seriously, I'm trying very hard to win, so I truly know what's important to actual DFS grinders. By staying in that niche and being specialized, I can be more authentic. You won't find me tweeting about politics or baseball or even season-long fantasy football. I won't tweet something if it's out of my lane.

TheRyanKing: Is there a way to make season-long fantasy football viable?

If we look at season-long from strictly fun perspective, it remains extremely viable and wildly popular. Playing with friends, talking trash on the bulletin board, texting to negotiate trades – all that stuff is fun and a great way to stay in touch with old friends.

Now if we're coming from the perspective of trying to grind and make money, then season-long is not going to be very viable. Even if you get into a high-stakes league with a \$2K or a \$5K buy-in, your projected hourly will still be low. The time commitment and brain power required to optimally execute waiver-wire claims, trades, and lineup setting is far higher than most realize. And once we factor in how much variance there is in season-long leagues in the form of injuries, what pick you land in a draft, suspensions, etc., our hourly expectation is far lower than in DFS.

Of course, that doesn't mean we shouldn't play season-long. Not everything in life has to be a grind to maximize EV; in fact, living that way is a surefire way to find unhappiness. So yes, season-long away and here's a shameless plug for our [Draft Kit](#).

DeKalb Milita: I've always been curious about the percent of your yearly income which comes from playing DFS vs. what percent comes from other the business/content stuff you do?

My main focus right now is helping people get the information they need to beat DFS through [EstablishTheRun](#). There's something really exciting about betting on ourselves in business and making all the decisions within the confines of a small team, doing what we think is right for our audience.

So while there's some honor in only gambling with an edge for a living, it's also wildly difficult and extremely stressful. If my focus was on playing, I'd be grinding every sport and every slate all year round, and I don't think that's sustainable from an ROI or lifestyle perspective. If we're going to be on #TeamSmelltheRoses, we can't be juggling lock times while the kids have soccer practice or have to take a bath. For 99.9% of the people reading this, treating DFS as a hobby we try hard to win at is the optimal path.

Nick Bauer: Do you have a plan for what you're going to do when you retire? Everyone's chasing retirement and it seems to me few know what they are going to do with their time when they get there.

It's a well-taken point. We're all out here busting our ass, trying to make money, enough to support our family and eventually not have to work anymore. The problem is that by the time that end-goal is met, the things we aspire to do are no longer practical. We're not climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro or playing 5-on-5 basketball or hiking through Peru when we're 65 years old. Who knows what's going to happen then – we could easily be dead, suffering from a disease, or have other physical limitations.

So I'm a big believer in simply doing it now. If you have something you want to do, don't wait. Aspiring to work 30 years so one day I can lie around at Del Boca Vista Phase 2 and play shuffleboard seems like a very odd goal.

Glossary

Defining some of the jargon you found in the previous pages:

ACO – Short for Average Cumulative Ownership. Refers to the total projected ownership of a lineup divided by the number of roster spots.

“This lineup looks good, but its ACO is going to be more than 20%.”

Bankroll – How much money you have to gamble with. This does not refer to the total amount of money in your bank account.

“I was only going to put 2% of my bankroll in play this week, but I got some really soft head-to-head action.”

Beautiful Beast – My 6-year-old Goldendoodle, Gerri. She was the runt of her litter and is the most loyal mammal on the planet.

“I pressed my bare chest against my beautiful beast’s fur and felt true loyalty.”

Cash Game – Any DFS contest in which roughly 50% of the field gets paid out. Typically head-to-heads, double-ups or 50/50s.

“Lot of the soft money is in tournaments trying to get lucky, but the real action is in cash games.”

Deathbed Theorem – The idea of making decisions based on what we’d do if on our deathbed. Trying to use the fact of eventual death to improve life efficiency.

“Should I binge watch Season 6 of Game of Thrones, or should I go hike a mountain? Deathbed Theorem says mountain.”

Dolt – Someone lacking an understanding of DFS, gambling, or life. Can be used interchangeably with donkey.

“This dolt won the Milly Maker with Kyle Juszczyk on his roster and now thinks he’s the best.”

DFS – Short for Daily Fantasy Sports. Typically refers to a game in which contestants select athletes while staying under a salary cap. Whoever’s team scores the most points wins the money.

“DFS is tilting me so hard lately, going to take some time off to join #TeamSmellTheRoses.”

Expected Value – The amount of money a person can expect to return on an investment over an infinite sample. The official calculation is the sum of all possible values multiplied by the probability of its occurrence.

“Our expected value in this tournament is through the roof, it’s going to overlay massively and there are a ton of donkeys already registered.”

FPS – Short for Fancy Play Syndrome.

Typically refers to a person making off-the-board decisions without good reasoning and/or ignoring the obvious.

“I caught a nasty case of FPS and decided not to play Christian McCaffrey at \$6000.”

GenderLabs – A fictional company I created to assist couples with their gender optimization desires through research, data, and coaching.

“Clients here at GenderLabs LLC, aka Gender Consultants INC, can purchase the premium package, which includes in-home consultations at the moment of conception.”

GPP – A DFS tournament with a guaranteed prize pool. The amount of the prize pool is predetermined by the operating site and will be paid out regardless of whether the tournament fills.

“I’m going to throw some money at GPPs this week, hope to get lucky and blink something.”

GTO – Short for Game Theory Optimal. The mathematically correct, unexploitable way to play a game. Can also be used sarcastically for life decisions.

“The GTO play in a public bathroom is to build a criss-crossed nest.”

#HowRich – When someone is being arrogant about how much they’re winning or their material possessions, we can hit them with this.

“Oh you’re driving your Tesla to your villa in Aspen? #HowRich.”

MME – Short for Mass Multi Entry. Refers to using an optimizer and lineup generator to enter a lot of lineups – typically 150 – into a single DFS tournament.

“I’m going to MME the Milly Maker this week, please let me run pure one time.”

Nut Low – A poker term which refers to the worst possible hand. Can also be used to talk about DFS or life situations.

“That chicken gyro from the mall food court was the nut low.”

Overlay – DFS operators must predetermine how many entries will be in a GPP. If the tournament does not fill, the excess money the operator must pay is called overlay.

“I wasn’t going to play the \$333 GPP this week, but the overlay was too much to ignore.”

Rake – Amount of money kept by a site operator in exchange for hosting a DFS contest. For example, a win in a \$109 H2H contest will typically only return \$200 – not \$218.

“Being a 50th percentile DFS player isn’t enough to win because of the rake.”

Running – Refers to how fortunate or unfortunate someone has been in the short-term while playing poker or DFS. Running pure refers to ending up on the good side of close situations, running bad refers to the opposite.

“Man I’ve been running so pure, had a 1v1 with Chris Godwin and he scored a garbage-time touchdown to give me the win.”

Scared Money – In poker, someone very timid with their bankroll and decisions. Sometimes because they're playing too big for their roll.

"I three-bet him every time he opened because he was clearly scared money."

Skin to Fur – Similar to the skin-to-skin recommended in the first hours of a baby's life, except with a dog.

"The doctor said skin-to-skin was crucial, but then I realized I had never done skin-to-fur with my beast."

Slate – A set of games in which a DFS contest will take place. For example, there is a 1 p.m.-only and a 4 p.m.-only slate of games offered each week in the NFL in addition to the main slate.

"Can't play the primetime slate this week, have a dinner I can't miss."

Soft Skills – Skills useful in gambling outside of the core objective. For example, contest selection strategy in DFS or Daily Double wager amount in "Jeopardy."

"I can't win at DFS with my ability to pick players, but I can squeeze out a profit by knowing which contests to play and when to register for them."

Stone Nuts – A poker term which refers to the best possible hand. Can also be used to talk about DFS or life situations.

"That Counting Crows concert was the absolute stone nuts."

Sweating – In DFS, refers to watching the games to see how your lineups will fare.

"My wife really wanted to go out to dinner, but I had to stay home and sweat the fourth quarter."

Tilting – A feeling of frustration and anger that often comes with losing.

"I lost to a guy who played Larry Fitzgerald, I'm tilting my face off."

Tout – A person in the gambling space who sells sports betting picks or DFS lineups. This is different from an analyst, whose goal is to inform an audience so they can make their own decisions.

"I've yet to meet a tout whose clients can actually win."

Variance – Mathematically, measures how far a set of numbers are spread out from their average value. In DFS and poker, refers to the short-term luck associated with the games.

"I have a 10% ROI in these \$109 3-mans, but I'm losing \$2,500 in them this month. Hopefully just variance."



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