

Scott (Shalom) Klein of Get Down to Business

Speaker1: [00:00:04] This is the Investor Connect podcast program. I'm Hall Martin. I'm the host of the show in which we interview Angel Investors, venture capital, family offices, private equity, and many other investors for early stage and growth companies. I hope you enjoy this episode. The Investor Connect is a 501 C three nonprofit dedicated to the education of investors and startups for fund raising. Please consider donating \$100 to the program to help others in their investor and entrepreneur journey. You can find the donate button on the Investor Connect org website. Hello, this is Hall Martin with Investor Connect. Today we're here with Scott Klein, host of the Get Down to Business Radio Show and podcast. Scott, thank you for having me on your show and thank you for joining us today.

Speaker2: [00:00:49] Absolutely. It was fun to have you on my program and it's great to join you and your amazing audience.

Speaker1: [00:00:56] Great. So where are you calling from today?

Speaker2: [00:00:59] So I don't know if this happens frequently on your podcast, but I'm actually in the Middle East right now. I'm actually currently deployed for my service in the United States Army Reserve. So like many of my, as we say, battle buddies juggle my life as a citizen soldier. And so strange times we're living in but I unique I'm fortunate that I'm able to to have a good connection and join you while deployed out in the Middle East.

Speaker1: [00:01:27] Well, that's great. Well, glad to see you're providing service and helping with the community. I've always believed that business connects with service and community. It's all part of the same thing. What do you see out there in the service world today?

Speaker2: [00:01:43] Yeah. So I don't separate out service and business. I see people like U-Haul that clearly committed to to both. And there's no there's no difference. Just to give you a little bit of background, I grew up in a family business. My dad taught me from a very young age the importance of call it charity. But that idea of when you get home at night, you don't kick your feet up on the couch and watch T.V. You get out, you get involved in a political campaign knocking on doors. You make a difference. You roll up your sleeves to do something. And that

became fundamental to me. So I have a master's in nonprofit management, a doctorate in education, and that's what I'm hoping to inspire others to do. So what I'm what I'm seeing, what I'm hearing is I see I hear amazing stories. It's amazing people making a difference in their own communities, people that have created projects, lay leaders and professionals that have started organizations because they saw a need locally. And my wife will tell you that my pet peeve is when people use the word, they there's no they there's no wizard behind the curtain. If you're not seeing something happen, it's probably because nobody else is doing it. So the key is roll up your sleeves and make it happen. Chances are nobody has thought of it and don't think that anybody's going to slap you on the wrist. It's simply because people haven't thought of that idea and hard work perseverance, which is a skill that we know as entrepreneurs. That's exactly what's necessary in the in the service and the nonprofit community as well.

Speaker1: [00:03:23] Great. Well, we see a lot happening in the impact world. I see every year more and more startups are going down the path of being not just a good business but also an impact business, providing some community service, social cause or governance that really makes a difference down the way. And I find the financial world seems to be moving in the direction to foster that and support that and really help that. And in many of these impact deals I'm hearing, there's a discussion about how do we take the the ones who are doing good and share that with maybe a better interest rate or a lower financing cost. And those who are not doing those contributions are paying a higher interest rate. What do you see going on there?

Speaker2: [00:04:12] Yeah. Well, I'd say that it's, it makes sense for business, let me put it that way. So let's start there and then we'll talk about the good side of things and all the all the sort of altruistic reasons. Social impact is good for business when you and I think more and more firms are recognizing that that in I'm 32 and both call it folks my age and younger I think are and especially now folks that are coming out of college right now in this pandemic era, they're seeing that time is too short to just chase another dollar. And people are looking for where can they work that has a social mission and where can they do business with firms that that have a social impact? And I'll say this, that I'll give you an example. A son from Skokie, Illinois, just north of the city of Chicago, and I have been the chairman of the Economic Development Commission for a number of years, and I have met some of the most amazing people because I care deeply about the economic development, the entrepreneurship, the business, climate, job creation. In my local hometown, who sits on my commission, I've got the vice president of

Westfield Malls who I would have guaranteed never have had the opportunity to meet. I have the president of the local hospital who sits on my commission, and I've met some amazing people I've been able to help.

A lot of people find employment, help small businesses, do contracts with some of those some of those companies and organizations. How did I meet them all? Because we care about the same mission and that same goal. So there is a personal benefit. You know, there's that endorphins that are released and not to get go down that rabbit hole. But you feel good. You feel good when you're doing something, when you're volunteering and making a difference. But also you you are able to build connections that will have many ripple effects and a return on investment way beyond your wildest imaginations. And in this era of, as we say, great resignation, again, if you focus in you promote your mission, vision and values. And I'm a big believer in that. That's typically terms that are used in the nonprofit space. But I believe that for profit companies should be promoting every for profit should be promoting, let me underline that, their social mission and what are they doing? And I can tell you that that it will have a return on the investment as it relates to internal satisfaction and external business goals as well.

Speaker1: [00:07:00] That's great. Well, there seems like there's quite a few areas in which people can give back to the community. The United Nations has 16 different areas of actual support that one can provide, and there seems to be quite a few different groups trying to standardize and normalize those because like I say, I think I find the finance industry wanting to really support this, but if they had some more standards than it'd be easier to align them across the board. How much is that contribution worth from a financial point of view and then put some dollars behind it? Because that that certainly changes behavior when you have that level of support behind it, where do you see the standardization efforts going?

Speaker2: [00:07:40] Well, we're building the plane as we're flying it. I don't I would agree with you, Hall. I don't think that there's enough standardization that's out there. I think that as this has become a little bit more accepted, which I think is awesome and a little bit more of an expectation on some levels, I think that you mentioned the United Nations standards. I think that industries, I think, are leading the way in terms of setting standards. You mentioned financial services. I think in real estate. I think in in a number of different areas. I think standards are being created. And you know who the judge of this is, it's your peers. That's the reality. No set of standards is going to uphold as much as the the the actual market itself. And in this world

of everything you do is broadcast on social media and people talk about what you are doing. We have this this cancel culture when when when people don't believe in in something, they will walk with their feet. And by the way, I don't think that that's necessarily a bad thing. And so I think that the standards are being created. And frankly, I think it's going to evolve over time. What's true in 2022 will not be true in 2025, and that is OC But definitely the fact that there's more awareness on these, on these topics, not only of corporate social impact, but also in terms of this, as you said a moment ago, the importance of service, which I hope we can talk a little bit more about. I think that that's a good thing for for the world at large.

No. I think you bring up a good point service. We used to have a draft in the country. We moved to a volunteer force for many reasons. But what about everyone else? Where's their service? And have seen many efforts come and go where people could do service, Peace Corps or other things to work in a non-military fashion, but haven't really seen anything take hold just yet and wondered if the pandemic might foster some of that. We have all these new infrastructure programs. We have all these new, truly huge be had goals with climate change where we're not going to be able to just buy our way out of that. We're going to have to work our way out of that. And everybody's everybody's going to get compensated for every every ounce of energy they put into it. There's just going to have to be contribution by everybody to achieve it, for sure. And so what do you think that might look like? What would a service organization look like? That's just not just the military.

Speaker2: [00:10:27] Oh, yeah, absolutely. So one of the things that I think Pete Budda, judge, current secretary of transportation, said when he was running, was he championed, by the way, he's a Navy Navy vet and he championed a national year of service. And I believe so strongly in that. And that, again, to reiterate, it doesn't mean that everybody needs to put a uniform on. I, I believe in my my service. And I think that people that are capable of doing that, that's great. But that's not necessarily for everybody. But I think that there is that there is goodness to be had when folks after high school, they take spend the year, like you said, Peace Corps volunteering somewhere in the hospital. Lord knows we need it now more than ever. We need we need to step up and and give back. And I think that that would be a very positive thing. I think that there's I'm a big advocate for travel to connect the dots with business. I've been a big fan of this new phenomenon. Well, maybe not so new, but I'm hearing about it more global real estate investing. I'm fascinated by it. I read so much and I listen to so many podcasts about sort of

these folks that are getting involved in real estate entities in other countries, and they're getting to know the people, the culture and so on as they're building a business. So I find that absolutely fascinating, but I'd say that is going to be helpful in this post-pandemic era, as you said a moment ago.

Hall That I think it helps people find themselves to take a year to figure out who you are as opposed to just going straight to college and sort of jumping around trying to figure out what your major is going to be. And then maybe switching couple of times along the way, spending money, take the time, figure out where your passion is. And I'm talking about for young people. But I think we're even seeing some people that maybe careers have changed or something like that, and people are taking a little bit of time for themselves to to get involved and to volunteer and make a difference. And I think that that's huge. So, yes, I would highly advocate for a year of national service and having some way I would advocate I am not the legislator, not a policymaker. But I think that finding some way to build it in to our social structure, to give people that opportunity, I think our culture would be better for it. And you're right that I think that as it relates to to jobs, I think you're going to have an impact. I am a big believer in not everybody's right for a four year education. I again, I'm proud of I have a terminal degree. I have a doctorate. That's great, but that's not for everybody. And we need to encourage the trades. We need to encourage people to find themselves along the way. And service does that for you.

Speaker1: [00:13:23] You talked about globalization, and we see a lot of that trend happening where we used to just get calls from the US, but now we get calls from Africa, Middle East, Europe, Asia, all over, coming in, wanting to raise funding, start a business both local and internationally. And so it just seems like the world is moving into a global mode very quickly here, post-pandemic. There are some legal issues with legal entities and what the what the rights are and so forth. But those appear to be normalizing and connecting more quickly than we originally thought. So you can easily invest in any company in the world, not just the one that's in your backyard, which I think might foster more globalization and more interconnectivity across the boundaries. What are your thoughts there?

Speaker2: [00:14:12] Yeah. I think that we are going in that direction. I think that's happening already. I think that it's a good thing for us to move in that direction. I love to travel. I've been 56 countries now. I've been on all continents. And the if there's one silver lining to the pandemic, it's that it has become far easier to connect. I mean, look at us. I mean, we're we're

7000 miles away from each other. And we're we're having this conversation right here and right now. But it's become even easier to to connect and to conduct business, but also to learn about things that maybe you wouldn't have been able to learn about. I mean, I've taken time during the pandemic to learn about going back to nonprofits and organizations. I've learned upsetting info sessions that I would have never had have had time to do because there's a limit to how many after hours receptions you can go to and so on. But now jumping onto Zoom or even watching a prerecorded session is helpful. But definitely globalization is a trend that's happening more and more. And I think to your point about the elite, the legalities and the tax implications, I think that there are firms that are specializing in that and helping that, helping investors, helping companies reach investors. And that's becoming easier and easier. And obviously, our conversation doesn't substitute, you know, having a conversation with your experts, with your accountant, with your lawyer and so on to make sure you're doing things right. But I would highly recommend take this time to learn learn about something that you didn't know about before and and industries that you didn't know about before, countries you didn't know about before. And chances are, there's a business opportunity out there that's that's waiting for you.

Speaker1: [00:16:04] Well, it seems like remote work and the increased capability we have now is going to foster that even more. You don't have to drop everything to go do this. You can actually interleave it with your current work as long as the time zones and everything work out. But it seems like that it fosters more of that. What are your thoughts there?

Speaker2: [00:16:22] Howard, big time. I mean, I'm seeing people that are that have moved from big cities to more remote areas. I think that there have been people I mean, I'm hearing about it now that that people have been like me, you know, working and connecting on us hours while also being ending up some somewhere else. And by the way, I think that there's another dynamic to it is I think, again, on the cultural side, I was actually listening to a podcast about real estate investing in foreign countries, and I'm hearing of people that are finding romance and love. I don't think that's the topic of your podcast over here, but they're they're perhaps working. I think I just heard of somebody working in Vietnam and they, you know, they've met their significant other and it's just interesting how we're how we're connecting that's but remote remote work certainly has advanced obviously that has a huge impact on the real estate market on the commercial and office real estate markets, because fewer and

fewer companies need the amount of space that they had. In my beloved hometown of Chicago, United Airlines just moved out of the Willis Tower. A number of the floors out of the Willis Tower because more and more folks are working from home, but not just from home where their home was before.

But now homes can be can be anywhere. And that's overall, I would I would assess that as a good thing. I think it's leading to a better quality of life for people. And I think people companies are able to find the talent that they're looking for. And it's changing all the dynamics of salaries and so on. A company that new a New York company might be able to hire somebody for the bookkeeping position that ordinarily they'd be paying cost of living for a New York person. Why can't they hire somebody in the Midwest that can do the same job, do it at the same skills, but for a for perhaps a better price point, I think it's changing so, so much. And I think we're going to the pandemic is just the start of it. But again, in my mind, it's a silver lining. I'm a glass half full kind of person. I'm thinking of all the positive things. I know that there's challenges with it, too. I know that there is a present time. I like to look at things through rose colored glasses.

Speaker1: [00:18:53] Great. Well, you're in the reserves right now. What's the most important lesson you've learned since you started doing that?

Speaker2: [00:18:59] People, people, people. So I, I will tell you this, how I came into the Army at age 29, which is. Might sound young, but that's that's pretty old in the in the army world. To come in I went through basic training at age 29 continued my my training. And ultimately the reason I did all that was to I'll share this and this ties back to what we were talking about about service is that. In most careers, you start in an entry level job, you work your way. Hopefully you become a supervisor, manager, director, VP. Hopefully you work your way up in the Army, especially as an officer. You come in and on day one you're given the lives, quite literally the lives and that responsibility for 50, 55 people on day one. That's why I came in, is to is to serve people, to serve my soldiers. I believe in servant leadership, although I hate the term because I don't believe there's any other kind of leadership other than servant leadership. And I came in to make a difference for four people. Every single person that that I work with has taken an oath to give their life for the country and to serve the greatest nation on earth. And and it's been an incredible experience. I've learned I came into the Army not thinking that I had many more leadership lessons to learn. I will say that I learned from my people each and every day, and

that's been the greatest lesson. And I am looking forward to continuing my service for many years to come.

Speaker1: [00:20:35] Right. So what's the common myth about your job that you think you'd like to dispel, among others?

Speaker2: [00:20:42] Well as you know how I have I a few jobs I've got my I juggle my my army life I juggle of course my civilian world of both being in business as well as, as you said, hosting a radio show, a podcast. I've written a book, a couple of other things. So I think that I think that people see just on the military side, they see just green. And it used to be the the the big thing that people would say is, oh, we don't see colour, we just see green. Every soldier is the same. That's changing. That's changing, especially right now because of the pandemic. So many communities have seen the National Guard, the Army Reserve in their local communities giving shots involved in the civil unrest. I think people are seeing a little bit more. Hopefully people are realising the great sacrifice that individuals like my soldiers are making when they uproot their life for months on end to deploy, to be involved in community and understand that there are people, people with enormous skills, enormous talents behind that uniform that are literally just all about service. And that's not to ask I'm not saying all this to ask for a thank you from anybody. I just want people, as you said, to dispel the myth of why people come in and what they're doing. This is a this is a military Army, Navy, Coast Guard, Marines, and and, of course, our newest branch of the Space Force. That's that's all about service to country. And a special, special shout out to those in the National Guard and the Reserves for splitting their lives and for their families that are that are allowing them to to serve and serve the community and serve serve our country.

Speaker1: [00:22:36] Right. Well, as a reservist, I always ask a question of this nature What online information source do you find most helpful for being a reservist?

Speaker2: [00:22:46] Interesting question. I am a podcaster. Obviously, we're having this conversation over here. So I think that there's amazing podcasts that are out there that talk about, by the way, I think for anybody, regardless of military or not, there are some awesome military leadership podcasts learning from my role model and I one day I hope he'll hear me talk about him so many times that he's just going to call me one day and say, Hey, hey, Scott, I heard

you. I heard you talking about Admiral William McRaven, you know, four star commander. And he famously talked about make your bed. It's the first thing that you should do in the morning. Make your bed and everything else will follow because you accomplish one thing. And then you keep checking things off your list and moving on. And that's like my life philosophy and I believe in it to the core of my being. And I've heard him on podcasts and folks like that inspire me. So I think that if people are interested in learning about what military life is like, certainly there's a lot that's out there. There's a lot of good websites, too. But, you know, I definitely would encourage both those in the military as well as those not in the military to check out podcasts. I've hosted many conversations under the banner of We All Serve. As you mentioned, I hosted the business radio show, but I also host a podcast called All Serve. I've interviewed many amazing people talking about the lessons that we've been talking about over the past half hour or so, all about about service, but including some military leaders that have really walk the walk and talk the talk.

Speaker1: [00:24:19] Great. And continuing our theme on service, if you could start a business tomorrow, what would that business be?

Speaker2: [00:24:25] You know, off the top of my head, it's a really good question. But my I'm just going to go with my gut over here and I would love I've always you. Many of your listeners won't be able to see me over here. I always have a cup of coffee nearby. And it's not just because I need the caffeine, because I'm fortunately I don't sleep as much as I should. But I also believe in coffee as again, I'm going to say this for the third time, this conversation, life, philosophy, coffee for me is the power of relationship sitting across from each other and actually getting to know each other. I wish we were doing this conversation in Person Hall, but I've had a dream of establishing a social enterprise of coffee shops employing either disabled veterans, special needs individuals and coffee shop where I love to get to know people and be able to serve coffee to people and make a difference. So social, in fact, where we're we're creating jobs for people. And I think that there's a huge opportunity, even in the midst of this pandemic, where we're sort of people are I hate the term social distancing. It's it really is is just physical distancing, that's all. But eventually we'll come back. And I'm hoping that, yeah, we'll be able to maybe one day of my retirement open on line of coffee shops employing individuals that might otherwise not have opportunities and give them the jobs in packaging bags of coffee

and delivering it to maybe office buildings that you and your team are helping to, to to attract investors for. And maybe maybe there's a synergy there. I don't know.

Speaker1: [00:26:10] It sounds like a pretty good opportunity to me. I think there's going to be a lot of community and service in that one for sure. In the last few minutes that we have here, what else should we cover that we haven't?

Speaker2: [00:26:20] You know, going back to service, I definitely think that everybody can step up. If you love puppies, get involved in the animal shelter. Like I said, you will have those endorphins fire off and you will feel good. You will actually feel really accomplished. And along the lines of what I mentioned a moment ago about making your bed, when you do something that makes me feel good, you will have more confidence. And that will lead to better business decisions and and better personal relationships as well, which is important. But also you will meet like minded people, people that also let they love puppies or love helping the homeless or fill in the blank or whatever it is. You'll meet other people that you probably otherwise would have never have had the opportunity to meet. So I know we talk a lot about networking, and networking is really important, but it doesn't just need to be at a Chamber of commerce or at a networking group. It could be while volunteering and being involved in a social mission as well. So I highly recommend people consider that. And just on the theme of entrepreneurship, I'll just conclude by saying that I wrote a book called Get Down to Business. It's available on Amazon and all that. But my publisher wanted to call it You Can Do It before 30. I wrote the book when I was 28 or 29, and I hated the title. I hated the title because I don't let age define anything. But the reality is, is as we were saying before, there is no wizard behind the curtain.

If you want to do something, get up and make a difference, make it happen. That's been the biggest lesson of entrepreneurship is I have seen so many people that spend so much time sitting behind a computer screen and budgeting and planning and strategizing and creating a business plan. And they do it for years and years before they run out of money and they can never get started and actually make it happen. That's not to say that you shouldn't operate without a business plan. That's not to say should operate without without a budget. At the same time, you need to have that healthy balance if you have an idea and I like the question you just asked a moment ago of if you're able to start a business tomorrow, everybody has the ability to do that and leverage your own strengths and recognize your own weaknesses and challenges and surround yourself with like with amazing people that can mentor you, that could

advise you, but also don't be afraid at times. Take some risks and bring people on. If you're at that phase that, hey, you're really at that at that growth phase and you you can't do your little QuickBooks Online anymore, definitely you need to hire an accountant. You need to work with somebody to get you to that next level. So entrepreneurship, it's the American dream. That's what I love. And I love to hear stories. I love to profile those stories on my radio show. That's why I brought you on call. And I can't wait to continue to hopefully inspire other people along the way.

Speaker1: [00:29:09] That's great. So how best for listeners to get back in touch with you?

Speaker2: [00:29:13] My website is ShalomKlein.com Just Google get down to business. Radio show pops right up. Including the book and everything. I'm always happy to get in touch. Always happy to just give advice on service. I'll talk about this literally till I'm blue in the face right now. But it is. We're recording this. It is almost midnight out here. And I am so passionate about this and it has nothing to do with that cup of coffee that's sitting next to me that keeps me fired up and energized to hopefully inspire others.

Speaker1: [00:29:46] Great. We'll put that in the show notes. We want to thank you for joining us today and hope to have you back for a follow up soon.

Speaker2: [00:29:52] Absolutely. Thank you all. Appreciate it.

Speaker1: [00:29:56] Investor Connect helps investors interested in startup funding. In this podcast series Experience, investors share their experience and advice. You can learn more at [Investor Connect dot org](http://InvestorConnect.org). Hal Tim Martin is the director of Investor Connect, which is a 500 1c3 nonprofit dedicated to the education of investors for early stage funding. All opinions expressed by hall and podcast guests are solely their own opinions and do not reflect the opinion of Investor Connect. This podcast is for informational purposes only and should not be relied upon as a basis for investment decisions.