<u>**PITCHIT FINTECH STARTUPS PODCAST NO. 73-PERRY RAHBAR**</u>

Welcome to PitchIt, the fintech startups podcast, one founder, one startup, one investor at a time. I'm your host, Todd Anderson, Chief Content Officer, Fintech Nexus.

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Todd Anderson: Thanks again for tuning in to this week's episode of PitchIt. I recently sat down with Perry Rahbar, Founder & CEO, dv01. dv01 is a leading data intelligent platform with integrated low level consumer credit data and analytics that drives transparency in lending markets. You know, during the episode Perry talks about his time in banking and some of those lessons learned back from the global financial crisis and really, dv01 aims to solve some of those structural issues that plagued multi-participants back in, you know, 2007, 2008, 2009.

The insight that you get from this type of data and the transparency it provides really allows those issues to get caught early and so it avoids, you know, a Bear Stearns, a Lehman-type crisis. Perry and I talk about his time in banking, why he decided to start dv01, the meaning behind the name dv01, the evolution of fintech lending since he launched dv01, what a recession might do to the fintech lending markets, the recent acquisition by Fitch, adventures on the fundraising trail, visiting Iran and much, much before.

Before we begin the episode, please take a minute and rate or provide feedback on the show. I take ratings and comments very seriously, I try to do my best to read them all. And don't forget to join us in Miami on December 13th and 14th for Fintex Nexus LatAm, it's LatAm's premiere event. For 15% off of your ticket, please use the code "podcast."

Without further ado, I present dv01's Founder & CEO, Perry Rahbar. I hope you enjoy the show.

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Welcome to the podcast, Perry, how are you?

Perry Rahbar: Doing great, thanks, thanks for having me.

Todd: Of course. So, just want to kick off, give the audience a little background, you know, before dv01, what your career looked like and tell us a little bit about yourself.

Perry: Ah, before dv01, seems like ages ago, (Todd laughs) my career before dv01 was trading mortgage-backed securities at Bear Stearns and then JP Morgan. So, that was in total basically just ten years, just shy of ten years on a trading desk after graduating college.

Todd: So, one, before we get into exactly what dv01 is, what you guys do, did you eventually see yourself as an entrepreneur, a founder or did you see yourself in trading most of your career. Did you find this problem and say, you know, I need to solve this?

Perry: Well, I think growing up, I always thought of myself as more independent and entrepreneurial and then I went to college and then I got really lucky falling kind of a into Bear Stearns internship my sophomore in college and that was the first time I sat on a trading floor and I was pretty mesmerized by that whole experience. I just finally got locked into it and then I was doing well and my career kept on advancing and moving up and, you know, from getting promoted to running a desk and so forth.

And so, I just never really questioned it, I just kind of felt like this was the thing that I'm good at so I guess this is what I'm doing, but then interestingly enough after I kind of, you know, accomplished a few things on a trading floor, I got that entrepreneurial itch, that kind of original feeling of that's what I'm really meant to do, build your own thing kind of came back and that's when, you know, how we kind of I guess arrived at dv01.

Todd: So, tell us a little bit more about dv01, exactly what you guys do and where is the name derived from?

Perry: Yeah. So, you could think of us as a data hub in the center of the markets, we interface with originators and issuers, all the banks that trade and underwrite deals and all the end investors that invest in them. And we have market data sets, securitization data and if you own your own loan portfolio all of that could be housed on dv01, but what we do a little bit differently than what existed was we're doing this across multiple asset classes and we're standardizing and cleansing all the data and then we've also built all the reporting and analytical tools that you need directly on top of it. So, you don't have to be buying data from one place, you know, storing them somewhere else and then having this workflow that might touch a number of different vendors who are kind of be a mess internally to handle.

So, you know, that's what we always envisioned was to have this one place for all the data sets because that was the biggest gap that I experienced in the market, it was just the availability of data. And then even if it's available, you know, how accessible is it in terms of like ease of use and being able to drive any kind of insights quickly and really having access to granular information but in a non-burdensome way. So, that's kind of what we're solving, we started with consumer unsecured which was a fintech asset class and that was where we kind of really, you know, a sector that really needed an infrastructure and we kind of met that and we've expanded it to some of the more traditional ones like mortgage, auto, solar is the new one that we're working on, single family residentials is another one so anything that's within the structure's product space.

The name dv01 is actually a finance term, it stands for the dollar value of a basis point so it's a fun term specifically so when you have a move of a basis point in rates which is something that's pretty meaningful these days, it's how much is the dollar price of the bond move with that basis point in the opposite direction and that's kind of how you figure out how you're supposed to hedge the security. So, that was the name, we kind of fell into it because trying to find a domain name for a company is actually one of the hardest things (Todd laughs) and this is the name of your company.
So, you know, we were down to acronyms and then it just hit me well, if we're using an acronym maybe we should kind of check this and dv01.co was open, dot com wasn't and then I guess a few years later the person that owns dot com realized that there's no other bid in the market (Todd laughs) so just trying to sell it a few times. But at this point, we've established ourselves as a dot co so we've given up on the dot com.

Todd: So, you know, I saw obviously there was some recent news, tell us about the recent news and what does that mean, you know, the acquisition by Fitch, what does that mean for dv01 and you, the team and while answering it, also what does it mean as a founder to have that type of validation for a name like Fitch to acquire you guys?

Perry: Yeah, there's a lot there. Well, first, what does it mean? It means that we are part of the Fitch & Hearst family, Fitch is owned by Hearst which is, you know, a private company, it's operated over 150 years, has a ton of different companies within the family across all walks of life. Media was originally where they got started, but they've expanded into a lot of different asset classes, Fitch being one of their biggest investments or purchases which they did over a number of years to finalize, you know, a number of years ago. It means that, you know, well, one, I tell this to all of our clients, now you don't have to worry dv01 going out of business (Todd laughs) which is one of the things we've always dealt with as a startup, that's off the table.

That's interesting to think about because that's, you know, one of the fears you have as a founder always that no matter how successful you are, it never goes away because things could happen very quick in the tech world. But, more importantly, it means that, you know, we're very lucky the way that we've structured this deal is to keep dv01 pretty much an independent company. We could think of it as like we operate within Fitch and we have kind of strategic alignment with them, we sell to a lot of the same customers, we're in the same market, we're advocating with investors. The business model is shockingly very kind of aligned and, you know, you make a lot of revenue or in our case, most of our revenue is selling to issuers but needing the advocacy of investors and there's other things that we could cross sell investors as well so they really understood that.

So, we have a partner that didn't want to kind of mess with our, you know, secret sauce as a startup and culture and growth, but really wants to facilitate that growth and help us with it and the brand is one of the best in the financial markets. I think the Fitch brand is really, really special and the place itself is really special. You know, there's countless people that I've engaged with there, they're super smart, super talented and have been there for 20+ years so, clearly, there is something in the water there that people really like and, you know, culture is such an important thing for dv01 that we sensed it immediately, like this would be a great home.

And the fact that they are kind of giving us the space, they kind of do this, continue on its path and for our employees and for our customers that means effectively nothing's really changing and you can ask for anything better when you're getting acquired. I think, you know, going through the process, we looked at a few other options that would have involved, you know, real integration and an existing business line which would have come with layoffs and, you know, would have meant like changing some strategic offering maybe or getting rid of some offerings which could affect some clients, like these are all difficult things that a founder would have to deal with normally and, you know, I'm pretty fortunate that I didn't have to deal with this thing or one of those things. So, you know, that's kind of what does it all mean both for customers and employees.

What does it mean for me as a founder? I mean, you know, it's kind of the thing that you always think about when you start a company, it's a very bizarre but amazing feeling to experience the day that you like think about every day for the prior amount of years and in my case, it was eight years since we started the company, effectively the acquisition. And, I guess, maybe the thing I had wrong about it is, you know, it was always like the final destination but it's not and that's the wrong way to think about it, like you get acquired and you just ride off into the sunset. (Todd laughs)

Todd: On to your next venture.

Perry: Yeah, I know. It's funny and I think a lot of people believe that because everyone asked me well, what are you doing next. I mean, maybe some businesses that are really kind of like more commerce-type businesses where it's just like another product line and the acquiror already has a better assembly line for everything that you want to do maybe, but for most fintech businesses I don't think that's going to be the case. I think, you know, the founder and the team is expected to stay along and in our case, we were given actually the resources to keep this going like as if we were a startup but not a startup in the sense, like all the benefits of a startup without like all the risk of a startup is kind of the environment that we have now.

For me, I realized I think, though this experience, that when I think of the vision that I've had from day one and continue to have and kind of how I see us being in the market and interacting with the market, this is just a step along the way that puts us in a better position and accomplish it because there's still a lot more we have to do and it was part of the calculus, like, you know, how effective are we going to be at doing this on our own versus having a bigger partner that could help us accomplish all that. That's what I'm locked in on, that's what the whole senior team is locked in on and I think it's telling when you don't lose a single person through an acquisition. The deal has been closed for a month now and we've retained everyone, and we're really excited about continuing this journey.

Todd: Back to what you guys actually do day-to-day, especially on the fintech side, how much since you began to where we are today has the fintech lending space evolved?

Perry: Well, I would say, you know, I would say it evolved a lot in probably the first five years and then I think it's kind of been pretty consistent the last three. I would say, you know, when we started the company it was 2014 and, you know, I came from a structured finance background of a bank and I have more of a mortgage background and I think ……I remember, when I would talk to clients or colleagues, often treated with a lot of skepticism about this asset class, you know, who's the person that's taking out a loan online or who are they originating these loans to, you know, I think these loans are going to be the first to default in any kind of remotely recessionary environment and so forth. I'd say it started with that skepticism and really catered to a bespoke universe of investors, it's become fairly commoditized. It is a mainstream Wall Street business just kind of like another structure product issue that we had and that was the view that we had and we knew what that looked like and we knew where the market was and we wanted to kind of build the infrastructure to support that vision which is where we're at today with it/

And then I think in many ways, I think maybe you could say some of the evolution has come more recently, it's about managing these downturns. I think COVID, you know, kind of put a lot of hair on people's chests, so to speak, right, it got hairy pretty quickly and I actually thought the response from this community versus more traditional issuers and servicers was head and shoulders above and how they managed that and how they, you know, obviously helped a lot or the relief packages for consumers helped a lot. But what we saw from the servicers and their ability to kind of quickly iterate, modify loans, work with borrowers, do that so much quicker than anyone else was pretty amazing.

I think now, we're going to see another….I think this is the proper recession that everyone has been talking about for the last eight years. COVID was a bleep for a minute and then there was a lot of money that came into the market, but this should be the next leg of the evolution for them, is really managing this downturn, how does performance hold up, how do they work with borrowers and how do they make adjustments and continue to get investors into the product and, you know, enough loans into borrowers' hands that they could support the businesses.

Todd: Do you think that having technology reporting and analytics that you guys provide help lenders and servicers deal with like a COVID or even a recession a lot better than say back when you were at Bear or back in the days of 2008/2009 which obviously came to a crashing halt. But what does it mean to have that type of intelligence and that type of actionable data when you said it yourself at the beginning it was hard to parcel out of that data back when you were at the banks?

Perry: Yeah. I've actually been saying this a lot lately and I'm not talking my own books, so to speak, here (Todd laughs), I genuinely believe this and what I've been saying to a lot of issuers because in fintech we have over 90% of the market so there's not really much of an audience to talk to that's not on the platform. So, you know, in the mortgage market we still have a lot of room for growth and what I say to those issuers is that when we saw this firsthand during COVID is that in an absence of transparency people assume the worst, right.

Todd: Yeah.

Perry: The narrative, when markets get really scary and volatile and you kind of have this….like people's minds go to really dark places in what's going to come and, you know, it's doomsday and it's all over. And if there's no information or information is not accessible to prove them wrong then they're going to go with that and that usually results in the selling of assets and not buying anything and then results in this kind of, you know, negative price pressures that send things down, trip different kinds of technical levels, result in more selling and it's kind of a cycle that goes and is tough to break. COVID was really an example of that because there you had a really bad scenario, people assume the worst, right, and with consumer unsecured that means these guys are the first to puke up and because we….I mean, I think these servicers and issuers are just ahead of the game data wise, we're getting nightly data from a lot of these counter parties, we were able to put out bi-weekly reports updating people on performance and you could do it in the app too.

There's a lot of transactions that are real-time on our platform like Lending Club club certificates, that's daily reporting, people who have loan portfolios were getting daily reporting and what you saw was that it wasn't getting worse and it was counter intuitive. For a while, we were all puzzled by it and then it started to make sense, right, you know, you know, there was a lot of stimulus, people had extra money, they stopped going out, they were saving money and actually, they weren't defaulting on anything. And so, very quickly things tightened up and I'd say the consumer market actually got straightened out faster than the non-QM mortgage market where it took a while for investors to know how servicers were engaging with the borrowers, what was going to be modified.

You know, one thing that we did with all the consumer issuers was basically talk to all of them and talk about how we're going normalize the modification reporting. It was so much easier for investors to understand what was happening in the consumer unsecured space than it was in the non-QM space and it took a year of ferocity to understand what was going on in the non-QM space and I think that's the reason. You know, you didn't see a single one of these consumer issuers go out of business during COVID and it was a pretty….you almost saw a bunch of mortgage companies go out of business, you didn't see a single one of the, what is thought of as a riskier consumer originator, even, you know, fork with it.

So now, we're in this imposition where the markets are really messy, but performance is actually not that bad and I think, you know, what we say to a lot of these mortgages was this, you should be telling your story out there, but if you're just doing it with your own PowerPoint and slides and stuff that you computed on your own, it's a little tougher for people to trust that and you should have a third party where the data is there and full charge from our platform and you see that in consumer world. A lot of issuers are fully in-charge off of dv01 comparing their performance to the benchmark and so forth, but more importantly, the investor community could do it all themselves and trust it that they're not being, you know, adversely selected, really friendly in-charge and, you know, it sure brings down the skepticism level.

Todd: Yeah. Obviously, we're talking about a potential recession, whether or not we're in one and what that might look like between now and the next year or two. You were working at banks back in 2008/2009 time period, you know, do you think that some of the lessons that were learned coming out of that will stop people from making some of the same mistakes they made back then and the technology advances we've had between now and then, we were touching on some of them, does that help potentially eliminate some of the mistakes that were made back then?

Perry: Well, I think it depends what market you look at. I would say in the mortgage market, for example, because that's a big one, I think it's going to be tough to repeat that just because that underwriting was really crazy and I think from a origination and underwriting standpoint there were some real lessons learned about what type of loans are we not getting into again. For the most part, even in a period of super easy money like the last two/three years, you didn't see that come back. In fact, maybe I'd say, you know, you saw people reaching on consumer underwriting a little bit more than the mortgage guys because the mortgage guys, you know, have been down that road before and maybe that's what the consumer people need to figure out, but on the technology side, you haven't really seen it with the mortgage people.

I think people are still stuck in their old ways and, you know, will hang their hat on the underwriting, I'm just saying well, you know, it's not the same type of loans and the performance is a lot better. Again, in any bad environment people become suspect about everything and you need to be able to give them that transparency so they can actually see what's happening. And even if the performance is bad, you know, even like we're seeing some pockets in consumer right now that aren't great and it might look bad for an issuer so this is where it began. Even in that performance I think it's important to have the data on dv01 or just a platform, make it transparent. It's because you could at least isolate where the bad performance is and put a box around it and say listen, our numbers, I see it, you know, a lot of these companies are public now are our clients, right, and they get crushed by the equity analyst, just talk about delinquencies across the whole platform in aggregate.

But that could be driven by a very specific segment of loans and what that does is it kind of throws it all out, you know, and makes it all look bad when in reality you could say, no, no, no, look, here's where the delinquencies are coming from, it's this demographic, we know exactly what's going on, we're handling it, we're changing pricing or we're not just originating for this type of borrower anymore. So, it allows you to kind of really focus the conversation around what's what as opposed to just overall delinquencies are up which just makes it look like everything is falling apart and that's usually not the case.

Todd: Since launching, what's the top two or top one lesson that you've learned since founding dv01 to, you know, say your time that you were acquired by Fitch.

Perry: Hmmm, I think about this question all the time and every time like when it gets asked, I kind of freeze because there's so many and I think on different days……listen, even on post-acquisition business is tough. You know, I guess maybe you could take some of the stress off the table that not everything is going to be kind of, you know, it's not an existential pride for the business. But I think one of the more important things is, for a founder specifically is and what served me really well, is that your own personal wellbeing is a huge component of your company's wellbeing. When you are the founder, you are kind of the life source or energy of the business to a degree, every interaction you have is under a microscope and sometimes you lose track of that because, you know, when the company is small it's like kind of there's not this life on the founder, it's like we're all…a few people in this room trying to throw this shit against the wall and make it work (Todd laughs).

And the next thing you know, as things grow, that's not the case, you're the CEO and for anyone that you're chatting with it's an interaction with the CEO. It's maybe one of the more meaningful interactions you're having that day or that week and if that's a bad one, because you were in a bad mood about something, or, you know, you lost your shit somewhere else or something like that, that has a way of spreading through the company. So, I always kind of, especially I think like the first year to your job is mostly doing because you're doing five different roles, because you start building a team your job goes from doing the thinking and when your job is more thinking you really have to make sure that your mind is in a pretty good place, otherwise, you're not going to think effectively and you're not going to be able to engage with people effectively.

So, my view, I would say, when people say, you know, what's one of your biggest responsibilities is just to make sure that every day I come into the office my head's, you know, screwed on right. And whether that means, you know, kind of like some sort of wellness practice mentally, physically, for me it's all of the above, you know, working out, meditating, all that kind of stuff so that I could be focused here and make sure that that's what I'm channeling into the company as opposed to being toxic to the business.

Todd: Is there a top regret since you've launched?

Perry: Top regret, maybe not self-funding the business a little bit more (both laugh), have more equity, kind of one of those things when, you know, I've dealt with this a lot recently, a bunch of my seed investors. I should have invested more, I go, well, tell me about it, I should have taken advantage, I should have just invested it myself, but no, I mean, the good, bad and the ugly is in my mind, I mean, all part of it, right. And I think there are times, if you're a founder listening to this and you're in one of those where it's really bad and you have some sort of regret or you think you messed something up, you have to realize that that's part of it and you won't understand why, but I apply that with my team and we've just gone through this period of doing a lot of reminiscing. You know, the good moments along the way, like you signed a big contract or, you know, you broke some revenue, I mean, you don't even really reminisce about those.

What you're reminiscing about usually when it works out at the end is all the different moments where it could all have fallen apart and funny, believe it or not, might be painful right now but at some point in the future they will be really funny and they will be the moments that you cherish the most with the people that you went through them with, whether they're still with the company or not. I've definitely, you know, done a lot of reminiscing with former employees too and, again, everyone has their role on the journey, I think, whether or not they're still at the company or they left or whatever. Having those kind of great, keeping those relationships in a good place is really meaningful because at the end of the day, you will look back on those moments together.

Todd: Speaking of people, what does the team look like today, how big is it, where are you guys located overall, tell us a bit more about those that are working with you at dv01.

Perry: Yeah. We're whoooo, I think we're, this number changes often, but I think we're in the 125 to 130 range, this probably would be approximate, we're all over. I think we still have a pretty big concentration in the Tri-State area of New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, we were a New York-based company pre-COVID with a pretty sizeable office space in New York and then COVID happened and people started moving a little bit. A lot of people that were in the city moved to the suburbs and then I even moved to Miami, but we were thinking about coming back to the office, but we just couldn't force people back to the office and we also couldn't hire in New York exclusively enough. You know, it's funny, it's a very different employment market now, but two years ago and a year ago, it was really, really tough. And so, we decided to go fully remote because we needed to and we also didn't want to try to make a return to the office because we just hired all these people that were not in New York and we didn't want to have kind of this like, you know, second class citizen type situation where you had a bunch of people in New York in an office and then, you know, remote employees.

We wanted to really make sure that we were building a remote first culture from the ground up. We have an office space in New York, we call it a clubhouse, it's not even really a full pledged office, there's nothing mandatory about it, people could just sign up and come as they please, we have some events there. Yeah, it's just a very different environment now and I'm not totally sure that the verdict will be on this. I think we're starting to see some, you know, remote fatigue, I would say, what am I even saying, I hear that from other people but within our company we haven't and I think people appreciate the freedom that they have, but I do think it's important to bring people together.

I'd say that's maybe the thing that I sense with our own place, it's not necessarily a fatigue from remote because they enjoy that freedom that they have there, but a desire to, you know, be around their co-workers a little bit more, but not necessarily through working in an office. We had an offsite that was amazing, we're having a holiday party and then we'll have different teams offsite so it takes work, it's definitely a lot more work to make sure the culture is right as opposed to when you're in an office, you could just be pretty lazy about it and just, this is our culture, it's whatever's happening in the office.

Todd: A lot more intentioned one, you're not with everyone on a daily basis.

Perry: Yeah, exactly. It is way more, I would say, engineer the culture than it is just kind of on its own, serendipitous.

Todd: You've obviously had a number of fundraising rounds, you had an acquisition, how different or what's something that you learned from those early fundraising days to the acquisition, kind of that evolution of alright, now I've got my business locked in, we have some traction versus one of just pitching this idea.

Perry: The sale process of the business is way different than a fundraising process, I mean, orders of magnitude are different in terms of depth and detail and in many ways, I think it'll still be helpful to understand what that process looks like. You know, one of the things I was thinking about when we were going through it and we worked with bankers, we were very fortunate that Jefferies was one of our investors and it actually happened to be phenomenal in the capital markets fintech space so it was a natural fit for us, but we worked with them three months before we really talked to anyone and getting the numbers right. When you're working with bankers and you understand what they're looking at to help kind of tell the story of the business, some of the staff were like wow, never really thought about the business this way.

I mean, it would have been helpful if maybe I knew this a few years ago and it would have changed maybe some of the metrics and KPIs we were looking at internally, sharing with our board so I think it just brings a level of discipline. So, I would think even if you don't really have intent of selling your business, chatting with bankers along the way just to kind of understand what they think potential acquirors would be looking for and how they are thinking about your business is really helpful because it's definitely, I'd say, different than we experienced during the venture capital raises.

I also think another thing is, again, we got really lucky that we didn't go through a formal process, this kind of all started because someone was interested and made us think about it and then go through this process with bankers and invited a select few, you know, I could have definitely done a better job having some of those relationships earlier on so knowing who your potential buyers are. We got really lucky Fitch was not someone we chatted with and in the eight years that I'd operated the business.

They were interestingly enough a client and so we had a commercial relationship with them, but we didn't really have a core dev relationship with them so there was kind of like this…it was a little fast and not usually how we operate, but I think we built a lot of trust and, you know, over a couple of months we really got to know each other and we felt culturally aligned and I think that gave everyone a lot of comfort. But, you know, there's no doubt it would only have helped if I had made some of those relationships a couple of years earlier and I don't know, as a founder you always kind to put it off, I'm not ready to sell, it doesn't work that fast.

Todd: Yeah.

Perry: So, you don't have to be ready to sell, this is all just about it's easier dealing with someone if you'd known them for a little bit longer. So, you know, don't worry, it doesn't bring extra workload to you, it's just literally managing the relationship.

Todd: Any fundraising horror stories?

Perry: (laughs) Yeah. I think every founder has a round that would, you know, scar them. For our Series A, we had a term sheet, we were negotiating it, it evaporated mid-negotiation. It actually started, we were talking to a strategic partner, they pulled us along, it didn't work out then got a term sheet from an investor that we were familiar with, we were negotiating it, it evaporated so then I had kind of a couple of months to start a formal process. I mean, it was the one where I talked to everyone out there and it seemed pretty dire, like it wouldn't get done and we got it done, we actually got it done.

We had three venture funds in that round, OCA Partners, Ribbit and Illuminate and so it became oversubscribed, but it's like, you know, your typical….. you have a lot of follow-on interest, but you need someone to lead it and finding that lead was the tough thing and OCA came in and lead that, but that was the round that really almost killed me personally. (Todd laughs) And then, you know, from there we were really lucky to pivot, investment partners came on, a little piece on that A as a follow-on, but then led the remainder of our round, the B round, and there was a few follow-on B's so it was really easy with them and we never really had to go to market again.

Our seed round was interesting too just because at that point, you know, we have a complicated product and I wasn't really good at pitching it yet and we had Soros in as a lead, but we tried to get other venture funds in and I just fumbled the ball every time trying to explain it to them. So, it ended up being Soros and then a bunch of my friends and family which now is great because they all did really well on the deal, also, we had one other investor, they were the only ones that got it because they come from a capital markets background. So, I would say, yeah, I mean, rounds were tough, I think fundamentally it's structured in a way which is really mentally difficult to deal with, you will hear, you know, 60 times more no's than yeses.

Todd: Yeah.

Perry: You know, 99% of the convos you have will lead to a no and I think earlier on that's a lot tougher to stomach because it's an idea. Maybe it gets easier as the business is …….

Todd: And you're trying to build that idea all at the same time while trying to pitch the idea.

Perry: Right. And I think when it's an idea in your mind, it's obviously a bit more sacred, right?

Todd: Yeah.

Perry: So, when someone kind of wants to, you know, say your sacred idea's not worth it, that hurts.

Todd: (laughs) Yeah.

Perry: And then, you know, I'd say it's a little bit different when you have a business and you have a revenue stream and you have a business model and everything and someone says no, it makes you insecure about, like is this going to fall apart, like maybe I have this wrong, I think it might be wrong, but it's tough. I mean, it's tough on both sides, right, and, you know, I think my advice, because now I also, you know, Fitch also has a venture group so I've been fortunate in chatting with some other founders that they're chatting with and I also talked to a lot of founders on my own. But one thing that I think I always was is, and I think it's important especially in this market, is being really authentic about what's working, what's not, what do you have, what don't you have. I think being on the other side, it's really tough to like, you know, there's a lot of people that just will present a really rosy story, but that's impossible.

Todd: Yeah.

Perry: Like you talk to one operator who, any part of their business is rosy and smooth, it just doesn't exist and if you're framing it like it is that way well then, we know that's not true and then it makes us suspicious about everything. I think I and my investors always kind if love this about me maybe, maybe too much was I was kind of worried on my sleeve who knew when things were going bad, I couldn't hide anything. You know, it's very clear things were going well or they were going bad and they're bound to go both ways, I'd say more up and up they're not going well and then we have these few moments when things were working and they're short-lived, enjoy those because they're very short-lived and boom, you get hit with more adversity.

Todd: We have just a couple of minutes left so I'd like to end a little bit lighter. Do you have a favorite book or the last book that you read.

Perry: The last book that I read, well, it's funny because I hop around books pretty frequently, so I don't like know when I actually finish something that I jump in and out of books, but right now, I'm reading this book called "The Divine Matrix," it's an interesting book if you're a spiritual person that's been out there. I'm also reading this book, I forget the title of it, but it's about the Shah of Iran and the history about Persia so it has some personal value for me. Was there a second part of that question?

Todd: Nope, that's good. I mean, you mentioned this book before in terms of unwinding and mental health, but meditation, I presume, is the thing we do to unwind and kind of step away.

Perry: Yeah, yeah, I think and look, there's a lot of different kinds of mediation, I've definitely done a ton of different things. Meditation and exercise, to me those two, you know, the exercise, especially if you do something strenuous, you're thinking about that and how you might not be able to survive whatever exercise you're doing and, you know, if that's what you're thinking. I'm thinking about work and you just need to shut if off in your head however which way you can. So, however that works for people, whether it's time with their family, whether it's meditating, exercises, reading, I don't know, but you just……because it's tough to shut the stuff off in your head and it really takes only a few things that could have the ability to do that.

Todd: Do you have a favorite sport or sports teams that you root for?

Perry: Yeah. I'd say the Yankees are my team. I mean, as brutal as that's been the last couple of years, but they are my favorite team. I would say, baseball, in general, isn't my favorite sport, but I find football and basketball way more fun to watch, but the Yankees are definitely my team and it's been a heartbreaking few years.

Todd: Do you have a favorite vacation spot?

Perry: I'm lucky, Miami is, I mean, every time I even travel out of Miami, I miss Miami which is a new phenomenon. (Todd laughs) I'm used to like, you know, living in New York, going on vacation somewhere and not wanting to come back, but if I had to pick a place outside of Miami that I go is probably Italy, you know, Amalfi Coast is a special place.

Todd: You mentioned, you know, you're Irani and have you ever been to Iran?

Perry: I did once, high school, 2000 was the year.

Todd: How was that?

Perry: It was an awesome experience. It's really an unfortunate thing, the country is an amazing place, the people are amazing, you know, most of the country is young and hate this government and you're seeing it. It was last month, the protest, particularly around women's rights so it's…. I can't even imagine what it would be like if it was just a normal country and people could go visit there and it wasn't like backwards like it is, but it's a beautiful culture and I'd love to go back sometime soon.

Todd: Final question. biggest inspiration in life?

Perry: Biggest inspiration in life, wow, I didn't even prepare for that question. What do you mean exactly?

Todd: What inspires you?

Perry: What inspires me? Helping people really, I think whether it's by actively helping people, whether it's, you know, doing stuff like this and people find value in something I said or something I post on Instagram, or whatever it is that, you know, maybe helps them in that day or over the course of their career which is nice. I got a message like that, some advice I gave someone really, you know, help them think about their career differently.

So, that's I think what keeps me going, specifically, for my employees too. You know, one of the things that we do is we're pretty transparent about the company, you know, we post all the board decks, any questions that we have, we don't really…other than comp, everything is pretty fair game. We want to, you know, and for me personally, I want to help people who might want to start their own businesses understand what it takes when I started the company, I don't know, it goes into a board deck and what we have to do or how we have to think about the business and so forth. So, you know, that's something that we specifically focus on within dv01 as well.

Todd: Well, Perry, thank you for taking a few minutes out of you day. If someone wanted to find you or find dv01, how can they do that, how can they reach out?

Perry: I'm perry@dv01.ceo and then dv01inc it has an Instagram if you want to reach out on our LinkedIn page, but feel free to email me.

Todd: Alright. Thank you again, good luck with the continued acquisition and hopefully, we'll get you back sometime in the future.

Perry: Love it, thank you so much