



S1E17

The Future is for the Originals

Season 1 Episode 17 Notes

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Episode Synopsis

On the road to Protein Foundry in Daybreak, Ash Ram of Weapon joins Coby over protein shakes to talk about what separates work that lasts from work that fades. From becoming a single dad to twins to building brands for Qualtrics, Boom, and the largest surf park in the world, Ash makes the case that great creative has never been about tools or trends. It's about strategy, storytelling, and having the nerve to be different on purpose.

Ash also shares his perspective on AI and the future of the creative industry, arguing that a higher bar is exactly what makes this the best possible time to do original work. Along the way, he reflects on giving people grace, why relationships have seasons, how he teaches teenagers to charge what their ideas are worth, and why he's watching blue collar while everyone else stares at Silicon Slopes.

About

Ash Ram



Highlights

- Ash has served as president of Weapon Agency in Lehi, Utah, since 2011, leveraging a 15-year career to shape identities for major brands like Skullcandy, Sony, and Qualtrics.
- He advocates for "grace" in parenting, leadership, and life, emphasizing that all relationships—whether personal or professional—have seasons, and bridges should be strengthened rather than burned.
- As the founder of Creative Academy, a nonprofit for youth, he focuses on practical creative training, helping the next generation understand the value of their ideas and how to effectively present them in professional settings.

Expertise

- Ash possesses a deep mastery of brand storytelling, operating on the conviction that customers do not buy products or services, but rather the story they tell themselves about those purchases.
- He utilizes hands-on strategy exercises, such as "Price Poker" to teach value-based negotiation and "shelf analysis" to ensure clients achieve meaningful differentiation in crowded markets.
- With a diverse background spanning environmental design and brand strategy, he bridges the gap between artistic vision and commercial ROI, coaching teams to solve problems with strategic "big ideas" rather than mere execution.

Related Links

- [Connect with Ash on LinkedIn](#)
- [About Sweet Takes](#)

Show Notes

In This Episode

- The case for seasonality in relationships, careers, and clients, and why respect matters more than agreement
- Strengthen a bridge instead of burning it, because people leave and come back
- How Ash defines great creative: timeless, enduring, and always built on real strategy
- Why every brand needs a villain, and how the Allstate Mayhem campaign personified the frustrations of insurance
- The role tone of voice plays when every competitor is saying the same thing
- Why a \$4 million Park City condo and a local med spa are selling the exact same thing
- Coby's framework for aspiration, catalyst, and conviction, and why people buy the story they tell themselves
- How Weapon moved Boom from "modest" to a fashion brand through photography, packaging, and store design
- Creative Academy, Ash's charity teaching high school kids how to build a career in creativity
- Ash's sweet take on AI: why the future belongs to the originals and imitation isn't innovation
- Brands are living things that need guide rails rather than control
- The pitch Ash made to Vivint a decade ago involving a drone that deploys from your roof
- Why the next big opportunities are in blue collar, environmental design, and real world problems

Memorable Quotes

- "The future is for the originals."
- "People don't buy products or services. People buy the story they tell themselves about a product or service."
- "Learn to respect the relationship. It doesn't mean that you have to agree."
- "Brands are living, breathing things."
- "How you see the world is how you free the world."

Key Takeaways

- Respect the relationship even when you don't agree. Employees, clients, and collaborators leave and come back, so strengthen the bridge instead of burning it.
- Great creative endures, but it's never just aesthetic. It's built on strategy that solves a real problem.
- Every brand needs a villain. The Allstate Mayhem campaign worked because it personified the frustrations of insurance and gave customers something to root against.
- Storytelling is the whole game, whether you're selling a \$4 million Park City condo or a med spa appointment.
- Tone of voice is what separates you from competitors saying the exact same thing.
- Brands are living, breathing things. Like kids, you give them guide rails and let them become what they're meant to be.
- People don't buy products or services. They buy the story they tell themselves about a product or service.