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TITLE: Jon Armstrong Field Interview
AIR DATE: May 16, 2008, 8:30 PM
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TRANSCRIPT

LIZ

00:02

MAKE BELIEVE, THINK ABOUT THAT YOUNG WOMAN OR OLD LADY AT HOME WHO WATCHES KUED WHO HAS NEVER HEARD OF YOU AND WHAT YOU DO OR DOOCE.COM...GIVE US SOME INSIGHT INTO YOUR LIFE.

JOHN

00:47

I AM JON ARMSTRONG, AND I AM THE HUSBAND OF HEATHER ARMSTRONG, AND SHE IS THE MAIN CREATIVE TALENT BEHIND DOOCE.COM. AND I MET HER ABOUT ELEVEN YEARS AGO IN SALT LAKE CITY, SHE WAS A WRITER AND I WAS AN ART DIRECTOR AT A MAGAZINE, AND OUR PATHS CROSSED AGAIN IN 2001 IN LOS ANGELES, AND WE GOT TOGETHER AND GOT MARRIED IN 2002 AND...SHE HAD STARTED HER WEBSITE IN 2001 AND I WAS FAMILIAR WITH IT; AS A FRIEND SHE SAID, "HEY, I'M DOING THIS." AND IT WAS AMAZING, THE WRITING WAS REALLY GOOD. I WAS REALLY IMPRESSED. LATER THAT YEAR WE GOT TOGETHER AND STARTED A RELATIONSHIP AND MARRIED IN 2002 AND BOTH OF US LOST OUR JOBS. AND WE CAME BACK TO UTAH TO START OUR LIVES OVER. WE WERE ABLE TO GET INTO A HOUSE AND START A FAMILY. WE'RE BACK IN UTAH NOW; WE LOVE SALT LAKE CITY, WE'RE HAPPY TO BE HERE. WE LOVE IT HERE.

LIZ

01:45

BLOGGING AS A HOBBY IS ONE THING, AS YOUR LIVELIHOOD IS A WHOLE OTHER MATTER. EXPLAIN THE PRESSURES THAT CAME WITH THAT DECISION TO QUIT THE DAY JOB.

JOHN

02:11

I HAVE A KIND OF A MIXED BACKGROUND. I'M A CREATIVE GUY WHO DOES WEB DESIGN AND ART DIRECTION. BUT I ALSO WORKED FOR A MARKETING FIRM IN SAN FRANCISCO, AND I GOT TO LEARN THE OTHER SIDE OF IT, THE MEDIA ASPECT OF IT, HOW MONEY IS MADE ON THE INTERNET. THAT TRAINING HELPED ME SEE THAT HEATHER HAD A SUCCESSFUL WEBSITE THAT COULD MAKE SOME MONEY. SO SHE DIPPED HER TOE IN 2004 WITH TEXT ADS FROM GOOGLE, AND THAT GAVE A NICE SORT OF SEMI-PART-TIME INCOME FOR HEATHER. BUT AS THAT YEAR PASSED WE KEPT GETTING INTEREST FROM GRAPHIC ADVERTISERS, AND HEATHER DIDN'T WANT TO DO IT, AND I KEPT

TELLING HER THAT I THINK WE COULD MAKE SOME REALLY GOOD MONEY IF WE DID THIS. I THINK WE COULD REALLY DO WELL, AND MAYBE I COULD QUIT MY JOB SOMETIME AND COME HOME AND HELP YOU, AND WE COULD GO A DIFFERENT DIRECTION WITH OUR LIVES. AND SHE WAS NOT TOO THRILLED WITH THAT IDEA AND IT TOOK A WHILE. AND ONE OF THE AD NETWORKS GAVE HER SOME NUMBERS AND SO WE WERE, "OK, MAYBE WE SHOULD GIVE IT A TRY." AND WITH IT CAME A TON OF INTEREST FROM OTHER PEOPLE. SO WE STARTED HAVING ALL OF THESE PHONE CALLS. SO I'M AT MY DAY JOB JUMPING INTO CONFERENCE ROOMS WITH MY CELL PHONE HAVING CONFERENCE CALLS WITH HEATHER AND AD NETWORKS AND TALKING ABOUT NUMBERS. AND I CAN'T REMEMBER IF WE HAD A FIRST CHECK, OR IF WE JUST DECIDED TO GO...I'M A LITTLE FOGGY BECAUSE...IT WAS IN THE FALL OF 2005 THAT I DECIDED THAT I COULD QUIT MY JOB AND I THINK THAT WE HAD ONE CHECK THAT WAS A SIZABLE CHECK, THAT WAS, I MEAN, IT WASN'T MY SALARY BUT IT WAS A GOOD SIZED CHECK THAT MADE US DECIDE "HEY, MAYBE WE COULD DO THIS." SO FROM THERE, IT'S JUST GONE CRAZY. WE PARTNERED WITH A GREAT AD NETWORK OUT OF SAN FRANCISCO AND THEY SELL ADS FOR US, THEY TAKE A CUT AND GIVE US THE REST. IT'S WORKED OUT REALLY WELL...IT WAS SUPER STRESSFUL THE FIRST YEAR I WOULD SAY, NOT KNOWING FOR SURE IF IT WOULD WORK. HEATHER'S SITE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST PERSONAL SITES TO ACCEPT THOSE KINDS OF ADS, THE GRAPHIC ADS. THERE WERE OTHERS WHO DID DO IT, BUT THEY WERE MORE GROUP WEBSITES, GROUP BLOGS. AND HEATHER'S WAS REALLY THE FIRST SORT OF PERSONAL SITE WITH A PERSONAL VOICE TO DO IT, SO SHE TOOK A LOT OF HEAT; THERE WAS THAT KIND OF PRESSURE. LIKE THE COMMUNITY BACKLASH I GUESS..."YOU'RE SELLING OUT, YOU'RE PUTTING ADS UP, THAT'S GOING TO BE TERRIBLE FOR YOUR SITE, YOUR VOICE IS GOING TO BE DESTROYED BY THE CORPORATE INTERESTS AND YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO CONTINUE WHAT YOU'VE GOT." AND THOSE ARE VALID CONCERNS BUT IT'S SOMETHING THAT HEATHER'S BEEN VERY CAREFUL WITH, AND I'VE BEEN CAREFUL WITH, AND ANY TIME AN ADVERTISER APPROACHES US WE'RE, WE ALWAYS CONSIDER WHAT A PERSON COMING TO THE WEBSITE WHAT THEY'RE WILLING TO PUT UP WITH. AND WE DON'T WANT TO GIVE THEM SOMETHING THAT CREATES A NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE IN TERMS OF ANNOYING ADS OR AN ANNOYING EXPERIENCE. YOU MIGHT BE ANNOYED BY THE WORDS OR WHATEVER, BUT NOT THE ADS. YOU MIGHT BE OFFENDED BY THE WORDS, LET ME PUT IT THAT WAY...OFFENDED BY THE WORDS. BUT NOT THE AD SHOULDN'T BE A PART OF THAT, LIKE "THE WHOLE THING DRIVES ME CRAZY!" IT SHOULDN'T BE LIKE THAT; THE WHOLE THING SHOULD BE A PLEASANT EXPERIENCE, EVEN IF YOU DISAGREE.

LIZ

05:40

IT STRUCK ME AS VERY SUBTLE. DO YOU THINK THAT BLOGGING HAS BECOME A NEW FORM OF WRITING? WITH THE AMOUNT OF TIME YOU BOTH ARE PUTTING INTO DOOCE.COM, DO YOU THINK THAT THE BLOGGING FORMAT DOES NOT GET AS MUCH CREDIT AS IT DESERVES?

JOHN

06:07

I WOULD SAY THAT DEFINITELY IT'S A NEW FORM, IT'S A UNIQUE WAY IN WHICH IT'S DONE THAT IS DIFFERENT THAN SAY A NEWSPAPER COLUMN OR A RADIO SHOW OR ANY OTHER MEDIA. I THINK THE NEWSPAPER COLUMN IS PROBABLY THE CLOSEST. BUT IT'S A QUICKER RESPONSE. YOU PUBLISH YOUR THING OUT THERE AND YOU GET RESPONSE IMMEDIATELY. EITHER IN YOUR COMMENTS, IF YOU HAVE COMMENTS ENABLED, OR THROUGH EMAIL. SO YOU GET QUICK USER FEEDBACK ON WHATEVER YOU'VE POSTED, EVEN IF YOU DON'T HAVE A LOT OF READERS, SOMEBODY IS GOING TO FIND IT AND GIVE YOU FEEDBACK. SO I THINK THERE IS A NEW DYNAMIC BETWEEN A CREATIVE PERSON AND THEIR AUDIENCE. AND I THINK THAT THAT DYNAMIC IS WHAT MAKES BLOGGING DIFFERENT. SO, YES, I THINK IT'S A NEW MEDIUM, I THINK IT DOESN'T GET THE CREDIT IT DESERVES IN THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA PARTICULARLY. IT'S KIND OF A DEROGATORY OR PEJORATIVE SENSE ABOUT BLOGGERS. IT'S ALWAYS SORT OF "THEY'RE JUST BLOGGERS...BLOGGERS..." THE WORD SORT OF LENDS ITSELF TO THE READING. BUT WHAT'S BEEN INTERESTING IS THAT MOST MAINSTREAM MEDIA OUTLETS NOW HAVE BLOGGERS ON STAFF OR LIKE A BIG NETWORK, YOU ARE AN ANCHOR ON A SHOW, YOU HAVE A BLOG. MAYBE YOU DON'T WRITE IT, BUT YOU HAVE A BLOG. SO BLOGS ARE SORT OF BEING CO-OPTED BY THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA AND SORT OF...OVER HERE, AND OVER HERE THEY ARE STILL "OH, BLOGS!" SO IT'S KIND OF A FUNNY TIME RIGHT NOW. I THINK OVER TIME WE'LL SEE MORE VOICES EMERGE FROM BLOGGING WHO WILL GO ON TO DO OTHER THINGS AND BIGGER THINGS. OTHER MEDIA, BOOKS, MOVIES, THAT KIND OF STUFF.

LIZ

08:18

LOTS OF STUFF ABOUT YOUR PERSONAL LIFE HAS BEEN REVEALED THROUGH THIS BLOG. HAS THAT CHANGED THE WAY YOU INTERACT WITH PEOPLE YOU'VE MET WHO KNOW YOU BLOG? WHAT HAS THAT BEEN LIKE TO DEAL WITH?

JOHN

08:28

WHEN I WORKED AT AN OFFICE IT WAS KIND OF AWKWARD, BECAUSE PEOPLE WOULD COME UP TO ME, AND I NEVER, EVER TOLD ANYBODY I WORKED WITH THAT MY WIFE HAS THIS WEBSITE AND THIS IS HOW YOU FIND IT. WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IS THEY WOULD SAY "I HEARD YOUR WIFE HAS A WEBSITE" MAYBE IT WAS A WORD-OF-MOUTH THING, AND I'M LIKE "YEAH, I DON'T LIKE TO GIVE THAT OUT, IF YOU WANT TO GO FIND IT, YOU KNOW HOW TO USE THE...I'M NOT GOING TO..." AND THEN, INEVITABLY, A FEW DAYS LATER, THEY'D "HEY, READ YOUR WIFE'S SITE..." AND THEY'D KIND OF JUST STAND THERE AND [PROBABLY MAKES GESTURE]. SO IT WAS A LITTLE BIT AWKWARD AT TIMES, SOMETIMES IT WAS A BIT SURPRISING BECAUSE PEOPLE I THOUGHT WOULD BE MAYBE JUDGMENTAL OR UNCOMFORTABLE WOULD, IT WOULD START A DIALOGUE BETWEEN US. IT WOULD BE POSITIVE. THERE WOULD BE TIMES WHERE SHE HAD WRITTEN ABOUT THINGS THAT MAKE ME UNCOMFORTABLE ANYWAY, IN A PROFESSIONAL SETTING IT IS VERY WEIRD TO GO "DOES THIS PERSON READ ABOUT THE TIME I WAS SITTING IN MY UNDERWEAR IN FRONT OF THE COMPUTER? DID THEY READ THAT?" YEAH. AND SO, YOU'RE A LITTLE BIT...IT DIDN'T CHANGE HOW I WAS OR CHANGE, YOU KNOW. IF I WAS REALLY UNCOMFORTABLE, I THINK HEATHER AND I HAVE

A RELATIONSHIP WHERE I COULD TELL HER AND I THINK SHE WOULD TEMPER IT IN SOME WAY OR NOT WRITE ABOUT IT. AND WE'VE HAD TO WORK AT IT OVER TIME. I MEAN, THAT DIDN'T JUST HAPPEN, THAT WAS SOMETHING THAT...HEATHER LIKES TO PUSH BOUNDARIES, AND I LIKE TO BE SUPER VICTORIAN SOMETIMES. SO, WE GO BACK AND FORTH WITH THAT SORT OF THING. NOW I THINK WE'RE IN A GOOD PLACE WITH THAT.

LIZ

10:10

DO YOU WORRY ABOUT THE SAFETY ISSUES? HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH THAT?

JOHN

10:23

WELL, MY LAWYER TOLD ME TO RESPOND TO THE SECURITY QUESTION WITH WE HAVE A STAFF OF TRAINED MARTIAL ARTS EXPERTS THAT SHADOW US AND HAVE BEEN ISSUED SPECIAL RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES TO BREAK AND OR SEVER LIMBS. THAT'S WHAT THE LAWYERS WANT ME TO SAY. EXCEPT THEY WOULD ALSO WANT ME TO SAY THAT WE REALLY DON'T HAVE THAT. BUT IN MY MIND WE DO. I THINK THAT WE'RE ALWAYS MINDFUL OF SECURITY. WE'RE VERY CAREFUL ABOUT...HEATHER'S VERY CAREFUL ABOUT WHAT SHE WRITES ABOUT. VERY CAREFUL ABOUT WHAT SHE SAYS ON THE WEBSITE. AND THERE ARE CERTAIN STEPS WE HAVE TAKE TO BUILD THAT BARRIER. THAT'S ONE OF THOSE THINGS ABOUT BLOGGING IS THE BARRIERS. A LOT OF THE BARRIERS THAT YOU HAVE IN SAY NEWSPAPER ORGANIZATION OR A TV NEWS CREW IS THAT THERE ARE BARRIERS BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR VOICE...AND THE PUBLIC. THERE'S CORPORATION, THERE'S EDITORS AND THERE'S ALL THESE OTHER LAYERS, AND YOU MAY EVEN HAVE ON STAFF GENERAL COUNCIL, OR VERY EXPENSIVE LAWYERS THAT CAN STEP IN AT ANY POINT. YOU ALSO HAVE SOME LEGAL PRECEDENT ON YOUR SIDE, AND CONSTITUTIONALITY ON YOUR SIDE. SOME OF THOSE ISSUES WITH BLOGGERS ARE STILL BEING DETERMINED. SO THERE'S A LITTLE BIT OF A WILD WEST KIND OF THING WHERE SOME OF THOSE BARRIERS ARE REMOVED. AND PEOPLE FEEL MORE CONNECTED TOO. SO THERE'S KIND OF A DELICATE BALANCE THERE. YOU WANT TO SHOW YOUR LIFE AND BE OPEN AND HONEST, BUT YOU WANT...YOU HAVE FAMILY MEMBERS THAT YOU WANT TO PROTECT, AND YOURSELF AS WELL. AND OUR CHILD ALSO, OBVIOUSLY. BUT WE'VE BEEN VERY FORTUNATE AND HAVE NOT HAD ANY MAJOR INCIDENT.

LIZ

12:22

CERTAINLY THERE'S SOME EMOTIONAL ISSUES AS WELL. SOME PEOPLE HAVE NOT BEEN PLEASANT IN THE WAY THEY COMMENT AND RESPOND TO THE BLOG. HOW HAVE YOU DEALT WITH THESE COMPLETE STRANGERS WHO SOMETIMES SAY THESE THINGS ABOUT PEOPLE YOU KNOW AND LOVE?

JOHN

12:46

WHEN THE FIRST BAD COMMENTS STARTED IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT TO NOT TAKE T

HEM PERSONALLY, NOT BE REALLY UPSET BY THEM OR TAKE THEM AS SOME SORT OF ATTACK. AND THROUGH THE YEARS THE PATTERNS THAT HAVE EMERGED THROUGH THOSE COMMENTS, AND PART OF THIS IS WE'RE BIG BELIEVERS IN THERAPY...TALK THERAPY AND WORKING THROUGH STUFF WITH A THERAPIST...WE BELIEVE THAT IT'S A GREAT WAY TO PROGRESS IN YOUR LIFE. SO IN OUR OWN THERAPY AND I THINK BEING ABLE TO LOOK AT THESE THINGS ALMOST DETACHED. I MEAN, YOU ARE STILL CONNECTED TO THEM, BECAUSE THEY ARE ATTACHED TO YOUR WORK, RIGHT? THIS IS MY WIFE'S WORK; YOU ARE SAYING AWFUL THINGS ABOUT MY WIFE OR MY DAUGHTER OR MY DOGS, OR WHATEVER...OR ME. BUT REALLY WHAT'S HAPPENING IS PEOPLE BRING THEIR OWN THINGS TO THE TABLE AND A LOT OF PROJECTION HAPPENS WHERE HEATHER TOUCHES A NERVE AND THEY FEEL A NEED TO RESPOND TO THAT. BUT IT'S TOUCHED A NERVE IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEIR RESPONSE IS COMING FROM A PLACE NOT OF GENUINE CONCERN OR A SORT OF CRITICAL DISLIKE, IT'S COMING FROM "I HAVE MAJOR ISSUES AROUND WHAT YOU JUST WROTE ABOUT AND IT JUST SCARES ME AND I HAVE TO TELL YOU YOU'RE AWFUL AND TERRIBLE AND WHATEVER." AND I THINK THAT'S ONE EXAMPLE OR A KIND OF EXAMPLE OF COMMENT. AND BEING ABLE TO SEE THAT HAS TAKEN SOME TIME, BUT THAT'S WHERE I AM NOW IS I LOOK AT THESE COMMENTS AND IT'S...LARGELY THEY'RE DONE BY ANONYMOUS PEOPLE WHO DON'T HAVE THEIR OWN WEBSITES, THEY DON'T GIVE REAL EMAIL ADDRESSES, AND THEY'VE CLOAKED THEIR IP ADDRESS SO YOU CAN'T REALLY DETERMINE WHERE THEY'RE COMING FROM. I MEAN WE COULD PROBABLY...IF WE REALLY WANTED TO WE COULD SPEND THE TIME WE COULD FIND OUT WHERE THEY WERE BUT IT'S JUST NOT EVEN WORTH IT. I MEAN, THAT KIND OF ENERGY IS NOT EVEN WORTH IT. JUST DELETE AND MOVE ON. BECAUSE IT'S OBVIOUS THEY'VE GOT ISSUES AND WE CAN'T HELP THEM WITH THAT, THEY ARE GOING TO HAVE TO HELP THEMSELVES. SO I SUPPOSE THE BIG THING TO SAY WOULD BE "HERE ARE SOME PLACES YOU COULD GO TO GET SOME HELP" BUT EVEN THAT WOULD BE MISTAKEN AND DISREGARDED AND WHATEVER. IT'S JUST BETTER TO JUST PUSH THE DELETE BUTTON.

LIZ

15:11

IT'S NOT WORTH YOUR TIME OR ENERGY.

JOHN

15:11

RIGHT. AND THERE'S OTHER THINGS WE'RE TRYING TO DO SO IT'S JUST BETTER TO MOVE ON AND FIND THE POSITIVE AND FIND THE HUMOR AND HOPE THAT THESE PEOPLE WHO SEEM TO BE VERY UPSET GET THE HELP THEY NEED.

LIZ

15:25

IS THERE A DEEPER STORY THAT IS EVOLVING ON OR ABOUT THE SITE THAT WE COULD BE MISSING?

JOHN

15:36

I THINK THAT, AND THIS IS TRUE OF ALL TECHNOLOGY. WHEN COMPUTERS FIRST CAME OUT, EVERYBODY COULD BE A DESIGNER. EVERYBODY COULD BE A WRITER...WITH A COMPUTER IT MADE IT EASIER TO WRITE AND EASY TO DESIGN SUPPOSEDLY. BUT AS WITH MOST TOOLS, TO BE REALLY GOOD AT IT YOU STILL HAD TO DO THE WORK. THERE'S NO, THE COMPUTER ISN'T THE MAGIC WAND. I MEAN, I GUESS POWERPOINT IS THE MAGIC WAND. BUT ASIDE FROM POWERPOINT, I WOULD SAY THAT THE BIGGEST THING THAT PEOPLE DON'T UNDERSTAND, AND I WOULD SAY THIS ABOUT ANY CREATIVE ENDEAVOR, BUT BLOGGING IN PARTICULAR, IT'S SO EASY TO POST SOMETHING, AND SO QUICK AND SO IMMEDIATE, YOU LOSE SIGHT THAT THERE IS WORK BEHIND THIS. HEATHER HAS TAKEN TIME TO CRAFT A STORY, AND IT IS SOMETHING THAT I AT FIRST WHEN I READ HER SITE ALL THOSE YEARS AGO, I DON'T EVEN THINK THAT I PICKED UP ON THAT. I WAS ONLY "SHE IS REALLY FUNNY." BUT IT TOOK HER A LONG TIME TO CRAFT THAT, AND PEOPLE WANT TO DISMISS THAT OR THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT THAT QUALITY OF WORK TAKES TIME. SO I THINK THAT'S THE BIGGEST THING THAT PEOPLE DON'T SEEM TO UNDERSTAND. TO WRITE WELL, AND TO TAKE GOOD PHOTOS, TAKES TIME. YOU CAN THROW ANYTHING UP, BUT TO BE GOOD, YOU HAVE TO SLOW DOWN AND TAKE YOUR TIME AND CRAFT IT AND REALLY DO A GREAT JOB OF CRAFTING. I THINK IT'S THE NOTION OF TALENT IS SOMEHOW NOT PART OF THE DISCUSSION. THAT SHE JUST MAGICALLY DOES THIS. SHE'S TALENTED. AND I THINK THAT'S ONE OF THE BIGGEST REASONS FOR HER SUCCESS, THAT SHE'S A TALENTED AND CREATIVE WRITER AND PHOTOGRAPHER. SHE TELLS A GREAT STORY IN WORDS AND PICTURES, AND THAT TALENT IS HUGELY INSPIRING TO ME AND I KNOW IT'S A LITTLE SHMOOPY BUT IT'S TRUE. I THINK THAT'S SOMETHING THAT PEOPLE TEND TO OVERLOOK OR THEY DON'T REALLY TOUCH ON. IT'S ALWAYS THE HOT BUTTON SORT OF CONTROVERSIAL THINGS OR "SHE WROTE ABOUT THIS, AND I DON'T AGREE WITH IT." I THINK IT'S HARDER TO SIT AND STOP AND GO "YOU KNOW WHAT? THIS TAKES TALENT." AND I THINK IN OUR CULTURE THAT'S NOT ENCOURAGED EITHER, IN OUR GO-GO CULTURE, ESPECIALLY ON THE INTERNET, WE REALLY KIND OF DISREGARD THAT. AND I THINK THAT, NOT JUST IN HEATHER'S CASE, BUT WITH A LOT OF CREATIVE THINGS THAT ARE HAPPENING IN THE WORLD TODAY, PEOPLE OVERLOOK THE NOTION OF TALENT. SO I THINK THAT'S A BIG PART OF THE STORY THAT NO ONE'S REALLY TOUCHED ON TOO MUCH.

LIZ

18:13

RECENTLY YOU'VE HAD "CELEBRITY" INTRODUCED IN YOUR LIFE. HAS IT BEEN OVERWHELMING, AND AT THE END OF THE DAY IS IT ALL WORTH IT?

JOHN

18:37

I THINK THAT PART OF THIS IS...I DON'T THINK HEATHER OR MYSELF EXPECTED US TO BE WHERE WE ARE TODAY. I DON'T THINK WE EXPECTED THE ATTENTION, I THINK WE EXPECTED SOME TRAFFIC AND SOME READERS TO SAY, "THAT WAS REALLY GOOD AND FUNNY AND INTERESTING AND YOU SHOULD READ IT" AND THAT THAT WOULD KIND OF GROW. BUT THE MEDIA INTEREST AS OF LATE HAS BEEN UNBELIEVABLE. IT'S ALMOST LIKE YOU READ ABOUT STUFF IN THE MEDIA AS A READER, BUT NOW WHAT YOU'RE

TAKING PART OF, AND YOU ARE PART OF IT. THAT CHANGE IS KIND OF A SHOCK. BEING, WAKING UP EARLY FIVE DAYS IN A ROW AND SORT OF "BEING ON" THAT I THINK IS VERY DRAINING, BECAUSE WE'RE NOT USED TO IT. WE'RE NOT USED TO WHERE YOU HAVE TO BE IN MOTION TO DO THAT. AT LEAST I'M NOT USED TO IT, AND SO THAT I THINK IS A CHALLENGE. BUT I CAN'T COMPLAIN ABOUT IT BECAUSE I LIVE AN AMAZINGLY CHARMED LIFE. I GET TO WORK WITH MY WIFE, WE GET TO WORK OUT OF OUR HOUSE, AND WE CAN GO WHEREVER WE WANT WHENEVER WE WANT AS LONG AS WE CAN AFFORD IT. THAT KIND OF FREEDOM IS RARE AND I CHERISH THAT FREEDOM AND I'M BLOWN AWAY BY IT. AND I'M ALSO VERY MOVED BY THE SUPPORT THAT WE'VE GOTTEN FROM READERS. COMPLETE STRANGERS, PEOPLE WE'VE NEVER MET, HAVE SAID THE NICEST THINGS, AND DONE THE NICEST THINGS FOR US. AND IT'S REALLY...FOR ALL THE MEAN COMMENTS AND ALL THE CRAPPY EMAILS, THAT'S REALLY WHERE THE POWER OF THIS COMES THROUGH IS WHEN YOU KNOW...HEATHER HAS WRITTEN SOMETHING THAT HAS TOUCHED SOMEONE'S LIFE, AND THAT I AS HER HUSBAND AND HELPER AM ENABLING THAT FOR HER. I'M HELPING HER WITH THAT, AS SHE ENABLES ME TO HAVE THE LIFE I HAVE. AND IT'S JUST BEAUTIFUL, IT'S REALLY A BEAUTIFUL THING AND IT'S A BEAUTIFUL PARTNERSHIP. SO I CAN'T COMPLAIN TOO MUCH ABOUT THE MEDIA EXPOSURE. I THINK I MIGHT NEED TO START TAKING SLEEPING PILLS OR SOMETHING CAUSE I AM JUST EXHAUSTED, AND I WANT TO BE NICE AND UP AND EVERYTHING, I'M JUST NOT POLISHED OR PREPARED.