Matt Bowles: My guest today is Grace Kwan, better known as Ori. She is a designer and engineer, writer, world traveler and the co-founder of Orca, a leading decentralized exchange protocol on the Solana blockchain with over $250 million of total value locked and over 200 million in daily trading volume. Ori is best known for her ability to turn complex systems into simple user experiences which has made Orca well known for user friendly approach to web3. Before taking an unexpected dive into crypto, she got her bachelor's and master's degree in computer science from Stanford and then worked as an interaction designer and a software engineer before taking the entrepreneurial leap to co-found Orca on the side. She also dabbles as a food writer and photographer and her work has been published in Gastro Obscura. Orey is also a full-time digital nomad who runs her business while traveling the world with no permanent base completely remotely.

Ori, welcome to the show.

Ori Kwan: Matt, thank you so much for this very flattering intro.

Matt Bowles: You deserve a flattering intro. I am so excited that we were able to put this interview together and I'm super excited for our conversation. But let's just begin by setting the scene. Unfortunately, you and I are not in person today. So, let's talk about where we are recording from today. I actually in the city of Kali in Colombia, in South America. And you are in a very different time zone. Where are you, Ori?

Ori Kwan: I am in Tokyo.

Matt Bowles: Well, I have to tell you that Tokyo is one of my all-time favorite cities on the planet of Earth. I have been there about three different times. I spent about a month or so in Tokyo, and then I went back and I spent about a month or so in Osaka, and then I went back and I spent about a month or so in Kyoto. And I keep making, even when I'm in another city, I always go to Tokyo to visit because it's just so epic. But it is unlike any city in the world. And I would love for you to share a little bit, maybe just starting there, about Tokyo, because you have spent a lot of time in Tokyo, maybe just share a little bit about your relationship with Tokyo. And then for people that have never been, what is it like and what do you love about Tokyo?

Ori Kwan: Ooh, that's a toughie. There's just so much I could say. I guess I would start by saying that I think of Tokyo as my chosen home. I think that's something we'll end up talking about a lot, is that sense of intentionality and choice. You know, I'm American, I grew up in New York, in the suburbs. I'm Chinese American, in fact. But Tokyo, I think, is the first place that I've really felt this sense of home and of belonging. And that's come from the pretty much past three years that I've spent living here, living in a very international expat community before becoming a digital nomad.

And although I'm just here for a short visit this time, every time I come back, I do feel like that sense of home in terms of, I guess, what makes Tokyo special. Japan has been able to maintain, I think, a lot, a very distinct and unique culture, which comes from this pride, I think, that they have, and a lot of intentionality in terms of kind of interweaving this ancient history together with a very modern, bustling, and vibrant city. And I've always been drawn to places that can kind of strike that balance of modernity and history. And I think Tokyo does it like nowhere else.

Matt Bowles: Yeah, it is truly spectacular. My travel experiences are like before Tokyo and after Tokyo. The city is unlike anything. If you've never been there, there's nothing I can even say, oh, it's just like this city. No, there's no city like Tokyo. So, I tell everybody, just go and just immerse and just experience and just allow the energy of that city to infuse into you and just the sensory perceptions from all around you. You will just have sights and sounds and you can't even imagine that there's food that good on the planet of Earth until you go to Japan. I mean, it's just crazy. And so, it's such a special city. And I go back as frequently as I can. So, I love that you have spent so much time there and that you love it so much.

But let's go a little bit further back now. I would love for you if you can expand a little bit on your background and how cool that you and I found out that as kids, both of us lived at me for only a shorter period of time, but we both lived in Westchester County right outside New York City, which is so cool. But I would love for you to share a little bit about your experience sort of growing up there and share a little bit more about your cultural background and how your interest in world travel developed and your cultural identity and all of that.

Ori Kwan: For sure. Yeah. So, I'm originally from this little Podunk town called Pound Ridge. The population still is around 5,000. It hasn't really changed much since I was a kid. And mostly white, mostly senior citizens. A lot of like white picket fence situation. As you can imagine, that was a place that I stuck out a little bit, being Asian. And also, my parents are first generation immigrants. My grandparents and parents are from Hong Kong and China on both sides. And so, I think I always felt a lot of the typical identity issues, like who am I? I remember growing up because just the people around me were so homogenous. In elementary school, I was very flabbergasted by a question a kid asked me where he said, are you Christian, Catholic or Jewish? And my answer, not knowing what Christian, Catholic or Jewish even was, was, you know, I'm not really sure, but I think my parents said I'm Chinese. So, you can kind of imagine that was the environment I grew up in and a desire to kind of see what was beyond.

Matt Bowles: Wow. Yeah. And so how did that evolve into traveling when you were a kid? Did you have an opportunity to go back to Hong Kong? Do you still have family there? Like, was there a close connection with that? And did you get to experience places outside the United States?

Ori Kwan: It was a very mixed relationship, I would say, with that side of my identity. I was pretty confused about it and always just felt different. The first time that I actually went back was when I was 8 years old. I remember over the summer we took this tour of China. Actually, you know, the tour bus situation we visited Shanghai, Beijing, Xi'. An. I just hated it. I hated all of it. It was so hot. It was like, so worn down. I couldn't speak Chinese. I remember going out to this little provincial town where we had some relatives, and it was just like Dove Farms and no running water. And I remember my relative speaking to me. And I can understand Cantonese to some degree, although I don't really speak it.

I just remember them saying things like, how could you raise this foreign devil? To my mom, she can't speak Cantonese. She can't even use chopsticks. I couldn't. Which was kind of shocking. Now, in retrospect, there was just such a disconnect. And so, I think actually that experience left me feeling even more alienated. America, I felt different. China definitely wasn't where I belonged. And so, I think always for the rest of my life, I had this feeling that I wanted to see what was out there, to find a place where I could better fit in and belong. And that's been kind of part of my lifelong journey.

Matt Bowles: How did that part of your identity evolve over time and over the years? Like, how do you now connect with that part of your heritage? Like, did that eventually become a deeper connection?

Ori Kwan: I would say I really started to connect with it again when I was in middle school, and it was kind of a stark contrast as well, because I have an older sister, and she just never really took much interest in the Chinese side of our identity. You know, I think almost deliberately avoiding it, avoiding Chinese food, avoiding the language, everything. Whereas I kind of went the other way. And I was like, okay, well, I don't fit in in America, I don't fit in in China, but at least I can understand my roots. And so, I actually did start to just self-study Chinese, because obviously that wasn't really an option. In the school I went to, I became very interested in just like, Asian culture across different dimensions. Read anime and manga as well, which was my first exposure to Japanese culture.

And generally, I think, started to make more Asian friends in high school and to just kind of very slowly explore that side of my identity. I would say I'm pretty conversationally proficient in Mandarin now, which is actually huge because, you know, my parents are from mainland China and they grew up there, and we have a lot of relatives, my grandparents included, who don't really speak English. And so only after I gained conversational proficiency in Mandarin throughout high school, just from continually studying, was I ever actually able to have a conversation with my grandparents who were there. The Whole time in New York City. And so, it's something that I invested a lot of time in, I think, but I'm very, very grateful and proud of.

Matt Bowles: That's awesome. I love that. I also want to ask you about your culinary journey and the role of food in your life and ultimately in your cultural explorations of other parts of the world as well. But when you think back sort of about your culinary journey and your relationship with food as it relates to culture, what comes to mind when you think all the way back on that?

Ori Kwan: I've always loved food. Just everything about the sensory experience of food, which my family finds extremely weird because nobody else in my family likes or cares about food. My parents basically subsistence cooked. I'm grateful now, thinking back, that they put effort to make Cantonese food every night just because that's what they knew. And it was pretty healthy. But it was honestly, they don't like salt. They don't really season their food much. And so, it wasn't like the most pleasurable experience most of the time, but I don't know why. Yeah, I just always loved food.

And then the first time I actually really tried cooking was after college. We always ate in the dorms back at Stanford because it's like just such an expansive campus. But then once I graduated and I was on my own, I just started to experiment a little bit with cooking, since that's what you do when you start living on your own. And I just became obsessed. I loved everything about it. I read cookbooks obsessively. And for me, working a normal 9 to 5, actually reading these cookbooks from around the world was kind of my way of traveling without traveling and learning about these different cultures. And, yeah, it was the start of something, I think, very beautiful.

Matt Bowles: And how do you currently integrate food into your travel priorities and your travel experiences and the way you like to experience culture through food?

Ori Kwan: It's funny because I don't really identify as like, a traveler, so to speak. It depends on your definition. But when I hear traveler, I think of someone who's constantly bouncing from place to place. But I feel like I'm much more interested in living in different places. We try to go more places for at least a month at a time. I travel together with my partner, and we usually just try to settle in and go to neighborhood restaurants. Explore slowly. Don't make a big deal out of, like, trying to book every Michelin star restaurant, but rather just try to eat like the people who actually live there eat, and get a little bit of a glimpse into how that affects their routine in their lives.

Matt Bowles: Yeah, I agree with that 100%. I love that when I go to a place, for me, experiencing the food is a huge part of it, and food at all levels. The local streetcar vendors and going even just to the grocery store to go shopping. When you go to the grocery store in all these different countries, that is one of the most interesting cultural experiences for me, because you live there and you're a resident, so it's very different. If you're a tourist and you stay at a hotel, you're not going to go to a grocery store, most likely. But when you live there and you go shopping and then you see all kinds of different stuff and you learn so much just from buying groceries, right.

And then the different restaurant culture and the way that the restaurant culture works in different places and the time that people eat in certain places, Buenos Aires, 11pm is the dinner hour. You learn about all this different stuff and how different cultures come together around food as well as what they eat. And then there's all of these different echelons of amazing food, from street carts all the way up to the fine dining and stuff like that. So, I as well, love to sort of experience these different cultures through food and be able to do that by living for extended periods and really trying to sort of become a resident of these countries. But you cook at a high level. I want to hear about this. You do? You were telling me that there was an Airbnb Experience contest that you won. Can you talk about that and explain what that was about?

Ori Kwan: It's a bittersweet story, but it's a fun one. So, this is right before COVID Airbnb was promoting their new Airbnb Experiences line, all focused on cooking. And so, they had actually launched a contest in which folks from around the world were invited to write about a recipe that was meaningful to them from their family. And the winners would be invited to come to a culinary university in Italy for a week over the summer to participate in cooking seminars and classes, along with classes taught by David Chang, who is one of my culinary idols for really elevating Asian American cuisine.

And the recipes that were submitted in the application were also going to be compiled into the first ever Airbnb cookbook, featuring the recipes from all the participants, as well as some from their experiences. But, you know, one of my pipe dreams is actually to write a cookbook focused on Chinese diaspora cuisine. And so, this felt like the first step. And going to Italy, which I also have a deep connection with, I studied Italian throughout Middle and high school and meeting David Chang and all of this. And of course, of course, the trip was scheduled for July of 2020, peak Covid, when Italy was having Peak Covid and the whole thing was just canceled.

Matt Bowles: But did you win the contest? Did you get in the cookbook? Are you now published in that cookbook? What became of the recipe and the contest?

Ori Kwan: Yeah, that's a good point. The recipe that I wrote was actually focused on a duck noodle soup, which I had created, inspired by the duck bones and the duck scraps that my mom would bring home from the celebratory dinners that we'd have with our family. I was so excited to have it published, but unfortunately, even though I went through all the rounds of the contest and actually did get selected, I forgot to mention that. So, I actually did win the contest. They're really hoping to still hold it when Covid was just starting out, but logistically it just wasn't going to happen. So actually, the entire thing got canceled, including the cookbook instead. I did get $4,000 in Airbnb credit, which I later used towards my digital Nomad expense explorations. But, yeah, the cookbook and experience would have been cooler.

Matt Bowles: That's amazing. Well, I want to talk also a little bit about your professional trajectory and your entrepreneurial journey. So, I know you ended up going to Stanford and doing your bachelor's and doing your master's in computer science and all of that. And then from there, I would love to hear a little bit about your professional journey and how that led you to entrepreneurship.

Ori Kwan: My professional journey has always been a mix of engineering and design. Now very technical, but also at Stanford, as we say, very fuzzy. So, at Stanford, for some reason, we call all the social sciences, humanities, arts, et cetera, fuzzy things. And so, I've always identified in that sort of techy fuzzy intersection. Some people jokingly call them fuckies. Even my Common App essay, I remember writing it back when I was a little high schooler and writing about to do something at the intersection of art and tech. And so, computer science and human centered design was actually just a very natural extension of that.

I worked for Coursera as a software engineer, so really building out my fundamentals, working on education, which is a cause I'm very passionate about, and then working in New York later after that, also at startups as an engineer before making the transition to design, which I came to because I realized that I had spent all these years building products that were very technically sound and well architected, but ultimately not the right product. And to Me, it was more important that we build the right product than we build a beautifully technically designed product. And so, I wanted to kind of go up that funnel and make sure we were working on the most important problems. So that's what led me to design and to IDEO, which is one of the most famous design firms globally.

So, I'd always had this desire to move back to Asia and see what that was all about. And IDEO had an opening in their Tokyo office for someone who did both coding and design. I was like, that's me. So that's kind of what took me to Tokyo. Working there for a couple of years before COVID happened. And at that time, I had actually just broken up with my ex who was of eight years. You know, we went to college together and went to California and New York and Tokyo together. And so, it was kind of just like a big life shift. I moved into a share house in Harajuku, which is a term that they use there for this kind of co living situation that's pretty popular in Japan among people in their 20s and 30s. And, and my very first day there, the first person I met was Yutaro. Who is this? Just this guy, we're in his pajamas who's just watching me lugging all my boxes. He's like, how are you going to fit all that in your room? I think that was like our first conversation. But yeah, he ended up being my co-founder.

Matt Bowles: Wow, that's amazing. So, can you talk a little bit about that entrepreneurial leap though? Coming out of the corporate world and working at those jobs and things like that. Can you talk a little bit about your entrepreneurial transition? I mean, first of all, what was the business idea? How did it come about? But then your decision and the mental and emotional aspects that went along with, okay, I'm leaving the working world and I'm now going to do this business owner thing. How did that go for you?

Ori Kwan: It was very organic. And I almost laugh at myself because going to Stanford, everyone's like, I want to found a company, I want to found a company. And honestly, it's just too much. A lot of the time, you know, people just want to found a company for the sake of it. And everyone has an app and everyone thinks that their app is the coolest and yet people aren't really creating value. And so, I was actually really turned off by that. And I thought I didn't want to be an entrepreneur as long as I was working on meaningful problems, I'd be happy. But one thing led to another and suddenly I found myself as an entrepreneur. It was basically during COVID when Tokyo was locked down. There was basically about two months where we weren't really allowed to go out. And so, it was me in the share house. It's like these 32 new folks. It literally happened the same week that I moved into the share house.

So instead of having a very lonely quarantine, I'm very grateful to have been surrounded by these people. And, yeah, we would just hang out every night. Honestly, it was super fun. We played mahjong, we cooked together every night. We just hung out and it was super fun. At some point, we also got a little bored. And so that was the time when I hit up Yutaro, and I was like, hey, you're an engineer. I'm also an engineer and a designer. We could build something. Why don't we just hack on something on the side? And so, we started building this little side projects. We honestly started out with this little, like, Facebook quiz type thing, which is, if cryptocurrencies were high schoolers, which one would you be? And so, you did this quiz and then it told you, you like bitcoin, is the teacher, dogecoin, who's the class clown, et cetera. We really started with that. But as silly as it was, we very quickly realized that we just worked really well together and we really enjoyed building stuff together.

And Yutaro's been interested in crypto forever. We naturally kind of went down that path, which I was initially actually very skeptical about, which we can get into. But, yeah, we basically just found an application to this incubator run by Mozilla called Mozilla Builders, which, due to Covid, was fully remote. And we applied to their MVP lab program, in which you have eight weeks to come up with the MVP or minimum viable product for something in a range of categories, one of which was crypto. And so, we just applied on a whim. I remember we just did it over, like, a single day, even though the application was clearly supposed to take multiple days, and just. Just shot it off. And a few weeks later, we were like, oh, we actually got this. We have funding for a startup, and I guess we should try.

Matt Bowles: Wow, that's amazing. All right, let's start the story with your cryptocurrency journey. So, you mentioned you were initially kind of skeptical and things like that. So, take us back to the beginning and let's go through your cryptocurrency journey. Walk us on that path.

Ori Kwan: Until I started working on these projects with Yutaro, I would say I had zero interest in crypto. You know, I think my friends who traded it, I had friends who mined bitcoin out of their student dorms, you know how it is. And I just couldn't see the value. I spent my entire career trying to work on things that I felt like had meaningful social impact on education, like fintech in developing countries, et cetera. And when I saw crypto, I just saw this giant casino of people losing money online and I was like, I don't see what's interesting about this.

And so, it was really like a long journey where when I first suggested to Yutaro that we work together, he was like, well, maybe, but only if it's crypto. I was like, come on crypto, can't there be something like valuable we can work on? But you know, through these many conversations, many debates on and on and on, we both kind of found this middle ground where Yutaro was like, oh, you know, maybe we should try to focus on using crypto for these more practical problems. Because he was actually a researcher at the Ethereum foundation, you know, very research minded, very focused on the technical side. I meanwhile came to see that yes, actually crypto is this giant casino where people are losing money, but it can also be the foundation for a much more equitable and open and powerful financial system. And that's where I became to begin to become very interested.

Matt Bowles: So, let's talk about that, about why you are today so passionate about crypto and web 3, why it is so important, what the potential in the future is here. Can you share that?

Ori Kwan: Sure, yeah. I'd start by saying I kind of joke about this that I'm really not that passionate about crypto and web3 compared to most people in the space. I would say I take a very level headed approach to it. The technology I think has the potential for a lot of good and bad, but when used for good, it can have really massive impacts. And so, I think it would be foolish at this point to ignore Web3 and crypto. It's clearly a rising tide and it can actually solve a lot of the problems that were actually really most affected me when I was a consultant at IDEO and we did a project in Indonesia for a bank that was trying to essentially bank the unbanked through digital banking solutions.

And it was just so painful to hear from the people we talked to about how they didn't trust the banking system, they weren't even able to open a bank account because their income wouldn't qualify, and how essentially a centralized entity could prevent people from having better access to opportunity and from having a better life for themselves and their families. And so, with crypto essentially not being run by any centralized entity, which is essentially the spirit of Web3 as a more grand phenomenon as well, you can see how that allows pretty much anyone with gumption, talent and interest to start building something to take advantage of a more fair system and get involved.

Matt Bowles: Can you talk a little bit about the concept of decentralized finance? And let's start maybe at a pretty high level in terms of what is the difference between decentralized finance versus centralized finance or traditional finance at a high level? Just sort of the concepts and the principles there.

Ori Kwan: Centralized and decentralized sounds very jargony, but ultimately, when we talk about centralized, we're talking about centralized control. So, in the typical financial system, your assets are generally being controlled by some third party. So, for example, I bank with Citibank, so I give them my money and I trust that they're going to take care of it for me. And, you know, generally that's worked out for me pretty well. But like I've mentioned, there are a lot of folks who don't have those types of same opportunities to have a trusted entity managing their funds. There are lots of folks who live in countries where the currency is very volatile and they don't really have options to keep it somewhere that's safer.

And so decentralized finance is really giving different options to folks for financial tools that aren't controlled by a centralized entity. In the particular case that we talk about with DeFi most often, we're talking about essentially cryptocurrency, these currencies which are built on top of blockchains. Another technology which is essentially run by a network of people all over the world. Anyone who wants to can participate by being a Bitcoin miner or an Ethereum validator, or a Solana validator, again, more technical terms. But basically, the idea is the network is controlled by anyone who wants to participate, not simply by like one designated entity, like a bank.

Matt Bowles: I want to ask you a little bit now about what specifically attracted you to the Solana blockchain. In particular. You mentioned in passing that your business partner was previously involved in some Ethereum research and some things with some other blockchains. So, what ultimately attracted you to Solana?

Ori Kwan: It was actually when we were building for the Mozilla Builders program. So, we had built a prototype of an app that we called Wallaroo. It's very cute. It was trying to be essentially a savings app where people could put in savings and they wouldn't need to understand much about crypto. And we could help them earn yield through decentralized protocols on Ethereum. But this was around July, August of 2020. And so that was actually the same time as Defi Summer was happening. That's kind of a name for that period when Ethereum began to really blow up. And because the costs for things on the blockchain are basically determined by the demand. So, the more demand, the higher the transaction fees are. And the transaction fees were just spiking to an insane level on Ethereum due to the amount of activity.

So, it just really didn't make sense at some point for folks to deposit $50 into our app if that deposit itself was going to cost $50 in gas or transaction fees. So that's when we felt like we had to start looking elsewhere. We looked around. Yutaro has been very connected in this space for a long time. And it caught his eye that Sam Bankman Fried, who many folks will know is the founder of Alameda Research and FTX, was taking an interest in Solana and had made a big bet on it to build serum, which is essentially an order book exchange on top of Solana. So that's actually what caused us to take a deeper look at Solana. And after speaking with the Solana Labs team, we became very convinced that they were able to solve the problem of scale, essentially these affordable, high throughput transactions in a way that no other blockchain could.

Matt Bowles: Yeah. And just for people's context here who are not really into cryptocurrency and into this world, Bitcoin has the largest market cap of any cryptocurrency. Ethereum has the second largest market cap of any cryptocurrency. And then Solana is in the top 10, let's just say that probably somewhere around number eight or so at the time that we're recording this. So, it is certainly one of the major main top 10 cryptocurrencies out there. I want to go a little bit deeper on that though, if you can. Orey, can you describe this concept of the blockchain trilemma, what that is, and the fact that there is no perfect blockchain, because every blockchain has to make a trade off. Right. Which is what the trilemma is about. And within that framework, can you talk about where Solana sort of exists or positions itself within that blockchain trilemma?

Ori Kwan: So, the blockchain trilemma, or the scalability trilemma, was actually coined by Vitalik, who is the founder of Ethereum, and he basically posited that no blockchain network can be completely decentralized, secure and scalable, where scalable is talking about being able to process many, many, many transactions. And so, Solana basically positions itself as a layer 1 blockchain. Some might think of it as a competitor to Ethereum that solves all three of these problems. Some folks may quibble about whether it's decentralized or not. Personally, I don't really care that much to engage in those debates. I'm again very practical person and not too much on theory.

But I do believe that Solana, more so than any other blockchain, is extremely focused on practicality. And their founders and their team all come from these tech companies like Dropbox and Qualcomm, where they've been focused on the problem of scale on the hardware level for many years. And so, they've already been able to prove that, you know, a layer one blockchain can handle way more transactions than people ever thought was possible. And, you know, it's not perfect, but they're still ironing out the kinks when it comes to decentralization scalability. But I personally believe that they'll be able to fulfill the needs to acceptable degree in all three points of the triangle.

Matt Bowles: And for folks that are following the crypto industry and maybe trying to get their mind around some of these different blockchains and how they might want to diversify into some of them, and they're trying to learn about the pros and cons of these different blockchains. Can you share a little bit about some of the recent concerns that people have articulated about the Solana blockchain in terms of blockchain outages or spam bots and censorship of NFT projects or different things that sort of been in the news about Solana? If people are trying to process that and think about that, what are your thoughts on all of that?

Ori Kwan: I'll be upfront that I don't follow NFTs at all. I think that's just like a whole another space with like way too much information. So, I personally opt out of that one. But in terms of outages and spam bots, which are very related, in fact, basically folks are trying to get their transactions through and currently there's no penalty for essentially spamming the network with lots of duplicate transactions with the hope that yours gets through. And so, Solana is currently working on some potential solutions to that problem. Really more at like, technical level. I am not the most technical on my team, but those who are more technical have like more heavily vetted what they're working on and feel pretty hopeful that what they're working on will be able to solve or fairly confident, I would say, that they'll be able to solve these congestion issues. I also am in some ways happy to see the network being stress tested because it's a little bit scary if you've never seen a single outage and what happens in the case of an outage. But I think Solana's actually recovered in pretty well from these outages. And in particular Orca, the product that we work on is really designed to be very resilient in the face of network congestion. So, we've seen that every time the network stops, once it starts again, our aim just starts processing transactions again. So, in some ways I think it can even be seen as a bit bullish.

Matt Bowles: Yeah, I wanted to ask if you can sort of articulate the bull case for Solana, let's say over the next five years or so. And by the way folks, I always make this disclaimer anytime we talk about cryptocurrencies or NFTs or anything relating to investments. This is definitely not investment advice and cryptocurrency and NFTs and all other forms of investments are risky. You could lose any money that you put in and all of that kind of stuff. With that said, I am super interested Ori in your take on the bull case for Solana and particularly with the price right now and the opportunities in this particular market right now to take positions on Solana. What are your thoughts and how would you sort of articulate the bull case for Solana over the next five plus years?

Ori Kwan: Thank you for the full disclaimer. I'll reiterate that disclaimer, but also say that my very first piece of advice, which I'll reiterate endlessly, is don't buy anything that you don't understand and always do your own research. So, listen to what I say and then do further research before buying anything. But in terms of why I'm personally excited about Solana, I think it's hard to talk about it without talking about what's going on in the crypto markets more generally. With Terra's I would say, fairly dramatic and painful collapse over the last week. So, Terra is another layer, one blockchain, which some can see as like a competitor to Solana, Ethereum, et cetera. And due to some pretty dramatic market moves, it's essentially tumbled from a high of $85 for its base asset, Luna, down to basically nothing over the last week or so.

And so, the entire crypto market has been feeling the reverberations from this collapse. Everything is very far down. And my own personal portfolio is probably a third or less of what it was a week ago. And honestly, Matt, I don't care. I think it's totally fine. These things are very cyclical. And, you know, I was thinking about how to talk to my team about this and how best to express it. But, you know, the analogy that I like to use here is kind of like a forest fire. You know, forest fires are very devastating, but actually, if you look from an ecological perspective, they clear out sort of this old underbrush, they open up the canopy to let in more sunlight. There are actually some types of trees that need the high heat from fires to actually survive. I think the same thing is kind of happening in crypto right now.

A lot of people are investing speculatively. They're not really focused on what savvy investors do focus on, which is long term creation of value. These projects, like a Shiba Inu coin, just straight up does not pretend to have any value, and yet it's going like up and down just based on whatever Elon Musk says. So that's something I personally wouldn't invest in because I have zero control or insight into what Elon Musk is going to say next. But there are a lot of coins that do represent protocols and blockchains with actual value. So, the questions that I would put out there is, is this project or protocol actually claiming to solve a real need? How much demand is there for the solution to that need?

And then does their technology actually live up to being able to solve that need? And that's something that I think is true in all cases for Solana and will become increasingly true as these projects that fail any one of those questions in the test based basically get swept out by the crypto winter because they won't be able to coast on just promises and run out of funding and basically disappear, leaving basically projects with clearer fundamentals and more honest promises and stronger technology left to continue the cycle.

Matt Bowles: When you think out into the future, five years and 10 years into the future, do you view Solana as a competitor with other layer ones where five to ten years from now there will be a clear winner and the other ones will be losers? Or do you envision a world where numerous layer one solutions can simultaneously thrive and serve different purposes or cater to different markets or that kind of stuff? Like how do you think about the ecosystem when you think five to 10 years out.

Ori Kwan: The answers here honestly, I think my co-founder is the one who I really trust with being able to seemingly predict the future when it comes to crypto. When we bet on Solana, it was like a dollar fifty back in the day. So still feeling pretty good about how that panned out. But for me personally, I could see it going both ways. I do think most markets, if you look at just traditionally go more winner take all, especially if regulation isn't able to break up monopolies, so to speak. What I hope is that whichever blockchain is best able to serve people's needs is the one that wins. I'm very much not a maximalist. I think we're not maximalists. We move from Ethereum to Solana. If someday a better chain comes along that can better serve people's needs, then Solana will move as well. But I don't really see that happening, to be honest. At least I haven't seen it yet.

Matt Bowles: Let me ask you this. What lessons should new crypto investors take from the events of the last couple weeks with the collapse of Luna and the subsequent ripple effects that that has had in the crypto and the defi space and all that? What types of lessons should people take away from that? And what tips do you have for particularly newer crypto investors in terms of approaching the space and making intelligent investment decisions?

Ori Kwan: I'll just speak in terms of how I think about things, stopping short of financial advice, but I always think long term. I'm not interested in day trading or speculation. I think it's very hard to beat the market. If anybody could reliably beat the market, they wouldn't really have to day trade anymore, to be honest. I think what you can do and where the market is very inefficient is that evaluation of whether something is generating real value is fulfilling a real need. And most people aren't actually really focused on that. And so, I would say look for these projects and protocols that are undervalued. Kind of do your due diligence on why you think they will grow and eventually the market will catch up and you'll be rewarded potentially.

Matt Bowles: Let's talk about your company, your decentralized exchange protocol, [Orca](). I feel like we maybe even need to just take a step back as well, just at a very high level. What is Orca? What is a decentralized exchange?

Ori Kwan: Let's start there. So, let's start with what is a decentralized exchange? Well, first of all, let's start with what is an exchange. It's a place where people can trade one type of thing for another, which solves a very basic human need, which is being able to swap one type of thing for the other, even if those things are not necessarily the same type of thing. So back in the day, we would barter apples for oranges and all that kind of thing. That's the basic tenet of an economy. Without the ability to trade one type of thing through another, we're kind of limited in terms of the ability we can diversify as a society, in our skills and in our focus. And we'd all have to spend our days just growing our own food and all that. And so, I think if we're going all the way back, an exchange is basically like infrastructure for an economy or for a financial system.

In terms of a decentralized exchange, and specifically in the realm of crypto, something that many people I think still don't know is that there's actually a lot of different types of cryptocurrencies, as you touched on earlier. So, there's of course Bitcoin and Ethereum, those are cryptocurrencies. But there's also lots of other ones which often represent particular projects or protocols or honestly, because it is all kind of decentralized and anyone can be involved, you can. And I absolutely have just gone and minted my own Gracecoin or Oricoin or Mattcoin, and that's a cryptocurrency too. So, all of these, you know, nobody's going to pay me anything for Oricoin though. But all of these need ways to be traded. And so, a decentralized exchange is basically this, this technology that allows you to trade cryptocurrency, one type of cryptocurrency for another.

Matt Bowles: Okay, so let's talk a little bit about Orca. What was the vision and the goal for creating Orca? Because you are doing $200 million in daily trading volume, which is absolutely incredible. So obviously there was a massive customer response to what you created. So can you talk a little bit about that sort of from the, the beginning, what was that void or that need which obviously you filled and obviously people are using at an incredible level right now. And what does Orca offer to customers and cryptocurrency investors?

Ori Kwan: When we first spoke to the Solana team, there was literally nothing on Solana. There was the idea of serum, which is this order book exchange, and there was literally nothing else. And so, it was really an open field in terms of what we could build. But I would say we actually made a pretty contrarian decision in terms of deciding to build what's called an automated market maker, or AMM. So, Orca is an automated market maker because the markets in which you can trade on Orca. So, let's say we have Bitcoin Ethereum market or an Ethereum Solana market. These are automated in that the price of the assets in the pool are determined by an algorithm. So, these liquidity pools in, like a very traditional AMM such as Uniswap, which we were very heavily inspired by, is governed by actually a pretty simple algorithm known as the constant product X times Y equals K, in which the price of the assets basically go up and down depending on how much of the assets are in the pool.

Which means that if a lot of people want Solana, then they will buy Solana using the other asset. Let's say it's USDC or like a USD coin, which means the price of Solana will go up and the price of USDC will go down in that particular pool. This is very different than the order book style of exchange that CRM was already trying to build on Solana in that. Well, first, it's very simple. So, I think it's very designed for the constraints of a blockchain in that it can be implemented very efficiently, which allows it to be very robust in times of the network congestion, like I mentioned earlier, and is also just very computationally efficient and simple. So, it serves a different need in that it can be very robust. And this core piece of infrastructure, I love the term money Legos or Defi Legos, which is something that people use to talk about composability on the blockchain.

But you can basically think of it as a tool that other people can use to build more complex financial products on top of, I would say, actually like, pretty ballsy to go out and say Solana needs this simple AMM DEX, when there was already this giant, I don't know, billions of dollars of capital saying that they were going to build an order book that could be much better and more efficient. But we just saw a need for the simplicity and the user friendliness of an AMM, because their interfaces can be so much simpler. And that's where our strengths lie. That combination of deep crypto understanding and an eye for making things simple for everyday people.

Matt Bowles: So, can you talk a little bit about how a liquidity pool works from the perspective of a customer or person that wants to be a liquidity provider and earn fees and rewards can you sort of explain how that piece of it works?

Ori Kwan: Sure. So, the way it works is you basically connect your wallet on Orca and then you can choose to deposit some assets in this liquidity pool. And in exchange for depositing your assets in a liquidity pool, you earn a share of the fees which are charged on all the trades made against that pool. And so over time, the size of the pool grows and you get a cut of those fees. On the other hand, you do need to watch out for a phenomenon known as divergence loss, also sometimes known as impermanent loss, in which the value of the assets that you deposit actually decreases the more that the ratio between those assets' changes from the time of deposit. Which is very jargony, but let's just say that you've deposited these two assets in a pool. One goes up and the other goes down in the time that you've deposited. That means you're actually losing money due to the way the algorithm works. And that's the thing that people are generally most scared of when it comes to liquidity provision. So, it is something that takes a decent amount of understanding to do well, but can be very lucrative if you know, kind of the art of it.

Matt Bowles: So, with a liquidity pool, the concept is that people want to trade and swap between two different tokens. And by you as a person providing both of those tokens into a pool, you're helping to create liquidity so that other people can swap between those two tokens instantaneously. And in exchange for doing that and providing that liquidity, you are going to actually make some of the swap fees for doing that, and you're actually going to be able to earn those market maker fees. And then as you were saying, one of the downside risks of doing that is that if there is divergence between the values of those coins you put two different coins in and they're both worth something when you put them in. If one of them goes up and one of them goes down, you could be left with more of the coin that has gone down and less of the coin that has gone up and miss out on, on the upside of the coin that's rising and be more exposed to the downside of the coin that's falling. Did I articulate that correctly?

Ori Kwan: We should just hire you to explain this stuff. You nailed it.

Matt Bowles: But in exchange for that risk, you're also receiving quite a good bit of rewards and quite a good bit of yield on those coins. And so that's really sort of the risk reward trade off when you see, wow, that's a really quiet a high APR that you're offering me before putting those two coins in. And then you just need to understand the risk that you're taking in exchange for that APR. So do you have any sort of risk mitigation strategies maybe that you personally use if you're going to choose to participate in a particular liquidity pool and sort of maybe some selection criteria that people might want to think about as they're deciding if they want to do this, and if so, which types of pools maybe might be the best fit for them.

Ori Kwan: First of all, before you get into this, know that it may eat your life. It takes a lot of time to understand this stuff. And once again, don't buy or invest in anything that you don't understand my top advice.

Matt Bowles: And you could lose everything. It could all go to zero tomorrow. Like, let's just be super clear folks, there is a high risk with anything relating to this stuff. And so, I just want to provide educational gear which can hopefully start your independent research into these things. And you can then consult with your financial advisors and professionals and do all of your own research. So, this is sort of the start of an educational process. But I do think that this decentralized finance stuff is just going to play an incredibly prominent role in the future of finance. And I think it's really important for people to understand at least how it works so they can start researching it for sure.

Ori Kwan: I would say if you're interested in becoming a liquidity provider, start out by understanding the algorithms that actually determine the prices of assets in the pools and understanding divergence loss.

Then I would say actually do some calculations. There are a lot of divergence loss calculators out there that will do this for you, where you understand the actual scale of divergence loss that you'll experience by putting assets into the pool. Based on the extensive user research I've done; I don't even know how many people I've talked to about AMM. Most people actually overestimate the percentage loss that they will experience by the changes in price of tokens. Many people also don't understand that if the two tokens move together, you're actually not experiencing as much impermanent loss because it's based on the ratio, basically the price of one token quoted in the other token.

And so first of all, make sure you understand divergence law. Second is take advantage of the super low transaction fees on Solana, you know, like a fraction of a cent in general, to deposit a very small amount of money and play around with that. Because the transaction fees are so low, the percentage gains and losses don't really change depending on how much you're depositing. So, you can use it as your playground and play around even on main net, which is what we call like the real-life deployment of the protocol. And actually like, try depositing liquidity for a while and observe the price changes and the impact on what your yield would be. And then I would say the general framework for picking a pool to provide liquidity in is. Well, first of all, there's the question of whether you even should provide liquidity, because you basically have to provide two different tokens. And if you're extremely bullish that the price of like a particular token will go up, you're actually probably better off holding that token.

First, you don't need to experience any divergence loss, and second, all of your assets will be in that token. So, you're just getting that. And then you probably shouldn't even provide liquidity. One that is like a good candidate is if there are potentially two tokens that you're pretty okay having in your portfolio and you would probably hold those anyway, and there's a liquidity pool for those two tokens, and you think the price of them won't diverge that much, then you won't get too much of the divergence loss. On the other hand, you should look at the amount of swap volume going through that pool, because what you're earning is a percentage of fees on the swaps. And so, the more swaps going through that pool, the more you'll earn. Of course, this also has like a denominator to the equation, right? Which is the amount of total liquidity already in the pool. So, a pool that's a good choice has, has a lot of swap volume relative to the liquidity in the pool and consists of tokens that you think will move basically in a correlated fashion.

Matt Bowles: Okay, So I think that is a really important thing in terms of thinking about token correlation. And the other thing is that if you're just really bullish on two tokens and you're like, in the short term, if one of them goes up and one of them goes down and I'm left more with the one that went down. As long as you're really bullish on that token for the long run, it might be less of a problem for you personally, because whichever one you get sort of left more with, if you're really bullish and you're really committed to the long term for those tokens you may not mind as much in the short term if that happens, as long as you're not trying to day trade and do short term stuff and things like that. So, there's a lot of different strategies and stuff like that. So hopefully this will just, just start people sort of researching into this stuff to see if it is at all, even categorically, something you're interested in doing or not. And if so, then what might be the best strategy for you? Now you also have something on the Orca protocol in addition to your liquidity pools that's called whirlpools. Can you talk about what those are?

Ori Kwan: Sure. So, whirlpools are actually our name for what's called concentrated liquidity pools. People who know me that will know that one of my favorite roles as a designer is naming things. So, I named it Whirlpools because whirlpools are concentrated liquidity in the real world. But they're a pretty complicated concept in terms of finance. But essentially, I think what's important to know is that they allow the market makers to be more deliberate in terms of how they provide liquidity, have more control over how they provide liquidity, in particular by choosing to provide liquidity only for swaps that happen within a certain range, and in turn allow that liquidity to be used much more efficiently. So, what that translates to is for, you know, LPs who essentially play this game well, they get more fees, so higher earnings, and also simultaneously provide better prices for people, people who are actually swapping tokens because their liquidity is being used more efficiently. So, I would say it's an evolution of the base AMM that became very popular, that constant product AMM that I mentioned that ultimately allows these liquidity pools to be a more efficient source of liquidity for the entire ecosystem.

Matt Bowles: And can you also talk about the Orca governance token? Just the concept of a governance token and the DAO and the treasury and how that whole part of it works.

Ori Kwan: So, Orca is what's known as a DEX or a decentralized exchange, because it's decentralized in the sense that it doesn't have that centralized control, but rather is governed by the community. And that community governance takes shape through the Orca governance token. The ticker is just Orca. And anybody who owns those tokens can participate in votes. So, these votes are pretty simple in structure right now, but they'll basically have some kind of threshold that needs to be met for the vote to go through. And then a certain percentage of people must vote yes. And if so, those changes will be implemented to the protocol. And so, we're still in the process of evolving our governance. We've really just started to experiment with it. But I'm really excited to see how the community can really shepherd the future of the Orca Protocol and ensure that it has longevity, which is something that I think a decentralized protocol can have in spades compared to something more centralized.

Matt Bowles: Awesome. Well, I also want to ask you about the Orcanauts NFT collection. Can you share a little bit about what that is and what NFT holders get?

Ori Kwan: Sure. So, the Orcanauts NFT project was actually something that we worked on back in November and it's 10,000 of these really adorable little whales. It's what's known as like a PFP or profile picture project, in which every single one of these whales is kind of randomly generated based on a bunch of traits which are created by our very talented artist Corcorarium on Twitter. And every single one of these is completely unique in terms of its combination of traits. That's like its eyes, its background, etc. And we treat them as fan token for people who love the Orca protocol. We use them for things such as we get access to a special Discord channel which is just for these Orcanauts holders in which we've had different special events. We also gave early access to our Whirlpools beta. So, we ran a beta for about a month before releasing the full product to Orchinauts holders only. And we also were able to raise a ton of money through the NFT sale. We actually gave 75% of the mint revenue to charity.

So, it went directly to Aflatoun, which is an amazing NGO based in Amsterdam which is focused on financial and social education for youth. We are partnering with them to fund, first of its kind crypto education curriculum for young people around the world, which will be translated into multiple languages and rolled out in regions that typically won't have access to this type of education. And the remaining 25% of all the mint revenue actually went directly to the artist. So, Orca took exactly zero, which I think is very meaningful because a lot of these NFT projects are known as, and honestly are cash grabs. But I feel very proud that we were able to create an NFT for these really loyal fans who wanted to buy more into Orca and the protocol, but also donate almost a million dollars to a really meaningful cause.

Matt Bowles: That is so amazing. Well, I really, really loved and appreciated reading about the Orca impact Fund. Can you talk about what that is and how those functions on an ongoing basis?

Ori Kwan: Yeah, the Orca Impact Fund is kind of my baby is the other branch of our charitable work. But the way it works is that a percentage of all swap fees on Orca actually go to this Orca Impact Fund, which is in turn distributed to charitable organizations which are actually chosen by the community. So, our first chosen recipient is actually the Ocean Conservancy. It'll be used to fund a couple of initiatives which aren't public yet, so I can't quite speak about them. But in general, they're all centered on the theme of climate change and sustainability. Our very first one also happens to be like marine and ocean life theme, which obviously fits very well with our Orca brand. But where this really came from is again, I told you that I've spent most of my career until now really just trying to make a positive impact with my work.

And with crypto, that was very unclear at the beginning, right? And so, one thing that I always insisted to you, Taro, is like, if we're going to do this and we're going to spend our energy on this, we need to make sure that it's having a net positive impact on the world. And so, this is just one idea that I came up with out of the blue someday. And I was like, what if we just directly donate some percentage of all the fees? Because a lot of crypto projects will do these like one off donations kind of that feel good, like I helped some kids once type thing. But like, I really wanted this to be a sustainable thing that would grow along with Orca, so that the more our business succeeded, the more impact we would be able to make. And I'm very proud to see what it's become today.

Matt Bowles: I love that I relate to it so much because exactly the same thing was with my company, Maverick Investor Group. So, my co-founder and business partner Valerie and I both have master's degrees in international peace and conflict resolution and we worked in the nonprofit advocacy space for our entire careers up until we left to become entrepreneurs. And then we started this business and we said, okay, listen, if we're going to start a business of any kind, it's. It's definitely got to have a social impact. And we have to commit upfront to donating a certain percentage consistently for the life of the company so that the better our company does, the more it throws off the causes that we care about. So that was exactly the same. So, when I read about what you were doing, I was like, oh, wow, this is incredible. And I related to it so much, so I think that's really awesome.

Ori Kwan: I love that. I'm really glad to hear that more people are taking that perspective of impact being scaled. Everyone's always focused on scaling all their other metrics, but impact is kind of this sideline thing. And the other way that I hope that we can make an impact is to be an example for other projects that want to be ethical, that want to make an impact, and especially to do so in crypto, which is very much usually driven by greed. And so, one thing that Yutaro always said early on is by being involved and having a slice of the pie, we can become influential and hopefully push the space overall in a more positive direction. And if that's what we accomplish, then it's so worth it.

Matt Bowles: Are there any particular lessons on the business side of the defi space, running a protocol side of the space that you took or learned from the last couple weeks of the Luna collapse and all of these different things? I mean, as things like that happen in the crypto market, are there any adjustments that Orca would make or things that you learn and changes at all to the business model?

Ori Kwan: No changes to the business model because we've always been focused on fundamental value creation and that's not something that has to change for us. I would say for those who aren't focused on that, they should. But one thing that I would like to change is being more vocal and open with our community about why we make the decisions that we do. Things like focus, focusing on fundamental value creation. I think we can get caught up in the day to day of building and designing and marketing and not always have as much time for explaining our thought process. But everything that we do is a result of deep deliberation within the company with advisors and really thinking about what's ultimately good for the protocol and for the community. And so, the more that I think we can share those things, the more that we can help the community navigate what will likely be very stormy waters for the months ahead.

Matt Bowles: Awesome. Well, I want to also ask you a little bit about some of your travels and your nomad life and how you run this business while traveling the world and all of that good stuff. So, you are now a full-time nomad. You have no permanent base, you travel the world, you live in epic locations, all of that good stuff. Can you talk a little bit about how you structure your nomad life, how you select your locations, how long you stay, sort of how your lifestyle design works?

Ori Kwan: Our lifestyle is designed to support productive work, probably more so than most other nomads, because we have to be plugged in all the time. If something goes wrong, we can't just be backpacking in some desert with no Wi-Fi. We're very passionate about the work we do. We recognize that people's money is at stake and it's extremely important. And we care really deeply also about just, like, the health and happiness of our team. And so, a lot of how we travel is designed to support that while also giving us all the other benefits of inspiration and inputs and stimuli and fun and, you know, all those things. We generally try to go places for at least a month at a time so that we kind of have that mini base and aren't, like, constantly shuttling around out of suitcases.

We also try to take things pretty slow so we're not trying to go somewhere new every weekend. I love having a Sunday where I can just slowly meander around, like a city square and watch pigeons eat things off cobblestones or something. Just to take time to prioritize, like relaxation and being in the moment. And then finally, I think, making sure that we just have a very comfortable place to live and to work from. I'm not like hostile shoe stringing anymore, because where do you take conference calls? I think it's a much more practical approach than many people, but we've still been able to have super fulfilling experiences during that time. And so, I would recommend it for folks who are a little scared of the impact on their work of travel.

Matt Bowles: Can you talk a little bit about managing a fully distributed team? Because you have staff all over the world. You have people in Dubai and Brazil and Singapore and New York and Hong Kong and all over the place. What tips do you have for location independent business owners running businesses, remotely managing people all over the world? Any advice on that?

Ori Kwan: I love the term location and time zone independent because that really is the ethos with which we've built Orca. And I think the way that works and the only way that can really work is by getting the right people. And by the right people, I mean people who are, first of all very good at what they do and can execute without a lot of oversight. If you need people who constantly kind of need to check if they're doing the right thing or constantly be given direction, that's much harder in, like, this fully distributed environment than it would be in an office where they can easily just come and find someone if they have questions, right? You need people who are excited to own whatever it is that they're working on and can be trusted to go execute, but then also to go communicate. Because communication is the hardest thing about this distributed lifestyle, right? So, folks who are willing to proactively do things, but then also do the hard work. And often it's a slug to write up notes in asana or notion or what have you, but who are willing to basically take on that extra lift of communication.

And second, I would say pick folks who legitimately seek connection even in a remote environment. I've heard founders who talk about their team as resources and that kills me because they're people, they're not resources. And these same founders have sometimes not even met over video some people on their 10-person team. And that just kind of blows my mind because how do you trust people if you've never even spoken to them before? And so, we've made a very deliberate choice of picking people who want to be a community and by fostering community through rituals, through how we communicate and over communicate and meet up from time to time around the world so that we feel like. I kind of always say that I never get lonely when I'm traveling because I'm always carrying all these people who I really love on my phone and on my computer with me.

Matt Bowles: That's so awesome. Well, I do want to hear a little bit about some of your travel experiences. You mentioned that the Italy trip you were so excited about ended up getting canceled because of COVID But I understand you did get to Florence, Italy, which is one of my favorite places. I try to go to Italy like every year if I can. I mean, just go to a different place. That was just about six months ago. I went up to the Piedmont region in the northwest and I went to the white truffle festival in Alba.

Ori Kwan: Oh my God.

Matt Bowles: Was drinking Barolo and Barbaresco and driving through wine vineyards. Italy is just so magical. But of course, Florence is such a really, really special city and right there in Tuscany and everything. So, what was your experience in Italy like?

Ori Kwan: It was magical. It was really like a fairy tale. Especially because Florence is normally such a tourist hub, right. But since we went pretty much when things were opening up, it was kind of magically empty or it felt like just a place where Florentinians lived. And so, I was able to use a little bit of the Italian that I had picked up throughout middle and high school. I found people were very friendly, they were willing to work with me and what, whatever I had to say. And you know, we just went to local restaurants.

Actually, our very first night in Florence. This is a time when Crypto still wasn't that popular. Solana wasn't that popular. And so, we were able to be pretty undercover, so to speak. And we just went to a random trattoria on the side of the road and just went to order with the waiter, saw the Solana backpack that we had with us and was like, Solana, I know Solana. I like invest in Solana coins. And we were like, oh, well, do you know Orca? And he said, Orca, of course I know Orca. And we were just mind blown because we had literally never met a user in the wild, so to speak. Not in New York, not in Tokyo, not in, like, California. And then in this random Chattoria on the side of the road in Florence. Our waiter knows Orca. It’s just mind blown.

Matt Bowles: That's so awesome. Well, Ori, let me ask you one more question, and then we'll wrap this up and move into *The Lightning Round*. When you think back about all of the travel that you have done over the years and the places you've been and the experience that you've had, what impact has all of that had on you as a person? And why are you still inspired to keep traveling? What does travel mean to you?

Ori Kwan: It's been very humbling. My life philosophy has always been to have as interesting and as impactful of a life as possible. And the times where I've grown the most and been exposed to situations that allowed me to develop the skills and to develop the personality traits that have allowed me to have the impact that I've had, I think, have all come from a change of environment. Studying abroad was my favorite time in college, in Kyoto and in Beijing. I think it forces you to take on challenges that you might not otherwise have known even existed, and to become more gritty, more resilient, and to be more open. And all of these things that you wouldn't just otherwise get if you weren't exposed to all sorts of strange situations that you may find yourself in. So, it's something that I feel like I'll always do is kind of wander from place to place and be surprised by things.

Matt Bowles: Amazing. That is an awesome place to end the main portion of this interview. And at this point, Orey, are you ready to move in to *The Lightning Round*?

Ori Kwan: So ready.

Matt Bowles: Let's do it. All right. What is one book that has significantly impacted you over the years you'd most recommend people check out?

Ori Kwan: Radical Candor. Anyone who knows me knows that I live in, like, Swear by Radical Candor as a philosophy and as a book.

Matt Bowles: Awesome. What is one travel hack that you use that you can recommend to people?

Ori Kwan: This is kind of a specific one, but now that travel to Japan is opening up again and maybe it's going to be relevant to some of you folks. Yutaro and I always talked about how it would be nice if you could just get the lie flat seat from business class. I don't really need the food; I don't need like people being nice to me. I don't need the lounge. I already have my credit card. I just want that seat that lets me like put my five-tube body down flat and they just don't do that. But there is an airline, actually a new airline that does that and it's called ZIPAIR. It's the budget airline from Japan Airlines which was unfortunately, I think launched in the middle of COVID So they were kind of struggling. But yeah, they unbundle everything so you can literally just buy a lie flat seat. It costs a lot less than a normal business class seat, but it's the exact same physical seat that they use in Japan Airlines business class. And so, I actually rode that last time I flew from Japan to Hawaii and it was amazing. I played way less than normal biz class, but I got to sleep and I'm always going to ride it if it's a bag.

Matt Bowles: That is an awesome tip. I have not even heard of that airline, so that is really cool. All right, Ori, if you could have dinner with any one person who's currently alive today that you've never met, who would you pick?

Ori Kwan: J. Kenji López-Alt. He is actually the founder or the original writer of the Food Lab, which is the nerdy food science column that really inspired me to get into cooking and that my friends and I just kind of all idolize and adore as well as just an advocate for like Asian food, food in general in America and I just love to have dinner with him.

Matt Bowles: Awesome. All right, knowing everything that you know now, if you could go back in time and give one piece of advice to your 18-year-old self, what would you say to 18-year-old Ori?

Ori Kwan: Focus on doing more interesting things and not on traditional definitions of success. I was a very grade driven kid as a typical Asian American immigrant kid and I think that prevented me from getting the most that I could out of my college experience.

Matt Bowles: Awesome. All right, of all the places that you have now been, what are your top three favorite travel destinations you would most recommend?

Ori Kwan: People check out the far-flung regions of Japan I can specifically recommend Miyazaki as a place that I think is really magical and not very well known. In addition, I would say Florence, especially now. I think, you know, we've talked about how magical it is, just how friendly the people are. I just love so many things about it. And then finally I would say if someday there are fewer people there. Don't know if this will ever happen, but Jiu Haikou in China actually in Chengdu Province is probably the most physically beautiful place that I have ever seen. There's just magically rainbow-colored crystal pools and waterfalls and lush forests and it is just so filled with people you can't even walk. So, if they ever solve that problem, go there.

Matt Bowles: That's amazing. Well, Mainland China is super high on my list to visit. I've been to Hong Kong and I've been to Macau, but I have not been outside the airport in Beijing. I've only transferred through it. And it's just such a high place on my list. I feel like I need to spend so much time in Mainland China. So, I will definitely hit you up for some tips when I start to plan that trip. I want to know now is our final question. What are your top three bucket list destinations? These are places you've never been highest on your list you would most love to see.

Ori Kwan: Istanbul, Sri Lanka and Costa Rica.

Matt Bowles: All amazing places. I have been to all three and I concur with those picks. Those are amazing. So yeah, you can hit me up whenever you're ready to play those trips and we will definitely chat more about that. Ori at this point I want you to let folks know first of all how they can find you, connect with you, follow you on social media, all that good stuff. And I also want you to let folks know how they can learn more about Orca and see if that might be something they want to get involved with as well.

Ori Kwan: So, if you've ever been exposed to the crypto space, you will know that crypto runs on Twitter. So, you can find me on Twitter *oritheorca*. And you can also find Orca on Twitter. We are *orca_so* that stands for Orca Solana. But you can find all the info about our protocol, how to get involved and find what I also think is our very charming brand voice. We have lots of fun nautical puns on there. So, I definitely welcome you to join our communities.

Matt Bowles: Amazing. So, we are going to link all of that up in the show notes. So, folks can just go to one place at themaverickshow.com and just go to the show notes for this episode and there you will find everything that we discussed, all of the ways to find and follow and get in touch with Ori and learn more about orca. Ori, this was amazing. Thank you so much for coming on the show.

Ori Kwan: So much fun. Would love to do it again.

Matt Bowles: Awesome. All right, good night, everybody.