

Ep #232: Giovanni Marsico - Differentiation Through the Creation of Memorable Experiences



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David Phelps: Good day everyone. It's Dr. David Phelps at the Freedom Founders Mastermind community and Dentist Freedom Blueprint Podcast, here today with a gentleman that I have actually been looking forward to doing this interview for quite some time. In fact, I was just telling him that I'm going to have as much fun engaging with him as I hope you are, listeners, and I know you will. So please welcome a good friend of mine that I'm a part of some other mastermind groups with, Mr. Giovanni Marsico.

Giovanni, how are you, sir?

Giovanni M.: I'm having an epic day. Thank you, David.

David Phelps: Excellent, excellent. Well, you're up in Toronto. And one of the things that you do very well, we will kind of get into your backstory, but one of the things you do very well today is you have the Archangel Summit, which is a gathering of entrepreneurs from all over the world each fall in Toronto. You've been doing this, I think this will be like your fifth year? Am I-

Giovanni M.: This our fourth annual coming up.

David Phelps: Fourth annual. We'll talk about more about what that's about. And I have not been, so I'm only just basing it on

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studies I've done, reading from other people, watching videos about it. But it looks like a combination between a business group of entrepreneurs, thought leaders, people are that are driven about mission, life, purpose, but also like a little bit of a rock concert. So it's very engaging.

And you've had some very, very notable thought leaders as part of that group over the years, keynote speakers, people that have been on panels, presenters. Here's the thing I know about you, just a little bit from being around you at a few of the other groups that we're a part of, you're a lot like me, I think, introverted. When I get to be in my place, with my tribe, with my people, like here with you today, I get very passionate and I'll speak out.

But get me in a big, big place, I'm not going to be like the life of the party. I'm not going to be jamming it from the front stage. You seem like your personality is a lot the same way. I watch what you do and you have this major impact.

So one of the things I want to get from you today, among other things, is personality styles. A lot of people think that people that have a big mission, a big impact, purpose, that are changing the world, people think that they have to be this wildly extroverted, charismatic personality, and they just have to like be out there, like some of the people that are that way, and they're good at that.

Yet, you seem the opposite. Could you just give me a little bit of that? Because that's what I feel when I talk to you, you're very thoughtful, very focused. You get on a big stage, but you're not like the big rock band leader, but you attract people that are like that.

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Giovanni M.: Well, thank you. I am highly introverted, but I can... the proper term is ambivert. I can swing the other way when necessary. And I feel like we've built a huge community of people like me, where we are all visionaries, we all have a dream of an epic, bigger future that we want to create. And part of the magic is reverse engineering it to actually make it happen. And that's what I believe. I believe we can all do that.

And Simon Sinek, the author of Start With Why, one of my favorite books, he spoke at one of our events and I was interviewing him, and asked about this question, introverts versus extroverts. And had the most amazing analogy that I'd love to share.

Introverts start the day with a limited number of energy coins. And every time we have a social interaction, we pay a coin, to the point where we deplete it zero. Extroverts start at zero, and every time they have a social interaction, they collect coins.

So it's just an energy distribution thing. It's not about being shy or different. I think anyone who's introverted still can speak on a stage in front of 10,000 people. I do it all the time. It's not as hard as you think. It's just understanding how to manage your energy and then after my events, I had this room called the Batcave, like I have to go into hiding for a bit just to sort of recharge my batteries.

I'm sure we're the same in that way.

David Phelps: 100%. I totally get it. I like the spending from an introvert standpoint, I think that there's so much truth in that and it makes sense. But yes, like you said, I know other people

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that are as introverted, but yes, can get on a stage and with all the passion in the world can bring it. The ambivert, I think that plays well into what you just described.

So just a little bit of your story of origin, your evolution, I know we've spoken in the past and you told me this, I don't even know it, that you spent... You're a great marketer and you spent a number of years with Dan Sullivan Strategic Coach. I forget what was before that, or if there was something before, but get kind of your story relevance and take us up to today and a little bit more about why you're doing what you're doing. I think that'll be really, really good for our audience to know.

Giovanni M.: Yeah, for sure. Working at Strategic Coach, it was the last job I ever had until I discovered through Dan's help, that any entrepreneur is really unemployable. It's a challenge for us to work for other people.

And I had the privilege of running the marketing for the company for four years, being around people like us, who are doing really big things. And it gave me the courage and the bug to do my own thing.

But I started my first company when I was 16. Company is a loose word, but I was producing dance parties for teenagers in a safe environment. I fell in love with experience, I fell in love with bringing people together. And I've had that in my DNA since I was a kid.

Part of my story and I think a lot of people will resonate with this, I was bullied in grade school and everyone has a different reason for being bullied. But it's usually the thing that makes you stand out. And for me, it was IQ. So I was labeled as gifted and went to a gifted school. And

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every time I came back on the bus to my main school, I was made fun of, which was weird, but I had this sort of negative stigma and trauma around the word gifted. I hated it, until high school when I discovered comic books.

And the very first X-Men I opened said Xavier's School for Gifted Youngsters, and now it meant superpower, reframed it. And I had this cheesy thing in high school that when I grow up I want to lead a team of superheroes, which is what I would tell people. And now I'm doing that.

So we've literally built this huge tribe and community of thousands of visionary entrepreneurs who want to change the world by sharing the thing that made them stand out and potentially bullied, as a superpower and building a successful, thriving business around being authentically themselves.

So that's the story in a nutshell. It's like understanding the thing that makes you stand out, the thing that you're probably told to stop doing, because for me, I was also told to stop dreaming. Get your head out of the clouds, that kind of language for parents and people who loved me, cared about me and wanted me to get a safe job and all that.

I went to engineering school and university, because I was told to do that by my guidance counselors. And not the thing I wanted to do. And previous to Archangel, I was running this huge real estate business, and did really, really well and I hated it too. Until I discovered the thing that was aligned with who I am and sharing me in a really unique way and going back to my roots of bringing people together.

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Now, it's just different people. Now, it's people like us.

David Phelps: That's interesting, because my story is somewhat similar in that I took the safe path, and my tribe that we're speaking to today, which are for the most part, professional practice people, owners who went to school and went way up the chain, in terms of getting degrees and licenses and expertise. And certainly very gifted at what they do, or what I did and worked really hard on that.

And I think that factor of safety is also something that can hold people back. Not to say that there aren't people that love what they do and thank goodness there are our clinicians and doctors and scientists and researchers that are really good at what they do, because they're making a difference in the world.

But you had the opportunity and I guess I was given the opportunity also, to make a shift in my life from that, you went from engineering and then to real estate, which has all the constructs of being wealthy and famous. It's all there, but it wasn't where you wanted to be.

So I'll be interested to find out how you gave yourself permission, because all these people said, you're gifted Giovanni, you need to go higher in the education level, engineer, or this real estate thing, which wasn't cutting it for you. What about sunk costs, that people have time and they have capital into a profession or career, but they're just not happy. Or maybe they could be happier if they could think outside, using that cliché, think outside the box, do something differently.

I've throwing a lot of stuff at you, but I know you're good at peeling this stuff, and probably peeling it down to

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something more concise than I'm throwing at you. But take some of that, if you will, and give our audience a little bit of feedback on that from the standpoint that I gave you.

Giovanni M.: No matter what line of work you're in as an entrepreneur, whether you are a CEO of a giant business or a practitioner and a clinician, we're all entrepreneurs, and we all thrive on momentum. If we're not growing, if we're not moving forward, we're dying.

So part of the challenge, especially with people in, let's say, brick and mortar, where they're doing the same thing over and over again, they're getting really, really good and they're mastering their craft and I bet no matter what profession you're in, someone will come to you, a patient or a client and say they have the most unique problem in the world. And it's probably one of four or five things that you see every day. So you've mastered that thing. So there needs to be an up leveling.

And part of what can happen is to inject more of yourself into what you're doing in a sort of hybrid way, that allows you to create differentiation. Because it's more of you and your personality, which I know for a lot of doctors or clinicians or any professionals, it's almost scary, because you're told not to do that. If you don't have the white lab coat and the stethoscope, whatever it is in your line of work seems like it's not professional.

And yet, the thing that will make you stand out is you. So if you can find ways... And to use myself as a personal example, I now produce one of the biggest events in the world for visionary entrepreneurs. And it started off as a business conference and now it's morphed into a

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spectacle, into a show, because I spent my whole life designing immersive experiences that are...

The best way to explain it, imagine telehealth had sex with Cirque du Soleil and created a baby that was my event. And why it stands out so much is because there's nothing like it. And I've taken two distinct things and turned it into a hybrid that differentiates it so much that you can't even compare it anymore.

And I love using Cirque du Soleil as an example. Anyone who's gone to one of their performances, if you ever try going back to a normal circus, it's like what the hell is this?

David Phelps: Yeah, exactly.

Giovanni M.: What they've mastered is they took the elements of a circus and the elements of theater and combined it together to create their own thing, their own category. And I think no matter what industry you're in, you can do the same thing. You can take your profession, your field and take other things that you were either passionate about, or some kind of mission that you want to create change with, or even your own personality and create a hybrid of your work, so that it stands out so much that you can't be compared anymore.

And it's possible and it's doable and I've seen it over and over again. And people in my community, I would love to see more of that happen.

David Phelps: You talk about why a remarkable delivery trumps amazing marketing. And so we know as business people, marketing is critical to what we do. But you're talking

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about it delivers, again, you're going back to experience the differentiator personality. What drives you? The mission.

Again, on kind of a street level, brick and mortar type of business, again, it doesn't have to be in professional practice, or it can be, any examples that you've seen, that we can relate to our audience about how they could take what you're saying and actually put it into some kind of actional form?

Giovanni M.: I think everyone has their own examples of this. And if you just track your day, what stands out for you as remarkable that you're dying to tell your friends about or dying to tell someone about? And something that's shocking to a lot of people is that most word of mouth is offline. But 93% of word of mouth is offline, it's not on social media, or in email inboxes. It's human to human conversation.

So my advice would be, be so remarkable that the people you serve are dying to talk about you. And they're dying to be your advocates and your ambassadors and activists for your movement. And part of that is designing touch points in your experience that make people smile, that wow people, that are completely different.

If we're talking about any kind of clinician, there's probably an intake process and there's a first consultation type of thing. And then there's a second report of findings, or whatever that looks like for... And it's probably generic. What can you do in your practice that makes it stand out, so that people are leaving thinking, oh, my God, that was so cool, so different? To the point where they want to tell other people about the experience they've had.

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Again, Cirque du Soleil, perfect example, you cannot not talk about going to that kind of performance after you've been, because you're just so used to the standard. And now this is exceptional.

David Phelps: Yes. What about rejection marketing and trying to attract your ideal clients? Talk about that a little bit.

Giovanni M.: This is super counterintuitive ad so stick with me on this, because some people may think I'm crazy. But what I've discovered and I bet you, you'll agree with me is that the more you say no to bad clients and okay clients and good clients and only say yes to the hell yes people, and you hyper niche down, so that you are exclusive to this small group people, the easier it is for them to refer other people like them.

I call it rejection marketing, because it's only saying hell yes to your dream avatar, whatever that means for you, and saying no to everybody else. But being known for that thing. And I'll use my real estate as an example. I'm based in Toronto and there are 50,000 licensed real estate agents. And I was in the top 1% of the top 1%, but the only thing I did was sell pre-construction condos to investors.

I've never had a client doing showings, I don't even know what a house looks like. I wouldn't know how to sell a home. All I did was this one thing, but then I became known for the one thing, and it's very easy to build a platform and a reputation in a specific niche or niche when you are the big fish in the small pond.

So to me, and it's not necessarily about what you're doing. It's more about who you're serving, being crystal

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clear on saying this is my dream client. This is the tribe I want to build, based on these characteristics. And for me, I equate it to, imagine the people you loved were citizens of a city, what would the city be called and what would the citizens be called?

Like in our world, Archangel is the name of the business, it's the name of the event, but it's really the name of the community. And to be an archangel means something. It's all about being aligned with what our values are, what we stand for, what we believe in. And it's for a very specific kind of entrepreneur with a giant heart, who wants to serve humanity and have exponential impact.

So that we know exactly what their frustrations are, what the patterns are with their language they use. We just know them to the point where any conversation I have with someone who should be in our group, they feel like I get them really well.

David Phelps: Yes.

Giovanni M.: And it's so much easier to go deep in relationship than narrow and shallow.

David Phelps: Yeah, you said it. I heard you say it, that when you niche down to that level, to that depth, that your avatar, your people, that you can actually speak to their aspirations, their challenges, frustrations, better than they can even articulate it better. And what they say then is that, wow, he or she really gets me. They understand me.

You can't do that when you're trying to serve the massive wide populace. When you're trying to be all things to all people, you're too diluted. There's no voice or message

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that stands out. That's commoditization. And that's the problem.

You're right, it is counterintuitive, because people are fearful that if I niche down too tightly, then they I'm going to miss opportunities. But as soon as you start to expand that out and go shallow and wide, then you have diluted yourself. And this is an era today, where to stand out you have to really identify who you want to serve and what's in your heart. And as you said, have that connection to that group of people who will follow you or be with you no matter what.

That's the key, but it is hard. It's hard to get that and actually have the faith and disavow the fear that comes with that kind of a stance.

Giovanni M.: I'll give them sort of case study story. There's a friend of mine who's in the Archangel group. His name's Darius, and he's one of the most gifted photographers I've ever met. But how many photographers do you know? Right? So for headshots, for example.

I've hired him to do my headshots, and he calls it heart shots. And what his process is, is three hours of coaching and an interview, to go really deep on who you are and what your superpowers are, and then an hour of photography to bring out those qualities in you. And that's the magic of what he does.

And then I told him, you're completely underpricing what you do. Because you're comparing yourself to other photographers. You're almost a hybrid of a coach that helps you uncover what your superpowers are, and the most gifted photographer. And when you package your

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value in a way that shows both sides of this, you are so unique that no one can touch you. You're really good at helping people uncover the superpowers better than most coaches can and you're the best photographer I've ever seen. And there's no other photographers who can do the coaching side, and no other coaches who can do the photography.

So you've created this cool category of just you, where he's injecting the thing that he was almost giving away for free as part of the process and that's where the real value is. So for anyone listening, what do you literally giving away as part of your daily routine or process with a patient or client, that is the most outstanding part of what you do? And how can you package that with the language that you use, to the point where you're creating a framework that's unique to you?

David Phelps: It's a category one. I mean, right there. And I think something else that you brought out that a lot of people that are hard working and they're educated, they're intelligent, fail to understand that we're all, each one of us is very much within in our own life, and we see things through one lens. It's who we are, it's our experiences, but to have somebody else outside like you just gave to your friend the photographer, to show him his uniqueness, probably wouldn't have seen it by himself. He's just doing what comes natural to him, doesn't see it as unique. You come from an outside perspective, well, that's really what being part of a community of any kind is about, right?

Because we only see ourselves one way. And when you're around other people who are also unique in the

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way they look at life, but they can spot things that we can't see, it's that blind spot that we all have, that's how we can develop some these things. So for someone who wants to figure out what is my superpower, or who would be my superheroes, maybe go down that road a little bit, because you talked about your superheroes, and I think that was a great story. Maybe talk a little bit about that.

Giovanni M.: I'll address both. First in terms of figuring out what your superpowers are, the biggest challenge is that they will feel innate, they will feel normal to you. So you don't think you really stand out, because of whatever it is. And you need the external feedback of asking people close to, what topics light me up? When does my face change? When do my eyes get bright? What is it that I can talk about for hours and feel supercharged about that topic? Those kind of questions.

And it's so much more helpful to get that external feedback. Because even for me, I went for years of people telling me that connection was a superpower for me, you're so good at connecting people. And I kept thinking, I don't understand what you're talking about. I know David, and I know this person named Lisa. And David has a challenge that Lisa can help with, so I'm just going to introduce them.

And yet when I really finally accepted that maybe this is a thing, and I went deep with it and I sharpened the saw of amplifying the superpower, now, I'm a super connector, because I understand that it was a gift. And if you practice a thing that you're really good at, or that is a superpower for you, you can go exponentially deep with how awesome it is.

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But you still need that feedback upfront, because there's this cool saying that you can't read the label of the jar you're in. You need that sort of external feedback of people telling you what that is.

And with respect to community, you brought that up, I was chatting with our mutual friend, Todd Herman. We were just on the phone and we're talking about something completely different and he gave me this toss away comment that was like one of the most profound things ever. And he said, the biggest problem with personal growth and self-development are the words personal and self. And he said, you've already solved that problem for people, because you've created community. You cannot grow outside of community, you need the support, you need the accountability, you need the feedback, you need the mirroring, you need a safe space to be yourself, so that people can help you grow.

And it doesn't happen in a vacuum. The idea of self-help is such a crap language, because it gets amplified in a community, in a safe space, where you can grow that way. And in terms of superpowers and what was the other question?

David Phelps: Superheroes. So you identified superheroes and talk about how you aligned with the particular superheroes that you chose.

Giovanni M.: My two role models or my own personal heroes are, one is a fictional character, which is hilarious, but Professor X from the X-Men. So discovering comic books when I was in high school, especially that book, The X-Men or that series of stories, he is an introverted leader who helps other people discover their superpowers and realize that

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they're not a curse, because most people feel like it's a curse, and teaches them how to use it as a gift to impact the world.

And I thought, that's who I am and that's what I do. So I modeled everything I do after the X-Men, which is kind of crazy, but who cares? We can do whatever we want.

And my other hero is Seth Godin, the author, my favorite author. I've followed his work since his first bigger book was Permission Marketing in I think 1999 and he's had 19 bestsellers since then. I've read every single book, but more importantly, I've applied it. So it's not just about reading books, you have to actually take the wisdom and use it. His philosophy on marketing and growing a business is so aligned with mine. I just love everything he does.

He spoke at our first Archangel Summit in 2016 and we just announced that he's coming again this year in October to speak again, to do a big keynote. I'm super excited for that.

David Phelps: Your follow-up story to that which I'll just allude to here, but you mentioned that, as you said, you had been following Seth, reading everything, implementing. And he put out an opportunity to ask a question, I believe. And out of thousands, you were one of the few that were selected to answer the question, and what he gave you back just added to your firepower for what you were doing.

And you decided I'm doing Archangel Summit, I'm going to reach back out and you talk about, in fact, it's an article people could google, it's How to Ask Anyone for Anything.

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And it was really well done, because it's about alignment. Not just asking somebody to do something, but actually understanding and doing enough research to understand, what can I do for them? And you did that so well.

And so as a result, just to fast forward, he was you said, one of your first keynote speakers and now that's awesome. He's coming back this year. So that was a great-

Giovanni M.: I'd like to share that story, because I think it's important understand this framework. And I see it daily, because every day multiple people reach out to me asking for things. Often it's, here's why I should speak at your event, which I get it, but they're going about it the wrong way.

And what I've discovered is, if you want something from someone, you have to be able to help them get further down their own path first, before you could ever ask for their help on your path. Whether or not they can help you. But investing in giving in that way, there's no direct ROI measurement for this, but it always leads to allowing yourself to grow and you go further down your path.

So with Seth, I didn't know him at all and I wanted him to speak and I'm like, how do you pitch the best marketer in the world to come speak at an event that doesn't even exist yet? So I knew that he checked his emails, which is rare for someone of his caliber. And my invitation was, Seth, I'm your biggest fan. And I know you probably get that a lot. I've read every single book and I know you get that a lot. But here's the thing that's different, I've applied your work and here's how I've done that and here's the result.

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Because I discovered that someone at his level doesn't really need much. The thing he cares most about is that his work matters, right? So if you give someone like that evidence that all of his decades of hard work has paid off, even if it's with one person, because now I'm affecting thousands of people who are affecting thousands of people and that chain continues. And I said whether or not you can come and speak, I just want you to know that your work did matter and because of it, we're able to do this giant event with thousands of people. But it would be so cool to have this all come full circle, to have you come and speak at this event. He said, how do I say no to this?

And he says no to almost all speaking events. He doesn't like to travel. He doesn't like to fly. But he did and now he's coming back. So I'm super excited.

David Phelps: Excellent story. That's one really to bank, I think, all day long. All right, so now we kind of come full circle back to Archangel Summit. So let's describe more about what it's about. Is it one day, two days, what's the event look like? And then who comes? I mean, you have great keynote speakers, Seth Godin for one, you can tell us who else is coming this October.

Giovanni M.: October 19th.

David Phelps: October 19th. Okay, so then, who is this for? We talked a little bit, to entrepreneurs, thought leaders, influencers, people that want to take their mission and impact larger, how does this all work? How does it happen? Give us the best you can as far as the feel for what this would look like, what the experience is like.

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Giovanni M.: So the experience itself, we're always going deeper and deeper at creating such marketability, in terms of the event itself. I'm smiling, if you're listening to the podcast, you can't see this, I'm-

David Phelps: He is lit up right now, I'll just say.

Giovanni M.: I had a production meeting this morning with... So we have a visual team, we have a circus team, we have a performance team, we have entertainers. And this is all for what used to be a business conference and it still is at its core. But it's really for any visionary leaders who want to become the best versions of themselves, so that they can create the biggest change possible.

You don't have to be an entrepreneur. A lot of our entrepreneurs bring their teams as well, because it's kind of like a personal growth event disguised as a business growth experience. And we bring in the best speakers in the world, like some of the ones we've announced so far are Seth Godin, Lisa Nichols and Elizabeth Gilbert, who wrote Eat, Pray, Love and Big Magic, and she has this ginormous... she sold 10 million books.

They're not just great authors, they are some of the most amazing speakers and there's no pitching, there's no selling, there's none of that kind of stuff. So it's all 100% value. And then we design the experience to feel like you're in a movie theater, where there's a storyline and there's emotions evoked.

Because we've discovered that, go to any event, 90% of what you've learned will leave your memory, your short-term memory quickly. But if there's emotion attached to it, you'll actually remember better. So we designed the

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experience to have almost a climax and the storyline, and a lot of emotional points, so that you're connected to what's happening on stage.

And then the secret sauce of all this is community. We're very intentional on how we invite people to only be... this is rejection marketing, even at 3,000 people. So that you show up thinking you're there for content and you leave with new best friends, new connections, new community of people who want to support the growth you're creating.

Because people like us can get very isolated and it becomes very lonely, especially the more successful you become. And we need connection very badly and a human to human connection, not just a Facebook group, which is important, but the opportunity to be person to person. And my favorite stories are of those matches that happen of people meeting in the audience or meeting in the hallway or connecting in a breakout or whatever it is.

We've had businesses form, we've had people meet their soulmates, like we've actually had people start dating after meeting at my event, which I love too. And it's a one day event for general admission tickets, which is Saturday, October 19th. And if you have a VIP ticket, there's a second day of deep dive tactical workshops. It is more for established entrepreneurs who want to scale quickly. And for VIP ticket holders, you get to meet the speakers. There's a catered lunch and dinner with the speakers. So it's more of a very high level exclusive kind of ticket. And you will leave feeling like this is a transformational experience.

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David Phelps: Awesome. Giovanni, thank you so much. And to get more information, easiest place to go would be archangelsummit.com, I assume, right?

Giovanni M.: Yes, .com.

David Phelps: Yeah. Arcaelsummit.com. Giovanni this is a real pleasure. I've enjoyed getting to know you a little bit more this last year and look forward to more of the same as we continue to connect, collaborate on different levels, just a real treat. So thank you for being here today. And you're providing some really great insight and wisdom to my tribe, my community.

Giovanni M.: Thank you so much. I loved it. I appreciate the invitation.

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