

#WorkTrends Podcast Episode Transcript

Taking a Scary Career Leap...into Cannabis

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Meghan M. Biro: Happy Halloween, everybody. On this week's episode of Work Trends, we're talking about overcoming your fears to take big leaps in your career, even into scary new industries.

Meghan M. Biro: Welcome to the Work Trends Podcast from Talent Culture. I'm your host, Meghan M. Biro. Every week I interview interesting people and brands who are re-imagining work. For more information, be sure to check us out at talentculture.com and join us live on Twitter every Wednesday at 1:30 p.m. Eastern using the hashtag [worktrends](https://twitter.com/worktrends).

Meghan M. Biro: I'm joined by my friend and cohost, Kevin W. Grossman.

Kevin W. Grossm: Happy Halloween, Meghan M. Biro. Boo.

Meghan M. Biro: Ha ha. What are you guys dressing up as this year? Because I know I'm gonna wander on over to your Instagram or Facebook account, and there's gonna be some big surprise there.

Kevin W. Grossm: You're gonna see it all. You know me, I'll be sharing it as soon as we're all dressed up. So my youngest is gonna be an angel this year. She's been all about that. And my oldest will be, definitely be a horror fan someday. Beatrice loves the horror. So she's gonna be a zombie. That's what she's already decided and we've already got the costume ready to go. And then, my wife and I are gonna be candy and we're gonna have a little tongue in cheek fun. I'm gonna be Big Hunk and she's gonna be Hot Tamale.

Meghan M. Biro: Oh my gosh. I am in love and want to be there with you guys to celebrate this. Seriously.

Kevin W. Grossm: It's gonna be fun.

Meghan M. Biro: Seriously, how fun are you? And I have to say, I'm not sure yet what Ron and I are dressing up as. But we know we're gonna have fun either way because that's how we roll. And ... we're kind of waiting until the last minute because we wanna see a little bit more of the ideas float and then really surprise everybody.

Kevin W. Grossm: Since today we're talking about all things spooky, we're gonna talk a little bit ... a lot about something a little bit more controversial. An industry that can scare some people, even a lot of people. Maybe some of our listeners, as well. And that's the cannabis industry.

Meghan M. Biro: And that's marijuana, people. Okay? Mary Jane.

Kevin W. Grossm: Yes. It is now a legalized industry and thriving in more states like California and, now, in Canada. And it continues to expand throughout. It's not legal in all fifty states in North America, but it is growing on a regular basis. Now, it doesn't scare everybody. Because I was just reading some of the latest stats on the industry.

Kevin W. Grossm: Now, Meghan, did you know that the global legal marijuana industry will reach more than 20 billion by 2025?

Meghan M. Biro: I did know that because there's a lot of people that are walking around, like the walking dead, no pun intended. Like, what do we do with this big thing? What do we do with Mary Jane?

Kevin W. Grossm: Add Mary Jane.

Meghan M. Biro: How are we not gonna get in trouble here? Especially as we start talking about marijuana and cannabis. And I don't care how you roll on that, you can't call it anything you wanna call it. It's coming into the work place.

Kevin W. Grossm: Absolutely. And start ups in the industry, they're exploding. And so financing to cannabis companies more than doubled in 2017. That's disrupting industries like pharmaceuticals and beauty products. But also, some of the less expected industries like packaging and textiles. Now, that means more jobs in the industry, too, of course. That's what a lot of our focus here around the world of work at Work Trends. And jobs are something that I know our listeners care a lot about. There was a 690 percent increase in overall marijuana industry job listings between January 1, 2017 and August 1, 2018. Wow.

Meghan M. Biro: That's got my attention and I'm super excited about it. That makes me want to hear more from our first guest who has one of these jobs.

Meghan M. Biro: Our first guest is Stormy Simon. You may know her as the former President of the online shopping site, Overstock. Actually, one of my faves. I was an early adopter of that. She is here today to talk about how

she's overcome some scary obstacles to find her big career success. And, to share her latest mission, taking that spooky stigma out of the cannabis industry.

Meghan M. Biro: So, welcome to Work Trends, Stormy.

Stormy Simon: Thank you, Meghan. And Happy Halloween.

Meghan M. Biro: Happy Halloween. I have to admit, when your name came across my transom on email, I said, Stormy Simon. The name alone, you know what I mean?

Stormy Simon: It can be a little scary nowadays.

Meghan M. Biro: Yeah, exactly. So, you have a fascinating background. You started at Overstock as a temp who sat outside the CEOs office. And fifteen years later, you were President of the company. What did you learn about taking chances and creating your own career?

Stormy Simon: Well, overstock.com was quite a ride. I learned more than I possibly could have thought when I walked in to interview. And the best part about arriving at Overstock in the beginning of an emerging industry was the ability to take a chance. There we were, sitting in offices, creating a new way to shop, changing the habits of consumers. In 2001, when I started there, I, myself, had never placed an online order. People in the office hadn't really ever done it. And so, we were created habits that no one had done. And that gave the ability to take a chance because you were first. Which also turned out to be a lot of fun.

Stormy Simon: But as far as my success there ... you know, I didn't go to college. I have an untraditional path to the corner office. And I ... being in an industry where things really weren't figured out yet and we had to define it as we went, every day, and figure out new metrics every day, really created an environment where I felt free to have ideas or say them out loud if it was on an equal playing field. No one really knew what the heck eCommerce was going to be, how big it would be, what the winds were going to be. And, throughout that, I was fortunate enough to get some really good home runs.

Meghan M. Biro: Okay, so you were President of a company you helped catapult into this huge success we're talking about. Your work has been respected. You felt good. Life was good. Then, you decided to take another big leap. Tell

us, how did you actually decide to leave Overstock and strike out into something new?

Stormy Simon: That was a big deal and it took a long time. It was one of those multi-year struggling back and forth decisions. It wasn't something I took lightly. All of us get frustrated at work, so I knew it was beyond that. Fifteen years is a long time. And when you start as a temp and really an entry level position and go through the ... and we were \$18 million the year I started. The year I left, we were about \$1.9 billion. So the epic growth and rise and build, the number of employees and space and all of that was a super exciting time.

Stormy Simon: And, fifteen years later, I had done just so much within that company, and built a lot, too. But I started thinking ... then I became an empty nester. I became ... I don't really say the G word, but my son had a daughter. And, those things ...

Meghan M. Biro: Come on, Stormy. [crosstalk 00:08:02]

Stormy Simon: I can't do it.

Meghan M. Biro: Grandma.

Stormy Simon: I get called [Bla-la 00:08:09]

Meghan M. Biro: That's cool.

Stormy Simon: Yeah. It's a good save. I think people know what it means, anyway. It wasn't that I found myself unhappy. I wasn't as happy. I started becoming interested in things that were going on outside of the office. And legalization of cannabis was one of those things.

Meghan M. Biro: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Stormy Simon: When Colorado decided to go recreational and just change the way that this plant was viewed by the world, my mind went to the prohibition history books and the way things evolved and how the country had to figure out a way ... and, you know, at that point it's alcohol. So we're talking about something very different. But the country had to figure it out. Books were written, people participated in history. And that's what I felt was gonna happen with this plant.

Stormy Simon: Now, when I first started thinking about leaving Overstock, I had no idea. I just thought, what would I go do? Where would I go? Would I live here? And, what I decided over the course of time was, if I was gonna to another eCommerce company right now and do the same thing, why would I leave?

Meghan M. Biro: Yeah. No, it doesn't make any [crosstalk 00:09:11] you had that. Been there, done that.

Stormy Simon: Yeah. And then when you start a new job, we all know it's hard. To have to go in, prove yourself, find your groove, find your tribe. You gotta figure yourself out. And, a much more difficult path to do relatively the same thing. And that's when I decided, looking outside of other industries and then landing with cannabis.

Meghan M. Biro: Very cool. I'm someone who's been closely watching that whole industry, and I was excited for Colorado when that happened. I think there's a lot of opportunity, when you talk about just entrepreneurial opportunities in business. I think, also, culturally. The way we're looking at pain relief, the legality of it all. I mean, it's just a cultural movement. So, I can understand why you're excited. Because there is a lot of activity. There's also a lot of legal loopholes.

Meghan M. Biro: I have friends in Vegas who are in the industry, and it's been one giant headache when it comes to getting through all of that hubbub. When you start talking [crosstalk 00:10:09]

Stormy Simon: It is. It's beyond anything I've ever seen. When I jumped in, I came from a big business and my work history had kind of been pieces of bigger businesses. And so, to come into cannabis and expect, you know, solidified businesses, with the foundation. And then, coming in and realizing I worked in a 90 thousand square foot grow with two medicinal dispensaries. Realizing those businesses were so new. But not only that, the rules kept changing. So the rules on the guidelines would change. Now we need to add this to a package. Well, that's a cost in your production. That's an added cost of the sticker. There's all these things that you have to adjust on these young businesses that are heavily taxed.

Stormy Simon: And that was surprising to see. They aren't treated within their state as an equal business to any other business. So if you have a grocer that only sells lettuce, they are gonna pay less taxes than someone that only sells cannabis. Where do you put your money? There's no banking options.

You're paying outrageously for banking options. And now banks are starting to come up with solutions. But two years ago, it was archaic.

Meghan M. Biro: You know, you're clearly not somebody who's afraid of change or afraid of all that gray that's happening, basically. Let's talk about your current mission a little bit, which is taking the stigma out of the cannabis industry. What are the most common misconceptions you hear about the industry? And why are people so afraid of cannabis?

Stormy Simon: Well, the most ... it's hard to say what the most common is, because it's really just a fear. And so I think, for me, what I found as I jumped into this industry was this just unbelievable history about the plant. Not the history about [inaudible 00:12:10] the plants, and all of those things. But the plant, itself. And it starts a super long time ago with a Chinese Emperor, like 2737 B.C. And this Emperor, the first on record that's been found, starts prescribing cannabis tea for ailments. People get sick. And, as time goes on, thousands of years are passing. The Indians start using it for leprosy. In Greece, they begin using it for medical remedies. The Egyptians start prescribing it.

Stormy Simon: So these are different continents, different people, that are all stumbling upon this plant and finding different ways to leverage it. And then, as the years go by, in China, surgeons start using the resin as an anesthetic. And then they start documenting it in their medical journals and enter the U.S. It comes over to the North America in the 1600s. George Washington, our first President, completely involved in hemp with THC.

Meghan M. Biro: Who knew?

Stormy Simon: And the Queen of England uses it. But we bury this part of history, I think a little bit. Not bury it, but we don't talk about it as much as we could. And by 1850, the U.S. is using it for neurological reasons, typhus, rabies, alcoholism, opiate addiction. All of that in 1850. And it's added to the U.S. pharmacopeia in the 1900s. What is that? 1900, 118 years ago, this thing's added in our pharmacopeia. It was accepted. We're growing it. Early 1900s, we're growing it like crazy. Pharmaceutical farmed 60 thousand pounds annually. They start governing it.

Stormy Simon: Anyway, the ... then the prohibition starts. Right around the early 1900s, the Mexican immigrants also come and they introduce it more as a recreational use. They'd just been using it recreationally. I think, at that point, and history dictates about the 1930s that our leadership, Harry Anslinger, who was the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, and William Hearst,

who has publishing companies, they start writing about cannabis and these violent acts. Now, why would Hearst do that?

Stormy Simon: Well, one of the reasons he would do it ... well, they dropped the word cannabis and started using the word marijuana. And it was kind of like, hey, the Mexicans brought over marijuana and it's really bad. And Hearst, he had the power ... he had about 28 publications that he could print and own the messaging that goes out to Americans. We didn't have TV. We couldn't call each other. So, the connections were, oh my gosh, did you read the paper? That is the truth. And one of the reasons he would do that is because he had lumber and hemp was a great alternative for paper. So it hurt him on a [crosstalk 00:14:46] right. It's always at the end of it; isn't it? It's always at the end of it.

Stormy Simon: But then, new messages start coming out like be so scared and aware and they're shrewd dope peddlers. And just these uneducated fights. They just started fighting.

Meghan M. Biro: It's funny, Stormy. I never really thought about the difference between hearing marijuana and hearing the word cannabis. Somehow, cannabis, when you take a moment and you listen, it sounds a little easier to take in, somehow.

Stormy Simon: Well, I think that that's our history. That's the stigma, that's a piece of the stigma, is when the Mexicans came over, they were calling it marijuana. That was their real name for it. And Hearst started referring to it as marijuana and then who knows if that confused the American consumer? If they thought it was something different than cannabis or more than cannabis?

Meghan M. Biro: Who knows? Yeah, you don't know. At least we're going back and looking. I guess I just get a chuckle out of the fact that booze has been around forever. We celebrate booze on Instagram. I mean, God knows I did with my martini yesterday, by the way.

Stormy Simon: Right. It must have been pretty.

Meghan M. Biro: It was really pretty. I'm at Meghan M. Biro, by the way, on Instagram, Stormy. If you're over there, let's have some fun.

Meghan M. Biro: But, yeah, it is interesting. I know there are a ton of uses for the cannabis plant beyond what most people know. Tell us some of those.

Stormy Simon: The hemp plant, so hemp, it's unbelievable what this plant can do. In addition to our endocannabinoid system actually being named after the cannabinoid system of this plant. Because we put them together after the plant was made. So, in addition to our bodies being named after this plant, it's good for ... I mean, you can use it in food, salad dressing, paper. Everybody knows the textile industry. But apparel. Think about it for diapers. Fine fabrics. We haven't even gotten there, yet, to where we can turn it into some [silkie 00:16:43]. But it can be for oils, it can be in your soap, your shampoo, granola food. You can eat the seeds and it's very healthy for you. I hear varnishes and oil paint. It's pretty much everything from packaging to insulation to hemp seed.

Stormy Simon: There's a new product out called Hempcrete. So I think once we grow enough hemp and people have access to it in the United States and we're able to grow it and start taking the plant to create other products, people will be very surprised. And I think it's gonna cut a lot of costs out of some of the things that we do and the way that we do it.

Stormy Simon: But the good news is, we can now get our hands on it.

Meghan M. Biro: Tell us about Sophie.

Stormy Simon: Oh, Sophie Ryan. I'm actually here in L.A. to see Sophie and go to an event today. To talk about Sophie is talk about her parents. Sophie was diagnosed with a brain tumor that sits on her optic nerve. Now, I would try to pronounce the name, but I normally mess that up. This tumor will grow on Sophie's brain until Sophie stops growing. So, the goal is to keep it small and get her to adulthood.

Stormy Simon: Sophie's parents, when she was diagnosed, were devastated. This is actually outlined in a movie called Weed The People. It was just released. It was at some film festivals. But Weed The People, produced by Abby Epstein and Ricki Lake, told part of Sophie's story within this movie. But, Tracy, her mother, felt that chemo was so harsh on this little eight month old baby and began researching cannabis and found people that were familiar enough with the plant as a medicine that had done things on their own, because there is no medical support here in the states. And, by golly, she started figuring out what dosage to give her daughter.

Stormy Simon: And now, the results for Sophie have been great. Doctors have left western medicine to follow this girl's story. What I want to say is at no point is Sophie [inaudible 00:18:35] that I know with ailments who utilize

cannabis to augment their treatment. Sophie receives medical ... or western medicine just like anyone else is. The difference is, she augments that with cannabis and are seeing great results.

Meghan M. Biro: Mm-hmm (affirmative). And, as importantly, it's giving everybody hope for Sophie. And that's [crosstalk 00:18:57]

Stormy Simon: ... for Sophie and everyone. No, that is a ... it's a big deal. Cannabis and children, people [inaudible 00:19:03] that's a tough conversation to start. Until you're talking with parents that are fighting for their child's life. And then it's not so tough to have. In fact, you're grateful there's another alternative. You're hopeful every time we learn one more thing about it. And also, if you can stop a child, a human, not a child, anyone, from starting on an opiate regimen, an opiate regimen and, instead of a plant based potential pain killer, I'll take the deal any day. I'll start there. And that's the same with children. You don't wanna give them the heavy drugs that are gonna stay in their system or ...

Meghan M. Biro: Right. Right.

Stormy Simon: ... create addictive behavior. That happens at any age. So I think Sophie is paving a way for us to all have the conversation about what we do give our children and why a plant medicine would be different than the nitrogen gas they might breathe when they get their wisdom teeth out or pain meds they might take for [inaudible 00:20:02]

Meghan M. Biro: I'm gonna take out my crystal ball for a moment. Talk to us about your predictions for the industry.

Stormy Simon: Well, that's really hard. And I say that because two years ago when I stepped in I thought one thing. And then, every six months it's kind of changed, including where my ... the shiny object for whatever passion I have or whatever [inaudible 00:20:22] of this market I find interesting. But the future, I actually think, ultimately, the federal government's going to approve this plant as a medicine. That's ultimate. I hope that they ... and this is a tricky, controversial thing to say, but I hope that states are brave enough to go recreational. Go recreational before that happens. And the reason I say that is there are all sorts of benefits happening in states that are legal, both medicinally and recreationally. The reason I think recreational is important is because the people that have figured this plant out to date haven't been the federal government. The federal government holds a patent on one of the compounds in this plant. Yet, they say there's no healing abilities. But they hold a patent. They're looking for

approval from people that have ... get their money in place first. That's my feel.

Meghan M. Biro: Well, do I want ... and Stormy, I want everybody to know, you can do that without having the psychoactive ingredients that change your brain and your body chemistry as well.

Stormy Simon: I was just [crosstalk 00:21:35]

Meghan M. Biro: I think that's an important caveat here.

Stormy Simon: It is an important caveat. But it's one ... when we talk about that one that compound of cannabis that gets you high, we're leaving out 430 plus compounds that we don't talk about. We talk about one piece of this plant. And yes, there are ... get the plant in the hands of people who can research it. The most important thing. And the states are gonna ... the states are allowing that to happen.

Meghan M. Biro: Talk to us about job growth. I'm hearing more and more about really interesting roles that are popping up in the cannabis industry.

Stormy Simon: Well, from a couple years ... I guess it was about a year ago, 280 thousand jobs to create. 280 thousand jobs by 2020. Isn't that crazy?

Meghan M. Biro: Awesome.

Stormy Simon: By 2025, total sales expected to exceed 24 billion. 24 billion. Now, what this doesn't say if it's medicinal only or recreational only and how they're getting to that without knowing what states are participating. But, in 2016, the medical market, \$4.7 billion.

Meghan M. Biro: Crazy numbers.

Stormy Simon: Right.

Meghan M. Biro: Maybe it's a little hyped, some of these numbers. But they're still big. That's the bigger point here.

Stormy Simon: What's the butterfly effect? The butterfly effect is the cartels or violent distributors of cannabis, way down the end of the line. All of those activities stop. There's good things that stop, too. And I guess for me, as an advocate, what I want people to do is be educated and form their opinion based on that, on a pure, self-directed education model.

Meghan M. Biro: It sounds like you took that path yourself, so you can speak from your heart and your mind about that. Tell us, Stormy, how can people learn more about the work you're doing and the future of the industry? Because I think that's where it starts, is learning.

Stormy Simon: Yes. Well, the work that I'm doing ... I love being an advocate. I have my hand in about five different cookie jars right now. And, I have really enjoyed going around the country, meeting people, and starting the conversations that can potentially change their mind or spark their interest enough to get their self directed education. And where I would say to go that is the Marijuana Policy Project, MPP they go by, but online. They keep a great library of what each state has done. Research papers. You can find so much information just there.

Stormy Simon: Now, from there, you can go and find white papers that were done in 1970. You can find the history of what has actually been done with this plant on a medicinal level. Because people have been fighting for it the whole time. It hasn't been dormant. It's not just sitting there with nobody trying to address what we can discover about this plant. It's been happening. It's just been happening underground by good people. Not the cartel. Not the people that are bringing drugs in that cause violent crime. These are people that are just like you and me. Passionate about this ... well, I'm passionate about this plant. But there are people that are dedicated to figuring it out, with or without the federal government saying, you know what? We approve this now.

Stormy Simon: So that's, I've completely enjoyed meeting those folks. And I encourage the listeners to just start reading. This is a big deal in our lifetime. History books will be written and we are all, whether we simply read about it or we jump in, we're all a part of it. It's part of our future.

Meghan M. Biro: Hey, Stormy, thanks so much for stopping by. We've all really learned quite a bit today.

Kevin W. Grossm: Wow, Meghan. What a fascinating conversation with a real trail blazer. I wanted to learn more about the cannabis industry. So I called someone who knows a lot about the ins and outs of operating a cannabis company. Keegan Peterson started the company Wurk, that's W-U-R-K, to manage all the back office operations and challenges that cannabis companies face today.

Kevin W. Grossm: So, Keegan, we just talked to one pioneer in the cannabis industry, Stormy Simon. So tell us, how did you get involved in the industry?

Keegan Peterson: Yes. I had been watching the industry a while and I personally wanted to come in and be able to apply my skill set to the needs of the industry as it expanded. And a friend of mine, here in Denver, had a dispensary that had grown to a hundred employees. And they had been dropped by their sixth payroll and HR vendor. And so he reached out to me and asked for some help in supporting his company. And so, that's when I knew the calling was there. So I dropped what I was doing and started focusing on helping him in his business. And then, eventually, realized that the challenges he was having were systemic in the entire industry and that there was a bigger opportunity to serve more people.

Kevin W. Grossm: That's awesome. And by the way, we know regardless of where it's actually been legalized, and I just was telling you before we started, I live in California. And now Canada, the whole country has just legalized marijuana. And the consumption, the sale, from a consumer standpoint. But there's still, again, this heavy stigma that's attached to the cannabis industry. So what are some of the unique challenges? Obvious ones as well as, maybe, the not so obvious, that cannabis companies face today?

Keegan Peterson: If you're looking through the lens of a cannabis owner/operator, one of the challenges is that each state has a different set of regulations that they have to comply with. And those regulations are very unique to the cannabis industry and they're complex and they change very frequently. And if you run a business in multiple states, then you have multiple sets of regulations that you've got to comply with or your doors get shut down. So that's the biggest issue.

Keegan Peterson: Banking is very limited in the industry. Probably 50 percent of the space has a bank account and the other 50 percent is still operating in cash.

Keegan Peterson: And then the last main challenge for these businesses is taxes. There's a provision out there called 280E, which we can dive into if you'd like to or we can save that for another time. But, effectively, it hampers these businesses from being able to deduct certain tax expenses. Most of these businesses are paying 80 percent, 90 percent effective tax rates, which is starving the business.

Kevin W. Grossm: So, that's ... and that's not by accident. Right? Unfortunately.

Keegan Peterson: With the tax piece of it?

Kevin W. Grossm: Yeah, with the tax piece of it.

Keegan Peterson: Yeah. The tax piece came about in the '80s when there was some drug dealers that had gotten picked up for tax evasion. And the IRS realized that they had been writing their house, their boat and their cars off on their taxes. And they wanted to make sure that didn't happen again. So they put in provision 280E to stop that from happening.

Keegan Peterson: Fast forward now to the cannabis industry. We're in a federally illegal state of ... state legal. And so, as the IRS is a federal bureau, it's still imposing these archaic tax measures against the cannabis industry.

Kevin W. Grossm: Let's take that a step further. Because, obviously, that's, again, I think you use the word starving the companies. That's obviously gonna impact the potential employees that would work for any of these organizations; right? In regards to just adding that layer of payroll tax and providing benefits. I mean, how complicated is that going to be? And do you see ... is there light at the end of the tunnel when it comes to staffing organizations that are in the cannabis industry?

Keegan Peterson: Yeah, it's become very important to track your employees down to the minute on the exact tasks they're performing. This tax provision ... basically, if you are selling the product or retailing the product, costs associated with that are not part of the cost of your goods. But on the production side, you can deduct typical expenses. So, you have an employee that works in the grow and the dispensary, some of that time is deductible, some of it's not. And then, it gets even more granular within a dispensary, depending on what they're doing. If they're rolling a joint, which is producing a product, that's deductible. If they're cashiering, then they're selling a product, it's not. And so, it ... the IRS has even gone to the far extent in some of their audits of asking for video footage of what employees are doing.

Keegan Peterson: So, businesses are trying to create very unique strategies to staff the business and being able to track the staff to make sure that they put themselves in the best position to be taxed ... to reduce their tax burden.

Kevin W. Grossm: It's the glamorous life of working in handcuffs, it sounds like, unfortunately. But that said, though, where do you see the industry going? Do you think that this may change over time? Any industry that's heavily

regulated, it always adds a really cumbersome layer to the business itself and we can have a whole other show about that. But, I mean, where do you think it's going overall as an industry?

Keegan Peterson: Yeah, I mean, polls are now showing 60 percent of folks are in support of recreational cannabis across the United States. Over 90 percent are in support of medical cannabis. So the people are speaking out and they're speaking in favor of legalization. So, I think this is ... in the meantime, it's gonna be a states issue and it's gonna continue to spread out. We're now starting to see the state legislative bodies that are actually passing cannabis legislation.

Keegan Peterson: So, I think that we're on the path to legalization. How long that's gonna take is still up in the air, but I don't think there's anything stopping this train at this point in time. And, at the end of the day, this product is helping people. It's helping save lives, it's helping children. And so, it's making a real impact in the communities that we are living and serving. So, it's gonna be a hard thing to stop at this point in time, which is exciting for everybody.

Kevin W. Grossm: Well, I'd agree. And the total per pound ... I grew up in a very conservative family. And, God rest my dad's soul, I can talk about him and I'm sure he wouldn't mind, even today. He was a police officer and a police detective for 32 years in a small town where I grew up in the Central Valley of California. And one of the things that he was always very progressive on, and it always struck me as odd, is that ... it was the legalization of any and all drugs. Marijuana, narcotics.

Keegan Peterson: Very progressive.

Kevin W. Grossm: It was very progressive for him when considering how conservative he actually was. And he told me, he said, I believe maybe in your lifetime or at least your children's lifetime, that we will see this change. And we are seeing the change now. So there you go.

Kevin W. Grossm: So, listen, though. For people who are still skeptical at the end of the day, what makes you optimistic about the future of marijuana?

Keegan Peterson: Now there are studies that are being conducted and research. And we live in a bubble here in the United States. But this cannabis legalization is something that's going on worldwide right now. And, as you saw from Canada legalizing, Mexico is looking at this. Columbia, Italy, Germany, Australia. This is a worldwide shift in mindset. And it's hard ... I think

people are now starting to get the personal stories about their family member that is suffering from some kind of condition and cannabis was the last resort and it [inaudible 00:32:27] their life or it gave them a couple days of life where it was as enjoyable as possible. It's gonna be hard for people to turn a blind eye anymore and say they don't have the experience, so they don't understand, therefore it's not good. Now, everybody has somebody in their life that has had an experience with it. So, I think that's what's gonna keep on driving this force. And the more stories that get shared, the more this is going ... the stigma's going to change.

Kevin W. Grossm: Yeah. I probably have [inaudible 00:32:54] on one final personal note, too, that ... obviously, I think this also had an impact on my father, was my mother had suffered long-term autoimmune disorder as well as lots of neurological pain. And there was ... there were times when this was the only thing that could help her, as well.

Kevin W. Grossm: So, there you go. Listen, this [crosstalk 00:33:15]

Keegan Peterson: ... real quick. There's actually a film coming out. I had the opportunity to work with Abbey Epstein and Ricki Lake to do a documentary. And I just kind of supported it. But, the film's called Weed The People. And it's six kids who are going through chemo and using cannabis to help them through that process. And they document their lives over six years of going through that. And it's going to be airing next year. It's now doing private screenings all over the United States. And it's things like that and stories like your mom and your dad that are what's changing people's perspectives. So I highly recommend folks check that out. It'll show a personal story of six young children that are really suffering and this was really helpful to them in their lives.

Kevin W. Grossm: Well, right on to that. And that's what ... what's the title of the film, again?

Keegan Peterson: Weed The People.

Kevin W. Grossm: Weed The People. Very nice. All right. Well, Keegan, it's been a pleasure talking with you and thanks, again, so much for being on Work Trends.

Keegan Peterson: Thank you so much.

Meghan M. Biro: Like it or not, it's an industry on the move and will continue to grow legally more and more. These are clearly exciting times.

Kevin W. Grossm: What did you say? What?

Meghan M. Biro: Come on.

Kevin W. Grossm: Nothing. I'm just ... go ahead and close the show, dude.

Meghan M. Biro: Thanks for listening to Work Trends from Talent Culture. Join us every Wednesday at 1:30 p.m. Eastern for a live Twitter chat with our Podcast guest. To learn more about guests featured on today's show, visit the show notes for this episode at talentculture.com.

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