



MITT ROMNEY INTERVIEW
PORTIONS USED IN: *THE THREAD SEASON ONE*

Mitt Romney, Politician
August 30, 2023
Interviewed by Mark Salter
Total Running Time: 1 hour, 11 minutes and 58 seconds

START TC: 00:00:00:00

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Mitt Romney
Politician

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Mitt Romney

Politician

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MARK SALTER:

I'll said, Senator, I'd like you to talk a little bit about your childhood. Talk to me about what your parents expectations of you were.

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MITT ROMNEY:

You know, I had a I think people would say a privileged childhood. They'd probably say that because we were very well off. I'd say that because I had two parents that loved me. A brother and two sisters that cared for me. They were older than I was. My family had a strong faith tradition, and so I had a sense of purpose. And my parents gave me the kinds of values that they thought would be enduring. So from that standpoint, oh, and by the way, I had a great education. I went to a wonderful school, was able to go to college and and had, I think, the kind of experience that you'd hope a child might have, particularly growing up during the 1950s and 1960s. This was not as unusual as it is today. The wealth was. Yes. But the two parents and the education and the investment of time by parents and the upbringing of a child, I think that was less unusual then than perhaps it is today.

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MARK SALTER:

What were the values your parents instilled in you?

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MITT ROMNEY:

Well, it's a long story there. My my dad was raised very, very poor. My mom not so much, but my dad's influence was probably the most significant, which is he felt that we needed to work. So I had jobs all during high school, the summer jobs ideas, and then at the home I mow the lawn and it was a big lawn. The driveway was never plowed professionally. My dad and I shoveled the snow and it was a long driveway. We planted the flowers in the spring. We



didn't have a landscaping company to take care of things around the house. We did that ourselves and then we were involved in the community. My dad had me collect signatures for ballot initiatives that he thought were important. And then there was our church, which is it was a small church relative to others in our country, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints or Mormon Church. You know, my friends who were Catholic or mainline Protestant, and I belonged to a little church. I was the only one in my school that belonged to that church. And so I grew up very comfortable with the idea of being different, not quite like everybody else. And that's a little uncomfortable, but you get used to it. And I think if you're different in important ways, that can make a difference in your life. So those are the kinds of values that I learned early on.

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MARK SALTER:

That distinction, that sense of being a little bit different that stayed with you all your life, even today.

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MITT ROMNEY:

You know, I think there's a natural tendency on the part of adolescents to want to be like everybody else and to fit in, if you will. I grew up recognizing I was going to be a little different. I got used to that. I became more comfortable with that as time went on. And I think throughout my life I have worried less about whether I'm doing the same thing as everybody else and accepted by everybody else, whether I'm alone at the dining table at work.



Instead, I'm focused on doing what I think is right and not worried so much about what other people think.

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MARK SALTER:

Tell me what it is like to be the youngest of four children.

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MITT ROMNEY:

There's a great advantage, or there was for me in being the youngest of the four. My older sisters were a good deal older than me, six and eight years older, my brother six years older. And and so I was home basically alone with my mom and dad. My mom read to me when I was a little guy. We would sit in bed together and she would read from famous literature. She was an English major. She wrote Read The Ideas of the King by Alfred Lord Tennyson to me. And then my dad would take me in to work not all the time, but every now and then he would let me come to work with him. And he was at this time head of a car company. And I got to be in his office and listen to him interact with the executives there. The same thing happened when he decided to run for office. I was in the room when he would meet with his strategists and his team, and I watched how he interacted, watched how he led an organization. And he didn't so much teach me by by word as by watching him, but watching what he did. And that was the advantage of being the youngest. I got to go places that my brother and sisters didn't get to go because I was, again the baby. I could tag along. And that meant that I got to watch my parents and watch them interact with other people in a way that I think was unusual.

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MARK SALTER:

Who was your father and what was his role in politics?

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MITT ROMNEY:

My dad, George W Romney, was born in Mexico of an American family living there, came to the United States when he was about five, couldn't put enough money together to finish college, and ultimately became a governor of the state of Michigan, a member of the cabinet, an extraordinary man. He became a member of the Cabinet under Richard Nixon. He was the secretary of Housing and Urban Development, made some changes that I think improved our housing market. He was. Did the civil rights. That was his passion as a secretary, and I believe he made a difference there.

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MARK SALTER:

Do you know if he ever met Dr. King?

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MITT ROMNEY:

You know, I know my mom met Dr. King because I've seen a picture of her shaking his hand. And I believe dad did as well. Dr. Martin Luther King came to Detroit and marched. I believed that my dad marched with him. But I think the historical record suggests that my memory is faulty, that it was a Sunday

that my dad didn't do campaign events on Sunday, so he did not march with them. He probably met him at the time or associated with that time. But there's no question that he was very close to that effort and and marched in a number of civil rights marches.

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MARK SALTER:

Did you ever marched with him on those?

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MITT ROMNEY:

I don't recall being with him in a political civil rights parade, but may well have. I did participate in a Black Lives Matter civil rights march during my term as senator. I don't know about the organization that calls itself Black Lives Matter, but the principle of saying, you know, all people matter and black people matter and the system of justice sometimes cracks down a lot harder on black people than it does white people. That's something that I agree with.

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MARK SALTER:

When you enter your own private sector career, did a lot of those lessons that you remembered from your dad. Did you employ them in your private sector career?

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MITT ROMNEY:

Well, you know, when you go into to a job, everything gets thrown up in the air. It becomes an entirely new experience. You feel overwhelmed and underprepared. You wonder whether you're going to be successful at what you're doing or not. The private sector, for me, was a huge departure from just going to school. I'm sure it's true for others as well. I had served a mission for my church. I was two and a half years in France as a mormon missionary, and that's another place where you you have to learn to be comfortable being different than everybody else. When you're American to you don't speak the French language terribly well. And three, you're proposing a religion that most people there had no interest in. So I went to the private sector. I wasn't thinking so much about values and principles as instead just how I could be successful and do a good job. My dad used to say that the key to being successful in any occupation is doing your present job well. And not focusing on what the future might be or what the problems are with your enterprise. Just do the job as well as you possibly can. And I had a number of summer jobs. I tried different things. I had a law job working for a law firm. I worked for Chrysler Corporation. Big corporation. Didn't like either one of those. I got the chance to go into a consulting firm, which was in many respects right down my alley. You know, I like solving problems, tough problems. And that's what Consulting did. And I got the chance to work in an environment where I solved tough problems day after day, was compensated for doing that and rewarded with a success or feeling like you've accomplished something and found an answer. So it was a it was a pathway that suited me well.



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MARK SALTER:

In detail, you said you did your mission in France. Can you tell me about that time in your life and what exactly you did?

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MITT ROMNEY:

A tradition in my church is for the young men to go off and serve their church in some far off place, far from their home. That is whether here in the United States or somewhere around the world to proselytize for our faith, also to help build the membership of our church and support the members of our church wherever they might live. I was asked by church leaders to go to France. I did not speak French, so I was given six months to learn the language. So I was there for two and a half years. I lived in Paris and Bordeaux and not Lahav. And I got the chance to to see our church grow and ultimately thrive. And in the country of France. Fabulous experience. I was living poor. We lived on \$100 a month that paid for our rent, transportation, our food, our clothing, everything for an entire month. And that was very different than the upbringing financially that I'd had. And living among the people and living a life devoted to my faith is something which gave me the courage to stand by my convictions and not to worry about so much of what everybody else thought. Because frankly, we weren't real popular in France at that time. United States was engaged in Vietnam. The people of France believed it was an enormous mistake. It turns out they were right and going from door to door, knocking on doors and as an American and encouraging them to listen to me, I'd often be hit with a get out of Vietnam, you Americans,



and had very little occasion to talk about my church, which was what I was there for. And frankly, as a mormon and a Catholic country that also presented some challenges. So, you know, I learned to take rejection, learn to take disappointment and to measure myself based on internal measures as opposed to what comes at you externally.

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MARK SALTER:

And did your parents ever visit you when you were over in France, or was it two and a half years of not seeing them.

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MITT ROMNEY:

When serving as a missionary At that time, you only called your home twice a year on Christmas and Mother's Day. But because my dad was running for president, he and my mom came through France on one occasion. And and I got to see them as my dad was campaigning, but he was running for president at the time. I didn't really get the chance to follow his campaign like I would have had I'd been in the United States because I was off being a missionary.

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MARK SALTER:

Is that still the case today?

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MITT ROMNEY:



Today, the church has made it much easier for missionaries to be connected with their home so they can talk to their family one day a week. And they do that through a Zoom or Internet connection and they can have a face time communication. I think every year they call it day preparation day. I think that's Monday. And most missions.

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MARK SALTER:

What accomplishment have been are you proudest of.

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MITT ROMNEY:

The chance to be in a consulting firm? Was it was energizing and rewarding because I solved a lot of problems that were presented to me. I believe I was able to help my clients from time to time. But I think the thing I'm most proud of from a private sector standpoint was helping create a new entity called Bain Capital was a venture capital and private equity firm. It still is. This came at a time when the markets were looking for new ideas and we had some and we applied the kind of thinking and approach to problem solving that we had used as consultants to create a new enterprise. I was able to select the team. There are about ten of us. As we started off, we made a number of investments, some successful, some not so successful, but we went to work and the investments we made to try and make them more successful and to help them make choices that would make them more profitable and enduring. Bain Capital is today a very successful enterprise which grew far beyond anything I would have imagined. We got to started. And by the way,



starting something is a lot harder than just building something further. Once it's already been started. Starting something from scratch is really a very challenging undertaking, and I guess I'm most proud of the fact that we were able to get that launched. We had a great team, the folks that started it basically. They stayed with us the entire time I was there. And that I think I'm most proud of from a private sector standpoint.

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MARK SALTER:

There any of the investments that stand out more than the others have satisfying to you?

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MITT ROMNEY:

You know, we had some some investments that weren't terribly successful, but then we had some that just blew the doors off. We had a guy that come by a game by Tom Stemberg with an idea for an office supply superstore. And this was at a time when people got their office supplies primarily through delivery. They paid an extra premium for delivered services. If you bought supplies in a store, you're probably going to be paying a very high markup. And his idea was, Hey, let's charge the price of about half of what the other stores are selling with a large store. People told us it wouldn't work. We did some analysis and concluded it would work and put some investment in it. And it became an enormous enterprise with about 100,000 employees. Ultimately, and financially, it was very successful. That was at the beginning of our investment career. Towards the end, we we acquired Domino's Pizza, not



the not the product itself, but the company and acquired it from a gentleman who had built it from scratch. And we're able to grow it substantially and make it even more successful. So building businesses and making them thrive was something we were excited to be part of. But then there were turnarounds. Businesses losing money. We acquired Vesco. Gray This was a division of a major corporation that lost over \$70 million the year we bought it, and we were able to turn that around and make it a successful enterprise and sold it a little later. Frankly, some of the most rewarding successes came from acquiring a business, losing money or underperforming in some way, and making it more successful by virtue of bringing in a perhaps more superior management team or making better decisions. And that always is extraordinarily rewarding.

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MARK SALTER:

What appealed to you about being the CEO of the Salt Lake City Olympic Games Organizing Committee?

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MITT ROMNEY:

Look, I didn't want to lead Bain Capital. The financial rewards were were large and getting much, much larger. The work was exciting to acquire businesses and bring in new management teams and help make them more successful. And one day I got a call from my wife and she said, Mitt, I've just talked to our friend Kam Gardner, And Utah said he thinks you ought to come out and run the Salt Lake Olympics. And I said, That's ridiculous. Of course



I'm not going to do that. And she said, I want you to give some thought to it. And I said, By the way, why did he call you instead of me? And she said, Because he knew you'd say no to him immediately. And she was right. But over time, she convinced me of two things. One, the Olympics was important. It was the last great stage on the public arena where young people were able to see the greatest qualities of humanity dedication, teamwork, determination, hard work. And that was important for the Olympics to thrive and to move on. And number two, it was something that I desperately needed, that my life up until that point professionally, had been focused on being successful and making more money. But that was ultimately not going to be fulfilling that. I wanted to make a difference, that I wanted something bigger in my life and going away from Bain Capital and the financial rewards of that enterprise and instead doing something where I would initially not be paid and instead trying to save a troubled Olympics was something that would be very much in keeping with my parentage and and my values.

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MARK SALTER:

Did you learn anything from that experience that influenced your decision to go into politics?

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MITT ROMNEY:

You know, I never imagined I'd be involved in politics. My dad had said, admit, don't get in politics unless you're financially independent and your kids are raised. And his logic was, you want to be financially independent such that



you don't have to win an election to pay your mortgage. And number two, you don't want your kids to be young and growing up and think that their dad is someone special because he's got some political job. I never imagined I'd become financially independent, but Bain Capital became far more successful than my imagination, and I didn't imagine my kids would ever grow up. But ultimately they did. And so I didn't get into politics until quite late in my career. I was at the Olympics enjoying my experience there, and I had a dinner right before the closing ceremonies with Peter Ueberroth, who'd been the CEO of the Olympics in Atlanta, and he was now on the board of Coca-Cola. And I said, look, I'm I'm being asked to consider running for governor of Massachusetts. What do you think? And he said, you know, I made a mistake when the window was open to get in politics. I didn't jump through it. And he said, I wish I had. But once that window closes, it's hard to get back in. And he said. You've got the window open for you to run for political office, and you ought to go through it, because if not now, you'll never get the chance again, most likely. So I decided to take the plunge to get involved in politics to run for governor of Massachusetts. My hope was that I could make a difference in people's lives and that my experience in the private sector and at the Olympics in helping build great teams and make the right decisions would be good for the people of my state.

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MARK SALTER:

How did your father's political year and your mother's? She ran for office. Wants to. How did it influence your own career?

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MITT ROMNEY:

My dad didn't worry about what other people thought. He had his own values, his own perspectives. He knew what he believed was right, and he said it forthrightly. In some respects, that got him in trouble politically. My mom was more attuned to what other people thought about her, but I followed more my dad's path in that regard. And and while we're all interested in whether we're popular and whether people like us and whether they agree with us, I think I'm a little more comfortable with being, if you will, out an alleged myself than perhaps the average politician. And and I learned that from from my dad and to a degree, from from my mom, She she got involved in a race she ran for Senate in in Michigan against Phil Hart, a very popular Democrat. And she had to know that the likelihood of her success was not very high. But she thought it was important for our party, the Republican Party, to stand up to the she believed the mistakes of the Democrat Party at that time and and put herself out there and got in the middle of the arena, as Teddy Roosevelt once quoted or once said. And so that was that was part of my, if you will, a heritage that I learned from them and launched my my effort politically.

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MARK SALTER:

Who are some of your other political role models?

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MITT ROMNEY:



You know, I love biographies and biographies of American presidents have always been of great interest to me. Of course, the most famous presidents, the Washington and Lincoln. But I. I particularly love John Adams. David McCullough's book about him had me captivated. And when at the end of the book, I closed the last page. I literally became quite emotional. I felt like I'd lost a family member. And seeing John and John Adams life and Ulysses Grant, you know, you come away, moved and inspired by some of the greatness of America's leaders, even Harry Truman. I loved his biography again by David McCullough. And learn more about that extraordinary man, a man of of courage. I want to say courage, the ability to know what he believed to not be embarrassed. Other people ask other people their point of view, a recognition that he wasn't always the smartest person in the room. That was the quality, I think, of all of these people that I admired. And then once he made his mind up to live by his decisions and not look back, I really admire a number of the American presidents that I was able to to to read about and and even some of the modern day political leaders. I admire.

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MARK SALTER:

Any contemporaries you want to mention or.

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MITT ROMNEY:

You know, I think the the senators that I've been able to serve with, there are a number among them that I admire a great deal on our side. You know, Rob Portman, Lamar Alexander, John McCain, Senator McCain has passed away.



But someone who I admired for the same kind of determination and go it alone attitude that he exhibited on the Democrat side. You know, Mark Warner, Kyrsten Sinema, senator from Arizona, you know, I admire people who have the courage to stand up and take their own path. Joe Manchin, These are folks that I think are unusual and and worth emulating.

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MARK SALTER:

What achievement as governor you proudest of?

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MITT ROMNEY:

You know, I came into Massachusetts thinking that the the issue I would face would be primarily a fiscal challenge. The budget was not balanced. And I wanted to find ways to get our budget balanced without raising taxes on people and driving businesses away. But I wasn't in office very long until a friend of mine, the founder of Staples, the office superstore, Tom Stemberg, came to see me and he said, Mitt, if you really want to change people's lives and help people in Massachusetts, you'll find a way to get everybody health insurance. And I laughed and said, Tom, that's just not possible. I mean, I have to raise taxes on everybody. That's that just doesn't make sense. And he said, well, you're a smart guy. Put your mind to it. See if you can find a way to get everybody health insurance. I began thinking about it. It crept under my skin, if you will. And I spoke with my colleagues about it. My secretary of HHS, Health and Human Services, said, you know, that's just not going to happen. But one of the people that I had on my team, Cindy Gillespie, who'd helped



me at the Olympics, she said, you know, maybe there's a way. And we began thinking about solutions for this problem and found a very unusual circumstance in Massachusetts. And that was we were giving hundreds of millions of dollars a year to hospitals that were caring for the poor and the uninsured. And the idea was we'd take that same money and instead of giving to the hospitals, we'd use it to subsidize the purchase of health insurance for people that didn't have health insurance and couldn't afford it. And we wondered whether the the funds be enough to actually get everybody insured. And sure enough, they were. And so we were able to put in place a health insurance plan that got everybody in Massachusetts health insurance. And we did it without having to raise taxes or cut vital benefits for others. And by the time my term it ended, I think 97% or so of Massachusetts citizens had health insurance. And that's probably what I'm most proud of. It became a model for other states to follow. And to some degree, I think Barack Obama followed it with Ted Kennedy for the nation with Obamacare. Older brother had states craft their own plans because I think there's some big differences between states. But the need for people to have health insurance and to get good health care is something I believe I'm most proud of.

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MARK SALTER:

Why did you run for president?

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MITT ROMNEY:



You know, I ran for president for the same reason I ran for the United States Senate, which is I thought I'd be able to do a good job. I, I don't know that I have the intellect of the most brilliant of our leaders, but I'm sure I don't I'm not the smartest guy in the room. But but if I had some skills that I think are unusual, one is the ability to to solve problems by listening to lots of different points of view and trying to sort out which ones are right and wrong and think it through. I think I'm good at that. I also think I'm good, if you will, it at leading. And by leading, that means one choosing and assembling the right group of people and and then to making sure we're going on the right path. So problem solving and leading were two of my unusual, I think, skills and abilities. And I believe that our country needs that, that we need real leaders who know how to bring people together and solve problems. And that was the kind of thing that I thought I'd be able to bring to our country. I really think, by the way, that our our country faces extraordinary challenges now, more now than actually when I ran in 2008 and that again in 2012. I believe that our opposition party, President Obama at that time, candidate Obama when I was running in 2008, that he did not have the right vision for what America needed to do and felt that I had the potential to bring better answers and to keep America strong and to make our people more free and prosperous.

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MARK SALTER:

What did your family think about that decision to run?

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MITT ROMNEY:

You know, my family was was supportive, even though they recognized it would have a big impact on them, that we'd all be campaigning a lot. And and there would be the criticism that comes with being in the public eye. But I had a meeting with my five sons and their wives as well as Ann, and went around the room and said, Do you think I ought to do it or not? And they were overwhelmingly supportive. They thought I ought to get into it. And for the same kind of reason I was. And that is they thought I could make a difference and that I could help our country at a critical time. And their sacrifice in many respects was as big as mine. My my wife, on one occasion when we were in Iowa, she said, our son Josh wants to visit all 99 counties in Iowa. And Josh's face kind of like was. And he I mean, he was married. He had I don't know how many kids at that point. I think four kids. He got an RV and went to all 99 counties in Iowa. So it was a it was a big commitment by our family. Rewarding in numerous ways, but by a decision we made together.

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MARK SALTER:

That their views change between the '08 and '12 run.

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MITT ROMNEY:

In 2012. I think it was even more obvious to us that as a family that that I should run again. I think we recognized the downsides more the vitriol and the anger that gets lost your way. The fact that, look, running for president is a bit like getting on a roller coaster. There are few things you can control, but



not many. I mean, it's up and down. Things happen that are completely out of your control. There are good days, are bad days. They're terrible days. And that's just part of the process. And you really don't control it. And they recognize that that's the downside. The upside is the country needs good people. I don't believe I've bad people in my family. Likewise believe that I could help our country at a critical time.

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MARK SALTER:

You lost a few races. You lost a Senate run and two presidential races. Is it difficult to get over those kind of defeats or to take your while? And what advice would you give other candidates about dealing with that kind of disappointment?

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MITT ROMNEY:

You know, I think I don't know. I can't speak for other people. But but my dad's life was not defined by by winning or losing elections. It is life was as big as his faith and his passion for the country and his family. That's what he lived for. I likewise have lived my life for my family, for my wife. And look, the most important thing to me in my life is that and is happy and that my kids are happy and and that my faith is as thriving and well and the country strong. I mean, those are the things I live for. Winning and losing an election that really doesn't define who I am. My relationship with my family, my wife, my God, that defines who I am. And and so losing is not as hard as people might expect in a circumstance like that. Now, in 94, when I ran against Ted



Kennedy, I'm smart enough to realize I was not going to win that race. I told my partners, Don't don't move my desk. Right. Because I'm coming back. I'm doing this because I want to send a message now for a glorious moment there looked like I might actually win. But then reality set in and I got beaten soundly. And thereafter, I hope you would win. But I recognize that in politics, you don't control the outcome necessarily. Things happen that that you wouldn't have expected. But if you define yourself by how much money you make or whether you get promoted or whether you win an election, you're bound to be disappointed. But if you define yourself by things, you control your relationship with others, your friends, your faith, your relationship with your God. These are things you control and and your success is measured by things you determine, not by things determined by others.

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MARK SALTER:

You've never managed to let any disappointment. They'll stop you from trying again. So you're quite persistent, I would say. What made you decide to run for the U.S. Senate?

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MITT ROMNEY:

I didn't expect to run for Senate when my race for president in 2012 was over and I'd been beaten by President Obama. You know, I retired from public life. I thought entirely and forever and was enjoying myself back in the private sector. It's a little frustrating not to be as engaged as I had been when I'd been a governor and when I was running for president. But, you know, I happened



to get a call from Orrin Hatch, the senior senator from Utah, asked to meet with me. We met at a Marriott hotel. He had me to sheets of paper. And on it he had laid out what he thought of how to run for Senate and take his seat. And that is not something I had even given a thought to. He was a Republican. And my party, I presume, running for reelection. I thought he was coming to see me about a fundraiser for him. But I began to give it some thought. And frankly, it was a little tiring being on the beach. Not a great golfer. So that certainly wasn't going to be my future. And being engaged at a critical time was something that drew me in. Wanted to confront some of the challenges we face. But number two, and perhaps even more compelling at that point was my concern that that we might face a constitutional crisis of some kind. I recognized in Donald Trump a very great departure from what the Republican Party had been in the past. I was concerned about where he might take the country and what kind of crisis there might be. And I felt that we needed more people of sober judgment and serious mindedness and in D.C. thought that I qualified in that category and that I might be needed to make a difference.

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MARK SALTER:

Were you genuinely interested in serving as secretary of state in the Trump administration?

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MITT ROMNEY:



You know, I got a call by the vice president at that point, Vice President elect Mike Pence. I was playing golf with my friend Kim Gardener in Hawaii, and a call came in and Mike Pence said the president would like you to consider being secretary of state. And I'm like, are you kidding me? Is this Donald Trump? I mean, I've been his most outspoken critic. This is a joke of some kind. And he said, no, no, this is in all seriousness. And I thought, my goodness, I mean, and I've been so wrong about him that that that someone who I do not respect as a great leader by any means, that he would like me to be his secretary of state and put aside all the critical things that I've said because he thinks I can be an effective secretary of state. That was really extraordinary, actually. I called former President George W Bush and said, I'm getting asked by Donald Trump to consider becoming secretary of state. He said, Mitt, if he asks you to be secretary of state, I'll have to reconsider what I think about the man. You know, I wondered, is this when he said that he could become presidential when he became president? Maybe that's true. Maybe he's putting aside the silliness and the the ridiculous nature of his campaign and is actually going to be a an earnest and and effective president. I hope so. And and there's no question but that I felt that I could be a very effective secretary of state. I had perspectives on and China and Russia and our alliances that I thought were important. At the time, I felt that there were things we should be doing in Syria in ways of helping Israel and other things that I thought I could make a difference for for our country. So, yeah, I was very interested in potentially becoming secretary of State and hopeful that the President's burying the hatchet that I had launched, if you will, suggested a degree of of mature leadership from him that would welcome my participation.

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MARK SALTER:

How soon did you into Trump's Trump's presidency? Did you realize your reservations were well-founded?

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MITT ROMNEY:

It was not lost on me that my hopes for a serious presidency and one that would have room for someone like myself were were unfounded and would not be met. And the president continued his not his bombastic nature and, if you will, his dalliances with untruth. That's an understatement if there ever was one. We saw that almost from the very beginning. And I don't know that there was a specific day when that became obvious. But but I had indicated to the president elect that if I were to become secretary of state, that, for instance, all decisions relating to foreign policy would have to emanate from the State Department. And he indicated that he was comfortable with that. Well, it was very clear. We brought in Jared Kushner, his son in law. That was the person from whom major foreign policy decisions were. There would not have been a role for me in a Trump administration. And frankly, maybe the best decision of the president President Trump made right off the bat was not choosing me to be secretary of State because I would have had to resign two or three weeks after coming in. I guess I could not have been able to work in the environment that that existed there. And whether, you know, Rex Tillerson, he couldn't last terribly long. General Mattis, one after the other people that came in left and could not be part of that administration.

00:35:19:00

MARK SALTER:

Were you at the inauguration? Did you tonight?

00:35:21:00

MITT ROMNEY:

I was not at President Trump's inauguration.

00:35:24:00

MARK SALTER:

But you listened to his speech, I'm sure.

00:35:26:00

MITT ROMNEY:

I listened to his speech and I concurred with President George W Bush, as reported to have said, which is that is some strange, crazy stuff.

00:35:34:00

MARK SALTER:

Has the experience of serving in the Senate met your expectations?

00:35:38:00

MITT ROMNEY:

I knew what I was getting into in the Senate. I'm not necessarily made to be a senator, but I did for a long time work as a management consultant and as a



management consultant, you don't call the shots. You try and convince other people to do what you think is in their best interest. So I'm used to not always being the top dog, and I knew that in the Senate as a junior senator, I would not be the top dog. I wouldn't get my way, but I'd be collaborating with others. And something unusual happened in the Senate, and that is that just by happenstance, Lisa Murkowski invited me to a dinner during COVID, during the epidemic, a dinner at her home. We each had takeout food and we sat in her living room. There were, I don't know, eight or ten of us and half Republicans, half Democrats. We began talking about a COVID relief package because the president and the speaker of the House were at loggerheads. And we came up with what we thought was the right idea. We got our colleagues to accept a pretty similar proposal that got passed. And this group of ten, if you will, ten Democrats, five Democrats, five Republicans kept on meeting. And and we we were able to take on infrastructure. We looked at gun legislation, religious liberty, the Electoral count Act, one thing after the other. And this little group, even though is outside the committee structure, not subject to the committee chairs being able to move the legislation or to negotiate, we were instead this group of our own, this little row group of about ten people and one topic after another, we took on and got bills passed. That doesn't happen very often. Couple of the senator, I think, was Senator Susan Collins of Maine. She said, Look at all my years in the Senate. I've never had so much fun. We got so much done and it was a lot of fun and I think made a difference for the country. I sure hope so. But but the Senate has been far more rewarding, in part because of that group that came together. And and it was led by a number of Joe Manchin, Kyrsten Sinema on the Democrat



side, Rob Portman on our side, Susan Collins on our side. Those were the leaders. I was part of that group and enjoyed the experience a great deal.

00:37:52:00

MARK SALTER:

What's the least appealing aspect of the Senate?

00:37:55:00

MITT ROMNEY:

Sometimes I get disappointed with with the fact that people on both sides of the aisle want to get reelected. I guess that shouldn't be a surprise. But in some respects, that looms extraordinarily large and can become a compelling factor in decision making and voting. And and that's disappointing. The whole idea of a representative democracy is that people would go to Washington with the interests of the nation at heart. And there are many who do. Look, all of us want to do the right thing. But personal interest, self-interest, getting reelected sometimes can lead us to rationalize decisions which we may, in our heart of heart recognize are not entirely in the national interest. That's probably the most frustrating thing and in our political system. And I think over time, we've seen more and more of that as the nation has become more divided and as the base of each political party has become more susceptible to demagoguery. And and and and so I think some of the great senators of the past, whether, you know, Richard Burr and Lamar Alexander and Rob Portman and such, have have left and retired, We don't have, I think, the same level of commitment to the to the national cause above the personal cost that the perhaps I would hope for.



00:39:23:00

MARK SALTER:

You gave a very powerful statement on the Senate floor explaining your vote for a conviction in Trump's first impeachment trial. It seemed at times you were struggling to contain your emotions. What were you feeling in that moment?

00:39:35:00

MITT ROMNEY:

There's no question but that the impeachment of Donald Trump was a difficult time for me and I believe for our country. I did not want to vote to convict Donald Trump. I recognized that the consequence for me personally and politically could be extraordinarily severe if I were to vote to convict. So I did not want to convict. At the same time, I recognized the human tendency to want to rationalize what's in your best interest and knew that I would try and rationalize not voting to convict. And so from the outset, I made a concerted effort to try and apply reasonable justice and and to to put aside personal interest. And so I took careful notes of each day's deliberations, tried to draw conclusions from each day, keep an open mind to the extent possible. And as we got closer to the decision day, I went through a timeline, considered all of the evidence and weighed this the way I hope jurors generally weigh a vote of guilt or innocence and came to the inescapable conclusion that Donald Trump was indeed guilty of withholding weapons from Ukraine for the purpose of a political means. That is something I did not want to see happen. I knew that the consequence for me would be significant,



but I also knew that it was a defining moment in some respects for me and and was in a great deal of dimension, a reminder of my dad's life and my mom's life, which is time and again. They had to put their personal beliefs above what was in their self-interest. And my emotion was thinking about my dad and my mom. Look at my my guiding star throughout my life, frankly, has been my dad. And my mom to a great degree, but they had different qualities. And in my professional and political life, my dad was the one that I was following. During the debates, I would put his name at the top of my my notepad and circle it to remind myself that I had a a measure of integrity to follow. And and as I was speaking on the floor, explaining my vote to convict Donald Trump, I thought of my dad and and hope that he would would have the occasion to to look down and see that his son had not entirely measured up to my dad's example, but I was endeavoring to do so at that moment.

00:42:21:00

MARK SALTER:

What virtue do you think is most important for someone who holds high public office to possess?

00:42:27:00

MITT ROMNEY:

I listen to a person who had served in the cabinet of two different presidents and he was asked, What is the quality that's most important in a president? And he said, a recognition that you're not the smartest person in the room. And as I look back at some of the biographies of presidents that I most admire, I note that they had an open mind, sought opinions of others, did not



immediately thought they had all the answers. And and that is something I think is critical, that individuals in public service are willing to listen, to gather information to to accommodate different points of view, to recognize that our system is based upon collaboration and compromise and finding common ground. I think that open mindedness and a recognition you're not the smartest guy around is really essential for people who want to be effective.

00:43:23:00

MARK SALTER:

Do you think the political climate will get better or worse than in their time or during your time in office? And what can individual officeholders do to improve it?

00:43:31:00

MITT ROMNEY:

Yeah, I hope our political environment gets better. I don't think it's likely to. I think Donald Trump is most likely to become the Republican nominee in 2024. He has proven to be an extraordinarily gifted demagogue. My political party has, as shifted a number of people have rushed into it who are drawn to that demagoguery. A lot of people have left it that found it repelling. And and so the reality is that the base of my party is more extreme, more, more subject to demagoguery. I remember the quote from H.L. Mencken, which is to every complex problem, there's an answer which is simple, clear and wrong. And that's what we're seeing on my side of the aisle and on the Democratic side of the aisle. We're seeing a President Biden drawn by the



Bernie Sanders wing of his party, which is as misguided as the Donald Trump side of our party. And so the nation is becoming more and more divided. The enmity that people in one political party feel for the other party is at an all time high. That's very, very frightening. I don't see how that turns around in the imminent future. Historically, as you look at nations that have faced a similar circumstance, one of two things have happened to turn things around. Either there's a crisis so severe, it shakes people into finding common ground again and taking corrective action or an extraordinary leadership steps forward. And that was Lincoln following the Civil War, saying with malice toward none and charity for all. I mean, think of that after hundreds of thousands have been killed. Extraordinary leader Winston Churchill, three great emperors of Rome. The list goes on. We've had individuals who step in at a critical time to turn things around. And we may see that I don't know if it's in the offing at this point, but, you know, I like President Biden, but I don't think he has shown yet the capacity to do that. I don't believe Donald Trump has or ever will. And perhaps one of the people who's coming along will be able to demonstrate that skill. But if not, I think it's more likely that we will face a crisis of some kind within the next decade or two. That causes us to be shaken to the core, to ask ourselves whether we really want to remain a constitutional republic or whether we want to be overrun by China or someone else.

00:46:12:00

MARK SALTER:

Do you want to be on hand to help deal with that crisis?

00:46:15:00

MITT ROMNEY:

You know, I will continue to to try and battle for solving the challenges that America faces, the fundamental challenges we face to try and heal the divide that exists in America, whether that's through elective office or whether that's through creating new entities that will move elected officials towards the center. I don't know how I will continue to be engaged in the future, but I'm not going to go to the beach. I'm not going to hit the golf course.

00:46:41:00

MARK SALTER:

Using your business background and your political background. Is there a way that we're going to solve the national debt?

00:46:48:00

MITT ROMNEY:

You know, I'm increasingly cynical about our debt problem, and I had hoped that we would be able to solve our debt problem before it became a a crisis or a catastrophe. Senator Phil Gramm and I were meeting just the other day, and he's left the Senate. As you may know, some time ago, and I told him, we've got to solve the debt problem. We've got to deal with entitlements, which is where the depth actually where the debt problem flows from. And and he said that's not going to happen. There's a crisis. And that's frightening because if there is a crisis, the the the repair that's going to be needed, the actions needed will be so draconian, it's going to be very, very painful. Dealing with problems before they become crisis can be done in a way that's



far less painful. I don't know that there's the political will to take on our challenges, our debt problems on a timely basis. And I say that because both people running for president this time, the leaders, Donald Trump and Joe Biden, have said they're not going to touch entitlements and entitlements are where two thirds of federal spending occurs. Two thirds The one third is not the problem. The one third we vote on every year, it grows more slowly than the economy. The two thirds the entitlements are growing faster than the economy. That's where the problem is. That's why we have so much debt. And unless we're willing to focus on those areas, either by raising the taxes that pay for them or changing the benefits in some way, we're we're we're going to face a crisis down the road. And I hope it's not a crisis so big that it caused us to get eclipsed by other nations like China. But it's it's going to be painful unless we do. And I, I don't see the political will at the top of the political parties right now to suggest we're going to take it out.

00:48:46:00

MARK SALTER:

I remember in your acceptance speech when you were not in on the nomination, he told a very affecting story about your dad and a rose and your mom. Would you mind sharing that here?

00:48:55:00

MITT ROMNEY:

My mom and dad had a an unusual love story, not unlike my own. My mom and dad fell in love in high school and my mom was educated. She had a career in Hollywood and my dad did not have a college degree, felt very badly



in love with my mom. And once they were married, he would bring her a rose every morning. How he got them. Heaven only knows he would go clip them from gardens and bring her a rose. He got up early. He was out usually walking or jogging at about 430 or five, and he'd get a rose somewhere and bring it and put in a vase by her bedside such that when she woke up, there's a fresh rose every morning. And that was the case throughout their marriage. On the day he passed away, she woke up and there was no fresh rose in her face. And she immediately recognized something was wrong and got out of bed and went to the room where the treadmill was and found that my dad had passed away. So a long family heritage of commitment to to one another.

00:50:01:00

MARK SALTER:

As a son. Can you tell me about witnessing your parents getting older and eventually dying?

00:50:06:00

MITT ROMNEY:

Yeah, it's not fun getting older. My dad was 88 and and I said to him, You know what? What is the most rewarding thing in your life? And and I thought about the fact that he had turned around a car company, American Motors, its stock price went from roughly \$7 a share to over \$90 a share when he was CEO. He was elected three times as governor of Michigan, was a cabinet secretary. I mean, so I thought what was the most rewarding, most exceptional part of your life? He didn't hesitate at all. He said the most rewarding part of my life was helping raise you four kids, me, my brother and



two sisters. And he said, And your mother deserves most of the credit for that. So even at age 88, he knew what was most immediate, most meaningful to him. But he also said at age 88, you know, it's a funny thing. I'm the same person inside I was during my twenties and thirties. I look on the outside and see what's happening in my body and recognize that people see me differently. But I'm not a different person. I'm who I was before. And it's strange to get older and get old. And there's no question it is. I'm you know, I'm 76 right now. And, you know, the aches and pains and the various indignities that we go through as we get older have been visited to me, as they have on others. Seeing it happen to my mom and dad was particularly difficult. My dad passed away first. My mom passed away about a year later. She really was in failing health, but both of them fortunately had full mental capacity and mostly physical capacity until the very end. And they were they were blessed with a an active and meaningful life.

00:51:46:00

MARK SALTER:

Do you ever still dream about them?

00:51:48:00

MITT ROMNEY:

I do dream about my mom and dad every now and they every now and then they intrude on my dreams. And I don't ascribe any any, if you will, spiritual influence. But but they are continue to be a large part of my life more frequently. However, I think about them. And as I'm considering a political issue or what I'm going to say about something, I think about them. I have a



picture of them just outside my bedroom and in my home. And as I walk into the bedroom, I sit and think about them and try and measure up to their expectations.

00:52:29:00

MARK SALTER:

And where are they buried?

00:52:31:00

MITT ROMNEY:

My dad was buried in the middle of Michigan and my mom buried right next to him.

00:52:37:00

MARK SALTER:

And do you ever go out to the gravesite or?

00:52:40:00

MITT ROMNEY:

Rarely. My dad was was so cheap, frugal. He would say he he picked a place which was in the center of the state where he had served as governor. It's in the middle of nowhere. There's not much around it. You have to make a long journey either from Detroit or Lansing to get there. Been there a couple of times, but not very often.

00:53:03:00



MARK SALTER:

And was he proud of your success? I mean, he was able to look at your success as a businessman as well. Did he ever tell you how proud he was of you?

00:53:13:00

MITT ROMNEY:

You know, there's no question. But my dad was proud of what I'd accomplished by the time he passed away, although I had not been involved at that stage in a political way of any success or significance. Frankly, the last political race he'd seen me in was the one I ran in 1994, where I ran a very uphill campaign against Ted Kennedy. He said, This is just the beginning. And I said, No, no, no, Dad, this is the end of my political foray. I wanted to make a statement, make it a message of some kind. I'm not going to be running again. And he said, no, no, no, this this this is just the beginning for you. And we had the whole family together. We were in a at a restaurant following my defeat to Ted Kennedy. And I, I grabbed a an Easter lily that happened to be at a floral arrangement in the room and lay down on the floor in front of my dad and held the Easter lilies like it was a dead body and said, My political career is over. And he turned out to be right. I turned out to be wrong. I guess my political career went on. And yeah, I. I have no question but that that he knows what I'm doing. I happen to believe that there's life after after death. And I believe that he and mom recognize that I'm engaged. But I'm sure they're engaged in things that are more important than I am today, as in the past.

00:54:34:00

MARK SALTER:

How do you balance your career aspirations with your family responsibilities to your family?

00:54:39:00

MITT ROMNEY:

Look for me, family and faith come first. And and that has been tested for me time and time again. And I have made decisions that are in keeping with that. I guess that's because I found the most rewarding part of my life is my relationship with Ann and my kids and my my commitment to my faith. They they don't fail. Those things are there for me. I am not disappointed in my family or my faith. Sometimes my career can be disappointing and as politics can be disappointing. Lost elections. If I had a sense of personal accomplishment based on what happens politically from day to day, gosh, I'm not sure what my stock would be at this point. But because I measure my life accomplishment by virtue of my faith in God and my faith in my family, my love for my family and my friends, I'm able to feel that my life has been okay.

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MARK SALTER:

Any career choices you made your family didn't agree with?

00:55:43:00

MITT ROMNEY:



You know, it's a funny thing. I can't think back on a time when my family disagreed with what I was doing. I think there may have been some some uncertainty about whether I should run for Senate or not. I don't entirely remember. But look, I've never gone a different direction than Ann has thought was right. She has been my life counselor and and and she is a much better judge of character and people than I do. She says right away, when people are phony, her assessment of whether someone is a person of character or not is a virtually flawless, flawless. I'm more likely to get taken in. And and so I go to her for her thoughts. I followed her advice Now, now that I will disagree and we'll will battle it out and and but come to a meeting of the minds. And I don't think there's ever been a time when I made a decision she disagreed with.

00:56:43:00

MARK SALTER:

Can you tell me about it? Who is she? How did you meet?

00:56:47:00

MITT ROMNEY:

Yeah, I met. And before she got a chance to meet a number of. Better looking, more athletic, more intelligent, other guys. She was 15. We went on our first date, and shortly thereafter, she turned 16. She was a sophomore. I was a senior in high school. I fell immediately for her. She was very standoffish and sort of pushed me away, dated other people from time to time, which drove me crazy. I became more and more focused on her. Intent on winning her, her love and affection. As time went on, that became reality. Before I'd graduated



from high school, I'd asked her to marry me. She said she would. I said, I don't want to go on a mission for my church, which was next in line for me. And she said, You've got to do that. I don't want to stand between you and and and your mission. She was not a member of my church at that point. She said, You regret that and resent me all your life if you don't go on a on a mission for your church as your dad and grandfather have. So I went on my mission. When I came back from my mission, I was two and a half years later, I was still very much in love as I had been on the car ride home from the airport. I asked her if she'd marry me. She said yes, and we got married just a couple of months later. So we've been in love ever since. It's not that we always agree. We disagree. We've had, you know, arguments, but we don't fight. I never really had a fight with her. And people say, Oh, that's just not real. He's he's not authentic, you know? But look, we grew up together. We fell in love. We're still in love now. And and even though we might disagree or have an argument, we don't fight and and haven't. Not that there's anything wrong with it. I'm told that a lot of marriages where the or the fighting ends up leading to a greater love and affection. But our love and affection is held up pretty darn well.

00:58:38:00

MARK SALTER:

And when you were in France on your mission, were you able to write her?

00:58:42:00

MITT ROMNEY:



I wrote two. And almost every day, maybe every week is a more fair measure. She wrote back regularly. We were very much drawn to each other, you know, And as I as I met her, it was reserved, quiet, maybe a little shy. And as time has gone on, we've we both developed in various ways. She's a better speaker than I am. More extemporaneous, more natural. She's also an extraordinary leader and visionary. She began something some years ago. She was diagnosed with M.S. in 1998 and knocked her off her feet and and was looking to basically live a life in a wheelchair. And we were getting ready to put a little elevator in our in our house so she could get around. She was able to find an extraordinary doctor who helped her overcome her, her disease, that along with exercise, horseback riding, blessing from a church leader. All these things combined to help her overcome her disability from M.S. and then led her to working with this doctor that had helped her, led her to help establish the Ann Romney Center for Neurological Research at Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital. And and she now has some 300 researchers, which she helps to raise money for and finance. She's leads the board of this entity. They're researching major neurological diseases. The idea that my girlfriend, a 50 year old shy little girl, would be able to help found a, you know, a research institution at Harvard Medical School, it just goes beyond anything I would have imagined. But she's an extraordinary person, a visionary, a leader and a person I'm very deeply in love with.

01:00:37:00

MARK SALTER:



Do you remember the day that your first child was born? And can you describe that day?

01:00:41:00

MITT ROMNEY:

I remember very distinctly the day Tagg Romney was born. We were living in Provo, Utah, 911 West 100 south. We had a basement apartment, little one room apartment, and began to go into labor. Without much time passing, I became panicked, went to the hospital, took her to the Provo Hospital, Utah Valley Hospital. And they said, No, you got to wait longer. You're not ready. So we we went to get a burger and couldn't eat. She wasn't allowed to eat, but I sat there and ate a burger in front of her and she smirked at me as I did. So we waited most of the afternoon and finally the labor came more intensely, went back to the Utah Valley Hospital. Dr. Webster delivered the baby. As the baby was emerging, he snipped a little snippet of hair and said, Hey, you guys want this for your baby book? He was a character as a doctor, as you might imagine. You don't want the first child is born. The head gets squeezed a good deal by the birth canal. And so his head was long and skinny. And I looked at that head and thought, Point is that unusual? I said to Dr. Webster. So I was in the delivery room with Ann and the baby that just being born. I said, Is that is that head normal like that? He said, No, no, no, we call that a hot dog yet. It'll stay like that. And that terrified me. I realized ultimately he was being funny. So yeah, I distinctly remember the day the tag was born. And by the way, it was on March 21st of 1970. We were married on March 21st of 1969. So to the day, the day of our first anniversary. Oh, and by the way, it happened to

also be the anniversary of our first date, March 21st, 1965. So that that first day of spring turns out to be quite significant for us.

01:02:35:00

MARK SALTER:

Can you tell me each of your children's names?

01:02:39:00

MITT ROMNEY:

Yes. My oldest son is Tagg Romney. Taggart Mitt Romney. Number two son is Matthew Scott. Romney. Then came Joshua. James Romney. Then Benjamin Bratt. Romney. And finally, Craig. Edward Romney.

01:02:54:00

MARK SALTER:

What brings you joy? What's a perfect day for you?

01:02:57:00

MITT ROMNEY:

A perfect day is being with my sons, their wives and our grandsons all together. We have a week which we take in New Hampshire on Lake Winnepesaukee, where the entire family is together. We have all of our dinners together. We enjoy the day together. That, for me, is heaven on earth. I call it family week. My youngest son, Craig, has renamed it Inheritance Week, whatever you call it. We're all together for a full week and it's the best life can be.



01:03:27:00

MARK SALTER:

And what are the grandkids call you?

01:03:28:00

MITT ROMNEY:

My grandkids call me Papa. And they call. And Mamie, as in Mamie Eisenhower. We we patterned ourself after Ike and Mamie Eisenhower. And she's got the name Mamie.

01:03:41:00

MARK SALTER:

Describe aging and how you stay so healthy.

01:03:44:00

MITT ROMNEY:

You know, I wish I were more healthy than I am. I'm not going to tell you all of my statistics, but there are a few things I can't control. I can't control how much I weigh. And that's really two things. One, how much you eat. And I try and limit how much I eat. And I also try and eat more greens and more vegetables than I might otherwise be inclined to. I'm told that they keep my blood sugar level down. I'm supposed to start off the meal with with something green. So I try and do that. And then the other part of staying somewhat physically fit is by exercising every day. So I, I usually ride a bike



for a half an hour every day with a stationary bike, or if it's in a place where there's a safe place to ride a bike on the road. I do that.

01:04:29:00

MARK SALTER:

And do you notice any your body starting to get older and the creeks and the lakes or not so much.

01:04:36:00

MITT ROMNEY:

Yeah. The problem is, stuff that you do when you're young doesn't hurt very much. Comes back in a hot year. So, you know, jumping off a boat some years ago caused a bit of a difficulty with one knee. I feel that a skiing accident caused some difficulty with another knee. I feel that a whiplash automobile example or excuse me, accident years ago caused me to have some pain in my back that I don't particularly enjoy. The things that happen when you're younger end up coming back with a vengeance when you're older.

01:05:10:00

MARK SALTER:

Do you still ski?

01:05:12:00

MITT ROMNEY:

I do still ski. Snow ski and and water ski. I like them both.



01:05:17:00

MARK SALTER:

Why is storytelling so important?

01:05:19:00

MITT ROMNEY:

I think I have been provided with the values that I have that are enduring and lead to a sense of personal satisfaction. By virtue of having watched people that I admire and understanding their life story and reading about people that I admire. And in today's day and age, maybe people find it harder to sit down with a long book and read about a president who died long ago or some kind of hero that that that might have influenced them. But being able to hear their life story or seeing it through through video or streaming or other more modern techniques is perhaps a way for people to get a closer connection to individuals who who will help them shape their values. Look, it's no question but that in the history of humanity, the greatest leaders and the people who have tried to study life have determined that there are certain values that are the most rewarding both for society and for the individual. And every now and then, people try and stray from that and find that it makes them less happy. Being able to learn from those people who have found enduring values and the most rewarding values is a way to live a happier life, and in my view, to preserve a civilization that is successful and leads to the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people.

01:06:47:00

MARK SALTER:

Do you fear death?

01:06:49:00

MITT ROMNEY:

Do I fear death? I don't want it. I want to stay forever. I don't want to leave. This could be a very interesting time. The emergence of China as the world's largest economy is going to be interesting. The the tumult China goes through is going to be revealing. AI presents a threat and an opportunity. A threat of unmeasured proportion. An opportunity of a similar dimension. I want to see where that's going to go. I like to see what's going to happen with the Earth, how we're going to deal with all these challenges, our climate change. What is that going to mean? Huge migration of people? I think it's going to be a very interesting time, even more interesting over the next 25 years than over the past 25 years. So I want to be here for it, but I won't be. So I don't want to go. I want to stay. But that's not in the cards. So, you know, my life expectancy is what I'm 76, so maybe ten, 12, 13 more years, I hope longer than that. But, you know, you can go at any time.

01:07:47:00

MARK SALTER:

And do you want to go before Ann or after?

01:07:49:00

MITT ROMNEY:



Oh, I'd far rather go after. And I don't wanna leave her a widow. I don't want her to have to be alone and to fend for herself. You know, I like to clean things up, but then I'd like to go shortly thereafter.

01:08:03:00

MARK SALTER:

And when your grandkids watch this interview, what message would you like to say to them?

01:08:07:00

MITT ROMNEY:

You know, I actually got the chance to write a book where Anne and I described what we want our grandkids to know. It's basically a letter to them. It's a very short book, but it describes what's most important to us. I want them to recognize that the most important things to us, the currency of our life, is our faith in God, our belief in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints. Our love for one another. Our love for our family. Those are the things that matter most. We really have a family legacy, and our family legacy really has three dimensions. One family and friends. The people we love. Number two. Our faith. And number three, kindness. And that's something and brought to our family legacy. I once came in and she was having a long telephone conversation with an elderly lady. And I said, And why do you waste so much time talking to that woman? And she said, Mitt, I want to leave flowers in my wake. Wherever I go. And that kindness she has is something which is part of our family legacy.



01:09:18:00

MARK SALTER:

Are you optimistic about the future of America?

01:09:20:00

MITT ROMNEY:

I'm realistic about the future of America, and we will make choices that will make all the difference. That which gives me the greatest optimism is the elixir of freedom. Freedom allows America to outcompete anyone else in the world. Our system, the rule of law, our financial system, our educational system, the dedication of our people to to one another. All of these values, American values, will combine with freedom to allow us to outcompete the world. And that's what gives me my optimism. We are driven by innovation. I hope people recognize that, that there are, you know, a small number of people in almost every profession that are the innovators. I wish I were one. I'm not a great innovator. I have other skills, but innovation. I didn't develop a new product of some kind that changed the world. But the innovators in our society have built new enterprises and new products that have made America the leader of the world and an employed people. The remarkable and we welcome them here. They come from other countries. In some cases, they're homegrown here, They're educated here. They've given up. They're given opportunity here to thrive. That's what gives me the optimism. The area that gives me concern is we become highly divided, subject to demagogues on both sides of the aisle. And there's a jealousy, a resentment and anger which is growing into America. I don't know where that goes. If for some reason we don't welcome innovators and reward innovators and encourage them to



thrive, then we could find ourselves being overtaken by, you know, by some of the world's worst actors that the magician paying and Putin and others Iran, North Korea, China, Russia represent a whole different way of life that would be unimaginable for me, for my kids and grandkids to live in. And so we're going to make those choices. We've got to throw off the demographics and go back to the principles and values that have made us the hope of the earth. I believe the American people will do that. I, I do now and then chuckle at the words of Winston Churchill, roughly. He said this, which is you can trust the American people to do the right thing once they've exhausted all the alternatives. And right now, we're exhausting a very unfortunate alternative, which is divisiveness and demagoguery. Hopefully, we'll get back to the kinds of vision and passion we saw in Alexander Hamilton, John Adams, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, the founders of this great land.

END TC: 01:11:58:00