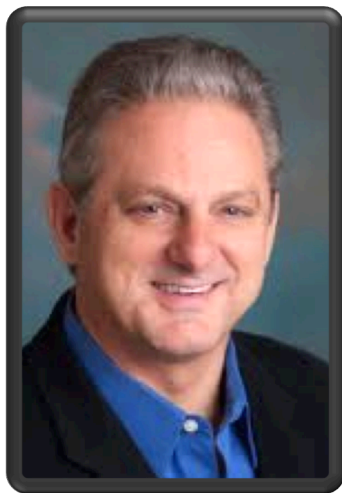


ATTRACTION CONTROL INSIGHTS

Using “Conscious Dating” to Meet Your Soul

Mate With David Steele



Interview Introduction...

David Shen: Hey, there! It's David Shen here.

Renee Wade: And Renee Wade. And welcome to another session of Attraction Control Insights, where we interview leading experts in the field of dating and relationships.

David Shen: You see, here is the thing. In the many years that we've been teaching, coaching, and helping women, we realize that there's no faster way to

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make progress, than to have multiple perspectives from people who are the leaders of their field.

Renee Wade: Mm! And this is why we've found the best experts to share with us their knowledge and experience in finding love, triggering attraction, establishing that loyalty and trust, and frankly having the relationship that other people envy.

David Shen: So we really think you're going to enjoy this interview. I suggest you sit back, take some notes, and let's get started!

(intro music)

David Shen: Hello, everyone. David here, and today I have the privilege of interviewing David Steele, who is an author, a coach, and a licensed marriage and family therapist for over twenty years. He's the founder of the Relationship Coaching Institute and has trained hundreds of relationship coaches since 1997. He's the creator of *Conscious Dating*, the book, and *Conscious Dating Relationship Success Program for Singles*, which is a structured, step-by-step workshop and coaching program, that has helped thousands of singles find the love of your life, and the life that you love. And one of the things that I love about David's work is that he is a firm believer of not settling in your relationship, because I think so many people in this world today feel like they'd rather be in a bad relationship than being alone. So I really think David's message here is so appropriate and so needed in this world where there are just so many terrible relationships. So, David, are you there?

David Steele: Yes, Dave! Thanks for having me.

David Shen: No, thank you for being here. It's really my pleasure to have you share with us your thoughts and your experience in matter. I mean, you've been

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a marriage and family therapist for twenty years, so I assume that you've seen a lot of different things. Is that correct?

David Steele: Well, yeah. I actually burned out as a couple's therapist, because I work mainly with couples in trouble, and more than half will get divorced anyway, so by the time they are in enough trouble to see a therapist, one or both of them really want out. They just want the pain to go away, and they don't really think it can be fixed, so I really got tired of that, because I like success, I like to help people have fulfilling and happy relationships, and it just was not working as a therapist. So, that's why I became a relationship coach— I'd much rather help people achieve their goal of a relationship when they're single, rather than trying to fix a broken one when they're in it.

David Shen: I totally understand that, I would almost feel like there was no hope for all of these couples, when you're helping their marriage and whatnot, when they just want to get out.

David Steele: Right. It really drove home to me that the opportunity to make a long-term choice of relationship, a good long-term choice, the most effective long-term choice, is when you're single. Yet when we're single, all we can think about is, "I don't want to be single! I want to be in a relationship!"

David Shen: Yes! Yes, I totally understand that. I think that a lot of people feel that way, and they feel—like, they look at other people in relationships, and they go, "Wow, I want to be sort of in that relationship right there," but then they don't realize all the challenges that come up once you're in a relationship, and I know you have a lot of philosophies around that in terms of compatibility— and we'll talk about that a little bit later on.

David Steele: And there are a lot of singles that are afraid of relationships, and they see relationship failure all around them, they've experienced it themselves, and they don't really know how to have a great relationship that they kind of

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think it might not even be possible. So people are really, nowadays, they're waiting much longer to get married, and the marriage rate is actually going down, and the co-habitation rate is going way up, and so people are living together rather than living in committed relationships, because they do want relationships but they don't want to be stuck with somebody that is not right for them, and that's totally understandable.

David Shen: For sure. So, my first question, really, is, how did you get into all of this? I mean, did you want to be a marriage and family therapist from the start?

David Steele: Thanks for the question. I did get kind of an early start, because I grew up in a single-parent family, my parents divorced when I was a kid, and they were very unhappy with each other and individually and it was just really not a great childhood, and so I grew up wanting to understand what this was all about. Probably the biggest saving grace was when I realized that it wasn't my fault. Kids in that situation, oftentimes, they blame themselves, and they think something's wrong with them, but I did realize that, "Hey, it's really not my fault. My parents screwed this up, not me." But it left me wondering, okay, well, I see how not to do it—but how can you have a successful relationship?

David Shen: It's a good question!

David Steele: How can you have a happy marriage. So I grew up not having it, and I really really really wanted it for myself, and I made it my life's work to help other people do it as well.

David Shen: Fantastic. And it's one of those things that you mentioned before, you got pretty burnt out and depressed about seeing all these couples breaking up and they were going to break up anyway, there was hardly anything that you could do to convince them otherwise. So it's much like that quote, "If you want to be rich, don't study poor people," or, "If you want to be healthy, don't study sick people."

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David Steele: Right. Yeah. Exactly. I think I had a bit of a shift because I started out wanting to be a hero, wanting to save marriages? And after twenty years of beating my head up against the wall, realizing I can't save anybody's marriage if they don't want to save it!

David Shen: Absolutely, they have to have that desire. In fact, perhaps you'll probably agree with this, for some people the marriage—or staying in that marriage, is actually the wrong thing to do, or the bad thing to do.

David Steele: Well, you know, it's really hard for us to judge. There's arguments on both sides. For example, there's this great book called *The Case for Marriage*, and there's some research in there that studied unhappy couples, and the studies showed that unhappy couples that stay together for at least five years, that over—I forget the percentage—over sixty-five or seventy percent or something like that, ended up being happy or very happy five years later. So the surprising fact from that research is, that if you stick it out long enough, chances are you'll end up being happy later! And I think the reasoning and logic is pretty simple. That, you know, things change, things never stay the same. So, if all you do is stick it out, it could be better. There's a good chance that it will be better, but also there's a fairly equal chance that it won't.

David Shen: So it's hard to know, isn't it?

David Steele: Yeah.

David Shen: I mean, I think what we tend to do as human beings, is that we get used to our lifestyles and our habits. So, if someone is really getting on our nerve for a long period of time, after a while we sort of just—we get used to that, and we become okay with it, we become okay with living our lives. Would that be a factor in this?

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David Steele: Well, you know, I see a lot of people that get into a routine or a rut, and they just adjust to it, and it seems like they adjust to it for ever. And yet I see other people, and it seems to be human nature, that we can only live with the status quo for so long. We have an inner drive or an inner need for change, or to make things better, or to move on. So maybe there's two kinds of people in the world, the ones that just turn their brain off and turn their desire off and just stay in a rut for ever, and there's others—and I count myself in this category—that, we just really need things to improve, we need things to move, and we can't hang out in misery forever.

David Shen: Absolutely. I totally agree with you, and I'm totally in the second group as well. I can't stand the status quo. I simply cannot stand it. In fact, it is my belief that if things are not getting better, they're getting worse. There is no static level of goodness.

David Steele: Yeah, you know, Dave? As long as we're on this subject, one of the biggest questions I get, as a relationship coach, from somebody that is not quite sure about their relationship, or they're in an unhappy relationship, or they're dating somebody and they're not sure that this is the one, and they have a few issues, the biggest question by far is—and I paraphrase it, because they ask it in different ways. But it comes down to this. "Should I stay, or should I go?" It's like the bottom line question. "Is this the right relationship for me? Should I stay, or should I go?" And so, if somebody is married, they are in a committed relationship, they have made that lifelong commitment. They have kids. They have made a vow. Then, in my mind, the answer is a bit different from, like, somebody that's just a dating couple, or they're just living together. Because if you have made a commitment, according to the research study in the book *The Case for Marriage*, you have a seventy percent chance of being happy five years later, if you just stick it out, if you work on your relationship. So I am an advocate of, "make it work if you can." Don't just run away. Just don't walk away, because you will have regrets. You will look back on it and kick yourself if you didn't do everything you could do, because when you get a divorce, and you walk away

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from a committed relationship? Your life doesn't automatically get better. Yes, you have less pain, and life can be a bit easier, but your life can never go back the way it was. Never!

David Shen: That's true, yeah!

David Steele: I mean, I've been divorced twice, and the first time, it was devastating. I wanted to be married for life, and after I got divorced, it was, like, "Okay. I can never have that dream, ever." Because now I've been divorced. And then when I got divorced a second time, I was really kicking myself and saying, "Man! I'm a failure! I really can't do this! There is something seriously wrong with me!" So here I am, I'm divorced twice—I can't go back. There's a serious consequence, and it doesn't mean "don't do it," but it does mean that, give it every chance possible. And chances are, there are some things you can do that you haven't done. As a therapist, I would hear it all the time, "We've tried everything" and you know what? No, they haven't.

David Shen: They probably tried a couple of little things over and over and over, and knowing it doesn't work, they still try it...and, yeah, most people sort of get caught in that pattern, and they can't get out of it.

David Steele: The truth is, when a relationship isn't working like that, one of my mentors calls it, "a clash of immaturities" and you know what? That's absolutely true, that the undeveloped part of me, is clashing with the undeveloped part of you, and you know what? Once we develop, then we won't have that problem anymore! And that really does illustrate that a relationship has a function, and the function is to help the people grow up in the relationship! So there's a strong argument for making it work every which way you can, if you are in a committed relationship. Now when you apply that same question to what I call pre-committed relationships, meaning they're exclusive, but they're not yet committed.

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David Shen: Not married, is that what you mean?

David Steele: Well, committed. I mean, you know, some people, you know, they have a thing about marriage, they say, “Well, I never want to be married, but I do want to be committed,” so, a commitment means that it’s formal. You have a time, a date, a place, and witnesses, and that you have pledged yourselves—you made a vow to be together for life. So, you’ve made a commitment. If you want to call it marriage or not, if it’s legal or not, it’s a commitment. And in life, if you want to have any integrity, you keep your commitments, and you do everything you can to keep your commitments. You don’t just walk away because you’re unhappy. We have to take responsibility for our unhappiness, and we have to do something about it, and as a therapist one of my most frustrating things was that people were unhappy, and they would point a finger and say, “I’m unhappy because of you!”

David Shen: Yeah, that’s such an easy thing to do, isn’t it, in a relationship? When you feel pain, you feel like it’s the other person’s fault.

David Steele: Right, and you know what? It is not true. And so we have to have the ability to look in the mirror, and take responsibility, and that’s part of that development, part of growing up in the relationship. So when you apply this, “should I stay or should I go?” question to new couples or dating couples, or pre-committed couples, I have a very very different position, and it pretty much goes like this. If what you want is to live happily ever after with your soulmate, it has to be the right fit. And if it’s not working in some important way for you, then, that’s an indication that it’s not the right fit. Now, you could try to fit the round peg in the square hole, you can try to twist yourself into making this relationship work, you can hope that it changes, you can hope that it gets better—but if we are adults, meaning that we have developed to the point where we are who we are, and that our goal is to be with somebody who we can love as they are, and they love us as we are.

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David Shen: And do you think it takes a lot of self-development to get to that stage? Because I know that's the first thing, and that's what you teach.

David Steele: Yeah, absolutely. Self-development is part of it, but then there's finding the right fit. I mean, like, just take a look at your friends, right? Chances are that you have met people that you become friends with, that you just got along so smoothly, and it was so easy, and it was so much fun. Then you've had friends that were a pain in the butt!

David Shen: Absolutely! I think we all have.

David Steele: And so this is really no different, when you're dating and you're looking for somebody to be with, you need the right fit. You need to study who fits with you, who loves you as you are, who thinks your quirks are cute, who loves you in spite of your faults, who puts up with your B.S., and loves you anyway—and they love you as you are, and you can be happy together as you are. When the fit is right, it is wonderful. So all those people that are in a relationship and they're wondering, "Should I stay or should I go?" "Is this the right relationship for me? Well, this is wrong, and this is wrong, and this is wrong," or "This is not working, and this is not working, and this is not working," "He's doing this," and "She's doing that" or whatever it is? Well, you know, chances are it's not a fit. If it were a fit, it would be a heck of a lot easier, and the problems would be solvable.

David Shen: Are there any particular things you would look out for as a therapist, in terms of telling people, "Okay, are you guys a fit? Are you guys not a fit?"

David Steele: Well, yeah, and that's really what *Conscious Dating* is all about. And so there's concepts in Conscious Dating that are important, and one of them is Who You Are. What's your vision for your life? What's your life purpose? Your vision is what you want to create for your life, the kind of life you want to live. It

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has to fit with somebody, right? And you can't chance your life, you can't change what you want, in order to be with somebody, because you'll never be happy.

David Shen: Yes. That's true.

David Steele: So there are three concepts that go together, and I call them, "requirements, needs, and wants."

David Shen: Okay. Okay, can you explain that a little bit for us?

David Steele: So, if you make a list of everything that you want in a relationship and a partner, and everybody has their list, right? And not everything on that list is equal. Some of those things are requirements. They are absolutely non-negotiable, they must happen in order for the relationship to work, if it's missing it won't work. So, for example, let's say you want a family—you want to have kids. And that's a requirement for you, you don't want to be with anybody that does not want kids. So, if you're dating and you find somebody, and you really like them, and maybe even you fall in love! But they don't want kids? That's a deal-breaker, because that's your requirement. So there are incredibly important things that are requirements to you, that you absolutely must say no to anybody that does not line up with one hundred percent of them. So, for example, if it's a requirement, "financial responsibility" somebody is responsible with money. They don't gamble it away, they don't waste it on impulse spending, they save it, they make agreements with you about it and keep those agreements—they're responsible with money. That's a requirement. Let's say another requirement is—that they are non-abusive, you know? That's an important one! That they treat you with respect, so they don't hit you, they don't call you names, they don't practice physical or emotional abuse of any kind—that's a requirement! And if it's violated, and your requirements not met, then you need to say no. You need to get out of there.

David Shen: Yeah, absolutely.

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David Steele: So take a look at your list, and I do believe that one of the best things that singles can do is just make an absolutely long list, as long as possible, of everything you want, everything you need, in a relationship, and a partner, and then separate them out into requirements. I have a test question for requirements, so ask yourself this— “If you met somebody, and you were in love, and you really really really wanted it to work, and everything was perfect— except for *this*... Would you leave anyway?”

David Shen: I see, I see! So that tells you whether it's a requirement or not?

David Steele: Right. And so you take a look at everything on that list, and if you would leave anyway? Then it's a requirement. If it's something that you could make work, it's like, well, let's say, “I really want financial responsibility, but they have a gambling addiction, and I think I can handle it if they were involved in gamblers anonymous, and really working on it.” Then, okay! Then it's not a requirement. If you can find a way to live with it, if you can somehow negotiate it, then it's not a requirement.

David Shen: So in that case, would you suggest that the less the requirements you have, the more likely you would find someone that you are more compatible with?

David Steele: Well, no, actually.

David Shen: No? Okay.

David Steele: The thing about requirements is, they are what they are. You don't have a million of them, but however many you have, they are critical. You know, it's like you have ten fingers, and every one of them is important. You would not want to go through life without two of them. “Okay, I have eight fingers! That's good enough.” No, you want all ten fingers! So your vision is inside you, it already

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is. Your purpose is inside you, it already is. Your requirements are inside you, they already are whatever they are. And the trick is, to identify what they are, and so that is what the conscious dating program is all about, I mean that part of it anyway is to get very very clear about who you are and what you want and how to get what you want, and what are our other requirements? If one is missing, the relationship won't work, so it's very very important! And so, next up is needs. So, you have that long list, you identify what the requirements are, so let's say you have a list of a hundred things. Let's say twelve of them pass the requirements test. So now you have, if my math is correct, you have eighty-eight things left. Now you're looking to identify needs, and there are two kinds of needs that are important in a relationship. They are emotional needs, and functional needs. So emotional needs are what you need to feel loved, and we want to feel loved—and the relationship is not going to work for us if we don't feel loved. So, we do have emotional needs that we bring into a relationship. And then functional needs are what you need just for your life to be okay. You know, you need your bills paid, you need food on the table, you need the doors locked at night, otherwise you're not credible. You need the bills paid on time so the power stays on, you need the cabinet doors open so that when you are walking around the kitchen at night, you don't injure yourself. You have lots and lots of functional needs, and the measurement of a need—you know it's a need, when it raises a problem or issue for you every time it occurs or doesn't occur. Every time. So, if every time you get paid, you spend half your paycheck at the bar, drinking and gambling and on women, it's going to be a problem for me every time. Now, I'm not going to leave you because of it, because it's not a requirement, but it's going to be a problem, and we're going to have words, and we're going to have an argument, and it raises an issue for me that I'm not comfortable with. So, it's a need if it raises a problem for you every time it occurs, and the thing about needs or requirements especially? Is that they are all valid. They are all valid, a hundred percent of them. So let's say, you're a woman, and you're with a guy, and the guy likes blondes. And so every time you walk down the street and he sees a blonde, he looks at the blonde. And you notice him looking at the blonde, and that bothers you, and it bothers you every time it

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occurs. It's not an requirement, you're not going to leave him because he looks at blondes. However, it makes you feel unloved, and makes you feel discounted, it irritates you, it angers you—it raises an issue for you every time it occurs. So it's related to a need of some kind, and so let's say you talk to him about it, and he says, "Oh, come on! What's your problem? Don't be ridiculous." He's not actually going to do anything about it. "It's no big deal." So don't let anybody discount your needs, and don't you discount your needs, because all needs are valid. In a good relationship, we honor each other's needs. So in a good relationship, even if a guy does like blondes, he's going to make a conscious effort not to look at the blondes, because he knows it bothers you! That's what you do in a good relationship.

David Shen: I see. Yep.

David Steele: Okay, so requirements are deal breakers, and the test for requirements are, "If you were in love, and you really really really wanted it to work— and everything was perfect, but *this*... Would you have to leave anyway?" If you were in love, and everything was perfect, except... they didn't want children, and you want children. Could you stay? Or would you have to leave anyway? And so, if so, it's a requirement. It's a need if you could stay, but it would raise a problem every time it occurred.

David Shen: Yep. So what was the last one?

David Steele: And the last category is wants. And so wants are pretty easy, because everything that did not qualify as a requirement, or a need, then it becomes a want. And wants are pretty interesting, you know, wants make life enjoyable, pleasurable, fun— but wants are changeable, and you know, "I want to go on vacation to the Bahamas, but if there's a hurricane there? I'll go to Hawaii. That's okay." So I might want vanilla ice cream right now, but once I have vanilla ice cream, tomorrow I might want or be in the mood for chocolate. So, wants have a tendency to change and get satiated, and there's a very interesting thing

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about wants, that you can be very very happy in your life and in a relationship, without any of your wants met.

David Shen: Interesting. Interesting. Is that because you have your requirements and your needs met?

David Steele: Yeah. Yeah, so let me give you an example of that.

David Shen: Okay. Fantastic.

David Steele: There was this guy that he hired me to be his relationship coach. He was single, and had been single for a very long time, and he really really wanted to be with his soul mate, and he wanted to find the perfect woman for him, and he wanted her to be very intelligent, and very spiritual, and very educated, and very cultured—because he was—but he also wanted her to have large, artificial breasts.

(Shen laughs)

David Steele: And when I first started working with him, I tried to talk him out of it, and say, “Well, you know what? The odds of finding a woman that is spiritually developed, and emotionally developed, and highly cultured, and educated, that has large artificial breasts? I mean, you know, that— that’s kind of contradictory, don’t you think?”

David Shen: Yeah, they’re contradicting, aren’t they?

David Steele: And so I asked him the requirements question. “Well, if everything was perfect, and you fell in love, and you really really really wanted it to work—but this woman did not have large artificial breasts... Would you leave anyway?” And his answer was, “Well, yes I would, because I wouldn’t be sexually attracted to her.”

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David Shen: I see. So that was a requirement for him.

David Steele: Okay. So. Fast forward two years later. He meets a woman, and he falls in love. And this woman is intelligent and educated and spiritual and cultured, and she does not have large artificial breasts. And she's also very short, and she also has kind of a peasant body? You know, not the hourglass figure that his fantasies had in mind. But you know what? He didn't care. And they are still happily together, today.

David Shen: What do you think changed? Did he change his blueprint about what he required?

David Steele: Well, you know, I could see it— that this was more of a want. He was talking himself into it being a requirement. But the bottom line is, when he got into the situation, it was not a deal-breaker. And so that's what really matters. It's what's true and what's real, and not what you think in your head— or not what you make up. And so sometimes you cannot determine that, until you test it out. And that, Dave, leads me to the four steps for conscious dating.

David Shen: Ah! I'd love to hear it. The four steps.

Steele: So now that we've covered requirements, needs, and wants, let's talk about the four steps of conscious dating. You know, one of them is testing. And it goes like this—it's scouting, sorting, screening, and testing.

David Shen: These are the four steps?

David Steele: Right. And this is the answer to probably the biggest most common question I get from singles, which is, "How do I find my life partner? How do I find him?" And, you know, you think about it—it's a little—it's an unusual question. I mean, you know, there's singles all over the place. And, you

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know, you join an online matchmaking service, or you just go to Starbucks, you know—there's singles all over the place!

David Shen: Absolutely. You even said, I think, in one of your interviews, that there's more single people now, today, than ever before.

David Steele: Right, and so— But singles feel isolated, and they feel like there's lots of other singles, yeah, but they're having trouble finding the right person for them. So, the number of other singles, isn't as important then. It's not about how many singles are out there, it's about finding the one that's right for you, and that's a whole other issue, because sometimes I hear from singles that, "Hey, I live out in the rural country, and there's not many singles out here." It doesn't matter how many or few singles are there, what matters is finding the right one for you.

David Shen: And this is why you've created the four steps.

David Steele: Yeah. But that's a whole other subject. Okay, so let's talk about scouting, sorting, screening, and testing. So this is the answer to, "How do you find your soulmate?" Well, the first thing you do, is you have to scout. Right? And scouting is the process of finding somebody to meet. You can do that in online matchmaking, you can do that at singles events, you can do that at the post office— singles always kind of scoping out other singles, and an important principle about scouting is that who you find is often determined by where you're looking.

David Shen: Yes!

David Steele: So if you want to find somebody that lines up with who you are, chances are, hang out in the places where you would really want to hang out, and these are your people. You know, it's your community, it's people like you, it's people you want to be with, it's places that you want to hang out at. So, I've heard

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women say, “Well, yeah—but it’s mostly women over there!” Hey, no problem, because women... know men, right? And women help each other out, so no problem. So, scouting is a process of finding people to meet. Then sorting is a process of, when you first meet somebody, you quickly determine, kind of, first glance—“Does this have any potential for me?” And one of my favorite techniques is to trot out one of your biggest requirements, and measure that requirement up against this person. So, for example, when I was single, I had some requirements, but the one that was easiest for me to measure—the easiest Litmus test for me, was that I have twin boys, and whoever I’m with has to really enjoy children. Twin boys can be a pain in the ass! There’s not just one, there’s two of them!

David Shen: Yeah, absolutely! And knowing that people out there, there are a lot of people who don’t actually like kids, so this would be a big requirement.

David Steele: Right. And so, a sorting technique that I would use, is, whenever I would meet somebody, as soon as I possibly could—I would drop the fact that I had twin boys. So, let’s say for example, I’m standing in line at the Starbucks, and I’m talking to this nice lady in front of me. I’m thinking, “Hmm! She’s kind of cute. Hmm, maybe she’s single...” and pretty quickly, I would look at my watch, and say, “You know what? In a little while, I have to go pick up my twin boys from school.” And then I would look at her reaction. And when I would do this, some women would respond like, “Oh my gosh! Twin boys, how fun! You’re so lucky.” And so I know, “Okay, this is somebody who has some potential.” And I’ve also done this with women, where I would get the kind of reaction of, “Oh...uh, twin boys. Well, do you ever have any time for yourself?” And I could tell that this woman sees children as an obstacle, as something that gets in the way.

David Shen: A negative kind of association with them.

David Steele: Yeah. So, if you know what your requirements are, and you know what your top one or two might be, it’s pretty easy to work it into the

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conversation, and then just—just watch. Just watch the reaction you get. It's going to be clear. So, that's what sorting basically is. It's a short conversation, it's like five or ten minutes—really, you don't want to date somebody, only to find out two or three dates later that they don't want children. You can find that out within the first five or ten minutes without even being pushy, without—

David Shen: And you want to disqualify those ones.

David Steele: Yeah, just being—Do it with a little bit of finesse. So, and then, screening is—when people pass your testing— then screening is getting to know them, screening is collecting information, screening is what you might do when you sit down and have coffee with somebody and talk for an hour. You know, and you ask each other questions, you get to know each other— so you're collecting information, here. And the important kind of information that you want to know, is about your requirements.

David Shen: And about their requirements as well, perhaps?

David Steele: You're not worried about that right now. You just want to know about your own, and you're doing screening—so this is like an informational interview. And I have a concept that I like, that I call “screening in” versus “screening out”. Now, screening in is where you give people second chances, and you find a way that it might possibly work, and say, “Well, they say they don't want children now, but maybe they'll change their mind,” so, or you know— whatever. “Screening in” is giving people a lot of latitude, and finding a way that it could work. “Screening out” is the opposite. Screening out is finding any reason why this might not work, and if you find any reason, then it's an immediate no!

David Shen: Right, right.

David Steele: So that's screening. Then testing, it's step four, it's when you actually test out the information you get.

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David Shen: Ah! I see. In real life, you test the information to see if they're telling the truth.

David Steele: Yeah! It might take a few dates, you know— certainly, you don't have to hang out with them for a year, so conscious dating is actually—once you are aware and conscious of who you are and what you want and how to get what you want, the process of scouting, sorting, screening, and testing, goes very very efficiently. And for me, I mean, when I practiced it, I must have gone—I burned out, I tell you, I've gone on so many first dates, it's not funny. I call them coffee dates, because the first thing you would do, when you meet somebody online, or when somebody's introduced to you by a friend, is you get together for coffee, and it's not really a date. It's more of an interview, or a getting-to-know-you chat. And on the one hand, it was frustrating that, you know, I would go on dozens of them, and it wouldn't go any further than that first meeting. On the other hand, it was very efficient, if in that one hour coffee, I could determine, you know—yes or no. And so, when I met Darlene, you know, I'd been single for two years, and I've gone off and on, you know, stopped dating, gotten tired of it, and then tried it again, and then stopped, and then started again, and then get frustrated—and then, you know, it just—it's not an easy road. But, conscious dating really made it very very efficient.

David Shen: So you could screen out more people in the same amount of time.

David Steele: So I did not get involved in relationships that weren't right for me, I would not hang out with anybody that was not an absolute one hundred percent Yes. So, I learned this the hard way, by the way—because I have, you know, my relationship before that, after my second divorce—I actually had two relationships, one was a five-year live-in relationship, and that blew up. The one after that, I decided I was going to be very very careful, and I did end up meeting somebody, and she was eighty percent of what I was looking for. There was so

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much good there! But three months into it, I knew this was not long-term. I knew that it was not a hundred percent fit.

David Shen: Was it because of the twenty percent?

David Steele: Yeah. So I tried to break it off, and she talked me out of it. And I allowed myself to get talked out of it. Why? Probably for the same reason a lot of singles hang out in relationships that aren't right for them. I allowed myself to stay in it because the sex was good, because I didn't want to be single again, because I had a companion, we had a good time together—but, you know, I knew it wasn't long term, I knew I wanted to find my soulmate, and I knew as long as I was with her, I was not going to find my soulmate. So, after a year, I finally broke it off, and I swore off what I call “eighty percent relationships”—no more eighty percent relationships! It's a hundred percent, or nothing! So my mantra became—and you might recognize this— I'd rather be—

Both: —single, than settle!

David Steele: I'd rather be single than settle. A hundred percent, or nothing! So for two years, date after date after date after date—meaning coffee dates, not dating more than once. Coffee dates for two years. However, when I met Darlene, it was clear as a bell.

David Shen: Because you went through all those people to have to know and be clear about exactly what you were looking for.

David Steele: Yeah. And, you know, Dave, I really—I don't know if I can fully put it into words, but when I met her, and the fit was so right, and I just knew it, you know? It was like a hundred percent alignment, it just, like—*klunk!*

David Shen: And you guys were engaged after six weeks, right?

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David Steele: Yeah.

David Shen: That's amazing.

David Steele: It's one of those things where, you know when it's right. And you also know where it's not right. And how many times have I hung on a relationship that I had a red flag about, or I even married somebody that I had a red flag about—versus finding somebody who ends up being a true soulmate, who the fit is so good... I mean, it was to the point that I got scared! There's no problems here!

David Shen: "Is this real?"

David Steele: There's no red flags! Come on! That's impossible! There's got to be a red flag!

David Shen: Have you found a red flag, yet? In all these years?

David Steele: No! And so what I did was, I called one of my mentors. And she is a woman who I greatly respect, and I think of her as probably the best relationship coach in the world.

David Shen: Okay! Would you mind sharing her name?

David Steele: Well, sure. Her name is Hedy Schleifer, and her website is HedyYumi.Org. And she's married, and she mainly works with couples, but in my opinion she is absolutely the best relationship coach in the world—and I'm the founder of the Relationship Coaching Institute, I know a whole lot of relationship coaches, and I know a whole lot of professionals. I have interviewed or I have co-presented with the top experts in the field, Hendrix, Pat Love, and Terri Wheel and you know, you name it. This woman is, to me, the guru on the mountain. So I called her up one day, and I said, "Hedy, I met somebody, and I'm in love, but I

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cannot find a single red flag, and I'm getting scared to death that I'm fooling myself, and what should I do?"

David Shen: What did she say?

David Steele: I'll never forget what she said. She said, "David— Stop looking for red flags! You are going to sabotage this!" And so, what she meant was, if there's a red flag, it'll be there! You don't have to look for it, it'll be waving in front of your face. And, you know, the trick is not to ignore it, of course, but you don't have to manufacture it, you don't have to dig deep for it, it's either there or it's not there.

David Shen: I guess you got also very good at looking for red flags after the two years of dating so many different women that you didn't have to look very hard?

David Steele: Right. I absolutely knew what I was looking for. I absolutely knew, and I had plenty of relationship experience, and the experience of finding your soulmate is just unmistakable. You will know. And you will not be asking the question, "Should I stay or should I go?" or "Is this the right relationship for me?" The fit will be so good, everything will just work.

David Shen: Yes, and because a lot of women out there feel like— They don't feel like they have the time to actually meet enough people to actually go through that process that you went through, in order to find their One. What kind of advice would you have for them?

David Steele: Well, first of all—don't settle. Don't talk yourself out of it. Go after a hundred percent of what you really want. Do not settle even a little bit. And the second is to let the love attraction work for you, and so how do you get the love attraction to help you? Well, one way is by getting out there, and by continuing to scout and sort and screen and test. There's times that I gave up and I stopped doing it, but then I restarted again. If you're busy, then don't—You know, stop,

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and when you can get back to it, go ahead. So it's an ongoing process, and the thing about the love attraction, is that it also listens to the things that you're telling yourself. And this is the amazing thing. So if you're telling yourself, "Oh, it'll never happen," or "I don't deserve it," or "The right one—All the good ones are taken, you know. Or dead." So, love attraction is going to listen to what you tell yourself. So if you're telling yourself that kind of stuff, the love attraction is going to prevent you from finding your soulmate, because... "All the good ones are taken." Or, whatever it is you're telling yourself. Or, "I'm too old," or "I'm too fat" or "It's too late for me," or whatever it is you're saying to yourself. The love attraction will work against you. So, you have to live your life. You have to live your vision. Which means going after the life that you really want.

David Shen: And also get good at this process, right? So that you can screen and sort people out quickly, so that you don't waste a six-month with someone who you never really had a future with.

David Steele: Yeah. And, you know, don't put your life on hold. Live your life to the fullest, while you're dating, while you're looking for that somebody. I had one client who, in the process of coaching and determining what her vision for her life was, she got in touch with that she loved horses. And she loves riding. And she hadn't done that since she was a kid! But it was something she always wanted to do, it was something that she clearly saw in her vision—so, she started doing it, as an adult. Finally, forty years later! Here she was, she bought a horse, and she took riding lessons, and she—you know, horses are in her life now. She was hanging out with people who had horses. Including... men! So, that's a great illustration of, don't put your life on hold, live your life to the fullest, and the love attraction will help you have a positive mindset, and hold out for a hundred percent, your soulmate, the person that you want to live happily ever after with... You know, one of the things that one of my colleagues said that really struck me, is, that they are looking for you at the same time that you are looking for them. So you're not alone in this. It's not like you're the only one looking. They're looking, too.

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David Shen: And I know that there's so many people out there looking for their soulmate, and sort of confused and lost as to what to do, where to look— but they don't realize at the same time that they are looking for them as well, at the same time.

David Steele: Yeah. So, I have a metaphor. Singles tend to think about this as a needle in a haystack. Finding your soulmate is a lot like finding a needle in a haystack. There's a whole barn full of hay, and this needle is so small and so tiny—how in the world are you ever going to find it? That's what it feels like. However, my metaphor is, conscious dating is like having a magnet. And it does not make the barn any smaller, it does not make any of the hay go away, however it does make it a heck of a lot easier to find that needle.

David Shen: Oh, yeah, that's perfect—because you attract your soulmate.

David Steele: Yeah. And, you know, you literally magnetize them, and you work through all that hay, and you find them. So it took me fifty years, you know—I was fifty years old when I met Darlene—and it took me two years of being single and searching, two years of really swearing off, you know, eighty percent relationships. So, two years of sifting through that hay, and I finally found her. And you know what? It was absolutely worth it!

David Shen: I can tell just by your voice, and just by the excitement in your voice that you guys still have that passion, and it's one of those journeys that it was worth every moment of it.

David Steele: Yes. Absolutely.

David Shen: Now, I know you talk about life partner versus soulmate, because most people were thinking, you know, "What soulmate, do I even believe in a soulmate? Is it even possible? There's so many people out there..." I mean, some

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women have had long-term relationships in the past that haven't worked out, so finding that soulmate seems a little out of reach. So what is your definition of life partner versus a soulmate?

David Steele: Well, a life partner is somebody that you spend your life with. Good, bad, and ugly. And you're there for each other, and you love each other, and you have companionship, and you know a lot of it works—and there's some parts of it that don't work, and there's some parts of it that you have to shut yourself off in order for this to work for you. And you know what? There's more good than there is bad. I think it was Dear Abby, years ago, that came up with the question, which was to answer the "should I stay or should I go?" question, and so what she would say, is, "Well, are you better off with him, or without him?" So—I don't actually agree with that—but that's a very life partner kind of question. Well, is your life better off with him, or without him? You know, it's a form of settling, because this is not a hundred percent of what I want, but I don't think I can find a hundred percent, I don't think it's possible to have a hundred percent, so I'm settling for this.

David Shen: "Should I compromise?"

David Steele: Yeah. But you know what? When you compromise, you never let go of what you really wanted. Right? So you are always aware of what you gave up, in order to be in this relationship.

David Shen: And it probably drives you mad, too, the fact that you gave it up.

David Steele: Yeah, and so you can grow old with somebody like that, and have a very nice life, and a very good relationship. There's absolutely nothing wrong with it. However, some of us, including me, want more than that. We want to live happily ever after with our soulmate, we want somebody that meets and matches us on an emotional level, a spiritual level, an intellectual level—a hundred percent. Even though I grew up with an unhappy childhood, and with

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parents that did not show me how to have a good relationship, I knew it was possible—because all I had to do was look around. And I saw people who were happy together, who—it seemed like they fit together so well, you could never imagine them apart.

David Shen: Mm-hmm, yes, I know the couples that you're talking about.

David Steele: And so I've always identified those kinds of couples, and I've always said to myself, "I want to be like that!" Including couples that work together, that had a great personal relationship, but they also work together, and they really—they really enhanced each other in terms of the business or the partnership of working together, and so that's always been my dream, and so I would look at those kinds of couples, and I'd say, "Yeah, I want to be like that!" And so I found Darlene, and so I finally found my soulmate, I finally had the kind of life and relationship of those other kinds of couples that I wanted to be like—that. But you know, when I met her—she was a nurse, on our end, a registered nurse, and worked at a hospital, which I respected and appreciated—and, you know, I let go of my dream of working together, because to me it was enough that she was service-oriented, that she was in the business of helping people, and that was one of my requirements, by the way—that whoever I am with, appreciates my desire to make a difference in the world, and help people, and they want to help people too. And so, it doesn't matter how—teacher, nurse, counselor—it doesn't matter how. And so, she's a nurse, so she qualified with that—and, a couple of years after we got together, she decided that she would rather work with me in my business, of helping people with their relationships and relationship coaching institute—and so she left the hospital, she left her nursing profession, and now she—we work together.

David Shen: Yeah, how do you find that? Because I know so many people, I hear about it, so many people think that a man and a woman just—a couple should not work together, because you get into each other's space... and especially at

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home, as well, you just sort of run into each other too much and the law of proximity kicks in. What are your thoughts on that?

David Steele: I love it.

(Shen laughs)

David Steele: You know, we share an office—so I’m talking to you from our home office, and I’m looking over at her desk and her computer, and, you know, it’s just a regular bedroom turned into a home office. I have one side, she has the other. I work at my desk, she works at her desk, and the only thing that bugs me, is if she comes up behind me and reads over my shoulder. I hate that. But, you know, we definitely respect each other, we have a similar pattern and we call it “being tasky” that—when we are absorbed in a task, and our brain is concentrating on this task, we don’t want to be interrupted or disturbed.

David Shen: Oh, I totally understand.

David Steele: And so, I will look at what she’s doing, and I will gauge, “Is this a good time to ask her a question or interrupt her? Or is she being tasky?” And so she does the same for me, you know. So if I’m just scanning through e-mails, then she knows, “Okay, this is a fine time to ask a question or interrupt.” If she knows I’m writing something, which to me takes a tremendous amount of mental concentration, to compose, to create something—to compose something, then she knows, “Okay, stay away—he’s being tasky.” So, you know, we know each other really well. We know each others’ needs, we know each others’ buttons, we know each others’ quirks—and we respect them. So, you know, we get along. I mean, you know, she appreciates my quirks. She appreciates that I don’t like her standing behind me and reading over my shoulder. You know? And she respects that. She doesn’t argue with that, she doesn’t minimize it, and say, “Oh, come on! Don’t be ridiculous!” So, you know. We love our life together. We love working together. We complement each other in our work, very very well. So, she has a

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different skill set, she has a different perspective—you know, what she brings to the table and what I bring to the table? I respect what she brings to the table, and she respects what I bring to the table, and together we are so much more powerful than we could be by ourselves.

David Shen: Oh, that's fantastic to hear, because so many people, men and women, just cannot work together. I think it's a very difficult skill to master. Not only do you have to balance the relationship side of it, you also have to balance the work side of everything.

David Steele: Right. And, you know, in a good relationship, you honor each others' needs. So, there are times when you will need space. So, for example, Darlene does need space. And so, she has a pattern of—every few hours, she will stop what she's doing, walk out of the office, and go do a chore. Do the dishes, or do some work out in the yard, or go get the mail from the mail box, or make lunch, and that's her way of taking space. She needs that space. And so I know that's—that's you know, I need to let her have that space. And if I have a need, if I have a question or I need assistance, she's absolutely happy to put her need for space aside, and be there for me. And if she has a need, after I get over my initial irritation of being interrupted, I'm absolutely willing to be there for her. And so, for us, we really enjoy sharing our personal and professional relationship. We enjoy being together 24/7. And the thing is, we're both adults. We're both over fifty, right? So it's not like we have this need to be symbiotic, and oh-my-gosh-we're-teenagers-and-we-can't-live-without-each-other. We are very aware we could live quite well without each other, but we are so much more happy with each other. She was married for twenty-four years, before we met. She was single for a number of years, and I'd been married twice, and combined my marriages were about twenty years. So, both of us have experience in marriage and relationships. Our need for—and this is a very psychological term—our need for differentiation, or individuation, our need to develop ourselves as individual people? We are already developed as individual people. So, now, we can come together as individual people, and really really enjoy each other—instead of

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having a clash of egos. Remember what underlies all relationship problems, is a clash of immaturities. Okay, well, it's so wonderful when you can get to the point of maturity, and just let go of ego, and be together, and just let it flow.

David Shen: I guess you two have both a very strong sense of identity, within yourselves, that identity doesn't get blended into the relationship when you are together.

David Steele: Right. So if you're at the point where you need to have a job away from home, you need to have half the day away from your partner—Okay! Fine! But, you know, in terms of being single and searching for the love of your life? Find someone that fits you one hundred percent, don't settle for less. Keep on looking until you find that person, the key point being, you are not going to find that person if you stop looking. You are not going to find that person, if you settle for less.

David Shen: And would you say that that would be the number one key to long-lasting passion? Compatibility?

David Steele: Right. Passion is energy. And energy is easily blocked. And so, if energy is unblocked, then it's allowed to flow. And so if you feel safe, and you feel loved, then your energy is allowed to flow, and passion is allowed to flow. So, for example, here's a good test of an intimate relationship. Can you tell your partner anything, without fear of judgment or rejection? Anything. I mean, your deepest, darkest secret. Your deepest desire or fantasy that you have judged yourself as perverted because you have this fantasy! Can you share it with them anyway? Can you share anything and everything, without fear of judgment or rejection? And that—having the freedom to do that—means that you are in a very safe environment, and then, that passion can flow. And if you don't feel that you can share your deepest darkest secrets, your deepest fantasies that you even don't allow yourself to have, then... you know...

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David Shen: There's nothing unblocking you.

David Steele: Well, for the most part, we're doing it to ourselves. So, take a risk! Go ahead and share that fantasy. So, you know, say, "Hey, honey, it's not that I really want to do this, but I've always had a fantasy, about, you know—having sex with two women." You need to be able to share that kind of stuff, with your partner, with the one you love the most, who loves you the most. You need to be able to share anything and everything, to be yourself fully. To share even the things that you deny even admitting to yourself. When you can, you will have an emotionally free relationship, where passion can flow. And so go ahead and take a risk and try it, go ahead and do it, and work on the relationship and work on yourself, to the point where you can do that. If your partner gets grossed out, and say, "Ugh? Two women at once? You're perverted!" Go ahead and have the talk, you know, "Sweetheart, I am who I am, and I have these thoughts and these impulses and these feelings, and they just are—they're part of me, and I need to be able to share them with you. What we do with them? You know, we're adults, we don't have to actually act it out, but I just want to be able to share with you everything—Who I am, and what I'm thinking, what I'm feeling, and what I'm fantasizing. You know, so that we can have an emotionally free relationship. Will you do that? Will you do that with me?" And, you know, if you're a man, and you talk that way to women? Women love that.

David Shen: Yes, yes! And you have to have that amount of—I guess, confidence—inside of yourself, to own yourself, before you can actually do that to someone else.

David Steele: Right, and you can consciously choose to do it. There's a lot that we can do if we just step into it and do it. We might not be evolved yet, but we call it "acting as if." If I was the best lover in the world, or if I had the best wife in the world, then I would do this, or I would say this, or I would act this way. Or if I had the most passionate relationship in the world, then I would say this. Well, then go ahead! You might be surprised.

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David Shen: Yes. Yes, absolutely. That is fantastic advice, for most people out there, because most people are just living with their current situation, but they can never get outside of themselves and see a different perspective.

David Steele: Right. That's the best way to get outside of yourself, is to just make a conscious choice and do it. So, it's sort of like, you know, you—there's a swimming pool in front of you, and you know the water's cold, and you could even put your hand in it and feel how cold it is. You have the ability to just jump right in. You know? Yes, it's cold. Yes, it's going to be shocking when you get in there—but you can do it anyway!

David Shen: Yes, just do it!

David Steele: There's lot of reasons for no. There are always reasons for no. "It's too cold, I might catch a cold, I have all my clothes on, it's not the right time." You know, "I have to go make dinner in five minutes—" There's always reasons not to, and there's usually only one reason for yes.

David Shen: And what is that? Is that just your desire to, or...?

David Steele: Well, because you want to, or because it's important. Okay? You can have fifteen reasons not to jump into the pool, but that one reason, you know, because it'll get you out of your complacency, because it'll stretch you, because you need to do something crazy. You know? That one reason, is good enough. It's not the kind of thing where you have to have more reasons for than against, not at all. If we did that—if it was like that, then we would never do anything. So all you need is just one reason, because it's important, or because you really want to. Just forget the reasons not to, unless there's some serious problem involved. If it's taking a risk like jumping into a swimming pool that's cold, or asking somebody out that you're attracted to, or telling your partner your deepest fantasy that you never shared with them before? Go ahead. Yes,

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you're risking rejection, but you're also stepping into the kind of relationship and the kind of life that you really really want.

David Shen: Oh, that's fantastic! And that's great to hear, too. I think so many people need that message now, than ever before. In the state of the world, in people's relationships now, that is, people are just mostly scared, I think, than anything else.

David Steele: Right. There's only one way out of fear, you know. You have to stop holding ourselves back, because of fear, and just do it anyway. Like Nike says, Just do it.

David Shen: Fantastic, and thank you so much for your perspective, and all your advice, all your tips today. I think you've just added so much more value to the world, through all your work or the work through *Conscious Dating* and the relationship institute. How can women out there get in touch with you if they want more of your information?

David Steele: Well, it's very easy. You can download the Conscious Dating app, for your smart phone in the app store. You can go to ConsciousDating.Com, or you can go to RelationshipCoachingInstitute.Com.

David Shen: Perfect, perfect! And I think that a lot of women can really get a lot of value out of everything that you do, especially finding your soul mate, which is something that you're obviously passionate about.

David Steele: Well, I do have a recommendation. I have a great audio program on my website, at ConsciousDating.Com, called "using conscious dating to find your soulmate" and it's right there on the homepage, down at the bottom, and there's even a Q.R. code that you can use with your smart phone, to open up the audio program and listen to it. It's Darlene and I talking about our journey to find each other, and talking about what a soulmate is, and how to find your soulmate.

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So, that would be a great program, and also the *Conscious Dating* book, of course. You know, really getting a handle on scouting, sorting, screening, and testing. Who are you and what do you want, and how do you get what you want? What are your requirements, needs, and wants, and your vision? And how do you discover your requirements, all of them, so that you don't choose a relationship that's doomed from the start.

David Shen: Perfect, and I think that's so valuable, what you're doing. Fantastic. So, thank you again for your time. I know you're a busy man, so, thank you.

David Steele: Well thank you, Dave, you have been a great and gracious interviewer, so thank you very much.

David Shen: Thank you! And we wish you all the best.

David Steele: Okay. Bye for now.

David Shen: Okay. Take care. Bye-bye.

End of Interview.

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