

Baehr & Curadh Podcast

Episode 003

Career Advice

Baehr: Hello from Baehr and Curadh, a podcast from the Land of Awes Information Services.

Baehr: I love you, Curadh.

Curadh: I love you, too, Baehr.

Baehr: This is episode three of The Bear. We're going to talk about our work and related topics.

Curadh: So I was thinking, what has been your favorite job that you've held?

Baehr: My favorite job? I would have to say I worked actually for a carpet place.

It was a fairly big company, I guess, about a million dollar company. And I was hired as a programmer, as a web developer, although I did some other things for them. And I don't know, I felt extremely fortunate that they gave me their resources that I needed to do my work. They were usually very specific about what needs to be done, and they let me do a good job.

I could write the software in a thorough manner where, when I was done with it, I didn't feel like I had left anything out or had held anything back.

Other jobs that I've had. It's usually rush, rush, rush, try to get it done as fast and as quick as you can and just get it up to the customer. And that job

wasn't like that. And I really miss that work. It's too bad they had a downturn and had to lay me off. I really wish I was still working there.

Curadh: I remember when you worked there, you did enjoy quite a bit. You brought it home, but you enjoyed doing it quite a bit. It never bothered you at all that you would work on it on your time, I should say, but yeah, I remember you were very happy with that work. You enjoyed it thoroughly. You were much happier.

Baehr: What was your favorite job?

Curadh: Probably, it's going to sound silly. Probably. I was just a day labor one summer. A summer job. I did tree work.

Baehr: What do you mean by tree work?

Curadh: I was a groundman for a local company back home. We did tree work, removed trees, trimmed them back, stuff like that. It was a good hard day's work. It wasn't nothing glamorous, nothing beautiful about it. But it was hard work. I went there in the morning, got my job, did it. Worked hard work for me in the morning at the six, seven at night. And I was walking by the day. Go home, sleep, get up the next morning and go.

It was a great summer job. I was outside all day long, and I mean, it was pretty much free reign of here's your chainsaw. We need this cleared out and clear out a lot.

It was just a lot of fun. The people I worked with a lot of fun, but that was probably one of my favorite jobs. It was a fun job.

But aside from that, probably my favorite job is the one I've been doing for the last 18 years since I've been doing it so long, but it's had its ups and downs. It's also been my favorite job, but it's been the job that I absolutely hate, depending on who I was working for at the time.

So right now I'm working for a really good boss and bosses. I'm really enjoying my work back to what I fell in love with in the first place, but there for a while, years back, I dreaded going to work. I felt like I was going to see the executioner when I was getting dropped off there in the morning. I absolutely hated it and was almost to the point where I was in tears, almost on a daily basis going there, it was a different boss, different owner.

Baehr: So your current job is the one you like, second the most, but it's also the one you hate the most.

Curadh: Absolutely working for the one boss and the one owner at the time, it was the hands down the job I hated the most. Hands down by far, didn't like how it made me feel like. Everything just made me sick and guess everything that I ever did in that job.

But I think it's now working with these people again, a different group of people. Obviously, it's been much more rewarding and much more fun, even though I do gripe about it.

But I think everybody gripes about a job they have. So it's called a job. Nothing is always perfect.

Baehr: You work as a broker, and so you work with the public?

Curadh: Yes.

Baehr: How do you do that kind of work... I would think you could, just, at the end of the day, just go home and not think about it at all.

My kind of work. I have huge projects that I'm given to do, and I think about it constantly from the time I'm given to the project to the time I turn it over, it goes through my head and you can see sometimes the wheels and the cogs are turning in my head. Even though I'm not working.

I would think being a broker, though, at the end of the day, you could just put that all aside and be done. And the next day you start fresh again.

Curadh: You can. But you're dealing with people on a daily basis, and I question, did I handle that correctly? Could I have done better?

I sleep well at night. I know that I'm never screwing people over, but you're dealing with the public, so could have handled that situation better. I deal with people who come in there not probably going to the best time of their life. Could I have had a little more sympathy for them? Or did that person work me over where they tell me the truth, where they lying, stuff like that.

It's strange. It's very weird. I don't know. It doesn't make much sense of what I'm saying, but most of the time I can check it at the door, but there's some instances where you hang on to it when you come home.

Baehr: I do hear about things that bug you. I guess I'm fortunate in that I deal with computers and they don't lie to you. They don't talk back, sometimes you are extremely frustrated, and we talk. And I think once you get it out, it's pretty much over for you, isn't it?

Curadh: Yeah. You listen to me. I'm the type of person, once I get it off my chest, I feel better and its water under the bridge. At that point.

You're a great sounding board, and you listen to me and just listening to me helps it kind of clears the air and clears my conscience. So, yeah, you've been great about that.

And I joke with you. I said, okay, I'm getting ready to throw up on you. I tell you all the bad things that happen during the day, and you just kind of nod and shake your head.

Baehr: Yeah, I'm not a real good talker, but I am a pretty good listener.

Curadh: Yes, you are. What has been your least favorite job, actually, the one that I'm doing now, it was for a different company, for a different company, different owner, different boss didn't appreciate the lying, the double standard that certain people were held to.

Meaning you could do something and they would chew you out for it, and another employee would do the exact same thing and be praised for it. Or they could do nothing at all and basically accomplish nothing during a four-hour period.

And I would bust my butt and do ten times what they would do. And it was just expected of me. There's a lot of things about that position that I actually just hate. It, just absolutely hate it.

But it's all in the past now. So, they got what they sound like this, but they're basically lying in the bed that they dug. And my part of the company is reaping the rewards, whereas that company is kind of falling by the wayside. So Karma is a bitch.

Baehr: If you treat people with respect, they'll come around or, for the most part, treat you with respect.

Curadh: Exactly.

Baehr: I suppose there's always new people who can be less appropriate in their behavior, but in the end, you come out on top.

Curadh: Yeah.

What has been your least favorite job?

Baehr: The last job that I had. I'm unemployed right now. They laid me off.

I can't say that I didn't like the work. The work was challenging, and I was up to it, but they had an employee there who was just completely inappropriate, not at all professional.

He would cuss. He would say rude things. He was not allowed to talk to any of the customers. They had, like service reps, who would have to talk to him, get an answer and then pass the answer along to the customer because he was not allowed to talk to customers.

Curadh: Wow.

Baehr: He knew a lot about their system because he'd been there from the start, but I guess he knew that he had them over the barrel sort of. And they were stuck with him, and they were not about to do anything about it.

There were times when he said inappropriate things to me. I complained to management and management would say we agree that was inappropriate, but we're not going to do anything about it.

Curadh: Yeah, I remember you telling me some of those stories, and I didn't particularly care for that individual. From what you told me.

Baehr: I wanted to quit that job so many times.

Curadh: You hated that job.

Baehr: And I suppose it's fortunate that I was laid off and didn't have to quit because with the layoff, you get unemployment and all that.

But that's the only job I can think of that I wanted to quit more than once just because I needed to pay the bills. I just sort of persevered through it.

Curadh: You're kind of stuck in doing what you have to do to make the rent.

Baehr: What was the most important lesson you've learned in your career?

Curadh: That's a tough question. There's so many.

Like I said, I'm a pawn broker can't always judge a book by its cover.

Baehr: What do you mean by that?

Curadh: I deal with a lot of different people in society. I've seen the poorest of the poor, and then the richest of the rich.

So, people come in and they need money. Obviously, people need money. You don't always know what where why they're there for the money. You just kind of got to do your job.

And some people can come in and they could look like Joe Shit, the ragman. And next thing, they're furthest from that and that they just like pawn shopping and seeing the value of things. And they hand you a \$20,000 Rolex watch.

You really can't. Also, the one thing I learned is there's a lot of people that are only a few steps away from being in the worst possible scenario that you can imagine that they're in there punting their goods just so they can pay rent, or feed a kid.

You never know what you're going to walk into on a daily basis in that job.

Baehr: I think there's sort of a stereotype or reputation that richer people are more stingy than poor people. Do you think that's true?

Curadh: I guess.

Baehr: Is that how they got rich, by just not spending it?

Curadh: Could be or, I don't know, I've seen young rich. I've seen old rich. You never know.

Some people appear to be rich, but if you look at their credit score, they just have a ton of credit cards. It's all run up on credit cards, and then they're not wealthy. I mean, we don't do credit checks at the pawn shop, obviously, because it's a loan.

But some people want to portray a certain image.

Baehr: I think I've heard those called ten-cent millionaires.

Curadh: Yeah, they look like they're looking at their wallet and there's 50 credit cards. I don't have any credit cards. I don't want any credit cards, but they live paycheck to paycheck like most of Americans do, but they're rolling around in a high-end car. But they're one step away from bankruptcy.

And then there's other people who don't look like they have anything at all. Next thing you know, they're pulling out thousands of thousands of dollars in cash and giving it to you.

Baehr: I've also sort of heard that pawn is sort of the poor person's banking system.

Curadh: Some people consider it that way pawn. Over the years, it's got a really bad image of pawn brokers being sleazy, and there probably is some out there. There probably still are.

I take pride in the fact that I know I'm a good pawn broker. That might sound arrogant, but I know I'm a pawn broker, and I sleep well at night. I'm an honest person. I'm not there to rip anybody off.

I'll tell someone what their stuff is worth, like it or not. But like I said, I sleep all at night. I go to bed at night knowing that I am not ripping somebody off.

But some people don't have credit. Some people need some quick cash. I mean, society kind of frowns upon it, but you can't go down to your bank. If you need \$100 you can't borrow \$100 from your banker, you can come to a pawn shop and walk in and out in ten minutes with \$100 in your pocket.

Every state has different walls for the interest, and all that in Kansas is one of those. It's just 10% every 30 days. So, I'm not trying to sell the business to anybody. I'm happy to do what I do. It gives me a good job that I do every day that I enjoy quite a bit. And I do find it fulfilling.

I'm not going to lie, there's days where it gets really frustrating and can anger me quite a bit. But most of the people that I deal with are pretty good people.

Baehr: Sounds to me a bit like masturbation. Everybody does it, but nobody wants to admit to it.

Curadh: Yeah, and I've seen those people. "I shouldn't be in a pawn shop." Motherfucker, get over it. You're standing in front of me. Do you want the money or not?

People laugh at me at work because I'm pretty blunt and I'm straight forward. And yeah, it is what it is.

Baehr: I don't think I could deal with people day in, day out.

Curadh: No, you thought you hate your last job. You would hate this job tremendously. You're not an outgoing person and you have to be an extrovert to do this type of job. Yeah, you would not handle it.

Baehr: My computers don't give me back talk or anything like that.

Curadh: What did your career teach you about?

Baehr: Well, I'd like to think it's attention to detail. That's the answer I want to tell myself.

In programming, there is a lot of detail involved. You've got a plan for every possible outcome, but something that I have learned that -- I guess surprised me -- is it's been surprising.

I have learned that software is not judged by your attention to detail. It is judged by how it looks.

You can have the most elaborate subroutine that handle data in the most elegant way. But if the screen looks ugly or it's a color the customer doesn't like or the controls aren't lined up very well. They don't like it.

I suppose it's sad, but it's true.

Curadh: It's got to look pretty.

Baehr: Yes, software is judged as much by how it looks as how it works. And I guess it's an unfortunate thing, but it's true. And when I first came into programming, I had no idea that it would be that way.

I think some management, like my last company, never saw that. They didn't care about that. They didn't care how it looked. Every project that I was given, I made sure that it looked good. It was clean. And when I was

given something that already existed, I cleaned it up and made it look better. And I'm sure they're benefiting from that.

Curadh: Wow, they lost someone they definitely needed.

Baehr: I don't think they wanted to lay me off. They lost their biggest customer. And that was the customer I did most of the work for. So, they really had no choice.

Curadh: That's interesting.

If you could have a conversation with any historical figure, who would you choose?

Baehr: I would have to say, Galileo.

I don't speak Italian. So, we'll just pretend that there's no language barrier there.

But he was the one who proved that the Earth was not the center of the universe, that the sun did not revolve around the Earth, that the Earth revolved around the sun and the other planets revolved around the sun, which was a direct affront to the Church. Because in the Bible, the Bible said that the sun went around the Earth. That was the god honest truth. Literally.

They could not believe that the Earth revolved around the sun, and they punished him greatly. Eventually he came to recant because it was an expedient thing to do, although there's an expression that I use myself.

Sometimes I say, "and yet it moves," because when Galileo was forced to recant, he made a public statement that the sun does revolve around the Earth and that the Earth does not move. The Earth is the center of the universe.

But it was said that he muttered under his breath, "and yet it moves". That's why he is somebody that I would like to talk to.

Baehr: Who would you like to talk to?

Curadh: I never thought of this. I don't know. I really don't have anybody in particular that I would like to talk to.

Baehr: No historical sports figure or anybody.

Curadh: Not really. No. I mean, athletes are athletes, and they play games. I love sports. Everyone knows on this podcast, but I don't find anything that they say worth a nickel. You normally get the standard, "Well, we put in our time. It's the team."

I don't care about their social political. Go out there, throw the ball, hit the ball, do whatever you want to do with it. I don't care about the political statements or whatever.

I don't know. Maybe this is going to kind of come across as coy, maybe go back in time and talk to Jesus Christ, just to find out he was a normal fucking guy that someone wrote a bunch of stories about to come back and say, no, you're all a bunch of idiots.

But I know I'm not going to make any friends with that statement on this podcast, but I don't have anybody that absolutely look up to or just admire to know, like yours like, those would be neat.

Some old artists, even modern-day artists. I would like to maybe talk to them about how they come up with stuff that they sketch or draw. Or I think that would be neat to sit down and have a conversation with Michelangelo, and then Todd McFarlane, one of the best comic book artists out there, Jim Lee, and have them at a round table in how they would say about art.

I think that would be really interesting because you have one that's viewed as probably the one of the best artists ever, and then one that just quote,

unquote does comic books, but he's still an artist to hear their different aspects of stuff and how they come up in inspirations and stuff. And I'm not comparing the two by any means but are subjective. So, I think that would be kind of cool.

Baehr: Maybe we should go to a comic book convention sometime because they have panels where there are comic book artists, and you can ask questions.

Curadh: I would love to go to, like, a Comic Con, like in New York or in San Francisco, or in one of the bigger cities. I don't know which has one, but I don't think they get any of the comic panelists around here that I would want to see. But I might even say go to the Comic Con in San Diego or anything, just a bigger city, maybe one in Kansas City or Dallas or Oklahoma City. But I would love to go to one of those.

Baehr: I think you'd be surprised of the local talent.

Curadh: Oh, probably. Yeah. I'd have to save a lot of money because there'd be a lot of things that I'd want to buy while I was there.

Baehr: That's true.

Curadh: A lot. You're going to talk about how many markers and pens. And you made a joke about that in the past. I was like, oh, I need this. And you're like, you already have, like, 10,000 markers.

Baehr: How many colors of blue can you really need?

Curadh: Exactly. But, hey, if there's a different color and I don't have it, I want it.

Baehr: What is your astrological star sign?

Curadh: I'm a Leo. Is that what you're talking about?

Baehr: Yeah.

Curadh: I'm a Leo. Yes.

Baehr: Do you think that that means anything?

Curadh: No, not really. No. I think when it says you're loyal, you're loyal and proud. And I think a lot of those words are just, they cover everything, and it makes people feel like they're special.

I already know I'm proud, but I don't think it has anything to do with the fact that I was born on August 13. The line, the sun, moon line. There was certain accident. I don't believe in any of that.

I think it's hokum, as Sheldon Cooper would say.

How about you? What sign are you?

Baehr: I'm an Aquarius.

Curadh: Do you believe in any of it?

Baehr: I don't think there's anything to that whatsoever.

The way that the stars are aligned and the planets are aligned, the way that you're born has nothing to do with anything. The magnetic pull of a star. The stars, probably most of them are long gone by the time the light reaches us.

Curadh: Well, I'm going to have to contact Growlr, because that's why I picked you. Because you're an Aquarius.

Baehr: Seriously?

Curadh: No, not at all.

Curadh: When people ask. Granted, people sometimes ask, "what's your astrological sign?" I think it's just as a way to start a conversation, which I guess is fine.

Curadh: But you probably want to promptly end that conversation as soon as they ask you that.

Baehr: Here's how I like to respond.

I say, what is your blood type? And most of the time, people have no idea what the blood type is, but they know what's their sign. They know that right away.

Well, which is really more important to know? Your sign, or your blood type?

Curadh: Yeah, I agree.

Baehr: The sad thing is probably about 90% of the people out there don't know their blood type, but they know their astrological sign. I find that just, I don't know, both fascinating and sad at the same time.

Curadh: Yeah. Sometimes you just got to laugh at things.

If you had to eat one meal for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Baehr: One meal?

Curadh: You can't say what's in my pants.

Baehr: Okay, I won't.

Well, my favorite food is macaroni and cheese. It's a nice comfort food. I think if it was the only thing I could eat the rest of my life, though, it wouldn't be that fantastic. Yeah, but it is something, I suppose if I was forced to decide this is the only thing you have...

Curadh: Everybody, keep in mind. He's talking about Kraft macaroni cheese in the box, not a homemade from scratch.

He's happy with Kraft macaroni and cheese with extra cheese singles in it. There's a certain way that he makes it. And I've had to learn how to do that because it's just not the same.

Baehr: And even other brands of box macaroni and cheese won't do.

Curadh: No boxed, shells and cheese, that doesn't fly.

Baehr: No, it has to be Kraft macaroni and cheese. It's an early childhood memory, and it's a comfort food and just nothing else equals it, in my opinion.

What would be the food you would eat the rest of your life?

Curadh: From back home? Cheese steaks from back home.

Baehr: Like a Philly, like a Philly cheesecake.

Curadh: Yeah, well, Jersey cheesesteak. It's a little bit different. There's no cheese wiz, but, yeah, I could be happy eating one of those for the rest of my life. Just with the bread and everything just easy.

Baehr: Well, they say there's something about the water in New Jersey that the bread has its own flavor or something.

Curadh: They've actually made a sub shop in Vegas, where they flew out the water from New Jersey to make the bread like that out there, but it's definitely in the water that they use or something for the bread, but it has to be.

I think there's more scientific to it than that. And that's what people have come up with.

Baehr: But it seemed to me like it would be just as easy to fly the bread out to fly the water out.

Curadh: When the bread is fresh, every day made every morning. By the time you fly to Vegas, they're already 8 hours gone and freshness. So, I don't know. I guess you can vats of water and just store it.

Baehr: Well, there are sub shops in town that we go to. And do you think any of them are equal to what you get in Jersey?

Curadh: No. Because of the bread, the bread is one of the best parts, but, I mean, some of them are close with the meats they use and stuff like that. But it's really the bread that makes it.

Baehr: I think that's unusual, because when we go to Jimmy Johns, I order their unsub, which has no bread at all. It's just wrapped in lettuce leaves. And I love that.

Curadh: I like the bread, but it doesn't compare at all to its back home.

Baehr: And those lettuce wraps have the advantage that it's all protein, no carbs. It doesn't affect my blood sugar whatsoever. It's sort of like being able to pick up a salad and eat it like a sandwich.

Curadh: Yeah, but hands down. That would be mine.

All right. Favorite time of the week. What is your favorite joke right now?

Baehr: My favorite joke. Okay, you asked for it.

Why did we name our pet rocks, Thoughts and Prayers?

Curadh: I have no idea. Why have we named our pet rocks, Thoughts and Prayers?

Baehr: Because they're also useless.

Curadh: Oh, God, that's a good one. That's a real good one. We should make that into a T shirt.

Baehr: I always say for a politician, whenever there's a big tragedy, the politician gets on the TV and says "our thoughts, or my thoughts and prayers are with the victims."

I always think, well, when it comes time to vote, all you're going to get from me is my thoughts and prayers.

Curadh: Yeah, that's too funny.

Baehr: Well, that's enough for this episode. I hope everyone enjoyed listening. This is Baehr...

Curadh: and Curadh, signing off for now. Talk to you guys next week.

Baehr: You have been listening to the Baehr and Curadh podcast, a production of the Land of Awes Information Services. We can be contacted via email using the address podcast@awes.com and Awes is spelled A-W-E-S.