

Creative Entrepreneur | Former CEO of School of Rock
Founder of One River School | Former Media Executive | Author

Matt Ross

INTERVIEW MATT ABOUT HIS NEW BOOK:

GROW OR FOLD: *Transform Yourself in Midlife and Beyond*

ABOUT MATT:

Matt Ross is an entrepreneur, author, and former media executive with over 30 years of experience building businesses that inspire passion and creativity. From rocking New York's airwaves to scaling global education brands, now he is the author of *GROW OR FOLD: Transform Yourself in Midlife and Beyond*, a profound story of awakening your enthusiasm for growth.

Since 2012, Matt has been the Founder and CEO of One River School, a company whose mission is to "Transform Art Education®." Today, One River operates fifteen schools in six states with plans for substantial growth over the next five years. In 2005, Matt became the CEO of School of Rock and turned a struggling music education startup into a dominant brand. Under his leadership, the company grew from 5 to 55 locations, while securing commitments for another 50 locations. In 2009, he engineered a sale of majority ownership to Sterling Capital and stayed on as an investor and multi-unit franchise operator until its sale to Roark Capital in 2023.

From 1989 to 2005, Matt led some of the most important radio brands, including: Q104.3, New York's Classic Rock Station, and Hot 97, New York's Hip Hop Station. Matt was featured in Crain's New York Business' "40 Under 40" and is responsible for increasing shareholder value by billions of dollars for Clear Channel, Viacom, Emmis, and Broadcasting Partners Inc.

Matt holds an MBA in Finance from the Stern School of Business at NYU and is a cum laude graduate in Marketing from SUNY Albany. He is also a former member of the Board of Trustees for Art 21 and the Bergen Performing Arts Center.

His advocacy efforts focus on two main areas: supporting organizations that build communities for adults with autism, such as Reed Autism Services and United Way of Bergen County, and championing artists and arts-based organizations. Along the way, he has also built a personal collection of contemporary art that now includes over 400 artworks from more than 100 artists.



FEATURED IN:

The New York Times

CEOWORLD Magazine

PBS.

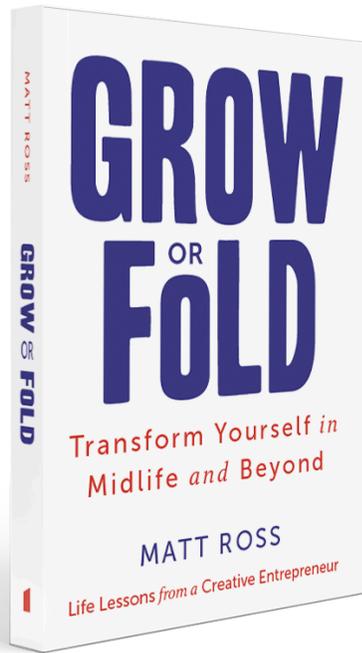
SiriusXM

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FOX

ABOUT THE BOOK:

GROW OR FOLD: *Transform Yourself in Midlife and Beyond*



(Amplify, January 13, 2026)

Many people in midlife feel stuck. The challenge isn't a lack of motivation for change, it's not having a proven process to help.

In this genre-defying, deeply personal, and ultimately inspiring book, **Grow or Fold** redefines what it means to thrive in Midlife and beyond.

With honesty, insight, and a toolkit forged in fire, Matt Ross—former CEO of School of Rock and architect of One River School—invites you into his story of transformation, resilience, and purpose.

At fifty, faced with personal catastrophe and professional upheaval, Ross chose growth over surrender. This book is his blueprint—and your invitation—to do the same.

Through raw storytelling and practical wisdom, **Grow or Fold** helps you navigate the turbulence of change with clarity and confidence. You'll learn how to take inventory of your life, reconnect with your core values, and design a future that reflects your most authentic self.

Whether you're feeling stuck, uncertain, or simply ready for more, this book is your call to action. Because in the face of adversity, there really is only one choice: **Grow or Fold?**

ENDORSEMENTS:

“Matt Ross proves it’s never too late to change everything. *Grow or Fold* is raw, honest, and packed with the kind of wisdom you only earn by living it. If you’re at a crossroads in your life, this book will show you how to move forward on your terms.”

– **MEL ROBBINS**, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Let Them Theory* and host of *The Mel Robbins Podcast*

“*Grow or Fold* is a wake-up call for anyone who thinks midlife is about coasting. Matt Ross takes you inside the messiness of reinvention with grit, humor, and hard-won wisdom from a life in music, art, and business. He shows that midlife isn’t about slowing down—it’s about choosing growth, even when the world dares you to fold.”

– **MARSHALL GOLDSMITH**, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *Triggers* and *The Earned Life*

“Matt Ross has done a remarkable job starting life’s greatest challenges in the eye and moving through them thoughtfully and with great passion. Midlife is such a unique time for all of us and a chance to reset our path for the rest of our lives, and Matt’s journey and compelling toolkit will light a fire in you and help to guide you through the process of transforming your life.”

– **JACK CANFIELD**, Coauthor of the #1 *New York Times* bestselling *Chicken Soup for the Soul®* series and *The Success Principles™: How to Get from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be*

DISCUSSION TOPICS:

- I Built School of Rock Into a Global Brand—Then Lost My Job, My Health, and My Son at 50. Here's How I Rebuilt My Life From Scratch
 - Grow or Fold: The Two Words That Saved Me in Midlife—and Why They Could Change Yours Too
 - Treating Yourself Like a Business: Applying CEO Strategies to Rebuild a Broken Life
 - The Most Important Decade of Your Life Isn't Your 20s—It's Your 40s and 50s: Here is how to make the best of it
 - The Midlife Toolkit: Simple Principles That Can Save Your Health, Happiness, and Career
 - Pure Growth: The simple three-part model that keeps your brain sharp and your life resilient as you age
 - The overlooked X factor: Why Creative Growth is the Key to Staying Sharp in Midlife and Beyond
 - Business Principles for Your Personal Life: Using CEO-approved Strategies to Bridge the Gap Between Where You Are and Where You Want To Be
 - Why Midlife Burnout Isn't About Motivation—It's About Clarity and Courage
 - From Rock Bottom to Reinvention: A Top CEO's Blueprint for Thriving in Midlife and Beyond
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SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

- What motivated you to write the *Grow or Fold*?
 - What is it about midlife that is different from other periods of life?
 - What are the key drivers of success for transforming yourself in Midlife?
 - How should people approach resetting their careers in middle age?
 - What did you learn about yourself from raising a severely autistic, non-verbal son?
 - What is the key difference in people who overcome their midlife challenges versus those who get stuck?
 - How did you come to learn that teaching music and art wasn't just a career, it was an essential part of your life's purpose?
 - If somebody wanted to think about investing in their creative sensibility, where should they begin?
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CONNECT

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