

**EPISODE 185**

*“JT: At first, this job was yes, it was aligned with my degree but it was truly out of desperation for finances, and so the driving factor of the decision was, I need money, and what I learned is that usually, it doesn’t put you in a place where you’re meant to be and I learned that through doing the work and realizing that I left empty, every single day. No matter how full my bank account was, my heart, my soul, my spirit was empty and that was the indicator that I was in the wrong place, and I had the realization that you know, I’m going to work for the rest of my life. I need to find something that’s going to make me feel fulfilled when I leave the office because really, at the end of my life, I don’t care about a full bank account. I want a full life, a full life experience of the things that I got to do that made my heart feel full.”*

**[INTRODUCTION]**

**[0:00:48.0] LW:** Hey friend, welcome back to the Light Watkins Show. I’m Light Watkins and I interview ordinary folks just like you and me who have taken extraordinary leaps of faith in the direction of their path, their purpose, or what they’ve identified with as their mission in life, and in doing so, they’ve been able to positively impact and inspire the lives of many other people who’ve either heard about their story or who’ve witnessed them in action or people who directly benefited from their work.

And today, I’m in conversation with Jordan Tarver. Jordan is the author of *“You Deserve This Shit!”* Which promises to help you get unstuck, find your path, and become the best version of yourself. A close call with death is what caused Jordan to dedicate himself to living a life infused with meaning and more importantly, to work to empower other people to do the same. His goal is to take his life experiences and create digestible lessons, understandable action steps, and easy-to-follow frameworks that will help you create the life that you create the life that you have always desired.

And what I love about Jordan’s work is how he was able to take several chances on himself. He didn’t come from money or anything like that. He worked regular jobs but he kept taking leaps of faith, he kept following his heart, and he eventually self-published his book, which wasn’t exactly

a bestseller when it came out but then he began to work the social media algorithms to try to bring viral attention to his book and through consistency and creativity, he blew up.

And in this episode, Jordan is going to give us the play-by-play of how he was able to post on TikTok and Instagram in a way that caught fire and he went from selling dozens of books to selling thousands of books each month. So, if you are a content creator or just someone who loves hearing about clever marketing strategies, you're going to love this episode. On top of breaking down how he became a bestselling author, Jordan also talks about how he broke into the keynote-speaking world.

And of course, as we look closely at the entirety of the story, we can see breadcrumbs leading back to Jordan's earliest days working nine-to-five jobs and it's just more evidence that there are no throwaway moments in life that everything you are doing today is helping you learn skills and helping you to cultivate an attitude or a level of resilience that is going to come into play down the line as you continue to get deeper and deeper into your purpose.

So, this was a very fun and enlightening conversation with a luminary of a person. I got really excited to hear how everything came together in Jordan's life and he's not even 30 years old yet. So, he's still evolving as we all are and I think that this episode is going to leave you very, very inspired. So, without further ado, let us get to my conversation with Mr. Jordan Tarver.

[INTERVIEW]

**[0:04:14.9] LW:** Jordan Tarver, I'm honored to have you on my podcast, and to dive into your story and share it with my audience. So, thanks so much for coming on.

**[0:04:23.2] JT:** Yeah man, it's been a long time coming to get here. I'm glad we made it work.

**[0:04:27.1] LW:** Absolutely. Well, what's interesting is you got this story that you allude to in a lot of your other conversations, podcasts, even in your book, I read your book, and I didn't see any details about this notorious car accident that you apparently got in and caused you to change your perception on life and everything. So, can we just start with you talking about that experience and the ramifications or implications of that experience?

**[0:04:55.0] JT:** Yeah. So, it was 2013, I was in college and we're just going out for a normal evening with a couple of my friends and all was going well and we got in the car and headed back to our apartments at the end of the night and we're just driving down the freeway. You know, one moment it's like, everything's normal, just laughing at the homies, all good, and the next moment, we're spiraling out of control at like 85 miles per hour, and that whole moment was slow motion to me.

It was like, time froze and it was I felt like I had a really reflective experience while it was happening. It was one of those things where I was like, "I can't believe this is actually happening to me." For so long, you think about like, "Oh, that's never going to happen to me. Like I got this like golden bubble around me protecting me" or whatever until it's actually happening to you and I was like, "Oh shit, we could be good or it could go like really bad."

And, from outside looking in, this accident should have taken multiple lives. It was an accident between two cars and both cars happened to be both of our friend group, and everyone walked away unscathed, which it felt very universal, and felt like something was protecting us that night and I just remember when the accident had stopped and we had climbed out of the car, one car had done two rolls, landed tire side up and the other car, my car had slid on the driver side all the way to the center divider.

And I was the first one out of the car and I just remembered repeating and screaming out loud like, "No-no-no-no." And I was just thinking about the earlier today and I feel like I just didn't want to accept that it happened because I wasn't sure of the severity of the accident quite yet. I didn't know if we lost any friends, didn't know if anyone was injured, just in a state of trauma and shock.

And as that night progressed, we had left the scene and we didn't want to go to bed because no one knew if we had concussions or anything like that and so I remember going to McDonald's because it was the only place opened and we all go to McDonald's, sit down in the booth and we just kind of sat there in silence and just looking at each other like, "What the fuck just happened?"

Like, it was such a loud moment for all of us and it really shook us all and I don't know how the experience was for each and every person and what came after but I know for me, it was just a major wake-up call to see how quickly life could be ripped away from me. It was something that made me look at life moving forward and way different but also reflect on my life before that moment and asked myself, "What can I do differently so that when my time comes, I know I didn't leave anything on the table."

And so, that was the biggest thing for me was recognizing I guess, the fragility of life and how precious it really is and I had really two decisions. I could let that car accident spiral my life completely out of control, I could go into the fear, I could go into the trauma, I can go into the shock, and let it take control of me, or I could recognize what happened, acknowledge the fact that that is a very traumatic experience and work toward working through that trauma.

And then making intentional choices and changes to move me in a direction that aligns me with where I want to be so I know that I am living that fulfilling life for whenever that day comes when my time's up.

**[0:08:20.0] LW:** How old are you, Jordan?

**[0:08:21.0] JT:** 29.

**[0:08:22.0] LW:** You have only been driving for a few years. Were you driving the car?

**[0:08:25.9] JT:** No, I was a passenger sitting right behind the passenger seat.

**[0:08:29.4] LW:** Why were you not driving your own car?

**[0:08:31.6] JT:** It wasn't my car.

**[0:08:33.4] LW:** Oh-oh, it's just a car you were in. Got it, got it.

**[0:08:36.0] JT:** The car I was in. So, my buddy was driving and our other friend was driving next to us and we had both clipped on the freeway at 80 miles per hour.

**[0:08:43.7] LW:** What happened? Were you guys like, racing or listening to music or –

**[0:08:48.3] JT:** No one actually knows what happened, I have my own perspective of what I think happened. So, we're driving side by side, going 85 miles per hour probably, and I remember like seconds before this happened, I had this urge to ask my friend to slow down because I just felt like we're going way too fast but then something like, quieted me and I think that's interesting because had I spoken up, maybe this wouldn't have happened.

But maybe it was supposed to happen so I could have this understanding and perspective of how I think life should be lived for myself in order to be you know, aligned with the best life for me and so we're side by side and then there's a big rig in this other way and our friends starts to speed up around us and right as he speeds up, the big rig starts to move over and what I think happened is that he was in his blind spot.

And so, he swerves and doesn't see my other friend and then we collide and then we start to do the sway. We go one swing to the left, one swing to the right and that's where I'm like, "It's about to happen. Like, it's – we're about to be in a gnarly car accident" and then we hit the side and slide across five lanes of traffic and then the other friends do two rolls the entire side up.

**[0:10:03.8] LW:** Now, when I have ridden in the back seat of anybody's car, it's rare that I am wearing a seatbelt. Did you have your seatbelt on?

**[0:10:10.4] JT:** Our car had our seatbelts on, no airbags came out. Our friend's car, airbags came out, no seatbelts on. The worst injury was the driver of our car had glass that had – was shattering us, where it was sliding into the back of his hand from where he was holding the steering wheel but every single person walked away that night and no one spent the night in the hospital.

**[0:10:35.8] LW:** Let's take it back then, Jordan, let's take it back to childhood. You and I share something in common, we both grew up in very privileged – it sounds like you had a privileged lifestyle and we're both children and a family of six. I have three brothers that I grew up with and both of my parents and talk about your family life growing up in terms of the philosophies and

the ideologies that you would hear your parents echo as you were growing up and becoming a teenager and an adult and what kind of takeaways did you have from that sort of background?

**[0:11:16.0] JT:** I think the biggest thing for me was my parents had always let us do the things that we are naturally drawn to. We were given the gift of not having a predetermined path and I think that was one of the most freeing things as a teen but also in my life now. Because I had that permission from a young age, I feel that it's easier to give myself permission now to do the things that I feel drawn to.

Even if they might not be the most traditional path or the thing that you think someone should do, having that permission from a young age has opened the doors of my life a lot and has put me on the path that I'm on because it has allowed me to just go after what's in my heart and what I really think is right for me and so that was like one of the biggest takeaways for me and that's one thing I tell my parents all the time was like, I'm just so grateful that they didn't put a path on us.

They didn't want us to go to a certain college, they didn't want us to get a specific degree, they didn't force us into a career that wasn't aligned with us. They always, always gave us space to make those decisions for ourselves.

**[0:12:26.2] LW:** Would they explicitly say that or would they just not say anything when you were wanting to go and devote your life to baseball or whatever you were interested in doing growing up?

**[0:12:36.8] JT:** I think it was more of the way that they led and the unconditional support they gave toward the things that we were interested in. So, for example, I went to Cal State Fullerton and got a degree in business finance. You know, when I first went to school, the degree felt like it would align me instead of toward big paycheck and that seemed really interesting to me at that time.

Thought I want to be a ball up numbers, business stuff, and then I get to graduation and I'm like, "I don't think this is really what I want to do." I don't know if this is actually what's meant for me and so going into a career out of college just never felt right and that was kind of the thing that

pushed me toward doing my solo backpacking trip was, going to do a little bit more soul searching, figuring out more of myself because I had not really stepped into who I was meant to be quite yet.

I had a lot of things to work through myself from childhood insecurities and things like that and my parents never said one word about that being a bad decision. Matter of fact, I was in Europe and I was about five weeks into my trip, was supposed to come home. At that time I was single, I had no job, I had moved out of my house for my trip and so there's nothing really pulling me home and I wanted to stay longer.

I wanted to skip my flight and continue to travel for another month and a half and my parents were on board from the second that I said that's what I wanted to do and so it was just the way that they led and the support they gave. It wasn't explicit to the point where like, "You can do whatever you want." It's just the way that they treated me when I would be interested in trying something.

**[0:14:24.3] LW:** I would like to just go back to high school again and talk about baseball because I heard you talk about this anecdote on another podcast where you said you were a strong defensive player but you were lacking as an offensive player and you decided to be very intentional about fixing that. How did you do that?

**[0:14:41.7] JT:** I figured that it was probably time to listen to my dad when he would just motivate me to really put in the reps required to get better at something and so I think it was in the summer before tryouts. I've hung up a net in our garage, got a T, got a bucket of 50 balls, and every day, I'd go out there by myself in the garage and just swing. Simple stuff, it wasn't even rocket science. Just doing the most simple mechanics of baseball.

But there were the things that I needed to work on the most in my game. Like you said, I was – defense was my thing, it came natural. I didn't have to do those small minute detail-oriented drills but hitting, not my strongest point. I think that summer where I was just really intentional with focusing on those small little things is what over time had compounded into me being able to go to tryouts and then show off this entire new skill that I had built, all from this act of being consistent with just these daily small actions.

**[0:15:51.1] LW:** Were you already a fairly disciplined person in school? It seems like you have a lot of discipline today, just in the way that you move with your – building your keynote speaking and you’re writing your books and stuff like that. Was that something that if we were to look at the breadcrumbs leading up to this moment – that we would have seen outside of that baseball approach?

**[0:16:11.3] JT:** Yeah, I think I’ve always been a good student and I say that in terms of like, did my homework, was on track, didn’t let things fall through the cracks, and I think that comes from like I am someone who just wants to get things done. I don’t know if that’s because that’s a personal thing that I need for my own level of fulfillment and I don’t want to feel bad if I don’t do things right but I would say yes, who I am today is a direct reflection of how I was as a child in some capacity.

[BREAK]

**[0:16:56.6] LW:** You get this undergrad degree in finance and you’re working at a restaurant. What restaurant were you working in?

**[0:17:02.3] JT:** Old Spaghetti Factory in Newport Beach, California.

**[0:17:05.5] LW:** What was that money like?

**[0:17:07.6] JT:** Good enough to be a college kid going to class a few days a week and surfing the other five.

**[0:17:16.5] LW:** So, quitting that job and going backpacking was not a big decision for you. You were just like, “Okay, this is just a temporary thing anyway, this is really what I want to do” or was it a big deal and you had to like, have a “come to Jesus” moment with yourself?

**[0:17:30.0] JT:** It was a big deal. It was a big deal because for most of my life, up until that trip, I was very insecure. I didn’t have the level of confidence that I have now. I wasn’t sure of who I was or what I want to do so I had a lot of uncertainty just within my own spirit and so that was



really outside of my character to do something like that. I remember telling my mom that I was going to be going alone.

I think she was shocked. If you asked her today, she couldn't believe that I was going to do this and then I'm the youngest of four of her babies, so she has all her these other worries that come with that but it was by no means, something that someone would have guessed that I was going to do but it felt right. Like, I was supposed to originally go with a friend and he had at the last minute, right before he bought tickets, he had said that he had a job and they were doing training in New York during the summer.

And so I was like, "Okay, well, he's out" And this was way before I was really deeply connected to my own spiritual journey and the awareness of the universe and things happening for specific reasons but now looking back, I wasn't meant to go with someone. I had a lot of deep inner work to do and I was going to be able to achieve that better. Whether I was conscious of it or not, had I gone on that trip by myself. So, out of character, yes, but meant to be, also yes.

**[0:18:51.2] LW:** Well, your siblings also all had a gap year or a gap weeks or months or something like that. So, you also had that as a point of reference.

**[0:18:57.7] JT:** For sure and I think that's what originally kind of inspired the thought of it being a possibility was that I saw the people by that I look up to do something similar and just in some capacity but yeah, and I think there is a level of permission that came from seeing my siblings do something similar.

**[0:19:15.8] LW:** What were three takeaways from that trip? Obviously, journaling, the power of journaling was something that happened during that trip or was that before?

**[0:19:23.5] JT:** I mean, my biggest thing in life I would say it's probably my top core value is intention. Everything I do comes with a level intention that I hold out of – to a very – I have a high standard for myself when it comes to intention.

**[0:19:40.9] LW:** What do you mean by intention?

**[0:19:42.5] JT:** Doing things with purpose and assign meaning to things so that I will get more out of it for the betterment of myself and just showing up as my fullest version. You know, I don't want to do something like you're saying like, earlier, we were talking about being dedicated. I know what I'm capable of doing and I know what I'm here to do and I personally can't show up half-assed because I couldn't live with knowing that I didn't give it my all.

And so, when I think about intention in my life, if I'm going to do something, it needs to be a full body assed and I need to be fully involved in that process and not just like, half in half out, one foot out the door. So, when I thought up my trip, I was like, well, I want this to be very intentional, I don't want it to just be a Euro tour of going to bar hops and all this kind of stuff but I wanted to come back with something, whether it was tangible or not tangible.

And so, that's when I had the idea of doing the journal because that felt like a really good way to, one, document what was happening but also explore the feelings and things that were coming up for me, and that was the first time I really started to write. You know, in high school, I hated writing and I wasn't very good at it, mind you, I was probably writing topics that didn't really matter to me.

And so, it was the first time actually was going to approach writing from a place of curiosity for myself and writing it in a way that really felt fulfilling to me, and that's kind of where the journaling did start was, it was that trip.

**[0:21:09.3] LW:** You became a long-form essayist much later but I'm just curious, man, you and I have so many parallels, like I had a restaurant job that I quit to follow my heart and it was a big deal because I was making good money but I knew that this wasn't what I was meant to be doing in my life, working as a server. I went to Europe with nothing, with just like a duffle bag and I've started journaling.

I started journaling on that trip and I found that it's so funny because I still have all of those journal entries and I often times will go back and read through them fondly and my style at that time was to write in a sort of narrative fashion, where I was telling some linear story about my day, what happened first, second, third, et cetera, and it allows me to sort of relive the experience in my mind.

So, it wasn't very abstract and I'm curious to hear what your style of journaling was and why that style.

**[0:22:13.2] JT:** So, originally, in that first journal, it was a lot of recapping and writing about what was actually happening around me. So, like actually, like daily diary kind of style, like documentation. With the intention that I could like relive those movements but the nature of myself is introspective, that's just who I am, and that's why I do what I do is because it comes so naturally to me, like having self-awareness, looking within, looking for lessons in everything, and finding ways to then teach people around me, those things that I'm learning through my life experience.

So, at first, it was very much documented like what my days were like because that's really all I knew to do back then. It has since evolved and it's a lot different now. It's still very open-ended though. I don't use journal prompts as much as I would just have a free writing session and kind of be just open, channeling to see what would kind of come through.

But it is – whether I'm writing, recapping the day, or diving a little bit deeper into maybe why I'm feeling a certain way or what's causing a certain emotion, it's therapeutic, whatever, whichever style I was doing. It was always – whether that was the initial intention, that's kind of what I did receive from it.

**[0:23:25.1] LW:** And you say, the first thing you tell people to do when they're starting their process of self-discovery is to buy a journal. So, what do you mean by self-discovery and how do you propose that people use a journal to explore themselves?

**[0:23:39.6] JT:** Yeah. So, I think journaling is the easiest way to unlock truths of your inner world that will catapult you on your journey, truly. My perspective is that the first step toward improvement, whether that's 'changing your life, discovering yourself, or just making a small shift is self-awareness and not action. So, you can't make a change or take an action, or discover something about yourself if you're not actually aware of what's going on in here.

And so, for me, the journal is the direct key and the direct door to that world, and so the more I journal, the more I uncover, the more I feel connected, the more I feel at peace, the more I feel grounded, and that's why I think it's the most crucial part of self-discovery journey because it's the most intimate way to get to know yourself and it's free.

**[0:24:33.9] LW:** And you kind of guide people through steps, you call one of these steps as like guided brainstorm. What's a guided brainstorm?

**[0:24:41.6] JT:** So, a guided brainstorm would be proposing a specific question. So, I think in the book I use the question like, "What is my purpose?" Or it could be any other question and you're just doing like a brain dump. So, it's just you make a bullet list and the way I do it now is I will set a timer, so I'll set a timer for 20 minutes. I'll put it on some sort of focus music, whether that's like, binaural beats or just like, lo-fi kind of stuff.

Stuff that's not distracting that can almost like, disappear into the background but keep me locked in and I'll just write answers to that question without thinking and without judging what's coming out, and so I think when I do that, I actually allow myself to get out of my own way, remove the ego, remove the self-limiting beliefs, the negative chatter, and just truly write from a place of purity.

And there's a lot of clarity that comes through that because a lot of the times, when I'm brainstorming a bullet lesson response to a question, I'm writing things that I've never thought about before and so, I feel like these things are actually coming from a higher place.

**[0:25:49.8] LW:** What I'm referring to when I'm saying, "Oh, you said this or you did that" I'm referring to this book that you have out called, *You Deserve This Shit!* I love the title and I want to talk a little bit later about the process of creating that book but I guess, the obvious question for me is, what do you mean by, "This shit?" What does, "This shit" you're referring to, that we deserve?

**[0:26:12.7] JT:** The true essence of that book is self-discovery and knowing oneself and that's what I think everyone deserves because when you develop the relationship to yourself, I think that's when your life really starts to begin because we were put here to have this human

experience and that human experience becomes much more grand in the spectrum of it widens, the more that you get to know the person, that's experiencing it or you might say, the spirit that's experiencing it.

But the more you get to know the self that is experiencing that experience, the wider that spectrum gets, the more grand the experience gets and so I think the things that people deserve is that connection to themselves because at the end of the day, this is who you're going to be with forever until the end of time.

And so, understanding and having a relationship with yourself is going to give you just a much clearer roadmap, whether that's understanding your emotions, understanding your wants, needs, and desires, understanding what you resonate with or who you want to become but really getting to know yourself is what people deserve.

**[0:27:20.8] LW:** Yeah, and it's funny, I was pontificating to myself this morning about the idea of success and how the way it's that word is normally used is an indicator of someone who mastered the capitalism game.

**[0:27:39.9] JT:** Yeah.

**[0:27:40.8] LW:** But we don't really ask how do they feel, right? And you talked about your book, you talked about working in mortgage, in the mortgage industry, and how you were making more money than you'd ever seen in your entire life and it looked on paper to be this glamorous sort of life and existence but it didn't feel even the slightest bit glamorous to you.

So, just talk a little bit about that experience and I guess, take us a little bit deeper into that feeling you're describing, and how did that inform the next steps in your journey? Because I think a lot of people can relate to that.

**[0:28:17.2] JT:** Yeah, I think it's a big challenge a lot of people go through is finding something fulfilling and you know, I was traveling for those three months after college using every dollar to my name to fund this trip, and for the record, I was on a crazy budget trip. I financed this trip

myself and so, I was doing everything as cheaply as possible and staying in cheap hostels, trying to get all through the hoops to make this money stretch the distance that I needed it to.

So, I'm in the middle of my trip and I'm like, maybe a month out from coming home, and at this point, my credit card balances were getting over the actual limit because I had effectively run out of money but I was like, "I needed to finish this trip." And so, I was trying to get like, pretty stressed out financially and I wanted to expedite the process of getting a job.

So, I'd sent my resume to a friend who worked at this mortgage company asking him if he could put me in as a referral so that when I got home, I could like come home right in time for the interview and so he did that. So, I had this like, mortgage job that starting to cook on the back burner while I'm out just like running around for the last month in Europe and so I get home and land the job.

I think it was maybe a month or two after I had gotten home and I was sleeping on the homie's couch for the time until I found an apartment and got like a paycheck and all that kind of stuff. So, really, at first, this job was, yes, it was aligned with my degree but it was truly out of desperation for finances and so the driving factor of the decision was, I need money, and what I learned is that usually, it doesn't put you in a place where you're meant to be.

And I learned that through doing the work and realizing that I left empty, every single day. No matter how full my bank account was, my heart, my soul, my spirit was empty and that was indicator that I was in the wrong place and I had the realization that you know, I'm going to work for the rest of my life. I need to find something that's going to make me feel fulfilled when I leave the office because really, at the end of my life, I don't care about a full bank account. I want a full life, a full life experience of the things that I got to do that made my heart feel full.

**[0:30:27.5] LW:** What are some of the indicators of that emptiness you're describing? Were you drinking, were you like, just vegging out in front of the TV? Were you going to bed at 7:00 at night? Like, how was that showing up in your life, that emptiness?

**[0:30:39.5] JT:** Lack of motivation, apathy, and feeling like energetically depleted. You know, I think when you work on creativity in general, and creativity I mean I think such as art but like,

creating anything, being in a mortgage role and making a spreadsheet, that's also creativity, and I think a lot of people get that mixed up or don't think they're creative but just exerting energy like that, it's exhausting.

Like, creative work takes a lot out of you but it could also give so much back to you and so when I recognized that I was not feeling like, my cup was getting more full but it was just getting more empty and more empty and more empty, that's when I realized like, I was in a wrong place and, to the point I was making earlier, that all came from my self-awareness that I developed on that trip, and like I said, self-awareness is the first step towards change.

It's the first step toward improvement. Had I not had that awareness, I could still be in that job today, you know? It's like, my awareness was the catalyst and to even understanding that I was in the wrong place.

**[0:31:41.3] LW:** What we sometimes do is we start telling ourselves stories, like, "Maybe I'm just in the wrong apartment. Maybe I'm just in the wrong relationship, maybe I'm just in the wrong this" or that or not realizing that it's actually this thing that I'm spending eight, 10 hours a day doing that's not really allowing me to tap into my talents, my gifts, my full potential and I think the journaling you're describing inevitably gives you an opportunity to see that.

It comes out, you can't keep it from coming out. If you're journaling every day and the way you're talking about, right?

**[0:32:14.0] JT:** Yeah.

**[0:32:14.2] LW:** You start seeing themes and patterns, you keep seeing the same shit over and over.

**[0:32:18.1] JT:** And you go, "Woah, I need to change this thing." You know, I keep talking about how much I hate this part of my life or how much frustration I feel in this relationship or the tension I feel around this type of work, and so it is the recurring themes, and so like, yes, you can journal your way to that truth but I also think those are reflective part of that process as well because if you're not actually looking at the things that are coming out when you're journaling,

you're not actually understanding or seeing those recurring themes because you're not doing the work to reassess what's been going on and it was just recurring.

It's just every day, I just like, one, I didn't feel motivated to go into work, which is a problem that many people have, and then didn't feel very great after work besides the fact that it was done, and really look forward to Saturday and Sunday, and I just think that's like, not the right way to live for myself and I want to say this because I think right now, what we're seeing in the space of – I guess, all work is with the rise of technology and with the rise of social media, entrepreneurship is pushed heavily. It's pushed heavily.

**[0:33:24.4] LW:** It's even equated with purpose. Like, if you're not an entrepreneur, you're not living your purpose.

**[0:33:28.3] JT:** Yeah. If you're not working on your passion, you're not living, your fullest life and so there's a lot of like, societal pressure and peer pressure to become an entrepreneur and to get out of the nine-to-five but I don't think that's true. I think we're going to see a shift where people start to value work in a way that opens up their life to doing what they do love, not tied to money outside of work for fulfillment.

And so, I say that because I don't want people to hear my story and think that the only way to fulfill in life is not working a nine-to-five or aligning with your job with your passions. I still think there's a way to find purpose within a traditional corporate job.

[BREAK]

**[0:34:23.6] LW:** So, talk about how you pivoted and got closer to that, what you're describing of having more fulfillment in your day-to-day existence?

**[0:34:33.4] JT:** Yeah, I mean, I took it right back to the journal. It's like, it's my spot where I just know I can get so much clarity and I started to really explore what makes me feel fulfilled, not related to anything with work or money. Just like, what things do I do in my life that make me feel excited and fulfilled and inspired and motivated? Because I always knew I wanted to eventually turn one of my passions into my work.



I just always had that feeling that was felt like destiny to me and so I was like, “Well, I just fell in love with writing.” On my trip to Europe like I wondered if there’s a world somewhere out there where I could make a living doing writing and so I kind of started to explore like, what that looked like, and at the time, my brother was writing for online publications and he had a couple of freelance clients.

And so, I just asked him, like, “Hey, I really want to do this eventually but I have a finance degree, I don’t know shit about journalism and I got nothing to prove when I got to apply for a job.” But I figured I could find a way. I figured there had to be a way and so he kicked me some of his freelance clients and so I started writing for them. It was not pretty in the beginning at all, and I would work for my mortgage job from eight or nine to five, get home, have a snack, and then I would write for about two hours.

So, I’m working close to 10-hour days, just to find a way out of something that didn’t fulfill me anymore. Now, I will say that time period of me going through, trying to build these – I was trying to build a portfolio and it wasn’t easy by any means but I knew there were more at the end of it was worth the work and I knew so deeply that I needed to be aligned with something that felt fulfilling to me. So, I was willing to do whatever it took to get there because I was so unhappy at my current situation.

**[0:36:27.0] LW:** It’s like the baseball thing. You brought that baseball practice, the garage.

**[0:36:30.6] JT:** Yeah.

**[0:36:30.9] LW:** Throwing the thing, you know? And hitting the ball and what I love about this part of the story is that you didn’t quit your job but you changed your relationship with it and instead of becoming this thing that was a drag, where you’re just watching the clock all day and waiting for the weekend, now it becomes your funding mechanism to support this thing that you’re more passionate about.

So now, you’re doing both and I think, that’s another common misconception is that we have this idea of it’s got to be either/or. Either I’m living my passion or I’m working this dead-end situation

and the reality, 99 times out of a hundred is that you kind of have to do both for at least a period of time in order get lift off with the passion thing.

**[0:37:15.5] JT:** Yeah, I think it's a great point, and actually was just having a conversation with a family member over Thanksgiving, and he was talking about how he was looking to go back to work because it was becoming a little bit too stressful to like chase his dream without any financial support and when I was telling him from my own experience, it was kind of what you're saying right now is, having that financial security I think allowed me to create what I needed to create without the sense of urgency.

And so, it gave me more freedom to do my best work and learn what I needed to learn without feeling like I wasn't going to be able to pay a bill. Although, maybe I didn't want to be working that many hours, working that many hours was much better than quitting my job and then having absolutely no cash to support myself. So, I think it's a good reminder that you still can chase a dream, you still can chase a new line of work while you're working at your current role. Now, you will have to create time outside of that but if you want it, it's there, you can do it.

**[0:38:20.4] LW:** So, how long did you have to work before you got liftoff?

**[0:38:25.0] JT:** I landed my first writing job in 2018. I think it's probably like a year and a half or a year after I had – because I had worked the job and it took me maybe a year to realize like, “Okay, I need to find something different.” So, I would say, a year to a year and a half until I could actually – was able to land a full-time writing job.

And what's interesting is during that journey of trying to build a portfolio of articles, I started interviewing at this online publication out of New York City and as I'm in the interview process, one of my clients tells me that I wasn't good enough and that they're going to let me go and so now, I'm in this internal battle of trying to remind myself that I still could do it, when this person over here is telling me, “Hey, you're not good enough” and this company is like, “Hey, we're about to hire you.”

And so now, I'm in this weird narrative of what to actually hold onto and I think that actually – it's interesting, I've never thought about this but that experience was similar to the car accident.

There's two choices, there's always two sides of the coin, and I've done my absolute best to be deliberate about always choosing the positive side of the coin. So, is the car accident going to take my life and spiral out of control or am I going to use it and leverage as a way to change my perspective moving forward?

Am I going to latch onto the thing that this person says that I can't do or am I going to latch on to my self-belief so I can do the thing that I know I want to do? And so that's been a very interesting like duality of my life and I'm sure it's similar to a lot of people but every situation, every experience, there's two sides, and the way forward depends if you choose the negative or the positive side.

**[0:40:10.5] LW:** I've written recently about how we all have our own self-generated echo chamber in our head, which are those voices and the dominant voice is, the one you listen to the most, and around this time you say 2018, you're starting to write your first book. This is a very audacious endeavor, what gave you the audacity to think that you had enough life experience to write a self-help book?

Because I imagine you had imposter syndrome, and you're still learning really how to write properly and I'm assuming this is a self-published book, maybe you tried to get it published first, you had a proposal. So, talk a little bit about this process because I think this – and I want to kind of dive deeper into this process than we've talked about any of the other aspects of your life because I feel like a lot of people who listen to this podcast, in particular, are on the cusp of doing something like that.

And I want to give them a real impression of what it's like because I think people think, people who write books are somehow especially gifted or talented, and in my experience — is that's not what it is. You just have to be willing to take something to the end and put it in a paper and know that it's going to take a hundred drafts in order to get to the point where it's legible and so talk about the genesis of that experience for you.

**[0:41:31.4] JT:** Yeah, so my writing journey with books really actually started with the journal. So, it's you can't find it online anymore but I've written a short form, it's like a hundred-page book. The purpose of it was just kind of the inner circle community thing.

**[0:41:46.8] LW:** *Moment?* Was that *Moment*?

**[0:41:48.1] JT:** Yeah, *Moment: To Whom It May Concern*, and that book was in the two-month gap when I got back from the urban and started my job, again, intention, I was sleeping on my buddy's couch with nothing to do and I just like, "I can't go surfing in the morning then come back and sit for six hours. I need to do something" and this is when I was really starting to connect with my creativity and creativity for me is such a big source of my life.

It gives me so much and so I decided, I was like, "Hey, like I got this journal of all these really dope travel stories, like what if I just copied that into a Google doc and started working on a book?" And so I put like present-day reflections of what lessons I was learning and that was like my first experience with book writing. Now, I've gone back and read it before, I'm like, "Man" I was far off from where I am now but you got to start somewhere.

And so I think that was the thing for me was I never made myself believe I couldn't do it like because I hadn't done it yet. I knew I could continue to work that muscle and just like the baseball thing like through consistency, I would get better. It's like going to the gym, you know? It's like you start to lift and then you go on a week later and you're like, "Oh, I can lift a little bit more" and you go on a week later and you lift a little bit more.

Everything works that way whether you're working a muscle or working a talent or skill and so I figured I have to –

**[0:43:14.4] LW:** You read the *War of Art* too around that time, right? Steven Pressfield's book.

**[0:43:18.2] JT:** I did, yeah. That was a big thing for me. The biggest takeaway from that book, which is being professional and that's something I've really taken to heart even as a movement to like my speaking career is like, "How can I lead and how can I create as if I've been doing this forever? What level of intention would someone 20 years ahead of me put into their work? Why can't I do that now?"

And so that was a really big lesson at that time was I am honestly taking things seriously even if only a hundred people bought my first book but give it as much purpose and as much level of dedication as if a million people read it, as if ten million people read it. So, for me, it's always been being the professional before maybe I am actually the professional that I think I'll be and then just being highly dedicated to the process and just giving it a lot of value and just being really purposeful and intentional with the creation of it.

**[0:44:16.6] LW:** You and I are both in the same speaker community and we were both on this call that we had recently, where the guy that started the community, Josh Linkner, was sharing a mock schedule for a speaker and that was very eye-opening for me because to your point, I haven't been scheduling my speaking practice in that same way and I know you have. You've been very consistent about practicing on a daily basis and incorporating that, which you said, professionalism into your craft.

And I think that's something that I think you know, we all need to get to that place in order to really, really take things to the next level but before we get to that because I do want to talk about that, let's just finish up the book conversation.

**[0:45:05.0] JT:** Yeah.

**[0:45:05.5] LW:** You self-published this book?

**[0:45:06.9] JT:** Yeah.

**[0:45:07.7] LW:** Okay, so you said you didn't launch it until 2021 even though you started writing it in 2018, was that correct?

**[0:45:16.9] JT:** Yeah, just about – so the book was – it was done pre-pandemic. I was going to release it in the summer of 2020 and then I was like, “If no one is over my shoulder” publisher, “Telling me that I need to get it out by a certain date, why would I rush it when I feel like it's not the right time to put a book out?” Potentially, one of the most difficult times to market a new product, too much other noise, and so I just listened to my intuition.

I did what I felt was best for me and held onto it for another year and during that year, I just kind of cleaned up the edges, and worked on the creativity of it a little bit, nothing major to the point that it changed the message of the book but just tried to look for opportunities during that year to make it a little bit better since I had the time. It took me about two years to create but three years to put out with that kind of year gap that I held onto it for.

[BREAK]

**[0:46:31.0] LW:** I put out four books so far, I'm planning to put out more. It's hard, man, to market a book. It's really hard and you never know like what's going to cause it to pop and my first book was a self-published book. To this day, I think it has about 170 reviews. Your book has 620-something reviews, which to anyone who's ever put a book out, published with a publisher or self-publish, it doesn't matter, to get that many reviews means that a lot more people have read your book and that have spread the messages in the book.

And then I know you and I had a conversation many months ago about your book popping and how that happened through I think social media. So, can you just break down the case study of a self-publish author who releases a book, you don't know what's going to happen but you were intentional about how you were going to market the book.

**[0:47:28.2] JT:** Yeah. I mean, first, I want to say I appreciate the reminder of that because I think it's really easy for me as a human to get stuck in the not enough narrative and so it's just really nice to hear that from you, so I appreciate you kind of –

**[0:47:41.5] LW:** You comparing your book to, I don't know, Will Smith's book that has 23,000 reviews or something.

**[0:47:45.7] JT:** Yeah. Well, I look at Atomic Habits and I'm like, "Damn, a hundred thousand? Like I'm way off." So, I appreciate that because I'm human and it is really easy for me to downplay that kind of stuff. So, I would first want to say, my competitive edge to start for me was my age and I say that because I have a different understanding or not understanding but connection and comfortability with social media.

That's my place of expressing my voice and I know that sometimes it maybe doesn't come as easy to other people but for me, that's felt like the strength that I can lean on that could maybe lend me some sort of visibility because I had no money to spend on anything. So, I figured I'll use my social media, you know? It will be great. So, the book comes out in June of 2021, does great during the launch week, which is expected, friends, and family who had been hollering, all that.

**[0:48:38.6] LW:** What is great? What are we talking about like a thousand copies sold or?

**[0:48:41.2] JT:** No, I think I did like only a hundred.

**[0:48:43.9] LW:** Okay.

**[0:48:44.4] JT:** Which to me –

**[0:48:45.3] LW:** It was great. Right, because you weren't like a big personality or you didn't have a huge platform at this time, right?

**[0:48:51.6] JT:** No, when I released my book I had 8,000 followers on Instagram and I didn't have a TikTok account. I felt like no one was really there. And before this, I was a travel photographer. So, my audience on Instagram for the last decade –

**[0:49:06.7] LW:** Were looking at photographs.

**[0:49:07.7] JT:** Photographs and not a book about self-discovery and so I was in this really weird phase. To be honest, right when I launched it where I was still – I was sharing both and so I really hadn't committed to one or the other yet and so it was just like to me, those 8,000 people weren't actually there for that kind of content quite yet. So, I say that meaning I didn't start with much.

So, I put the book out in June 2021, does great during the launch week, and then just falls flat like I'm selling like five or seven copies a month for like six months and I'm like, "Damn, I feel

like I'm done." Like I lost my chance, I kind of was like ready to give up. I didn't think I had it in me to become a known author with work that is respected and shared amongst other people.

**[0:49:54.7] LW:** Did you get crap about the title having profanity in it and stuff like that? Like do they question any of that and decide, "Maybe I should change something about it."

**[0:50:04.0] JT:** No, I actually had a different title, which I've never actually talked about. The title was, *Run Yourself Wild*. It was the very first title of the book and at the time, I was very much in more of my art scene creative and like fluid connection with that travel art and I feel like that's kind of where that title is inspired from and then I was writing one day and like just boom, "*You Deserve This Shit!*" just popped in my mind.

And I was like, "Hold on" I don't know where that came from, I don't know which world that word was just pulled in from but it just stuck and I remember like I wrote it down on a piece of paper. I think I knew it was so good that I was nervous to actually tell someone else and so my wife, girlfriend at the time, I told her eventually. It was like two months after I thought of the name. I was like, "Oh I had this other name for the book."

And I was like, "*You Deserve This Shit!*" and she was like, just had this big reaction and we were just like, "That's it like that's the name" and so I never had any pushback. I think people really were stoked on the name. The only thing that happened was I couldn't run Amazon ads because of the profanity and so that was part of the thing that caused me to think after six months of no sale and I can't run ads like I just thought it was game over.

I didn't understand that I could mix it getting out of it still and so I was just doing all Instagram at the time and just kind of posting photos. It wasn't really quite the place we're at now with the ecosystem with how heavy people go on reels. So, I was posting photos of the book, it wasn't converting and then kids were talking about TikTok. It was really on its rise and I was like, "Well, I just got to try it."

Like at this point, this isn't working. I got to do something different and so I go over to TikTok and I start posting but at the time I was still posting travel and self-improvement content. So, things aren't connecting, videos aren't doing great, I'm like, "This is pretty discouraging. I'm going to



stop, I'm going to go back to Instagram." So, I stopped doing TikTok and go back to Instagram, things aren't working again and I'm just like at this point, I'm like, "I don't even know what to do."

And so the first thing was I need to decide if I'm invested in travel or if I'm here to do self-improvement work and by all means, although I don't take or post photos anymore, this photo behind me is mine. Like travel, photography is one of my greatest passions. I'm a huge outdoor guy, I have been for my whole life and it's something I still do but I don't share it professionally and so I just had to decide what's the thing I actually want to do for business.

You know, so I had started making money doing photography and that took the fun out of it for me and that was a really clear sign that it wasn't meant for monetary purposes and so the first thing was deciding, "Okay, I must go all in on self-improvement." I'm going to stop posting travel and just post about personal development and self-improvement content.

**[0:52:53.0] LW:** What made you make that decision? Is there a feeling, did you have a conversation?

**[0:52:58.9] JT:** To go all in on self-improvement?

**[0:53:00.7] LW:** Yeah, and to abandon the travel stuff, which somebody will look at the travel and say, "That's your purpose, that's your dream. You're so good at it" blah-blah-blah-blah, you know? So, you have that going on in your head.

**[0:53:09.5] JT:** I think it's still part of my purpose but I don't think we need to make money in all parts of our purpose. For me, the payment is joy.

**[0:53:17.2] LW:** The paycheck for your spirit.

**[0:53:19.4] JT:** Paycheck for my spirit, paycheck for my heart, absolutely. So, it was just being real with myself, like really thinking about business and like where I want to go in the future and what would make a good brand. I was having a really hard time but for so long I was trying to intertwine the two somehow in some way. Like for a little bit, I thought I was into this like travel retreats that were really around self-discovery and it's turned out really fine.

Like a cool niche and it just wasn't connecting and so it was me being realistic like, "Yo dude, one or the other." It doesn't mean you need to quit the other thing, it's just this is the one you're going to go after for business purposes. It was just a reality check, it was like, "Hey, you need to make a decision" and once I did that I then went back to TikTok. I was like, "Okay, I'm going to try TikTok again but I'm going to do it in a way that only posting the self-improvement."

So, I am not confusing the algorithm, confusing my audience, viewers, all that kind of stuff, and I start posting. I was like, "Oh, why don't I do like book recommendations? Why am I not recommending my book to people as a book to read?" And so I started doing these book recommendations where I include my book and a couple of other of my favorite books that had a profound impact on my life.

And I remember it was December 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021 — I'm at my parent's house for Christmas and I woke up and I must like on TikTok and I saw like this video, book recommendation video getting some good traction. It was probably at like maybe like 150,000 views, which is a lot, a lot of people and I was like, "Whoa, this is crazy." I've never experienced virality before in my life, you know like dopamine is firing off.

I'm just like all over the place and I'm like, "Well, I wonder what this is doing to my book sales?" and so I go into my dashboard and a hundred books had sold over one night. That's the same amount of books that I sold like right when I released the book and I was like, "Whoa, okay." I started making all these connections of like what I could do now that I've recognized the power of the platform and the power of social media and the power of sharing the book.

And so I just leaned in hard to the book during that time. At first, I was like, "Oh, whatever. Like this is a flash in the pan, who am I to get more?" Like I'm just like an insecure kid, not very confident, why would I get more success through this? I just thought it was going to be like one and done. So, I keep posting about the book, and the engagements doing really good through January.

Obviously, a great time of the year for that stuff. January ends and I'm like, "Dang, we did a thousand copies in January." It was the most copies I've ever sold and then again, self-doubt

comes in, “Nothing else can come from it, this isn't going to continue, who am I to experience this kind of abundance?” All those kinds of things and I posted a video in February, the first week of February and it got three and a half million views, with my book in it.

**[0:56:07.7] LW:** Was that the seven things I don't do anymore video?

**[0:56:11.4] JT:** It was three books that will change what you think.

**[0:56:13.9] LW:** Well, you're kind of like recycling the same theme and including your book as one of the books that – like how many iterations of these three books can I do?

**[0:56:22.6] JT:** Yeah. So, I mean, my book was always a book that I recommended because truthfully, I'm recommending my book because I believe in it but it wasn't the same like video or the same books. I would –

**[0:56:31.7] LW:** Right.

**[0:56:32.1] JT:** Again, intention.

**[0:56:33.1] LW:** And how often were you posting?

**[0:56:35.2] JT:** Dude, at the time, I was doing like three videos a day on TikTok. It was quite absurd to be honest, just now thinking of where I'm in my content creation and especially after seeing it work, you know, I started to like go in harder and really lean in –

**[0:56:49.3] LW:** It's like a hit or miss thing because you'll do something else that has the same quality, another listicle, crickets, and then you do another one and this is like 10,000 views, and then another one, crickets, and so you have to really let go of the outcome.

**[0:57:03.1] JT:** Yeah, I mean, that's where it's addictive because you start to have the dopamine. You know, that's really what it is, that's like I've experienced a lot of that and there is definitely a lot of learning lessons. We can get in a whole conversation about that specifically

but I posted that video, three books that will change the way you think, I included *The Surrender Experiment*, which is like one of my favorite books.

So, if you are listening and you haven't read it yet that was like the start of my spiritual journey and there's another book, *The Mountain is You*, which is a book about self-sabotage and that video just went crazy and I was like, just started computing in my head like, "Okay, if this many views in December did a hundred copies in a night if we did this in January, we did a thousand, three and a half million views like what could that do?" And so, I go into my dashboard, did 1,800 copies in three days.

**[0:57:51.3] LW:** Holy shit.

**[0:57:52.4] JT:** And I was like, "Holy shit."

**[0:57:54.5] LW:** Bestseller, ranked first in the category of whatever self-development.

**[0:57:57.3] JT:** I was in the top 100 books in all of Amazon.

**[0:57:59.6] LW:** I love it.

**[0:58:00.7] JT:** It was crazy. It was like I didn't spend a dollar on paid ads, so organic only, started from zero followers on TikTok, no account, only 8,000 followers on Instagram, and so for me these numbers like just didn't make sense quite yet but it was just like, "Wow, I think this thing has legs" you know? And I always believe it did and I did from the second I wrote it but to see it actually start to work was like, "Okay, I wasn't just being delusional."

Like this is real, that's kind of what took the book and has just compounded since then and those numbers are really high and so for me, it was relearning that that wasn't the normal so that I didn't get let down when it was 500 books or 100 books in a month and still seeing a hundred book – that's about a hundred people in my house like there wouldn't be enough room, you know? It's a lot of people but that was the trajectory of the book gaining its momentum, getting its legs, and started to really connect with people.

[BREAK]

**[0:59:10.2] LW:** Some chapter president in Idaho reads the book and reaches out to you, what does he want?

**[0:59:17.4] JT:** So, this guy last April, I get this email and says, “Hey Jordan, read your book, would love for you to come speak to our chapter. I can put in the learning calendar together.” And I’m like, “That’s pretty cool.” Like my book, I didn’t know this guy, he just read it, connected with the message, found my email somehow, and it was interesting because I always knew I wanted to do speaking but I never actually gave it thought.

As a kid and still to this day, one of my dreams of speaking is to give a commencement speech and that’s something I’ve always just felt naturally drawn to. Every time I went to a graduation and saw the speaker, I just think, “I want to do that.” It just seems like a really cool place to influence people and impact people and a really good point and the turning point in their life. It’s a really good spot and I’ve always felt really connected to that spotlight.

So, I was like, “Oh, that’s cool.” Like I’ve always wanted to do speaking but I never actually thought of how to get there. So, it felt like the universe just put this thing on a platter and said, “Hey, if you want to do it, it’s right here. It’s right here” and I took a second and I was like, “Well, I don’t know what to do.” I don’t know anything about the business, I don’t have a keynote, I don’t have a speech, I don’t know how to write a speech.

And so I thought to myself, “Who do I know in the space at all who could help me?” and at the time, I’d sent a marketing box or I guess in what I put in the book to Ben Nemtin. So, I said in my book when I put it out, so we had some who’s connection to be a DM to where he knew about me of me and so I was like, “Okay, I’m going to ask him for help” because, for me, I’ve always been someone to just ask.

I don’t let the fear of rejection get in the way of asking someone for support or for help and that has opened so many doors in my life because I don’t know what would happen if I – I mean, if I didn’t ask I wouldn’t get it. So, just asking makes me feel like there’s more possibility for

something happening and so I just asked him. I sent him a voice note, I said, “Hey dude, I got this speaking inquiry. I really want to do it but I don’t know what to do.”

“I don’t know what to charge, I don’t know how to even go about the process of closing the deal. I don’t even know what to say in response like what kind of details do I need to give them” and like two weeks go by and Ben hasn’t responded and I’m like, “Shit, I’m probably just another dude in his DMs wanting something from him, like who am I?” He’s probably busy, I mean, like talk speaker on the circuit, how often is he hit in his DMs and how busy are his DMs?

And then one day, I get a ping and I got a message from Ben and I opened the message and it’s like a seven-minute-long voice note and he’s like in the airport. It’s like loud, he’s like, “I don’t know if you can hear me, dude” but like – and he’s shouting on his phone and he basically holds my hand from A to Z on everything I need to do, from what to charge and how to close a deal to do this and it was one of those moments where again I realize like this feels very divine and I feel very unconditionally supported by people that I personally know.

And that made me feel like it was one of those meant to be like this opportunity was placed in my hands for a specific reason, and just having that connection to the opportunity made it feel like this was like my next venture, the next part of my creative career, and so I closed the deal, walk in the speech, and then Ben was like, “Hey, like you know if you really want to do this, you need to go to boot camp with ImpactEleven.”

And again, thinking back to like the process with the book and the baseball stuff, be the professional now and so that’s when I started to take speaking really seriously because I knew the level that I want to take it and that’s how it kind of it turned into what it is becoming right now.

**[1:03:07.7] LW:** And talk a little bit about your regiment now with speaking. You’ve written the speech, you practice it on a daily basis whether you feel like it or not, is that the case?

**[1:03:17.3] JT:** Yeah, it’s a little different right now because I’m developing a new one but when I wrote the first speech like regardless if I’m writing a speech or not, I write in some capacity five days a week for different projects of my own like whether it’s a newsletter or sometimes if I don’t have a specific thing I am trying to achieve, I’ll just do a creative writing session and just have

like a channeled stream of conscious around some topic just to kind of keep the muscle working.

It's like going to the gym, I work out every day. Well, I should probably work out my writing skills as well. So, when I wrote the first keynote, I was just writing every single day, and then Josh Linkner with ImpactEleven, the thing that I really took away from his preparation was a keynote isn't ready until it's performed 21 times before the event and so with me, in my work ethic and how I like to do my work and prepare for things and the intention I like to put into it, I did that.

I did 21 times every single day, I would record it like just a little part of it and put it on my Instagram story. I kind of like to get an accountability partner, it's like, "Oh, we'll post every time I do it today. Okay, I did it for today" and that really locked me into a new level of preparation with something I have never done before and to tell you the truth, no one knew that this was my first event that I was going to be speaking at.

The people that reached out, they didn't know that I wasn't a speaker, and so my goal was to show up on that day and gave a speech in a way that people would think I've been doing it for years, and so that took a specific level of preparation to give me the confidence to perform in a way that didn't make me feel like it was my first speech.

**[1:04:54.6] LW:** Would you mind sharing what you charge them just ballpark?

**[1:04:58.2] JT:** Fee was 7,500, travel is 15, so that came out to like 9k, and for a guy with like there is so much imposter syndrome that can come with that. A guy who has never given a speech before is charging close to 10 grand, however, I do have a presence. I do have a successful book, so there is something of value that I have that made me feel worthy of that amount and that's what Ben had recommended based on what he thought of my presence and what I do in the world.

But there is a level of imposter syndrome but also motivation that came from that was from the level of preparation I was going to go. It wasn't you know, a free gig where I'm like, "I'll show up and like just say whatever." I was like, "I have an obligation to uphold. They are paying me this

amount of money because they believe that I will come and deliver on that value” and that really helped me lock into that kind of preparation.

**[1:05:50.4] LW:** Yeah, listen to your story man, it’s so fascinating because again, if somebody were just to enter into your life today, they would say, “Oh, you know” they would think something was special about you and you know, we’re all special in a way but you can also see the breadcrumbs of the story going back. If you hadn’t gone all in on TikTok, that video wouldn’t have gone viral.

Maybe this guy who purchased your book got it in that wave of you know, 1,800 people who bought the book because they saw that viral TikTok video and if you hadn’t tried to get Instagram going, you maybe not have gone on TikTok, and if you hadn’t written a book in the first place, you wouldn’t have been on there trying to do that and if you hadn’t started writing those articles, you know, and reached out to your brother and started journaling.

And you just keep going back and back and back, I would make the argument that whatever we, the audience, are curious about today is going to become a pivotal step, if you lean into that it’s going to become a pivotal step in whatever your journey is going to ultimately be. So, what are you speaking about these days?

**[1:06:58.3] JT:** Choosing change and creating possibilities is the premise of my talk. So, I’m launching a new brand, which is technically my first real brand in January. Up until now, I’ve just bootstrapped everything. Like this book right here, my wife, at the time girlfriend, had the cover idea as we were falling asleep because I had a different book cover. It was blue and yellow. It was like so different and she was just like, “I don’t think that’s the right cover, I see this.” And she saw this and I woke up and I made it.

**[1:07:32.7] LW:** You designed it yourself.

**[1:07:34.7] JT:** Yeah, I just went to Photoshop, and like I do have a creative background. I have done a lot of photography and graphic kind of stuff, so I had to be able to do that, and like my website, I’ve always made my own websites. So, I used to have my – there was a time in my life



for like six months where I had a web design side hustle. I was just very entrepreneurial, that was just like my spirit from a very young age.

And so I was always just trying to find a way to make my own work. Up until now, it's all been bootstrapped and just like kind of making stuff without a clear direction. So, I'm finally, for the first time, developing a brand around all of this work with a specific vision, a specific mission, and a specific goal, and that all comes out in January, which is that's why I'm developing the new keynote because now the new keynote is around this like clarity I have with the brand or the message and the voice and all that kind of stuff. So right now, I will be speaking on choosing change and creating possibilities.

**[1:08:28.4] LW:** The thing that stands out for me also is something you mentioned earlier, things jump out at you and you recognize, "Oh, this is what I'm supposed to be doing or this is what I'm supposed to be developing" and that's been my experience as well. I write every day and I meditate into all those things and you know when the idea is ripe because a lot of times it will get repeated.

You can't forget it even if you tried to forget it, even if you try to convince yourself, "This is going to be too much work, too much hassle" too much whatever and it's still there. It's right in your ear and the more you've listened to that and the more you've taken action on it, the louder the volume gets on those ideas that are really aligned and it gets to the point where you just can't ignore them. Has that been your experience as well?

**[1:09:14.5] JT:** Yeah, and I think the awareness that I've built over time is being able to pick up on those whispers that eventually turn into a shout, something that you can't turn away from, kind of like what you're saying and that's why I felt writing. I just felt drawn to it from there was no – it was unexplainable. It just felt like it was what I was supposed to do and really it comes down one, your ability to hear, hear those callings, and then two, your willingness to act on them.

Marianne Williamson has a quote that the universe will give you the awareness but you must take action on the awareness. So, you can hear something and you can feel something but if you don't do something about it, nothing is going to come from it.

**[1:10:00.7] LW:** Love that. What do you say to people who you know, they hear this whole conversation, they get inspired, they may be working at a job where they don't feel particularly fulfilled, and they just say, "You know, I have these things that I'm curious about, I just don't have time. I just don't have the time" or "I don't have the following." What do you say to those people?

**[1:10:23.2] JT:** Simplify. You know, most people get change wrong and most people think that change is all or nothing. They think that in order to make a difference or do something or make progress, they have to do something crazy or they have to make some massive shift. If that's your way of thinking, then you will feel paralyzed and you're not going to want to change. You're not going to want to do something different or you're not going to want to go after that thing.

But if you believe that there's power in small shifts and doing small actions and the fact that they compound over time, similar to the dots that you connected back, the breadcrumbs of my story if you believe that there is power in those small shifts, change, and going after something is much more approachable. You will have the inspiration to really create space for your own magic to happen and I think that's where people need to start is realizing that things can be much more simple than you may think they need to be.

Because at the end of the day, making changes or making shifts, you want them to be sustainable. You are not trying to choose change or go after something one time. The goal is to make it a way of life and a lifestyle and so what I would say is start smaller than you think. Make a small shift and see where that compounds over time. For me, I picked up a journal and now, I'm following the stream of speaking. I wouldn't be here had I not decided to just to journal.

If you compare those two things, they're wildly far apart and they're wildly different but if you listen back to this episode and pick up the breadcrumbs, it will lead you right to where I am right now.

**[1:11:59.3] LW:** Love that man, that's a great place to end it. I want to thank you so much for taking the time to come on to this podcast and share so vulnerably and are you going to be in Phoenix?

**[1:12:10.6] JT:** Yeah, I'll be there, masterclass and the dollar.

**[1:12:15.8] LW:** Yeah, and you made a reference earlier to this organization called, ImpactEleven. You and I are both a part of that community and I think it deserves us kind of giving a little shout-out to them.

**[1:12:27.2] JT:** For sure.

**[1:12:27.5] LW:** That's the community that will give you the playbook on how to become a viable profitable keynote speaker. Obviously, it's not going to happen overnight and if you go to their website which is [impacteleven.com](http://impacteleven.com), and look at the boot camp, that's where I recommend starting, I'm sure you're the same, you recommend starting there. Don't be too bewildered by the sticker price, it's worth every single dime that they charge if you're serious about building a keynote speaking platform.

So, tell them that Jordan and Light recommended you when you reach out so we could get a little bit of you know, credit in the community but I sing their praises all the time, and I'm glad that I keep meeting people like you who I'm happy to have on the podcast. What were you going to say bud?

**[1:13:14.4] JT:** Oh, I just want to quickly add because you had mentioned it will take a little bit work. I will say, I went to my first boot camp in June of 2022. So, a little over a year ago and then joined the community, and this, just this February, the amount of progress I have made coming into speaking as someone who has zero experience and no background and no messages, no positioning, I actually have the chills right now, it's out of this world.

Like, I would not be where I am today without the experiences that I've had through the community, with the people that I've met but honestly, the unconditional support and generosity that I felt through that community has lifted me up way higher than I would have been if I had gone alone, and so I tell people this all the time, I probably shouldn't say this but I would pay more money for it. Like, it's that valuable. I probably should inspire them but you know what I mean. It's like, it's in the valuable –

[1:14:09.7] **LW:** I'm the same, I've spent more money on this community than I've ever spent on any community in my life and it's worth every penny, so.

[1:14:16.1] **JT:** Yeah. It's honestly made me go further and faster with the people I've been doing it to. So, that's what I just wanted – my personal shoutout for them is it's a great place, whether you have zero experience or a ton of experience, it can take you far, and then to you, I just – thanks for reaching out and wanted to make this happen. It took a couple of months here and there to get things sorted but I feel like it was meant to be to do it now and so, I appreciate you opening up the conversation for me and just giving me a place to talk.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[1:14:44.0] **LW:** Thank you for tuning into my interview with author and keynote speaker, Jordan Tarver. You can follow Jordan on the socials, @jordantarver and you can grab a copy of this book, "*You Deserve This Shit!*" everywhere books are sold, and of course, I'll put links in the show notes to everything that Jordan and I discussed which you can find at [lightwatkins.com/podcast](http://lightwatkins.com/podcast).

And if you enjoy the conversation and you found it inspiring and you're thinking to yourself about other people that you feel I should interview, the way you can make those interviews happen is just by leaving a rating or a review because that's the way that gatekeepers of potential podcast guests will vet the show to determine if the podcast is worth their time.

They'll go to the podcast page, mainly on Apple Podcast, and they will look at how many ratings does this podcast have, how many reviews does it have, are people engaged, is there an engaged audience, and so if you look at your device right now and you just click on the name of the show, and you scroll down past those first six or seven episodes, you'll see a space with five blank stars, just click the star all the way on the right if you enjoyed the show and you've left us a five-star rating, and so you cast your vote for those gatekeepers to let them know that hey, yes, this is an engaged audience.

And if you want to go the extra mile, leave a review. Write one line about what you find inspiring in these conversations and I appreciate you for that. Also, don't forget, you can watch these interviews on my YouTube channel if you want to put a face to a story. Just search Light Watkins Podcast on YouTube, you'll see the entire playlist. Make sure to subscribe there as well and if you didn't already know, I post the raw unedited version of every podcast in my Happiness Insiders' online community.

So, if you love hearing all the mistakes and the false starts, and the chitchat throughout the conversation, you can listen to that by joining [thehappinessinsiders.com](http://thehappinessinsiders.com) and not only are you going to have access to the unedited versions of the podcast, but you'll also get access to a bunch of challenges and masterclasses that will help you become the best version of you, okay?

I look forward to hopefully seeing you back here next week with another story about someone just like me, just like you, taking a leap of faith in the direction of their purpose, and until then, keep trusting your intuition, keep following your heart and if no one's told you recently that they believe in you, I believe in you. Thank you and have a great day.

[END]