

## Transcript for Jon Acuff | The Gift of Done (Episode 668)

Full show notes found here: <https://theartofcharm.com/668/>

JORDAN: Jon, welcome back, man. I appreciate you coming back. At first I thought, "Maybe his books are so successful that he's just stopped writing and he lives on a beach somewhere."

JON: Yeah, I'm one of those super rich authors you hear about all the time. Those super rich, nonfiction authors.

JORDAN: All the money is in publishing. That's what they say now, right?

JON: If the size of the LEGO department at Barnes & Noble doesn't scare you, you're not paying attention. Harry Potter puzzles are swallowing bookshelves.

JORDAN: Yeah, that's a good point. I often do wonder, "What are bookstores going to do in the future?" and you hear people go, "Oh, I'm always going to go to the bookstore." And whenever I hear people say that, I'm reminded of my dad, who in 1995 maybe, when I showed him Yahoo, which was black and white and text based and basically in beta, I said, "You can search for things on the Internet and colleges put all this information up there, and they're putting the library books -- the searchability on here, you can find them," and he goes, "No one is going to use that. It's hard and there are libraries everywhere." And I told him, "You've got to invest in this company," and he's like, "That's ridiculous. No one is ever going to use this."

JON: But even libraries use robot librarians now that retrieve them for you like Amazon's shipping warehouses. So, I went to a college, they don't have as many librarians.

JORDAN: That makes sense to me. I remember arguing with -- and getting in trouble and getting sent to the principal's office -- because I told the 6th grade librarian -- and this was '93, so it wasn't so obvious like it is now, although I thought it was obvious. I was the last person to learn how to use the card catalogue, and I said, "I don't need to do this to find books in

this library, because we have this computer system in here," and she goes, "Most libraries won't have that and by the time you get to college, you're going to have to look up books all the time." And I said, "This is all going to be online on those terminals and we're probably going to have our own terminals that we use for ourselves." And she was like, "That's never going to happen. These things are expensive." And we got in this huge thing and I thought, "This is the dumbest thing in the world that I'm learning, the Dewey decimal system. What on Earth are we doing here?"

JON: I wish I had a sign I could put in my front yard that said, "I know about Google," so they wouldn't deliver a Yellow Pages. It goes right from my driveway into the recycling bin and it's a short trip.

JORDAN: It's not even a doorstep anymore. It's just, "Why did this get made?"

JON: No, kids don't even sit on that, so even that. They're like, "Oh, even butts. We're losing the butts' business."

JORDAN: So I think we've sold the idea of books and printed information really well, so tell us about your new gig here, because [Do Over](#) is what we heard about before. You had that book about starting. [Now you've got a book about finishing](#), dare I say a little predictable, but here's the problem. You've got a book about starting, obviously something did or did not happen, now that you have a book about finishing. So, what's going on here?

JON: I had so many people come up to me and go, "Hey no offense, I like your book, but I've never had a problem starting. I start a million things. Starting is easy. How do I actually finish?" and two years ago I didn't have answer. So, that's what kind of kicked off this idea was, "All right, well why did 92 percent of New Year's resolutions fail? Why do people get P90X and do four days? Why do diets fail the third week of January?" And so, that's where this book came from. I thought the start was the most important thing, and it is important, it's just not as critical

as the finish. Nobody gets a medal in the middle of a race, or they shouldn't. If culture is doing its job, you shouldn't reward middle. You should reward finish.

JORDAN: That's true but our psychology doesn't want to do that a lot. I think every person listening to this right now, because they're alive, by virtue of the fact that they're able to download something and put it into their earbuds, has unfinished stuff that they kind of have a little bit of shame over. High achievers have this even moreso, I've noticed. And maybe that's just anecdotal data, because that's who I'm surrounded by, these overachiever law school nerds and entrepreneurs. But, it seems like people who do really well in life, generally, also have a lot of unfinished stuff and you hear about it all the time. It's an element of shame. Everybody's got that skeleton. Everybody's got P90X, or as I like to call it, P4X, because that's about how long I lasted.

JON: Exactly. Until you get yoga. And then, in the 90s, everybody had Bowflex, and they were like, "I'm going to get ripped with this thing. It's got limbs and bows and now you use it to dry laundry in your garage." I think part of it is, that culturally speaking, we celebrate the beginning and we say things like, "Well begun is half done," which sounds good on Instagram and an entrepreneur is like, "Hey, and buy my webinar." And then you go, "What does that mean?"

If a doctor said to you, "As soon as I've made your first incision, I'm half done with your surgery," you'd be like, "Well, that's not how anything goes. Where did you get your degree?" And the other thing is, we go, "The hardest part of any journey is the first step." You're kidding me. We have launch parties, Jordan. There's no middle party. I have never been to a party where the guy was like, "Hey it's the suckiest part of the project, we're going to have a middle party." We celebrate the beginning, we ignore the ending, and in the middle, we quit.

JORDAN: Yeah, there's launch parties, there's no, "I'm done with my book tour party."

JON: The first step is a dream, dude. Derek Sivers talks about this, where the problem is if you tell somebody your goal the wrong way, you actually don't do the goal. So what happens is I go, "Jordan, I'm going to run a marathon," and you give me pre-congratulations. You go, "Dude, you're so brave. I couldn't do that. You're so disciplined," and I get dopamine, and I don't actually run because I got enough dopamine. The whole thing drives me nuts.

JORDAN: It's true. Because we're really getting the validation we were looking for by getting that pre-validation.

JON: People get insulted but I very rarely will do a new podcast. And the reason I won't do one, is I want to know the stats, you probably do -- the majority of podcasters quit in X amount of months, because it's hard.

JORDAN: Jason, what are the stats?

JASON: You have to hit 13 episodes, if you're ever going to see 14, but everybody drops before 13.

JON: The idea of doing a podcast is so easy. The reality of doing a podcast is not as easy.

JORDAN: I'll tell you right now, I have the same policy. People go, "I would love to include you in my launch," and I'm thinking, "I would love to give that opportunity to anyone else." I used to do that. I used to go, "Great. Wow, I'm really flattered," and it still is flattering that somebody thinks of you first, but the problem is, out of 10 launches, 9 of them of would go, "Oh, I never actually made it to launch," or, "I launched with all the episodes that I did and then I decided that I was going to write an ebook or do a webinar," or, "Oh, I'm still working on it." And I'm like, "I recorded that with you a year ago. What are you working on?" and the answer is nothing. It's just, they thought it would be really fun to talk to entrepreneurs and then nothing happened.

One question. As soon as I saw this book, I thought about this, and I've got to ask, did you play to write a book about finishing at the time? Or did you actually end up writing the book about finishing as a result of all this stuff about starting and then not actually finishing, yourself?

JON: It was through the experience of, I felt like I had launched a lot of books that never got out of the harbor, and I wanted to say to people, "Hey, wait a second. This is fine, this is important, don't get me wrong. But without this piece, you just end up driving in circles and never actually accomplishing the thing." It was frustrating. And as an author, the two things people say to you when you say you write books are, they go, "What's your biggest book that I would have heard of?" which is so sad because they've never heard of it. It's like you never say to a lawyer, "Name your most successful case. I'll tell you if I agree," it's so humbling. But then they say, "I want to write a book," because 81 percent of people want to write a book according to the New York Times, and less than one percent do.

JORDAN: Wow, 81 percent people? I didn't want to write one before. Who are these people?

JON: We miss a quarter billion books every year, from people who say, "I want to do it." And you're right, the problem is scientifically speaking, you remember incomplete goals more than complete. So the things, the open loops, as David Allen would say, that you have in your head, weigh heavier than the stuff you got done. The podcast where you felt like, "I could have gone better on that interview," you think about that more than the ones where you're like, "I crushed that. Me and James Altucher had a great conversation. It was so fun." So, it does cost you, dude. It weighs.

JORDAN: I think I could get 99 five star reviews and then someone sends a one star and I'm like, "I'm going to stay up until 3 am writing a reply to this person, if I can find them online, which I will try to do for the next 45 minutes." And then you realize, "Hey, you

know what? Some people just don't like pizza and I don't want to be around those people," right?

JON: Yeah, exactly. Like my wife can't stand the Red Hot Chili Peppers. There's a lot of people that like the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

JORDAN: Sorry about your relationship, bro.

JON: We're working on it. Counseling is pretty expensive. That's why I still write books, these lucrative books.

JORDAN: In said book, [\*Finish: Give Yourself the Gift of Done\*](#), you mentioned we have the same percentage of being accepted into Juilliard for playing the bassoon as we do of finishing our goals, eight percent. Of course that's eight percent of people who apply, but in theory if you have a goal, you're kind of applying to finishing. Eight percent, that's really low. That's a 92 percent failure rate.

JON: Yeah, and the crazy thing, Jordan, is we don't change it. Every year on December, we get wooed back into the new year, new you kind of movement, and we're like, "I'm going to do it this year. It's going to be different," and if you say to somebody, "How will this year's diet be different?" they'll go, "Oh, it'll have more beets." They might eat something different but none of their patterns have changed, none of their habits, none of their approaches. I asked a lady at the grocery store. I said, "When do people quit their goals?" and she said, "Third week of January." I said, "How do you know?" she said, "That's when we stop selling kale." And part of what happens is, you blew it once and then you give up. That's where perfectionism comes in.

JORDAN: All right, let's talk about perfectionism, because this is the Bowser to your Mario in this book here. Perfectionism sounds like something that, okay we get down on ourselves. When you're in a job interview you say, "Yeah, my biggest weakness? I'm too detail oriented. I'm a perfectionist," right?

JON: I work too hard. That's why I'm jobless, but I give too much.

JORDAN: Tell me, though. What is it about perfectionism that's causing us not to finish things? It makes sense when you say it out loud, but in the beginning, shouldn't me having an awesome plan actually be a good thing for accomplishing my goals, getting into Juilliard and whatnot?

JON: I think an awesome plan is different from perfectionism. Perfectionism doesn't exist. So, as a goal --

JORDAN: Well, perfect doesn't exist, right? Perfectionism totally exists.

JON: Yeah, perfectionism exists, perfect doesn't Amazon has never sold a perfect book. They've sold millions <http://amzn.to/2iMi2cI> of imperfect books people are brave enough to finish. I made mistakes in every book I've ever written. In one book I said that Terrell Owens, the football player, had caught 1,000 touchdowns. He's caught 100. I was off by a factor of 10 and every jock on the planet was like, "Hey, idiot."

And then, I made a mistake in *Do Over*. I called the Sensei of The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Stick instead of Splinter, because Stick is the mentor of Daredevil, Splinter is the Ninja Turtle. Every nerd was like, "You loser, I can't believe," -- so, you're always going to have a mistake, but the problem is, Jordan, if you say, "My goal is perfect," you'll always get close to it but never close enough. And even worse, if you don't hit it, you'll quit. People that struggle with perfectionism grade on a pass/fail schedule.

If you want to lose 10 pounds and you only lose 8, you didn't almost get there, you failed by two and you quit. That's where perfectionism is so dangerous.

JORDAN: So, you end up with examples like -- the weight loss thing is great. It's binary, so you say, "Well, since I didn't lose all 10

pounds, I fail." But, isn't the result then, "Fine, you lost 8 pounds," where's the problem?

JON: I always say -- here's another example, perfectionists have the messiest cars and offices. And you go, "No way, they're neat freaks, they're clean." If they can't clean it at a toothbrush level, they quit the whole project. So there will be half coffee cups, there will be a mess every where. So, that's where it gets people. And that's where if it's not perfect, you end up writing a first chapter, not liking it -- you've done this, Jordan, where you have an idea in your head and before you even write it down, you judge it as dumb and you don't even commit it to paper.

JORDAN: Is that not normal?

JON: Or healthy? Or good? Of course not. And so, that's where perfectionism just prevents your stuff from seeing the light of day and from getting better. If you had said, "I'm not going to do a podcast unless it's perfect," we wouldn't be on this episode. I guarantee this year's is better than the first one. I don't even want you to peak the first time, I want you to grow into it. But, if perfectionism had been loud enough, you would have done one episode, realized it wasn't perfect, and given up. Perfectionism doesn't have room for growth.

JORDAN: That's funny you should mention that. I know so many people who won't launch their show because it's not perfect, which is one of the reasons why you and I don't do brand new podcast interviews and things like that, with shows that haven't started yet, one reason. But, I didn't fall victim to that and I'll tell you the reason was not because we weren't perfectionists, it was because we decided that this was a hobby initially and it didn't matter at all, because all we were doing was drinking and talking and there's no real way to make that perfect.

It took us maybe half a decade before we were like, "Hey, you know what? This is something we should focus on because it's working really well. And we should probably turn it into a product where we release it on the same day every week and

maybe actually do one every week." People always go, "Where are the early episodes of the show?" and I'm thinking, "Don't waste your time. Go to a movie instead."

JON: What episode number is this?

JORDAN: This is going to be somewhere in the what's -- we don't know exactly.

JASON: In about the 660s.

JON: That's crazy. You've iterated every time. You guys sent me an email this time. The first time I was on, you didn't have a mic recommendation. This time, guess what? You were like, "Hey, it would be better for the listener, who we're trying to serve, if you had a better microphone." Guess what? I bought the microphone and now every podcast I do, I use the microphone. And so, you don't get to continually improve if you're trying to aim for perfect.

JORDAN: Right, because you start trying to get the perfect on the first try, which since you're is impossible, prohibits us from maybe not trying at all, but at least not going after the first iteration because why? We're so ashamed that our first try wasn't perfect, we just say, "Screw it?"

JON: People don't like to do things that fail. It's voluntary failure too, let's be clear. A lot of these goals are voluntary. You started this podcast. A boss didn't say to you, "Jordan, you've got to do this podcast." And so, if you're doing a voluntary goal, people don't want to willingly increase their run ins with failure. Very few of us are like, "I love it. I eat it. My haters are my motivators." It's not enjoyable and so we try it, we already feel shame about it, we bring in the shame of, "I wanted to write a book five years ago, I didn't. I wanted to lose weight ten years ago, I didn't." We already feel bad and if our first experience is bad, our chances of stopping are exponential.

JORDAN: So this isn't about productivity, it's not about time management, it's about ditching perfectionism. You had some funny examples in there of trying to get over perfectionism like the, "Yummy cracker of perfection." What was that all about? That was weird.

JON: Yeah, it was another really successful productivity book that said, "Imagine your perfect dream or goal as a movie. Now, shrink it down to a size of a cracker and imagine yourself eating it. Now that perfect movie is part of you." But you and I, one of the things we have in common is our enjoyment of making fun of bad advice, of where people go, "You are the solution you've always been looking for." What does that mean? No, I'm not. In most cases I'm the problem I've always been avoiding. To quote a great American poet, Creed, "I've created my own prison." So the idea that I'm my own solution -- I think you and I have fun swimming through the Instagram experts that haven't done anything. If I were you, it would make me laugh when I see people selling courses on how to do a podcast that don't have a successful podcast.

JORDAN: Those are pretty much the only people that sell those types of classes so far.

JON: What you're doing is you're monopolizing people's dreams. You're taking somebody who's vulnerable and wants to do a podcast and adding a buck onto that dream. So, stuff like that drives me nuts but, the problem is the goal space is full of stuff that says, "Have a huge crazy goal that terrifies you. It has to be so big it makes you cry in the fetal position."

JORDAN: Yeah, the big, hairy audacious goal. And I'm like, "Actually, I just have these little ones that I keep hitting."

JON: You didn't sit down with AJ and go, "Okay, I want to do 600 episodes, I want it to be one of the top podcasts, I want publishers to chase me down," and you have new goals every year, every month, but what we found is people shoot for the

moon, that go too big, almost fail from the get-go. I'll have people say, "I'm going to run," and I'll say, "Okay, what are you going to do?" and they'll say, "I'm going to do a marathon." And I'll go, "Well have you done a half marathon or a 5k or even just a 'k.' Have you ever run a 'k'?" and they're like, "No, I've got to do the Iron Man. I saw a bike commercial, I'm getting carbon fiber and wearing skinny clothes," and they they quit a week in, two weeks in, because it's so overwhelming.

JORDAN: Yeah, this is interesting because I see some of this in my life in some areas and not in others. Perfectionism doesn't necessarily have to infect every area of your life. Do you find that it infects certain areas of your life more? Because there are plenty of people who are doing the perfectionism thing with their podcast but they have no problem being an awesome athlete and running in triathlons or running a business. What's going on there?

JON: I would say, for me, my parenting -- I don't try to be perfect because I know it's just freaking impossible. I'm much more the type of guy that's like -- I'll tell my kids, "These are the 10 things you're going to talk to a therapist about some day, so let me save you a lot of sessions. Here are 10 specific things I just blew and I'm sorry but that happened."

So, I don't try to be a perfect parent, I recognize that I'm constantly growing as a husband, so the idea that I'll be a perfect husband, that ship has sailed as well. But then other things like writing or public speaking, I might fall into that. But, part of that is what you're motivated by, what kind of rules you bring to it, there's a lot of people that have these kind of secret rules, some would say limiting beliefs as another phrase, that they bring to a certain topic. Like money, you and I both know a bunch of entrepreneurs that struggle with a fear of success and they get ashamed when they get successful.

And you go, "The whole goal is success!" and 20 years ago a mom said to them, "People who are rich must have cheated to get there," and so now in their head, they have this thing that

only cheaters win, and they self-sabotage, right when they're starting to go well. It drives me nuts.

JORDAN: Okay, let's talk about secret rules. I found this in the book to be quite fascinating. There's a friend of mine Ramit Sethi, who's been on the show before, he calls them invisible scripts as well. So, secret rules, invisible scripts -- I don't think that's his term but -- these are great because limiting beliefs, it's got too much woo attached to it now, and it's kind of like, "You can because you believe in yourself."

JON: If you think it, the universe will make it possible. And I always think, "Tell that to a cancer victim." They weren't like, "I wish I had colon cancer," and then the universe was like, "You have wished it and here you will receive it." Ugh.

JORDAN: Oh, man, I wish I could teleport you into a conversation I had with this guy who was in this book *The Secret*. And when I was like, "What about kids who get cancer?" He was talking about how people who get bad things happening to them have done something somewhere and I'm like, "Okay, so 8 year old with leukemia, go." And he was like, "I'm hungry, see you later."

JON: Exactly. Or like, car crash. It's punishing me. So, the book -- the metaphor I use is, the cuckoo bird doesn't build its own nest when it's going to have a baby, it hides its egg in another bird's nest and then the first thing its egg does is hatch first and kill all the other eggs. So then the mother bird dies feeding this gigantic species.

If your listeners go onto Google and say, "Cuckoo parasitic bird," the Google images are crazy. I say how does the mom not recognize the lie in the nest? And it's the same way that you and I, if we have a secret rule, don't recognize that there's a lie in our head. A friend the other day -- let's talk about the money one -- he said, "Jon that CEO makes \$20 million a year, how do you think he sleeps at night?" and I wanted to say, "Probably on Hungarian down pillows and pretty well. Probably after eating some peeled grapes," but in his mind, 5 million was okay, 10

million, now you're greedy. He had this weird, never spoken, never verbalized, system.

So, a lot of times, goal books treat you like a robot. They go, "Jordan if you do these four things in this order, you will have more productivity," and they forget that Jordan grew up with a dad that was working on stuff and Jordan grew up with a mom that wasn't perfect and we had a teacher."

You had a teacher. Some people, that teacher -- you, fortunately, had the strong enough will power and personal character to say, "You're wrong about the Internet and I'm going to show you." Some people, dude, listened to that teacher and made career choices based off of, "I don't want to get involved with the Internet. It's not going to be around forever. Better find a safe, stable thing," and were impacted by that teacher, and so that's what's really fascinating.

JORDAN:

The secret rules that govern us can either be good or bad, then. There were a lot of secret rules where teachers told me, "Oh, you're not good at this. You're not good at that," and for a while my parents were being told that I had some sort of learning disability, and they were like, "I'm pretty sure he's bored because you're a terrible teacher," and then of course the administration was like, "Parents always think their child is perfect," and my mom was like, "I'm a special ed teacher. He's not a special ed kid. He's doing these different things in your class like he wants to write the book in Spanish, not memorize the Spanish numbers. Let him just go do it."

And since I was not well behaved, they didn't go, "Maybe he's gifted," they were like, "Nope, he's just a dick. I'm sorry to tell you." But there was one thing. When we were leaving middle school, it was 8th grade -- that's when they separated middle school -- there was a teacher that was the french teacher, I was a terrible student in his class, but he was also the football coach. And a lot of the teachers were glad to see me go.

And Mr. Wilson was probably glad to see me go too, but when we left, a lot of teachers were like, "Good luck. See you later, blah, blah, blah." He goes, "Take care of yourself, man," and he had this look and this head tilt where I went, "Oh, wow, he's really worried about me?" He has stayed up at night thinking, "That kid is going to end up in jail," or, "I'm going to hire that kid later on to pull weeds out of my garden or something like that," and I'm going to be like, "Damn." And I remember that to this day because he was worried for a reason.

He wasn't a dumb guy, he wasn't some old stodgy French teacher with bi-focals telling me to memorize a verb table, he was cool and smart and he had a great way of teaching and explaining things, and he just saw a kid who didn't give a \*\*\*\* and it scared him because he knew it was wasted potential. Maybe I'm just wishful thinking here. And that secret rule was, "Hey man, you've got to show people what you can do because you're not going to get discovered over here, man. You've got to work your ass off."

JON:

And what's really interesting to me about that is, I think you know this but I think there's times you maybe forget. The crazy thing about a podcast or giving a speech is people come up and they'll say, "This thing you said changed my life," and then they'll say something you don't remember saying. They'll say, "Hey Jordan, I know you don't know me but that episode was for me. I'm in Oklahoma and it hit me right at home and I know you didn't think about it," but dude that's what's so powerful about -- I told somebody today, "I would pay to do the job I get to do." That's how much I enjoy it. I love to speak, I love to write.

The podcast is successful but there's great joy there and part of that joy is you know you're reprogramming some things that just aren't true. So you're saying to people, "Hey, I know you think you're not talented, have you tried this? Talent isn't one shape. It's a bunch of sizes. The path isn't one way." And when you have Brian Koppelman on, he's sharing ideas that people haven't thought of before. So, that's what's fun about our job but

that's also the power and destructiveness of having a secret rule that holds you back at the very last second.

JORDAN: So, how do we find out what the secret rules are and then kind of, maybe take the bad ones and do something else with them? Is there a practical here that we can execute?

JON: Yeah, let's do three practicals. One, you look for a pattern. People say that all the time. If you've been in five bad dating relationships, the one thing in common is you. So, I would say okay your three last mistakes or failures, what happened? Is there a pattern? Is it that right at the last second, you blew up the whole thing, or you over shared and it made the conversation really awkward and you left the dinner party early because you felt like you had been too personal, or you rushed three of your last dating relationships with guys or women that weren't ready for it? So, one, I'd look for a pattern. The second thing I would do is I would talk to a real friend, a friend that will say, "Hey yeah, I've noticed this." Sometimes you're so close to it, Jordan, that you can't recognize it. It's like when you're in a bad dating relationship and you break up and a month later you go, "She was terrible," and your friends are like, "We tried to tell you." Ask a friend.

I heard this idea on this podcast that I like to listen to. Do you think there's some secret rules I live by that I might not see? Ask a friend and then listen. Whatever they say, your job isn't to say, "You're wrong!" You're going to get defensive which is just going to shut them down.

The third thing I'd say is, when you find one, ask the question, "What does that mean?" So if I said to you, "Jordan, success is bad," and you said, "Well, that does that mean?" I would say, "Then failure must be good." Take the reverse. So, failure is good. Or, "I don't deserve a good relationship?" So, what does that mean? "I have to date jerks." That doesn't seem like very good advice. I wouldn't tell a friend that. Why do I believe that? So those are three very practical, very easy things you can do.

JORDAN: I like that. So, essentially we're looking for patterns, we try to listen for the secret rules that we have. Maybe write them down? Do you ever do that?

JON: Your head is messy, paper is clean. So, from your head, take down and go, "Okay, here's what I think. What does this really mean?" And it's big and scary in your head, it's simple and clean on paper.

JORDAN: Right, so you can listen for a rule that says something like, "Success is bad," and then you can say, "You know actually, this is not a good rule for me. I wrote that down and it doesn't make any sense." Like you said, you can take the extreme reverse and then if you can't spot them or you want to confirm them, you can have your friends say -- I've done this with other friends. We didn't call it secret rules but I had a friend say, "Am I a bad person?" because he was going through a hard time. And I said, "No, but I'll tell you why people are reacting to you in this way in my observation." And he goes, "Wow, I never --" I told him something about -- he's one of these guys who somehow find the negative and he's like, "I was just raised by people who were always \*\*\*\*\* about stuff."

JON: Yeah, so that was his language.

JORDAN: That was his language and he goes, "I just never thought that anybody else could do it," and he's like, "Things really do look bad to me," and I'm like, "Yeah, but you live in the same reality as your wife and kids. So, is it really that bad? Because they're fine and you're not and you're getting depressed." That was a strange thing for him because he had to write a new rule which was, "It's probably not that bad, and when it seems really, really bad, ask myself -- "there was all kinds of tangents and branches that could come off of that but it really changed the way that he thought and it was good for me too because I thought, "Well, wait a minute. That was so obvious to me. Where are my obvious things that I'm not picking up on because I'm in the middle?"

JON: And that's a dangerous game of self-awareness. I don't like when I hear podcasts and they tell you something that's difficult and they go, "It's super easy. Just raise like a million dollars next week with your friends." This is heart work. So, that's part of it, is most goal books address the brain and they forget the heart.

For me, it was, I used to have a rule that a speech had to be perfect so I'd memorize them. And one time, a client pulled me aside and was like, "Hey I got some feedback." And he said, "Fifteen people in the review of you said you seemed fake and over-rehearsed and mechanical and with no passion," and they were right. It wasn't fun to hear but my secret rule of "It has to be perfect," has changed into, "Mistakes make you human. Mistakes have humor in them. They take the tension out of it." Yo-Yo Ma talks about that all the time. Once he's made the first mistake, then he can relax into the humanity of the performance. And if Yo-Yo Ma is like, "You know what? I'm okay making a mistake," I should probably be okay too.

JORDAN: So we talked about the planning fallacy, overly ambitious goals, which stop forward momentum, we sort of touched on what you call "the danger of might as well," which is like, "Well you had a half a cookie on your diet, so you might as well order chili cheese fries now."

JON: Yeah, it's the single french fry principle. Like, "I had one, might as well go for 1,000." I also this happens around the Super Bowl. People go, "I'm going to a Super Bowl party. There's not going to be any healthy food, I might as well," and then that cascades like four weeks later, you're still living off the chili dip rationale of like, "I've already broken the diet. All bets are off."

JORDAN: Yeah, it really is dangerous because you find yourself going, "Well you know, today I already ate a bunch of crap," and it's like, you do realize that you don't have to eat 8,000 calories because you already had three, right?

JON: You can recover the day. Or, but the flip side is when people tell me, "I want to run five miles every day, I only have time for

three, so I'll do zero." Here's a sign -- an easy practical sign you're a perfectionist. If you'd rather get an F than a B-. If the thought of a C+ is worse to you than you don't even try. So, that's where you know, "Okay, I'm accepting a zero instead of a C-, because then at least I can say, 'Well it would have been perfect if I tried.'" And you want to say, "A B is way better than an F. Infinitely better than an F," but that's where perfectionism is.

JORDAN: Daria Rose, who's been on the show before, she calls this the "What the hell effect." Jason, do you remember that?

JASON: Yeah, it's pretty much when you do have that first bite of cookie, you're like, "Might as well throw in a couple pints of ice cream as well. I'll start tomorrow."

JON: Yeah, I'll just go ahead and smoke some crack. I've already had a french fry, crack is next on the train. Woo woo!

JORDAN: Right, your brain is -- my brain, I should say, is really good at that. I think everybody's is too. Motivation wise, in terms of getting this stuff done, or strategy wise, I should say -- you have this concept in the book -- well, you have two concepts in the book that I thought worked really well together, which was the shame versus strategy kind of motivations here. Strategic incompetence. I love that. Can you tell us about strategic incompetence for a minute?

JON: Yeah, so the idea is that you have two choices. And the phrase "strategic incompetence" came from this book *Two Awesome Hours* and then I started to really research the idea. So, most people try to do too much. Most goal setting books will tell you, "Jordan, oh, you have a financial goal? You should have a physical goal and a relationship goal and a spiritual goal. Have one goal for each of the seven main areas of your life." A lot of us have heard this. But if you were going to learn German, I wouldn't say, "Jordan, you should learn six other languages at the same time, Swahili, Norwegian, Spanish," that sounds terrible.

And so what happens is, we add new goals to our life where what we're supposed to do is say, "Okay, as I do this new thing, during this season, I'm going to deliberately suck at these five things. So, as I finish my book, I'm not going to get four months ahead in the podcast. I'm going to be committed but I won't expect to do these extra things." The parenting one I use in the book is, when we had two young kids under the age of three, my yard was terrible and I did not care. It could have been on fire. I was just trying to survive to bedtime. My only goal when I had two kids under the age of three was to get to bedtime. I always joke every parent has put their kid to bed when it's still sunny out and they can hear other kids playing and your kids are like, "Why are you using blackout shutters, dad?" and you're like, "Pipe down. It's midnight in China. We're celebrating the new moon. Just go to bed," and so, I think especially moms you see this. They talk about mom guilt or mom shame. When you try to do too much and inevitably fail, you feel ashamed or you say ahead of time, "During this season, I'm not going to do these three things and that's okay."

JORDAN: So, you basically say, "Eff it, I'm not focusing on these lesser important items and I'm doing so deliberately." Not in the moment. "I'm planning to not care about the lawn. I'm planning to let the playroom become a nuclear disaster area until their 11 and I can force them to clean it up. That's the way it is. Yep, I know there's spiders in there. Oh, well. That's what's happening."

JON: It's insignificant stuff but it can be significant in the sense of -- you know, I had a book come out recently. As I tour to talk about it, I don't hold myself to creating great writing. I would be such a jerk to myself if I said, "I don't care that you're traveling four times a week, you still go to to find -- I want you in the terminal D, in between flights, creating great prose." Screw that. Does writing matter to me? It does, Jordan. Is this the wrong season for me to think I'm going to get deep writing done, it is.

And so, that's where I argue that if you're in the middle of budgeting season, if you're listening to this right now and

you're in charge of preparing next year's budget, you might need to say, "My inbox is going to get a little crazy because I've got to do the budget. The CEO is concerned about the budget, not my email. Is email important? It is. But for this month, for this week, whatever, I'm going to suck at these five things and I'm not going to feel ashamed about it."

JORDAN:

I love that. I thought this book was really great, especially if you find yourself taking on too much or bailing on things because you won't have time to make them amazing and perfect. And, I hear stuff like this all the time. We have this challenge for The Art of Charm, the AoC challenge, for people that are interested, at [theartofcharm.com/challenge](http://theartofcharm.com/challenge). We tackle a little bit of the perfectionism stuff, where we just have people dive in, no matter what.

But, one of the chief excuses when I ask people why they haven't started the challenge, when they write in as big fans of the show, is they often say, "Well, I just want to make sure I can dedicate appropriate time to it," and I'm like, "Look, it's designed to be 20 minutes a week." "Yeah, well you know, I have all of these other things happening and I've got to plan to do this and I've got to plan to do that," or people will say things like, "Yeah, I'm going to come to the course but I have these 87,000 things that I need to get done before that. I've got to lose 300 pounds before I give my --," and I'm thinking, "Wow." "Can I have program info? I've got to lose half my body weight before I come in."

Don't even ask me for this until you are ready because -- and I'm not trying to pick on the weight loss people, it's with any goal. They're trying to do this thing where they're like, "I got it all ready," and it's unfortunately a huge time suck.

We had to train our sales folks here at AoC, our program intake people, to spot this because there were so many people requesting info and calls and I said, "You've got to check on the timeline," because half the people that were calling in for program stuff "at one point in time" were like, "Yeah, I'm going

to do it in like 2023, because first I've got to do this, this this." Don't even bother us with this because you're calling and talking about doing something because it makes you feel like you're actually taking action, when all you're doing is having us do a bunch of work and you're going, "I've got all the brochures and they're stacked up on the right corner of my desk and they're printed out in color and then I laminated it." It's like, "You haven't done \*\*\*\*. This is not a move towards anything."

JON: No, and it does make us feel better. I always talk about -- I call them noble obstacles. The example in the book is, my friend -- his wife is like, "Clean the garage," and he goes, "I'll do a yard sale," and he's never going to do that. But he gets to go, "I can't do it until I have a perfectly planned yard sale." She would love him to throw it all away. We're talking one afternoon on a Saturday. Throw it all in a dumpster, you're done. He's like, "No, I've got to label it, I've got to sort it, I've got to figure out what the HOA says about yard sales, I've got to da,da,da,da," and he feels like, "But I'm trying to make us money," and it seems noble. So, it's the same thing about putting obstacles between working on your challenge. And dude, did you say it's 20 minutes a week?

JORDAN: Yeah, it's like 20 minutes a week.

JON: So, three minutes a day. It's like when Brian Regan, the comedian, talked about the microwave instructions on Pop Tarts. If you can't wait for a Pop Tart to pop out of the toaster -- because the microwave instructions are like, "Microwave on high for three seconds." Whose breakfast is like -- "I can't have a five second food. I need three seconds. I already have two seconds going somewhere else." But it sounds so tempting to get the info and then never go on the vacation, never do the challenge.

JORDAN: Yeah, it's easier as well. And I love the noble obstacles. What can we do about these? Because again, overachievers, people with really good rational brains, these folks are -- it's hard for me to disagree because they go, "Look, I have my week planned out in 15 minute blocks, just like you do, and I've got all these

things prioritized and I have a plan for my learning for the next 18 months,” and on its face it’s like, “Man, you do have all this stuff figured out,” but really, a lot of it is just this mirage, this sort of sham. They spent three weeks planning out their entire year but it’s not going to get done, they just made the plan so they feel like, “I’m done. Now I can rest. I hired a trainer, I don’t have to go to the gym. I hired the trainer already.”

JON:

No, but that’s like bullet journal. If you’re spending more time coloring the bullet journal entry than you are doing the activity that you’re writing down in the bullet journal, if you’re spending an hour creating this flowery visualization of your day but then don’t actually do the day, it doesn’t work. So, I guess I’d say two things. One, ask the question, “Is it working?” If somebody says to you, “Jordan, I want to do your course, but I’ve already got the next 18 months planned out,” then you should say, “Well, is your 18 months already working? If it’s going really well, don’t do the course. You came to this for a reason. Something is missing. Is what’s missing big enough for you to carve out 20 minutes?”

If it’s not -- it’s like when people come up to me, and they’ve done this to you, they’ll say, “Why should I listen to your podcast,” or, “Why should I buy your book?” and I always say, “Maybe you shouldn’t.” And it surprises them because they think they’re about to get this, “Well The Art of Charm is the best,” -- I’d rather say, “Maybe you shouldn’t. Read the free chapter online. I’m not going to force you. If your life needs it, then go for it.”

The second thing I’d say is noble obstacles are hiding spaces that I talk about. A lot of it will go there naturally. I’d ask yourself, “In a week, where do I go naturally with my time?” So for instance, I’ve never met a human who accidentally or naturally just starts working out. I’ve never met somebody who was like, “I sat down to watch Narcos, I ended up doing burpees. I don’t even know how it happened.” We never accidentally or naturally do things that are good for us or productive. That means we have to be deliberate. We have to be intentional.

And so, I would ask people who have a lot of noble obstacles, "Well, where are you going?" And if you know you're supposed to write a book and you say, "Well as soon as the garage is cleaned," what do those two have in common? Like, if somebody said to me, "I can't do a book until my garage is cleaned," I'd say, "You know, most authors like Hemingway, that was his process too. He was like, 'First step, go marlin fishing drunk. Second step, clean out the garage. Third step, write the book.'" That's insanity.

JORDAN: I love the idea of, again, strategic incompetence, to nip this kind of thing in the bud. And, picking things you can either bomb, simplify, or pause and just say, "Look, I'm not doing this until later because it's this huge cognitive drain."

JON: And it's not forever. Your listeners right now are like, "I have all these things I can't quit." Agreed. But you can ask for help, you can delegate. The simplify one, a mom I put in the book said, "I can't stop feeding my kids but I can make easy meals." The biggest sham parents do is breakfast supper. You tell your kids you're doing breakfast supper and they're like, "Oh, yay," and in your head you're like, "I just have to scramble some eggs, you sucker." Or my friends mom had, "Make your own sandwich night." You talk about a sham. Make your own sandwich? She's outsourcing the whole meal and the kids are like, "Yay, make your own sandwich." So, I think that there are things you can simplify. And remember, it's for a season. You and I aren't saying, "Hey, quit email." That's dumb. We aren't saying, "Stop everything you ever do," we're saying, "In this season, be really deliberate about what you do with your time."

JORDAN: In the book there's a lot of great stuff that unfortunately we don't have a lot of time for, so I want to touch on some of it. You talk about making things fun in order to reward yourself. "Do you motivate yourself using fear or reward," and you go through that process, and you talk a lot about hiding places, email, social media, apps, money traps, creative energy vampires, noble obstacles being one of those. And, I want to jump back into that because you do have some types of noble obstacles

that I think are quite funny, such as, "Okay, I need to eliminate all of my distractions first," or, the "If/then." Can you go over -- the if/then is actually funny because we all do this and it's ridiculous when you hear someone else do it. But when we do it, it's like, "Well, mine makes sense."

JON: So, when you read it, what was your "If/then?" Did you have one that you were like, "This is an example of how I would do it?"

JORDAN: Actually, this is a great one. I wanted to start working out with somebody who -- and I won't name their name because I'm still friends with them. But, I wanted to work out with them and I worked out a bunch and I got in really good shape. I couldn't even hold on to the pull up bar for more than 30 seconds. I went to being able to do 30 some odd pull ups in six months or a year. And, I remember he had quit because I got better than him faster than he expected and he was kind of leaning on me to be the less fit guy than him in this arrangement. And I remember asking him why and he said, "Well, I really don't want to get too bulky." And I remember thinking, "You're at least 30 pounds overweight. If you're worried about bulk, it's not going to happen because you're hitting the gym too hard. That's for sure."

JON: Yeah well so, another, if/then -- so, the, "If/then," is like, "If I do this, this bad thing will happen. So, I'm actually being noble preventing it." So, they'll go, "I'd love to start a business, but if I do, then I'll probably become a workaholic and my wife and I will get divorced. So, in order to preserve our marriage, I can't start a business I've always wanted to." And the wife is usually not going, "Don't start it. We'll get a divorce." The husband is just afraid. Or they'll say, "If I start a podcast, I'll have to work on it like 900 hours a week and then I'll get get fired." But yeah, the bulk up one where guys were like, "I don't want to have to buy new clothes," and you're like, "Homie, you are five years from new clothes."

A lot of the people that listen to this show are entrepreneurs, they're marketers, they'll say, "If I promote my book, then I'll

become too promotional and I don't want to bother people. So, I'll just hide it." And I always say, "That's great. Just, next time, write a diary not a book." It's funny to me that some of my listeners, when I tweet this out, will go, "I didn't know he had a podcast. That's awesome," and you, on your end, might think, "I tell people about it all the time. How do you not know?" Every time I go to a city for an event, I say, "I'm coming, Boston. I'm coming, I'm coming, I'm coming," and then inevitably, the day after, when I post a picture of the crowd, somebody goes, "I wish you had told us." And I feel like I overtold. So you have to say, "Do I have these weird if/thens that just aren't true?" A lot of the book is getting rid of the fake rules that really aren't honest.

JORDAN: There is a lot of shaking off -- what do you call it, lying to ourselves? It's essentially what it is.

JON: Self-deception.

JORDAN: Self-deception. Yeah, I knew there was a flashy term for it. And, I want to make sure people don't think, "Oh, it's a book where I'm just going to find out all of these horrible things about myself and then feel bad," right? It's about replacing the habits.

JON: No, it's all about here's what's to put in its place. The fear/reward thing, it's not about saying, "Oh, you have the wrong form of motivation," it's about going, "Oh, the reason it's really hard is you're a bird trying to swim." Imagine if you were a bird flying. That would be amazing. That's what I think people get out of the book, is they go, "For 10 years I've been trying to be a fish. It turns out I'm a bird and I'm a pretty awesome bird. But, my mom told me I was a fish. Hooray, now I'm finishing things." But, the best part is as I tour with this book, people hand me the books they've written. I got a t-shirt the other night from somebody who was like, "I made a t-shirt company because I learned how to finish. This is my first product. Thanks for doing that." I love that. That's what's fun.

JORDAN: Finishers make things easier and they make things simpler. That was something that I took away from the book and you

hammer that home pretty well. This is an important concept because, we tend to throw obstacles and hurdles in our way, as we mentioned before, and sometimes they're time-based or sometimes they're task-based. But, they're always going to be something that will throw in our way, whether it's an if/then or whether it's turning a garage cleaning into a 13 step project, and we have to figure out how to be honest with ourselves and the book does a really good job of being more honest with ourselves. A lot of us, especially as entrepreneurs and things like that, where it's almost like we're trying to be miserable so that we feel like we're working hard or we're sticking with things we hate, because it's part of this plan. Once concept that I would love to hear more about, is the idea that perfectionism hates data. This is kind of the perfectionism kryptonite, data and measurement.

JON:

It's amazing. And the reason it hates it is that it's realistic and we're often told, "Dream beyond bigger than your reality," or like, "Sometimes you've got to jump off a cliff and grow your wings on the way down." I'm like, "That's never how gravity works." With data, there's a couple different examples, but I like to say, "Data kills denial which prevents disaster." So, for instance, I launched something recently and I thought, "It's going to be huge. We launched it to 10,000 people. I'll get X percent of sales." So few people bought it on the first day and fortunately, my business partner said, "Hey remember, we always have a small percent on the first day. The last day is really where we close strong." And if he hadn't had that data, I would have been disappointed from the results.

Data is not emotional. Data is your friend. Data just wants you to make the best decision. I counted calories for a month and I was shocked the difference where I'd go to a steak restaurant and I'd say, "Can I have horseradish?" and they'd go, "Do you want the cream or raw?" and I'd go, "Bring both," and I'd look it up. The cream was 220 calories, raw was 7. We like the idea that ignorance is bliss like, "I can eat whatever without consequence," but data just goes, "Hey, just so we're clear, I want

you to know, this is what's what and you've just got to be careful."

Data didn't ruin the meal for me. The calories existed, data just made sure I knew them. And I think entrepreneurs, especially have a hard time. When an entrepreneur shows me their plan for growth and if I go, "Show me your sales from six months ago," and they go, "Ah that's -- no, we're talking about the future, not the past," I know there's no way. You're doomed.

JORDAN: I see this all the time and we talk about this with some of our entrepreneur friends. We try not to be dicks about it but basically, you'll hear someone say something like, "Oh, well you know, I have this. This is going to happen and this is going to happen and this is going to happen," and you go, "Okay," like you said, "Show me your sales data." And this isn't a wee-wee measuring contest. It's about going, "Okay you're going to grow from what to what? We need realistic stuff here." If I asked, "How do I take my show from 3.8 million to 10 million?" it's a different question than someone else going, "Yeah, how do I get to 10 million?" You go, "Oh, what are you at now?" "Well, I'm thinking of launching in three months." "Okay, well let's talk about this in 8 to 10 years.'

JON: Yeah, exactly. Or like, I had a friend and he said -- I won't mention his name, just like your weight lifter guy. So my friend was like, "Hey, I've got to rush finish my book. I won't have time for as much editing because I want to launch it at an event." I said, "Well how big is the event?" He said, "Four hundred people." I said, "Okay, I sell 10 percent of a crowd, but let's say you're twice as good as me at selling. So, you're going to sell 20 percent of the audience. So, that means 80 books. You're going to make \$5 a book, so just so we're clear, you're going to release a poor quality book that you have to live with for years to make \$400. So after taxes, 280." And of course he's like, "Oh, I didn't --" But the data is what tells you that. He was emotional like, "I've got to launch it big."

I guarantee there's people that talked to you about launches like, "I really have to launch it on a certain day," and if you go,

"Why? What if you added a week to the timeline and it was twice as good because you were able to Q & A it?" They go, "No, no, no. I want it. It's got to be on this Tuesday. We've been telling people," and you go, "How many people did you tell, 100 Twitter followers? But, why?" Data tells you the truth. And I'm not a data guy naturally. I've been an idiot most of my life, where I will work 100 percent on my exercise and not look at my calories at all. And it wasn't until I started going, "I feel like I might be shooting myself in the foot with all this queso. I don't feel like this is helping," and then I looked at it and I was like, "I would have to run a marathon every day to eat what I've been eating." It's just helpful and it's simple.

JORDAN: So, how do we get started with this? What I worry about it is, "Oh, good, I need data," and then someone goes, "All right, I'm going to spend the next six months researching the type of data that I need and then I'm going to find the best program to measure the data in and the best ways to measure it.

JON: Weigh one. Weigh one to two things. It'd be ironic to become a perfectionist reading a book against perfectionism. So, I would say, if you're at a business, find the easiest things you can measure. Numbers of times you worked out -- let's do health real quick. Numbers of times you worked out, distance you ran, what you ate, your pounds -- pick two that are easy to measure, always do the easiest ones first, and here's why. Once you get a little data, you get excited. Data is contagious, dude. I guarantee you, you start to look at data on your downloads and stuff like that, and then you and your producer are like, "Dude, if we do better with two forms of data, imagine what would happen if we had four."

Start with small, let it grow. I guarantee you, you didn't do a deep data dive right away, but now dude, it's fun. Once you get a taste, you get hooked on data. So, start small, if it's your business, measure revenue, expenses, the obvious things. I would beg you, beg you, beg you, don't invent new forms of data, don't try to do 10 forms of data, you'll cripple yourself. You'll

hate it from the beginning. Fall in love with one or two forms and make better decisions with it, and then grow it over time.

JORDAN:

I can relate this to podcasting quite easily. There are a lot of people -- since we're on the subject, I'm not obsessed with this topic, I swear. But, they'll start their show and they'll go, "One Hundred downloads, this is great. Everybody has got to start somewhere." The next week, "Two hundred downloads. This is amazing. At this rate, we're going to be at 100,000 downloads at X number of months," and then week three it's like 212 downloads, and they're like, "Oh," and then the week after that it's, "Well our feature expired and then we still have to stop the promo blitz so it's at 175," and then the next week after that it's 150 and they go, "Yeah, screw this." Whereas, the difference was -- I have a love/hate relationship with this particular story of this particular idea, which is, we didn't really pay any attention other than maybe a quarterly check of our download stats for the first five or six years with the podcast, because it didn't matter that much, because we were going to do it anyway.

I wish I'd started looking at it and measuring more things earlier and paying attention to that stuff because it would have helped to grow the business. On the other hand, I might have also quit. Looking at the historical data, there were enormous dips, and I'm talking haircuts of 30 percent, where I go, "I don't even know why that happened," and, "Yeah, maybe we could have avoided a repeat," or I could have just gone, "Eh, nobody's listening to this anymore," and quit, which is very likely.

JON:

But, I would say, especially at the beginning, your data should lead to better decisions, not more shame. So, if you find yourself measuring something that makes you hate what you're doing, it's the wrong thing to measure. The goal of data is to provide you with information, so you can make amazing decisions. You find the points of data that you go, "Okay, when I do this thing, it's so much better for me. When I know this or when I tweet at this time or when I focus on this one thing, it's so much better for me."

There's part of me that, Jordan, I wish you had done data early because, to the person that gets discouraged at the beginning, I would love for you to have 10 truths about starting a podcast nobody tells you. And you say, "Just so we're clear, my data hung around this level for six months." And maybe you already have that product. If you already have that product, awesome. If you don't, you're in a position to say to that person, "Ten things you don't want to hear about podcasting but will save your life," and you go, "Month four will feel like this, and I know because here's what happened in my month four." That's part of it because the problem with the person you described, the fictional person is, they never reach out.

That's the other thing about your emotions. Your emotions and perfectionism go, "You're the only podcaster that ever saw a dip in the third month and this is indicative that it's time to quit." Most people won't go, "I'm going to shoot a podcast guy a like a question, and he's going to respond back and go, 'Welcome to the party.'"

Here's an example. My daughter is 14, she started an Instagram page, she just started a photo based one. She's got a new camera, she wants to do photography. She invited her friends from the one page to join the others. She said, "Dad 100 people saw it, only one followed me," and I got to say to her, "Welcome to social media." There's so many authors I know that go, "I'm speaking to 100 people today, probably sell 80 books," and I'm like, "That's adorable. You think 80 percent of the crowd is going to do that." Or like, "I got an email list with 10,000 people, probably have like 9,000 open it, maybe 8,000 click through," and you're like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah dude. That's what we're all doing."

JORDAN: It's definitely not going to be 30 people clicking through.

JON: This is no lie. I had somebody send out an email for 150,000 people. It wasn't my list, it was somebody else's list. And I was like, "Dude, how many books did it sell?" He said, "Seven." And I

was like, "Like, 700?" and he was like, "No, seven, as in one more than six, one less than eight."

JORDAN: Yeah, that's scary, actually, all those stats there. I want to wrap with this though because I love the meta and the zoom out -- when people aren't finishing something, a lot of it is perfectionism, a lot of it is what we're mentioning here. But, I think the unasked question is, what value are we getting out of not finishing? Because, at some level, quitting, not finishing, leaving things on the table, has to outweigh the value of actually finishing.

JON: I think that sometimes, people if they're honest, would say, "By not finishing, I never have to get criticized." You know Jordan, if I work on a book for 10 years, and I never publish it, I never have random strangers on the Internet tell me I'm dumb. That's the thing.

There's this great section from Chaucer and it's this story of this guy who builds a boat. He builds boats, he's amazing, but he always tears them apart at the last second and they go, "Why does he do that?" and they say, "Well, he's afraid of the water, and if he finishes the boat he actually has to get in and go out into the water and it terrifies him." If you're afraid of criticism, you'll almost launch a podcast, you'll almost write a book, you'll almost start a business, but then, right at the last second you won't. So, that's part of it. Part of it is if you're always working on it, people will give you credit for being like -- you're such a hard worker and you never actually have to produce, or sometimes what people get out of not finishing is they look noble to the people.

So, they go, "I just don't want to be so busy so I just accept this small life," and people are going, "You're such a good dad," and they don't realize you're teaching your kid you shouldn't chase your dreams. If you've been struggling with something for a while, you owe it to yourself to ask that question and be kind to yourself with the answer. The answer isn't designed to make you feel like, "I knew I was a loser. That's what I'm getting out of

it, is I get to be a loser." The question is designed to give you some information that you can then operate on.

JORDAN: Jon, thank you so much. Brilliant, I love it. The book [\*Finish: Give Yourself the Gift of Done\*](#). Really good, funny. It's a lot like this podcast, only I'm not there, so it's not hilarious, but it's funny.

JON: It's east coast hilarious. You're in the west coast, things are a little different out there.

JORDAN: Yeah, we're a little more subdued with it.

JON: Oh, yeah, that's what they've said about the west coast. I'm in Nashville, they say, "Nashville's crazy, west coast, subdued." That's always been the going --

JORDAN: Sure.

JON: Yeah, sure. That's it.

JORDAN: That's how we do things here.



