

Transcript for Daniel DiPiazza | Rich20Something (Bonus)

Full show notes found here:

<https://theartofcharm.com/podcast-episodes/daniel-dipiazza-rich20something-bonus/>

DANIEL: It just threw me into this really, really bad, deep depression, where I just didn't really even have the will to get out of bed and I don't get paid time off. And I just went through a long period of time, several months, where it was hard for me to do my job and that's when I had the darkest days in the business.

JORDAN: Welcome to The Art of Charm; I'm Jordan Harbinger. Today we're talking with my friend Daniel DiPiazza, founder and author of [Rich20Something](#). We'll gain some insight into why there's so much hype on Instagram and social media about being a hustler and living this life of financial freedom. We've meme-ified these concepts so as to make them universally glorified and I want to talk about that with somebody who is not only an entrepreneur and a successful author, but somebody who teaches others to do the same.

We'll also discuss the seven maxims of entrepreneurship that Daniel uses when he needs a little bit of direction and how you can apply these for yourself and we'll uncover the dip, how to get out of entrepreneur or life slump and a story from Daniel's recent past and how he managed to stay focused while writing a book and dealing with the loss of a parent. And we'll look into when it's time to sack up slash skill up in his journey from a young twenties into late twenties and early thirties, freelancer to entrepreneur to burgeoning CEO.

By the way, if you're new to the show, we'd love to send you some top episodes and the AoC Toolbox. That's where we discuss the science of people and discuss concepts like reading body language, having charismatic nonverbal communication, the science of attraction, negotiation techniques, social engineering, networking and influence strategies, persuasion tactics, and everything else we teach here at The Art of Charm. Check that out at

theartofcharm.com/toolbox or in our iPhone app at theartofcharm.com/iphone. Also at theartofcharm.com you can find the full show notes for this and all previous episodes of the show. Whether this your first episode or your 500th episode of AoC, we're always glad to have you here with us. Now, let's hear from Daniel DiPiazza. So Daniel, thanks for coming on the show today man. I know you're a busy boy these days with your book coming out.

DANIEL: A busy man, you mean.

JORDAN: Yeah the phrase "busy boy" sounds a little homoerotic, I'm not going to lie.

DANIEL: A little but --

JORDAN: I regretted it immediately but I just figured no one's going to say anything, right? So it doesn't matter.

DANIEL: Just ball through with it. Don't take it back, commit.

JORDAN: Lean into it. Tell us what's going on with you recently because a lot of people write books about entrepreneurship, why is this different? Especially because you are young, a lot of people might say, "What do you even know about balancing your life or creating a lifestyle? You're just starting to have one."

DANIEL: Yeah. Well I think also the thing about all business books is that when a new book comes out, it doesn't mean that it's all new material. What it means is that it's written in a way or in a voice that can be relatable. People read the books and the books that resonate with them are the ones that they can relate to the most. And so I think that what's important is whether it's my book or Tim Ferriss' [4-Hour Workweek](#), or some other book, you've got to find the book that breaks through to you and that really starts to help connect the dots for you, and that's the book you should read.

So, people that read my book are going to be ones -- we're looking for a young audience, most of my readers are, you know, between 19 and their early 30s, and they're looking for a no bull**** approach. The good thing about being able to write my own book instead of having someone write it for me or instead of kind of just like piecing together old blog posts is that throughout the book, I got to tell the story of how I got from where I was to where I am now and it -- If you read the book, there won't be a reason to ask, "How are you credible," or, "Why should we believe you?" because it's all in the book. So I cover it.

JORDAN: The danger of course, is that a lot people are going to go, "Why should I read your book just to find out why you're credible? You're supposed to tell me why you're credible so that I read the book. You're doing it backwards." But, you know, that's okay. That's why I'm asking the question, I suppose.

DANIEL: So also, you know, I think there's a certain amount of like, credibility that comes just from developing an online presence over time. So when you have a big following, or people see you in Time Magazine or they kind of hear of you from multiple different sources, there's a lot of like, buzz in the periphery that creates the illusion of importance. And sometimes, you know, that's the detriment to the industry that we're in because thought leaders can almost spring up from nowhere. But, people start to eventually recognize who you are.

JORDAN: Yeah that's a good point, thought leaders do start to spring up out of nowhere. Before I saw a Twitter profile and I've been railing on this one for a while and it was like, "Father, founder, thought leader, speaker," and I was like, "Ugh! You can't put thought leader in your Twitter bio because it doesn't mean anything." It means that you'd consider yourself an influencer which also doesn't mean anything. All it means is you want to be famous online. So it seems like there's this -- the bull**** industrial complex, right? Where it's like, repackage content, nobody's coming up with original stuff, it's just sort of rehashed. I know you wanted to set yourself apart from that so

I wanted to give you a chance to do that because I know that you've worked in tons of odd jobs. You even -- you were in the behind the scenes on Art of Charm years and years go as well.

DANIEL: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

JORDAN: And then you did other stuff. That -- some stuff worked out, some stuff didn't. You travelled a bunch, you launched a bunch of different businesses, you even had like a test-prep company --

DANIEL: Yeah, yeah.

JORDAN: -- I want to say, back in the day. So obviously you wanted to start businesses and not just be Internet famous, right? There was something else going on here.

DANIEL: Yeah my relationship to entrepreneurship is through the perspective of a freelancer. I worked all these odd jobs. I graduated from school and I thought, "Look I have two choices. I can either go back and do more school, which a lot of people do -- "

JORDAN: That's what I did.

DANIEL: That's what you did, yeah.

JORDAN: Yeah.

DANIEL: You were a great attorney I hear, great attorney.

JORDAN: Yeah for the nine and a half months or something like that.

DANIEL: For nine and a half months, mother was proud. So it was either more school or it was go corporate, and I had a lot of friends who did both. I didn't have the desire to do that so it kind of left me in this middle passage where I was working just these odd jobs. So I worked at restaurants, I worked at like museum gift stores, I worked a UPS with like the brown short shorts. I was

very good at that job. And I worked those jobs because I didn't know which path I was going to have to take to get to where I was going. And then I realized that if I could figure out how to help somebody with something, whether it was like, "I need my website done," or, "I need -- you know my kid needs to Spanish," or whatever skill I could provide, I could monetize that and that was the lightbulb -- the initial lightbulb that set me off on a spree of starting these freelance businesses and what I would do was, I would start them, I would validate them, I would grow them, I would hire a few employees, and then I would sell it or I would disband it. And I just kept doing this over and over and over again. To me this is so relatable because many people don't come from the world of -- I would say the shiny entrepreneurship. Like, you know, you're in San Francisco so you know Silicon Valley.

JORDAN: Yeah.

DANIEL: Everyone talks about, you know, VC and building some big app company or, you know, millions and millions of dollars. I didn't do it with any of that stuff. My mom works in insurance, my dad works for waste management slinging trash, so I didn't have a frame of reference for that ****. I was just like, "How can I pull money out of the air? What can I do?" I would say it's a very middle class perspective on how to go from where you were born to kind of, where you want your family to go next, and a lot of people don't have that perspective.

JORDAN: So how is this different? How is wanting to figure out how to pull money out of the air like you said, different from a lot of the hype that's out there, a lot of the 'B.S.-y' things? Because I get it. There's college students and recent graduates who don't know what they want, they just know the traditional career path isn't for them. Props to those people because I didn't get that memo and had to figure it out by doing the brute force method. "Well I just need more education. Well I just need a better job. Well I just need a better job. Well I just need to -- " and now here we are.

DANIEL: Yeah.

JORDAN: I could have started 10 years prior, you know, or close to it. And then there's also people who are employees working somewhere, they're in a career that doesn't inspire them, they want to leave the nine to five and do something else but they don't have a clue how to get started. And then there's also just regular people who are interested in their career but they're freaking out and they're looking for maybe a side hustle or something like that. I get that there's always those folks but in addition that niche, that demographic, there's this whole con artistry on the Internet, and I'm just going to throw it out there, where it's just a bunch of, "You can hustle and live the life of your dreams. Financial independence!" and it's like, "Eh." How is that different from, "Google's paying people to work from home. I made \$30,000 last month"? I mean how is it different, right? What is the difference?

DANIEL: I was just talking to a friend about this over text before we got on the podcast and it's just so hilarious because I was looking through these -- it's really bad on Instagram. It's really bad.

JORDAN: It is on -- Yeah.

DANIEL: It's so bad.

JORDAN: That's like the HQ for all this garbage.

DANIEL: That's scam central, Instagram. Which you know, I have my biggest social media following on Instagram so shoutout to Instagram. Thank you for all your hard work.

(laugh)

DANIEL: But what you'll find is that people are trying to marry like the idea that having ambition means that you deserve to make a certain amount of money.

JORDAN: Yes, exactly. Like, "Well I've got to do this because that's what I want," and it's like, "Okay and what?"

DANIEL: Right and then just have like these really empty -- completely empty quotes. Like I'll look at my phone right now and tell you some of the things I see because the quotes are always so self-affirming that you can't deny they're valid but that doesn't help you at all. It's something like, "For every excuse you have, there is someone who has overcome the same obstacle." Well, yeah.

JORDAN: Maybe, yeah sure.

DANIEL: That doesn't help. A lot of these new like, make money online businesses are built around these like, inspiration, motivation, and hustle, with no substance in the middle. Without the actual business part. Like the actual part of like, defining a skillset, finding your markets, like targeting your offer, productizing it, or skilling it up. It cuts out all that stuff and it just tries to shortcut to the money. With [Rich20Something](#), what I've done in the book and what we do in our courses and our website is that we focus on the middle part. I think you should be ambitious, and I think you should have some drive and motivation, and I hope that you make a lot of money but in between that, there's this work part, and that's what we cover, because that's what's going to get the results.

JORDAN: The work part, yeah. No kidding.

DANIEL: The actual work part. So like, in the book, one of the things I was really happy to be able to write about in like a -- in a very extended format was how to come up with an idea, how to determine if that idea is going to actually work, how to validate it before you start, and then how to find people who want to pay you because people kept asking me these things and I was like, "Man I need to write a book so people can stop asking me."

JORDAN: Right.

DANIEL: And so now I have something to hand out.

JORDAN: Well I see a lot of younger people thinking, "Becoming an entrepreneur, owning my own business, that's the ticket to happiness," but they have no idea what it really entails. There's plenty of times now, I've been in business for over 10 years, plenty of times where I thought, "I wish I just had a regular job, -- "

DANIEL: Totally.

JORDAN: " -- a guaranteed paycheck, -- "

DANIEL: Totally.

JORDAN: " -- and worked with normal people on a product or a service that was doing well, and I could be part of some team or something."

DANIEL: Yeah.

JORDAN: I've thought of that a million times. Is it just that the grass is greener on the other side of the fence or is there something happening generationally that's causing people that are 20 and 30-somethings to decide that this is for them, in droves? Or is it just Internet hype?

DANIEL: It's such a good question because it seems now like it's much, much sexier to be an entrepreneur than it's ever been. And it's very weird because, you know, I used to be a lot more like militant about people not working the nine to five or for the man, and now I'm like, you know actually, there are some days where I'm like, "Man I wish there was just someone to tell me what to do so that I could clock in and then I knew I would get paid a certain amount of money and I knew it would all just be there tomorrow." Sometimes I wish for that. And so I think that what that is, is there's a lot of hype built around the potential for making income, that entrepreneurship is tied to but no one actually considers the work and the work is what makes you

spend so much time doubting yourself, being scared, all the fear. So when you cut out the work part, you also cut out the fear, you know?

JORDAN: Right so it ends up being kind of a fun day dreamy type of thing because the truth from my perspective is that starting a business is really hard, it's 24/7, you're constantly hustling. People that I know that are successful in business are thinking about their business even when they're with their families, they're thinking about it on Christmas, they're thinking about it when they're out with their girlfriend or their wife, they're thinking about it when they're playing with their little kids sometimes. There's a reason that actual business owners talk a lot about work life balance and finding out that we don't really have it. And it's not just, "Work life balance, oh, I love what I do. I feel balanced," it's, "Wait a minute, no. It doesn't matter if you love what you do, does your family know you exist anymore because you've worked 24/7 for the last 10 years. Did your kids grow up without you?" That's what the ugly truth for a lot of us is, we've got to keep the house from burning down while we're in the office and there's a lot of stuff that doesn't get discussed. You mentioned some of this pre show. Depression, failure, waking up one day with no effing friends --

DANIEL: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- other than other business people.

DANIEL: Yeah.

JORDAN: No relationship, your ex-girlfriend, you know, sees you at a party and is shocked that you left the house. These are real things for a lot of people that start businesses and these things are ignored by a lot of people who don't have the business to start out and I knew you write about a lot of these. First of all, let's discuss why you made it through to the other side. I mean, you're still of course working on your business and you're writing a book about this and you're marketing all of that but you've been objectively successful in a lot of other areas. How

come you're different than the other 20-somethings who just have a freaking Instagram account?

DANIEL: I mean I think the first thing is, people don't like to talk about this because it makes it seem a little bit unfair, but there always is a timing issue. And depending on what type of business you're starting or what trend you're riding, the time that you start something does help to increase your chances or potentially decrease your chances significantly with what you're doing.

JORDAN: Start a podcast 10 years ago, highly recommend it.

DANIEL: Exactly. Start a YouTube channel 10 years ago. God that would be, you know, a dream. So timing certainly plays a factor. So, the thing is, there's a perspective bias so by the time someone sees me they think I'm Internet famous. They're only seeing me now because I'm Internet famous but it took a certain amount of time for me to get to that point and by the time that they see me and want to emulate me, I've already ridden that trend, so they wouldn't be able to hop right on it with me. They have to find their own trend.

JORDAN: Right it's not about getting on the tail end of your same wave. You have to find a different one.

DANIEL: For me when I was establishing what I think is a lot of the more credible things that happened to me like, being able to write for Time Magazine and Fortune or being able to, you know, explode my social media and, you know, get a book deal and do all these things that seem to be breaking through -- when I was doing all those things it was early 2015. Late 2014, early 2015. And that's right before especially Instagram really took off big time. And so I was doing a lot of the right things at that time that helped propel me and I think that if you want to break through, you just have to start identifying what the waves are for you and then strategically working those waves, not just try and repeat what I did.

JORDAN: Right yeah, I remember you telling me like, "Jordan you've got to get on Instagram and do more with Instagram," and you're showing me things and I was like, "Wow this is really cool." I was focused on other things and my team was focused on other things and we still worked on our Instagram a little bit and it has been successful in certain ways but I remember you identifying that trend so early --

DANIEL: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- and you had also tested a lot of other things. It wasn't like you just picked up Instagram and you're like, "This is cool."

DANIEL: Yeah.

(laugh)

JORDAN: It would have been really easy for me to just put Instagram in with a lot of the other things you were excited about. You told me about Blab, that doesn't even exist anymore. You told me about other things. I remember Blab because that was one of those like, big deal, everyone's on it, let me run webinars from it and then like two months later they went out of business. It was just --

DANIEL: Even Periscope is kind of ***** now.

JORDAN: Yeah, I agree. I joked about Periscope with Scott Adams who was on the show, and I said, "Congratulations on being the last person who's using Periscope." And, you know, some people love it but let's be realistic, it's not Facebook Live and it's not going to be and it's probably a matter of time.

DANIEL: Twitter dropped the ball. I'm so mad at Twitter. I'm so mad at Twitter because I actually prefer Periscope to Instagram live. I prefer it, I like the interface better but they just dropped the ball so ***** hard with integrating it into Twitter and Twitter is just a dying thing waiting to just completely wash away.

JORDAN: Yeah they're trying to figure out what's going on there as well. But, you've identified a couple things that worked, you tested a bunch of stuff.

DANIEL: Yep.

JORDAN: The testing you say was fun but there had to be plenty of late nights where you just went, "This sucks. Why am I even doing this? This is annoying."

DANIEL: No! It is not fun, it is slave labor. Here's how this cycle worked, and this is -- we're talking March 2015 was when I started doing this, okay? Instagram is the primary source of, I'd say, the traffic in the early days and also a lot of the recognition that's led to more credibility and book deals and stuff like that. So, we're talking primarily about Instagram here. I was posting at least 10 to 12 times a day and I was building up my account by just, you know, finding other accounts, following them, sharing, shouting, basically doing everything you could on the app all the time, every day, all day.

And not only was I doing that, but I was taking the people who were coming to my account and I was like, directing them to my bio link and then driving them through a funnel so I could make some money to send to other influencers so I could pay them to shout me out to grow the account so I could keep doing this system and circle jerking the platform, and that's how I built it.

JORDAN: Jeez. Yeah so it's not just, "Wow this person has cool photos," and people are discovering you, you were funneling cash into this while spending a lot of time on it.

DANIEL: Correct. It was at least 12 months. Once you reach a certain point with the size of your account, it takes its own momentum and you don't have to push it so hard because there's just a lot of links to it and a lot of talk about it. But it was at least 12 months of just like, constant -- and I know it's such a first

world problem. "Oh, I was on Instagram and my fingers hurt," but I mean it's just intellectually it's very exhausting.

JORDAN:

This is just one example of the things that you did to get your business off the ground that I remember seeing and hearing about a lot and you've got these 7 maxims of entrepreneurship, rules, mantras that you live by that you essentially repeat when you need direction. Let's go over these because it seems like some of these things are what kept you going when you woke up with maybe not as much money as you would have liked in your bank account, some invoices coming in your inbox, your team looking at you like, "How are we going to eat?" and maybe your game plan coming apart at the seams. What are these maxims of entrepreneurship that have kept you flowing and going to where you are now?

DANIEL:

Well, these are ideas that I like to live my life by and they're frameworks, and so they're the ideal situation. There are certainly times when I'm not consistent with them because I'm a human but they're my aspiration. And whenever I can, I try to think within these parameters because I've noticed that when I think in these specific ways, it helps me to live a better life and be happier. And so, I think that we all should have some basic guiding principles that we try to live by that help us to have more consistently better days. And I think we don't have enough of those, I think that we let our culture dictate what our beliefs should be, and I think that we should make our own beliefs. So, that's where my maxims come from.

Maxim number one is just about self-improvement. I like to phrase these in terms of a sentence like, "I can always improve," that's how I would say this. There is this belief -- this system of beliefs and it's called like "growth versus fixed mindset," right? A lot of us are stuck in this fixed mindset where we believe that we'll reach a certain level of skill or proficiency and that will be where we top out in life, where we kind of like, just stop growing. A lot of us believe that there's a point where we can never get any better. And because we believe there is this point, a lot of us never push past what

could be just a plateau to really see how good we can get at a skill, in a relationship, building a business, you know? There's so much that we can always improve and so we should always know there's the possibility, right? And that's something I try to remember even when things get tough.

JORDAN: Yeah, we did a show with Dr. Carol Dweck a long time ago. I don't know, a couple years ago now, Jason, right? She talks about growth mindset versus fixed mindset and she goes over the science behind why people who actually believe they can grow and improve and change are so much more successful in pretty much every single area of their life. I mean it's without a doubt.

DANIEL: You have to believe it. Otherwise, what's the point of all this? What's the point if you're already done growing? What's the point? Just kill yourself now because what's the point of living?

JORDAN: I'm sure there's plenty of people that don't care and they're fine where they're at. I think this might be something that's inherent to the entrepreneur mindset --

DANIEL: Maybe.

JORDAN: -- which is, bigger, better, faster, stronger, or some other Daft Punk track. This might be something that only guys and gals in the entrepreneur space think about 24/7. I mean there's people that think about improving all the time, not just business owners. However, I think it's something that we've become obsessed with as a niche, as a sub community.

DANIEL: It's just so hard because eventually, as you start doing more for your work, you start meeting people and you start leveling up, and then you kind of -- your perception of what the average person's wants and needs are, really just gets blown way out of proportion --

JORDAN: Mmm.

DANIEL: -- because you're hanging with all these ballers as you move up in the social spectrum.

JORDAN: That might be a different kind of onward and upward though, especially when you start comparing yourself to people above you. Do you find that you do that? I mean, are you looking at other entrepreneurs and using that to drive you or is that making you feel bad about yourself? When I talk with other business owners, a lot of the time, and I'm subject to this with myself at some level -- I could be having the number one best download week of this show's history, but if I see all of these other guys in our niche doing something and they're having major victories, depending on my mood, will not be able to stop thinking about it.

DANIEL: Man it's so true. I vacillate between two different ways of thinking about this. The first way is when I feel like that, when I feel jealous, I'll like repress it. I'll like press it really deep down like I don't want to address it.

JORDAN: Doesn't work for me, but yeah.

DANIEL: I'd be like, "I'm not jealous," like, "Ugh, I'm just ugh. I'm awesome, I'm me." So I do that and then other times I just get overcome with sadness, I'm like, "God I'm just trying so hard and it's still not working and when is it going to work?" So I go through both of those and neither of them make me feel that good, so now I'm just trying to let go of it. I'm just trying to say like, "You know what?" I really am trying to just -- My mantra is kind of just like, run your own race. You're running your own race.

JORDAN: Run your own race, yeah. Realize in some way of course that a win for one is a win for all. For example if somebody hits the front page of the New York Times with their podcast -- which I mean, this isn't a real example, but if they did, I could either get jealous, I could get really upset by it and feel bad about where

we're at or I could say, "Holy crap, that's going to bring a lot more people into the podcast ecosphere, this is good for everybody." They're the ones who got lucky with the skill level finally paid off with that mention but it's always going to be good for everyone. No matter what you've got to get philosophical about it but I think it can really drive a lot of people to frustration and to quit. That lead us kind of the second maxim which is, "I persevere when I'm frustrated." That's really easy to say but how do you actually end up doing it?

DANIEL:

Man you know, this is such a great ideal to have and so this is why it's part of my system, my way of thinking. Because, perseverance -- you can get so much, even if you lack skill, even if you lack talent, even if you're not that lucky, just by persevering, because mostly everyone gives up at everything. If you really were to zoom out and look at what was happening with our relationships, with our business, even the statistics about nine out of ten businesses failing, it's mostly just because people get tired. They're like, "Man this is too difficult. I'd rather just do something else that's easier."

It doesn't mean that business doesn't work, it works fine. It's working just fine. Perseverance when you're frustrated is a really, really -- an important ideal to uphold because there's going to be constant frustration. Life is very frustrating. If frustration is something that's going to make you retreat then you need to examine other areas of your life too because you're not going to be able to go all in on the important areas of your life if frustration is your barrier. Because there's a lot of frustration but on the other side of frustration there's a lot of good stuff. Most of the good things you're going to accomplish, the really meaningful things, can only be earned and achieved through frustration.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

JORDAN:

When you persevere through frustration, not only do you build those new neural pathways, you build those new habits, you

also build the habit of persevering when frustrated which is great because it teaches you self-trust, which is that when you get frustrated, instead of your next thought being, "I can't do this, this sucks. I'm going home," your thought will be -- hopefully you'll teach yourself to think this way that, "All right this is frustrating, that means it's right on the edge of my comfort zone, I'm in the learning area. I'm in the learning zone now and when I get through this I'm going to have a new skill." And that's something that took me years to get. Years and years. Because before that I just got frustrated and angry and then left it at that until enough reps came through where I always made it through to the other side, or often made it to the other side.

And I think that sort of leads into your other maxim here which is, "I don't run from mistakes, I learn from them," because it's very easy to get frustrated with a mistake, especially one that you make, and then go, "Well this sucks," and you just dwell on it. You pack it up into a nice little package and then you swallow it and that's a big problem. You can really get yourself into a negative thought loop by running from mistakes or dwelling on them and not using them for fuel.

DANIEL: Yeah and also I think we associate -- we incorrectly associate our personal self with the mistake that you made.

JORDAN: Yeah good point, yeah. Exactly.

DANIEL: We think that a mistake, especially a mistake from being a novice at something -- we think that making a mistake at something is going to say something about like the quality of the type of person we are or how smart we are or how capable we are. But mistakes are just like the frustration, they're unavoidable. There's no way to avoid them so this way of thinking, you know not running from mistakes and learning from them, is out of pure necessity. And you'll find that the only time you're going to start to develop that new skill, or

you're going to get a little bit stronger in a certain area, is when you've made enough mistakes to stop making them again.

I think about Jiu-Jitsu -- I trained Jiu-Jitsu pretty hard and I've competed a bunch of times and I think about all the mistakes I've made that have resulted in me getting like just completely ***** up. Just choked out, just in pain or just really struggling, and it takes a lot of mistakes on my part for me to like hardwire a new skill set and new neural pathway, but once you do that, you're good for life. And so, when you frame your mistakes from the perspective of learning from them and you encourage yourself to make more and faster, you know within reason, you're going to develop that thick skin, you're going to develop that self-confidence like you were talking about. I mean you're also can develop some self-awareness. And those skills combined as a result of your mistakes are going to allow you to move faster up the chain as you get smarter and as your business progresses.

JORDAN: Now the next one -- it seems like we touched on this a little bit. "I'm inspired by successful people." That's great but does that mean instead of jealous? Is that what that means? Or does that mean that you draw your motivation somehow from others?

DANIEL: I think it's both man. This really does harken back to the idea of being jealous of other people who are succeeding. I have also had so many friends who, you know -- they're just like crushing it. I'm like, "Oh, man I'm doing pretty good," but like I could be doing a lot better. And so I've also kind of adopted a similar mindset to you in that, if I see someone in my space or in my industry who's like really crushing it, I'm like, "All right well you know what? You can go ahead and take the headway and then I'll just ride behind until I find my lane."

JORDAN: Exactly, yeah.

DANIEL: So you have to be inspired by people who are well, who are related to what's important to you because that's going to open a door for you. It's really more about timing. It's not about

whether you're good enough or bad enough, it's about is it the right time for you? And so, let those who are doing really well inspire you and just wait for your time as you improve your craft.

JORDAN: Yeah I think it's really easy to run into problems with this though because it can be, for me especially -- I had struggled early on with just massive demotivation looking at other people succeeding in a certain area. That was because I identified success in those areas with something inside my identity that was external. That's really tough. When you tie something from your internal sense of identity to something external, you have no control over it anymore and that will absolutely ruin your life. It can anyway.

DANIEL: You know what? That's a really tough place to be when you're tying all these external events to your personal self. That's a real tough place to be and it can really stick with you for a long time if you don't figure out how to change that thought process.

JORDAN: Yeah it works in the short term. You can see Gary Vaynerchuk --the style of motivation of people that are just so hungry. "Argh hustle!" Yeah but you can really end up burning yourself out, getting yourself sick, or ruining the rest of your life --

DANIEL: Totally.

JORDAN: -- by trying to catch everybody, because you're -- not only are not running your own race, you're not even running one other person's race, you're running 10 other people's race. You've got to be the best on YouTube and you've got to have the Instagram and you've got to have the best-selling book, and your podcast has to be great. It's impossible and it will cause you, whenever you fall short of those goals, which is of course inevitable --

DANIEL: Always, 100 percent of the time.

JORDAN: You will then think badly about yourself. You could get on national TV but if your friend gets on national TV and the show that they got on is bigger, suddenly you're a failure again.

(laugh)

DANIEL: You know what was so funny man? I was thinking about this the other day because to promote the book, I dropped a mixtape. So it's not rapping but what it is is we took ideas from the book and then also just some personal stories from my life and we put them over some really nice beats so you can listen to it. And so you can just learn and listen to it at the same time. And it's done really well and I mixed it and I cut in a lot of stuff that was interesting to me like different little things from movies and things that listeners will find interesting.

And so, we did it as like a promo to get awareness up for the book. We released this exactly a week ago, today, and there have been like almost 8,000 downloads of it so far. Or 8,000 streams. And I remember thinking in my head, I remember thinking, "Man someone with such a big following shouldn't you have had more downloads? Or shouldn't you have had more streams? I remember thinking, "You know what? I'm not going to go in with that mindset. I'm going to congratulate myself for getting 8,000 streams on a mixtape this week. And I know I wouldn't have been able to do it in the past, so congrats to me and **** comparisons." You know? **** it, like, I'm happy. I think that's cool.

JORDAN: Well you're a better man than I. I end up comparing even against myself and then I realize I'm moving the goalposts every time I do.

DANIEL: Yeah.

JORDAN: "Oh, you got 125,000 downloads today? Wow that should be good. I mean, last month you wouldn't have even gotten close to that but oh -- but last week you had the same amount of downloads on the same day so you didn't grow. What a loser." I

mean I'm not that harsh on myself but there are times where I will get into a negative mindset like that and it's very tough to snap out of it. And the way that I snap out of it is I try to learn something new. Like, even if I'm reading another book -- at first it was just, "Read a book and distract yourself from the negative thought loop." What it turned out to be was, "Read a book and try to learn something else. Or even just practice Chinese vocabulary so that I can move forward objectively in another area and that leads to another maxim that you have which is -- I can learn anything that I want to. This one I read, I thought, "Well this isn't so unique or unusual." But when I talked to friends of mine that aren't necessarily business owners or in the same crazy man personal-growth niche or personal growth binge that you and I find ourselves on the same path. That's not necessarily a common mindset. A huge number of people don't believe they can learn anything they want to, which to me is kind of a bummer.

DANIEL:

It's so true and you know man, it's like, again there's this like perspective bias, right? Because when you start either reading more books or you start hanging around people who are really smart, you start to look at other people and you start to see your similarities between you and these really great people and you say to yourself, "Oh, I'm not that much different than them. I bet if I tried I could really learn that. I bet you I could do that." And that changes the way that you look at yourself.

So part of the reason I believe that I can learn anything that I want to is because I've just been around so many awesome people at this point, as I've like tried to claw my way into some sort of prominence, that I see now there really is a wide range of what humans are capable of. I'm capable of just the same and I think that until you start understanding that, it's going to be hard to believe that you can do anything you want. And so, it's your responsibility to start pushing yourself to learn more, to see what you're capable of, because I bet you're capable of a lot more than you think.

JORDAN: The next one seems a little bit Instagram meme with rainbows and sunshine over it but it's, "I can make a difference with my effort and attitude." And you know when I first read that I thought, "Well what were just trying to fill out the seven here? Come on, what's going on?" What is it about effort and attitude that you find even necessary to mention in this particular context?

DANIEL: Okay well I'll put it to you this way, Tim Ferris had an interesting quote. I don't know if it's actually his quote or he's reposting but I saw it on one of his social media accounts and he said, "We deal with the unnecessary suffering so that we don't need to deal with the necessary suffering.: I took that to mean we do things -- like let's say for instance we go to the gym and we get in shape and we train our bodies so that when we get older, we don't have arthritis or we don't have diabetes. We do things now, and it's suffering and there's pain so we don't have to deal with the other pain of not having prepared.

A lot of times in our life, we're going to have to make a decision where we have to kind of inflict some discomfort on ourselves now in order to get a bigger, better return later. And a lot of us are scared to inflict discomfort. So when I talk about making a difference with your effort and your attitude, I think there are going to be some times where you have to do some uncomfortable things -- just like we said in the other maxims, the idea of being resilient and you know, persevering when you're frustrated, there are going to be times where you have to deal with challenging things and if you can look at it with some positivity, not only are you going to have to get through it, which you have to anyway, but it's going to be easier for you if you change your attitude about it.

And so one way you can do that is you can start to -- basically start coaching yourself in your head. If you find yourself just really feeling down about like getting to the work you know you need to be doing or if you find yourself like, lacking confidence, you can coach yourself in your head and be like, "Look, I'm going to work at this until I get better. I'm never

going to be perfect." You can be grateful for the progress you've made and you can really coach yourself through it. But that type of attitude and that type of effort, on behalf of yourself, is going to go a long way for helping you to get through the more difficult parts of the entrepreneurial journey.

JORDAN: There's another one here that's, "I like to challenge myself," and I would love to ask you about that, but in the interest of time, I do want to move along to the dip here. Because you mentioned how to get out of an entrepreneurial slump and bounce back after a hard personal or professional loss and you actually had a pretty significant one. So tell us what happened here because this happened like right in the middle of your business, right in the middle of the book, everything.

DANIEL: So we're recording this now April 17, 2017 -- this happened August 2016. So still less than a year, relatively recent. My grandmother raised me. My mom was around, my mom was there, but like, she was like an integral part of my life and my mom was so young when she had me that my grandmother was really young too, she was 38 when I was born. So we had a very, very close relationship.

JORDAN: That's how old my mom was when she had me, maybe 37.

DANIEL: Exactly. So super, super young. And so because of that, we were very, very close. I lived with her for, you know, a few years and -- basically just like my second mother. Like the slightly wiser mother. So she just had a bunch of health issues that she didn't take care of and she ended up dying when she was 65. It was last year. And so she's only 65, just dies in her sleep. It ***** ruined my life man. It was just the worst thing to ever happen to me and I guess maybe that's a good thing because it's even still in the perspective of the world, it's not as terrible as could have happened. But for me personally, from a selfish perspective, it was very terrible.

JORDAN: Yeah your world fell apart. You don't have to compare it to other people's disasters.

DANIEL: True, of course. Of course.

JORDAN: It's fair enough. The person that raised you passed away with no warning. That's all that you need to say, right?

DANIEL: It was definitely -- it was devastating. It just threw me into this really, really bad slump. This just deep, deep depression where I just didn't really even have a will -- the will to get out of bed and so, unfortunately, you know, I don't get paid time off. I mean, in some ways, you know, I can make my own hours. But at the same time, I have to be working, I have to be doing stuff. And I just went through a long period of time, several, several months where it was hard for me to do my job and that's kind of when I had the darkest -- the darkest days in the business.

JORDAN: How did you get through that? I mean you had to mourn that. I remember seeing that. And I also remember being a little worried about you because you had started doing some things that we concerning, and I don't mean like you started getting into drugs or something like that. But I mean, you started to do things like, talk to me late at night, like, "I'm really into music now," and I'm like, "Oh, crap are you going to lose focus in the middle of your book process?" But at the same time, I had to be delicate with it because I couldn't be like, "Get your head out of your butt and go write your book," right? Because if you're not in that headspace, you're not in that headspace, and I didn't want to push you away in the middle of a personal loss. But that was concerning and I remember talking with AJ about it and going, "Is he even going to finish this book or what? What's going to happen now?"

Because you can get thrown off your game hard, not you, but anyone can get thrown off their game hard. If it's playoff season, to use a sports analogy which you know I'm so good at because I don't watch any sports. But it's in the middle of game time and you're supposed to have your A-game and suddenly you're looking around for the water boy, right? You're screwed, right? You can really lose focus at the wrong time and drop the

ball. So if you didn't get back on the horse, this could have been really bad. How did you even hold onto anything that you were doing at this point?

DANIEL:

I mean I think it would be almost criminal of me to not acknowledge the really supporting people that were around me -- supportive people. There's just no way I can really realistically sit here and say that I personally gathered all the strength to overcome this. You know I have my family, I have my girlfriend, I have a lot of like, even -- like all levels of friendship. From people that I just met to like close friends calling me and helping me out. So that was a tremendous help. Outside of that, you know, what I can say is that I did take some time where I was off my game. There's no denying that. From that time though, it wasn't completely unproductive. It was about three months where I was just completely despondent but I got a lot of good creative work out of that.

I got a ton of writing that is potentially like the basis of the next book that I'm going to write. Because I did 90 days straight of like really long form essay writing because I was just compelled to. And I also produced a mixtape during that period which we're now using to promote the books. So I didn't know how those pieces would fit together at the time but they turned out to be really useful and it just was a necessary time. So I went through my necessary **** first and foremost, how I got through it. I had to go through my necessary period.

Everyone's going to have some sort of outlet, mine was creative. You've got to find an outlet. It could be working out, it could be like physical stuff at the gym. I was also doing a lot of Jiu Jitsu. It could be, you know, your own creative pursuit. You've got to figure out some way to get that energy out because you're going to need to express yourself in some way. The next part is, try and reframe it. You know I was just thinking to myself, I'm like, "We take death so personally," but her dying wasn't about me. Like, I lost something but it's not the universe's personal smite against me, doesn't make sense.

JORDAN: It would be easy to think about it that way because you're the one that's in pain, up close and personal, and she's gone.

DANIEL: Right, if anyone should be felt sorry for, it's her. But she's gone so it cancels itself out because she doesn't care. So, although that doesn't like necessarily soften the blow of a parent dying, it's more like well logically, you know, there's really no one left to be sad for. It's all good, it's okay and you're going to be fine because you're here. You know, just try and reframe it. Trying to also think in -- positively, like -- because one of her things was she really wanted to -- books. Because she's such an avid reader but she never ended up doing that so I thought, you know, I have a perfect opportunity now to carry on this work and see my going through this as part of just a continuation of the process. And that gave me again, a different perspective on the purpose behind what I was doing and that made it a lot easier to push.

JORDAN: How do you know how to transition to your thirties? I mean for me, going from my twenties to my thirties was easy because I had just gotten done being an attorney and I had just started my business, so I only had a couple years and my twenties melded right into my thirties because I was in freaking grad school until I was 27. You don't have the same kind of situation, right? You started your business in your twenties. As you become 30-something soon, are you really looking at your twenties as, "I should be further along than I am now?" I mean what is the transition going to look like for you? You talk about, you know, sacking up and hustling harder but you also talk about skilling up getting better at things as you get older because, not that you had the excuse before but now you have no excuse not to know something. When you're 20-something you can say, "Look I'm young, I'm -- "

DANIEL: My frontal lobe is still developing.

JORDAN: Yeah, I'm whetting my appetite here.

DANIEL: No, no, no.

JORDAN: But now when you're 30, it's like, "Well if you don't know this, then you're just a screw up."

DANIEL: I know.

JORDAN: You know? You've got to bring it.

DANIEL: I've been thinking about that same paradox. It's too official. Thirty-anything is too official. Yeah I mean look, first of all, this transition to 30 is only made more hilarious by the fact that my company is Rich20Something.

JORDAN: Yeah, good luck. Somebody thought ahead on the branding.

DANIEL: "What are you going to do now? Are you going to change the name?" I mean come on like, just dumbass questions like that 24/7.

JORDAN: Well if you want to buy rich30-something.com give me a call, because I thought of this before you did.

DANIEL: First of all, no, for anyone who's wondering, I'm not going to change the name or immediately sell the company. But, I can only see myself from the present man. I can't look back because I think that that question really requires me to be a few years along in my thirties to really have some perspective on how that transition happens because I'm kind of just playing it out in real time. Like, I know I'm going to be 30 relatively soon but I don't necessarily have any opinion about what that means for me in my life until I've had a little of experience in that area. I think it's going to be easy. I think it's going to be easier because I've learned so much **** these past like, five or six years, that I think at least I got most of like the barebones knucklehead things out of the way. And so I'm going to learn more complex things, I think, as I go along. But I think I got most of the really dumb **** out of the way so I think thirties is going to be better and forties is going to be even better than that.

JORDAN: Of course, yeah. And that's the only real healthy way that you can think about this. And you've been working a lot on producing tons of different types of work. In the beginning, when I first met you, I thought it almost looked a little unfocused, but what I realize now is you're trying, in many ways, to find your voice, which you have since started to discover. We talked about this a few months ago, this is kind of what Tupac did, right? I mean it's funny to think about because when we were younger, before he passed away, he seemed like he was a grown up just like everybody else. He was in his twenties, was he not?

DANIEL: Twenty-five when he died.

JORDAN: Yeah, so not even close to 30 when he passed away and yet he hustled like a 30-something, and very prolific. What was going on there? It seems like you took a page out of the Tupac manual as well because he was producing a ton of work.

DANIEL: Yeah I mean, I've been referred to as the Tupac of entrepreneurship.

JORDAN: Nobody has ever called you that.

(laugh)

DANIEL: On my own landing pages.

JORDAN: Okay, I was just checking. I was just -- your copywriter called you that.

DANIEL: Actually my -- the mixed tape landing page says, "Is Daniel DiPiazza the Tupac of entrepreneurship?" so --

JORDAN: Mmm.

DANIEL: -- you guys will like that.

JORDAN: Yeah.

DANIEL: But Tupac was extremely prolific in a very short period of time because, you think about him, he's 25 but for his -- those whole 25 years he wasn't working. He was really only producing music for like five years. You know, from like 20. Maybe he was like practicing before that but he was really only producing music for like five years and in those five years -- I have to look at the stats again but he put out like 12 albums, he did three movies, he wrote a book, you know? And lots of people complain about trying to get a blogpost out in a week and I'm like, "Man there are people without the Internet who are producing way more than this."

And he still has stuff being released because he put out those albums and they're still coming out with them like every couple years. So, I like to look at that and I like to think, "Okay, how can I create something similar from my body of work?" And I know that, again, time and place has a lot to do with it so I don't expect to get the same results as Tupac but what I think is, it's a valuable way to look at the world. If you say, "How can I create the most amount of work and really find my voice? How can I create a great body of work that's cohesive?" And that's what I've tried to do.

I've tried to do quite a bit of writing but we also are doing like podcasts now, we're really, really getting sophisticated on social media, our YouTube is growing, we're trying to just really do as much work as possible because part of the strategy here is that there's a content war going on. And the more places you have your voice in and the more people can see who you are and relate to you, the more mindshare that you have of the community. And so that -- we're very aware of that.

JORDAN: I think Tupac between early '90s --

DANIEL: 92 to 96.

JORDAN: -- produced, what, like a thousand songs? And I'm not even exaggerating. It was somewhere near a thousand songs.

DANIEL: Yeah, literally.

JORDAN: Which is insane. That's one every other day or something ridiculous.

DANIEL: Yeah, with no Internet, just like straight recording it in the studio, track after track after track.

JORDAN: These are finished products. That's like writing a book chapter that's already been mostly edited, it's not a rough draft. This is a mid-level draft that needs some final touches and mixing and stuff. That's like one every -- I don't know. One every week day or something like that?

DANIEL: Yeah it's one every week day. You're only talking about the things that have been released, there's more. There's more that we don't even know about and he had time to star in three movies, and he had a whole book of poetry published. And I think he was like having a lot of sex.

JORDAN: I would imagine that's part of it when you're 24 and you're loaded and famous.

DANIEL: Yeah. You're 24 and you're loaded and he was also like, out on the streets a little bit, being a little bit of a thug. So like, he was doing a lot of stuff.

JORDAN: He had a court case. That takes up a lot of time. I know that from personal experience. So, "How do you do it Tupac? How do you balance?"

DANIEL: And he was in jail for like 18 months of that five year period.

JORDAN: To be fair, I bet you get a lot of stuff done in jail, writing-wise.

DANIEL: Writing-wise, yeah, he probably wrote all those songs there. But he had no -- it's not like he had the Internet, you know? A rapper goes to jail now and they can just record their whole album in jail. How do you think Gucci Mane has stayed so relevant? He just keeps rapping no matter whether he goes to jail or not, and he just keeps putting it out.

JORDAN: This is a good lesson here, aside from what's ridiculous about this and fun, is just -- the body of work that you create is bound to come up with a few hits. Not only that, but as an entrepreneur or anybody starting their own body of work, artist whatever, you can't just get caught up on the one idea and like, "This next launch is going to be the thing!" It's about playing the numbers game and investing your energy and resources into a diversified set of ideas, all of which could be a great thing while also not losing focus on what your core is. You don't want to become a music producer and an actor unless you're Tupac. But you do have to focus on a certain body of work that's going to have a through line that's going to appeal to a similar demographic, or at least similar demographics if we're going in multiple areas here.

There's a lot here, I mean we talked about a lot today. There's a lot of ideas here that aren't just for 20-something or 30-something folks, they're not just for entrepreneurs and artists. There's a lot here that can be taught and learned about focus, about staying on task, and about making that transition into a body of work if you're deciding to start your own business or do a project like writing a book. So, thank you very much for coming on, man. Is there anything I haven't asked you that you want to make sure that you deliver here?

DANIEL: Thank you for having me, first of all, and I would like to highlight one more point about the idea of really trying to make your mark. Because a lot of people are trying to start a business and they're trying to get people to see them and buy from them and follow them, and I think where we go wrong is we try to make things go viral.

We try to make things that are going to be flashy and impressive and when it doesn't happen we're disappointed. And I asked Seth Godin about this because I had an article that went viral early on. I emailed him and I said, "How can I make this happen again?" and he said, "Don't try to make it happen again. Write for just one person -- as if you're writing to one person and make something so good that they can't go to sleep again without telling at least one more person, and write something like that," and that's been something I've been following. And I think at the end of the day, you know, after all the things we've talked about today, the transition and everything that I've gone through, I think that's probably one of the key tenets that's really encapsulated by success.

JORDAN: I love the idea of not trying to make that happen again but actually service your demographic. Serve the right audience. And the book is called [Rich20Something: Ditch Your Average Job, Start an Epic Business, and Score the Life You Want](#). A little bit of hyperbole in the title, that's what the kids are doing these days --

(laugh)

JORDAN: -- but you know, I do dig the idea because I think that there's a lot of satisfaction to be had in starting your own thing. Even if you don't ditch your job, you can at least ditch your average job and do something that you love and that's what you've managed to do over the past few years and I've been privileged to see it happen with my own eyes.

DANIEL: You're one of the main contributors to my story man, and I am very grateful and much appreciative.

JORDAN: Likewise, my friend. Thank you so much.

DANIEL: Thank you so much.

JORDAN: Great big thank you to Daniel. The book is called [Rich20Something](#), that'll be linked up in the show notes as

well for this episode. Of course rich20something.com and rich20something.com/book has a little bit of extras for you there. If you enjoyed this one, don't forget to thank Daniel on Twitter. We'll have that linked in the show notes as well. And, tweet me your number one takeaway from Daniel. I'm @theartofcharm on Twitter. Remember you can tap on our album art in most podcast players to see the show notes for this episode. We'll link to the show notes right on your phone.

Our boot camps, our live programs, are at theartofcharm.com/bootcamp. Look you are an art project, right? You can curate your input and curate those around us and shape your future self. The live program is where we teach a lot of the skills that you're hearing on the show in person. Body language, vocal tonality, eye contact, first impressions, networking, mentorship, persuasion, and influence. Join thousands of other guys who've been through the program. The boot camps are super rewarding. It's just amazing how far these take people -- what we can see with our own eyes. And remember, we're sold out a few months in advance so if you're thinking about it a little bit, get in touch, get some info from us so you can plan ahead. Those details, once again, are at theartofcharm.com/bootcamp.

I also want to encourage everyone to join our AoC challenge at theartofcharm.com/challenge. You can text the word 'charmed' to 33444. That's C-H-A-R-M-E-D to 33444. The challenge is about improving your networking and connection skills and inspiring those around you to develop a personal and professional relationship with you. We'll also email you our fundamentals Toolbox that I mentioned earlier on the show. That includes great practical stuff, ready to apply, right out of the box on reading body language, having charismatic nonverbal communication, the science of attraction, negotiation techniques, networking and influence strategies, persuasion tactics, and everything else we teach here at The Art of Charm. It will make you a better networker, it will make you a better connector, and it will make you a better thinker.

That's theartofcharm.com/challenge or text 'charmed,' in the U.S. to 33444.

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