

Authentic Networking: The Give & Get Starts with Real Relationships – Joe Polish – #992

Dave:

You're listening to the Human Upgrade with Dave Asprey.

Today I'm recording in a new location in part because I've become nomadic on my way to moving to Austin. And I am at my dear friend Joe Polish's house. And you've heard Joe years ago on the show talking one of the most powerful interviews I've actually done where he just got really raw about addiction and trauma and things like that. But the other part of Joe that you probably don't know about unless you follow me really close on social, is that Joe's group Genius Network has had a profound impact on my business experience and what I've had happen. And what, very early, maybe 2013, a year or two after I started blogging, Bulletproof was still very small. I hadn't taken any venture funding, hadn't done anything. My friend JJ Virgin, who I met at Michael Fishman's event said, Hey, you have to go to this thing called Genius Network, it's 25 grand, and my eyeballs melted. \$25,000 to go sit with some douchebag. No one's worth that.

And then I was like, Okay, but I trust JJ, she just helped me learn how to write a New York Times best-selling book. And so I'm just going to close my eyes and just pretend like I didn't just cut a check for \$25,000 to go to a meeting, a three day meeting with Joe. And I went there and he said, straight up, I'll give you your money back if you don't 10X this. And through Joe, I met Peter Diamandis, who I've done a lot of things with and I met a whole bunch of other who are now close friends and people who are entrepreneurs who are helping other people. It's one thing to be in a group full of piranha-like people who are just all out to take. And a lot of internet marketing is like that. And you occasionally meet these groups of people that are curated where it is people are genuinely interested in helping each other.

So Joe's become a dear friend, we've gone fishing together and things like that. But he wrote what might be one of the foundational new business books, an upgrade to the old thinking, no, not Thinking Go Rich.

Joe:

How to Win Friends.

Dave:

Yeah, there you go. Thank you. How to Win Friends and Influence People. We went back and forth on the title over and over, but it's called What's in It for Them? So I decided I was going to interview Joe about this on the show because this book will teach you something even if you're not about business, if you're just about relationships. Joe has studied this for many years and is, in my experience, a master of connecting people and building great friendships. So Joe, welcome back.

Joe:

First off, thank you. Thank you for being a cool dude, being part of my group, being part of my life. And we've done some really insane unique things together. And we can talk, we've been on fishing boats just saying the worst things that a human could possibly say to each other in a form of bonding with friends. And it's been fun. And yeah, I want to talk about whatever will help your audience better connect with other people, because no matter what you do business personally, it always involves relationships. And many people are not good at developing relationships. And I was not good at developing relationships growing up, and that's why I ended up now probably learning as much as one possibly could and

applying it for building a connection network. And so I want to help other people build their own Genius Networks.

Dave:

I don't know if I ever told you about this. I used to have Asperger's syndrome when I was a kid. I was pretty darn unaware of other people and relationship dynamics in part because of toxic mold and a lot of early childhood trauma, birth trauma and nothing that anyone did on purpose. But what I started doing was I'd go to the Stanford campus and there was this business networking group every Thursday night, this thing called the Stanford Barn. And I was like the fat computer hacker standing in the corner eating grapes and cheese and I would just watch people and just every Thursday for two years. Because I knew business networking mattered if I wanted to succeed. And this was back, I think I was working at 3Com when I did this, which is now a dead networking company.

And I just remember thinking, this is hard, but there's a pattern. And I slowly worked it out. And then I had a couple mentors who took me under their wing, Oh, this weird kid's probably, he seems really smart and knows what he's talking about, but he's clueless. The bumbling level of clueness, or cluelessness. How bad were you? Because that's how bad I was.

Joe:

Well, I was more scared than everything else, in my mind I never asked someone out on a date, I never went to prom in high school. I was definitely afraid of not only developing relationships and approaching people, but I was completely insecure in myself. I was shy and introverted and part of it just simply was due to my upbringing and my childhood. My mother was a former nun. I've heard every joke under the sun on that. But she left the convent because she had gotten ill and she met my father in church. They fell in love. They got married, they had me and I have an older brother and my mother died of ovarian cancer when I was four years old. And that was in 1972. And so when that happened, my father was tormented, he was broken, he never really recovered. He lost the love of his life. And so every year to two years, my entire childhood, we would go to different cities in the Southwest. So different parts of Arizona, different parts of New Mexico, different parts of Texas.

So I would go to these schools and it was hard for me to develop relationships with anyone. And as soon as I established some friendships, we would uproot and we would go somewhere else. So I never really quite learned. I always felt like this is all temporary. I was always going to a new school. The only relationships that I had were very fleeting, temporary brothers and sisters of my father. And I never really got to know my mother's family side that much after she died. So I never felt safe in the world and I was scared and I would pray to not get picked on and bullied, but I was a shy kid. And then I tried sports and I had a sadistic little league coach that would force me to hold the baseball bat in a certain way where I could never hit the ball, and I could hit the ball fine if I just could lean the bat back and he would make me hold it straight and I could not hit the ball.

So I ended up quitting the team. Then the kids on the team started picking on me, some of them beating me up because I quit the team. But I quit the team only because I couldn't play the game. And it was a messed up childhood. So I started doing drugs junior high and high school, and that became one of the ways that I did it. And let me say this too, when I talk about things that are bad about my childhood, I want to be careful and preface it with everybody has painful, difficult things in their life. And there's a saying in recovery groups, because I've been in addiction recovery for over two decades, that you're as sick as your secrets. And if you try to fight silent battles, these are the hardest battles to fight. That's something I always try to talk about. And so I don't want this to sound like woundology, I never want to use my story as like, Oh poor me, because everybody has had awful stuff.

Dave:

There's a problem with that. Some people just love to go out there and they just pour it out, almost bask in it. And you don't do that, that I've ever seen you do. You're more just illustrating. It was pretty bad.

Joe:

Yeah. But because I have an addiction recovery foundation and I spent about half my time in that world helping people with addiction recoveries, and I don't charge for it, and it's not because I'm some philanthropic angel, it helps me in my own recovery, it really does. If you think your life sucks, there's other people that would love to have someone to sit with them, even if they're dying in a hospice center there. So part of it is I do that work, it's difficult work, it's challenging work, but it's very fulfilling for what I do.

And if you're going to tell your story about that, it's really dangerous to get so attached to it, because there's a lot of speakers that use their signature story as a way to manipulate people. And narcissistic people are really good at doing that. And I never want to come across like, oh feel bad for me because, and again, and I say this also not to minimize it either, because you can do the reverse too. You can say, Oh it was no big deal. And a lot of times it was freaking awful. So there's a balance on how to do it. I'm not sure I know the exact perfect ways to try to explain this, but I just want to point that out.

Dave:

Okay. There's no possible way that you would've known how to form great connections, how to build the thing that you have now. And for context, I've lost track of the number of times that you've reached out with a video or just called me and said, Dave, you need to talk to this person. And they're always spot on connections and you do it more than anyone else I know. And I have some amazing friends, people that guys like Mike Kanig and all who are just helping people in the world. What happens though is that a lot of people don't understand. There are people who profoundly just want to help and they're not trying to get something out of it.

And I didn't believe this at all as a kid. I didn't understand how society worked, how networks of humans worked. And certainly I thought that if I helped anyone, or if I accepted help from anyone, that that person, then I would owe them something. And it was always transactional. Maybe it was something in how I was raised and I loved it that you wrote the What's in It for Them?, as the title in your new book, because what is going on with that? I learned people love to help if they're the right people.

Joe:

Well, yeah. And well there are givers like Adam Grant, who I know personally, he wrote a book called Give and Take and he writes about givers, takers, and matchers. And my book is not like his book. I think you would get a lot from his book. It's a great book. I write about different things. But the purpose of my book is because people ask me, why'd you write the book and I often make a joke. Well some speakers or authors will say, I wrote it because I want to bless the world with all my lessons and ideas. Some people just want to make money selling a book.

Dave:

Writing a book is terrible on a per hour basis, you might as well just pull shots of espresso, you'll make more money.

Joe:

Let me give you a marketing thing on that. I've sold tens of millions of dollar's worth of courses for hundreds if not, and thousands of dollars, which is way easier than writing a book.

Dave:

Exactly.

Joe:

It really is, you're right in that department, is if you think writing a book, there are very few authors as a standalone that can just write a book and get rich. Smart marketers can use it as a seed, they can use it as a probe, they can use it to enroll people. I actually wrote this book mostly for me to remember the things that I have done that have worked and have helped propel me forward in my life and the mistakes I've made. So the book is mixed with methods, strategies, techniques, philosophies on how to develop and connect with people and cautionary tales on what not to do, because I've made a lot of mistakes helping people that I should not have put what I call time, attention, money, effort, and energy that have abused me, that have taken advantage of me, and you know.

Dave:

You and me both. Yeah.

Joe:

Yeah. So it is like you can put your effort and your love and your care and your concern and your relationships and connections and offer them to other people and they will cut off your hand. Now they won't do it right away.

Dave:

No.

Joe:

A lot of times they will... Because sociopaths and psychopaths and narcissists and takers are very good at identifying who are the givers of the world. And I really love givers. I actually think the best way to operate in life is to be a giver. I even wrote a book called *Life Gives to the Giver*, because life gives to the giver and takes from the taker, but not right away. We can look out right now into the world and see a lot of takers, many that are in the highest positions of politics and business running the world that are just doing nothing but destroying humanity and creating a massive suffering while they simultaneously make a ton of money. So people can look at that and be like, I don't get it. Why be a giver when I see all these takers that seems to be the path?

And what I want to do is help the givers of the world not get jaded. I want to help them to be better boundaried, because I think these people, some people, their purpose in life is a bad example. And so their punishment is their own existence. There's so much fear porn and propaganda that's being pumped out into the world right now. And oftentimes when people are scared and desperate, it allows the people that will take advantage to come out of the woodwork. So I think it's Cabot Roberts that said years ago that human beings are walking around the world with their umbilical cords in their hand looking for some place to stick in into in order to give them some nourishment.

And people that are exploitive will take those people that are desperate and hurting and they will take advantage of them. And it's sick and it's twisted and it's unfair and it's unethical and it's unfortunate.

However, if you are a boundaried giver and you genuinely care and you produce more than you consume, that is what I think the world needs more than anything right now. And I want people that really have these giver tendencies. They really want to be helpful. They really get a joy out of being useful and grateful and valuable to others, is to not feel like it's not worth it, or to feel like, oh my God, because everyone that has the ability to feel empathy, because what I feel sorry for the narcissists of the world, they don't have the ability to feel empathy. And part of that usually comes from trauma.

Dave:

Yeah. Most narcissists are trauma monkeys.

Joe:

And it's insecurity. So I write about this in the book, but one of our Genius Network members, you probably know Dr. Don Wood.

Dave:

Yep.

Joe:

He's a former hockey player. He has this great line, he's now a trauma therapist. And he says, if you understood the atmosphere conditions of somebody's life, it would make sense why they do what it is they do. So I can often look at some of the most scandalous, sinister people and if you understood the atmosphere conditions of their life, it would make sense why they turned out the way they turned out. It doesn't make an excuse for them hurting or abusing people, especially when violence is involved, or massive forms of betrayal and deception. What it does though, it gives you an understanding that I'm the way I am, you're the way you are. Everyone is the way they are because the atmosphere conditions their life. And I believe that we can alter our atmospheric conditions.

I believe we can change things. And if we do that for ourselves, then the atmospheric conditions of our family, everyone we have the ability to influence, communities, countries can ultimately change. And I'm not talking about save the world stuff. If you want to save the world, because a lot of people use that as a cop out, I want to change the world, I want to save the world, change one person's life, then change five people's lives, then 10 people. And if you actually are really good at doing that, you might actually change a lot of people. But I'm not on submission to save the world or change the world. What I would like to do in addiction recovery is I'd like to be a catalyst to change the global conversation about how people view and treat addicts with compassion instead of judgment, and find the treatments that have the best forms of efficacy and then share those with the world.

So that's why I created Genius Recovery. It's an educational platform. But in order for me to do that, I have to put information out in the world and that's where my businesses actually help me facilitate doing that stuff.

Dave:

You know what I admire a lot about you Joe, is your inability to talk about your brand new book.

Joe:

Yeah, you're right. Well see, I talked to the head of my sales prevention department right before this interview and I was like, make sure we don't mention my book What's in It for Them?

Well see, I talked to the head of my sales prevention department right before this interview and I was like, make sure we don't mention my book What's in It for Them? Because someone may find that, that could be a really useful book for them and they may want to buy it. And we're just here to talk about possibilities, not actually give people a possibility to plant a path to. But here's the deal. If you actually want to have a book, which I really wrote is what I call a first domino, because at the end of every chapter of What's in It for Them?, this is my book. By the way, the website is whatsinitforthem.com. And you can get this now wherever books are sold. And I recorded this book myself because I like it when authors record their own book. And Dave, how much of a pain in the butt that was.

Dave:

The worst part of writing a book is reading it at the end.

Joe:

Oh my God, when you're a talker, but then you have to make sure every sentence you can't say a word out of place. Talking to 5,000 people for an hour is infinitely easier than recording your own audiobook from my perspective. But yeah, I recorded it. And What's in It for Them? is, every chapter has what I call dominoes, because I don't want to just describe the things that work and methods and strategies and stuff. I want people to have actionable things that they can use. And I call those things dominoes, because everyone has probably read a book or met a person or done something that changed their life in a positive way. And I didn't write a timely book, I wrote a timeless book. So I hope that this book is around when I'm long gone because the book, How to Win Friends and Influence People by Dale Carnegie, this book wouldn't exist had he not written that book.

And what the difference though is I wanted to enhance, not say this is better or worse or whatever. I wanted to update it as best I can because it's not about winning friends and influencing people, it's about winning the right friends and influencing the right people. Only aligning yourself, the people you're aligned with because so much of our energy is wasted, giving our time, our talent. I call it in chapter two, I call it Tammy, in the book I don't call it Tammy, I'm just doing that for sake of our conversation here. Time, attention, money, effort and energy. Those are the things that we can spend. And I worked out at a gym earlier today that I've several gym memberships and they have a big thing on the giant wall at this gym that says, effort is your responsibility. And I really like that line because the effort we put into things is our responsibility.

Dave:

Man, I think I'd be offended at that. I would just say effort represents a waste of your time and energy. Get the results with less effort. Isn't that what really want? Well, I don't fetishize effort, do you? It sounds like you might.

Joe:

Well, I don't fetishize it, but I actually believe you have to put forth effort.

Dave:

You do. But you should put forth morally as little effort as possible to get results. So you could put the effort into something else that's as good or better.

Joe:

Wow. Part of the way of doing that, which would be called... Okay, let's talk about leverage and productivity.

Dave:

Okay.

Joe:

Okay. Productivity would be maximum results least amount of time. Leverage is maximum results least amount of effort. Okay. To go to your point. So to highly leverage yourself in business or in life has to do with putting your time, attention, money, effort, and energy into people that appreciate it, people that are deserving of it and not wasting it on losers or takers. And if you cannot just notice as my friend Patrick Gentempo helped me understand, it's not just the-

Dave:

I like Patrick.

Joe:

Yeah, he's great. Yeah. He wrote a book called Your Stand is Your Brand. So what he said, there's the red flags that we can see, but it's the yellow flags that we don't often notice. And so when you're going through life, here's what I did really wrong for a long time. There's this really interesting saying I heard, which unfortunately I find it to be true when you're dealing with people that are playing manipulative games. Now, by the way, the reason I wrote What's in It for Them? is so I can remember some of these things that I was actually going to say.

Dave:

So one of the things I appreciate about you is your ability to continuously change direction. I feel like if we were driving in LA, you would just take every other off-ramp without really deciding whether or not you would and eventually you get there.

Joe:

Well, if you were to ever drive around with me and there was available time, I'm the type of guy that would want to stop and see all kinds of stuff because I'm insatiably curious. And it's one of the reasons that I do a lot of stuff with different relationships is because, and I'm going to even lose, I almost had a sense of what I was going to talk about. Now I'm going to completely lose that complete train of thought.

Dave:

I'm the worst interviewer ever-.

Joe:

No, no, no, that's fine. It's fine. We'll make it work. So like Dean Jackson, who's my co-host of the I Love Marketing podcast. We're driving around, see, I've ADHD. Now I'm friends with all kinds of people that are "experts" in ADD ADHD. Dr. Edward Hollowell is considered the top ADD ADHD psychiatrist. He's been a dear friend for over 20 years. I have numerous interviews with him. Gabor Maté who wrote the book Scattered, and-.

Dave:

Daniel Amen.

Joe:

Daniel Amen's scanned my brain six different times. They all have different perspectives on ADD ADHD. And people that are destructible like what Gabor will say is it's actually a response to trauma. That's one of his beliefs. And the distractibility comes in from childhood. So I've thought about that quite a bit and most of my clients and even someone like you with different levels of it. But we know in most cases exactly what we need to do with a lot of stuff. It's the executive functioning and we can't bring ourselves to do it. Now, not always, but it depends on the depth of it. But give me your perspective.

Dave:

What I see from the 40 years is that, and we've looked at 1500 entrepreneur brains, high performing brains at this point, helped a lot of people.

Joe:

Remember we did that together too.

Dave:

I do remember that.

Joe:

Yeah. Yeah.

Dave:

I just don't disclose it unless you disclose it, maybe you're public about that. But what you'll find is that there's a meaningful number of people who have an internal choke or editor and it's constantly second guessing with the no, don't say that. Okay. But it's all unconscious. So they're bouncing around. There's a, I believe equally large number of people who are dealing with neurotoxins or they're environmental from food, from their gut, heavy metals, mold, lime, paint fumes, all that kind of stuff. And then the brain just doesn't electrically do what it's supposed to do. So you have this mix of, well, sometimes I lose my train of thought because my brain isn't working very well, and sometimes I lose my train of thought because trauma went in and edited my thoughts.

So the worst thing you could do is have what I used to have, which was a highly toxic brain with actually toxin induced brain damage that Daniel Aman found and substantial massive of trauma from bullying and from birth and all that kind of stuff. So then you have an internal editor that takes energy. You have a lack of energy in the first place. And when you actually have a thought that didn't get edited, you probably run out of energy and you just bounce all over the place. But I was just teasing you about that.

Joe:

Well, no, no. Okay, first off, I've written two books on addiction recovery, and I'll say there's four ways that you get sober or stay sober, but sobriety is not actually per se, the goal, the reason that you're doing the drugs or the behavior is because you have some internal unsettling. And I believe addiction's a response to trauma. But what you said about biochemical, okay, so the first is no true addict recovers in isolation. I've never seen-

Dave:

Community.

Joe:

Yeah you need a community, we're tribal creatures, as Johann Hari says, the opposite of addiction is connection. So it's a connection disorder.

The second is, is biochemical, it's dopamine, it's serotonin. Gabor Maté writes about in his latest book, *The Myth of Normal*, which I actually helped him with that book. He says, he references a study where mice that are depleted of dopamine in their system that are starving, if you put them in front of food, they will starve to death. They don't even have the motivation to the food. So what you're saying about mold brain toxins, there's so much to be said about that. That's why if you feed prisoners really crappy food, it makes them more violent.

Dave:

It does.

Joe:

And so unhealth cheap food in prison doesn't save the state or help these prisoners at all. It actually makes it worse. And so between, you probably know the exact amounts, between 70% to 95% of serotonin is made in the gut, correct?

Dave:

Yeah. Well, it probably depends on who you are and what you have in your gut. So somewhere in there, a great majority-

Joe:

But the fact is, if you have gut issues, what makes you feel happy and connected oftentimes is it could be your trauma, it could be different things, but it could be poisoning, it could be mold. And that's a complex subject that could... You know a hell of a lot more about it than me. But the point is, that's one aspect of it. And there's two other ones.

Dave:

Even if your gut's messed up, if you have a strong community supporting you, you're going to be better. And it's interesting that our current surgeon general was on my show before he became surgeon general. And he had written a book about the biggest epidemic he'd seen was actually an epidemic of a lack of connection from people becoming disconnected. And then he joined the current regime and is talking less about his book and more about ways to remove connection through facial coverings and things like that.

Joe:

So Nate Hollowell's vitamin C is what we need a lot of, and what he refers to as Vitamin Connect.

Dave:

I love that. I love that quote. We do need more connection. And it's hard for anyone to argue with that given the results of two years of removing connection by locking people in their houses. And the problem is, and this is something that was really a big thing for me, I was really good at feeling lonely in a crowded room. And many, many people are good at that. The number of close friends that people report having now is at an all-time low and it's been going down for the last 30 years. So people feel like they don't even know how to make a single friendship much less do the kind of thing you do where you have lots of friends and these are actually real friends, and you have lots of people you help who are in your sphere but aren't friends. But I've seen you, I've known you for a decade now and I watch how you operate. It's pretty damned impressive to be honest.

So you went out and you consciously learned how to make friends, how to build a community, how to build connection. And then you went to the trouble of writing the book *What's in It for Them?*, which is awesome. But here's the question. I sat down with you and my former wife over dinner right after you'd had a really big betrayal with someone in your business. And I'm not going to go into any detail, you know what I'm talking about. And you were genuinely hurt. I've never seen you like that just sad and just disheartened. And it's pretty easy to get bitter and to get angry and just F this and to have that vibe. How long did it take you to work through that?

Joe:

Well, there's definitely still scar tissue from it because it's another form of rape when someone does something non-consensually and they take from you. And when it's someone that you know, and someone that you have helped tremendously that could look you in the eyes and tell you that they love you and that they care about you while they're doing all this devious stuff behind-

Dave:

It hurts.

Joe:

... Yeah, it's really, I would be lying if I didn't say, it's not hard to deal with that, or to process that, especially if you can't even fathom doing that sort of thing to someone else. But you can see how does someone do it. That required me to talk to a lot of friends. I did not realize how my years in recovery would be helpful for that sort of stuff. I also had to spend a lot of time doing a lot of yoga and doing a lot of breathing and doing my best to meditate sometimes when I just wanted to jump out of my skin. And I did a deep dive and study narcissist. So my friend Dr.-.

Dave:

I'm working on a book about them now.

Joe:

Good. Good.

Dave:

Because I had a similar experience after that just recently.

Joe:

Yeah. And I will say Dr. Romney Divasla, who's one of the top narcissist experts in the world, I've done a couple interviews with her, she's great. She's written some great books and I have an awesome interview with her online. That's something that is, everyone's on the narcissist bandwagon too. So some people are fetishizing the whole narcissist thing. But we live in a culture right now that is with social media where, think about being an influencer. I want to be an influencer. It's like-

Dave:

Why would you want that?

Joe:

What's that?

Dave:

Why would you want that?

Joe:

Well ask the majority of young people that want to be an influencer, because it's been made out... And look, when I was young, if I was a teenager, low self-esteem, low self-worth in, I'd want to be famous. I'd want people to admire me. To this day I still do. I'd be lying if I didn't say that.

Dave:

Seriously?

Joe:

Well, the ego part of every one of us wants to be liked. But when I took a one year sabbatical last year, part of the things that I went into it with is I wanted to smoke out as much part of me that needed external validation to feel I was useful as a human, or valuable as a human. And I did where I'm just not going to go, I'm not going to even look at social media. I didn't. And to this day I don't have it on my... I have a backup phone that has the stuff, but I don't have it on my main phone. I have no social media on my main phone because I found not being on social media for me, not for everyone, I can always speak for my own life, was more inspirational to me than reading inspirational quotes on social media.

But we live in a culture right now where it is just, it's being framed that being famous or being an influencer. So I will say to people that there's thought leaders, any idiot can come up with a thought. I like result leaders. I like people that have the ability to produce the results. So, that's impressive to me. And, yeah.

Dave:

You're right. So people do seek out fame because they think it's going to make them happy. And it used to be money and they still seek out money because it's going to make them happy. But you've got several books and a good amount of visibility and you're financially successful and all. What percentage of your happiness comes from those?

Joe:

Well, I get more joy really as a human in the middle of a really just challenging yoga class. And I do putting together most business deals from a feeling of real connection.

Joe:

Well, I get more joy really as a human in the middle of a really just challenging yoga class than I do putting together most business deals from a feeling of real connection. The physical stuff is always a deeper connection because most of it is fleeting. Here's what I would say about fame though. I don't like the idea of fame, because I know a lot of very famous people and I see what it can actually do to someone depending on their relationship with it. Meaning if you're like our friend Dan Sullivan says, if you're pursuing growth over status, I think you'll find a lot more fulfillment and a lot more value. But if you're status seeking, social ladder climbing, trying to look famous, trying to play the part, but deep down inside you're doing that to cover up, or not even look at insecurities or stuff like you haven't done the work, then it will fool you.

And I've really worked hard, don't believe your own PR. Because if you are doing good stuff in the world, people should be saying glowing things. All people say, Oh my God, I got this amazing testimonial about my product or my service. And it's like, that's what you should do. Unless you're putting crap out into the world, people should be saying glowing things about it. And if you're selling anything for a company you work for, or for your own business and you're not getting that sort of feedback, you really need to take a look at what the hell you're selling. People should say amazing things if you are really selling something amazing. If you're selling mediocre stuff or crap in the box and you kid someone into thinking, Oh my god, it's the most amazing thing ever. You know. Karmically we know if we're doing good in the world or we're not. I think that am I a hundred percent sure, not? People can kid themselves. And so, the fame, the challenge with fame, see I don't want to be a sage from the stage, I want to be a guide from the side, that sort of thing. And so it's like I don't like the guru stuff. I get it, I understand it. Both me and my friend Brooke Castillo, who I did an interview with right before, she has a business, the life coach school, and she teaches people how to basically build a business and a career by helping people, and she is a convert of her own system. She went through her own journey and then she packaged it up and did it. And she's very successful. There's a lot of successful life coaches, but she built the most successful business in that industry, and as far as I know the world. Well, let's do this because the people listening to this, how do you connect with people in a way that would be more beneficial and valuable?

Speaker 1:

What can we teach them?

Joe:

Yeah, there's connecting and then there's connecting since we're talking about narcissists, there are people that connect by conning people. And the people that become my true inner circle friends or I look at people that are more powerful, how do they treat people that are less powerful than them? Most, I know quite a few billionaires personally and many I've met in addiction recovery, no one would even know that I know them. And I fortunately joined a high profile group for people with sexual addiction in the year 2000 that could not... And there were academy award winning actors and actresses, NBA players, NFL players, musicians, politicians, clergy, people that were well known, but they couldn't go out and just admit that they were struggling with this thing that has even the sound of a lot of shame attach it.

But I want to talk about sexual addiction. I publicly talk about it because for years I never did. And then once I started doing it, I would have people, a lot of high level entrepreneurs and CEOs, men and women that started coming up to me and just thanking me for how valuable it was, and a lot of people that have

gotten help as a result of doing it. So it is one of the most shameful things that I've ever dealt with of this sexual addiction sort of thing, but I wanted to define it and describe it.

Speaker 1:

How do we get there, from teaching people what's in it for them?

Joe:

Because connection is, if you are not connected with yourself, you're going to be disconnected with other people. But the thing with sexual stuff, let me point it this way, and what it has to do with connection, what it has to do with power, what it has to do with influence, everything is influenced on the internet by porn.

Dave:

That's what they built the internet for.

Joe:

Well yeah, of course, the first streaming videos were pornography companies. The first 900 numbers were pornography companies. And if you show monkey butts to monkeys, their brains light up. So pornography is highly arousing and highly addictive, and the brain lights up when it sees it. So for people to just, they can make jokes about it. And it's much easier to make jokes about things that are difficult to talk about. That's why people make jokes like monkey butts or masturbation or whatever. But the thing is, they've tried to do studies with universities and college students of what would happen if they don't masturbate for 30 days.

Well, so how does that correlate to addiction? Okay, now think about this. Let's go back to those young people that are watching pornography. They've never held hands with someone, they've never kissed, they're watching everything through a computer. How are they even to know what love is? When my mom died when I was four, my father never remarried and I was raped and molested as a kid and paid money to not say anything. Do you think I had an experience of love as an intimate act of love and oneness? It was something you do to get off. It was something that was very-

Dave:

How would you ever know? Because it's not in your world.

Joe:

So to go out into the world and try to connect with others when you're disconnected, or you're using some other means of stimulation and you're supposed to deeply connect. So you're either communicating with someone, you're connecting or you're trying to escape. That's what I write about in the book.

Dave:

So you're saying that porn is actually disconnecting people because of its effect on the brain, thus the need to write *What's in It for Them?* It's a book about how to connect to people.

Joe:

Well, yeah. The reason that What's in It for Them?, well first off, the line, the sentence, the question, What's in It for Them? Is to take the focus off of you and what you want and think about what the other... I think genius networking is, Nine Genius Networking Principles is the subtitle. In order to have a Genius Network, a Genius Network is a group of people that have skills and capabilities or something. It could be fun, it doesn't have to be for business, but it usually has to do with people that have some knowledge or wisdom and some capability. You have a Genius Network, you're part of my group, but you also have, if you want to get in better physical shape as an example, and you had to think of, who are eight people in my life? Do I need a nutritionist? Do I need a trainer? Do I need a yoga instructor? Do I need a massage therapist? Do I need a breath coach? Whatever.

Dave:

Yeah. The team that supports you.

Joe:

The team that supports you. So in order to have a Genius Network, not just go out and do networking and meet people, I'm not telling people to just networking is this old archaic sounding word.

Dave:

It's a waste of time anyway. If you're just meeting random people without any intent and just swapping business cards and just maybe we can help each other someday. That doesn't feel like it's a very productive activity if you don't know who's in the room.

Joe:

Well okay, so on social media you often see a lot of people that will go out and they'll take pictures of famous people that they don't even know, and then they will write up a post with a picture of them and they will say, this person's really great and I really appreciate everything that they've done and all that. And what I call it is giving credit to credentialize. You give credit to someone to credentialize yourself with them.

Dave:

As someone able to give credit.

Joe:

Well, it's just you coming up with a way to try... Now at the end of the day, it's not like a mortal sin or anything, whatever if you want... But the point is, is going and meeting famous people does not result in you having a successful life. You have to bring something to the dance party other than just your phone and snap a picture. And what I was saying is the people that are more powerful, how do they treat people that are less powerful than them? Do they say thank you when someone opens up the door, are they nice to servers and how do they treat their team? So if you really want to know who someone is, it's not who they are on stage, it's not the books that they write, it's not their social media post. It's who they are when the camera's not on.

Dave:

So then talk to me about this. We mentioned earlier that you had a narcissist who, he did some traumatic business stuff. I just had another one. I've had about three major experiences with people like

that who just about wrecked some of my companies. And I don't know that I'm any better equipped to spot them now than I was before. What did you change after your most recent experience in your own practice to have those boundaries where you could not let the narcissists attach their tentacles to you?

Joe:

Well for one, I had to look at how did I allow myself to help this person in the first place. I know what it was. Remember when I got completely thrown off earlier?

Dave:

Yeah.

Joe:

I was talking about games people play. Okay. And I was talking about, I have some friends, most of them women, but men and women both say this, when they're single and they've been in a relationship where they've been hurt and there's been some pain from a... And they'll say something along the lines of I want to meet someone that doesn't play any games. And it's like, well unfortunately humans play games because if we were all a planet of trusting individuals and there weren't all these demonic personalities out there, and I think most people are good. So when I say this, let me not-

Dave:

It only takes one bad one to take advantage of the good ones.

Joe:

And then you think everyone sucks. But so the line that I was going to say, and I'll come back to it, is whoever cares the least controls the relationship. And that's true when you're dealing with manipulative, intimidating power hungry people, whoever cares the least controls the relationship. And there's something about humans where if someone doesn't approve of you, you want them to approve of you. It's this childhood thing of please validate me. And so part of it is we oftentimes, and when I say we, I'm talking about myself and I do believe that because I've done the reps, I've done the work with a lot of people and I've gotten a lot of agreement on this and I've sat, I've been through more therapy and I've more groups than most people.

Dave:

You've done the work with a capital W.

Joe:

In no way, shape or form do I ever want to pretend like I've transcended all this. I'm a flawed human, I'm always working on stuff. It's a daily activity. Everyone thinks they're right and it takes a lot of awareness to realize that sometimes you think you're right and you're totally wrong. So the thing is, unless you're with a deep, bonded, caring person where you don't need to play, when someone says, I don't want to play games, what they're really saying is, I don't want to get hurt. Because if you could play games and win all day long, assuming you like playing a game that you're not abusing someone, you play games all day long, it's fun to play games that you win. What people are really saying is, I don't want to lose. I don't want to be hurt. So when those things happen, the first chapter of What's in It for Them?, is to be a pain detective.

And so because I believe most bonding is made when you can resonate and you can connect on either some mutual suffering or the ability to have empathy for pain, and you're able to step into that relationship and first relate to it and then actually help to either eliminate it, reduce it, or sit with it. Because you don't want to handicap your kids by making their life too easy, even though I say that without having children. But the metaphor is, you don't want to take away the gift of someone's pain if it is something they need to learn and need to sit through. But at the same time, if someone's really suffering and you can transform that suffering and you can bring some sunshine into the darkness, you're going to really create value for people.

Dave:

You are. And there may be some value in pain in and of itself. I'm reading a book by a science writer who is a masochist. And she's going really deep in dopamine signaling and saying, look, endurance athletes, pain, ballet dancers, pain, people who do cold therapy, pain, people who do CrossFit, pain. And she's like, it's doing something to allow us to experience pleasure. Do you think that's part of this whole thing?

Joe:

Dopamine, absolutely, for sure. Oh yeah, if dopamine-

Dave:

Dopamine but pain. We need to feel pain to reset our dopamine or something like that?

Joe:

I think so. I write about this in the book. I have a friend who was a dominatrix that I actually helped in addiction recovery to get out of that place. And if you knew her life, she was raped and abused. And one of the things that, I had a conversation with her recently about people that will want pain afflicted in a sexual, first off, their arousal template which causes them to be attracted to whatever they're into sexually, can usually be traced to one of their first early sexual experiences. And if there was pain or roughness attached to it, but it was arousing, then the dopamine is caused by that.

So the thing is, I've had numerous conversations where they describe what happened to them early on, and you'll see a lot of this arousal stems from abuse. And so with connection in the world, we live in a very disconnected world. We are more connected electronically than ever in human history, but we're more disconnected as tribal human creatures. And so part of the connection, and to go to your question about you develop your spiting senses, you start paying attention. I think if you have put yourself in a situation where you've been betrayed, if you were to sit and think what were the early warning signs? What were the metal detector?

Dave:

Yeah, that's what I'm working on identifying.

Joe:

And I'll tell you, I write about this in the book. If you are a giver, you will be taken advantage of. You-

Dave:

The more famous and wealthy you are, the more you'll be targeted.

Joe:

Oh yeah, you're a target for takers. They look for you, but at the same time, is that a reason not to be a giver? Is that a reason to put up walls and don't let anyone in? So it's about better bounding yourself, and it's also learning how to deal with intimidation.

Dave:

So you got to tell me in three sentences, what do you do to have better boundaries?

Joe:

Part of it is don't walk into landmines that are knowing landmines. Before you do anything business wise with someone, do a little research on them.

Dave:

Diligence.

Joe:

Yeah.

Dave:

That was my fault for not doing enough. I should have called the people who weren't references, I could have found.

Joe:

I talk about Harvey McKay's 66, see, and this is before the internet existed, he has all of these things and I write about it in the book where it's all these things that you can collect and learn about a person in that process. When you're going out and just meeting people and saying hello, and look, it's just part of life. But if you're going to get into a love relationship with someone, if you're going to get into a business relationship, if you're going to hire somebody, if you're going to get hired, research the person that if they don't have good references and for the entrepreneurs that are out there that whole saying, hire slow and fire fast.

Dave:

Yeah.

Joe:

There's a lot to be said about that. Well, there's someone interesting on the back of your book, the What's in It for Them? I think it's the second guy in the back. He says, everyone knows people prefer to do business within strong relationships. This brilliant book shows us precisely when and how to do it. But that's from Robert Cialdini, who you introduced me to several years ago, I had on the show, was one of my favorite episodes. His book Influence is so powerful, I gave it to my kids. And he is, here's how to tell when someone's running an influence operation on you, to take advantage of your invisible switches that allow them to control you. And so he's recommending your book, which is a really big recommendation, just because he's such a learned man. And what I remember from his book that really stood out was that if you find you like someone a lot right away, there's a great chance that they're running an influence operation on you and you should be even more careful.

Whereas if you got to like him over time and oh, okay, that's probably more authentic. It doesn't mean that they just weren't a great person and you like them, that could be real, but it's one of those little red flags. And so I'm working on compiling my own list of red flags so that I don't allow someone like that in and enough control so that if I do, I have a visibility and a learning system. So I'll just say straight up, if you are a narcissist, you won't know you're a narcissist. But if you think I'm your gravy train, you can go away.

Well, I'll tell you this too. The people that tend to dislike me, I say a lot of things purposely because I'm trying to attract people I like and repel people that I don't. Really, because a sales job is simultaneously attracting who you want and repelling who you don't. And I don't mean offending them by repelling, I just mean saying things in such a way that drives them away and makes you unattractive to them. And so let me say this about Cialdini. Okay. So, there's three people, and they're the three here in the back, although I've got Gabor Maté, all kinds of people there, Stephen Pressfield, one of my favorite authors read my book and has endorsed it. Every single blurb in testimonial in this book and yours is one of the first ones here. My request and rules for everyone that I sent out a pre-release copy of the book to was don't write me a blurb of testimonial unless you basically like the book and you've read all of it. So, because most books have blurbs from famous people that never read a word of the book.

Now if someone wants to give you a character testimony, you're not an evil human for wanting to get a testimonial from someone, I understand all that stuff. But the fact is people send me books all the time and they're like, will you give me a blurb for the book? I'm like, no, because I haven't read the book. If I have time to read the book and I want to, I will, but I'm not going to give if... Now if I know you and I've had experience with you, I can give you a character testimony, but I'm not going to write a blurb for something I have not watched, or I have not read. To me it's like quit doing that shit, it's inauthentic.

And here's the thing, so you got Robert Cialdini, who is the father of influence. He wrote the book Influence over 30 years ago, and he read, and so did Bob Bat Gordon, who is his partner, she read every word of the book and she loves it. And they even called me up afterwards, Can we take you to dinner and share with you all the things that we did that helped us with our book and talk about... Because they like it. So he endorsed the book. Chris Voss, who's currently the top negotiation guy in the world.

Dave:

He's great. I met him through Genius Network, you introduced us.

Joe:

Yeah. He's one of our members. And Chris wrote, Never Split the Difference. And he loves this book and he's endorsed the book. And in the book I talk about, he's taken my elf versus half. So way to identify who to hang out with and who not to, who to do business with, who to spend your time with. Are they easy, lucrative and fun or are they hard, annoying layman frustrating? I look for elf people, not half people. So one of the things we talk about in here is high indicators of elf. He's taken my elf process and identified phrases that if people say them early on, they are identifying themselves, most of the time they're going to be half, they're not going to be elf. One of those phrases is, I want this to be a win-win situation for it, which I was like, Chris, I actually want things to be a win-win situation. What do you mean?

He goes, Well, if you're a good person, you want things to be a win-win situation. However, if they say it right out of the gate or early on, we can make a lot of money together. We want this to be a win-win situation. He goes most of the time what they're basically saying is we want you to do all the work, we're going to make all the money. And there's an interview, there's interviews that come with this on the website when someone buys the book, What's in It for Them? You don't have to pay for them, you

don't have to buy a course. They literally are free. So Chris Voss has identified 20 phrases that if people say them, they're identify themselves, they're going to be pay in the ass relationship.

And if you are getting involved in something where there's money involved, but you just know at your core there's something off, really, I used to numb out the voices that were telling me, stay away, stay away, stay away. And I was ignoring the yellow flags. And if you ignore the yellow flags, then all of a sudden you can't even see the red flags even when they're right in front of you.

Dave:

Wow. That's really powerful advice, Joe. Your book is full of good stuff, otherwise I wouldn't have you on the show. I get pitched 10 books a week from people really wanting to come on. But you got to see something new or say it in a really good way in order to cut through the noise. Because I have a large audience and there's about what? 104 episodes a year. And so it's a very, very high bar that you have to get through. And I think you hit it with this book. The other ones you wrote, I'm not so sure, but this one, yeah.

Joe:

Let me say this and then we'll wrap this up because we got, there's other things that these people have to do today or tonight or whenever they happen to hear this. But let me leave people with a couple things. In order to have a Genius Network, you have to be a genius networker, and you have to do genius networking. So it's a be, do, have. In order to have a Genius Network, you have to be a Genius Network, which means you have to approach relationships with not what's in it for you, but what's in it for them? Looking for the pain. And then you have to do genius networking, which is being useful, which is being valuable, which is actually connecting. Connection and resources are not like fine China, where like love you're going to run out of it. So, that sort of thing. And so the thing I wanted to end with is the million dollar race horse analogy where if you had a million dollar race horse and every time that horse ran a race, you'd make a million dollars.

What would you do for that horse and what would you not do? What you would do is you'd have the best food, the best nutrition, you'd pick the best races, because my friend Nick Peterson says, You never win a race you don't want to be in. So, you'd be selective with where you put that horse's efforts and what you would not do, you wouldn't have the horse up till 3:00 AM watching porn, smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, over training. You wouldn't have it hanging around a bunch of loser horses. You wouldn't have it running in all these random... You would treat the horse really well. Best food, best nutrition, rest, relaxation, all of the stuff that you teach that a human could do, as much as you could do that with a horse, you would do that. And if you did that horse would win races.

And so the question is, are you a million dollar race horse? Do you want to be a million dollar race horse? And how are you treating yourself? Because you're the million dollar race horse. And if you treat yourself like shit. And million dollar race horses don't abuse other people. They don't develop a relationship in a way that where they leave scorch-earth and then they're never going to run a race again. So part of it is you have to be thoughtful, not only for other people, but you have to be thoughtful for yourself, because you can't fix a world with broken hands, and if you take care of yourself and treat yourself really well, you're going to win really... Which means you don't need... Like when I was interviewing Brooke, right prior to this, she talks about I wanted to design a business that allows me to work three days a week. And she's making \$50 million a year, her business does \$50 million a year in sales right now and she wants to even double that.

And so the fact is you can design in fashion whatever game or whatever race that you can resource yourself and be in, but everything that we do, even if it's not about making money, involves

relationships. And I think if you operate this way, you not only will increase your chances of making more money, having a better reputation, because you don't build a great reputation by talking about what you're going to do. You build a great reputation by actually doing something. And then if you live that out, and as Chris Voss says, you do the reps, you'll get better at this. But the bigger thing is I think you'll sleep better at night.

I think you'll just feel better about what you do in the world when you're not spending your time, attention, money, effort, and energy with people that don't care about you, people that don't respect you. So this is a book about responsibility. Responsibility is responding with ability. And if I can help people with the connection abilities and they can apply them, I think they're just simply going to be more responsible, not only to other people, but they're going to be responsible for themselves. So all that being said, the book is What's in It for Them? And I greatly appreciate you having me on your show and let me share this with everyone.

Dave:

Thanks Joe. You've had an incredibly interesting life and you've done a lot of learning along the way and you do a great job of sharing it. Whatsinitforthem.com. Guys, look at the interviews there. If this interviews calls you, read the book. If it doesn't, then don't read it. And Joe wouldn't want you to read it. Seriously-

Joe:

No, no-

Dave:

... If it wasn't going to serve you, he truly wouldn't. But I think it will serve you, otherwise I wouldn't add them on the show.

Joe:

Yeah. And by way, can I also say if anyone's struggling with addiction, I do have a foundation, Genius Recovery. Nothing is sold there. It's this educational stuff and the proceeds from What's in It for Them? actually goes to Genius Recovery. And so I want this to just help people that struggle with addiction and thank you brother.

Dave:

Thank you, Joe.

Joe:

Appreciate it.

Dave:

If you like the show guys, leave a review for Joe's book. See you later.