

The Joshua Boswell Interview: The Foundations of Planet Perry

Speaker, coach and copywriter Joshua Boswell has a knack for getting to the roots of a story. In this interview we discuss formative years that led to the Planet Perry of today – including the reason why we call this thing “Renaissance Club.” Dig for the gems, cuz this conversation has a lot of ‘em. Kudos to Joshua for asking such great questions.

Joshua: How did you grow up?

Perry: When I was a kid, my dad was an editor of a Christian magazine, and my dad always worked for religious organizations, so that colors things a lot. Especially when I was younger, he was not paid a lot of money. He changed jobs when I was maybe twelve and things improved a fair bit.

The early, formative years were very lean. My mom would wash plastic bags and reuse them. We drank powdered milk, and I probably now lack a whole bunch of allergies or something because of that.

Joshua: Something happened there that had to be a benefit.

Perry: My parents were very good with money from the standpoint of conserving it. They didn’t have any concept of creating it at all. Well, maybe I shouldn’t say that. My dad’s dad was a farmer, so the most entrepreneurial idea my dad ever gave me was, “You should grow vegetables in the garden and sell them.”

That was the most unappealing thing that you could possibly imagine. I remember when I was maybe five and I’d been given the chore – that’s what we called them, chores – of weeding the garden. It’s your typical Nebraska hot, humid day, and I’m in the garden in the sun pulling out weeds, and I’m complaining to Dad.

Dad says, “Perry, stop complaining because when Adam and Eve sinned, God said, ‘You will work by the sweat of your brow’ and that’s the way it is; just accept it.” And I just chafed at that. Dad, I hate this gardening stuff, okay?

Joshua: How old were you then?

Perry: Five or six. I vividly remember that conversation. It really stuck in my head. I told myself, I hate weeding the garden; I hate gardens, I hate plants. The way that I interpreted that was, well, okay, yeah, dad’s probably right and that sure sucks. So what you do then is, you try to do as little of this work stuff as reasonably possible, and it was an aversion to work.

What I preferred was to live in my imaginative world of electronics and wires and batteries and sound systems and all this kind of stuff. Now, that view of work is very inaccurate. I’ve never had a chance to have a deep, adult conversation about the concept with my dad because he died when I was seventeen. But if you want to talk about the Sunday School story of Adam and Eve and everything, then in that story, work exists long before everything goes awry. Work was never supposed to be a four-letter word.



What changed in that story was not that there wasn't any work before and suddenly there is work. What happened was, work became *inefficient*. Work became something where man is fighting nature rather than having the cooperation of nature, and of course, that infiltrates everything.

When you first go into sales, the very first rude awakening you have is when, no matter how great your idea is or no matter how helpful your product is or anything else, you have this inherent distrust that you have to overcome all the time, and it's built into everything.

Is the world screwed up? Yeah. Whether you believe Adam and Eve literally or not, the story reveals a great, great truth. There's blame and there's accusation and there's mistrust and there's con men. Rule numero uno of sales and marketing is that you have to legitimately overcome that.

Going back to that, what I know that I developed at that time was: I don't like to work, I don't like to do chores, I'd do as little of it as possible and I escape as much as possible into my other little interests and hobbies and fetishes.

For the next ten years of my life, I'm operating within that paradigm, but meanwhile, what I'm doing is – I would get this meager little allowance. At first, it was \$0.10 a week, and then it was \$0.25 a week, and probably by the time I was a teenager, I was making \$5 a week, but I would save my money for long periods of time and I would buy things that I was really interested in.

When I was ten, it was flashlights and batteries and wires and little motors and things like that. When I got a little older it was stereo receivers and speaker parts and I started building speakers in my garage and selling them to my friends. That was actually my main source of income when I was in high school.

Joshua: Just to go back on a thought process, did you perceive that you had disconnected that—I'm going to build speakers and sell them to my friends? To you that was not work, as in work in the garden, sweat, food by the sweat of your brow? Somehow, you'd disassociated that?

Perry: It was something that I hoped I would enjoy. If I have to work, then hopefully at least I work at something I enjoy. I was smart enough to get that, but my attitude towards it was, I'm going to do as little as possible because work is a four-letter word.

Something really interesting happened to change that. It was dramatic and it happened all at once. When I turned sixteen, I still wanted to build my speakers and squeak by on whatever money I could make from that, and my dad was really riding my backside to go get a job.

Dad was fearful that his son was going to turn into a lazy bum because, in his perception, all I did was sit around the house and play with electronic stuff and daydream. I'm a daydreamer, believe me. You know that. I'm always thinking about stuff, but he grew up living under the roof of a farmer.

Grandpa had worked him pretty hard. Every summer, they're out baling hay and growing tobacco. They grew up in North Carolina, so hot North Carolina summers working all the time, fairly harsh dad who doesn't have a lot of tolerance for stuff – not a pleasant upbringing. Once he grew up, he was fortunate enough to have a desk job.



My dad didn't really "get" me. He thought I was bright and talented and I had a ton of potential, so it frustrated him that I never had any more ambition than to just get B's in school and kind of get by. It's like, Perry squeaks by, squeaks by, squeaks by, does the minimum that he has to.

So, Dad's riding me to get a job and I finally get one and it's this janitor job. It pays \$3 an hour, and after school, I go to this factory and I work from about 4:30 to 7:00, and I'm sweeping floors and it's the most boring job in the world. If you work in a place that has low morale, it doesn't even matter if the people are there or not, you still know.

Joshua: It has the aura.

Perry: This place had mediocrity written all over it.

Joshua: Joe vs. The Volcano in the basement.

Perry: I hated that job. I worked there for about six months, and very slowly, my dislike of this job really started to get to me, and it got to where I was waking up every morning at 7:00 to go to school, and the first thing I would think of was, *When school is over, I have to go to that stupid job again*. I was also saving up my money.

One day I was irritable, and my dad was talking to me, and he says, "Perry, you've proven to me that you're not lazy. If you want to quit that job and do something else, do whatever you want to do, sell your speakers, whatever, okay, that's fine." So I went and I placed an ad in this little newspaper called The Thrifty Nickel. I don't know if it still exists.

Joshua: Somewhere they do. I've seen them.

Perry: That was my first advertisement. \$10 and you get this little classified ad. I would get this little trickle of customers. Demographically, this was probably the worst place you could advertise.

Joshua: Was this for building speakers? This was electronics?

Perry: The newspaper was for selling anything and everything. My ads advertised custom speakers or, sometimes said I've got this \$200 pair of speakers and you can call this phone number and come see them. It wasn't really a business but a glorified hobby. I was figuring out how to make it into a business.



Dad gave me the green light, and then a really interesting thing happened right at that time, which was that my dad was battling cancer and he got accepted into this treatment program at Bethesda. He and Mom go to Bethesda Maryland, and my brother and I go to stay with these people named the Lees. We lived with them for about a month, so I would go to my janitor job then I would go to the Lees house and live there.

Mr. Lee was an extremely successful businessman. He was a college professor in the business department at the University of Nebraska where we lived, and he was the highest-paid faculty member at the university, and he did consulting on the side. One



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night, he sat down and he told me this whole story of his life, growing up in Korea in the Korean War.

He has to steal vegetables to feed his brothers and sisters so he decides: *I'm going to work really hard and I'm not going to be poor anymore*. In fact he makes a vow: "God if you rescue me from this mess I'll work harder than anybody."

This was in 1986, and he was charging \$3000 to \$5000 a day for consulting. He told me this, and I had to pick my jaw off the floor. I bet my dad makes less than that per month – I know my dad makes less! He explains to me, he says, "The reason I charge all this money is not because I have to have all this money; it's for respect. When you tell a CEO what's wrong with his company and he's paying you \$5000 a day, he takes notes."

I'm hearing this at age sixteen. Mr. Lee completely changed my idea of what work was because they lived in a nice home, they went on nice vacations. They were not ostentatious. It wasn't this gigantic mansion, and they didn't drive Rolls Royces.

They were actually somewhat frugal, but I could tell they did very well. They used it well. I said to myself, "If you work hard, this is how things turn out." If you're working in non-profit organizations and living in that world, it probably doesn't matter what you do, you're probably not going to make a lot of money. I thought, "Oh, I see, in the business world, you can do well."

The other thing that struck me about him was, he had actually climbed the traditional academic ladder. He hadn't been a renegade. He gave me respect for some of the traditional paths. Prior to Mr. Lee, I had never really taken the idea of college seriously because I thought I was going to kind of do my own thing and be some renegade kind of guy. I didn't really know what I was going to do, so how's college really going to help that?

I started seeing college as being something where I could gain some legitimate knowledge and I could climb some ladders, and to some extent, I put myself on a treadmill. There were some negative aspects to that, but basically, I got serious about school and I got serious about getting decent grades, and I started to, as best I could, begin to think like a businessman.

I never thought of work the same way again. I'm going to work hard, and I'm going to do well, and I'm going to get somewhere in life, and I'm going to get some respect, and I'm going to do interesting things.

Joshua: There seems to also be a serious shift there that happened from your willingness to do as little work as possible to get the little benefits. The two words rumbling in my head right now are the difference between mediocrity and excellence. Can you talk on that for a little bit? Frame the conversation and how the meeting with Mr. Lee shifted your perspective from being okay with mediocrity to having to strive for excellence.

Perry: All of my experience with work prior to that point had been mediocre. Dad made mediocre money. Dad was good at what he did and he was respected, but I didn't connect that with "Dad works hard." The idea of excellence was vague in my mind. Dad just does what he does, and he was excellent in his own way. But you know how we all take our dads for granted anyway. Mr. Lee was definitely excellent, and more visibly so.



I would see the mail that came to his house, and some of it was these ego-stroking letters that say, “Mr. Lee, you have been invited to be featured in the book *Men of Distinction*, and you can receive your own copy of this book for only \$125, and for an extra fee, you can have a big listing instead of a small listing.”

I’m seeing this stuff, and he’s got these different stipends from the university to keep him around, and he gets job offers from these other universities, and it’s totally excellent. He dresses well and he gives talks on management consulting and he’s written all these books and he gets royalties on the books. I’m witnessing all this first hand. You walk into their home and it’s beautiful, and the whole excellence thing just really grabbed my attention. This is all happening at once, in the space of a month, this massive compression.

The other thing that happened was, I had mentally decided, “Dad let me off the hook, so I’m going to quit that job and I’m going to run my ads in the paper and when I get done with school, I’m going to go work in the garage and do the speaker-building projects and I’m not going to go back to that stupid janitor job.”

I’m pretty sure, based on some of my little ads in the paper, that I can make this work. Within two days of when we went to stay with the Lees, I quit my job. Now I’m having dinnertime conversation with Mr. Lee about my speaker business. There’s really not a whole lot of advice he can give – it’s not a business or anything. It was cool.

From that point forward for the next couple years, that was pretty much my sole source of income. I made probably as much money as I made at the janitor job and I liked it a lot better, and it started to work. Then I also figured out, if I want to do speakers and audio, what do I need to study in school? Do I need to study electrical engineering?

I go to the university a few times and I talk to a chairman of the department, I also talk to another guy. I start mapping out my future and figuring out what I want to do. You can see this major shift of all of a sudden—I want to embrace excellence, I am ambitious, I’m not afraid to work, work is rewarding.

Work is not this sweat-of-your-brow misery thing that Dad thought it was. I think Dad managed to find a spot in the world that didn’t feel like work to him. I don’t know that he ever really articulated that, but I got it.

Joshua: Absolutely incredible. I’m thinking that even the dinner conversations with Mr. Lee, even though they didn’t produce...you had a speaker business, so he wasn’t giving you the same level of consultation he was with the CEO of the Fortune 1000 companies or whatever he was consulting with, but I have to believe that there was this whole belief structure that you said radically shifted from “work wasn’t a four-letter word” and this desire to have excellence.

There’s got to be an enormous amount of that. It’s exactly what you said about the janitor job. Nobody had to be there for you to feel like it was a miserable stinking place to work.

Perry: Mr. Lee was a management professor. He was the chairman of the management department, and one day I asked him, “What’s the goal of management? Is it to get everybody else to do all your work for you?” And he says in his Korean accent, “No, the goal of management is to be efficient and effective.” I still remember that! Efficient and effective, that is a little different from lazy, now, isn’t it?



Joshua: It sure is!

Perry: That was priceless! I think it was a God thing that that happened, and there's even a weird story of how this stay at their house even came to pass in the first place, that we don't have time for. I did a lot of growing up; that was a year of growing up.

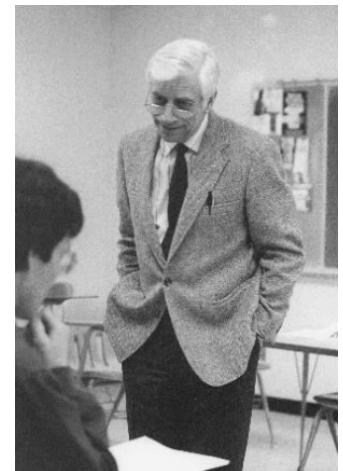
Shortly after that, I turned seventeen. About two months later, I met Laura. About three months after that, I started dating her. A month after that, my dad died of cancer. A year later, I started college. My life between sixteen and eighteen—totally different. I had to grow up pretty fast but I did it, and it was an exciting time of life. I started college and I got a little help from scholarships. It was pretty cool.

Joshua: I want to jump into post-eighteen-year-old biographical, but I do have one question that I want to follow down for just a minute, and that is, I'm interested to see the dynamic shift that happened by you, Perry inserted into Mr. Lee's place in life, and I'm wondering, metaphorically speaking, if there been other Mr. Lees in your life? Maybe you could talk for just a few minutes about them, if there have been.

Perry: Yeah, that's a great one to riff on. The next Mr. Lee in my life was a guy named Dr. Knoll. He was an English professor at the same university, and when I took this class, it wasn't an English class. It was something closer to a history or culture class.

I go in there and Dr. Knoll is the professor, and every single class is a mind-expanding, challenging experience where you walk out of the room with your head almost reeling. *Gee, I thought we were just talking about American history, how did we get onto this topic of Roman architecture?* This was really profound. Every single class, it didn't really matter what we were talking about.

I asked myself, *how did this guy get so smart?* Every time you'd ask him a question, he'd give you an answer you did not expect, and what I noticed was, he was so well-read. He was sixty-seven, and you could tell that he spent all of his sixty-seven years reading everything he could get his hands on, and not just casually, *That's interesting*, but *What insight is there to be gleamed from this?*



I read that his daughter said something like, “Dinnertime conversation with Dad – does even bread have to be interesting?” He could even make *bread* interesting. You'd ask him some seemingly-trivial thing. He would say, “Bread was invented in the Mesopotamian basin in 2500 BC and it was when the nomads began to grind grain and it created this explosion of economic activity which resulted in the invention of kilns, and the kiln was exported to Mongolia, and then the Mongolians used it to invent gunpowder...”

He would tell you how the invention of bread changed world history and it would actually be important. If you were paying attention, there's actually something you can learn from this. He made this comment one time – “Even a lot of my fellow college professors, they stop reading and they stop learning as soon as they get out of college, and they just coast for the rest of their life.”



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My goodness, is he ever right. But... what happens if you are an avid learner until you're sixty-seven? You end up being as smart as he is. Endlessly fascinating, and I want to be like that! I want to be the most provocative person that anybody talks to all day.

What if you're not even extraordinarily smart, what if you're just an ordinary person who commits to not ever stop learning your whole entire life? How wise are you going to be by age 67? Or even 47?

He also had this extreme passion for teaching. This was a guy who wrote a definitive history of the University of Nebraska. If you go on Amazon and you type "History of the University of Nebraska Dr. Knoll", you'll find his book and it's this whole question of, what is this university all about? What is the university for?

He was absolutely adamant that the purpose of the university was to equip students for life. It's not doing research, it's not doing technology for industry, it's not having a Nobel Prize winner. It's teaching students.

He took his job extremely seriously. His classes were always packed. You had to register early and specify that you wanted his class or you wouldn't get in, and you still might not get in. I just found out, because I Googled him, he died about three years ago. I hadn't really kept up with him. But anyway, there was a very important thing that happened.

I took another class from him – I took an English class, which prior to meeting him, I assumed must be "advanced sentence diagramming 101, 201, 301 and 401." I didn't have any idea why would anybody want to study that. Well, that's not what English is about. What English is about is, literature and literature is about life.

It doesn't matter if you read Beowulf or Chaucer or Dryden or Shakespeare or John Locke or any of those classic authors, if you can get past the archaic language and really get what they're saying, they're presenting you with the wisdom of life.

The wisdom of a thousand generations is distilled in these guys' writing. I got that from his class, and I really appreciated it. I'd go to his class every day, and I was just enthralled with it. He'd give assignments and we'd turn in papers. So then probably a month into this class, the only thing he knows about me is just discussion from hand-raising in classes and reading my papers.

One day, he pulls me aside and he goes, "I would like to talk to you. I would like you to come to my office and visit with me sometime. There's a lot of things we need to talk about." I'm like, "Am I in trouble?" "No, no! I've just been reading your papers and I've been making some observations about you, so come and see me."

I go to his office, and we sit down and talk. He says to me, "I am trying to figure out why you are studying electrical engineering. Frankly, I'm trying to figure out why you even think it's interesting."

I'm like, "What? OK, I know you're an English professor, but there is more stuff to do in the world than English." He's like, "No, no, no, *you understand people*. Most engineers don't. I'm really curious to hear why you're doing *that* because you could be doing *this*. If you understand *things* and you understand *people*, people are more interesting than things. I just have to know, why are you studying *things*?"



I tell him, “I’m really fascinated with sound and audio and speakers, and I’ve got this little business...” and I tell him the whole story.

He says, “I bet you like *demonstrating* your speakers to people, don’t you?” Yeah, actually I do! He says, “You’re in Engineering now, and it’s a wonderful skill you have. I’m a klutz when it comes to mechanical things and electrical things; I know nothing about them. I wonder what it must be like to be able to do that. Maybe it’s like having perfect pitch.

“That’s what I think it must be like, like having perfect pitch,” he says.

He continues: “Well, this is really good. Perry, I think you will probably do really well in technical sales.” I’d never heard that word before. The idea of going into sales had never even entered my brain. I was twenty years old. He says, “Actually, you know what? You might actually end up being the CEO of the company.”

This is what a guy figured out... just from reading my homework assignments!

Are you beginning to get an idea of how seriously this guy takes his job as a teacher?

Joshua: Right.

Perry: He just encouraged me and I walked out of his office like, *wow*. I never forgot that conversation.

Joshua: I hope it hasn’t – it’s the most obvious statement in the world what I’m about to say – but Perry, you are the CEO of a company that sells a very technically oriented product. AdWords is, it’s not technical as in sound stuff, but it’s very technical.

Perry: It’s very conceptual, and I approach marketing in a very engineering kind of way. I attract a lot of geeks, freaks, and misfits. What is a Google Ad? It’s this little bit of copyrighting human psychology with this giant, vast machine behind it, and if you can understand both – you can understand the human and you can understand the machine, then you can do it well. What Dr. Knoll did was, he said, here’s what YOU are all about. This is what you should be looking for as you go through your life, to figure out if opportunities make sense for you or not.

With the Marketing DNA Test, the giftedness stuff we do in 80/20 Productivity Express, the stuff we talk about in Roundtable, do you notice how much I encourage people to know themselves? It all comes from that.

Joshua: He made the comment, he said to you, “Perry, you understand people.” I’m interested to know if there’s anything in your life where you can go back and say, “Yeah, I was cognitively trying to understand this person or that person”, or if you can trace back how it is you knew people so well at twenty years old.

Perry: I don’t know that a whole lot of my friends would have said, “Oh yeah, Perry understands people.” I was kind of a geek and a little bit of a misfit. Not too much, but I was the last guy that was going to be the president of student council, I can sure tell you that. I kind of draw a blank when you say that.



The first thing I think of is, I grow up, read all these Bible stories and develop a sense of how human beings are. That's probably the closest thing to an answer that I think of, which is why I liked that English class so much. Because what I learned in that English class dovetailed so well with my religious education. I hope you understand, a religious education is by no means merely about 'here's the rules you're supposed to follow and here's a list of things you're supposed to believe.'

If that's all you ever got when you had your religious education, you got ripped off.... let's just put it that way. There's a whole lot more layers to that onion, and it's in all those stories. Again, the great literature of western civilization is about all that. Great books and great novels, they all speak to humanity.

I read a lot when I was a kid. I read all the Hardy Boys books. Some of that might be genetic and some of it might be from your family.

My mom is an extremely perceptive, intuitive person. The thing is, everybody's got a different set of things that got deposited in their bank account growing up. Everybody got stuff, and you have to capitalize on what you got. This is what Perry got. My wife will tell you, there's a lot of stuff I didn't get.

Joshua: My next interview will be with Laura :^> Go back... we kind of brought us up to age eighteen and some kind of significant epiphany, life changing type moments and some of the Mr. Lees in your life. Pick up the story when Laura enters the picture, off to college, then kind of go from there up to current day and talk about major events and finances and turning points.

Perry: Laura and I got married at age twenty. That class I took with Dr. Knoll was immediately after that. I'm working part-time jobs, delivering pizza and working at a warehouse. So then another turning point was, the following summer, I played a prank at work. I worked at Granger and me and this friend, Tony, sent a rogue fax and I got fired. I won't go into that story here, but a lot of Planet Perry people have heard it.

It really messed with my head to get fired—a lot—because I viewed myself as a guy who doesn't get fired. I do what they tell me to do, but this time I get canned. It shattered my illusion of security. I got that lesson really early. I got it then. Unfortunately, some people get that lesson for the first time when they're fifty and it wrecks their life. I guess twenty is a pretty good age for that to happen.

I got fired from another job, and then another job, and it was just like, I *am* kind of a misfit. Then, when my friend came and showed me Amway, I was receptive to the idea of being able to do something on your own. I didn't view the speaker business as something where you could make very much money.

I viewed it as kind of a hobby or maybe someday, I could get a job in that industry, but right now, it's just a little part-time thing. It's not skill at all, so this is not any kind of ticket to freedom. I dived into the Amway thing and I bit the whole thing off, hook line and sinker, and we both have that in common. I won't go into all of that, but that was my earnest introduction to the world of sales.

There's a lot of stuff I still didn't understand about people. I could write a good paper about Shakespeare, but selling vacuum cleaners door-to-door is another game. That was a big deal. There was a guy at Amway, he was my upline Diamond and his name was George.



George was as out of the box as you could ever be and still be in Amway. He's kind of hard to describe, except that *he never did the same thing twice*. Every single meeting was new and different. Apparently, when he was driving to a meeting, he would just dream up something, and whatever you got when he showed up was the unique George experience of today.

I guess, if I were to equate it to something I do today, it would be when I get up in the morning, I have no idea what email I'm going to send out, but it gets sent out by 10AM. Hey everyone, here's another candy from the box of chocolates. When I do a 4-Man Intensive, there are unique people from unique places and they're all in different businesses, and that's an experience that will be unlike any other experience.

What I liked about George was that it was unique and it was a contrast to another guy named Ed. If you went to Ed's presentation, he was scripted down to the letter. Ed was a diamond, too, by the way, and he was just as successful as George, and it was like, there's the improvisation guy and there's the Steady Eddy, reliable, systematic guy, and they could both be successful. To me, reliable Steady Eddy systematic is boring.

That's a weakness of mine. Anybody who's worked for me will tell you, I drive people crazy with my improvisation. Joshua, you know that because you've been on my team before, but that's how I roll. As long as there's somebody else in the organization that can build systems, and I'm getting better.

I'm surprising people less and less, and we're building systems, and improvisation is now used when improvisation is needed rather than the default mode of everything.

But anyway, George was a real inspiration. The other thing about the Amway thing was, they pounded the poverty mentality out of me. And that took a long time. I'd characterize myself as, I was a guy who was very imaginative and very naturally had a lot of aspirations growing up in an environment where aspirations were not a particularly valued thing. Think of, "I'm going to lasso the moon" in *It's a Wonderful Life*. That's just not the way people thought in the religious environment.

It was more of: you struggle, you scrap, you save. It was that kind of mentality. I think that has value in a certain context, but it was limiting. I'd go to Amway meetings and people would say things like, "God wants you to be successful" and I would bristle. It would make the hair on the back of my neck stand up. Part of that was, I'm not real comfortable with some guy standing up and telling a thousand people what God wants for them.

Joshua: This is a personal conversation you're having with 1000 people. This is not appropriate.

Perry: Right. That chafed on me. You won't hear me saying things like that very often. If I do, I qualify them. I don't know what God wants for somebody. Maybe he wants them to be a pauper in Bhutan and work with orphans, I don't know. Nevertheless, the next question I'd ask myself was, "Perry... if you don't think God wants you to be successful, why are you trying so hard to succeed?"

That's a pretty good thought!

Joshua: That is a good thought!



Perry: I'm trying really hard to succeed, so... is that okay? I had to figure out what I thought God wanted me to do. All of the hype about Cadillacs and Rolls Royces and huge mansions and giant estates and diamond rings, I don't think any of that moved my personal tastes of aspirations one iota. I have never been interested in that.

I drive a six-year-old Toyota Avalon. If I bought a newer car, I'd have to go get license plates and stuff. Are you crazy? What a waste of time; I'm not interested. What I did figure out was, if I can get sufficiently financially- and otherwise-liberated, there's w hole bunch of things that I want to do with my life that I can't do if I'm punching the clock. That is a personal thing.

If I was just going to use one word to define what I hope that I could eventually be was a *Renaissance Man*. That's a person who is involved in a wide variety of interests and topics and makes contribution in a wide number of fields, and is able to tie everything together. To me, it was like, if I can get the financial monkey off my back and design my own life and get up every morning and do what I want to do, that's what I'm going to do. It comes across a lot of disciplines.

There's science stuff, there's philosophical stuff, there's business stuff, there's charitable stuff, there's human being stuff. There's lot of things. How horrible it would be to punch the clock for the rest of your life when there are all these other things that were possibilities in your destiny *that could have been fulfilled if you'd had the courage to go pursue them*.

Joshua: Just an observation that I'm making more for myself than for you—I think it's noteworthy how, as you started talking about being a Renaissance man and that personal mission and passion, the conversation took a jump in energy, your tone, your feeling. I felt it in my gut. We're getting to the core of what makes Perry really tick. Suddenly, I had this new perception of Perry Marshall and what makes you who you are, so thank you for sharing that. There was a shift in the whole conversation there.

Follow that train of thought. You didn't stay at Amway, obviously. Didn't plan that out. Somewhere along the line, you had the awakening to *I don't want the car and the Cadillac and the boat and blah, blah, blah*, all the glitz and the bling-bling stuff, but being a Renaissance man and, how many lives could I effect on this personal mission woke up at about this time? Am I following that right?

Perry: Yeah. As soon as I started asking myself the question: **If money did not dictate what you do when you wake up every day, what would you do?** That question was a life-changing question. I was already starting to settle into the groove of, I'm going to be an electrical engineer, I'm going to make \$40,000 a year, I'm going to work for some company, the perfectly respectable thing to do. I just started thinking of all the people around me. We're all going to graduate and we're all going to get jobs and we're all going to get a comfortable life in the suburbs. I began to say to myself, maybe there's more for me than that.

Joshua: Did that question about God play a role in that shift? Did you get to the point where you had to say, "Now I'm comfortable that God maybe is okay with me getting rich"? Did that play a part in this?

Perry: Well, it's not so much as, is God okay with me getting rich. It's more like this: If I railroad myself into a career where I don't have many choices with what I do every day, how much of the potential I've been given is going to be wasted? That's a negative way of putting it, but frankly, I grew up in an environment of



more negative motivation than positive. That's how everybody thought anyway, but I don't want to waste my talents.

That is the parable of the talents, by the way. A guy buries his talents because he's afraid of making a screw-up and that's the worst guy in the story.

I just became more and more uncomfortable with the idea of not ever being able to do those kinds of things and not being able to make the contributions. I wasn't even sure what the contributions might be. I just had this idea like, I want to research things, I want to have a company and I want my company to do interesting things. I want to contribute to causes that I care about and I want to make the world a better place, and I can't do that if I'm working for the man.

It's not really about getting rich, so to speak. That's not how I think. It's about doing what you want to do because it's in your heart. How much smaller would my world be if I'd never been able to go to all the foreign countries I've been to? I've been to 30 countries. Every time I go to some new place, the boundaries of my mind get shoved outward. I come back with a bigger brain than when I left. I see things from a wider point of view, and I have a more accurate perspective on things.

What if I didn't get that? What would I miss? See, this is a spiral. Once you begin to feed it, it grows like a snowball, even within the limitations of everything else you're doing. The first trip to a foreign country that Laura and I did, we went to Brazil in 1999. We didn't really have the money to go, but we went anyway. I'm glad we did that.

For the next two weeks after we came home, I was still sifting and sorting and trying to absorb everything I'd seen and heard. I'm telling you, it makes you wiser, it makes you smarter, and that goes for any new thing. When people get into a rut, they start sleepwalking. 3/4ths of the world, if not 9/10ths is sleepwalking through life. Hello, wake up! There's a banquet out here, so why are you crawling through the garbage heap? It's frustrating.

Joshua: I think there are a lot of people in the world that have, at some point or another, had a little bit of an awakening. You had it and have now done something about it. I know, because of our relationship, at least in part. I know about the projects with orphans and 3rd world countries. I know about some really cool side-projects you've done and the deep feelings you have about certain people, and I know there's some of your staff that you could say Perry was the savior for that guy or gal, if we want to put it in those terms without being sacrilegious.

You go from this Amway-bot awakening of doing what I want to do and not wasting my talents. Today, at least in part, I'm certain you haven't fulfilled all your dreams, but you're actually living this. How did you go from the Amway-bot with this spark of a dream and this awakening to actually doing it?

Perry: There was about ten years of major serious struggle. From twenty-one to almost 30, the Amway thing was, I could NOT get that to work to save my life, and I tried everything. I labored at it for years. What I did do was, I sucked every drop of juice out of that orange, including later arriving at a very detailed understanding of why it didn't work and what was wrong with it. I've gone on for pages and it's really formed an understanding of a lot that I do and a lot of things that I know, and that's true of a lot of people. It's a rite of passage.



There are a lot of things where, if people knew all the things that they were gonna have to go through to get to the other side, they would never start. I'm never in favor of the person who paints the primrose path with the rose-colored sunglasses business, to recruit people and turn them into entrepreneurs. But the fact is, the late-night TV infomercial pitch about getting rich in real-estate, it gets a lot of people off the couch, so God bless them.

I don't really like what they're doing and I don't like the way they're doing it, but it does produce some diamonds on the other end of a small percentage of people who stick with it, or stick with something. Eventually, you have to get smart and eventually you do, hopefully, if you stay persistent and keep your mind open.

I have friends that are still at Amway after twenty years, and I'm not sure anything is ever going to convince them that it's not going to work, but that's not my problem. I plowed on for several years, and I discovered direct marketing. What happens is, I go to the success thing in Peoria, Illinois, and they're going to have Barbara Bush and Zig Ziglar and all these famous people, and the last person at the end of the day is Dan Kennedy, and he's awfully good because he levitates \$300 out of my wallet.

Remember, I was trained to pay \$5 for a tape and \$12.95 for a book, and that was my business education mindset, and he got me to spend \$278, so flat-out miracle that he did that. He absolutely nailed it because he's talking about cold-calling and rejection and wasting money on advertising.

I had already figured out, if there's a way to make money on advertising where I didn't have to make all these phone calls.... Dang. He just hit me in the right spot. Dan became the next luminary in my life. There was Dr. Lee and there was Dr. Knoll, and Dan was definitely one of those people.

What Dan added probably more than anything else was a mentality of ruthless pragmatism that needed to be added to my starry-eyed dreaminess. The whole Amway thing floats around on this cloud of the Good Ship Hope. If you could love enough people and be motivated enough and draw enough circles and do enough meetings.... well, that is crap. That is absolute crap. If you follow that road to its end, you'll be divorced, bankrupt, and schizophrenic.

Joshua: It's that conversation you and I once had of the should-world versus the reality world, and the pragmatism versus the hope. Dan gives you this gift of ruthless pragmatism.

Perry: And a giant toolbox of marketing techniques and here's how the catalog business works, and here's how you generate sales leads, copyrighting and all that kind of stuff. I had always been a pretty good writer but I had never seen any reason to develop it.

'Writers? Those are people who make no money.' I didn't see any value to that where I was actually going to put it to work or use it. All of a sudden, if you can write copy, you can get paid \$5000 to write a sales letter. You could write a sales letter in your own business and that sales letter could make you a six-figure income for several years, probably. It was true.

It's changed a little bit – that sales letter might now be a video or it might not. It might be an opt-in page for a home improvement company that does all this work for the salespeople. But I became as serious about



understanding direct marketing as I had been about the Amway thing. **When you go from being a serious student of something that doesn't work to a serious student of something that does work, your career lurches forward.**

All of a sudden, everything I did started working. A lot of it was from the learning and the experiences and the common sense and the people dynamics I learned from all the Amway stuff. I learned how to deal with the cranky person in the meeting and the happy, excited person in the meeting and how to set up phone appointments and how to call a complete stranger and say something that gets them to come and meet you at TGI Fridays. That's tough, but I learned it!

Things started working, and a major piece was getting a job at this tech company, and there was this guy there named Mike who owned it. Mike was one of those luminaries, too. Not so much in the sense of being a teacher, but from the sense of creating an opportunity in an environment where I could do stuff.

Mike was left-handed like me, and left-handed people are usually a little more receptive to creative ways of doing things. Mike had this fledgling company and he had a good product, and he had at least a skeleton crew of people that could support it, and away we went. We started selling and we started working on our website. It was a great experience, and we grew that company.

That part of the business grew from \$200,000 a year to \$4 million a year in four years, and we sold the company for \$18 million, and I got a piece of that for my stock options, and that made it possible for me to launch my career in business now. Mike was another one of those creative people where that wasn't just a job.

Yes, it was a job and yes, it was a paycheck, but it was also, in a tongue-and-cheek way, it was sort of a mission and it was also, we're going to grow this company and we're going sell it and we're going to go public, and we did that. It was very ambitious, it was very stressful, it was non-stop headaches and emergencies and traumas, but it worked.

That enabled me to go start a consulting company where I now worked for myself. After ten years of struggling and all this crazy stuff, I finally was working for myself doing what I wanted to do. Now I can get paid to be really good at direct marketing. That was great!

Joshua: When you got to that point, a lot of times, people hit a key turning point in their life. So for ten years, they had been hyperconscious or less than conscious, somewhere in the back or your mind was this, I want to get to the point where I can do what I want to do. Fast-forward ten years, here you are. You cash out on your stock, you start the consulting business.

What was going through your head when you finally kicked over and started doing that? Was there something that you did to continue to propel yourself forward? Did your dream shift, did you have a different attitude? Was there another turning point? How did you maintain the focus to continue to move forward once you cashed in and achieved the goal?

Perry: It was a really interesting spot in my life because it was almost surreal. Getting that company sold and all that was a minor miracle. There were so many obstacles and things that could have derailed it but it happened anyway. *Somebody was looking out for me.* It was like, I'm free!



I'll never forget, maybe two and a half months later. It's December, it's close to Christmas. I call my friend Jim, and I say, "Jim, I built \$12,100 this month. Can you imagine it? I made it!" I'll never forget how it felt to just pinch myself and realize, I'm not in this corporate cube.

There was this boss I worked for, for a while, and he was out to slice my fingers off and I'm not dealing with that anymore. I like my clients and it's great. At the same time, I do client project, I get money; I do client project, I get money. That's fine, but it was really interesting how very quickly, I was like, "Well, I want what I do everyday to not be dictated by the need for money. I want the money equation to be six months in advance, not today. I want to do something where I have some form of equity."

I immediately determined, "I want to have an information business that eventually replaces my income of my consulting business." I started blocking off chunks of time where I'm only working on this. The consulting became a way to invest in something with more equity that I owned.

That took a while. It was not overnight. I think a pure information business is one of the trickier things you can get off the ground. It's not as easy as people tell you it is. What else is interesting is, it was 2001, beginning of 2002, that I really started working on that. I did not get rid of my last client until 2008 and in fact, I'm back to having a few clients now, with Private Client Group.

The one I still had was a trickle of money and I could have gotten rid of it if I wanted to, but really, I still had significant client income coming in until 2006. There were some times when I was making some tremendous money from my information business, I still was not comfortable letting go of that \$3000 a month that I got every month from a client because it was diversity.

It wasn't a huge amount of work. I think a lot of people starve their business, or they try to build a herd and they slaughter too many of their herd to sustain the herd. The herd has to be able to grow. That's an investment. What the information business became was a platform for teaching business the way I think it should be done, and modeling the way it should be done.

I think you can do business; you can be completely fair with people. You can be straight with people—you don't have to make outlandish claims and promises. You can equip people with the things that they need, and they can enjoy it, and it could be done the way that I wanted to do it. Everybody's gotten a unique, individual fingerprint that they put on everything, and I think those fingerprints are really the key to how you create *your Unique Selling Proposition*.

Joshua: You can count me on the roster of who had major epiphanies and figured out massive direct marketing concepts from Perry Marshall. If we walked through who are my luminaries and who are my Mr. Lees, you certainly fall into that category, unequivocally and unquestionably.

Perry: Thank you, and that's a privilege and I'm humbled by it. Not everybody gets an opportunity to be an influential person for thousands of people. I think that there are some pieces of that that are providential, that are a blessing in my life, and it's a stewardship.

I remember one time, Glenn Livingston asked me some big deep question. I said, "I see the position I'm in as being a position of stewardship, meaning I've been given something and I'm expected to do good with it and



produce with it, not squander it or not use it just for my own particular, selfish agenda." Our job is to multiply loaves and fishes, not just eat them.

And that's true in every sphere. I think it's true in money, in knowledge, in intellect, in all things. What's cool is, if you keep multiplying loaves and fishes, then more little boys with their baskets keep showing up and giving you more. There's more that you can do. If we can manage to not get all caught up in the glamour of it, and stay with our responsibility, I think there's a very huge, long-term effect on lots of people because people are looking and people are paying attention.

I think one of the things you hope to do is eradicate some of the cynicism and hopelessness that people have, where they think that they can't control what happens in their life. Yeah, you can have some control over your life. You're going to have to stop watching Seinfeld and you're going to have to take some risks and you're going to have to make yourself uncomfortable.

I think it's when you become comfortable being uncomfortable, that's when the real action starts to happen.

Joshua: I've been fixated on quantum growth because I've seen a lot of people get right close to a tipping point or a quantum growth point and then miss the boat and I've seen people hit it and have just incredible explosion of not just income but general success in their life. You've talked about a few of them here.

You're 16 and there's this massive compression of events that creates not a quantum growth in income, but a quantum growth of who Perry Marshall is. It's a huge compressed experience. I'm wondering if you perceive that we can actually manufacture those, if they just come to us and if we can trade those quantum leaps, what are some essential things that we do to make those happen?

Perry: One of the things that I saw when I was in Amway, by paying really close attention because they never really come out and tell you this exactly this way... but one of the truths in that business is that growth happens in spurts.

People go along, and they go along and then all of a sudden they get some things right and all these people show up in the space of a few months. And then if they lose the momentum and they flatten out, or even decline, then nothing happens until they get another momentum surge. Now the MLM business is almost entirely momentum driven so it is kind of an "exaggerated" version of the rest of the world. Still, everything in life is kind of like that.

Anybody with kids knows that a kid goes from not talking to talking in about three months. They go from not reading to reading in about three months. They go from before puberty to after puberty in about three to six months. You could probably make a similar comparison to falling in love or kinds of stuff, that the world does not move on these gradual little by little by little by little incremental improvements. I think having a philosophy of incremental improvement is really useful everywhere in life. You can always keep tweaking, tweaking, tweaking and making better, better, better.

But if all you pay attention to is the tweaks, you'll miss the big leaps. There's not always a big leap right in front of you all of the time but sometimes there are. If you're paying attention and you're asking yourself the



right questions, you see that there is a big leap I could take or I think there is a big leap here and sometimes it's dead on.

Whenever there has been a big leap in front of me, I've always found my hands shaking on the steering wheel. It's almost invariable. For example, a big quantum leap was—and this goes back a number of years—I had put out my original AdWords e-book and it was selling really well, and I was beating the AdWords drum, and my friend, Bill Harrison comes to me and he goes “You know Perry, I think you're missing an entire possibility in your business.

“I have a million dollar idea for you. I'm dead serious, it really is a million dollar idea and if you do it and you make a million dollars, I have a stipulation that you have to make a donation to my favorite inner city school in Philadelphia.

I say, “OK, you're on.” Bill, by the way, has just about the best track record of giving me million dollar ideas of anybody. The guy is freakin' amazing.

He says, “You don't have any kind of coaching in your business.” Now coaching programs for info-marketers are very common now. They weren't really then. There's a lot of evolution that's happened but he outlined it, and he says, “I think you need to do this. I think you could price it this way. I think there are lots of people who got your book who never really did 10% of what they should have. They need to be lead by the hand so you should put this together.”

So I put together a coaching program and what I had at the time was pent up demand for just such a thing. Bill was right. I didn't really realize it, but he did. He lays it all out, I do my own analysis on it and I know that he is exactly right.

There is a whole bunch of money sitting here waiting to be collected, and over Christmas break I need to build all the sales promotions and write all the sales copy and I find myself procrastinating like crazy. I had to force myself to do it.

Finally I took my computer and I drove to the library in Beatrice, Nebraska and I banged out a sales letter. The library doesn't have Internet connection and the television won't be on either. I make myself do it, its like my hands are shaking on the steering wheel.

I even remember Laura's mother asking—we were visiting them—something like “What's Perry up to?” and she's like “He's figuring out how to make \$150,000.” She's a farmer's wife so this is unfathomable to her and Laura was frankly feeling like “That is an awful lot of money to us too.”

But guess what? We launched that and we did make about \$150,000, give or take. I don't know what the exact amount was but it was a lot.

It was an exhilarating thing when it happened but I'm telling you my procrastination demons were working overtime that whole time. I have just come to recognize that. I know what it feels like. There are certain things where, *Boy if I'm having this bad feeling right now, its pretty much a guarantee that something good is about to happen.* It's a head twister.



But that is really true in a lot of things and so I had to grow to where I could take ownership of the idea of “Yes, these are my customers and I can create things and I can sell stuff to them anytime I want to.” That was a big, big mental stretch that I had to do over a period of time.

Still, every time I do something that is bigger or better than I have done before I have to overcome that resistance because anytime you go places you’ve never been before, you’re going to feel that. It is going to be uncomfortable.

You just learn to associate the discomfort with growth and you know that its good and you probably check in with one of your friends or somebody and you say, “Okay. I’m fighting my procrastination demons. Check in with me, I’m going to check in with you, help me out here.”

I’m not going to let it ruin this opportunity and a lot of people miss that opportunity. Because of what I do, I see it all the time. I can show them exactly what they want to do but their demons can stop them. Although the thing they are supposed to do is simple and straightforward, it doesn’t mean that they’re going to do it.

Joshua: Have you found, I mean is it just plain willpower or strategies that go on inside your head to help you say, “Okay, my hands shaking on the steering wheel but I’m going to keep driving anyway”? Are there specific strategies or concepts that you’ve found to be very useful for you to get past that point?

Perry: Best I can tell you is just own it and acknowledge it and be clear about what it is and decide that you’re going to defy it. I think one of the best things any of us can do is learn to tell when we’re being triggered.

I think the most common form of this is the feelings that you are having. Like you’re having a conversation with your wife and she pushes that button you’ve got and you go off on her and then the rest of the evening is shot.

Well, if you can notice—and it’s hard to do because a lot of it is just a little bit below the surface—it’s like “I’m getting triggered. I need to count to ten. I need to take a walk. I need to hit a pause button on this whole conversation and say, “Honey, we’ll circle back to this but we can’t talk about this right now. I just need space,” or something like that.

You learn to stop yourself and go give your head a shake, or talk to somebody, or whatever you’ve got to do so you can think straight. See, what happens when we get triggered is we go into these little jags of irrational behavior and we don’t do what is reasonable, rational and logical. What I’m describing is just recognizing a business trigger or a demons-inside-the-head trigger.

I guess everyone is different but what I do is just check in with people. I’ve got a little system with one of my friends is where I realize what is my biggest challenge every single day was staying focused on the important stuff. I’m in a habit of working, so I’m always working, but its really easy to let the A project kind of slip and work on all this B and C stuff that is really easy. So I decided I’m going to text or email this friend every day and tell him the three most important things on my list, whatever they are and at the end of the day I’m going to text him and say that I got them done.



What that's been about for me is not about being productive as it is about being focused. All of us have about 10 thousand trivial things that feel like work, but they're not getting us to where we want to go.

Joshua: Has it been easier or more difficult for you to be unfocused as you've gotten more successful? The background of the question is when Bill came to you and sat down and said "Perry, here's a million dollar idea, you're really missing out here." My guess is that it was mixed in with *I just got to do this* was financial motivation and really getting to this place that you're at. Whereas today when you get triggered, you know that there's something, a quantum leap, right there in front of you, is it harder or easier to get sidetracked because you're already doing okay. There's already money coming in. There's already things in life that you can do.

Perry: I don't know that it's any easier or harder really. It's just that there's different things I need to learn and be good at now than what I needed to learn and be good at then. There was a period of time where getting better and better and better at marketing was "the path."

I think for a lot of businesses you can be in that mode for five-plus years and not run out of opportunities or ways to make money and to grow and grow and grow. Where I'm at right now is, yes I can be better at marketing, and yes there are things that I can do, but I already know most of them. I have a hard time going anywhere and hearing marketing stuff I already heard somewhere because I've been doing this for 15 years. But there are huge gaps in my knowledge about other aspects of business like management. Maybe I should hire Dr. Lee. He is still out playing golf somewhere.

Because I was an early adopter and I was way ahead of the curve on this stuff compared to most people and basically there's a whole generation of 30-something and to some extent 40-something business people where the internet was the first thing that worked when they were 30 years old lets say. And their natural response is "Well, everything that I need to do to succeed has something to do with the Internet."

Well, maybe not. Maybe there are things you need to learn to do that don't have anything to do with the Internet whatsoever. What might they be? Everybody can get into a certain comfort zone and completely miss—well you need to grow this certain area over here. I get a number of those and so I try to plug into people that are really good at completely different things than me so that I can have a frame of reference that's not just mine.

Joshua: That is a whole really fascinating conversation that we can have that's actually a little outside the scope of what we're talking about. Holy smokes! That just opened up, my brain just went "bing". The can opens up and I'm like "Hey, Perry's talking about me." The only business success I know per se is connected some way with the Internet and gosh Boswell there was a lot of people that had success before the Internet. There might be other skills out there.

Perry: And certainly I've always been aware that the internet is just a medium and that everything that works on the internet already worked off the internet before and this is about principles, not technique, so I definitely have an awareness of that. We need to write mail and things like that, but still. Completely other skill sets.

I'm learning management and how to be a CEO. There are a lot of skilled CEOs that don't even touch their computer and they are very good. What if I knew some of the things that they know? I think about that a lot.



Joshua: All right, I've got one last question for you and who knows where this will go? I thought of it last night when Margie and I were laying in bed and talking. This project, the hand shaking on the steering wheel for me has been something that I have been avoiding, procrastinating and I've had this on my mind for about a year and a half.

I keep getting these nudges: Joshua, you need to go, you've got all these incredible people in your life, you need to go pick their brain, hear their stories, analyze and figure it out.

So anyway, as we were sitting there talking, I thought, I don't know what I don't know. So my last question is Perry if you were writing this book on accelerated success in finances, because as you said this book is really about shaking people and really waking them up. You're right.

I've got this major passion for "Hey people, there's this huge banquet over here" and I'm saying, "quit groveling through the pigsty out there. Since I've been coaching, it drives me nuts even more.

Since I've been a Bishop, I can't tell you the number of people I meet with. I love them because they're my flock but, man! Wake up! So Perry, if you were writing this book and you were interviewing me, what is one question you think would be critical to ask me and how would you answer it?

Perry: Well, let's assume that you're somebody that knows them and has observed them for a period of time as an interest of them doing well.

If you've been coaching people for a period of time, even if its at a distance, then you certainly have some experience of them and you know some things about them and more importantly they've got other people in their life that have known them for years, I think that the best question that they can ask you is:

"What do you see as my unique ability or my special talent skill or angle are in the world?"

What is that? I think that one of the best exercises anybody could do is seriously ask that question to about 5 or 10 people and take the answers back and really spend some time digesting. So, what did I hear every time? What did I hear from 50% of those people? And what did I not hear, and in what ways am I not capitalizing on these talents?

If you look at the world as this big giant pecking order, then what you tend to think is: "There's Donald Trump and there's Mick Jagger and there's these really successful people and then there's the big long, long, long, long line and I'm person number 3,243,000,000 and I'm way down on this totem pole."

If you go ask that unique ability question and you look at the answers you get, then you say what if we arranged the whole world according to those answers. Well all of a sudden, Donald Trump and Mick Jagger aren't in the front of that line anymore and you might not be in the very front of it but you're ahead of 96% or 99 and if you restrict it to people that you have some level of contact with, you're in front of some lines.

The neat thing about some of those natural abilities is effort invested in developing them is very productive. It bears fruit. If you were always doing pencil drawings when you were a kid, then even if you haven't touched a pencil in 20 years, you're still better than 90% of the people around you at pencil drawings.



A few months of classes at a little art place could put you in the top 1% or the top .1% really fast. Stop thinking about all the skills you lack and all the things you're not good at and focus on what you're good at and then there's not some single pecking order in the world. There's a whole bunch of unique individuals that have something special to contribute and a special experience to give other people.

If you can discipline yourself to go develop those talents, then pretty soon you're going to be living some kind of a dream. Even if it's only on Tuesday nights, you're going to be doing something and that's the path to liberating yourself. You just have to start from whatever you have.

When Laura and I were struggling with no money and all this debt and things, we were still sharpening that saw as best we knew how in our struggling, meandering way. We would still always try to do it. I think people should ask you what you see that's special about them.

Joshua: Would you say that—this is kind of a yes or no question—but would you say that this accurate statement that our quantum growth, our fulfillment, our waking up and attending the banquet actually only happens in that sphere that's uniquely ours?

Perry: I don't know that that's necessarily true. I think the banquet starts with being proactive instead of passive or reactive. I think that's where it really starts. I mean, you'll figure out what being proactive about benefits you and what doesn't. You'll figure that soon enough. Maybe you're not an artist but you take an art class anyway. It's better than watching TV.

Joshua: Yes it is.

Perry: You know, maybe you'll meet someone somewhere and that turns into something and then you meet someone else but you're at least getting somewhere.

Joshua: Look at your story. Building speakers was not the end-all-be-all of your destiny and your contribution to life. However, it somehow got you into a frame of mind in order to be receptive to Mr. Lee. It's a chain reaction to a bunch of different things in your life.

Perry: Yes, well, you know what? That was the first thing that I had a burn to be excellent at. Age thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, I'm writing away to all these speaker parts companies and asking for their catalogues and I get this giant stack of catalogues and stuff, and I'm daydreaming.

Building speakers is not a be-all-end-all in my life. I've got a seven-foot pair of speakers in my library, and I really like them, but good grief. If all I got out of all that was just three years at Jensen and a seven-foot pair of speakers, that wouldn't be really meaningful.

But see, that hobby really taught me how to *think*. I was really, really intensely curious about: why does this sound this way and why does that sound the other way? What about all those noise and distortion specifications? How did these components really work? I really wanted to know that stuff and it was purely for my own curiosity.



I didn't really know where it was going, but I learned an entire framework of skills that, as I've gone through life, I've translated to other things and other things and other things. In all seriousness, let's go to a practical thing I do every day.

Somebody tells me about their business. They tell me, "I've been on these keywords, I've put Google Ads out there, and we use conversion optimized landing page, and it goes to an auto-responder and they get bumped over to the sales page and then this happens and then there's the up-sell." They tell me this whole thing.

You know that, in five minutes, I can show them six different places where: you could make more money here, you could make more money there, you could use less people here, you could change this, you could do this instead of this. It's all in my head in twenty seconds and I explain it to them in ten minutes. I do that all the time.

Joshua: I've seen it hundreds of times. I know what you're talking about.

Perry: You know where I learned to do that? I learned to do that sitting in school, not paying attention, doodling in my notebook, designing speakers in 8th grade. *If I use this tweeter instead of that tweeter, if I use a ported box instead of a sealed box, if I can go to a three-way system instead of a two-way system, if I put the subwoofer in the corner... then what, then what, then what?*

That's where I learned to think that way. It was by pursuing something I was passionate about because I didn't have enough money to buy it at the store. Everybody's got these little rabbit trails – **what happens if you chase them?** Everybody's already got them. You've already got these things you're into. What happens if you pursue them further and further and further? Now, speakers are just something I enjoy, but there are so many things I learned by delving deep into that that relate to so many things. It's just endless. Start somewhere and be proactive.

Joshua: My mind is going back to this mission statement—this drive inside of you, would you say that part of the thing that kept you going was this desire for you to unleash your personal, unique fingerprint, give that thing life, let it come to be? Was that part of the I-want-to-do-what-I-want-to-do passion that you had?

Perry: Certainly. I just have this insatiable desire to explore and to do new things and to experiment and see what works. To write and to influence and to challenge people and to leave the world a better place than I found it. Laura has her own set of ambitions that they overlap with mine, but they're a fair bit different.

We both have things that we need to do. What if I can help x number of people stop sleepwalking through life? What if I can help x number of people get up every day and do what they want to do, and do what they've been purposed to do? How will the world be different?

What if, twenty years from now, there are thousands and thousands of people that got a solid direct marketing education under their belt, and they're able to sensibly run a business and advertise and get customers and do the things that they want to do, because I showed them how to do it?

That's really cool. That's a legacy. We got a good start but it's just a start, and we got a lot of stupidity left to eradicate.

