

Ep – 52 Jonathan Goodman Interview



EPISODE 52

JON GOODMAN

*Welcome to the Muscle Expert podcast with Ben Pakulski, one of the world's top professional bodybuilders – an expert on human performance and mindset mastery. Ben dives deep to deliver the strategy of top experts to upgrade your body, mind, muscle, strength, performance, biochemistry, and how to become the upgraded, modern man.*

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**BEN:** What's up ladies and gentlemen! Ben Pakulski, the host of the Muscle Expert podcast, welcome back! We have another great episode for you today, just let you know this is going to be a complete shift in the direction. This is not going to be about muscle building, this is going to be about building a business based around muscle building: how to build a fitness business online. This gentleman has a massive following, amazing content and really great resources online at the online trainer portal. He's the creator of the personal trainer development center, and we have a really long conversation about details that people are absolutely missing – things like getting really clear on your long-term objective, not getting caught up in semantics and tactics on how to acquire short-term customers.

Jonathan Goodman I go into some really great conversation about how to develop your own book and how to develop your own tribe, and some really, really cool stuff that you definitely do not want to miss out on. If you want to get the transcript, you can head to [www.BenPakulski.com/podcast](http://www.BenPakulski.com/podcast). And please, don't forget to leave us review on iTunes, it drives us.

What we're going to start doing now is actually polling one lucky winner from the reviews each week to announce on the podcast. And I'm going to be sending you guys a care package of amazing world-class products from this company: ATP Labs (Athletic Therapeutic Pharma). ATP is a company I'm recently aligned with, that has literally the highest quality manufacturing that exists anywhere. They're the cutting-edge of every ingredient and every formulation, they have got a team of researchers and a team of formulators working to put out the most efficaciously design products anywhere. It's a relatively small company right now, but the reason I've chosen to align with them is because their vision is clear and the focus is impeccable.

So if you guys are interested in checking ATP, it is [www.ATPlab.com](http://www.ATPlab.com). Amazing efficaciously designed products, and everything is third-party tested so everything that you read on the label is present in the product. Enjoy the podcast and listen all the way to the end, because Jonathan and I get into details about how to publish your own book and the process to master putting out a best-selling book. I hope you enjoy, and I look forward to hearing from you. Jonathan Goodman, welcome to the podcast!

**JONATHAN:** Yeah, I'm psyched to be here!

**BEN:** Dude, you're doing awesome stuff! I've spent a lot of time over last the few days researching your books, researching your websites; and truthfully, you're doing this stuff a lot better than everyone, which is why I'm actually honored to have you as a guest. I want to start

off as we spoke about, just by giving people a little bit of insight of your background, because as I went to your websites, your stories is interesting. I know, and you do, hundreds of people going through the exact same thing you went through years ago when you started you become a personal trainer because that seems like a great job. Now, I'll let you walk them through that journey.

**JONATHAN:** Yeah, the journey started when I was 15 years old playing ice hockey. I was 105 pounds, soaking wet, and kept getting the crap beaten out of me. I was generally quicker than most of the other kids, but if they caught me with a body jack they would knock me on my butt pretty quick. So I started listing weights, and very quickly I started to enjoy lifting weights a lot more than I joined playing team sports. If I am honest with myself, I always played the name of the back of the jersey, not the front. I always wanted to score goals, I never played defense – I was that kind of guy. So it makes sense that I'd like weightlifting, and when I turned 18 I was studying Kinesiology at the University of Western Ontario where both of us went to school. I was 18 years old, they had two free personal training sessions at that point for all students.

I took the first one, I was like, I can be a personal trainer. I became a personal trainer about two weeks after my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, was a personal trainer at the University sports complex in second to fourth year. When I graduated university, I wanted to go to medical school, I wanted to do a PhD in Muscle Phys – that was always my path, like most people who become trainers. I said I would do this, because it was fun, and then I'd figure out what u wanted to do with my life. started full-time in Toronto, enjoyed it, hit the point at 22 years old where I was doing about as good as I could do as a trainer. I was charging as much as I could in Toronto, had a full-client portfolio, I was making a commission from referring my overload clients to other trainers, and I was managing group training. I was 23 years old!

And it was cool, it was fun at the time, I was making good money. But I remember, I was still paying ice hockey at this point at night, and I got tripped one night. It pulled my hamstring and I was out of commission for two weeks off my feet, and I didn't make money for two weeks. I was like, shit, is this what my life is going to be like? Like, what next?

**BEN:** Sometimes you need a kick in the ass to stimulate action, right?

**JONATHAN:** And it wasn't that big of a kick in the ass, I mean, it was a pulled hamstring for two weeks – it wasn't that bad.

**BEN:** But you can't make money.

**JONATHAN:** You can't make money. And I was 23 years old and I was like, what next in the fitness career? And that's a very scary thing to do. Long story short, I started researching a lot about multiple income streams, how to make money in the service industry etc. I came across something called **Info Panui** [spelling 06:05] in a book called *Multiple Streams of Income* by Robert G. Allan. It basically said write a book, so at 24 years old I wrote a book to educate personal trainers, because I was too ignorant not to – which I think is the biggest major lesson.

**BEN:** What was the first book?

**JONATHAN:** *Ignite the Fire*. I think a lot of people don't take action on things these days quite frankly because they know too much about it. So I called it the **Ignorant Culture**.

**BEN:** Yeah, paralysis by analysis, right?

**JONATHAN:** Yeah. So I wrote *Ignite the Fire*, it came out when I was about 25 years old, and I was like, I need people to buy this book! How do I build up a network to buy this book of mine as an ignorant 25-year-old that wrote a book to educate an industry because he had the guts to do so?

Long story short, I started a personal trainer development center based around the idea that if I can put out one good idea or two good ideas in a year, there's probably a lot of other people who can put out one or two good ideas a year, let's get them all on the same platform – help everybody win by being a part of this thing, while kind of increasing my expert status as a result. We did that, and the personal trainer development centers evolved into the largest club of personal trainers.

*Ignite the Fire* was now in revision, it's being translated to Chinese, it's in Spanish, it's used in colleges and mentorships around the world, and the rest is history. I trained for another two years and then drove deep into Internet entrepreneurship education. I don't know what I call myself specifically, but that's the story.

**BEN:** Ultimately every businessperson needs to evolve online. The newest catchphrase is Internet entrepreneurship, but the reality is that if you're not an Internet entrepreneur you're kind of screwed because it's the direction of the world. So it's a necessity. It's pretty awesome to see that you've taken your passion and your interest and turned it into something that's massively applicable for everybody else. The reason I think this is simply cool, is you have kind of attached to the catchphrase of 'the highly wealthy online trainer', and that's an awesome catchphrase because most trainers I know their only marketing strategy is: I'm going to post a snapshot, a screenshot on Instagram of 'hey, I'm now taking on clients'. That's their strategy, and that's the reality. Every pro bodybuilder comes to me and goes, "Hey man, how do I get more clients," or, "Hey man, how do I build a business?"

That's their strategy; that if I just post this picture of me in really good shape, that's my credentials and that's my credibility, and I'm just going to start taking on clients. And they will get one or two, or maybe they will get five or ten, and it ends there. So I'd love for you to start walking us down the path of what you suggest people do, because I know you've got a tremendous resource – the online trainer resource. What are you suggesting people do? and I know you've got two new books that you sell of Tandem that are really guiding people down this journey of hey man, here's how you take your interest and your passion in training (which I'm good at manifesting), and turn that into a business of taking the passions and interests and making money.

**JONATHAN:** Sure. There are two fundamental principles. The first is; how would this look like if it were easy? And the second is; two golden rules for success, which number one is do a good job and number two is make sure everybody knows about it.

So we'll go on the second fundamental principle, which is: how do you make sure everybody knows about how great you are? It's all surrounded by becoming the guy (the guy is a gender-neutral term). Everybody wants to be the guy, everybody wants to recommend guy.

**BEN:** I always say the mayor. Become the mayor of bodybuilding, become the mayor of muscle execution – that's how I always see it.

**JONATHAN:** Yeah, have become synonymous with it; the mayors. The mayor is gender-neutral as well. So how do you become the guy, is the question. I think what you described, somebody posting up a tip on bodybuilding and saying they're taking on clients, that's a tactic. There's nothing wrong with tactics, but tactics are come today gone tomorrow. And if you like, 'Facebook likes videos today', 'oh, there is Periscope', 'oh, there is Snapchat' – whatever, if you try to keep up you're always going to be two steps behind. If you understand fundamentally why people use social networks and how you can get them to want to share messages as an extension of themselves, you're always going to be put. Doesn't matter what the platform is, the platform is going to change.

So it's a matter of saying; what's my overall strategy? What do you want people to do? What do you want people to know about you? And then you can kind of feed in those individual tactics to that. Ben, you also hit on the idea of like maybe they'll get one or two or five clients. There are basically three categories of clients that you can get: fast, slow and medium-linked clients.

The first-linked clients if the low-hanging fruit. These are people who either know you or for some reason really like you and feel connected with you, or they felt enough pain and they're ready to take action right now and you're just lucky that you happened to be there. It's a combination of those two. That's going to be generally about 5% of your client pool.

Then you've got the medium-linked clients, you kind of wine and dine a little bit. Those are the people who are public, and they're going to watch your content for a while, they're going to kind of follow you if you can get a chance to be in front of them a bunch of times – they kind of know that they want to take action, they just don't know if they're ready to yet, or they don't know if they should yet.

**BEN:** Yeah, it's like the hot girl in college who you had to kind of woo them a little bit. You don't just go and say, "Hey, will you have sex with me? Will you marry me?" It's like, I have to walk you down this journey of 'let's become friends, let's show you that I'm not the bad person'.

**JONATHAN:** And if you ask enough people, one of them will probably say yes.

**BEN:** Yeah, exactly.

**JONATHAN:** But most won't, and the good ones won't!

**BEN:** Yeah, exactly. It'll never be the ones you want, that's right. It will never be the ones you want to keep for life, and that's ultimately what we're after – that how do we get those clients that are not only going to be paying clients, but they're going to be clients for life? The joke I always make on social media is, the people who are my biggest haters, to begin with end up being my best customers long-term, because it takes the longest time for you to convince them of your integrity and your value, and all of a sudden they're like, "Oh my God, this guy is the best!" So how do we walk down that path?

**JONATHAN:** And anytime you can connect with somebody really emotionally either positive or negative, they're very connected with you. It is kind of like an inverted you, or an inverted horseshoe. Somebody who absolutely hates you is actually very close to somebody who absolutely loves you on the opposite end of the spectrum. If you look at one of my books, if you look at the logo, you'll actually see on either side of the V, there's those individual points that break off of it and they each break off in two points. That's meant to signify the same thing with the V, positive and negative emotions. And that's all of the research that comes out of the social contingent theory and word-of-mouth theory. It is predicated on that idea, you need a positive and negative emotion. Neither, like somebody who is just kind of okay with you is where ideas go to die.

So, how do you get a positive and negative emotion? You're right, your best followers by far are going to be the people who hate you at the beginning, because you have connected with them enough to get that. So your question is how do you get this? That's something that I dwelt upon a lot in the last year or so because I think it's changed quite a bit, and I'll explain why. The entire online marketing ecosystem has become decentralized. You're kind of on your own.

Facebook ads spend has gone up, and it's going to continue to go up. Organic reach on all social media platforms has gone down – I don't care what platform comes out, it might be hot for a little bit but then it's going to go down. Email deliverability has gone down as well. So in order to reach the inbox, you used to be you get the emails and you own the leads, but you don't own the place where the emails go to. So what do you do?

My answer for this is:

- ❖ Hedge yourself – I'm basically using Facebook groups and email in tandem, and I'm just trying to spin people back and forth between the two. And I'm not a showy guy, you might do Instagram if you're somebody who looks good and your business is based off of how you look. That's not really me, my business is based off of me not owning shoes, owning one pair of jeans and owning one t-shirt.
- ❖ How do you get as many exposures as you need for somebody to trust you? And how do you stick around long enough so that when they're ready to buy you're the one they buy from? I think that's the biggest thing. I mean, marketing used to be basically you throw an ad or a marketing message, you try to stop people where they are, reverse them and get them to pay attention to you. Marketing now in the words of **Mark Earls**, who is an economist in the UK, is a matter of curating diffusion. How do you figure out where people are already going and diffuse seamlessly into that and become a part of the

conversation over a long period of time? I think you do that by getting materials in their hands that they want to talk about, not want to display.

This is why I'm so bearish on books. People have a wealth of books! You get a book on someone's shelf, it's theirs.

**BEN:** There's books that I bought three and four years ago, and there's this one book that's a perfect example. It was given to me in 2013, and I looked at it and I was like, no. And I picked it up again recently and I've been reading it and I'm like, this is the best book I've ever had, I wish I'd read it four years ago. But it's something out there, and I didn't know until I saw the title pop up somewhere again. You're absolutely right about a book!

**JONATHAN:** Books are amazing. I was given a book, I still remember this, it was like five months ago, for a former company that used to send us a free book by somebody. It was one of their other clients and they sent us a free book. The book was shit, it was like the worst book I had ever read. And we were moving out of the place we were living, and I had this book in my hand and it was so hard for me to throw it out! I could not throw out this book! It was shit, this book was terrible, but I couldn't throw it out. I kept it, I still have it. Why? I'm not going to give it anybody, but it's going to be on my shelf.

Now, of course you want your book to be good, but even it's not, my question is (you go back to) how you get people to trust you enough to buy? Or, how do you stay in the conversation long enough so that when they're ready to buy, you're the person that they think about – which I think is the biggest thing. I think what a lot of fitness marketers don't realize is that the reason that somebody doesn't purchase is not because they're not ready, it's not because they're cheap or they don't trust you. It is because they're not ready. They have probably tried and failed multiple times to do exactly what you're promising to teach them, over and over and over again, with the instruction of other people who promise them almost the exact same thing as you. So what you're giving them is trust.

**BEN:** That's so brilliant.

**JONATHAN:** Yeah. And how do you do that? You've just got to be there. It's an idea called cognitive ease: the more time somebody sees something, the more trustworthy they believe that thing is, and the more important they think that thing is. How do you get that? You get that by getting in front of them over and over again.

**BEN:** What I teach at MI40 is ultimately like, exercise execution is the solution to all your body problems, and people are like, "Well, I'm not so sure, I've improved my execution before generally doing it." And I just keep sticking with it and be like, "Listen guys, if you improve it, if you improve it, your body will change, your margin for error in nutrition will change, you will become mindful in your life because you have to pay attention to every amount of detail." people don't doubt that I'm the king of exercise execution, what they doubt is that exercise execution is the solution to their problems. That's exactly what you said.

**JONATHAN:** Interesting. And so how do you get that message to stick? What are some of your ways to do that?

**BEN:** Ultimately, personally it's just a matter of social proof. It's just like sticking with it. I think for everyone to tangibly feel something is where they really get that stick in the brain. So people come to our camps, or I try to give them tactile cues on YouTube videos or Instagram videos or whatever it is. And once they feel it, they're like, "Oh my God, I've never felt anything like that before," and they start to just kind of go down that journey.

Once they open their eyes to the idea that it's possible, their life changes. And that's exactly what you're talking about, but most people are just not ready to hear it! Like, the solution is there, they've tried the solution so many other times and it just hasn't worked. It's not the same solution, but they think they've tried so many other times – speaking to what you're saying. And ultimately the messenger you're conveying Jonathan is that it's the long-haul. I love that your business is built around, you're not the shiny red object. How do you build (and this is where I want to progress our talk to here) the business in the long haul? And this is what you're doing for yourself and this is what it sounds like you're teaching your students to do: building the 10-year, building the 25-year plan. And that's how you build a business, right?

**JONATHAN:** Sure.

**BEN:** Most guys are trying to make money today, because I need to pay my bills at the end of month; whereas you're setting it up from a perspective of how do I build an empire? I'm I correct in making that assumption?

**JONATHAN:** Yeah, it's definitely the long haul. One of the things you said that I really want to go back to, that I think was brilliant point, is 'it's possible'. How do you get somebody to commit to something that you want them, or that you think that they need to commit to that they've tried and failed with previously? The answer is, it's possible. And how do you do that? A lot of people try to do too much.

From a fitness standpoint, what you said is dead-on, that can you give them that one cue that's going to get them to feel something a little bit different? That they're going to say, this is it! Once you get that by them, then the waterfall effect happens.

With online marketing, you get this lead magnet for example. A lead magnet is generally (if anybody doesn't know what a lead magnet is) like whenever somebody says, "I'll give you this in exchange for your address." That's a lead magnet, or ethical bribe or content upgrading – you can call it a bunch of different things. For the most part it's usually a PDF, the good ones are PDFs. The bad ones are like webinars and three-part video series and stuff like that. The reason that the good ones are PDFs is that they're simple and their only job is to get you to take one step forward in the direction you want to go. It's easy, it's short, it should be consumed within 4-7 minutes. Its only job is to say: here's where you are, here's where you ultimately want to go, I'm going to prove to you that I can help you, and I'm going to prove to you that it's possible, by helping you take one step in that direction. That's the job of that, lead magnet.



So I just wanted to really get on that, it's so interesting to me when you can look at how industries overlap, and you can get beautiful synergy in-between. It's like a **ven** diagram, the overlap is what matters. Individual industries, individual thought processes are really boring.

**BEN:** So giving this speech, giving listeners some action right now, I'm thinking: would your first suggested task look like going out and creating a lead magnet that allows people to take that first step; or would you look at it from the perspective of creating your 10-year plan, write your book, and then get people into this funnel? Guys are sitting out there, they want to create a business, what's the next way from your perspective for them to take that leap?

**JONATHAN:** That's a good question, I'm glad you asked that. It's neither of those things. The first step is to eliminate fear. Seneca once said that if you were to stay in fear and imagine that the worst that could happen most definitely will happen, fear is nothing but no rational response. So fear is the unknown. So if you make the unknown know, then you have no fear. If you want to take action, you have got to eliminate fear, you're got to take the first step.

The way to do that is to make it very clearly known how much money you need. This is something that is so obvious and so few people do it. It's as simple as, write down on a piece of paper how much money you need each month to basically survive, make sure any dependents of you are looked after, pay all your bills that you need to, and if you have anything really special that you don't want to give up (like in my budget when I did it, I had a \$200-do-something-special-for-my-girlfriend fund, who is now my wife), whatever that is, make it a realistic number. It shouldn't be frivolous, but make a realistic number.

Then you want to subtract from that number the amount of money you're making doing things that are either completely passive, or doing things that you would do until the day you die even if nobody paid you. That number might be zero or there might be a number there. Whatever is left now, I call your freedom number. That's your monthly revenue that you need.

Your next job is to do whatever you can do that's as high-yield as possible to get to that number. That's probably going to be coaching, it's probably going to be service-based. I get it, it's not scalable, it's not passive, blah blah. Your only job right now is to get to that. So if your number is \$3000 and you want to charge \$300 a month for coaching, you need 10 clients. Your only job now of sole focus, is to get 10 clients who are going to pay you \$300 a month, because once you get that you're free. Freedom is providing yourself the opportunity.

Now you've got space; now you can give away all of the other stuff you're doing that's annoying. Now you can say, "okay, well now I have the mental clarity," which I think a lot of things that people take for granted is how important willpower is in creative energy and mental clarity. Now you your brain can relax and say, "Okay I'm taken care of, and the people I love are taken care of because I've got this. Now with all of my other spare time, I can start putting the pieces together."

And yes, the pieces are going to be some combination of creating intellectual property for sale, whether it's a book or whatever – something that is scalable and something that can become

passive at one point. Even before then, affiliate stuff if you want to do it. If you really believe in a company create a funnel for an affiliate product before you create your own product, just so you have that other revenue source.

And then you start to kind of stacking on to it. My friend Steph calls it the octopus. Basically, you have your main thing and then you just keep feeding differently generational techniques. That's all your social media stuff, that's all your lead magnet stuff, that stuff comes after. And by the way, paid advertising comes way at the far end of all this. Paid advertisement is gasoline onto a fire – if there's no fire, you're just pouring gasoline onto a pile of logs.

**BEN:** You're obviously a reader, and I want to ask this question, because I know a lot of people are out there going, "I don't really know what to create my business around." so do you have a method whereby you say here's how you find what you're passion is? You know, I own exercise execution, that's my objective, I'm the guy. If you want to learn how to exercise, I'm your guy and that's the end of it. Most people go, "Well, I don't really know what I'm good at!" Do you have a method, or do you have books that you might recommend for people finding what they love? What do you recommend? Because that's obviously step 1: don't create a business you don't love.

**JONATHAN:** Don't create a business you don't love. I don't have a method for you, I wish I did because that would have saved you a hell of a time. My method is to jump so deep into an idea, do a great job investigating and producing something on the idea, and then leave it out in the world and move it on.

**BEN:** How do you overcome the fear? It is just as Seneca says, like assume the worst-case scenario you've got your butt covered, and jump in?

**JONATHAN:** I assume the worst-case scenario. The easiest thing that I do is, no matter what I'm going to do if I need to make a decision, I imagine the absolute worst-case scenario that's going to happen. If nobody buys this book, if it crashes and burns, how much time is it going to take me? How much money am I going to spend at it? What's the potential reputation cost of this thing, I think is also very important. I'm I willing to live with the worst-case scenario? If I'm willing to work with it, then yeah.

I mean, we have a lot of years. There is this kind of this like cult of immediacy that I think a lot of younger entrepreneurs especially, fall prey to. We have a lot of years man, you can produce a lot of stuff. Since the age of 25, I've written seven books, created a certification, I've put on three conferences, I've produce something like 16 DVDs. And you know what? A lot of them aren't for sale anymore and a lot of them were bad. So what?

**BEN:** Good for you, man!

**JONATHAN:** Some of them were really good! It's kind of the idea of investigating what really popular people do. Ivan Vendicher [spelling 27:28] is a perfect example. Throw as much crap at the wall as you possibly can, and when you figure out what sticks, you double down on that.

**BEN:** Interesting percent.

**JONATHAN:** So I don't have a process. I'm not saying that this is a good answer, but this is what I've always done. I produce, I put stuff out into the world, I see what people respond to and what people don't respond to. I see what lights me up, and build businesses around that. I'm really, really good at writing books, and so I've turned my company into a publishing company. I'm really bad at coming up with an idea and running it for a long period of time and growing it slowly, so I'm not building a startup. I tried, it was miserable, I wasted a lot of money.

**BEN:** So the two books you have right now on [www.onlinetrainer.com](http://www.onlinetrainer.com), if anyone wants to check that out they can get these two books. The first one being: *Habits of Highly Wealthy Online Trainers*, tell me about that book.

**BEN:** That book was written, and this is another interesting story of failing yourself to success. Those books were originally going to be a four-part series that was going to be a free extra bonus as part of a paid print newsletter subscription. I started writing them and I absolutely loved them and realized that they were their own project, and the print newsletters never happened and might never happen. And it has become two books and not four books, and I struggled with that. There were a lot of nights where I was just trying to figure out what the heck to do with all this stuff that I had and how to organize it.

But the idea with having book number one of habits is, if you don't have good habits nothing else matters. I could tell you whatever you want to know about marketing, it doesn't matter if you're not going to do it. The best marketing in the world is stuff that you believe in, it's deep strategy and you do it consistently over a relatively long period of time. It is not one done, I'm going to shoot a Facebook ad to a 15-minute strategy call to a \$5000 coaching program. That's not marketing.

**BEN:** The parallel is drawn there from life, and your body and fitness are massive, right? And that's a realization you make before you go into businesses, that it's just all the same thing. Whether you're going to have to learn lessons in the gym and in fitness, or you learn lessons in business, you're going to get slapped in the face. You're going to learn somehow. So apply the lessons you learn here to lessons there. What are the habits of highly wealthy online trainers?

**JONATHAN:** That habits of respecting your time, the habits of learning how to write, the habits of something called choice minimalism. Here's one of the central tenets of the book; I look at online training as something that is a stepping stone. Some people will be online trainers for the rest of their life, but I'm honest, the odds are you're not going to be an online trainer for the rest of your life. I will be doing you a disservice if I profess to teach you marketing and branding and how to live your life, and I'm only doing it specific to online training. I want to teach you transferable skills that you can take with you whatever you want to do.

So I think that learning how to write and effectively communicate through the written word is the most valuable skill anybody can have. You can hire somebody to write your sales copy, fine. Still need to be able to write a status update, you still need to be to write an email to your client

or write an email to a friend or whatever. People are bad writers, man! Look in the comment thread of any Facebook post anywhere, it's bad.

**BEN:** Do you have tools? Are you just an avid reader and your writing skills developed from that, or do you have courses or things you recommend to upgrade? I'm an avid reader and writer, I write for at least an hour, sometimes up to 5-6 hours a day, but I still don't think by any stretch I'm a great writer. What are your recommendations for people to really pull out that creative process?

**JONATHAN:** I think that anybody who writes a significant amount realizes that; I think that the more you like the more you realize how bad of a writer you are. So I like how you said that, you're probably a great writer by most people's standards, but by your standards you're a terrible writer.

**BEN:** You can always be better, like everything.

**JONATHAN:** Sure. And the more you write the worse you're going to think that you are. That's just why most writers end of the basements drinking bourbon all the time!

**BEN:** Or in Costa Rico with no shoes!

**JONATHAN:** Yeah basically, in Costa Rico with no shoes. There are two kind of seminal works that I always recommend to people. *Online Writing Well* by Zinssera, I think is probably the most important book for learning how to write.

**BEN:** What is his name?

**JONATHAN:** Zinssera, William Zinssera. It is called *Online Writing Well*. What that really hammers in is the importance of synchrony and clarity, and writing for your reader not writing for other people that you want to impress i.e. your colleagues – which is something very important in the fitness industry.

Then the other book is, *The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White. That book, maybe I'm just a dork, but I actually enjoyed reading it, it's about a lot of grammar and punctuation principles. But what I really liked about it, it wasn't like: here's how we use a comma or a semicolon, or anything like that. It was like: here's how you actually use these devices to have a better effect.

For example, I absolutely love cadence in writing. I think that words matter and I think that the way that words are organized communicates more. I can get someone's heart pumping by how I arrange the words, and by how long or short but powerful the way that the sentences are organized as, without the words – it can be any words. If I want to exhaust the reader, I will write a long sentence (and you will see that sometimes in my books). And I work with editors now, and they leave it because they now recognize what doing. They'll write me like a little smiley face; there are long sentences on purpose. Elements of style kind of work without a lot: Decadence, alliterations, all of those tools that are just super powerful to use. So that is really big.

And then there's this choice minimalism thing is big. Those decisions you need to make are so freaking important.

**BEN:** I love that.

**JONATHAN:** I own one T-shirt, this is the only T-shirt I own. I own 6 in black, 2 in navy, 2 in grey.

**BEN:** We're living parallel lives man!

**JONATHAN:** And I'd give my buddy a bit of a promotion here at **Undown** Marina. It's the company, a fantastic company. But the idea behind that is quite simple: it's, what's the utility of a decision that you are making? What's the desired outcome?

**BEN:** Right.

**JONATHAN:** Take stuff in that. My desire- I mean if I loved fashion, it would be different. I don't. My desired outcome is to feel good and feel like I look good in what I wear. Is wearing a different brand T-shirt going to affect my desired outcome? No. So I'm going to wear the same plain T-shirt and the same T-shirt every day. And that way, I don't need to make that decision.

And how many little decisions, seemingly obtuse decisions that you can eliminate in your everyday life? That just leaves you more room to think about the important things.

**BEN:** Do you eat the same thing every day?

**JONATHAN:** I don't. But I also don't look at menus. When I do cook, I cook the exact the same things. But I don't look at menus.

**BEN:** Tell me some other things you're doing to eliminate decision fatigue. So you're modelling yourself, I don't know if it's intentionally, but after some massive personalities like Steve Jobs, Zuckerberg, another friend of mine Dean Jackson (if you don't know Dean Jackson, he's the same way – he wears the same shirt and pants every day, same shoes. he's always got his chucks and his lumber jacklumpy shirt).

**JONATHAN:** And Obama is the same way.

**BEN:** Really? Interesting! Tell me what other things you're doing, because I'm very interested in this. I mean I'm very interested in the minimalist lifestyle and eliminating all this frivolous, useless attention-to nonsense. Ultimately I want to focus my brain power on things that matter, which kids throw a complete range in that by the way, but we'll leave that alone. So what other thing are you systematizing so that you can eliminate decision fatigue?

**JONATHAN:** I'll talk about what's specific to business, because I guess that's more apt of this conversation. One is, obviously a lot of filters around my email. I have an email account that nobody knows about, that's not public anywhere.

All of my emails get filtered to one of two different: one is an assistant, one is my project manager depending on the idea, and I've built all the protocols for them to deal with basically all of the emails. And then we just added a quick line, somebody named Dan Martel was the one that introduced me to this. He says, "Hey, it's Courtney. I got to this email before John did and I thought you'd appreciate a faster response." And then they respond to the email.

So it's still very personal and I like it because it's kind of voiced in the way that you're doing them a solid. And so they'll sometimes forward me messages that they think that I want to see, but for the most part I might get three emails a day. Like, what do you need to deal with? Everything is an FAQ, everything has an answer to, with all of the administrative functions kind of taking a step back and authorize operator. So that's one.

The other is; when it comes to social media, when it comes to blogging, when it comes to writing articles: just eliminating the crap man! The only thing that matters is the work. Nothing else matters. I don't have any stat even integrated. I don't have any stat even installed into any of my websites. I have no idea how many people visit my websites. I have never done an AB test in my life, I've never measured anything. It's completely irrelevant. Because to me, those are all kind of short-term things going for the biggest win possible; versus trying so hard every day just to produce incredible work, day in and day out.

I look at people like Seth Godin. Seth Godin still operates on type pad, which most people don't even know it exists. He's like a 99.8% of their volume. You know, type pad is a pre-cursor to WordPress, is a pre-cursor to BlogSpot. So he's on type pad because there's no reason for him not to be. He's written an article something like every day for the last ten years, and he's written a whole bunch of books and got a ton of books out.

But what do you really notice that stands out about that? He doesn't have an email list, his email list is in OSS feed. So it's just like an automated feed of his articles, they go out to anybody who subscribes to it. His articles are also automatically posted on social media accounts. There is nothing else posted on his social media accounts. He doesn't answer any comments on it, he doesn't even look at the social media accounts. If you email him, he answers. But he doesn't pay attention to anything like that.

I never use images anymore. I have just eliminated all of the crap that stops me from producing high-quality work. I don't like meta-descriptions, I don't do any SEO work, I don't have any stats installed to my site, I don't do any AB tests.

The article gets out, I send it in an email and then somebody on my team syndicates it three days later on a couple of different platforms. That's it! And I move on to the next!

**BEN:** I love how clear it is. And the message here for all the listeners is; get clear on who you are and what you are objectively is. And Jonathan is so clear on the fact that his exclusive governing factor is 'I'm going to own content, I'm going to be an amazing writer and people are going to love me for my content,' similar to **Seth Godin**. And some people out there don't have the capacity to do that, at least not yet. So they need tactics, and they need to AB testing, and they need to optimize every day – and there's nothing wrong with that.

But I think that the best message in what you have just said, from my perspective, is clarity on your end result. Your 10-year vision is you're going to be prolific for your quality of what you are putting out there.

**JONATHAN:** Yeah, prolific. My goal in the back of my head has always been, I want to be able to send out an email that says: 'I will be here at this time', 'buy your ticket here, click'. No sales copy, no fanfare, no plea working people up – no nothing, just people blindly trusting me that I can send out that one email and sell out a 5000-seat theater. But I'm nowhere close to that now!

**BEN:** That's a good goal, I like that.

**JONATHAN:** Conner O'Brien sent out a tweet and in 20 minutes sold out a nationwide tour. Think about what needs to be in place for that to happen. It has nothing to do with social media dude, it is everything to do with the quality of work, the amount of assets that you've produced, the people you have impacted personally over such a long period of time, consistently over so many years. That's what matters. And that's power.

**BEN:** And the simplicity is the brilliance, right? The idea that so many people are thinking about all these tactics and what they have to do and how many posts they have to do and how many likes they get on the posts. The reality is, all that stuff is semantics and complete bullshit.

**JONATHAN:** Completely irrelevant.

**BEN:** Exactly, unless you're putting out great, valuable, morally strong content. I love it, I love that we're having this conversation, this is brilliant.

**JONATHAN:** **John Berardi** is one of our mutual friends I think. I had a very long lunch with him yesterday, he has been a great friend and mentor to me for many years, and one of the things that he said to me years back about testing that's great; he said: a lot of people test C versus C+ ideas, and when you do that the C+ idea is going to win out. But what you're doing is taking attention away from getting an A idea. Once you have an A idea, then you can test it against an

A+ idea. But 99.9999% of people never get the point where they have A ideas, because they just haven't searched hard enough for it.

**BEN:** They haven't spent enough time with it, completely agree. It's the idea of going back to paralysis by analysis – I fight that all the time with everything that I put out. It's like I want to have such high levels of integrity and quality with what I put out. Sometimes people are like, "Why don't you put out more videos, more articles," I'm like, because it needs to have a specific purpose, it needs to have a specific outcome in mind, and I need to be helping a large number of people. It's not just about putting out superfluous, unnecessary, massive amounts of content. Like, what's the purpose?

And sometimes I get ridiculed, like, "Hey dude; you just have to put out a lot more." But yourself, maybe I need to hold my feet to the fire with putting it out daily, but at the same time, I'm always of the mentality of where is it going, and is it an A+ idea, or at the very least a B+ idea?

**JONATHAN:** Right, there are certainly different schools of thought. I'm of the opinion that whenever anybody sees my name, they have a pre-existing notion. And I'm not there at this point, but this is the goal. They have a pre-existing notion of exactly what type of quality it is going to be, and it stops them in their tracks because they know it's going to be worth looking at.

**BEN:** I tell you, from my perspective, you're already doing that with your books. Everything you're doing is very high quality; you're doing a great job with all your websites. Looking through your websites makes me know how much I need to upgrade my website.

**JONATHAN:** Design and branding, man.

**BEN:** Yeah, you're doing a fantastic job. All that the book covers, the quality of the content of the books is amazing. I want to plug this other book you're selling on Online Trainer, which is the marketing breakthroughs of highly wealthy online trainers.

**JONATHAN:** Sure, plug whatever you want of mine, I'm happy to.

**BEN:** Yeah, exactly, because I think people need this stuff. If people are trying to build a business, these are really easy resources for them. What are we talking about when we say breakthroughs?

**JONATHAN:** Breakthrough is just way of thinking differently. This comes as a two-book box set, for anybody who doesn't know. You can't buy one without the other, you can't do marketing without habit. So I'm forcing that, and that was very purposeful. A breakthrough is a way of thinking differently. A breakthrough is not a tactic, a breakthrough is a strategy, a mindset. And a lot of people will read that book and they'll be like, "Oh, he's going to tell me when to post on



Facebook.” No, I’m not going to tell you that. I can tell you exactly when to post to Facebook according to science, according to research, but it’s not going to make an inch of a difference in business.

What I’m going to tell you is the importance of defying industry norms. What I’m going to tell you is the importance of avoiding things like marketing incest: not copying others, because when you start to really get into the thick of it, you realize that most people out there don't know what the heck they’re doing. They’re just copying other people. It’s like back in the day, you have young kids playing Purple Monkey Dishwasher (if you’ve ever played that game). There would be a bunch of kids in the schoolroom, and somebody would whisper something in the ear of one kid and that message would have to try to be communicated as a whisper to the final kid in the line, without changing. And it eventually changes and inevitable becomes something like purple monkey dishwasher. That’s marketing incest.

Understanding that most of the time when people are educating others about what to do when it comes to marketing or building particularly an online business, what they’d be doing is they’re teaching you a system that can be taught. I think that is a very important thing to understand. A system that can be taught is something that can be wrapped up into a neat little ball with a nice little hook in position properly, with a really easy overnight benefit. If somebody says, I just did this one thing and I got all this success, they’re lying, they’re disillusioned, or they got lucky. It’s not something that can maintain. If it was easy to do that, everybody would be doing it. So those are the types of things that can be taught and are commonly taught, and I think that is very important to understand.

So the idea of marketing breakthroughs is, let’s insert marketing to every part of your business. Even things like micro changes, changing how often you charge for example. You can change somebody biweekly versus monthly, and you can add (we’ve done the calculations) over have \$20,000 to 25,000 to your bottom line after a couple years. Because biweekly is 28 days, monthly is 30.42 days; in a non-leap year.

Micro changes in terms of how you present your services is very important. So when somebody gets to a page, you can very easily present an upsell that you think is important. Let’s say that you are selling training, and originally you were just going to sell a monthly training package. So you would say: here’s your monthly training package, 200 bucks a month, here’s what you get. Well, the sale stops at that point. What if you were to say: step one fill out this form; step two choose the supplement that best fits you; step three pick your monthly training package? What you’re doing now is you are taking advantage of this heuristic of this will of thumb that makes it seem like there's a pre-existing behavior that should be copied. And humans are individual unless they are in a place where they assume that pre-existing behaviors already exist.

So by saying step one, step two, step three, what you do is kind of make it seem like they should take all the steps in order to get what they want. I mean, you have to obviously believe

in the supplement you're selling them, that it's going to help – it could be supplements, it would be equipment, it could be any number of things. But all of a sudden now you're just adding dollars to your bottom line. It has nothing to do with marketing/ you can make more money three ways:

- ✓ Get more clients
- ✓ Make more per transaction
- ✓ Get more transactions per customer.

So you can get more client, you can raise prices, or you can sell the same people more things. Most people focus on getting more clients, the other two are probably much more important.

**BEN:** I think the one thing that I want to wrap up with you, this is going to be a big one for people is, (and this may take longer than a minute): what was the process that people should walk through to start writing a book? I know you're an advocate of, let's book and fire this stuff. You don't have to give them the whole process, but maybe simplify it in the easiest way you can, because this is a big one. I'm a really big believer, and I'm in the process of writing two books right now, two huge projects which are taking out my entire life.

But it's fun man! I wake up every day at 4 AM excited to write for three hours before I leave my house, that kind of thing. I'm not going to share my process because I think yours is probably a lot more detailed and complete than mine, but I'd love to hear what your simplified version of maybe words evolve from in the beginning when you wrote your first book, to now where it is now after your seventh. Or what you've identified as being the easiest way to get a book from your brain onto paper and published.

**JONATHAN:** Sure. There is no easy way. **Luis Shtuller**, a very good friend of mine, probably the most prolific fitness author of our time – I mean, he was an editor of Men's health, Muscle and Fitness, and has written about 10 books. He wrote the foreword for one of my books, and he once told me anyone who tells you it's easy is lying, or is a shitty writer, because it's not. It is easy to talk about things the way that you understand them, it is ungodly difficult to talk about things so that somebody else can understand. And that's the whole thing, so it's not easy and it shouldn't be.

I'll give you a couple points that I think kind of sum up my thoughts on writing books. One is that my books keep getting shorter and shorter and shorter. Mark Twain once said sorry I didn't have more time, or else I would have written you a shorter letter. These two books that I came out with that you mentioned – the Highly Wealthy Online Trainer boxset, were originally about 100 pages or more each, and they got cut. My other book is 88,000 words, it got published when I was 23.

**BEN:** That's your doing or the editors?

**JONATHAN:** That's a combination of both. I think hiring the best editor you can possibly find is probably one of the most important things you can do.

**BEN:** Which is a very hard thing to do.

**JONATHAN:** Which is a very hard thing to do. The final piece of it, or I guess the most actionable thing that I can give you for writing a great book, and to simplify it as much as possible, is to say one book one idea. A lot of people know a lot of things. You know a lot, Ben. You could probably write 100 books with what you know.

The biggest problem, and with the proliferation of self-publishing you see this problem a lot more – most self-published books are really, really bad. And it's not because their writing is bad or their idea is bad, it is because the authors try to do too much. It is one book, one idea, one theory, one theme. Everything in that book fits back to that theme and that idea. If it doesn't, you cut it out. You do what Stephen King says, you kill your babies. You cut it out and leave it for another book. I think that that is the most important thing.

So then the process becomes: okay what's this topic I want to talk about? What's the one big idea? What's the theme? Every nonfiction book has a theme, the same as a fiction book has. Any good nonfiction book has a theme. What's a theme? What's everything that I know about the topic? Write that down on a piece of paper. But everything that you know about the topic. I use Q cards and I use a program called Scrivener, which makes it really easy. It just allows you to organize really complicated projects easily, much better than Microsoft Word. But I use Q cards like old-school, and write down everything you know about a topic and then it's just a matter of cutting out anything that doesn't fit into that one idea, that one theme.

Then the next stage is, of course, the research. Find the story to back up this, find the research to back it up. If you can't find the research or if the research disproves it, then you have to deal with that. You can do what a lot of people do these days and find one obscure study that kind of mentions it but doesn't back up what you said, and kind of bank on people not actually reading the study and still it include it in the book, which is pretty common. Or, you can admit that you actually might not have understood this fully, and rework it.

**BEN:** Especially in the fitness industry, that is very common, right?

**JONATHAN:** Yeah. I'm not naming any names, but we can all think of a couple of the top of our head where if somebody has 50 research articles to back up a claim, and you read through them and you're like, none of these even mentions what they're talking about.

**BEN:** Not even close!

**JONATHAN:** Or like I read this one study that mentions it, and it actually disproves what he said. That's pretty common. But that's what I can give you in a short period terms of writing a book, I

mean, it's just a matter of putting pen to paper. There are two basic kinds of writers: the writer who edits what they write; they write very slowly, they edit every word as they write it. And then there is the writer who pukes everything down on paper and edits down afterward. I'm the latter. But recognizing what type of writer you are and working within that is important as well.

**BEN:** That's great. Can you give me some guidelines on how to structure your writing? Like, do you plan to do the same time every day, do you have some rituals around that stuff? Because I think that's where people get paralyzed, and I used to be the same way – making time, planning time to write. Is it something that you say: I have this book planned, I have this deadline, and to do this I know I need to write 3-4 hours a day, so I block out this time that's all I do. Or do you just write when it comes to you?

**JONATHAN:** 3-5 hours a day is very daunting to me. I have it number one in the habits book: 30 minutes of proactive work every single day. 30 minutes to move your business forward every single day, that's it. Plan for it the night before (and I tell you how you basically plan for it the night before). I do it first thing in the morning, most people that I know are like you and I – we wake up before anybody, before our families. The first thing in the morning we do that really important work. Now, there are some writers who do that overnight, but I'd 30 minutes every single day of proactive work. For me that almost always writing, but in a business it might not be necessary writing at every point in time.

Then my method is: I have these Q cards that I have written all the subjects, all the section heads on. And on each Q card is basically the title of the section, any writing crops, any stories, and any point forms. And I have all of them on the right side of my computer. Have you ever seen the marshmallow study?

**BEN:** Yes.

**JONATHAN:** So this whole idea of delaying gratification, and this is where there's a lot of interesting carry-over to fitness, to writing, to business – the more than kids were able to delay gratification in exchange for a greater goal later on, the more successful they would be in basically every part of their life. So that's all well and good. I actually own the domain [www.secondmarshmallow.com](http://www.secondmarshmallow.com).

**BEN:** You're the second marshmallow guy, huh?

**JONATHAN:** I'm the second marshmallow guy, because I would never have gone to that second marshmallow.

**BEN:** Dude, I would have found a way to manipulate my way into getting the whole bag. I would have sweet-talked and smiled my way into getting the bag.

**JONATHAN:** So what I've done throughout my processes is I've built in ways to give myself immediate gratification at every stage. So I have this stack of my Q card on the right side of my computer when I'm writing a book, and each Q card is of 300-600 word section, nothing less nothing more. Because if I'm sitting down and I'm saying: I have four hours to write, it's going to be 3000 words this chapter, I'm going to like clean my shoes, take out the garbage. You know, procrastinators are addicted to immediacy, procrastination is opportunity's natural assassin – I mean, you can throw all these phrases about how procrastinators basically do everything except the one thing that they want to be doing.

So what I do is I trick myself into doing that one thing, and I build an immediate gratification. So I write that 300-600 word section, I take that Q card, I move it to the other side of my computer, and I put it face down. That's my reward, each time. And then I pick up the next one and I write that next session, and I move it directly over to the left side of my computer. And that's that visual cue that I'm doing the work each time as well. Then it's like meshing it together into a book. It is not saying that every section is 300-600 words, it might be 10 of those that get patched together. But to be completely honest, that's an editor's job, that is not my job. My job is to get information down and to get the ideas down, it's the editor's job to craft it into work.

**BEN:** Amazing. So what are you working on next? I know you are planning, as we spoke prior to the call you were talking about heading out to six months abroad and enjoying some beautiful weather in Costa Rica. What can people expect from you? You know, everyone is going to go out and buy your two books, your personal training set, because it's useful and very valuable. Do you have something else in the docket ready to go?

**JONATHAN:** Yes, the biggest thing that we have going on right now is the online trainer academy. That's the first-ever certification for online fitness trainers, I quite literally wrote the textbook on that subject. And so we've got an open enrollment; we do two enrollment periods every year. We've got an enrollment coming up in November. Most of the work we're doing right now is getting ready for that.

**BEN:** Is that more business-oriented, like how to run a business online?

**JONATHAN:** Yeah. I assume that you know enough, I actually say straight up in the marketing I don't want you to buy this until you have trained people for at least a year in person. You must be proficient at programming, you must understand your clients before you start online training. I don't think there's anything I can teach you if you don't do that. And then it's just a matter of setting up the perfect ideal business for you, setting it up in a way that it grows over time versus continually getting you into this contact wheel or promotion wheel where you just do something and then it might work or not work and then you do it again the next day and do it again the next way. It's all of these techniques, strategies that kind of compound over time that we're focused on. And then how to operationalize your business; I walk you through how

to set up standard operating procedures for example, so that you can begin to remove yourself from a lot of the administrative tech tasks and stick in your unique ability and your 5%.

**BEN:** Beautiful, I love it. I think everybody needs it, myself included. We all get (and I'm sure you've seen this at some point) over-managing and sometimes doing too much in your business. I'm just as guilty as everybody else. But I think what you're doing is awesome, I'm so grateful you took the time to give our listeners information, valuable resources, and I highly recommend everybody heads over to [www.onlinetrainer.com](http://www.onlinetrainer.com). You can check out Jonathan Goodman at Instagram. What's the handle?

**JONATHAN:** It is Jonathan\_Goodman101 or something.

**BEN:** I'll post it on my social so that people can directly link to you, I appreciate your time, I actually want to hear more about the no-shoes, one-jeans and more-shirts, but will save that for the next episode. I think that's really cool, I'm going toward that too, except I also want to have like one closet that's like all suits. My day-to-day stuff is like one pair of jeans, and all my shirts are the same and all my shoes are the same. I like that idea. But then you're like, I need to train, I need to do yoga, and all these damn other outfits get in the way. I wish I could just have jeans and black T-shirts and keep moving!

Jonathan I appreciate your time so much, give that beautiful wife and that beautiful baby big kisses and hugs for me.

**JONATHAN:** I will.

**BEN:** I look forward to when we can connect again and seeing the great things and great books you come up with in the future.

**JONATHAN:** Thank you man, thank you!

**BEN:** Hey, I hope you enjoyed that podcast, thank you very much for listening. Head over to iTunes right now and leave me a review. Let me know if you loved it, let me know if you absolutely hated it. either way, I need to know so I can improve my job, and bring you guys at the best information with respect to muscle building, health optimization, and building a better person – building a better man.

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