

Intersection Education - #34 Justin Jackson

Corey: Hi, Justin Jackson, welcome to the intersection education podcast. How are you

Justin: I'm doing well. I'm doing what I was just telling you off are we've known each other for a while and I moved to Vernon from Stony Plain Alberta back in 2012.

And I just I was out snowboarding this morning decided to decided to take time off the time away from the office. And just it you get a little bit a little bit spoiled right? I only did a couple hours. So you just go up your ride a couple hours and then as soon as it gets tracked out you leave so I'm feeling great today.

Corey: I can imagine and Silver Star is such a

Justin: Yeah it there's we were looking at different places and you know as a Alberta Canada, especially if you grew up around, Edmonton. It's like wake up for a.m. Saturday drive four hours to Jasper ride all day. Put your lunch in your pockets. Don't go don't go in for nothing.

And then you know, he'll closes at 4:00 and then you drive all the way home. And so now when we were looking at somewhere to live silver stars, 20 minutes from you know our house to the left and there's just not that many places like that. So yeah, we're. We're

Corey: I bet him I bet you are. That's I'm going to stop talking about that before. I become too jealous and start looking at real estate and education jobs in Vernon. But anyway, Let's talk about what I would I really wanted to talk to you about and and I think that you have a really amazing perspective and that is you've been working in the field of education, but not in formal education of school.

And and you've been creating adult education experiences where where if people didn't like what you're selling or they weren't learning. They just weren't buying from you. It was that private thing and that's through your, you know, developing courses writing books and creating these online communities for adult learning.

Do you have any takeaways when you think about what you've learned through the years about teaching or education or how people learn that? What are the biggest things that you've kind of come to know or see his truths about about learning especially for adults?

Justin: probably a bunch of things. So the way that.

The way that I decided to start teaching is I had this podcast called Product people and we were interviewing the some of the best people in startups and design and Tack people that were creating software and some Hardware like some physical objects as well and. As a part of that I started to build this audience.

And the audience, you know, I was in communication with them both on the podcast and then I had weekly I still do a weekly email newsletter. And when you have an audience. And you have a relationship eventually they're going to start seeing you as an expert in certain things and start asking you questions. And so I was working for a software company at the time as a product marketing manager. And my job was to find out what people want then help set, you know, Define the vision of what we're going to build help to deliver that to the customer then get their feedback and then take all of that cycle and figure out how we're going to promote that and get new customers.

And you know I had Indy software Developers. In my audience. I had all these people and they were like, I just built an app. How do I get customers? How do I get users and you start to see patterns in the questions people are asking and So eventually I was like, okay, I've answered these questions hundreds of times. I'm going to see if there's demand for a book and maybe a course around this. And so I put up a landing page just a one page website and at the beginning all it said was marketing for developers guide on building and launching your own thing and getting your first hundred customers and then I just wrote one chapter of the book and I made that the sample chapter that people could download. and I just put it up on the internet and. I didn't just leave it there. I was promoting it on my podcast. I told people about it on my newsletter and eventually it got picked up and it kind of went crazy. I think in a couple months it had probably two or three thousand people that had signed up with intent. So these weren't just drive by people. These were people that have signed up with intent and said I want to learn this I feel this pain in my life. I'm you know, somebody who's trying to create software and I've tried it in the past and I've failed I need to figure this out. And so that's how I knew that it was worth doing and even though I knew it was worth doing I still procrastinated it took me. I think I started in 2013 and then I finished the book and the course in 2015 in. When did I say I kind of did a beta launch in August and then the official launch October 15th 2015. And I think it did about 20 or 30 thousand dollars Revenue in that time something like that. And so I was like, whoa, what's going on here? Like there's something here that the market had responded and people were telling their friends about it. And yeah, that's how I got into it was. Answering people's questions being helpful showing up and you know being willing to engage with folks wherever they were at and taking those kind of common pain points and then putting it into an outline and then trying to teach people how to do.

Corey: Very interesting. I think that that you know, it's a it's a it's a private. Perspective right because you're making a course but isn't that what we do without so we say hey, what are you struggling with? How can I help you with that? And I think that it speaks to knowing your audience knowing your staff for a school and then also being able to have a little bit of experience to know what's resonating with the people that you serve.

So, I think that that that makes sense now. Did you have I mean you have an audience that is very tech-savvy so you obviously chose, you know, I'm more of

an online platform. Do you think that learning that way online is different than face-to-face now and now you do a little bit of each because you do some some kind of coaching individually and stuff like that.

But do you think that what did you think about when you were developing this online course was the did the mode of Education change how you presented it or was it just. Kind of okay. Now this is what we're doing. So it just works and still a book, but I could be printing it, but I'm doing it online.

Justin: Yeah, yeah, actually I should back up because before that I did do some online workshops and where I was teaching people in real time and so there. In chat and they're able to interact with me in chat. And so I and that was just testing out some of the ideas and I'd also done some local workshops to where you know, I would say, okay, I'm going to you know, get 10 people in a room and I'm going to teach you everything I know about launching a product and when I advise people these days I usually ask them.

I usually recommend I should say. To start with a local Workshop or find a Meetup. You can teach at or something get in front of real people because I think there is a lot you can learn just from doing it in front of people and seeing their reactions getting you know, the ability for them to put up your hand and ask a question in the moment the ability to you know right away if you've nailed it or not.

And if it resonated and if you know people have takeaways written out that's one of my favorite things to do at a conference is like stand in the back and then someone's upfront speaking and there will be certain slides where everyone lifts up their phone to take a picture of the slide and you just you're like, what was it about that slide that made this whole room go.

I gotta save that for later. I'm really interested in those moments. And yeah, so I think that there's tons that you get in person. I think one of the things we've also discovered with online courses is you know, at first there's like. people just seem so into it. Oh, I can learn at my own pace it, you know, I don't have to go anywhere.

It's a lot cheaper, but now we're starting to see that the the disadvantages of. You know like there is something about having a cohort that's going through the same thing with you in real-time learning at the same time interacting at the same time. There's a little bit of competition. There's a little bit of you know support there's something about that that's very powerful.

And so I've done a few experiments where I've tried that approach and I think there's something to that. I think there are still be certain things that people just want to learn on their own that makes sense, you know, like reading a book and coming up with a bunch of takeaways that way but there's there's certainly kind of levels, you know, and that some things can almost start off in self-education and then if you want to take it to the next level, maybe you need a cohort or you. To actually show up in a classroom and have you know, be present. So yeah, I think there's advantages and disadvantages of of the online learning model. The advantage is accessible. It's cheaper people can do it wherever they can do it on their own time. It's good for the Creator the teacher if you can if you can

deliver something.

That can be self paced because it's way easier on the teacher, but in terms of people actually coming away with something. Yeah, there's nothing like being in person and even just being able to see the way they're reacting and no okay. I you didn't quite get that. Let me let me try to explain it a different way.

Corey: You bet and we see that I mean like that's the lived experience of teachers, right? That's we get that interaction Lots. So yeah. I know I appreciate that and I think that you said something valuable there about the engagement. I mean we often times we often times. Skip over that engagement part with adult learning in education when we're talking to teachers.

So I think that I appreciate that one of the other messages that I really like and you didn't mention it in your last one is this idea that multiple areas of knowledge makes people better able to earn money or to have successful businesses. One of the things I can think about clearly from from your work was I think the you were given the example of a programmer.

So if you have coding skills, you're okay. But if you add programming skills plus business skills plus marketing skills. Will then you're a rock star like you are going to have a successful. Do you think that that idea has implications for schools, especially for high schools? Perhaps. Would you advocate for people being perhaps more generalists or experts in different areas or would you I don't know do you think that you have to kind of do one of the time I don't know your thoughts about that when we're talking about kids who are learning maybe in high schools.

Justin: Sure, I mean in tech there's there's been a trend towards people learning a greater breadth of skills. Now, the funny thing is in certain cases. It's gotten more specialized. So take all of this kind of there's different pockets and. You know, but in web development, for example, we have this this description called Full stack developer meaning they can at multiple levels of the stack. They have enough knowledge that they can, you know build a basic web application just on their own and that might mean the further they go up the stack that might mean they. Like design skills, they can build interfaces and web pages that look really nice and function really nice and have a good user experience.

But all the way to the back end which would be you know, database work. I know how to configure things. I know how to actually write the code I can make this thing scale and it started very specialized like you would just have you know, Dbas, all they do is database stuff you would have, you know, just back and COBOL programmers and all they do is kobol that's it.

But things have gotten more and more. It's kind of like if you were skateboarding in the 80s, you only need to know two or three tricks but now because. There's so many tracks you would need, you know to know hundreds of tracks if you're going to compete at a high level and I think every profession and was goes through that like sure HTML and CSS might have been enough to get you a job, maybe 10 years ago.

But now you're also going to need to know JavaScript you're going to need to

know, you know, some some programming framework and then we even go outside of that. And we got okay. Well if you know programming. But you also understand leadership and teamwork. You're going to be much more valuable than someone who just knows programming.

If you are a programmer that understands leadership and also understands how to sell while you're going to even be more valuable to the team. So I think there's still like a lead, you know, I know a little bit of programming and I'm challenging myself to know more but it's never going to be my lead.

Like it won't be the thing that they hire me for first. But if they want to hire me for product management or marketing or whatever and then I in the interview I say oh and I am. I'm fairly comfortable and you know the development process. I know how to deploy things. I Now understand how get works.

I can write basic rails code then I become that much more valuable and I think that is definitely a trend when you're hiring. That's what you want. This is something he's a bit of a notorious figure now, but Scott Adams the creator of Dilbert. I don't agree with all of his politics, but. He's the cat the one that kind of really got me this idea, which was he's overlapped.

I think three or four things that he's pretty good at like he's not the best drawer drawer illustrator in the world. He's not the best artist, right, but he can draw okay. He's not the funniest person in the world, but he's pretty funny. He's not the I can't remember what his third one was he's.

The most knowledgeable about business, but he knew enough about business to comment on it and he was able to take those three separate things that were some of it was skill-based. Some of it was experiential and when he overlapped them this some of those parts made him, you know, kind of much more successful and I think that's true for sure.

I think there's. You know like in the programming world one of my advantages is I love being on stage. I I'm I don't know if I'm a natural Entertainer, but I like to entertain I like to perform and so like programming conferences will hire me to be the MC because I just bring energy and I'm used to that and that's one way I've been able to stand out that's unique to me.

Because if I you know, I put okay, I'm good at that and then I'm also good at that and I'm good at that that the sum of those parts is quite valuable and maybe in the old days you might you know notice a kid that's really good at chemistry and say okay. You just got to go deep on chemistry and don't think about anything else.

I think that's becoming less and less true because so many things are inter.

They're interrelated now, like if you're going to you know, you want to get into Big Data. Well as we've seen you probably also need to understand privacy.

You probably also need to have some sort of emotional intelligence.

And so it's not enough. To just be really really good at chemistry anymore in the market. That's my opinion. Anyway, I think I think you want people that have a lead like, oh, you know my friend Verner like he was the best at chemistry, but he also has these other attributes that make him a really valuable member of the team.

Corey: Yeah, and I think that that's exactly what we're kind of wrestling with this we're wrestling with this idea of how do we create these amazing entrepreneurs and I mean even in that whole realm, I mean the tech entrepreneurship. Is seen as a really high-end future for these kids and so I'm interested.

I was interested get your perspective on that it sounds from you is that yeah go deep on the tech. But also don't forget about some of these other cross-curricular cross subject skills that you're going to need because if you're flat and don't have some of those you're either going to a not be valuable for the skills you have or be you're not gonna be able to use those skills to communicate.

Eat them in ways that will allow you to create the relationships that you need.

Justin: Yeah, actually that that made me think of something that I actually bring up quite a bit. Because I have two minds about this. one is. I think schools could definitely be doing a better job of allowing kids to explore some of the things that they're interested in and you know just naturally right, but the other benefit of school is the rigor like and so I've used this example.

Dr. Nyberg taught English AP at Stoney Memorial High School for years. I don't know how long and you know, I sign up for her AP class. I liked writing already, but then I get into her AP class and she made me write a dang sa every single week and when she marked it she wasn't even nice about it, you know, like she would like tear these things apart.

And I was used to you know, I had kind of figured out a way to charm my way through school. And so when she showed up like she showed up and started challenging us to do work at this level. It wasn't fun. And you know, I remember us complaining about it. Like nyberg you're writing. You're making us write another essay.

Why can't we do something else and it was all it three-point s a three-point s a three-point essay. Well, I think I had her for grade 11 and 12. Graduate register for business at Grant MacEwan comes time to write the first paper and none of my classmates can write they can't write at all and I could have written that paper in my sleep like to this day.

You know writing comes easier to me than a lot of my peers and it wasn't that's not like just in green talent that was like hammered into me by nyberg. And so part of me is like so thankful. I went through this one phase where I was thinking about education on my cock. We got to get rid of all this, you know, dumb classroom structure and all this other stuff.

Let's just, you know, let kids pursue their own passions and whatever and I think there is a piece of that. But the other advantage of school is that the teacher has some Authority and says listen, you're in my class. This is what I expect and if they know what they're doing. They will, you know get you to practice and practice and practice and practice and practice and practice.

Like this wasn't just her getting us to memorize grammar. She didn't care about us being able to like. Memorize conjugation. This was like we would write an essay and she would correct our grammar. We would write an essay and she would correct her sentence structure and man that helped and I wish that my

biggest regret in school is that when I got into high school there was a shift from they were teaching us programming.

They were teaching us basic programming on Apple to he's in elementary, which was amazing. And then we got into high school and the whole world has shifted to kind of knowledge workers or office workers and to all we learned was Microsoft Office and I wish I had had somebody in a rigorous way forced me to practice programming because I could really use that right now if I'd had the experience if someone had made me, you know run those drills.

I would be in a much better place now than not having it. So I think part of it is the interest I signed up for English AP because I like to write it had been affirmed to me by teachers that I was a good writer, but it wasn't until I met nyberg. She was like, she's like no. This is the way you're going to write like and that was so helpful and you know, That's paid dividends years later.

Like I'll always have that and you don't have very many opportunities like that where you've got this group of kids that has to be there or in adult education, you know, like you're in college they have to be there they're showing up and it's a great place to get some rigor in there to get some practice to to do something that they're never going to have the brain space forever again.

That they might not understand at the time but years later, they'll be like, oh thank God that you know, she made me do all that practice because now writing is like I don't know writing is like 75% of my life.

Corey: Right. Yeah, we talk a lot. I mean I have this I have this. I have this Theory I didn't develop it.

I mean I guy named. Dr. Simon breaks beer kind of developed his in school should be rigorous and human she both rigorous where we make you practice things and there are right answers and then but it's also human where you explore things you're interested in and we let you communicate and form teams and all that good and that balance getting that balance, right?

It sounds like you're speaking to that. It's that you need to have them both. And so I really appreciate

Justin: come around on that, like I said, I used to have my wife used to get upset because I was like, I don't know if I even want to send my kids to college. Because I had been able to teach myself so many things on the internet and it felt like wow who needs formal education.

But now I've come I think I've come back halfway, which is exactly the tension between those two things which is yeah. It needs to be rigorous and human so if a kid comes to you and they want to. I don't know like my son my 13 year old son is really into taking old Nintendo games and tearing them apart and then being able to reprogram them like the dialogue and other things the way he wants that's amazing.

Right, but that's just the seed of his potential what he really needs and you know, I struggle as a parent to give him. Someone with who can in a rigorous way challenge him and say okay you're kind of playing around here. But to really get to the next level. I need to push you a little bit beyond what you're comfortable and I think that is actually the problem with with self-learning or

self-directed station or whatever is that we just stay too much in our comfort zone and.

Yeah, that the magic happens just at the edge of her comfort zone when someone says okay, I can see you can write a pretty good story. But I'm going to push you you're not going to like it, but you're going to I'm going to push you and it's not going to feel good, but it's going it's going to help you grow.

Corey: It's it and having the trust with that person doing the pushing to know and to trust that. Yeah, this push will will equal something. Yeah.

Justin: do you like? I'm trying to think of why because it was definitely teachers. I didn't respect as much. I wonder why. Nyberg was able to because we all respected her.

Corey: Do you think it was something to do with the formal education that allowed her to put doctor in front of her name that's got to be an aspect of it. Right? Like we hate formal education it when someone walks in be like yeah, I got my MBA you're like, oh, okay. This probably knows what he's Agee walked in with a certain amount of credential.

Justin: Yeah, I think I think that could have been it I think also sometimes. like my the only Professor from University I can remember. This guy named Jim wish Hoff. I had this I had this system kind of down first day of class in college. I put up my hand and. You know try to say something smart and get on the teachers radar, you know, I had a way of kind of charming my way into you know, being involved.

I want them to know who I am all these things and I remember getting into gym wish laughs class business ethics and he's talking and talking and and then at one point I put up my hand. It's okay. It's time for me to say something smart put up my hand tried to say something smart. And he just looked at me and said that's completely incorrect like your that's that's not right at all.

And I had never had anyone challenge me like that. It was it really took me back but it made me respect him all of a sudden I was I was like, oh, oh, I guess this isn't going to be a cakewalk. Like I've got a I've got to do this I ended up loving like I took three more classes for him him and. I think yeah, there's different ways to engender respect and sometimes you know people just want to be challenged they want they want to.

They want someone who's going to push them a little bit. And yeah, so there's something about that that I think is important.

Corey: Yeah, yeah, it's not easy. I put it out there. It's noisy. I'm interested in something a bit more personal for you and you've been really forthcoming and a big advocate for mental health and you've shared some of your own personal experiences through some of the different posts and podcasts.

I've read Around mental health. And and and now I don't want to present you as a mental health expert. In fact, we've already had one. Dr. Suzanne Squires was on. Our podcast and I learned afterwards that you knew her which is but I'm interested to know having having having gone through the process of really learning about mental health and it maybe not even been on your radar.

Is there anything that you've learned through that process? That schools might

do better to teach or to help kids be be well. Ideas to present to them to make them aware of earlier maybe that you didn't get and now we realize we have a different education system now than we did, you know, 20 years ago, but thinking back, can you think of anything that might have helped you and your growing up to to be able to better handle perhaps some ups and downs of Mental Health.

Justin: I mean, I think the advantage we have now, I'm not sure what it's like in other Pockets but in the tech culture definitely the last couple of years there's been a lot more transparency about mental health Rand fishkin who is a well-known founder has a book called Lost and Found. And it's all about mental health.

There's a podcast called Zen founder. That's all about, you know, the mental health repercussions of being an entrepreneur and being intact and so having more people talk about it and being transparent about it and sharing their stories. I think those things were very helpful to me education. I want to.

Corey: When you were growing up, like I have a question for you in high school did was that even on your radar like did we talk about mental health and I'm trying to think about when I was growing up. I mean, I don't think I don't think we talked about it all I think we do now more.

But yeah.

Justin: yeah, I think so. I graduated high school 98. and it's definitely wasn't talked about as much as it is now. And there's certain things like certain life skills. Now that I think I would highlight like if I was in a in a life skills class or something or if I was giving a grad commencement speech I'd say okay, there's a few things that are helpful in life.

One is to establish a relationship with a therapist now, Even if you feel good because I was a person who thought I would I thought only weak people got depressed and never never really had like, I mean I had tough times but whenever I heard people talk about being depressed I thought well, why don't you just like pick yourself up like I don't get I don't get why you're so weak and then it hit me.

The only way I could explain it was like it was like being punched into the ground by The Incredible Hulk and I just I remember it hitting me and being like, okay. Well I'm stronger than this are going to crawl up from this hole and then it was like getting punched again and again and it really in capacity Tate's you in a way.

I've never experienced before and. I had people say Hey, you know, you should see a therapist or even just like Justin. Why don't you go see your your family doctor once in a while and I was like, yeah, whatever like doesn't matter but in that moment, it was like man, I wish because then when you're desperate it's like whoa.

It's already uncomfortable the idea of finding a therapist like okay. What am I going to Google like therapists near me and then I'm going to try to decide who I should open my whole life and innards to just by looking at their little photo on

the internet that's hard. And so I wish I'd done that when I felt good and to me like having a.

Is just like good health. So to be able to go it's like medicine for me. Now. If I if I if I don't have a monthly session like it's at least once a month and more if I need it, but it all starts to build up in me and in a way that in the in the past. I might have just been like well, I'm just going to hold on to this but there's something about.

Sitting across from a real human being and being able to express everything that is so healthy. And I wish I had started before the before the crisis came. So I think that kind of stuff is is is helpful. I think there's a little bit too much not just in public schools, but in general and it's difficult because.

You know, there's this professional side of us that wants to be in control that wants to be a little bit of an authority but. That kind of polite Society where we never talk about some of the real human stuff. That's hard is that's sometimes where we get into trouble. It's. There's so many things I've had to deal with in my adult life that were just never talked about in polite sit polite society.

And then you get out in the real world and you're like, wait a second you get you've people told me it was this was going to be like a fairy tale, but it's not it's this is this is way different than you told me and having a little bit of. Kind of reality like, you know what there's going to be things that are really hard and the way to deal with those things is you know, yeah therapy is a good one.

You know, we can talk about physical exercise we can talk about, you know another store I've shared is that. One of the first things my therapist told me to do is go see my family doctor. I'm like, why? Why should I do that? Like this is this is silly. I didn't even know you were supposed to talk about mental health stuff with your with your family doctor.

So I'm like, okay, I'll I'll do this book the appointment and and this is kind of like an example of a real life thing that it would be good to be kind of blunt about so get into some I vote my doctor and. The first question she asks me is how much alcohol do you drink? And I said, you know, I don't I don't drink that much and she said well how much and I had got into the Habit.

I've got four kids every night after I put them to bed. I'd have a couple drinks.

Oh God. Thank God they're in bed. Okay, I can have a couple drinks relax and she says. So you're having two drinks a night? Yeah, two drinks night every night of the week. Yeah, probably five five six seven times.

Okay. Well alcohol is a depressant and if you are not feeling good it is going to be way worse for you. So here's my prescription for you. I want you to quit drinking for at least three months and I want you to double the amount of exercise you do.

Corey: How much exercise were you getting Justin?

Justin: Well at the time at the time I'm like that's actually question.

She asked me this she's like so what do you do for exercise? I'm like, well right now I ride my bike down the hill to my office and back up and she said, okay, I want you to do that twice and so I did and. You know, there's so many parts of that story that. Are just helpful to know and here which is one of the reasons I've

been sharing at 100 alcohol is a depressant like it's good for you to know that it's good for you to know that and I have nothing against alcohol, but when you consume it, you should know that it is a depressant.

It is acting on you in a certain way. and. And not in a preachy way. Like she wasn't preaching to me like, you know, it doesn't she was just saying this is this is just the facts about your health. And so if you want to get better if you want to feel better this is what you need to do and you know knowing that I could talk to her about mental health all those kinds of things were helpful for me and also seeing how this what I thought was an innocuous.

Of having a few drinks after my kids were in bed was actually kind of a destructive habit. That was kind of make me feel worse and worse and worse and until someone was kind of brave enough to confront me on it go. Well, just so you know, if you're drinking every single night that's going to have an all my friends like none of my friends batted an eye at my drinking.

None of them confronted me about drinking. But to have a professional say just so you know that that is a lot and if you want to get out of this depression, this is one thing we're gonna have to do so. Yeah, I think. you know, there's already so many great things about like opportunities in school.

Like you have a health class and you have you have these channels where. We can say those things. And again, I'm assuming that it's being talked about way more now than it ever was and a lot of it is just about talking about it and and saying, you know, like it's normal to go see a therapist just normal.

It's normal to book an appointment with your doctor. And to say hey, I want to talk about my mental health. That's fine. It's normally even to tell your doctor a little bit about what's going on with you and they have heard it all so that all of those things I think sometimes just communicating it.

These are things these are normal life things. And and that that's kind of the best kind of all you can do really just like talk about it openly and in a real way not in like. Not in a fairytale Way kids will never really know what it's like to be an adult until they become an adult and then there's even like there's an adult when you're 20 and then I don't when you're 30, I don't hear 40 like right now, there's like some 60 year olds listening to this and going on that Justin.

He's such a naive kid,

Corey: that young whippersnapper. Yeah, yeah.

Justin: think just talking about some of that stuff is is helpful and. Yeah, I I'm glad that it's being talked about more that that was one of the reasons I was able to go. Okay, I'm going to go get a therapist and since I've started talking about it.

I've gotten tons of emails from software developers and other folks saying. Hey man, I heard that interview you did and I was like, okay, I'm going to go find a therapist and they did so yeah. Yeah.

Corey: that's really great to hear and I want to commend you on kind of sharing some of those really personal experiences.

I imagine it's probably a bit scary at the beginning.

Justin: Yeah, I know. I'm thankful that yeah, I'm thankful that I had enough

support and enough kind of whatever around me that it. Yeah, and so and and honestly what made me the most upset is that. Maybe I hadn't heard more about it. I thought it was unusual.

To go through a hard time. And so for people to be other people to be talking and saying actually that's not unusual most humans go through multiple hard times and actually Justin as a privileged white male you've actually you haven't even had the worst of it. Right? And so this is just life this.

It is hard and that's normal. And so we have to have a way of responding to.

Corey: You bet. I'm interested to know I guess more more more broadly. Is there something about learning or education that you believe to be true that other people disagree with you on or when you talk about it. People are just and what are you what are you talking about?

That's that's not how it is. That's not how people learn that's not how Education Works or should work. Is there anything like that that you often get pushed back on?

Justin: mean, I've got all sorts of I've got all sorts of ideas that may or may not be practical and a real-world sense. I think that post-secondary education is going to have a real hard time in the next little while just as a business person. I'm looking at it going that the the fundamentals of that. Business quote unquote are going to become more difficult. So as an example, we you know, it's generally accepted that post-secondary education is way more expensive that kids are graduating with all this debt and all these other things.

There's a school called Lambda. That will teach you to be a programmer for free. It's a it's a actual like. As actual curriculum actual instructors actual classes, but you do not you don't pay any tuition. What they do is when you graduate they will find you a job. And then you you they take a portion.

I think it's I don't know what it is 30 percent of your salary until you've paid off your.

Corey: Write what they would say, their tuition is agreed upon amount,

Justin: That's right. And so the you know, if you are a you know a factory worker making \$40,000 a year. And you graduate and you're able to get a programming job where you're making a hundred thousand dollars a year you're already making more money.

And so you're you're happy. And then Lambda gets paid for the education on the back end. But only if they're successful in this case and you know giving you the job and so I think there's some models like that and adult education that are interesting. I also think, you know, my graduating class in 98 was like one of the maybe not the first but.

Like my parents generation not very many people have their bachelor's degree. And so then there's this whole generation that raise their kids to say, you will get your bachelor's degree. It's going to make all the difference in the world. And so we all ran out and got her bachelor's degree and then we graduated and were like, oh wait supply and demand if there's more supply of Bachelor degrees, they become less valuable and you know, maybe.

We're going to see a return to like more apprenticeships more. You know, like if

you're really into business, maybe it makes more sense for you to go and find a company that you really want to work for and just start at the bottom and work your way up and learn on the job. And my daughter is 16 now.

So she's in grade 11 should be graduating grade 12. So that's got a year and a half left. And again initially. I was like, I don't know if she should go to university but then we went to Scotland and we were walking around the University of Edinburgh and I would talk to the kids that were there.

And I was like, oh this would be a very different University experience going somewhere else and I could see a lot of value in it Beyond just getting the credentials so you can get a job. But going somewhere and having an experience meeting people from around the world being in this context that's you know, fir tile with all sorts of other different good things.

That's interesting to me. And so now I'm like, oh, you know, maybe you should go to a school broad or maybe you should go to school just because you want to, you know, be in a certain cohort of people. Maybe you want to go to school just so you can experience something from the best teacher in the world.

Like you find your doctor nyberg and you say okay. I'm just going to go and learn from that person as opposed to this just kind of cookie cutter. We just crank out credentials on an assembly line. I think all that's going to change. I think there's going to be way way more of that and I've. I've been listening a lot to Seth Godin has a lot of opinions on education and I think the the questions he is asking that our right is who is school for and what is school for and you know, there's a lot of days where I just feel like school is just publicly subsidized daycare so I can go to work and and that and I think.

It's okay actually to understand that that is one of that is one of the jobs that school is accomplishing and then to say okay, but what else is school for and what else is school for and who is it for so, you know for some people if you're saying well school is partly for parents and it's partly so they could go to work. Okay, that's okay. That's that's one piece if it's for kids and it is it's for both but. When it's for kids, what is it for and that's that's just good design thinking. How are we going to design an experience around who it's for and then determining what it's for and even if like you're asking these questions like hmm.

Maybe we should be overlapping more things like maybe intent instead of telling that kid to just double down on chemistry, which is a yeah double down in chemistry, but this. You know this psychology class you're going to take is just as important and here's why and we're going to not keep them as silos.

But we're going to teach you how to integrate both of those things in the real world. And here's some examples of how you might do that that there's there's going to be more of that in education and and maybe finally I think schools big advantage. Is the rigor you can get somebody that is the best at a particular topic and if they are good at challenging kids to practice and really in a rigorous way getting them better helping them level up in a way that they'd never be able to level up on their own that pays dividends forever and really you can only.

The best way to do that is in person in a class where you have to show up.

Corey: I agree.

Justin: and that's a huge Advantage because no one else can really deliver that so yeah.

Corey: Justin, I would say that it's not only a huge Advantage but it's huge responsibility. And so that's that's you know, that's on on teachers and I think that there's a whole bunch who are always continually questioning.

Are we getting the best are we are we are we that person are we creating the experience that makes them level up? So I think that that's great to see your perspective as someone from the outside because it's a lot of the same things that we're we're asking ourselves. I was on the inside as well.

How do we overlap? How do we make this human and rigorous? How do we create the Futures that these kids have imagined for themselves yet at the same time kind of push that idea. So it's like yeah, you can pursue that but you know, I'm also going to. Push you to think about other ways. So I just love that what you're saying in this like Tech idea this Innovative thing that it is happening to a certain degree here at schools to and I think it's awesome that you realize and the your understanding the complex nature of all the different things that act upon.

Yeah, that's really cool.

Justin: can I can I give your listeners some homework?

Corey: I love it. I think that they would they would appreciate.

Justin: Okay, so and you might already be doing this. But if this is something in product marketing we have to learn and so it's just and something we have to practice just like anything else the only way to know.

What you're doing now that's actually going to resonate in 5 10 20 years is to go to people and ask them about their experience 5 10 15 20 years later. And so you need to have a trigger in your mind when you're with so you're in the grocery store and you see an alumni someone who graduated 10 years ago.

And you know, there's the typical question. How you doing? Are you still here y'all? What do you do? Okay, you've got the kids all of those questions are great, but I want to challenge you to ask one question, which is Hey. Listen, I just I'm curious. What is one thing you learned at Meridian Heights School, whatever bairstow Elementary.

It doesn't have to be for me. But what's something that you've learned? That still is still paying dividends now for you and your life or that you still find yourself using all the time or a lesson that you continually come back to and you know people might have to think about it a little bit they might but there are certain things that they're going to say.

They're going to be like, oh I got I got a job at the software company called Melo. And I'm on my first week there. I'm trying to prove myself and then we get this call from Ottawa. She only speaks French and they look around the room. They're like does anyone here speak French and I go I speak French that French immersion really paid dividends for me.

So now you've got in a practical example, you've got a story and that story is that's that's the important piece because now you know, how are people using this in the real world and it might not just be something like. You taught me how

to write an essay really? Well, but it might have been you know, a philosophy of learning.

It might have been you know, there's all sorts of things that teachers are teaching but you have to ask the question and we do this in in product marketing all the time. We asked questions that help people articulate their experience in a way that they might not volunteer just on their own. And it takes some practice but you'll get better at it and it's a great way to figure out what you should be doing.

Now that is going to pay those kinds of dividends and it's something that you almost have to be like. Oh wait. Oh, yeah. Justin told me I should ask these questions and you kind of stumble over yourself. Okay, this sounds so stupid. But hey, what is there anything that you experience that the school?

That's still helping you now and you know, see what they say. What's top of mind? Yeah, and and and invite people, you know on a podcast usually at the end we go. Hey folks, remember to rate and review the intersection education podcast and folks should do that right now five stars, but these are these are natural triggers that we've learned to do over time and you can be you can be communicating that in.

In alumni newsletter. Hey folks if there is something that you remember that you learned at school this school that continues to help you today. Could you write us an email and let us know we'd love to hear that story and the stories they're going to motivate you they're going to help you figure out what you should be teaching now.

They're going to when you feel crazy when the kid the kids are complaining because you're getting them to write those essays you're going to have. This this his own data inside of you that says no this is why I'm doing it because I know that in five years. I've heard the stories from the people five years down the road that this works.

Corey: Awesome, awesome homework. I'm interested to try it. Do you want to get a couple quick hitters? To finish off today. Now, I'm going to put a little caveat on this one. It cannot be transistor FM and by the way little shout out to transistor FM if you're starting out a podcast check them out, but you have a favorite app website or other media like a film or something like that that that you use either personally or that you really like.

Justin: Oh, yeah, so there's one called streaks. That is basically so I've set. There's some things I want to try to do every day or every week and there's this idea of not Breaking the Chain, right? So I'm going to do this and not break the chain and so I've been using this quite a bit one of my goals for this year is to not drink any alcohol until I hit a certain Revenue number and so I've got an eight day streak for that.

I've got a workout streak that seven days. I'm trying to really read real paper. Because I was reading so many books on my phone and I realized my kids were just seeing me look at my phone. And so I have read a real paper book and I've done that eight days in a row. So yeah streaks is a really great app that I've been using and maybe another one just quickly de Leo da yli.

Oh, it's a like a mood Journal. So how are you feeling right now? You know it rad good man bad awful. And you can then associate activities with these emotions and then it'll give you stats on. Oh, you know what often you feel bad when you go to bed late? And so I've really enjoyed that one too.

I've been using that for about a week and it gives you a monthly mood chart where you can kind of track. Oh, I'm feeling good. I'm feeling that and it's really interesting to quantify some of that stuff. Especially if you're going to therapy you can it's like one of the things you can show folks.

Corey: Absolutely, speaking of books. You have one that you're really liking right now or maybe one that historically you've you've told people to read.

Justin: Yeah, I'm reading Atomic habits right now by James Clear. I met him at a retreat in Colorado. And before he released the buck and when he was telling me about what was going to be in the book.

I knew it was going to be a bestseller. It is unbelievable. I think teachers should be teaching it the most powerful lesson inside of it is every action you take is a vote for the person you become and so if you run just one time, you wouldn't call yourself a runner. But if you run on Monday and then you run on Tuesday, and then you run on Wednesday and the excetera by week's end you might say, oh I'm kind of a runner now the the actions we take reinforced and help Define our identity and that idea has been so powerful for me because now I realize like, you know, I didn't work out for years like I haven't been in the gym for since 2012.

But then I realized like oh every time I show up at the gym, I become one of those workout guys. Like that's that every time I do that I become more like that person. And so I love how it gives me the power through tiny improvements to become this kind of person you want to become I think it's such a great and it's really practical.

It's full of good research. I highly highly highly recommend it is it's really good.

Corey: That's awesome interestingly enough. You're not the first person to recommend it. So yeah, we had dr. David tranter who also recommended that one. He's out at Lakehead University. So that's very interesting now.

I'll have to for sure check it out. Yeah, now you've talked a lot about things that you do to keep you well and healthy, so I'm going to skip over that one and ask you is there an organization or a person who really inspires you either right now or if you look back and kind of your history, is there someone or a Pete a place or an organization that says hey man, they're doing some really good stuff.

Justin: Wow, does it have to be like a non-profit or.

Corey: be whatever you want. It can be absolutely profit or not Profit. Just someone you think about see like yeah that person's doing good stuff. I think I got a lot to learn from them or I'd like to be kind of emulate some of the things they're doing.

Justin: Wow, in the business world.

I've always tried to emulate 37signals. Now they're called base camp. Jason freed is one of the best writers and thinkers on the web. David Hannum are Hansen is. His his co-founder and is also just kind of like a really vigorous

thinker. They have a book called rework and their newest book is called it doesn't have to be crazy at work.

Corey: Which is another one on my list. I need to get to.

Justin: Yeah, it's really good. And I think actually that idea of it doesn't have to be crazy at work has lots of applications for it doesn't have to be crazy at school. It doesn't have to be crazy at home. It doesn't have to be quite there. There's some things we could take from the thinking they're doing there. So yeah, I highly recommend them to their there. They have a Blog called signal versus noise where you can read all this stuff for free if you want, it's really great and I'm trying to think of, you know in trying to think of of someone outside of business now,

Yeah, I mean nothing is really coming to mind.

Corey: That's okay.

Justin: yeah in the business World, those are good folks

Corey: are the good ones. Do you want I want to thank you Jess and so much for for for speaking to us. I think it's just really valuable when we when we talked with people who are outside of Education get a little bit more perspective and just moves us forward as Educators.