

EPISODE — JOSHUA SPODEK**[INTRODUCTION]**

[0:00:17.7] LC: Welcome to this week's episode of the Art of Authenticity. I'm Laura Coe, your host, and thanks for tuning in. Today, we have our very first repeat guest. We have Joshua Spodek joining us. He is a professor at NYU and a columnist for *Inc*, he holds – are you ready – five Ivy League degrees. If you're having a complex at the moment, join me, because I am as well.

He has a PHD in Astrophysics, and an MBA from Columbia, where he studied under a Nobel Laureate, he has done a lot of different things with his life, and at the moment, he is working on helping people in leadership, an executive coach for Columbia's business school, and he's just worked really hard on this idea of how to teach people how to lead.

He believes very strongly that leading happens from experiencing it yourself. He's written a book, *Leadership Step by Step: Become the Person Others Follow*. It's all about creating positive change, but how to do it, specifically, with actual guidance step-by-step, with exercises that he has used in his teachings and he is sharing with you.

I am confident that Joshua has a ton to offer. Go check out his book, you can buy it right now on Amazon. If you're looking to find out more about Joshua, you can find him at joshuaspedek.com, and I know that I haven't had anybody on twice before, but I thought his book and his approach is particularly cool, and I thought you guys might be interested. So enjoy the show!

[INTERVIEW]

[0:02:03.5] LC: Welcome to this week's episode of the Art of Authenticity. Today we have something really new, I haven't done this before. I've got a repeat guest, and I guess as we're rolling up into the final weeks before the year anniversary of the Art of Authenticity, that's going to start happening, and it's exciting to have Josh be the first one. Welcome, Josh, to the show, for the second time.

[0:02:24.3] JS: Thank you, I'm honored to be the one to demonstrate the enduring quality of your podcast.

[0:02:29.5] LC: Thank you, I would say the other way around. You're kind enough to come back on and allow the listeners and myself to hear what you're doing, and participate. The reason for the repeat is congratulations, you've got your first, is this your first book? *Leadership Step by Step* that's coming out?

[0:02:47.2] JS: It's my first one with a publisher. I had a couple before that were — I took a bunch of blog posts and I put them together into books, and you know, I put them out there and I'm really happy that I put them out there, but the work, and the attention, and the editing, everything that goes into one going to a publisher is a whole other level, and to be able to work with professional editors, and it just changes it and makes it so much more valuable.

[0:03:12.8] LC: Yeah, it's a strange time for the book industry, because you can put stuff up anytime you want to. If you have an Amazon account and an editor, you don't even need an editor, you can put it out there. But you know, it's a very different world, the publishing industry and self-publishing. Why a publisher this time and why this book?

[0:03:29.9] JS: Why a publisher is actually because I talked to a couple of authors, and I asked them when I was thinking about writing a book, before I had written the others, and a couple of people said that the biggest improvement in their writing came from working with a professional editor, and I wanted to do that.

A lot of people think leadership and the person they think of is like the CEO in the corner office and someone in a suit. There is that element of leadership, but for me, the big people that show up in my book, people like Nelson Mandela, and Martin Luther King, John Wooten, or Bo Jackson from sports, and Oprah Winfrey, there's a lot of areas of leadership that are not strictly that kind of business. Victor Franco is another one.

I had to write it. I really want this stuff to be broader and bigger than just a business book, because I see the effect it has on people that have gone through and done the exercises in the

book. I really wanted to get it out there, and broader than I think I would have been able to myself.

[0:04:31.6] LC: Yeah, totally makes sense. I did work with an editor, even though I did self-publish. I just paid for it, and it was incredible. I mean, they see things that you're like, "Wow, I would never have gotten there." Why leadership step by step? The idea of leadership is something that you achieve what, day by day as you work towards learning skills?

[0:04:57.0] JS: What compelled me to write the book of any sort is my long-term discovery from — my first real leadership experience is probably 20 years ago, when I started my first company, and then about 10 years ago is when I learned that there were classes in it.

I was in business school, and then five years ago is when I learned that how you teach is as important as what you teach, and that got me into learning an experiential, project-based — doing a set of an integrated, comprehensive progression of exercises that starts from wherever you are and leads to very advanced stuff, which I modeled.

I don't want to say too much of what I talked about last time, but you know, the basics is that it's modeled on how we learn to act, or to sing, or to dance, or to play sports, and so about five years ago I picked up on that. Then the past several years is when I realized that there was a coherent, encapsulated unit that was the leadership step by step, and it was this set of exercises, and this came and emerged from a lot of coaching, a lot of teaching students.

These exercises work together. Each one depends on each of the others, or build to a future one. They come together in a way that's very effective, and this is, if you read the student reviews, a lot of students say they didn't know they could learn stuff like this. They wish that other classes were like this, and you know, I had to get that out there.

I pass by bookshelves in the book stores, and if I saw a book that I hadn't seen before, I'd pick it out and say, "Is this a book about leadership like every other one? Or is it teaching me how to lead more effectively?" I did not find a single one. Lots them had exercises, but they're here and there, and they don't all fit together in the way that — we know how to teach someone how to

play a musical instrument from first lesson to Carnegie Hall stage, and no one's done that for leadership. I had to do it.

[0:06:51.8] LC: I love that. I think there's a lot of areas of entrepreneurship that you're just thrown out into the Wild West to figure out, and leadership is a huge one. I also think management, there's books about it, but to my knowledge, not so much of a step-by-step. I love that approach. I think that's right, and there's this kind of bias with leadership, right? You kind of either are a leader or you're not, and that person has real leadership potential, we talk in a way that, you know, maybe you could read some leadership books, but it's not just something like the violin that you could learn.

[0:07:28.8] JS: The style of leadership that I teach, and teach is a funny word. It's like I give people experience and practicing so they can do it for themselves. When a relationship really gets started, it's not obvious who the leader is. If you take the course online, you hear Chris, who is a friend of mine who I walked through doing all these exercises and I recorded it.

You hear him have this interaction with a guy in his life who can help him with this project he's working on, and so he goes through and does the exercises. He engages Mark, and then finds out why Mark is working with him, and he gets Mark really inspired to work together. Then after you've inspired the person, the next stage is to support the person.

When he starts supporting Mark, now he's supporting Mark, Mark is supporting him, they're both helping each other. They're both improving each other's lives so much that each of them wants to help the other one more. It's not obvious who the leader is in the situation if you look at it in the classical sense of one person's telling the other what to do. They're both telling each other what to do. They're both being told what to do. They're both having a stronger relationship because of it.

Sometimes I think of calling this teamwork, but I don't think that captures it either. Chris was doing something that ended up — his project was to create a set of in-person seminars. He'd been doing online stuff and he wanted to do some in-person things. Mark had a lot of experience creating events, and they're both, how do I put it? They're just having a great time together.

The main difference that reveals that Chris was the leader in this interaction was that he's the one who took the initiative, because he had the skills. Once it got going, they were both helping each other.

[0:08:59.1] LC: I love that. I mean, I think if you really strip away the hierarchy, that's hopefully how your exchanges in a business environment would go, right? I think we just don't ever stop and think about how these labels ultimately don't mean that much past a certain point.

Before we hopped on, you were bringing up an example of, you know, this coaching, and personal relationships, and that this is very similar to how we might function in our private lives, maybe with a relationship that isn't going that well. You were talking about possibly a relationship where the intimacy has disappeared. Can you speak to that? I told you to hold off because I wanted to hear it live on the show, but I still would love to hear your thoughts on that.

[0:09:43.0] JS: It's a great segue also, because you mentioned when you don't have a hierarchy, when you don't have authority, then what do you have? When you coach people, most of the people come to me because they have issues at work, you know?

It's often something, an issue with their manager or with their CEO. They don't realize that you can influence people and lead people without having authority over them. I say this like it's so obvious, but it wasn't so obvious for me at the beginning either. One of the things that happened was that a lot of people would, after you coach them for a little while, they start sharing about their personal lives.

I don't know how to put this, there are people out there and they've just lost the intimacy in their personal relationships. That can be emotional intimacy, it can be physical intimacy, it can be intellectual intimacy. I would coach people in these situations, and it became clear to me that if you're going to connect with somebody, these personal relationships, the things that help in those relationships were tremendously helpful in working with their CEO's. Likewise, working with CEO's...

[0:10:45.6] LC: For example?

[0:10:47.6] JS: I don't want to get into too much detail, and some of these relationships are very personal, but some people would say, "I'm in this relationship, I don't know how to talk to my wife, I don't know how to talk to my husband," and they would get into a habit, and I'm a really big fan of habits. Anyone who has talked to me about burpees knows how much I love habits.

[0:11:02.5] LC: Yeah, I remember that.

[0:11:05.4] JS: It's like a routine that they can't get out of. They're not connected with the other person. Some of the things that they do have lost the meaning in it, and they've lost the emotional connection in some of the more intimate relations that they might have.

To get someone to open up and be vulnerable about these things, there are certain behaviors. One of the things that — unit four in my book is really about how to behave and communicate in a way that makes the other person feel comfortable sharing a vulnerability. When they do that, then you can connect on those vulnerabilities. What are people vulnerable for? People are vulnerable for a lot of things, but I think a big thing is you're vulnerable about what you care about. You're vulnerable about the things that you're passionate about, you're emotional about.

If you behave in a way that makes someone guarded, and they don't show their vulnerability, then you don't know what they care about. People have these relationships that are based on habit that's divorced from their passion. So I work with people in how to make the other person feel comfortable sharing their passions and their vulnerabilities, and well, how do you motivate someone like your boss when you don't have authority over them?

[0:12:13.0] LC: Yeah, how?

[0:12:14.8] JS: You'd behave in the ways that make them feel comfortable sharing what they care about, what motivates them. If you connect those motivations, those passions of emotions to the task that you want done or the team task, they view that task as meaningful.

People listening to this podcast worked hard to get where they are. If they're listening to you and me speaking, they care about what they do. They're not flipping burgers. If you treat them like

the only reason you're there is for money, or not even that. If I assume that the reason you're doing something is what I think it is, even if I'm 99% on, that 1% off is going to feel to you like I don't care, or you feel like you're not going to feel like connected, and it may even feel like I'm stepping over you or stepping on you.

[0:13:02.5] LC: You're making me think about what a couple of guests have said, Dr. Shefali in particular, but ultimately all of us want to be seen and know that we matter. It's kind of a core need for most people, and I've never thought about it in this context, Josh, but it's sort of making me put the two ideas together, if it makes sense to you.

But you say my boss, this person I believe has authority over me, and all I'm thinking about is how to please them, but privately I'm upset. I feel taken for granted, I don't feel that they appreciate the high quality of my work, I don't know that they know what they're talking about sometimes, or whatever the grievance is. Instead of seeing that person as they really exist as a human being, and relating, and connecting, and then finding the avenue back to the work, we sort of divide, right? Create this negative narratives, and so likewise, after the marriage, you get into habits of not seeing the person for who they really are.

To your point, if you had a bias about coming on my podcast that it was for things that I am not intending, people feel that, and then there's an aversion to that. Because what we ultimately want is to be seen for what we're really intending to do. Is that a fair way of looking at it?

[0:14:16.9] JS: If you treat someone for their position first and their humanity second, then you're leading them into treating you the same way. You're falling back on protocol.

[0:14:26.9] LC: Josh, can I just interrupt you for a second, because I had so — you're just like, I don't know, bursting open. An issue I had but I never really put my finger on what it was, you know, I owned this company, and I had this open-door policy, and I did everything I could possibly do to encourage people to feel comfortable, but there would be somebody all the time who just would stand at the threshold of my door, for example, and not walk in. I'd say, "Come on in!" They'd say, "No, I don't want to bother you."

Just creating that dynamic would put me in a — I just felt uncomfortable, right? They wanted to keep me in that position of authority, no matter how much effort I put into dispelling it. At some point I just kind of gave up. That's kind of what you're talking about is people who are so committed to the concept of you as a boss instead of you as a person.

[0:15:18.4] JS: Yeah, the protocol, it keeps you from having arguments. It keeps you from having fights, but it also keeps you from connecting as well. After my course, people are — they do not want to talk about weather, and sports, and the traffic on the way over, because it's just meaningless. The reason we talk about these things is because we know that it's not going to generate any problems, but it doesn't generate any successes either.

[0:15:41.9] LC: Because we're afraid of the conflict? Is that what you're saying?

[0:15:44.7] JS: Yeah, we know that if I ask you, "So what do you do for a living? Where are you from? How many brothers and sisters you have? Did you catch the game last night?" Then yeah, you get to know the person in the sense that you know more about them than you did before, but it's the cocktail party stuff that everyone knows about them. It's not meaningful. For you just to say to someone, "Come in! Be open!" It's not effective, because why do we not want to share this? Because if we share this thing, you can hurt me. You can use me if you know what I care about.

[0:16:13.9] LC: Right.

[0:16:15.8] JS: I don't want that to happen, especially if you control my paycheck.

[0:16:19.0] LC: Right.

[0:16:19.5] JS: Especially if you control whether I have a job at all. Especially if you're the measure of quality of my output. I'd rather not get into that stuff, because then you can't judge me, you can't use me, and you can't hurt me. How do you avoid that?

Well, you know, we were talking about Sebastian Marshall, who has been on your show, and there's a way that I describe this a bunch recently is that before I started writing my blog, people

are like, “You should write a blog. You get all this benefit from it,” and I knew the benefit. That’s not what got me writing my blog, what got me writing my blog was Sebastian set up the webpage and told me how to do it. He said, you know, “This is step one, step two, step three.” There are a lot of things where you need that.

It’s like the analogy with how to learn to play an instrument is you know, put the guitar on your leg here. The left hand goes here. The fingers go on the frets like that, and piano, press this key and then that key, and it doesn’t sound like it’s expressive like you think music ought to be, but that’s how you get to Carnegie Hall. That’s how everyone gets to Carnegie Hall. You’ve got to — how to get to Wimbledon, you’ve got to do a lot of ground strokes. You’ve got to see how to hold the racket.

[0:17:27.2] LC: Yup.

[0:17:29.0] JS: What was missing, what made me do this book, was that no one was doing that. There’s a lot of stuff that’s like, a lot of books that have some great advice, or great sounding advice, but if I translate that advice into how to play an instrument, it’s like, “You can do it! Play with feeling! Play from the heart!”

It sounds great, or we’re like, “Just go out in this social situation and just be yourself.”

[0:17:54.3] LC: Right. It sounds super appealing, but if you’re guarded and you have insecurities, you have a loop playing in your head about specific things that you believe other people won’t like about you, you can’t just be yourself, right? This is what I work on with my clients. How do you remove all those thoughts and stuff so that you can slowly start to show up? It is, it’s technical to get there. You can’t just throw yourself in the middle of the ocean and think you’ll swim.

[0:18:16.8] JS: Yeah, actually one of the big benefits of working with — this was actually my agent before getting the contract. Writing the book proposal, which itself was 45 pages, I wanted to write a book that was just, “Here’s what to do. If you do these exercises, it will work,” and it’s like, almost, what’s the feeling? Embarrassed to say? She was like, “Josh, you can’t just write a

book telling people what to do. You got to have some stories in there. People really like hearing about stories.”

I started writing stories, and she was like, “Josh, let me tell you, show, don’t tell. What you’re doing is not really engaging,” and it was really hard when you’re doing it a way that’s ineffective, but it’s the only way you know. I look back at what I was writing then, I’m like good thing she was helping me.

[0:18:58.6] LC: Right. When you try to like show people through example, they can relate more effectively. Then to that point, like going back to your example about the person who is in the work environment and they let go of the authority, they connect to something about their boss, and your point is those steps are more technical, and then that’s where you get the relationship back on track? Where the boss feels more comfortable? Is that…

[0:19:25.0] JS: Well, if you want to up lead, if you want to manage your boss, then I recommend — actually a way that this advice turned into exercises is originally, I would work with a client and say, “Okay, your boss is really difficult to work with. Here’s what to do.” Then I realized it was much more effective if I said, “Okay, here’s what you do with your boss. First, practice with some people that aren’t in control of your paycheck.”

[0:19:45.0] LC: Right.

[0:19:46.3] JS: Practice with your spouse, or practice with a good friend, and that would work pretty well. I mean, that would be much more effective, and then I start refining the exercises to make it more and more — you figure out what works and what doesn’t work when getting them started, and so the exercises got more and more refined. I refined the exercises more and more.

[0:20:04.5] LC: Yeah, until you eventually have the exercises?

[0:20:07.7] JS: Then I started getting used to, at first I thought they should get this epiphany from just doing it at all. Then I realized the epiphany — when you first start playing an instrument, you’re playing robotically. Put your fingers here, hit it like that, hit the key like that on a keyboard. But somehow, at some point, it turns into expression.

I guess maybe it's like when you learn to crawl. At first — I don't remember learning to walk myself. At first, you're kind of lumbering around, and then eventually you're going where you want to go and you're doing what feels right. It's more like maybe learning a language. At first, you're conjugating verbs, and eventually you're expressing yourself freely, and that's what — it was one of the big things that I try to get across in the class is that some people think, "This isn't really expressive, and I don't really want to do these exercises."

Others are like, "Alright, I'm going to do these exercises," and that second group quickly surpasses the first group, and the first group has to catch up and they realize, "Oh, I see, these exercises weren't for the sake of me getting to do work." It's the only way. As far as I can tell, that's the only way to go to get natural at something. To be free to express yourself as a basketball player, as a leader, as a dancer, you have to do it, and you have to do it so many times at the beginner level that you can take for granted, but you know exactly what you're doing without thinking about it.

[0:21:34.6] LC: Yeah, and then you can put your personal swagger in there, because it's not impossible. For my friends who've come from different countries, telling a joke is one of the harder things to do when you've learned a new language, because it's hard to express at a certain level until you just know the fundamentals. So I think that makes a ton of sense for our work environment, for leadership. Why wouldn't it?

I just don't think people teach it that way. They teach it in this antiquated "either you have leadership or you don't," or "let me tell you about how other people lead," which I find is really bizarre. Just recounting how great somebody was without explaining how do I get there, right?

[0:22:13.5] JS: How do I get there? That's what people want, yeah.

[0:22:15.5] LC: Yeah.

[0:22:16.6] JS: That's what I wanted.

[0:22:17.2] LC: And here you find yourself again, like every journey is the same process. You've now got this book and you're doing marketing. You and I were joking before the call that books are now considered calling cards, just like something you do, but once you finish the book, you think that's the difficult step. In truth, it's the first step in a multi-step process, because now the whole marketing cycle starts, and you learn how to do that and walk your way through each step of that process, right?

[0:22:49.0] JS: Yeah. I want to go back one step, if I can, about this irony of the best schools, the top-rated schools. They have professors who got there by publishing or perishing, so these are the ones who published. So they're very skilled at these academic things. My teachers, I had some adjuncts, but adjuncts are very low on the totem pole. So the tenured faculty that teach the core classes, they haven't led. For that matter, they might not even have learned how to teach.

[0:23:19.5] LC: No, often they're terrible at teaching. Some of the best teachers I had were less famous.

[0:23:25.3] JS: I think the best teachers of leadership are going to be the ones who have these three things: Experienced leading, and that means facing the social and emotional challenges and overcoming them. To know the theory as well, and the last piece of it is how do you get across. So knowing how to teach effectively, and so that triple thing of experience leading, knowing the theory, and knowing how to get the theory effectively taught, which is not lecture. In my experience, it's through exercises.

[0:23:55.1] LC: Yeah, breaking it down into its component and teaching it like an instrument.

[0:23:59.3] JS: Yeah, figuring out what experience do I have to give them that will give them the knowledge that I have. That usually means going back to what experience got me there. So I had to comment on that.

So then to marketing. I had a big shift. Speaking of that, I used to talk about how another habit of mine is I post every day. So I am quickly approaching, posting one per day, approaching my 2500th blog post.

[0:24:20.8] LC: Oh my god.

[0:24:22.0] JS: Yeah. I post every day, and all the time I was telling myself, “If people read it, great. If they don’t, that’s okay too, because I’m really writing for myself.” I definitely learn and grow and explore ideas, and I’m publicly posting it, so I know some people read it. I guess I get about 500 hits a day, and it’s all changing now because for the marketing for the book. I wasn’t going around promoting. I wasn’t trying to get more people to read it.

So I finished writing the book in August, and then I realized, “Okay, it’s time to market, and I’ve got to go market this,” and so I go out and the first thing to do, I think, is to get reviews and blurbs. So I had Marshall Goldsmith, who has been a mentor of mine for about 10 years. He’s enthusiastic about it, there’s a lot of him in the book. He’s happy to write a blurb.

I start going out and I’d interacted with Dan Pink a while ago, like last spring, and so I contacted him and I sent him a draft. He’s like, “Yeah, I’ll write a blurb,” so he writes a blurb, and Seth Godin writes a blurb, and Frances Hesselbein writes a blurb, and these are really big names. I just said the ones who are on the back of the book.

[0:25:20.9] LC: Yeah, that’s amazing.

[0:25:22.6] JS: I didn’t think about what would happen, because that same vulnerability, I didn’t want to face it internally with myself. If I go out and try, I could fail. This is crazy. As a coach, I coach people through this thing all the time, but you’re still susceptible to not recognizing these anxieties that are just maybe about at the threshold of awareness. You avoid something without realizing you’re avoiding it.

And one, if I don’t try I can’t succeed, and two, even if people did say they didn’t like it, that would have gotten me much faster to fix that. So I started getting a lot of big success of people that I’ve never met reading it, who had no — they had nothing to lose if they endorsed “the book sucked,” so I take it that these are honest meaningful reviews. I’m like, “Oh my god, I could have done this a long time ago,” and so that switched me over.

So if anyone is listening to this, and you're thinking "Should I market and stuff?" it's a two-directional conversation, not just you promoting. Promoting is half of marketing. It's also getting all this feedback, and getting impressions, and getting advice, and getting judged. One of the big things in my book is it's not judgment that's the problem. We're all happy to watch the Olympics and see people say "9.8." That's judging, we're happy to see it.

The person chooses to go on an environment to be judged. To me it's are you imposing values on others, and in this case, I want to be measured. I want their values. I want them to use their values to evaluate me, because I am not writing the book for me. I have better ways to waste my time if I am just doing it. I have the stuff in my head; I don't need to write it. I will measure the success of my book by how many people and to what extent they're able to use it to change their lives. That means I need to know what their values are, not just mine.

So all these bestselling authors, they've been out there for so long. They say a few words, and you're like, "Oh my god, that took me a year to figure out and you just said it in three words."

[0:27:20.4] LC: What do you mean by that last statement?

[0:27:22.6] JS: I'm thinking of Frances Hesselbein in particular. She's been in the White House, met all these presidents, and she's had West Point leadership, and I would just ask her these questions. I'd like to think of an example right off the bat. I would ask her something, and she would say something, and she nails this concept that I've been struggling with for a while. I hope that if people ask me questions, that I'd nail it.

There was one client, we would always meet by Skype. Every single time — you can't see this now — he would point at the screen and he'd be like, "That's what I was looking for," and I always felt really good when that happened.

[0:27:55.4] LC: Right, totally. It's like, "Hey, this is what interests me, this is what I've figured out, I'm going to share it with you, and I hope that you find the value," and there's nothing better than when people do. You feel like you made that connection and helped somebody in their process. That's definitely an incredible story that you got all those people to write blurbs out of nowhere, and wouldn't you say each step of the way is just rinse-repeat on that concept?

Like the internal judge is the one we are disturbed by, because we are very good at self-abuse, but if you can lower the volume of that internal critic — to your point, to the Olympics, when they put up a card and it's 9.8, and you're finished. Your internal critic will sit there and yell at us for days. If you can get that volume turned down, and just take the criticism as people's hope to help better the work, and help you, and you can take it to the next level so you can hopefully help others, right?

[0:28:55.3] JS: I've refined this a little bit, and this is going to be me, and it might be different for other people. I don't think yeah, just lowering the volume, because the other thing is to be able to overcome it and to handle the problems. Like in sports, I would be in physical pain, and sometimes the game is on the line and you go through the pain. So in business, it's more emotional pain, or in a relationship it's more emotional pain, and I believe that there are skills that you can learn.

Like one big thing, and I coach people through this a lot, is the sentiment, "I've been doing this for six months and I'm worse off than I was before. I'm going backwards. This isn't worth it, why bother?" I don't know anyone who has gone through any significant change who hasn't felt that in some way, and I still feel it. The difference is that now, I know that I've gone through it before, and I know that that's part of the process of a meaningful transformation in my life.

So not long ago, it was a nearly five-year relationship, and we decided that it was best for us to split apart and to go our separate ways, and it's more painful now, because I was more open in this relationship than I had been in any before. I made myself more vulnerable because I wanted to, and so now the feeling of loss is greater, but the resilience is greater as well. The missing part is greater, but I know that that's part of the process, and I'm a human being, so I became me again faster.

[0:30:28.3] LC: That's what I mean by volume is down. I don't listen as closely, I don't let it play as if it's the truth. Like you have an alternative narrative there where you say, "Hey, this is part of the process," or "I will emerge eventually, stronger and better." Whatever it is, I don't just let that unconscious, critical, judgmental narrative keep going until I'm on my knees and say, "I don't

know why I feel so stressed out,” because it’s very toxic that we can speak to ourselves endlessly that way. So I think I am saying the same thing that you’re saying.

[0:31:02.2] JS: Yes, it’s interesting to talk about that dynamic that plays on inside your head and your heart, and people call it mindfulness, I guess, or self-awareness. At the beginning — it’s so weird, like one of the early exercises of the book is to write your internal monologue, and for a lot of people, and myself especially, it was the first time to be aware of it. It’s just a crazy thing.

It’s actually what you’re most aware of. In my physical world, it’s all mediated through my senses. But my thoughts, I have direct awareness of. It’s weird to realize that you weren’t aware of what you’ve experienced most directly.

[0:31:37.2] LC: I know, it’s crazy that these thoughts are going all day long, and your own ability to tune it out. If you and I were walking around in the city, and you just stood next to me and talked endlessly in my ear, I’d want to kill you. I’d be like, “Oh my god, Josh, stop, I need a moment of silence,” right? And yet, I never give myself that silence.

I think there’s an effect that it has, if you’re a smoker you don’t really notice the ill effects. I think if you eat tons of sugar, you stop noticing. I think these inner dialogues running, you can just become immune to their effects, and become so accustomed to it that it doesn’t feel abnormal.

That’s why I’m a fan of meditation, or something to show you what it looks like for just five minutes to have a little quiet space. It’s not that you’re mind ever stops, but you need some space. Just a little bit of room in between thoughts, and the thoughts aren’t creating emotions instantaneously. But we’re pretty addicted to all of it, and I don’t think we feel the effects anymore.

[0:32:41.2] JS: It’s weird when you talk to someone who has no awareness of this, and you can see them, you know they’re complaining about some thought that’s running through their head. You can tell them, “You know you can change that thought,” and they don’t realize that you have any control over it. Or if you say you can change some belief, and they don’t realize that a belief is filtering their perception.

[0:33:03.0] LC: I know, it's much...

[0:33:04.3] JS: No, it's not that way.

[0:33:05.2] LC: It's mind blowing when you can recognize. This was my big "Oh my god" moment in the middle of my book writing process, but the thoughts in my head, the ones that I'm listening to all day long, the reason I am comfortable is because they're my own. They sound like me, they use my vocabulary, my cadence, the rhythm of my speech, but they came from all these other places and I don't necessarily believe in them, but I trust myself to some degree enough to let these thoughts keep going.

If they came in your voice, if your voice is just going 36 straight hours, I'd be like, "Why am I thinking about Josh this much?" But we've taken all these views from so many places, and we put them in our own minds, and then it manifests in our own voice and our own vocabulary, and I think that's what creates that lack of awareness. Because it's like, "What? It's just me, rambling away about nothing important."

No, it's you, and it's thoughts that you probably picked up, and they're not necessarily beliefs that are working to your advantage, and you can question them, right?

[0:34:08.0] JS: Something that killed me, not killed me, but it was something that only later did I realize, you can't lecture someone into being self-aware. You can't get someone to read into identifying that voice, and recognizing the patterns in it, and that you have to behave. You have to act. You can read about meditation all you want. You can read about writing your inner monologue all you want, and it will never ever get you to see the patterns inside.

It won't give you the skills of being able to handle these things, and we're teaching this stuff in this way that's like, I can tell you it's important until I'm blue in the face. It will never get you to see, to identify that. It will just be you're a fish out of water, not realizing there's water around you, and you can't do anything about it.

[0:34:54.3] LC: Yeah, until you try it for yourself and get the benefits and recognize. For me, it was doing yoga and meditating, getting a coach. I was like, "Oh, this is really powerful," but I've

read about philosophy since I was a teenager. I mean, I was a philosophy graduate student for god sakes, and I'm a yoga teacher, and I still hadn't practiced these things. I just was very aware of them, and I think that's what happens to a lot of people.

They get it, but they're not sure what to do, and so I love what you're doing. I love the topic that you are bringing out. This book, *Leadership Step by Step*, is it available on Amazon? Is it on the shelves?

[0:35:27.7] JS: Well, as you and I are speaking right now, it's not yet, but by the time this goes up, maybe, because it's live on February 16th.

[0:35:35.8] LC: Oh, fantastic.

[0:35:37.1] JS: But the e-book goes on January 31st, I think, so probably people listening to this can go right there and buy it right now.

[0:35:44.6] LC: Awesome.

[0:35:45.3] JS: They can go buy it.

[0:35:46.2] LC: Go buy the book, and Josh, if people are looking to find out more about you, they can find you at?

[0:35:52.9] JS: Yeah, so for my personal blog, it's joshuaspodek.com. I don't know if you'll put the link below, but it's joshuaspodek.com, and then for the online course version of the book, the book has all the exercises in it, and for people who are diligent and disciplined and want to find people in their lives to do it with, the book has everything you need. For people who want more structure and want to have an online community of people who are also going through the same process, and you can read all of each other's reflections of doing these exercises, then there's the online version. Those are at spodekacademy.com. Just Spodek in my Tweeter feed or @spodek.

[0:36:34.3] LC: Awesome, and all this information will be, as always, at lauracoe.com. Under the podcast link, you will see Josh and all the other amazing guests we've had on. Thank you, Josh, for joining us today.

[0:36:47.0] JS: Thank you as well. You know, behind the curtains a little bit, you and I were speaking beforehand of how with first interviews, you have to do this introduction, and you can't always get too in-depth. I am really glad to, I don't know how it sounds to others, but to me I felt like you've gotten me in directions and gotten me to show things that I don't think often come out in a first interview, when you have to do that where you're from and that sort of thing.

[0:37:10.2] LC: Yeah, I know. I love it. Our intention was version 2.0, and I think we got there. So thank you for coming on.

[0:37:18.3] JS: Thank you very much.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[0:37:20.1] LC: Thank you so much for tuning in, and I hope you enjoyed this week's episode. Hey, before you go, I have a quick question for you. Have you ever considered coaching? If you have no idea what coaching is, no worries. It's basically like a personalized workout program, but instead of doing a hundred squats and a million sit ups, you're working out your mind, your well-being, and your emotions.

Coaching is about setting goals and taking action to create a life that's meaningful to you. As we navigate through life and ask our self the tough questions, "What do I want?" "What makes me happy?" "How do I build a life that works for me?" Just like we talked about on the podcast; "How do I have success, but have success that's authentic and meaningful?"

In part, the tactics play a huge role. Setting goals, having priorities that makes sense, and making sure you're organized with your list. After running a company for 15 years, I help my clients with that all the time. But coaching takes it even further. We remove all that stuff, all those mental obstacles that get in your way when you're trying to make those tough life choices.

If that sounds interesting to you, come on over to lauracoe.com, click on the contact form, and send me a note. Or at the bottom of the homepage, you'll see a button where you can click and set up a call with me just like that, it's free. We'll chat, we'll find out what's going on, and see if it makes sense for me to help you out, no strings attached. I hope to hear from you, and again, thank you so much for tuning in. I really value each and every one of you.

[END]