

**EPISODE 16**

[INTRODUCTION]

**[0:00:01.0] DT:** The year was 2007, the incessant creaks of a spinning ceiling fan were the only sound in the office. A regular man was sitting at his regular job, procrastinating on the same task he did the day before. The cubicle walls were beige, his desk, beige, his life, beige. He then made a decision to leave that beige world once and for all and embark on one of the most colorful entrepreneurial journeys of our time. He started by getting companies to pay him to wear their T shirts, he then sold his last name twice and then wrote the world's first ever fully sponsored book.

Now, the man who has sold everything is in the middle of what might be his craziest stunt yet. He's quite literally selling his future and he's doing it so he can help creative professionals take action and make money doing what they love.

**[0:00:40.3] SS:** Hello hackers, thanks a lot for joining us for another episode of the Hacking UI podcast where we hack our way through design, development and entrepreneurship. I'm Sagi Shrieber.

**[0:00:49.4] DT:** I'm David Tintner.

**[0:00:51.3] SS:** Our guest today is one of the most creative entrepreneurs in the world and we believe you'll be blown away and inspired by this episode just like we were.

**[0:00:57.9] DT:** Ladies and gents, it's our pleasure to present to you Jason Zook.

**[0:01:02.0] SS:** Let's get hacking.

[INTERVIEW]

**[0:01:14.0] SS:** All right, hello everyone and welcome to another episode of the Hacking UI podcast. I'm Sagi Shrieber. With me here is David. David, what's up?

[0:01:22.2] **DT:** Hey everybody.

[0:01:23.4] **SS:** With us is Jason Zook. Jason, what's up man?

[0:01:26.7] **JZ:** Gents, good to be here, virtually of course. I'm not there with you in beautiful Israel, but I'm in beautiful California so we can just compare to beautiful places we live.

[0:01:35.2] **DT:** It sure feels like it.

[0:01:37.1] **JZ:** Yeah, exactly.

[0:01:38.3] **SS:** Yeah, we're thrilled to have you here, we are great fans and we support everything that you do and we just are inspired by all you're doing Z. You seem to go on like in two weeks speed all the time. Launching more cool stuff and it's very inspiring.

[0:01:55.8] **DT:** Definitely. Before we begin, maybe you can just, for our listeners who aren't already familiar with your awesome work, can you just give a little bit of your background?

[0:02:02.9] **JZ:** yeah, I'm most well-known for being the guy who got paid to wear T shirts for a living for five years, which is just a ridiculous way to enter the entrepreneurial world. In the recession in 2007, I decided, "Oh let's have the internet pay me money to do things," and I was super inspired by the million dollar homepage, which I think so many entrepreneurs have been in their careers.

You just see something you're like, "Okay, if that guy can do that, I can do something," whatever it is. Because I never did anything entrepreneurial before that. I worked normal jobs, not super overly creative or anything but yeah, after that, I went on to do a couple of other weird things. I sold my last name twice which was super just crazy. I wrote the first ever fully sponsored book with 204 companies that basically helped me make money to write a book because as a first time author, you don't usually get a book deal, you don't, you know, there's nothing you can do making money and I made \$75,000 bucks which was really cool and I got to pocket all that money, which is fantastic.

Most recently which I'm sure we'll talk about a little bit, I have sold my future and as of recording this, we're actually in the middle or the beginning of the launch of selling my future, which is another ridiculous project and I think that's the thing for me, I just like doing a lot of things, I like building stuff, I like creating and really, at the end of all that, it's helping other people do the thing that they want to do, just through my outlet of doing it differently.

**[0:03:21.5] SS:** Yeah, we're going to get into that like for sure. We have so much to ask you about Buy My Future. Before that, let's go back to when you started out. So you said it's because you were inspired by the million dollar homepage. To anyone who doesn't know what that was, can you just say about that, a few words?

**[0:03:40.2] JZ:** Yeah, I'll even set the picture for you because I remember it vividly. I'm sitting in a beige office, working at a nine to five job like everything's beige; beige walls, beige desk, beige monitor, beige everything, it was just awful. I get an email from a guy that I worked with and this is 2005 I think was when the million dollar homepage happened. So there's not social media. You're not refreshing Twitter all day, you're not sitting on Facebook all day, you're getting emails from people when cool stuff happens, that's it. Or a call. Oh my gosh, hold the phone, craziness right?

But I get this email from my body who is like, "Hey, you're weird, you'll like this." So I click on it and I'm like my mind just explodes and basically this guy Alex Tew, made this website where every pixel on the website, there were a million pixels and you could buy a pixel for a dollar and put whatever you wanted on it. So obviously people didn't buy one pixel because you couldn't see anything. You had to buy like 10 or a hundred or a thousand and that would fill up like a little banner and it became this huge billboard on the internet, I mean, as big as a webpage gets.

But it was crazy with all the different companies and what I think is really unique about it is I dug in to the story more where most people are just like, "Oh, this guy made a million dollars doing this." No he didn't. He made like \$50,000 in the first couple of days and then bought press releases for all the big major media outlets and then they picked it up because it was such a cool story. So he ended up continuing to spend money to give eyeballs on all the stuff and at the end of the day, I think he walked away with like half a million dollars or something, which is still unbelievable, it's still fantastic.

But it just was the concept of it and I was like, “Wow, this is so cool, this is so eye opening to me,” and I look around and everything’s beige again and I’m like, “Shit, what can I do?” Of course I wanted to do like the two million dollar homepage. Actually, I was fortunate enough to think like, “I don’t ever want to be the guy that just copies someone else’s success. I want to put my own unique twist on it.” I think that has been a thread that I’ve tried to do with every project I’ve done where I never really done anything that just was like, mind-blowingly different. I have never even thought of that, it’s more like, “Oh, that’s a kind of a crazy twist on selling something.”

**[0:05:43.5] DT:** I think your standards for mind-blowingly different must be pretty high. Because when I first saw your thing, I guess it was your first project, right? I’ll wear your T-shirt for money. For most people, I think that’s pretty mind-blowingly different.

**[0:05:57.5] JZ:** Yeah, I guess it’s just in context, right? You’re totally right? I think that that’s different for everybody and with every idea that I have, I think this is, I hope your listeners can totally appreciate this. I always feel like a fraud. I always feel like this isn’t original, someone’s going to find some other version of this and maybe I thought about it in like the back of my mind at some point years ago because I saw something else and now I did it and I’m like, “This is my idea,” and you’re like, “No it’s not, it’s someone else’s that you cobbled together,” and I think that’s okay.

I think that Austin Kleon wrote the book *Steal Like An Artist*, which is a very popular book and I highly recommend it. Just a very quick short read about doing that is I’ll never forget actually when I was working in that beige existence, there was like a VP or something at ESPN that we worked with, because I worked in the sports world. I’ll never forget, she said in a meeting. She said, “Steal with pride,” and I was like, “Wow, that’s really interesting.” Because everyone steals, nothing is super original anymore, there’s always just an amalgamation of all this different stuff. I think you’re right. My context of different is a little bit different but it’s also okay to steal when you’re putting your own unique kind of flavor with it.

**[0:07:00.1] SS:** Yeah, and so how did the “I wear your T-shirt” go?

**[0:07:04.7] JZ:** Yeah, well, it's a roller coaster my friend as they think most people who build anything, especially their first venture will tell you. Even my later ventures are still roller-coaster but it started out with nothing. I put up a website, I launched the website which basically just meant like it was live, it was available and 12 people showed up on my first day. You could imagine my disappointment when you like, put all your heart and soul into this, and you think it's amazing, it's such a cool idea and no one shows up. And then you realize, "Oh, the internet is humongous and putting up a website is like putting up a billboard in the middle of the desert."

How's someone going to find you? You have to give them a map, you have to show them, you have to talk about and lead them to it. That's what I started doing, I got on twitter and I just started like talking to random people and not trying to be spammy and replying @ hundred people and saying, "Go check out I Wear Your Shirt. Go check out I Wear Your Shirt.." I didn't do that. It was more just trying to get in conversations with people and try and be interesting and it started to take off slowly but surely.

By the day that I started wearing shirts which was January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009. I launched it in October a couple of months prior. I had six and a half months of the calendar booked in, one of the cool things about their project was the pricing structure I came up with, which I now call bump sale which was a dollar on the first day, \$2 in the second day, \$3 in the third day. So the barrier to entry was super low and I always like to tell the story that Zappos bought the 29<sup>th</sup> day, which is a huge credibility builder for me. If you know Zappos, they're a billion dollar company, they're so well-known. But I'm also like, "Zappos, you're a billion dollar company, why did you only spend \$29 bucks? The whole year would have been cheap for you."

But yeah, their project was really cool, it was just me in the first year, I grew at the second year to two people and double the price and that sold out fairly quickly because then I had some good notoriety and buzz and right around 2010 was like the peak of I Wear Your Shirt, its height of popularity and it slowly started to like trend kind of plateau in 2011, I moved to five people, five times the price. Because I was stuck in the startup mindset where I was reading all this stories of funding and growth and all this stuff and yeah, "Oh I want to do that, I want million dollar company and all the stuff."

Well, I got to a half a million dollar company in 2011 and I never been more stressed out in my life, I had eight people that dependent on me, I was miserable, I literally worked every single day, 16 hours a day. My super comfy beige nine to five job that I got to turn off, now became this 14 hour grind every single day and I just kept doing it because I thought this is what is cool, right? This is all we all read about like, "This is it, I'm in my moment." It sucked. It really did and so that business kind of tapered down and the highlights at the end of it while all said and done, \$1.2 million in revenue over 2,000 companies worked with some of the biggest companies in the world.

But at the end of it, I walked away, dejected, stressed \$100,000 in debt and I learned so many lessons, I would not go back and change anything, even the gaining of 50 pounds of entrepreneurial weight. Even like the no sleep I didn't get for years, losing my hair probably, all this stuff, the unhealthy things that I had to do to keep the business going. Because it got me to where I am today and that was my kind of like big hurdle and obstacle and road block I had to get through.

But I did learn a lot about like the glamorousness of startup culture and that I didn't really want to be a part of that and also, what it means to make a million dollars, what it means to make even hundreds of thousands of dollars, you have to give up a lot of stuff. You have to sacrifice a lot of things. So I'm going to stop talking, that was a long thing. I've got a lot of baggage with I Wear Your Shirt, I still do. We're four years removed, and I'm still like, I still feel it.

**[0:10:33.7] SS:** Yeah, we had our share of startup life as well I guess. D, what do you say?

**[0:10:39.0] DT:** Yeah, definitely, we can completely relate, two different startups and now Sagi and I are definitely trying to do something different and not go the funding route and the Silicon Valley thing. So can totally relate to what you said there. I want to back you up a second because you said something really interesting. You said a lot of things really interesting. I have 30 questions but the first thing that you said was before you even launched I Wear Your Shirt, you had about half a year already booked?

**[0:11:02.8] JZ:** Yeah.

**[0:11:03.5] DT:** So you're like, I'll just kind of set the scene, tell me if this is correct? You're like a first time entrepreneur, you come up with this crazy idea, you say you launch a website, there's 12 people visit it the first time and how did you manage to get half a year booked even if it was part of a cheap price? How did you get anyone to buy it, and let alone half a year?

**[0:11:21.7] JZ:** I think this is something that I had stumbled upon naturally. It just, for me, is something that makes sense which is try and sell something ahead of time before it even exist to prove that someone wants to pay for it, right? Now we all know that right? You read so much stuff about that and it makes total sense. But for me, as someone who never, I never read a business book, not a single one. Never take a business class, I didn't have any of that stuff but it just made sense to me to say, "Okay, this idea is really weird. People can buy it ahead of time so why not let them reserve the space, it's super cheap, a couple of dollars a day, \$29, come on Zappos." Still bitter.

No, I love Zappa, I've been able to use that line for so long so thank you so much Tony. He doesn't care about us, anyway. What I basically did is I just kept reaching out to people and one of the things that I did then, which I now know and continue to do is I used my inbox. My email inbox was my most important asset at the time and that was because there were people that trusted me and knew me. So I could email them and not say, "Hey, I just launched I'll Wear Your Shirt, will you buy?" We all get those emails, even from friends and you're like, "Come on man, really? I want to support you but I'm not going to buy your thing, it doesn't matter." I knew that, I didn't want that email myself.

So I just sent emails to friends, family, contacts and it wasn't a lot of people, maybe a hundred total because I didn't have that many people that I could contact and all I said was, "Here is this crazy idea, I really believe it's going to do something cool. If you know anybody that just might be interested in learning more about it, would you forward this email? Would you tell somebody whatever?" Really, that's what did it you know? I continued to do that thing and here's the secret sauce to that, which is it's not the first email that matters, it's the follow up email afterwards. The follow up email is always the one that does the job.

Because you send the first email and someone goes, "Oh yeah, I want to help Jason, I like Jason. Yes, let's do this." Then what happens? Their baby cries or their boss yells at them or

they have to go on an errand or something, and life gets in the way, right? They have to do something else. Then when you show up in their inbox because you planned for it a couple of days later and you're like, "Hey man, remember when I sent you that email? Did you get a chance to forward it to anybody? Just curious, no worries if you didn't." They're like, "Thank you so much for reminding me, my baby was crying for four days straight, now I can do this for you, my baby has stopped crying."

That was the huge thing, that is literally how I got people to buy in is I just, I followed up, I kept pestering people in like a very friendly way but I put in the work and it was work. Every day I sat on my lap top and I emailed people and I had conversations on Twitter. Then I started doing a couple of little things like I decided to do a live video show every day. I started doing some live video, kind of prelaunch stuff on Ustream at the time, which was a big live video platform in 2009, 2008 and that started to build some buzz as well.

**[0:14:03.3] DT:** Okay.

**[0:14:04.0] SS:** Yeah. Cool, going on later after I'll wear your T-shirt, your next gig was the selling your last name or was it before something else?

**[0:14:12.7] JZ:** Yup.

**[0:14:13.5] SS:** How do you get about doing that?

**[0:14:17.2] JZ:** When you sell your T shirt for four years at that time, you're just now looking for anything to sell. I'm looking around my house and I'm like, "What can I sell?" Truthfully...

**[0:14:24.8] SS:** "What can be more extreme?"

**[0:14:26.7] JZ:** I know, right? I had so many things sponsored at that time. Like my dog had worn sponsored shirts, which was crazy. Which wasn't even my decision. The community that literally like showed up to I Wear Your Shirt, they loved my dog. tThey saw him in pictures and everything. They're like, "Your dog should wear a shirt." I'm like, "No, I'm not going to sell out my dog or whatever."

But people kept asking, then people started just sending me PayPal money, they're like, "Here's \$50 bucks, put your dog in a T shirt." Or you know? And I'm like, "All right, maybe I'll collect this money." So it actually it ended up raising like \$10,000 bucks through him wearing shirts, my dog and donated it to a charity, which was so cool like didn't pocket any of the money, I know, it's ridiculous, I could see, you guys can see David Space's like jaw gape like, "What?"

**[0:15:07.4] DT:** The world's best entrepreneurial dog.

**[0:15:09.8] JZ:** I know, he might be. If he would have kept going, he'd be so famous in Instagram right now it wouldn't even be funny, but he was too early. But yeah, I had a sponsored road trip, I had a sponsored fitness challenge, I had sponsored underwear, sponsored jeans, I had done all these cool things and then I had an unfortunate family situation that occurred and my mom said she was getting a divorce from my stepfather at the time and now I bring like the whole moment down, like, "Awe."

I know, in that moment though, kind of dawned on me like my identity is not shaped by my name, where you guys have probably had your last names your entire life. One last name, I'm guessing your entire life? They're both nodding, you guys can't hear them nod so I'll say it. This is the majority of people. Like 90% of the population has always had the same last name, I'd had three up until that point and there's no — I had nothing holding on to that last name and so I'm in the middle of this I Wear Your Shirt project or kind of tail end of it but I thought I was in the middle, I had this unfortunate family situation, it wasn't a pretty family situation.

I'm like, "I don't want this last name. I don't want to be Jason Sadler anymore. I want to move to something else," but how do you pick a name? You don't just open the white pages. Who even has white pages anymore? Most people don't even know what those are. Young people don't even know what white pages are. All right, back in our day, you had to — anyway. So I was sitting at lunch with my girlfriend and the guy that was working with me and it just like shot to the front of my brain, "What if sold my last name? What if I literally put up, this space on my T shirt, my name became a thing that I could have sponsored for a year?" And I think they both looked to me and they're like, "Okay, we know you're crazy but this is a little much."

I was like, “It’s temporary. What does it matter? It doesn’t matter at all. It’s really not a big deal, I can just change it later if I want to change it back,” and I would have full control. There’s not going to be a porn industry that’s going to grab my last name. Nowadays it would be like Trump’s campaign would be paying me to be like Jason vote for Trump and that would just be awful and terrible. But I had first right of refusal, that was one thing I setup. I built this auction, I didn’t want to do it on eBay or anything. I thought that could have had some organic result if I put it on eBay but I like to control the experience, the design experience of every project I make, which I know you guys can really appreciate.

Because I want the first impression of when anybody looks at anything to not be where it lives but to be like how it exists. You know? So if you think about like when you go to eBay well you’re in the eBay ecosystem, you can only look so good. But if I do it on my own site, if I buy a domain like buymylastname.com and I make it look exactly how I want and you use the functionality that works with that thing, that creates an experience. I do that with every site. You’ll see that in everything I’ve ever done and I always have tried to really make that experience solid. When I launched this site, it was zero dollars on the first day and I did the same thing.

I did a little prelaunch email list before that, I emailed friends and family, told them to, “Hey, get ready for this, I’m launching this project, it’s going to be crazy, I promise you you’re going to be like, what are you doing?” When I launched it on the first day, my goal was \$5,000 bucks, it was a 30 day auction, if I can get to \$5,000 for my last name being sold, cool, that’s a fun story. At the end of the first day, 24 hours, the bidding went to \$30,000 on the first day.

**[0:18:22.0] DT:** Wow, 24 hours in you got \$30,000? It was bid up to \$30,000? Wow.

**[0:18:28.1] JZ:** I’m still just as surprised as you are. I remembered like seeing my phone because we setup like a really crude notification system when I got a bid or whatever and I just was like, “I can’t believe this, this is insane.” So I started to tell the media context that I had from I Wear Your Shirt like, “Hey, I’m doing this idea, it’s getting some traction,” and so I ended up getting on Fox and Friends and New York Times and all these other different media outlets and sat down with the CNN reporter and it just was really cool. So it ended up selling for \$45,500 bucks, the company that bought it was a company called headsets.com.

They're actually, it's really funny, they are the Zappos of headsets. So when you think like office, their company culture is so great, they care so much. But they sell a really boring thing, headsets. It's not like an exciting thing but they're a really cool company, their CEO is awesome. I got to go to their offices after the sale happened and yeah, I sold my last name that time and I wasn't necessarily going to do it the second time but then I thought about writing my book after that and I was like, front cover of a book, big author name space like this feels like it could be another opportunity to do Buy My Last Name one more time because I don't want to just keep redoing things over and over, I like to think of the new idea and explore and get crazier. So I sold it the second time, did an auction again, made \$50,000 the second time with a surfing app called Surfr which is super cool. They're still around.

**[0:19:47.4] DT:** Great name for you too. You got lucky on that one.

**[0:19:50.2] JZ:** That was a good one, my joke always was like, when I was Jason Headsetsdotcom because literally it was the dotcom, I would go to hotels or whatever and they'd be like, "What's your name?" And I'm like, "Oh checking in under Headsetsdotcom." No, not the company name, what's your name?" And I'm like, "Oh god." I'm like, "Okay, my last name is," — and I had it on my license too so I'd be like, "Okay, let's just skip all the thing, here's my license." But yeah, when you tell them your last name is headsetsdotcom they're like, "Wait, what?"

When I told them it was Surfr App, they're like, "Oh, is that like a Scandinavian name? What is that?" It sounds like a normal — so I always joked, I was like, it's a piece of IKEA furniture, that's what it is. "Oh it's like that's the surfer app, you can put it vertically or horizontally. It works." Yeah, the other really cool thing about the Buy My Last Name project, two cool things I'll say. I'm going to toot my own horn here. Two cool things. One, I donated 10% of the profit each year to a charity. So it was cool, I got to donate basically \$10,000 to companies that never would have gotten that money because I sold my last name, which is really fun.

The second is that during that process, it really started to have me think about, "Well who do I want to be? Jason, what do I want to be for the rest of my life?" And I started actually to have conversations with my grandmother during this time that I'd never had before about my great

grandfather and she said, “I don’t know if you know this but your great grandfather was an entrepreneur. He didn’t do what you do obviously but when he was in the 70’s, he started a power company and actually won the Nicolai Tesla award for his work in the power industry.” And I was like, Whoa, wait a second. This is in my blood? This is in my heritage?”

When she told me that I was like, “Well, I really think I want to take his last name forward.” Because it hadn’t passed on, it kind of passed with him. So that’s how I ended up with Zook and I don’t think I really would have thought about taking that last name or learning more about my grandfather or great grandfather had I not done the selling of the last name thing. So it was a really kind of fun evolution into where I am now.

**[0:21:46.3] DT:** I’ve got to say, I thought the story was going to end with you saying that your grandfather’s name was like grandfather floridapowerandlight.com or something like...

**[0:21:55.4] JZ:** He was a super visionary. Talk about way before your time, it was decades before his time.

**[0:22:01.3] DT:** That’s a really interesting story. So now, just before we continue, let’s take a short sponsor break and we’ll be right back. We have tons to talk about.

[SPONSOR BREAK]

**[0:22:09.5] SS:** Hey everyone, hope you are enjoying this episode so far, this episode is actually sponsored by us today.

**[0:22:15.6] DT:** That’s right, we are soon launching the second batch of Side Project Accelerator, which is our very own program where we teach everything we learned while growing Hacking UI from a side project into a full time gig that allowed us to quit our jobs. You see, we have a very specific philosophy for side projects and it’s centered around what we call, audience driven product development. That means that you first have to build an audience even before you’ve created a product that you want to sell and then when you want to create products and monetize, you’ll know exactly who you’re doing it for and exactly who is going to pay you .

**[0:22:40.9] SS:** That's what we teach in this program and we will walk you through the steps to build your personal brand, gather an audience, and create super valuable content. When you're done with the program, you'll have the perfect foundation from framing yourself as a thought leader, a clear path to developing products for your audience and the tools you need to start making money.

The Side Project Accelerator is a members only community and online program. It includes recorded lesson, live stream sessions with the most successful side project entrepreneurs in the world and access to a closed mastermind group.

**[0:23:10.1] DT:** We can't stress enough how important the community is, we just finished the first batch and it was incredible to see how everyone helped each other out and held each other accountable. The best part is, they still are. Even after the program has ended.

**[0:23:20.8] SS:** Yeah, and once you joined the community, you actually get lifetime access, not only to the community itself but to all expert sessions, Q&A sessions with us, new lessons and bonuses that we give out to our members. You can learn more about the Side Project Accelerator at [hackingui.com/spa](http://hackingui.com/spa) and since you're listening to this podcast and you really appreciate your support, when you sign up for the waiting list, we'll send you a code for \$100 off the tuition price.

**[0:23:47.4] DT:** Now, spots are very limited and we expected to sell out quickly. So if you're thinking about joining us, sign up soon. Yeah, again that's [hackingui.com/spa](http://hackingui.com/spa) to sign up and if you use that URL to sign up, we'll email you \$100 off the tuition.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

**[0:24:02.8] DT:** Getting into the tactics of what you did here, you said something really interesting. You were expecting the first time to only make \$5,000. Yet you built out a site and you said, people were working for you or helping you at least build this. So it had to have been a serious time investment, monetary investment I'm assuming too. Can you talk to us about that a

little bit? How you went about like taking on such a big investment and exactly what kind of investment.

**[0:24:25.6] JZ:** Yeah, I really learned over the years, one of the things that I think is a skill of mine is that I'm okay to outsource my weaknesses. I think a lot of entrepreneurs will really try and cover up their weaknesses with like, "I'll do the design, I'll do the development," because they can. I probably could have done those things, I got my background was in graphic design, I knew some basic coding and CSS and the hardcore payment engine stuff especially of the Buy My Last Name sale. I couldn't have done that, I could have just outsourced that.

But what I realized is, the mental energy and the effort that it takes for me to do a design, to do the development, to go through all the headaches of me having to do that, takes away from the creativity that I could possibly come up with, right? We only have so much mental space and so much kind of willpower to get things out into the world. I really believe that this guys is why I keep coming up with this ideas and I keep being able to execute them, that's the thing is because I don't get into the weeds of doing all of the stuff.

Now, I draw the wireframes of the website, I have a vision for what I want it to look like, I direct the people who do it and I make sure that it looks and asks how I want it to down to the curvature of buttons. However, I'm not spending all my time and energy doing that, I'm focusing on the bigger picture. So I've done this with every project now and I continue to do it. So what I do is I just find great people and now I have the luxury because I'm 10 years into my entrepreneurial journey, I've been introduced to so many people, I've had so many people come across my radar who are talented and good at UI or UX or development or rails or whatever it is, their specialty that they do.

That has really given me a pool of people that I can pick from when I'm doing stuff. But at the time when I first got started, it was really just, "Okay, how do I find someone to do this? I'm going to ask my friends." Because again that's the only thing I had with my disposal, I'm just going to email people and say, do you know any great developers, do you know anybody who can do something cool? I got introduced to a friend of a friend, I knew the guy that I initially asked through car stuff. I was big into cars at the time and he was just a car guy, I didn't think he

would know anybody. But he knew another car guy who was a developer and who liked working on little side projects.

**[0:26:23.8] DT:** Okay.

**[0:26:24.1] JZ:** So he did the Buy My Last Name site, I think for like \$1,500 bucks was what he was going to charge me but he was really cool, he was like, "Listen, I know you're an entrepreneur, if you pay me half upfront and half when it's done, totally good, I know you need to make money from this," and it was a really great deal for me because I was like I don't have to come out of cash in. I found a designer actually, I think it was on 99designs.com and I had never wanted to use that site because I'm a design purist, and I'm like, "I don't want to do this." But I was like, "Maybe there's a needle in a haystack here. I could spend the money and the money for me would not be on the actual design I would get, it would be to find the good designer," and I did.

I found a really great designer who was there. He's in the Philippines, I've used him for years, I continue to use him. He just did a logo for a project I'm using right now. So I found this people and kind of plugged them in and so I've done that with every site. Everything that I've done, I try and find the people like, "Okay, who do I want to do the design work? Okay, who do I want to do, making sure the experience is good? Who do I want to make sure that the development is good? Who do I want to make sure that the site works and all the web hooks and all these things that I don't want to have to figure out, I don't want to spend time on I can make those things happen."

**[0:27:24.2] DT:** Cool. So now you have a core team of people that you know exactly who to go through for each project?

**[0:27:28.6] JZ:** None of them are full time employees. They're all people that I just reach out to, they're their own business owners or their own freelancers, they do their own projects. But I know that I can give them a heads up on a project and they'll be like, "Yeah, I'm in." Because number one, they're going to get some notoriety from the project of people being, "Who designed this? Who developed this?" And I can pass that info along but also they get another

piece for their portfolio that's like, "Yeah I did so and so boring project but then look at this ridiculous one I did for this guy."

That gets them a little bit of marketing and attention and I've really seen that work for people and I just think it's a really nice system to build where you don't have to hire and build a whole team, that's another startup thing right? You got to have a full time designer, you got to have a full time UI guy, UX guy, you got to have all this stuff. No you don't. You outsource it, you try and be as frugal as possible and you know what you pay for right? You get what you pay for.

You pay good money for the design that you get but you also realize, "I don't need to keep somebody on for months on end, I need them to do the project and then we can move on together." So that's been a really good system for me to keep going so yeah, I have just kind of roster of people that I can choose from as I move on.

**[0:28:28.0] DT:** Cool. Okay, so I want you to kind of walk us through what your day looked like at this time because you said, you basically jumped from the T-shirts to selling your last name and in between are you working on other projects, are you employed or are you totally entrepreneur and what were you doing? What was your day like?

**[0:28:45.6] JZ:** Yeah, so from January, 2009 to May 6, 2013, I got up every single day, I made a YouTube video, filmed, scripted, edited, uploaded, which takes hours. You guys want to try that for a week, give it a shot. Tell me how easy it is to do it every single day. I hosted a live video show for an hour, I took some photos, I posted stuff on social media, I was getting a couple hundred emails a day so I had to answer those.

Then I had to keep the business afloat. So I had to manage the employees that I had, I had to do the marketing, I had to do the sales, I had to make sure things are working, I had to follow up with people on orders. There was so much. Customer service, there was just so much stuff going on. May of 2013 when I finally decided to walk away from the I Wear Your Shirt business and let go of that, it was so soul crushing because this was my baby, right? This is the first thing I had ever built. This was the thing that defined who I was and I had so much consternation about this.

Because I thought that if I let go of this idea, I'm never going to have another one. I'm never going to have another idea like this and I think that that's a scarcity mindset that we all commence ourselves of. And it's not true, we all come up with ideas and you can always come up with more ideas. But the ideas aren't the thing, we know this, execution is the thing. The idea is only as good as you can get it out into the world and get people to pay for it and use it and whatever.

So in 2013 when I walked away from I Wear Your Shirt. I was in the middle of the last name, two last name sales. I had some money, luckily I had some buffer to figure out what I wanted to do with my life and I was really just lost and so I went to a conference to speak. I'd been doing a lot of public speaking at that time because I Wear Your Shirt was super popular and I got up on stage and I actually just bared my soul in front of the small audience and they probably didn't even know.

I know the guys who put on the conference did not know it was coming. They expected me to be like, "I Wear Your Shirt is so great, here's how awesome my life is," and instead I was like, "Everything sucks, I'm poor and everything's just bad." But it was a moment for me where I was finally able to let go of so many things I was holding onto because my day was always about having a perfect day for all these different companies. I couldn't have a bad day, it was not a good way to setup your life. But I remembered there was a guy who spoke at the conference, his name is Joshua Fields Milburn.

He co-runs a site called the minimalist.com and he started telling his story about how he was working at these jobs and he was constantly climbing the corporate ladder and spending money and he got into debt and he was never happy and he just felt like he was constantly just grasping at straws to be happy and to be comfortable and I was like, "Wow, a lot of this sounds like me. What's this minimalism thing all about?" And I started to learn more about this and really like that for me was the first step of bearing my soul, hearing about minimalism and then being willing to ask for help. S that was a huge thing.

I know you're asking like what I did, thinking business wise, but I actually had to do some soul searching before I could do more business stuff. I finally got the courage to talk to a woman who I guess she's a life coach. She's an author, she's a really cool lady, her name is Pamela Slim. I

don't even think she would say she's a life coach because that is such a bad connotation. I got on a Skype call with her and I really just like unloaded. I mean, she probably was like, "Whoa." I think she's used to that you know?

She didn't say anything incredibly enlightening. She didn't say anything that I wouldn't say if someone else is on the other side of the screen to me. I think being able to let that out and not have it just sit in my brain and fester. I think that as entrepreneurs, I mean, you guys probably know this. You guys have each other, right? You can always talk about and when something's going wrong, you have someone to share it with. When you're kind of by yourself, when you don't have an outlet, it can really fester and you don't realize how much of a stress that puts on you and you have to just kind of like let these feelings out and let them go.

And so when I finally did this, there was a huge sigh of relief and she really, the thing that I think she did is she gave me permission to let go of I Wear Your Shirt. To also appreciate it for what it was, not to look at it as the failure of a company that didn't make it. She was like, "No man, you made a million dollars wearing T-shirts like that's ridiculous, take that in for a moment. All the things that you were able to do, stop looking at the fact that it failed that she ended up in debt, those are lessons, yes. You should talk about those, you should share those," and I have, I continue to sell those. But she's like, "You also have to realize what this did for you so that you can move forward and move past it," and that was huge for me, it was accepting the fact that yes, there was bad but there was also good.

So that really I think gave me permission to say, "Okay, now what do I want to do? I'm obviously not a one hit wonder because I did the last name thing. So I now have two ideas, I'm a two hit wonder. What can I do moving forward?" And I met with a guy for lunch and it was right as I was kind of getting through all this stuff and I was really starting to embrace minimalism in the sense of letting go of all the I Wear Your Shirt stuff that I had collected over the years, kind of just like letting go of a lot of digital clutter as well like all these things I was keeping. I was like, "I don't need to keep all of this stuff." I have screenshots on screenshots in folders of all these little moments that happened in life. I'll keep like 10 of them with and that would be enough.

I start talking to a buddy of mine, he was like, "You need to write a book." I was like, "Yeah, there's no happy ending here." I don't have the like, "And then I made \$20 million and bought a

yacht and now I live in the Caymans.” He’s like, “Yeah but I think you could write the book that people will really appreciate because that didn’t happen. It’s a real story that they can read.” I was like, “Oh, that’s kind of interesting,” and so I’m literally driving home from that lunch and this is like right at the point of my life, I have \$9 in my bank account, no joke, I still kept that screenshot, I have that. \$100,000 in debt from my business and I’m driving home and I’m like, “Could I be an author?”

I mean, I’ve only really ever written tweets and emails. So I don’t have a lot of credit to write a book but I was like, “There’s millions of books out there, I don’t have to be the first person who is ever like not have experience doing this. I think I could write a book.” By the time I got home, it was like a 20 minute drive home. I was sitting in my driveway and I was like, “What if I got sponsors for the book? I have gotten sponsors for all my other projects like my dog, come on now. I had gotten sponsors for everything, I’ve got to be able to do something with this,” and then the idea kind of cobbled together for me was, if I got a sponsor for every page of the book, I’d write the book at 200 pages, let’s just say that. But this would be the first ever fully sponsored book and it would be my way to like crowd fund.

Kickstarter was around at this time, this is 2013, it was there but it wasn’t definitely the thing that it is now. I was like, “I think I could do this. I have an audience, I have a community, I have a roster of sponsors who’ve paid me money so I already have existing customers who like me, let’s see if I can do this.” And so I put together a website, I bought the domain, sponsormybook.com, started putting it out to people and just like I talked about with I Wear Your Shirt, for like three to five months, I just sent emails, promoted this thing, sold the sponsorships as much as I could and by the end of it, I made \$75,000, I hadn’t written a single word of the book yet, there was just a title, that was it.

But people believed in it, right? They believed in the idea, they liked the idea, they thought it was interesting and then I went on to write the book and I love to say, it has not become a bestseller because that’s like the thing, everyone’s like. Book’s a best seller and category of entrepreneurship, self-help, self-help for kittens, self-help for kittens who like yarn, self-help for kittens who like yarn and play with you toes. The most obscure categories ever but you get to say it.

I don't give a shit about that, I don't care about the award of being a best seller, that's not what mattered to me. What mattered to me was writing a real book that other entrepreneurs, other creatives, other makers that people who just want to aspire to be creative and put their thing out into the world, could relate to. That's what I did and I wrote the book in two weeks which is also crazy because it's a super ridiculous time. My editor and book coach was like, "You're a machine." I was like, "Well, yeah. I am a machine."

I need to embrace that. I work really hard, I can get this stuff done and so I put this book out into the world and it did really well. It sold tens of thousands of copies or something like that but never a bestseller, it's been out for a couple of years now, people continue to send me emails, "This book has been life changing for me, I'm changing my perspective on thinking," and all this other stuff that I'm doing and I just sort of really appreciated what has come from that book.

Yeah, that long winded journey of telling you how I went from kind of I Wear Your Shirt, Buy My Last Name, into sponsor my book and then right in that time I was starting to kind of play with some digital products stuff as well.

**[0:36:35.0] DT:** What a journey it was.

**[0:36:36.8] SS:** Yeah.

**[0:36:37.5] DT:** I think Sagi and I are both still in shock.

**[0:36:40.8] SS:** Jaws open, kind of like...

**[0:36:42.2] JZ:** I feel like your listeners are going to be like, "When is this guy going to stop telling this crazy stories?" The funny thing is that there's still more, that's the insane thing about, I think being an entrepreneur and really embracing the fact that who you are, I'm a creator, I'm a doer of stuff, I make things. That is where I get all of my personal fulfillment and besides like relationships and people but let's talk about business fulfillment.

I love making stuff guys. I love putting crazy ideas out there and I really like challenging myself to look at the world differently and to do things so differently that people are like, "I may not

maybe want this thing or I may not think this thing is something I need but I can't deny the fact that the story here is really cool or the way that this is being done is really interesting."

**[0:37:24.5] SS:** That's amazing and I mean, all that you've told us so far, it is just like jaw dropping, mind blowing and inspiring.

**[0:37:32.3] DT:** Okay cool. So you were totally all over the place, you were sponsoring every possible thing you can and that is a ridiculous journey. One thing I wanted to ask you about is you always had this people that you can reach out to and you always had like kind of this audience of I assume not just sponsors who were paying but also an audience of people who are following you and into your work, right?

You mentioned that you are YouTubing and blogging and doing all sorts of stuff like that along the way. So can you talk about how you're gaining this audience of, both on the sponsor side and the people who are following you, people who are buying your stuff?

**[0:38:05.6] DT:** Yeah, I think honestly, the biggest thing for me was I just showed up. I showed up on different platforms, I showed up in different places, I was super early to being on YouTube, I was on YouTube in 2008 like it was before "youtuber" was a phrase. I hosted a live video show every single day and I think the big thing for me that helped me build a community was I was just always around, I was always there. I just didn't disappear for moments on end, I just tried to always be in the community and the other thing is I cared. I cared about every single person that I interacted with that emailed me that showed up for a live show.

I could probably still rattle off 50 names of people who showed up to my live video shows seven years ago. Because I really cared about them and I believed in the fact that if they showed up for me, I should show up for them and I think that's one thing that's always just been so interesting to me is someone will email me and they'll ask me something and I'll respond and they'll be like, "Wow, you replied." I'm like, "What do you think was going to happen when you emailed me?"

It's kind of weird to live in a culture where maybe like E-celebrities, if you will, if I have a very small version of that, that those people don't reply, they just leave this air of I'm too important to

reply and I can't buy into that, I like to be the person that people hear from and especially because, and I'll give credit to Seth Godin who is very prolific marketing author, I emailed him super early on in my entrepreneurial journey and he wrote back.

I was like, "Whoa this is cool, I've heard of you. You're a published author, you're a bestseller, like a real one, not a fake kittens who do things with their toes one." That was really influential to me to be able to say, "Well I should do this for other people as well," and so I think yeah, just also trying to be helpful is probably the other thing. Whenever someone emails me, I try to just like push them off on to something I've written or do anything else, I try and give them a curated answer to whatever the thing is that they want help with.

I think that that goes a long way and a lot of times, I'm not going to solve someone's problem. I'm not some like mystical Sherpa who has the answer to everything and I could just wave a wand and you have the answer. But I can try and give you a little piece of my own experience or story or whatever that can help. So I think just doing that for years and I had an article that I never wrote but it was like, "How I got to 40,000 followers on Twitter in six years". It was like so long, it was going to be like days, 1,800 days it took me to get.

Because it's so unsexy and it's not a hacky thing, it's not a tactic but that's how it works and that's how you build an actual quality community of people and even now with the Buy My Future community which I'm sure we'll talk about here in a minute but that community itself is now growing but it's growing at a pace that it's small and it's really hyper excited. There are really tuned in, they're hyper connected, it's really an awesome community and I'm there for them. They're even still surprised. And I'm like, "Guys, you bought my future, you paid me for something that is, I'm going to be here for you. That's the whole point of this," and they're even surprised and they're like, "Wow, you respond really quickly." "Yeah, I care, that's what I want to do." Again, sorry for the long winded answer. Just got a lot of stuff.

**[0:40:59.7] DT:** I mean, that sounds amazing but it must take a ton of time right? You said you probably have hundreds of people emailing you, how do you manage your time and deal with that?

**[0:41:06.9] JZ:** Yeah, that's a good question. I think I've gotten much better at it but I also believe that the work I do is not the simple definition of work as most people define it. I don't show up and then turn it off like this is my life. What I do is my life, the creating is my life, the community building is my life and it may sound weird to some people but I get more enjoyment out of sitting on my laptop at 9 PM answering emails than I would if I was sitting on my couch watching some show on Netflix.

Yes, there are amazing shows on Netflix, I love them. But I also get so much joy out of responding to someone who is like, "I'm struggling with self-doubt, I got myself into \$100,000 in debt myself, my boyfriend just left me, I don't know what to do with my life." Of course I don't have all the answer for this person. I'm not going to solve everything but I can tell them, "Hey, really sorry about this self-doubt. Let's dig into that a little bit, what's that about? Is it a business thing, is it a personal thing? I'm not going to be able to help you with everything but what is that?"

Also, "Here is a debt article that I wrote, this gives you the specific steps of how I got out of debt and you can do the exact same thing. Also, I'm listening to you, I'm a person here who is listening to you," and I'll tell you what, just doing that for some people is enough that it changes their whole perspective, their whole life. It's someone who acknowledge that this is going on and it also gave them the courage to put it out there where they probably couldn't have said those honest things to their close friends or family because they'd be judged or they'd be out cast or whatever.

Yeah, I really believe in that and it does take a lot of time to answer your question. I spend so much time doing that because it's the thing that I want to do. I don't think about retiring, I don't think about stopping and doing this, I think about just continuing to create and put things out into the world and interact with people and have conversations like this because I'm not going to do anything more enjoyable than this in my life. Even like a vacation, like a lavish vacation. I'm bored three hours into it. I just can't sit still, I just want to do stuff.

**[0:42:54.5] SS:** It's amazing. I mean you really do care and I also see by the, I hear your podcast and I read your articles and I read your emails and it really seems that you really care and you really put a lot of time and effort into helping other people. The thing that, in my

experience at least, David, I don't know if he was yours, once we had the Side Project Accelerator that we're running right now. So we had all of the people coming from Side Project Accelerator, wanting to get help like on a personal level and plus I don't know, I have also the Israeli design community because I have an Israeli design blog. So a lot of people reach out to me about that and I also have all the other things going on, business, life, I have two kids so a lot of logistics.

What I found is that all of this kind of like people I really want to help, I got to a point where I can't help them all although I know that I am a person who really — I really care. I really want to help and I found that it's very hard for me to help, especially more in like I don't know, like 9 o'clock PM, I am eating dinner with my wife and all of a sudden I get a slack message from someone who really needs my help but I say, "No, I'm with my wife, I should be with my wife." How do you do that? How do you, I mean, you have a girlfriend for a long time, right? Caroline, is her name?

**[0:44:11.2] JZ:** Yup.

**[0:44:12.6] SS:** So how do you give time for her? How do you make time for friends and family and all of that stuff when you have so much interactions going on in so many channels?

**[0:44:21.9] JZ:** I like that we're digging deep into this, this is fun. So yeah, I have a very different set of circumstances but I strongly believe that everybody has the amount of time they need, they're just not willing to sacrifice to work with that time that they have. When people complain to me like a perfect example, I wrote this morning ritual article that went gang busters on the internet. It actually went viral, we can actually say that word, it really did happen. It wasn't just like 12 retweets, it got over a million views, it was posted on a bunch of different things and I kept getting emails from people that were like, "Oh this article is so great for like a dude who lives by himself who has a girlfriend, doesn't have like a job or whatever."

I'm like, "I've built this life, this is my life, I've made this decisions, I have set myself up for this, this is why I had this. Also, get up 10 minutes earlier, get up an hour earlier, stop watching TV." If you want things to happen in your life, you're going to have to sacrifice something. This is the truth, you want success, you want money, you have to cut other things out. Friends, partying,

enjoying your free time, that's what it takes. I'm sorry, that's it. That's the real talk, done, end of discussion.

Now, balance is a very interesting thing because, just as you mentioned, you have kids, you have a wife, you have things, you want your own free space too and I am the same way. So I have really actually cut back a lot on what I used to do. I mean, I literally used to be attached at the hip to my phone and I still kind of am but not as much as I used to be. I would try and respond within lightning time to everything. Now, you know, I check Twitter maybe two or three times a day, I check Facebook once or twice a week.

I check my email multiple times a day but I don't leave it open all day and Slack is pretty much the only thing because I do feel like I had this connection to the Buy My Future community, that's really the only thing that I really want to give solid quality value to, especially early on here. But I really do try and take time for myself and I don't feel like I have to tell people that. I feel like people know that and they experience that that they want time for themselves just as much as they want your attention and that their problem that they're going to put out into the world in front of you, it doesn't need to be solved this minute and it's also not fair to ask you to be there at every beckon call for them.

So you have to kind of establish that space and that thing. I've actually, I can tell you in multiple occasions, probably hundreds of occasions. I've responded to someone super late at night or right away and something or whatever and they're like, "Jason, you didn't have to respond that quickly, this could have waited." I'm like, "Oh well, it didn't seem like it could have. It seem super important, but I just wanted to respond." Really, to come back to the crux of your question, I think every single person has to find their own balance, I think every single person has to figure out what is the most important thing in their life and then you just step down from there. Like my family comes first, I set up time for a dinner and breakfast and time with my wife and nothing is going to impede upon that.

Then you just have to understand, those hours that you're not able to be there and do that are hours that you're not putting into whatever you're trying to build and be okay with that. That is an okay thing that life is more than the things that you creat and the things that you work on so you just have to figure out what works the best for you.

**[0:47:25.4] SS:** Yeah. I love that answer. Gives me some food for thought. Thank you.

**[0:47:30.8] DT:** I think at this point, you mentioned it a few times, but we've got to dive into this, you're talking about buying my future. Tell us about the Buy My Future, the next project I guess you're working on.

**[0:47:40.2] JZ:** Yeah, I work two days into the second launch of this project and last year I had this idea because I started getting mention and I started getting into the digital product space. Courses and I had written my book and I had a couple of little workshops and things that I'd done and I was like, "Man, that's kind of a pain to sell this things over and over again." I came up with a new idea and I want to help people write their own book and I create a course and my buddy Paul Jarvis, who you guys know and I'm like, "I got to relaunch this whole thing and I got to do the whole marketing thing again? That's kind of a pain and if I'm going to keep coming up with ideas, I'm just going to keep...I'm going to always feel like I'm selling.

It just dawned on me one day, actually while I was on a social media break which we could get into the weeds of, I'm passionate about social media breaks and our addiction to social media but it was while I was on a break that I had this thought, this moment of clarity where I was like, "What if I packaged everything up that I do and I sold it as one thing?" And my immediate thought was like, it's like a life time subscription to me.

I was like, "Well that sounds kind of weird, I don't know if I could pitch that to people." But then I thought about, I'm going to create, I've created a bunch of stuff, software products, info products, all this things. I know I'm going to create more, what if I sold it as like a buy-in and you get everything I'm ever going to create and you never pay me another dollar. Because for me, I looked at it from two angles when I first thought of that. Number one, I'm getting maximum customer lifetime value at a price I'm selling this for. When I opened up Buy My Future was a thousand dollars and my products were worth much more than that but I know that not every person buys every product. So I'm not getting a thousand dollars from every customer.

Then I looked at it as, well what if I could deliver the maximum amount of value to a customer for one purchase? There's not a lot of those opportunities out there and I looked at this aide and

I was like wow, this really feels like a win/win for both sides and that again, I control it. Just like the last name sale. I can control what I give people. I'm at the full control of this, you don't get to have a legally binding thing where you're like, "Well, I get one of your kids so I also get like access to your bank account and these things," no you don't.

You get access to their products, I want you to have access to but I'm also a giver. I think you guys hear that, the people listening to this hear that. I'm going to over deliver on what I'm setting up here. I did a big lead up to this project, I wrote a 60 day journal on medium and I chose medium instead of my own blog and because I wanted to have a place where more people could find it. Medium was really kind of up and coming and I really try and find those kind of up and coming places where I can be and I can show up and get attention from other people.

So every day, for 60 days, I showed up and I wrote about this project, I didn't name the project, that was the only thing I kept from everybody. But I talked about the self-doubt I was feeling. I talked about the branding, that my girlfriend was doing for the site, I talked about how I was going to be getting on podcast interviews because that was one place I wanted to do marketing. I talked about doing customer calls, I talked about coming up with pricing. I literally talked to every single day about all this different aspects of the projects and people followed along.

They joined that journey of this project that was going to launch. When it launched I had built up two months of buzz about this idea and that really lead to like a big splash. Plus it was a real crazy idea. It was a real weird crazy idea that I was letting people buy access to everything I'd created in the past, everything I will create for the rest of my life and you only pay me one time and you will never pay me another dollar.

When people heard about this, they're like, "Wait, this is too good to be true.' The more that people kept reading about it, they're like, "Oh I get it, this is a subscription to Jason, that's what it is. But it's a one time thing, you're never going to pay me again and this is a really cool opportunity." The thing that I didn't see coming at Buy My Future that has become the overall, everyone loves it, is the community.

I don't know why I overlooked that, just for me it was a side thing. Everyone wants the stuff right? They want the online course platform, they want the digital products, they want the future

software things I'm going to make. I mean they like that stuff, the use that stuff but the community is above and beyond the best thing about it and I just love that and the people who are even joining in this launch, we're a day and a half into this year's launch and people are so excited. They get in, they're like, I've been in so many communities on the internet, I have never seen so much activity, I've never seen such good people. There's no haters, there's nothing else because people are spending good money to be here and they're putting themselves in a level playing field.

So yeah, this year we're at the second year of Buy My Future, it's open for two weeks, it's \$1,500 bucks this year, there's 17 guaranteed products and services, which are really cool. I average about four a year so you're going to get a ton of value on the next couple of years guaranteed. But the community access is also the awesome thing. There's now 200 plus people who are in the community. I don't know where that's going to end up at the end of the launch, 178 people bought the first year, so we'll see how many buy this year. As of right now, we're at like 24 as of recording this. Which is really cool.

**[0:52:22.0] DT:** Five more since your earlier email?

**[0:52:25.5] JZ:** Yeah, I think I sent you guys an email last night or whenever that was but yeah, five more since the end of the first launch day. Super cool it's just really fun to watch and this community is, I love it, I'm so excited to be letting people in.

**[0:52:40.1] DT:** So tell us about the community, what does that exactly mean? That's a Slack group or what do they get in the community?

**[0:52:46.7] JZ:** Yeah, it's a Slack channel and then there's also a dashboard that has kind of all their goods and services and one of the next products that I'm actually making is a community directory tool. So it's kind of weird when you think about it. Slack is really great for chat and conversation. Twitter and Facebook, those are good for those things, but it's really kind of hard to see a community in one place. Who are the people who are in it? What are the things that they like? How can you connect with them?

I don't want it to be a messaging platform because that's what Slack does. I don't necessarily want it to be a platform where they share information because that's Twitter and Facebook but there's like this in between of how do you find the other people. How do you know, we tried to Google spreadsheet and it was just a shit show because the columns got so long with all of people stuff and it's so hard to look at.

So yeah, we're actually building a tool, I'm building this with Paul Jarvis and Zack Gilbert the guys who had built ofCourseBooks with. We're building this community directory tool where you can literally setup a community, your people can upload their profile, a blurb about them, some links and then tag themselves either based on the tags you set up or they setup. Then they can see each other. And it's a really easy way just to find other people, see other people, which I'm really excited about. So that to me is like the next evolution of the community but I do this quarterly calls with the community where I share all my revenue numbers and my projects, not because I want to be like, "Look at how much money I'm making," because I want to say, "This one sucked, this one did really well, I wrote a big article, look at how it impacted this one," and they can learn from those things.

Just talking about the upcoming projects and what they're working on, that's the other thing, every single day in that slack community, people are talking about their stuff, their worries, their launches, their courses, whatever. I'm there but I usually get up because I'm on the west coast, I get up like 7 AM, people have asked questions and 12 people have already answered the questions, which is so cool. I'm not even able to answer first anymore, which is I think that's like showing that you have a really good community. So yeah, that's been the big shining star I think for Buy My Future is that awesome community.

**[0:54:39.7] DT:** That's awesome.

**[0:54:41.6] SS:** By the way, I think this thing about having a community and wanting to build a custom tool for them, it's like not the first time that we hear of this because we talked to Bryn Jackson who is the owner of a network of podcast called SpeckFM and now they are like a network of designers and developers and now they need a tool. They also have a very active Slack group and they want to move it out of the Slack group and building something custom

again because the Slack is not enough and social media is, exactly what you said. Maybe this is somewhere in the future of like customized communities. That's interesting.

**[0:55:15.6] DT:** I want to take that even further to what Sagi just said. But I noticed a small thing you mentioned. So you're building the tool and actually going to use the tool that you need for yourself and also sell it, right?

**[0:55:26.3] JZ:** Yup. So the fun thing about this is that Buy My Future, and I had a little bit of vision here. When I thought about the Buy My Future idea, one of the things was like, "Oh I can build a little group who will always be my beta testers for anything I want to do, that's really cool. Because they're going to get this products for free so they're going to be the first ones to see it. I can get that feedback right away, I don't have to go out and get it, again, I'm not reinventing the wheel. Also, if they like it, they'll share it."

So now I have advocates, I have people who want to talk about these things who want to share them and I do think that Sagi was just mentioning the micro communities, I think are where a lot of this is going to go and I was actually. My girlfriend and I had talked about this idea about a year ago that we really think that SMS is huge, everyone knows the messaging is huge. But micro communities and business, there's a big opportunity I think to bring this stuff together and to be able to reach people and I think we're figuring a little bit of that out and we're going to try a bunch of stuff with this online kind of community directory tool where yes it's a thing you can search and see but it's also a way for you to interact with your community where there's not a lot of noise.

Where you really control the output of information as the community owner and we're really excited about what that might look like and who knows? That's the beautiful thing about making a lot of stuff. While you can't focus all of your effort on one big project to rule them all, I don't like the pressure of one big project to rule them all. I've been there. That was I Wear Your Shirt for me and all the chips had to be put in that one thing. I like having 17 projects, it's crazy and some of them have to kind of die after a while, which is fine but you really find out which one stand the test of time and which ones people really want and I like that and I know that I'm a special breed of human who can manage all these different things but I'm really excited for what that means

and the fact that all this people who Buy My Future get every single one of this things for free forever and they never pay for them, which is so rad.

**[0:57:15.4] SS:** That's amazing.

**[0:57:16.5] DT:** So I got to ask you, because everything you're talking about, you're just a content machine. Like you said, you're working on tons of projects, you're writing tons to promote them, you're creating YouTube videos, blog posts and everything and I know Sagi and I are in similar situation now trying to promote the Side Project Accelerator and doing our own, the podcast and our newsletter and...

**[0:57:35.1] SS:** Just to give a bit of background, our Side Project Accelerator is now finishing its' first batch. It was an eight week program and now we want to launch the next batch in October. So the thing is we're still so into the first batch, we can't even start to promote the next batch and...

**[0:57:53.4] DT:** Yeah, this is exactly what I want to ask you about, it's like, I'm listening to everything you're doing, I'm like, "Ah, I want to do that too, I want to write this thing also, I want to do that article and I want to do this email." How do you do it all?

**[0:58:04.0] JZ:** Yeah, it's a really good question and it's a constant struggle for me of "I want to do everything right now but I also don't have to do everything right now". I think that's like a, again, that's a scarcity mindset that our brains put on us of like, "If I don't do this right now, someone else will and I won't be able to do it." That's not true, they're so actual few people out there who put in the work and taken idea to execution. Sure you might hear or even see a small glimpse of someone doing something somewhat similar. But I would even pressure you guys to say, why does your next batch of your accelerator need to come so quickly after first one?

Why not give it a little bit of time so you can actually do what you need to do to finish this one and move into the next one when it's actually a better time for you guys who can then give the most value to these folks and do that? And the reason you probably don't do that as you look at like, "Oh we have all these other things we want to do." And I like to think about my next opportunity is not my last opportunity.

So even if someone passes my by that I'm like, "I kind of missed being able to do that because I was working with all this other things." It's okay. Because something else is going to come along and you have to trust yourself, you have to trust your gut, you have to believe in the fact that I'm going to do this and I know that's hard for people just getting started. Right? They're like, "Well Jason, I've never created anything." Okay, well then go create some stuff.

Get your first couple under your belt so that you can experience what that feels like and then you can know, I need to have the content plan, I need to have the consistency of showing up, I need to do a 60 day journal and write every single day. I need to build an audience over the course of years and then I can look back and go, "Well I've got too many things in my plate, I should probably figure out how to organize all those and move forward."

That's where I am, I've done so much stuff now, I've put so many things out into the world that now I know not all of it has to be done now. In fact, it's actually better if I give it a little bit of room to breathe because that gives my audience a little bit of room to breathe because they're not feeling like, "I mean Jason creates a lot of stuff but there's a break, there's enough time. It's been like a month or two since Jason's made something, what's he doing? Is he being lazy? Where did he go?"

**[1:00:00.1] DT:** Actually I remember you took a formal break from your newsletter or your mailing list in July was it?

**[1:00:05.9] JZ:** Yup.

**[1:00:06.9] DT:** I remember getting that email.

**[1:00:08.3] JZ:** I really believe in breaks. This has been a big thing for me that it always scared me as someone who relies on their community and their audience and content and people to show up and buy things to say, "Well if I disappear form their inbox or if I stop being on social media for a month, they're all going to forget I exist." No they're not. They're there for you. I think that comes with the time that you put in. That goes back to all the effort that we all put in to build our communities and you earn that. That's an earned thing that you do and I don't think

that if you're starting out a business, you can say, "I'm going to work on it for three months and then I'm going to take a month off."

I don't think it's going to work out for you. I think you have to actually put in the time and you have to work on it and you have to be there. But now that I'm so many years into this, and specifically for my newsletter, I wrote consistently for basically two years and then I finally said, "I think I can take a break. I think they'll be okay without me," and what was really funny was, I took that break and I really enjoyed the time when I was off. I didn't really like stop working, I was still doing stuff because I just can't stop.

But I wasn't forcing myself to do that writing, I wasn't forcing myself to be on social media and I kept getting emails when people who were like, "My Mondays suck, I want your emails back." You build a little bit of that fondness, the heart grows fonder with distance, right? "Distance makes the heart grow fonder," that's how you say it. You realize that not showing up for a little while makes people realize that they're missing out. "Oh I do actually really like this, I should enjoy more of this while I can have it," and that I think that that's a really good thing.

And social media is so crowded. There's just so much noise and space and it just feels like you're constantly running on a treadmill uphill at 100 miles an hour and I don't like that feeling. I don't like that feeling with anything that I'm doing anymore. I want to feel like I'm in control, that I can turn it on and off and that I can take breaks and that people, you guys are still there? You guys are still reading? Yeah, I disappeared for a while but if anything, you're like, "I can't wait for Jason to come back because I want to know what crazy stupid thing he's going to do."

**[1:02:02.9] DT:** Yeah, that's a good point. I mean, I could totally relate. There's a few email newsletters that I really, really love. There's daily ones, weekly ones and you know sometimes I just have other stuff going on and I don't open them up. I like what you're saying there, you're not taking a break for a year, you took a break for a month or something like that.

**[1:02:19.5] JZ:** Yeah, and you definitely earn that and the time grows longer depending on what you want to be doing and how you can kind of like figure that out for your own self.

**[1:02:26.9] DT:** So what did you do during this break?

**[1:02:29.3] JZ:** I watched a lot of Netflix. I really honestly like forced myself to kind of be a slob like watching movies and reading and just taking a break. But I did get ahead eight weeks on my newsletter while I was on a break.

**[1:02:42.3] DT:** Cheater. Cheater!

**[1:02:44.0] JZ:** I sent my editor like six articles in one week because I just, like I couldn't stop thinking about stuff and so I started writing and she wrote me a message back and she was like, "You're the worst at taking breaks, you're more prolific during a break than when you're actually on and working," and it's just because it's how I operate. You know like I said, when I go on vacation, three hours in, I'm completely bored. I've already established the fact that what am I going to do? My brain keeps going and so I think I have to understand that's my DNA is like Gary Vee likes to talk about. He knows his DNA.

I know that about myself as well and so this breaks, they really becomes like a portion of poll where I'm really pushing against my natural urge to create and to share and to help and to be there to say, "Okay, well let's just take a pause from that because you need a break, you need to recharge your batteries," and when I came back from that break, I mean, I was pumped, I was amped up. I knocked so many things off my to do list, I caught up on a lot of things that obviously piled up but I had this renewed energy, which is perfect for the launch of Buy My Future because I need it.

I'm going to be answering every email and every message and everything because this is like the biggest project of my life for two weeks, I got to have the energy to do that. If I didn't take that break ahead of time, I would probably be run down already because of so much emotional stress and pressure that gets put on yourself.

**[1:03:58.9] SS:** Yeah, it makes sense. All right, I want to just like kind of see what actionable items we can give the audience hearing this right now. If they want to launch their own thing and I'm talking about some kind of course or something to sell online. So in preparing the lunch, what are the tips that you can give to people showing up is one I know, it's a very important thing that you talk about and it's very important and David and I just learned it with time and like

do you have some kind of like strategy, how to come up with a strategy? Some tips on how to come up with a strategy and do it?

**[1:04:33.5] JZ:** Yeah, I'm going to say those to you but I'm also going to tell people that they're not going to remember these. So go to [jasondoesstuff.com/start](http://jasondoesstuff.com/start). I wrote this article with this exact problem in mind because this is an email I get all the time. It's like, "I don't have an idea how do I come up with an idea? I have an idea, what do I do with it? Been trying to launch a course, what is the stuff that I do?" This is literally, like I wrote in the article, if I was starting over from scratch with nothing, this is what I would do.

So I go through that in detail but the basics of it are number one, you first really need to identify if the thing that you're trying to create has an audience that's willing to pay for it, not an audience that's willing to cheerlead you along the way. There's a big difference there and I've learned that over the years, there is a lot of people who will say, "That's a great idea, I love that, I will buy that." As opposed to people who say, "Here's my credit card, take my money, I want to pay you for that."

You have to get to the "here's my credit card, take my money" part because if you don't, you don't have a business. What you do is you have an idea and you have cheerleaders and that doesn't pay the mortgage, that doesn't help put food on your table and you really have to establish that. So for me it's about starting really small. It's about going at your inbox, it's about finding people you can talk to, it's about looking at your previous customers and if you don't have customers, it's about defining who your ideal customer is and finding them and having conversations with them.

And what's going to sound really boring about all the things that I have just said and I'm going to say is it's work, it's putting in hours of work, it's about consistently doing the thing and it's about understanding that you're not going to make the best version of whatever it is you want to create the first time around, that's impossible. You're not even going to make it on the fourth or fifth time around but if you just know that that thing solves a problem for someone or if it's extremely useful or extremely entertaining, that it will get better. That nothing we are making anymore this days, especially with the internet, is etched in stone.

It's not a thing that just, you know, when people make an online course, they try and make the most perfect course ever, the first time around, they want the highest quality of video, the best written content, all this downloadable PDF's, a quiz, a certificate, all the stuff. I'm like, "Who cares? Has anybody asked you for any of those things? Has anybody even paid you for this idea yet? You want to make every bell and whistle and then you want to automate all the sales funnels and all the things. No, get your first sale. Talk to someone about them going through the basic version of your content, did it change their life? Did it help them? Did it solve the problem? Did it even just make them happy? If it did, great. Now improve it."

And it's such a step by step incremental process to get to a point where you can do things like selling your future, you can do things like cranking out a project in a week or writing a book in two weeks because you put in this consistent effort over and over and I think that the best metaphor that I can give everybody is one that I just talked about on the Invisible Office Hours Podcast with Paul Jarvis is everybody wants the treasure map. But what everyone forgets about the treasure map is that it winds and it curves and it goes through sunken ships and it goes through islands and it goes around and there's an animal that attacks you in the mid-way.

That's the real journey to be successful. But what everybody else thinks a treasure map is a starting point, one dot in between and an X, it's not it. It is absolutely not it and you're never going to find that treasure map, it doesn't exist, you can buy all the courses in the world, you can listen to all the E celebrities in the world tell you that you can chase your dream and do it but until you actually try and make your dream a reality and you put in the work to make it happen, you're not going to get there.

**[1:07:53.2] SS:** Love it. Love it, and I read your article and I really can't stress enough for everyone to read the article and I'm actually having thoughts right now, D, about us launching the next batch and maybe taking more time to doing this right instead of just rushing to do it. But yeah, it gives us food for thought. So I guess it gives the audience a lot of value as well.

Now that we talked about the launch strategy and building a strategy for a launch, so while you launch, can you talk about that a bit? Because I know there's tons of work putting inside the launch itself, talking to people that want to buy it but are on the fence and people that just bought, onboarding them, how do you do all that?

[1:08:34.2] **JZ:** It's tough, you learn from each time. I mean, what you don't do is you don't try and make it all perfect the first time around. Because if this is the first time you're doing it, it's not going to happen. But when you try and do it and this is what I've done now over the years is I just look at, "Okay, what do I want the experience to be for someone and where do I want them to go when all this happens?" And the other really important thing that you should do, two things I think actually are important. Number one, I mentioned this when I talked about I Wear Your Shirt, which is people need following up with.

You should not be afraid to follow up multiple times to get someone to buy something, to support you whatever it is. Because if you're proud of your product, you should not be ashamed to promote it. And I think so many creators and creatives are because they feel like it's shameless and it's selling out. No, you're trying to make a living, you're trying to get money for the thing that you want to do. You should be wanting to promote it every second of every day to a point when you're so annoying that people don't want to hear from you anymore.

But if you're doing something great that people won't mind hearing from you. I've sent out three emails in a row to my action army list. I've never done that but it's because I'm so excited about this project, there's cool things happening that I could share. So anyway, that's one thing, you need to follow up. The second thing is that, and I think that you guys could actually benefit from this, talking about your accelerator. I'm going to give you something practical here and that other people can do as well.

Talk to the customers that you already had or have. What are they saying? How are they describing your project back to you? What problems are you solving for them that maybe you didn't even think you were solving? What are the little things that they're saying in their words that you can in turn in use? So that's what I did when I launched Buy My Future the first time. I had a bunch of customer calls, I explained the project to them, something they'd never heard of, something I never done, something they'd never seen.

Then I ask them, "Will you repeat back to me what you think this project sounds like?" The words that they said, I was like, "Are they not getting it?" I'm like, "No, what they're doing is they're translating it in how they understand," and then I started listening for patterns and it was

only three or four people that I had to hear the same thing from where number one, the community was like such a big selling point and I was going to stuff it down the bottom and be like, “And you got a community.” It became like, “Access to the community.” That was a huge thing because that’s what people really wanted.

So following up with your people when you’re doing a launch is great and then also talking to your customers and speaking their language. Figuring out what they say. Now let’s get back to some more tactics on doing this launch stuff. One of the things is to prepare early. So whether you’re doing a Kickstarter, whether you’re launching a course, whether you’re putting a piece of software out into the world, whether you’re launching a podcast, don’t start promoting it on the day of.

Plan months ahead of time to say, “All right, what email do I want to send out a couple of weeks before hand to get people ready? What tweets do I want to be writing? Where do I want to be posting it?” Or write out a list of sites. Can I put this on Designer News? Can I put it on Product Hunt? Can I put it on Hacker News? Can I put it on Reddit? What sub forum on Reddit? Who should I start talking to on Reddit now, three months, six months ahead of time so I’m not just dropping a project and like, “Hey, shameless plug, here’s my thing.”

Write all of this places where you can promote this now then do another thing, go into your inbox and write all the names of the people who you want to reach out to who could possibly help you promote the project. Put them in a Google spreadsheet. Write down their emails, their names, write the date that you emailed them, write the date that you’re going to follow up with them and then do that. Talk to those people and you could do the same thing with your customers. Then when it comes to the actual thing that you’re putting out into the world that should just be done way ahead of time.

I hear a lot of creators who are like, “You know, I want to do the whole launch plan and create the thing at the same time.” You don’t have enough brain power, you don’t have enough like mental energy to do that, finish the product first, the thing that you’re going to sell, let that be done. Then work on all the promotion of it and build up to it so that you don’t have to be doing tow at the same time. Because when something breaks or something goes wrong, which it will,

then you're going to be like well, "Something has to give. I have to figure out how to fix this thing because this is the thing that matters, I can't write another email, I can't be on social media."

Well guess what happens? When you can't do those thing, people don't know about it and they don't buy. So you're in this like vicious cycle of trying to create, trying to sell that doesn't work. So the last part of that I think is like making the onboarding experience smooth. To me, that's like, do that afterwards. Do that at a point where you have to do it so manually that it's painful and then figure out how to make those pain staking manual things automatic. So the first year with Buy My Last Name — man, too many projects on my plate.

**[1:12:48.9] SS:** Names of kids.

**[1:12:49.4] JZ:** The first year with Buy My Future, yeah, last year, I didn't automate everything. The only thing I had was one web hook to a piece of software and the rest of it was just like, enter your email, I'll figure it out and I had to manually do stuff for 154 people. That was a lot of work. I told myself, "How much time would I have spent ahead of time trying to figure all that out and probably doing it wrong and whatever? I can just learn going forward."

So now, the second year, everything's a bit more automated. But it's only going to get better as years keep going on. Someone actually asked in the Slack channel I think it was the other day like, "Jason, how are you getting everybody in the Slack channel so quickly?" I'm like, "I'm not. They're getting themselves in here because I put the link in multiple places so that they can see it in multiple places, I reminded them when they're buying through the email structure." But I only learned that from last year. When I had to literally email every single person being like, "Here's the Slack link. Here's the Slack link. You've got to sign up with your email."

I had to do it manually only to learn, "Okay, here is where the problem was and now I have to address it." And that's just something that you have to do and I'm really sorry for your listeners if they're like, "Gosh, this guy isn't giving me any quick wins or any quick tips." This is the real stuff, this is what it really takes. Yeah, this is what it is, this is what you have to do and you just learn from experience and I'll tell people too, if they want to read the Buy My Future breakdown article that's on my site, it's [jasondoesstuff.com/buymyfuture](http://jasondoesstuff.com/buymyfuture). I talk about everything that I did for the launch of Buy My Future from the first year and you can get tactics and tips and things that

you can apply. How I reached out to podcasters, how I setup the email structure, what exact emails I wrote, how I did the customer calls.

All the things I just mentioned, I go into some detail about and the return on investment on those things, it may help you but you can't just copy and paste it. In my long diatribe here with a quote attributed to somebody. Whether it's Kevin Kelly or Justin Jackson or whatever. And it's "what got them there won't get you there." What got me to make \$178,000 selling my future is not going to get you to making \$178,000 selling your course.

It may help you make a couple extra hundred dollars, it may help you make a couple of extra thousand dollars which will be rad, that would be awesome. You didn't have that before you learned something from me or whoever else you're reading. But you have to apply that stuff to your own kind of identity and it goes back to the very beginning of Steal Like An Artist, right? Find something that, "Oh, I want that tactic, I'm going to apply it and I'm going to make it work for me."

**[1:15:06.3] DT:** I think yeah, definitely agree and I think what you said there is also important about prioritizing too. The way you prioritized what to tackle and what not to, the things that you said in the first round that you left off and didn't automate were things that are kind of like the good problem to have. Like the rich man's problems. You said, "Oh man, I had to you know, 154 times going." Well this was after someone paid you a thousand dollars. You said, "Okay, I'll send them an email with a link and manually do that."

I think there is something to be said there about prioritizing in a launch or in any sort of sale for a product of the things that have to be done because if you don't do, like you said, social media or something to promote it then nobody will buy it. If people buy it and you don't have time to tackle this sort of automation, "Okay, next time I'll get to it. But at least they bought it, I can now fine, I'll send them some emails or I'll do some things manually."

**[1:15:52.8] JZ:** Yeah, get to the point of having the problems of like, "Oh man, I have all this money and now I have to do work for this money." Good problem to have, right? You learn those lessons and I think I'll throw one other thing in there that the people can do, and this is going to overwhelm people with all the things that I think I've just told them. But the one thing that I think

is important, besides the follow up, besides talking to your customers is plan to surprise and delight your buyers with something.

So whether it's an online course and you have bonus lessons, whether it's a piece of software and you have maybe some extra features or you have like hands on customer support. Whether it's like my Buy My Future thing. When people Buy My Future, they get into the dashboard, there's three eBooks that are in there that are guides to taking action, being more creative or making more profit with your business. Those aren't promoted anywhere. I don't talk about them anywhere.

But people come in and they're like, "What are these?" And I'm like, "That's a little surprise and delight. That's something I made for you so you could have it." People are like, "Cool, you know, I didn't expect that. That's a little cherry on top." And so anything that you're doing, if you have a podcast and you have a sponsor for it, surprise the sponsor with something cool. But plan ahead, think about it. Put some time and effort into it like, "How can I make this experience a little bit better that doesn't take a lot of time?" It's just a little something you can do because those things can go a long way for people as well that they just remember that stuff.

**[1:17:05.0] DT:** In choosing these type of things, you said you didn't promote the eBooks beforehand, is it something — how do you find the balance? Because maybe if you had promoted those eBooks beforehand, you would have made more sales or something like that. How do you find of what to hide or what to delight with and what to actually offer.

**[1:17:20.3] JZ:** Yeah, usually the things that you delight with are stuff that is not monumental to the success of the project, right? Three additional eBooks is not, I don't think it will drive a crazy amount of sales. You also have to be willing to say, I'm okay with the fact that if someone doesn't know about this and that doesn't convert a couple of more sales, so what? You know what? I'm not in the business of making a million dollars on everything I do and squeezing out every dollar from every customer. I don't care. I want the people who are like, "I saw that, want to buy that, I believe in it, yes, I'm going to sign up for it. Oh Look, bonus stuff. Cool."

I'm really excited about that and I like to think about those things as just, it's things that I can do that aren't too stressful for me, it's not too much extra work, it's not going to take too much extra

like, labor on the back end when they do get that. Like, “Oh crap, now I have to,” — I think one of the biggest mistakes of a lot of entrepreneurs make when they’re selling stuff is that they sell their time as part of it like, “I’ll do a one on one call with you or I’ll do all this stuff.”

What you don’t realize is that number one, people don’t really give a shit about doing a one on one call with you. People don’t care about doing one on one calls with me and I feel like I have a pretty good track record in this world and that takes up so much of your time where you’re not actually giving a lot of great value. You could be doing so much more with those hours for those people and if that’s what it takes for someone to buy in, maybe you’re looking at the wrong customers. If people need every bell and whistle to buy, I think you have the wrong audience that’s set up for you.

They should believe in the idea and whatever it is that you’re selling and say, “I’m in for that, extra stuff? Cool, I’m down for that.” That makes sense. Build that audience and that’s really what I feel like I built with this project and Buy My Future has been the first project where I feel like I’ve delivered a lot of stuff on the front end that makes everybody happy that crosses all the checks off all the boxes but I know that I’m going to continue to deliver value over time and you could do that with everything. A course, a piece of software like you just keep adding stuff to make your customers feel like, “Oh wow, didn’t know this was coming, this is even better, this is even more awesome.”

**[1:19:07.4] DT:** Cool, that’s a great tip. Sagi, I’m blown away. I’m like, “All right, let’s rethink our entire strategy. Back to the drawing board.”

**[1:19:16.1] JZ:** 100% normal, you know like, I think a lot of entrepreneurs, even myself included, you have those thoughts and you’re like, “Oh man, I screwed everything up, I did it all wrong.” No. This is how it works. You do it, you learn from it and you improve and you move forward. And you know, I’m actually building an analytics platform right now with a buddy of mine and the first version of it, I’ve told him this like 10 times. I’m like, “Dude, we’re going to look back on this in a year, we’re going to hate this. It’s going to be ugly, we’re going to be like, how did we even start doing this?”

That's where you have to be. You have to understand that you're going to start with the ugliest version of something the worst version of it that you're not going to be proud of but if it solves a problem and if it does a thing and it make somebody happy then you can improve upon it later. It's okay to be like, "Hey listen, we pivot, right? We completely change the direction we're going but we heard from our customers that they all wanted this so that's what we're doing and then you go, "Oh, this is actually working better now. I'm glad we moved away and didn't do the sunk cost bias thing where we held onto all the work and all the time that we've suffered into something because we felt like we couldn't move forward."

**[1:20:14.8] SS:** Yeah. All right.

**[1:20:16.6] DT:** Definitely. Well yeah, I think this has been an amazing call. I guess everyone who has a conversation with you probably just leaves like walking away scratching their head, "What just happened to me?"

**[1:20:27.0] JZ:** Yeah, either in a good way or a bad way because they're like, "What is this guy doing?" Or they're like, "Okay cool, I have lots of ideas of my own, I need to go get my shit together."

**[1:20:34.8] SS:** Yeah.

**[1:20:36.3] DT:** Well, Jason, this has been really awesome. I know Sagi and I learned a ton, I know that our listeners did as well. We will put everything in the show notes that you listed here because tons of great tools and tips and...

**[1:20:48.5] SS:** I'm so happy that we did it because you know, like you said, you said like, we can scratch our heads now and all and we can actually be kind of feeling a bit down and, "Oh we didn't do a lot of stuff right." I think we already got a lot of insights from this stock but that's why we're doing this podcasts, we're getting you here on the podcast because we do feel that we can learn a lot from you and that's what we should do. If we don't do it, then we're stupid assholes.

**[1:21:16.7] JZ:** Yeah, I love that. To change your perspective too, right? Go from, “Oh man, we’ve messed a lot” to, “Oh man we have a lot of room for improvement”. Just that little shift of like, don’t be down on yourselves, same thing I had to go through with myself and I still do time and time again. It’s not a bad thing, it’s a lesson learned, let’s move forward, that’s good that that happened right? I stretched myself, I’m out of my comfort zone, it’s really good stuff. So yeah, I definitely appreciate the conversation, you guys have been awesome. I’m sure that everybody who listened to this is like, “When is this going to be over? There’s so many crazy things.” But I really thank you for the opportunity.

**[1:21:46.0] SS:** I really think people don’t want this to be over. They want more. But Jason, really, thanks so much man, yeah, we’ll have to follow up sometimes like in a year from now.

**[1:21:55.9] DT:** Definitely. So why don’t you let everyone know, I mean, you listed so many places that you are on the internet. But if people want to get in touch or people want to reach out to you, how can they get to you and everything else?

**[1:22:05.4] JZ:** Yeah, if they’re listening to this between September 20<sup>th</sup> and October 4<sup>th</sup> 2016 because obviously they’ll listen to this like 20 years in the future because podcasts are going to live on forever. You can Buy My Future for \$1,500 which is super rad, no pressure. If it sounds awesome, jump on board, it’s a really cool community of people, helping people create things, teach things, sell things and otherwise I’m at [jasondoesstuff.com](http://jasondoesstuff.com) where you can find all my writing and join my newsletter if that sounds interesting to you.

Pretty much what I’ve talked about all the time that we’ve been talking is what I write about every Monday and I try and make people’s Mondays a little bit more awesome. Yeah, that’s it. I’m pretty easy to Google, so you can find me, you can look around, you can poke around the internet and stalk me if you want. But if anybody wants to email me, you can find my email easily. So yeah, I really appreciate the platform guys.

**[1:22:46.0] DT:** Thanks.

**[1:22:46.7] SS:** Yeah, thank you so much man.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[1:23:00.7] SS:** All right, that's a wrap. Thank you hackers for joining us today. We hope you enjoyed the show. You can find all the links and resources from this conversation on [hackingui.com/podcast](http://hackingui.com/podcast). Just before we go, we want to share with you something that you might find useful.

**[1:23:17.0] DT:** As you know, we are voracious readers and consume a ton of articles, books, podcasts, and videos about design, development, and side projects. We curate the hell out of everything and each week we send a short round of email of our favorites. If that sounds like an email you'd enjoy getting, then we'd love to have you join our awesome community, which already has more than 20,000 happy members from all over the world. You can sign up on [hackingui.com](http://hackingui.com).

**[1:23:38.1] SS:** By the way, on [hackingui.com](http://hackingui.com), you'll also find some other cool stuff like the Side Project Accelerator, our eight week online program in which we teach everything that we learned in the three years working and scaling Hacking UI as a side project before we quit our day jobs.

**[1:23:51.7] DT:** And, you'll also find our resources page, which reached top of the week on Product Hunt Tech. And our events section, which is filled with conferences and meetups for designers and developers.

**[1:24:00.6] SS:** Hey D, don't forget the tease man, we also got some cool T-shirts for designers.

**[1:24:04.2] DT:** Sagi, again with the T-shirts?

**[1:24:06.1] SS:** Hey, I designed those. But really, last thing, if you enjoyed this, we would really love to hear from you, you know, by tweeting us at Hacking UI or by reviewing the podcast on iTunes. Those reviews really go a long way and help us and even make our day.

**[1:24:19.2] DT:** All right, we'll see you next week hackers and remember to keep hacking.

[END]