



## EPISODE 228

# Six Steps to Finishing What You Start

## With Jon Acuff

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**AMY PORTERFIELD:** Hey there, welcome back to another episode of The Online Marketing Made Easy Podcast. I'm your host, Amy Porterfield, and I'm so glad you're here.

Today we are talking about an important topic, how to get to the finish line. I think it's so important as entrepreneurs that we talk about all of these open loops we have and the fact that sometimes we get distracted, sometimes we make excuses, or sometimes huge boulders get in the way of us actually completing what we started.

I do believe one of the secrets to my success is that I definitely finish. I get it done. I haven't always been a finisher. In today's episode where we talk to Jon Acuff about all of the secrets that will help us get to that finish line, I have applied many of them to my own business and my own life in order to get there.

I still need to work on many of them. Of course I'm a work in progress as I'm sure you are as well so I think you're going to find some great value in today's episode.

But before we get there I love hearing from all of you guys. "You guys" sounds so California to me but it's where I was born and raised so what do you expect? But I would love to hear from all of you and today's shout out is from Lacey Busse, who left me an encouraging comment in my Online Marketing Made Easy Podcast Facebook group.

Did you know I had a Facebook group for my podcast listeners? It's a lot of fun. I do these impromptu 2-minute videos to introduce each new episode. I post them in the group and there's a lot of great conversation around the episodes.



If you never want to miss an episode this is a great way to get notified on Facebook. I'll link to the [Online Marketing Made Easy Podcast Facebook group](#) in the show notes but you can search for it on Facebook as well.

I've got this group and Lacey posted in there and this is what she said:

*"Taking action from Episode #149 (<http://www.amyporterfield.com/149>) and it feels sooo good!!! I have 12 weeks of content mapped out - now I just have to record the videos today and get the ball rolling on these 90 days. This blueprint freebie is amazing and I'm super excited to see the results of implementing it! Thanks for helping me so much, Amy!!!"*

She's got lots of happy faces in there so this means she is super charged. I just want to say, Lacy, I love action takers! I think Episode #149 was the most popular episode I've ever done. It was all about the blueprint to prelaunch.

I love that you're doing it. Keep us updated and keep up the great work.

I'd love for you to share a review of this podcast as well. If you're listening, you like what you hear, and like tuning in every week then please do take a moment to jump over to iTunes, leave a review, and I just love pouring over all of them and reading them and hearing what's working for you.

I definitely take note and maybe you'll get a shout out on the podcast as well.

Changing gears here. Have you noticed that as an entrepreneur there are usually no shortages of fresh ideas or new projects to start but when it comes to actually finishing those projects it can be really difficult?

Even if you've planned out every last detail things come up. Or, should I say that we allow things to come up and we get detoured. Those detours can lead us down a rabbit hole that we can never get out of. Can I get an amen?

Even the most vigilant goal setters have been known to stumble when approaching the finish line. But my guest today, Jon Acuff, entrepreneur, New York Times, and Wall Street Journal best-selling author and most sought-after and popular speaker I know has cracked the code on how to significantly increase your chances of finishing what you start.



You're going to be pleasantly surprised to hear how you can make it happen. I cannot wait until we dive into all of this and he's so incredibly funny that I'm kind of laughing throughout the whole episode. That's really fun as well.

Speaking of finishing what you start, one of the ways I've helped my students to successfully finish what they start when it comes to creating an online course is through my step-by-step system. I'd love to share that with you in my free masterclass.

So, this episode is sponsored by my free masterclass, How To Confidently Create Your First Profitable Course in 60 Days. If you've been thinking about creating an online course or maybe you even have an idea for one but you're thinking you don't even know how to get started (don't talk about finishing, you don't even know what to do to get going) then you, my friend, are perfect for my free masterclass.

All you need to do is go to <http://www.amyporterfield.com/courses> to sign up.

I won't make you wait any longer. Let's go ahead and jump into my conversation with Jon Acuff.

**AMY:** Jon, welcome to the show. Thank you so much for being here.

**JON ACUFF:** Thanks for having me.

**AMY:** I'm really excited to have you. But, before we get into all the stuff we're going to cover I recently heard that you are going to be doing a stand-up comedy show. Two, in fact, and I heard they are sold out.

First of all, is this true?

**JON:** It's true. For ten years I've been saying, "I'm going to do it." Every single person listening right now has that same kind of I'm-going-to-do-it-someday thing. Actually, scientifically it's called the Zeigarnik effect.

That means you remember incomplete things more than you do complete things and they have a heavier weight. My last book, Finish, was about finishing things you care about and according to the New York Times, 81% of Americans want to write a book. But less than 1% do.



That means every year we miss a quarter billion books that some poor person is carrying around saying, "I want to do it someday. I want to do it someday." I told people forever I was going to do a comedy night.

I went to a really famous comedian and his opener was terrible. I texted my assistant that night and was like, "Hey, find a venue. I'm doing it."

The venue, rightfully so, told me they would give me a Monday night. That's the night where you have never heard of me, of course I should have Monday night. We were only going to do one show but the first show sold out in 48 hours so we added a second show and it sold out in 24 hours.

I have found in a Machiavellian way the whole make-your-troops-fight-against-the-water. Sometimes there are things you have to say like, "I'm going to do this thing and I'm going to sell 600 tickets so it had better be amazing."

I'm going to invite everybody I know in a town I don't get to leave and it had better be amazing. I've got until October 28 to create something hilarious and then I'll try it and then I will have done it.

**AMY:** Oh my gosh! This is awesome. I would be terrified to do something like this. Does it get you excited? Are you nervous?

**JON:** I'm nervous in the sense that I want it to be really good. I'm not nervous in the sense that I've had the great benefit for the last ten years of getting to go travel the world speaking.

My niche is humor. I'll never out research Jim Collins. I'll never out swear Gary Vee but I am way funnier. I know that's my sweet spot.

There are stories I've told on the road. I was at a book signing once and I spoke at a couple of essential oil companies and they have been amazing to me. I love what they do. People sometimes ask me if I'm against MLM. It's such a weird question because there is amazing MLM and there is terrible MLM.

It would be like if you were against cars because there was a crash once. You would be like, "Well then don't drive drunk." There are a whole lot less crashes.



This woman came and gave me a vial of oil at a Books-A-Million in Chattanooga, Tennessee. I had signed her book and said, "Thank you." She left, or I thought she left and five minutes later I felt an oily hand on my bare neck.

Somebody was pouring oil on my hair and my head and she leaned in and it's like, "I'm anointing you."

Everyone in line was like, "Is she with him?" It was intimate. Everybody was like does he ball so hard he has a travel anointer and if things aren't going well he's like, "Hit me with some jasmine."

My favorite part of that story is that she was five minutes from the right decision. She left. She got to her car and she thought, "You know what, I am going to oil that man." She came back.

There are stories like that, that are 100% real and with the physical comedy. I'm not nervous in the sense of, "Oh No!" I just want to make sure it's as good as it can be but I'm going to practice like a maniac so I feel confident about that.

**AMY:** I feel confident it's going to be amazing. I listened to the audio version of your book, Finish, and I thought you were hilarious so I can only imagine how you're going to be standing up there at the comedy show. It's going to be amazing so congrats for selling out those two shows when you've never done a comedy show in your life.

**JON:** I'm excited about it. It's funny. Whether it's a problem with the internet or just humanity, people sometimes get stuck on what counts or what doesn't count. I always encourage people that they have to decide that.

For instance, I did a book reading challenge last year for myself. It wasn't something I invited people to. I just said I was going to read a bunch of books. I would post audio books and people on Instagram would inevitably on Instagram would say, "That doesn't count. That doesn't count."

I always wanted to say, "According to who?" Who is judging Jon Acuff's personal reading challenge? Where is the jury I must present myself to? It was funny. People said it didn't count because I was doing it in my home town. I didn't spent 20 years on the road in miserable towns.



I just thought there wasn't a community on the planet that wouldn't use 300,000 Twitter followers to sell out a comedy show. But when we get stuck on what counts and what doesn't count you get really twisted.

Unfortunately, the internet is more than happy to tell you what doesn't count. They will be very loud and vocal about that and you just have to do what you are going to do.

**AMY:** It's so true. I have never thought of it that way but I hear myself saying, "Oh, but it doesn't count" because of this or that. I'm going to be aware of that one. Because you're right, who says?

**JON:** I say that all the time. I say, "Who says?" Or I say, "Where does it say that?" Or, "According to who?" I'm living up to this old expectation that was a comment someone made. People publishing books will say, "Well, I self published so it doesn't count."

I want to say they wrote a 200-page book. That's an amazing thing. That counts.

**AMY:** It counts.

**JON:** I always tell authors, "If you think the publisher is the most important thing please tell me who published your top five favorite books. Go ahead, tell me who published The Help."

**AMY:** That's so good, so good.

**JON:** Uh, nobody shops by publisher. Nobody is like, "Wait a second, Amy's got a new book? Let's see who the imprint is." Nobody cares.

**AMY:** So very true. We all need to remember that. Next time you all hear yourselves saying it doesn't count ask, "Who says?"

Before we get into all of the juicy details of your book, Finish, and the concepts around it, I know that you live in Nashville, Tennessee. My husband and I are seriously talking about moving to Nashville when our son graduates high school in two years.



We're talking about this and looking at property so I'm very jealous that you live there because I love everything about it. But I want you to tell me about your family and about your business. What do you do to make money?

**JON:** We love Nashville. We've been here eight years. It's funny. We lived in Atlanta before so we've experienced real traffic. People in Nashville are like, the traffic is terrible. I'm like, it was adorable. It was a seven-minute traffic jam. Live in L.A. for an hour and you'll be like, "Nashville's pretty amazing."

**AMY:** Amen brother!

**JON:** We love the area. We love the schools. We love the people here. There's a creative community, which is amazing. In Atlanta I was kind of weird. There are definitely creative people there, that's not what I'm saying. I just mean when I have a travel season the guy across from me plays for a big band and he's on the road for three months.

His wife can talk to my wife and we can communicate and I can run into another public speaker. It's a weird job I have. Being a personality there are other people that can challenge me and sharpen me so I feel very good about that.

I've got two teenage daughters. I've got a 12-year-old but she might as well be a teenager at this point. One just turned 15 and they are amazing. One does band. Our band here is better than the football team. They go to Nationals every year. They are amazing.

She does band practice 8-4 every Saturday in addition to Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday.

**AMY:** Geez!

**JON:** It is such a well-run organization. I went and met the band director. I'm helping them with some social media. He said, "Look, this is practice adulthood. This isn't band. I'm going to try to turn you into amazing adults."

I was like, "Yes," these guys are so good. So she does band. My other daughter does lacrosse. I have been married for going on 18 years. My wife is amazing. She's super smart. I am constantly quoting her or getting credit for things she has said.



Here is one of my favorite ones. This is one of the smartest things I've ever heard. I think most jobs have an element of travel to them now. I love that even in the face of video technology, face-to-face fast-forwards relationships. It fast-forwards connections. It's vital. So most jobs have some travel.

One day Jenny said to me, "Hey, when you leave on trips you're feeling guilty so you express sadness and you hand the guilt to our kids who don't even know they should be sad about you leaving.

She said I make this big, dramatic, "I have to go. I'm so sorry. I'm dust in the wind," and the kid doesn't know. The kid will reflect your feeling but if they don't know to have that you've then given them a sad feeling.

My wife was like, when you leave celebrate that you're leaving to go make money for the family, to go be an adult, to connect it to when we're at Disney in the middle of a workweek that other people have I can go, "Hey, the reason we get to be here is that dad went to Tulsa in January for two nights."

That's a game changer. I have the benefit of having what people would say is the Full Cup Life, an amazing life.

We live here. How I make my money? I make my money a few different ways. A big way is that I'm a public speaker. We'll probably talk about that a bunch on this but I found years ago that I loved speaking. I loved getting to connect with people. I can't do that enough.

I don't want to be on the road a thousand times a year but my rate makes it easier for me to make money. This September I'll make more money than I did in all of 2014 and I'll travel 50% less.

**AMY:** Wow!

**JON:** I always tell people to find something you love doing that other people are terrible at and you'll be amazing. People are afraid of public speaking. I love to do it. You know when it's working or when it's not instantly. There's no delay between somebody laughing or not laughing or leaning in and not leaning in.

I can't believe I get to do it. I'm going to FedEx tomorrow to speak to them. It will be my second time that I get to go and it's their top performers. They have a program





where 3% of the company gets nominated for this award and I get to go talk to those people.

I'll get to learn from them. That's amazing to me. I get paid to challenge people with ideas and figure out how they are going to change their life. What does that look like? How are they going to change their sales?

A lot of my money comes via public speaking. Then I also write books. I do some courses. I'm working on a public speaking course because I get the question a lot and those are my people.

I'm a huge public speaking nerd. I have some very aggressive thoughts on never reintroducing yourself or saying, "I'm so happy to be here," because you've just wasted the most valuable minute.

It's the dumbest thing to do. Get up there. Start with a story. Create a lean-in line that forces people to lean in. You can thank the organization in the middle but just don't waste the first minute.

You never see YouTube go, "Hey, thanks for coming tonight. We're so glad we had an opening act. We love Cleveland. You guys have great hot dogs." No. They build the tension. They don't roll the credits at the beginning of the movie.

I make some money from that. I don't do a ton of coaching. I'm not against it, it just hasn't been a huge part. And, I have what I think is the best calendar on the planet. Eight years ago I started using a huge wall calendar. I just fell in love with it. It's gigantic.

The design is really smart and I did it for five years. I was like, hey, I should just call that dude and make some, "Can we do one together?"

We started selling this massive wall calendar. I mount it on foam core and I'll carry it to meetings. It looks like I'm carrying a paddle board. But time is fictional unless you can see it.

**AMY:** I'm all about that.

**JON:** Oh my gosh. It's at [FinishCalendar.com](http://FinishCalendar.com) and it's my favorite thing. I don't do a ton of physical products but I'm a big believer that if I love something I should ask to do something together.



I love **Tom Bihn bags**. I've used them for years. It's a Seattle company. In the 1970s Tom Bihn went to his mom and said he needed a knapsack. She told him he could save for one or learn to make one.

He learned how to make one. As somebody who gets marketing, you will love their site and how they tell stories. It's amazing. I said to them, "Hey, can we do something together? You seem really smart."

That's kind of how I approach some of this. I have a small team and I only have a handful of people. I'm pretty lean but that's a lot of words all at once.

**AMY:** This is so good. I love learning about other people's businesses so I appreciate all of those details. I just want to point out that you said "knapsack". I really haven't heard someone say that word since my mom, maybe, when I was in second grade so I'm cracking up.

**JON:** It's probably coming back.

**AMY:** I seriously doubt it.

**JON:** My oldest daughter is like, "Oh, I recognize that song," from Stranger Things. I was like, "You mean it's from the 80s." It actually had a 20-year life before that show.

**AMY:** So true. The kids just don't get it these days.

**JON:** These kids.

**AMY:** Good stuff. Okay, so here is the deal. Several years ago you wrote a book titled, **Start: Punch Fear in the Face**. But you realized in the years following the publication of that book that something kind of compelled you to change it up a little bit and write the book, **Finish: Give Yourself the Gift of Done**. Talk to me about how that all came about.

**JON:** Part of it was people expressing a need. I'm like you in that the best products to launch are the products people have asked for. That's amazing. I would rather you feel invested and excited and anticipate the thing I created to serve you.



Every time I go to a public speaking event I talk to the client probably a month before and ask them a series of questions. Eventually I'll put this in the course but the most valuable question I ask them is, "What shouldn't I say?"

They never expect that. But I often find out that they will say, "Don't say that radio is dead. Half of our speakers come to this new media conference and they say 'radio's dead, radio's dead,' and half of the audience works in radio." You lose the audience.

I spoke at a huge auto manufacturing recycling company. They said, "Don't say the work junkyard because it sounds like we have sleeve tattoos and pit bulls. We do highly technical work and it's insulting."

When I show up an event my goal is for the audience to feel like I read their mind. You love to get feedback where people go, "Amy, this was for me." That is how you know it worked.

People kept saying, "No offense. I liked Start but I have never had a problem starting. I've started a thousand things. How do I actually get them done?"

Part of the problem is we over celebrate the beginning in our culture. Our culture says things like, "The hardest part of any journey is the first step," or "Well begun is half done."

If a surgeon told you, "After I make the first incision I'm halfway done with your surgery," you would wonder where he went to school. The hardest part of any journey is the first step? Are you kidding? The middle is the worst part.

We have kickoff parties. We have launch parties. I've never been to a middle party. I've never had a manager be like, "Hey, we're in the middle of a project and it sucks. Time for cake!"

**AMY:** But they should.

**JON:** They should. I just recognize there is a real need. I didn't want it just to be my thoughts. The older I get the more I fall in love with research because it just gives me a confidence.

I went to the University of Memphis and commissioned a study with a PhD there named Mike Peasley. We studied nearly 900 people for six months to figure out what really works and what really doesn't and what's true.



My favorite writing style is to take something we all think we know and believe and then figure out the counterintuitive truth to it. That's where half the internet drives me nuts. There are so many motivational speakers that if you unpack what they said it's not true and it's not helpful and it will have a thousand likes in two seconds.

It's like, no! That's going to hurt you. Don't do that. That gets me fired up.

**AMY:** The book is fantastic. I am a huge Audible fan, which I mentioned earlier, that I listened to the audio book. Not only were you funny, my favorite things about the book (if you guys get it and like listening to the audio) John did something a lot of authors don't do. He gives you extras in the audio version.

You will kind of go off the cuff of it, right?

**JON:** I think that's the best.

**AMY:** Me too.

**JON:** It's fun to delight people. I think that's such a brilliant marketing thing. Some people know this and some people don't, but one of the stories I sometimes tell is that Trader Joes hides a stuffed animal in their store and if your kid finds it they tell the manager "the bear was in the frozen food section," and the manager gives them a lollipop.

This is brilliant for two reasons. One, it turns your kids into Trader Joe's advocates. Little kids can recognize a brand from nine miles away. Anybody who has flipped channels quickly, they can find Peppa Pig in four seconds.

The second thing it does, you as a parent walk through the store with the cart and guess what happens as you look for the stuffed animal? You find things you didn't know you wanted to buy.

They make a ton of money off of it and they personalize it. If you are in the Florida store it's a dolphin. If you're in California it's a bear. We moved to Nashville and we went to Trader Joe's. We walked around and walked around and couldn't find it.

We told the manager we couldn't find the stuffed animal. He said, "We don't do that here."



I wanted to scream, “What ROI is that?” Do you think he calls the district manager quarterly and says, “I saved another \$4 on lollipops! Killing it!” Stuff like that where people don’t stop for two seconds and ask if it is going to delight somebody or not.

That’s why I add the bonus content. You and I have written books but guess what, there is a lot of stuff that gets left out. I turned in 60,000 words. My editor gave me back 38,000 words.

We added to it but there are other ideas so if you have them and you enjoy doing the audio book it’s fun. I sell 2:1 audio books to electronic right now. Part of it is that I read them myself. They are funny and I add extra stuff.

**AMY:** Oh yeah, the extra stuff is so cool. Those of you who are listening who are course creators, I know Pat Flynn does a good job of hiding the Easter eggs throughout his courses as well, those fun things to find.

I love that you use the word “delight”, Jon. That’s such a great word. If you can delight people in ways they don’t expect it’s always extra fun. That was my favorite part of reading the book, especially because I just love listening to you. I think you do such a great job of reading your own stuff, of course.

For the purpose of our chat today we’re going to highlight six secrets to finish what you start. But before you go there, tell us about this whole concept of embracing perfectionism. That is a word, right, “perfectionism”?

**JON:** Yeah.

**AMY:** Yeah, so embracing that, because it’s a theme throughout your book.

**JON:** A big part of it is how you deal with perfectionism and how you identify it. I would argue that a lot of people get stuck because it’s not perfect. Here’s the crazy thing about perfectionism and perfectionists. They tend to have the messiest cars and the messiest offices.

You think, wait a second, aren’t they Type-A people? Aren’t they neat freaks? They are but unless they can clean it to the toothbrush level they won’t even start. A big part of it is that you have to say, you are going to be okay with “this” amount of progress even if it’s not perfect.



A perfectionist would rather get a zero than a C-. I meet perfectionists all the time that will tell you they are going to run five miles every day and they only have time for three today so they aren't going to do any.

Three is infinitely more than none so they need to figure that out. I'm a big believer that if you can't deal with that and wrestle with that it's really hard. Everybody who has half written some books has that sense that they tried and tried and tried but it's not perfect so they aren't going to do it.

I talk about that a ton. The other thing is it masquerades as a character trait. It's one of those fake things you say when people ask you what your weaknesses are. You tell them you almost work too hard, "I gave too much to the company. That's a real weakness. I'm a perfectionist."

It sounds fun to say but it's not really a quality. It is something that's not good.

**AMY:** It's not. I set up that whole question wrong but you're a pro so you took it. What I should have said was this whole theme of embracing imperfection, which is really it.

**JON:** I heard you and I thought, oh no.

**AMY:** She screwed up.

**JON:** Embrace it to deal with it. Keep your enemies close.

**AMY:** You are a true pro. Thank you for doing that. But yes, that was the whole concept of embracing the imperfection. All of you who are loyal listeners to my podcast, I know what you are thinking right now. You are thinking this is what Brooke Castillo of The Life Coach School talked about, doing B- work.

It doesn't have to be A work all the time. A lot of my audience, after I did this episode with Brooke, everyone that wrote me said, "Oh my gosh, this idea of not having to do A or A+ work all the time literally has freed me."

It's the same concept. Embrace the imperfection. I'm so glad you brought it up.

I wrote down this quote from your book: "Developing tolerance for imperfection is the key factor in turning chronic starters into consistent finishers."



I just love your perspective of developing a tolerance for it. I think when you say that you are kind of saying to a lot of us that it's not like it's going to come easy.

**JON:** No, it's not. It's so funny. The bar is low right now. I'll do a lot of customer service talks to people and I'll say the good news is that people expect bad service at this point. They have gone to a restaurant and it wasn't terrible. They didn't get the sense that they spit in any of their food. It was pretty nice. The waitress came over with stuff.

We have a low expectation. Then when you delight them or do something different they are like, "That was amazing!" They remember your name or follow up. I think part of that is that it's not going to be perfect and when it's not there is still value.

I love sharing. I did a book signing probably three months ago. It was at an event and four people came to the table. I took a photo of the empty line and I posted it. People said I was so brave. That's not brave, it's just true.

That happens to all of us but people think, you're Amy Porterfield or you're verified or you got to a level. Somebody yesterday told me they saw a quote but had never heard of the guy so they didn't think it was a good quote.

I asked who it was and they said it was some guy named Tony Robbins.

**AMY:** Shut up!

**JON:** This was yesterday! Then another person said, "Yeah, never heard of him." There is always going to be somebody that has never heard of you. One of my early mantras was "This Too Shall Post" versus "This Too Shall Pass."

If it's something that will be helpful to other people I'm going to say that it still goes on and this is how I deal with it.

**AMY:** That is so cool. I love that you do that.

**JON:** I don't do it to manipulate. I think there are people that overuse honesty as a weapon of marketing. I don't like that. For instance, where a really stunning, beautiful person says they were a nerd in high school and people hated them you want to as if they really were?

People say, "I had a tough situation growing up," you want to ask, "But did you really?"



Famous people have a hard time. A speaker in an audience, the minute you step on stage there is a gap between you and the people in the crowd. Your job as the speaker is to close the gap. It's not to lie and tell them you are just like them.

I've never been a chimney sweep so when I speak at a chimney sweep convention I should tell them I get it and I've been on roofs. That's mimicry not empathy. They are different. I think your ability to develop that tolerance and admit something wasn't perfect and was even a little embarrassing but it's okay, you lived through it, and you get to share the story.

Again, this is 100% true. I've read speaking books where they say if you hear a good story you should make it your own. That's fancy for "lie". I think in the 1960s people did that. Modern communicators, especially millennials, can spot a lie from ten miles away.

**AMY:** Yes.

**JON:** I was with a lady a month ago and my wife happened to be at the event. The lady came through the line at the book signing table and she asked if I had an audio book. I told her I did and that I read it.

She said, "Ugh, then I'll definitely hate it." She said I was the biggest failure. I said, "Then no book today?" What do you say to that?

**AMY:** I don't understand. She said you were a failure?

**JON:** Yeah, I think what she was trying to say was at this even she hated me the most. But it was a weird thing. My wife asked if that lady said that thing to my face. I was like, "She did."

At this point in my career that's hilarious and I am going to tell that story on Amy Porterfield's podcast someday. I was fine with that. You can't let that stuff get you. But I really believe, and I'm working on writing this idea out but your ability to experience awesomeness is directly related to your ability to tolerate awkwardness. They are related.

You have to do these things and you can't just get to say you want to have a big platform but you don't want to deal with any awkwardness. I'm sorry that's not how it goes.





**AMY:** Yes. Mic drop. That is so good and so true.

**JON:** Those are the things that get me excited. That's when I was like, chronic starter to consistent finisher, here's what that looks like. I like to say it's going to be hard. It's going to be difficult. That's not an indication of failure.

**AMY:** At all.

**JON:** I heard this guru say if you don't love 90% of what it takes to be in your industry you're in the wrong industry. So I thought in a 40-hour work week there are only four hours I'm not seeing amazing unicorns. That's terrible advice.

We've really done a disservice to this next generation by over telling them to always follow their heart and always follow their dream. The second it doesn't fulfil your purpose it's the wrong job. We have set up this false narrative that "it" will always be amazing and that's just not how life it.

**AMY:** It's not. Sometimes it's tough. Building my business, I tell my students, is one-million percent worth all of the toughness that's going to come your way.

**JON:** Oh yeah.

**AMY:** But it's going to be tough at times. That leads me to getting into the six secrets. Secret #1, in my opinion, is tough because you tell people to cut their goal in half. I've got a lot of big dreamers, people that are making big dreams, that are listening right now.

Talk to me about this very scary Secret #1, Cut Your Goal in Half.

**JON:** I will say when I send this idea to clients that I am going to speak about it they say, "Whoa, whoa, whoa. You're going to tell our sales team that?" That's not what I'm saying.

I had this theory. My theory was if your goal is to lose ten pounds and you only lose eight you don't feel like you almost got there you feel like you failed by two and you give up. I said to the 900 people we were studying to cut their goal in half.

I believed if their goal was five and they lost the same exact eight they would have won by three and they would try again. Ultimately, I care more about your February



than I do about your January. I care more about your March than I do about your February.

It's a long-term commitment. When you do a research study you're looking for a 5% bump or a 10% bump. That would be significant. We found that people who cut their goals in half were 63% more successful in the long term. That's insane.

The point then becomes that is an indicator of how bad we are at setting initial goals. There are a couple of ways to prevent that. One is to break the goal into small pieces. People for generations have talked about that.

If somebody said to me they wanted to write a book I wouldn't tell them to write half a book. I would tell them to write a chapter, finish it, celebrate it, write a second chapter, finish it, celebrate it.

I still want people to have massive goals. I can't tell Penguin, "Hey, I hope Finish sells half the number we want," because this is the research. But I can ask myself if this is a good goal.

I didn't launch a comedy tour. I did a comedy night. I don't feel ashamed of the size of it at all. I think that's a great size goal. I think that's a big enough goal. Will I build on it? Probably. Would I love to then do Dallas or Chicago or other cities after that? I will but my long-term, big, crazy goal would be to have a comedy special on Netflix.

But I don't make that the first goal because I'll get crippled by that. The problem, Amy, is that people make their goal when their motivation is the highest and then motivation, which is the most temporary substance in the world, leaves when the work shows up and you've got this massive goal and low motivation and there is this conflict.

I love to get people to go, "But really, what are you going to do?" The problem is, scientifically, there is a thing called the planning fallacy which is the belief you can get more done in less time.

We have this optimism. What's funny is I'll get labeled as negative, not optimistic enough. I am crazy optimistic. I have big dreams and big hopes. I just want them to actually happen. I want them to actually work.



I'm a big believer in a building up slowly and deliberately plan. There is this kid in our neighborhood. I don't know him and have never spoken to him. He's probably 19. He didn't go to college. He does a yard service.

I've watched over the last couple of years. He started with an old Forerunner and his lawnmower was hanging out of the back of it. Then he worked, worked, and worked. Then he got a trailer. It was amazing. He had a trailer. He still had an old lawnmower but he also had a weed whacker.

Six months later he had a riding lawnmower. He is deliberately building it over time. His goal may be that he wants to have a \$10 million lawn care service with 100 people under him but if you over focus on that it cripples the day to day it actually takes to reach the huge goal.

**AMY:** Oh my gosh, I absolutely love this. I've been telling my students to dream really big but to get there by taking baby steps. I feel like cutting these goals in half is kind of like that baby step concept. I'm all for it.

I'm on board with this for sure. I love Secret #1. Talk to me about Secret #2, Choose What to Bomb.

**JON:** Again, it's counterintuitive. In our culture we are taught you can do everything and you should do everything, especially like moms who have hustles. I love talking to them because in the 80s my mom, Libby Acuff, we lived in Ipswich, Massachusetts, she couldn't compare her motherhood to a mom in Seattle, Washington, or a mom in San Diego, California, because she didn't have access to their lives.

She could compare herself to the five other moms in our cul-de-sac. Now with social media you can compare yourself in 30 seconds to other moms and feel like a complete loser.

The other mom is always holding hands with her husband, forming the shape of hearts, and #blessed, and their meals are mac and cheese but it's deconstructed with a gouda demi glaze.

You are making that sad bowl of Easy Mac for your kid and you're tired of stirring. The kid is like, "It's really powdery," and you're like, "Life is hard." You compare. The reason I speak specifically to working moms is that working dads don't struggle with that.



I've never had another dude come up to me and go, "I'm just feeling low emotionally. I spent the day looking on Instagram and challenging my fatherhood. I just don't feel like I'm in a good place."

**AMY:** It doesn't happen.

**JON:** Fathers think they are amazing. The default is like lots of fathers are like, "My kid got a misdemeanor. It's not a felony," so I think it's vital that you look at your life and go, "They're in this season of hustle."

You are launching your own course or you're writing a book. You're running a business so "these" five things don't matter. It's not that they don't matter forever. They don't matter right now.

Every time I talk to a repo company I beg them to sit their team down in November and put five things you're not going to worry about until January because December is your Super Bowl.

Don't act like December is the same as May. It's not. Admit it's different and choose to bomb these five things. The problem is we try to do it all and end up kind of messing everything up.

One of my favorite stories was the mom in the book that said, "During a busy season my kids know that clothes get clean but not folded and put away." She has the laundry chair. If we're all honest we all have a laundry chair.

**AMY:** Right.

**JON:** It's your third machine. It goes washer, dryer, chair. I love that her kids can look at their clothes and see that they are wrinkled so mom must be busy. If there's things you can't ignore or that you suck at then delegate them. Ask for help. Simplify them. Figure them out for the season.

You choose what you're not going to worry about.

**AMY:** That's so good. I'll give you guys a quick example. In my business we recently reworked some of our evergreen funnels. We use this tool called EasyWebinar. You can customize and make it look really good.



I'm into making my brand look good so I like the aesthetics. It's a lot of work to customize. We rebuilt these evergreen funnels because they were broken and we were losing money on them.

I looked at them and thought they were kind of ugly. They kind of looked internet marketingish and I didn't love that. But we did not have the bandwidth nor the time to make it look pretty.

I said we just had to bomb that. We had to let go of making it look great. It wasn't going to change everything. And, if it does we can come back to it when the time is right. But it was scary.

I know this is just one example but it was scary for me to walk away because it could have been A+ work if I had made it look good.

**JON:** Yep.

**AMY:** It wasn't.

**JON:** Without a doubt.

**AMY:** But it totally still worked, which was the icing on the cake. It didn't matter if we went that extra mile. It doesn't matter if the mom folds the dang clothes or not. They're going to get worn no matter what so that was a big lesson for me.

**JON:** Part of it, how many people have told you specifically the aesthetic is why they liked the thing? The problem is that emotions lie and we will say that everyone is going to notice. How many people have said, "Hey the reason I connected with this was because..."

I would argue a whole theory about what sells a book marketing wise. I think endorsements are amazing but they don't change a "no" to a "yes". They might change a "maybe" to a "yes" but not a "no" to a "yes".

I haven't had a single person tell me they didn't want the book, it's not in their category, they don't have a need, but they saw so-and-so's name so they bought it.

I would much rather say there are other areas to focus on and not to get bent out of shape if the famous person won't endorse it because it might be okay to have a B+



endorsement. Have an amazing cover and have an amazing title. There are different things you can do.

**AMY:** Yeah, focus on the stuff that really will make a huge difference. I'm with you on that one.

Secret #3, Make It Fun. I love this one so tell my listeners more about it.

**JON:** This one, I really wanted to personally do this one because I think most people, if you say to them, "Name the five words you think of when you think of a goal," They say, "Hustle, willpower, grind, strain, persistence," they never say, "Joy, laughter, engagement, fulfillment."

We think a goal has to be difficult or miserable to count. The joke I always do, I always tease adventure races, which I think are awesome. I love them. They are great and I have friends that do them. I run half marathons. That feels plenty. But, during a tough mudder, one of the things that happens to you is you get electrocuted.

**AMY:** What?

**JON:** This is true. On a normal day somewhere in your brain is the thought that you hope a live wire doesn't touch your skin. But on tough mudder day you pay a person for that experience.

This is after you've jumped into a dumpster full of ice water and swum under a wall. The wall is there to make sure you fully submerge because if you get cold enough your brain synapses don't fire right and you lose control of your limbs and you flop on the ground.

**AMY:** I am never doing this. This sounds torturous.

**JON:** Yeah. Then you get to crawl through a live wire field and they're not all live because where would the surprise be in that? So my friend did that. I asked what it was like and he said, "I almost made it through and at the last second I felt the wire graze between my shoulder blades and I felt like a giant with a hammer for a hand had punched me into the core of the earth."

I thought the t-shirt that you get had better be amazing. But I swear to you there are things people do in building a business or losing weight or whatever that they do because they think they're supposed to do.



You might not be supposed to be running. That's okay. There are a million ways to get cardio. If you hate running, guess what, don't run!

**AMY:** Don't do it.

**JON:** You're an adult. I wanted to test if fun mattered because I thought it did but I wanted to really be able to walk into a company because I love the companies that I deal with who say, "We're serious companies. We're not Google. We aren't all cotton candy and ponies."

I wanted to be able to say that is fine but fun actually contributes to the bottom line. It's not just fake fun on HR day where you do a trust fall and you get a squeeze doll of the brand's logo. That's not...

We found if people make it fun they are 31% more satisfied. The two metrics that leadership hinges on for motivation is satisfaction and performance. Satisfaction is how you felt while performance is how you did.

A good principle raises both. If I only raise your satisfaction but not your performance you are smiling all the way to last place. If I only raise your performance but not your satisfaction then you will be every rich, miserable person that you've ever met.

We've all met people who are really successful and hate their lives. It's because they over focus on performance and they never thought about satisfaction. We found people who are deliberate about fun are 31% more satisfied but the crazy stat for me is that they are 46% more successful.

**AMY:** That's good.

**JON:** That's really powerful. The distinction I need to make is that the slide I do after that is to say, "Let's be honest, kale isn't fun."

There are a lot of unfun things you're going to have to do. So it's not to have fun, it's to make it fun. It's about being deliberate to make sure that you find joy in the things that aren't inherently fun. Give yourself a reward or some form of motivation that helps you finish what the thing actually is.

Down the road I'd love to have a Porsche. I grew up as a little kid near a Porsche dealership. They weren't cars. They were like dragons to me. Long term that would be amazing.



I bought a beautiful print of one and cut it up into 48 different pieces representing the amount of money I wanted to make. Every time I hit a certain goal I would put up one of those pieces.

**AMY:** That's cool!

**JON:** It's a visual. Now I can say, "alright!" That's one of those things where I would say fun is weird and you have to be willing to be weird. One of my favorites, my friend's business coach said to him (and people have done this before), "I want three signed check from you. Every time you don't hit your goal I'm going to send a politician you hate some of your money."

He was like, "Over my dead body."

The powerful thing about this principle is you figure out for yourself and then you figure out for the people you work with. If you want to have a miserable experience as a leader then try to motivate somebody with the wrong form of motivation.

Every leader in the world has said to somebody that everybody loved and had a great personality, "There are three things we need you to do or we're going to have to let you go."

If they're not motivated by consequence they don't even hear. The day they are fired they think they had a pretty good day. No it wasn't! But you tried to motivate them with the wrong thing. That's how I look at fun.

Fun doesn't have to be goofy. It can mean whatever you want it to mean. I'm not saying to be silly. I'm saying to be deliberate about how you add joy to what you do.

**AMY:** Be deliberate. I like that, definitely.

**JON:** So the last thing I'd say, I pick on smart goals, the most popular form of goal setting over the past few years. I'm fine with smart goals. I think they are helpful and I think they put boundaries on your goal and they are specific, measurable, achievable, attainable, realistic, and time bound.

I love those words but tell me which one is remotely related to joy.

**AMY:** I can't even.





**JON:** Time bound? How was vacation? It was amazing. I knew when it was going to end. It was time bound. We don't look for that stuff so that one, for me, I had a lot of joy exploring that idea.

**AMY:** That one's big for me in the sense that I don't go to fun right away. I'm all business. It's kind of embarrassing to me but I really don't think about how to add fun to this.

I have someone on my team that does as really good job with that and she's always reminding me to think about how we can make this more fun and more enjoyable. If it doesn't come natural to you then you can get a little help but I think it's really important.

**JON:** Oh yeah, I think there are people that are more naturally inclined. But on an individual level I had a counselor tell me I needed to ski more because I'm a workaholic.

I was like, "okay." So I went to Austria this year and skied the Alps. It was amazing. I'm planning another trip next year. And it's because I can. That's what's fun. You say all of the hard work is worth it.

There are a few things for me (my definition of fun) as dope as being on a ski lift in the Alps on a Wednesday and people are like, "How are you here?" It's like, I run my own business.

The other day somebody said, "You travel a bunch." I told them this year I have been gone 24 nights for work and 26 nights for vacation with my family. Name another job where you have 30 days off and it's only August. Come on.

**AMY:** Come on. It's too good. Remember guys, we're talking about these secrets of getting to the finish line to actually finish what you start.

We're moving into Secret #4. Secret #4 is actually two things that you say, Jon, are toxic to people's ability to finish. I've got to know what these two things are and, more importantly, how to avoid them.

**JON:** The first one is a noble obstacle. Here's an example I used in the book of a noble obstacle. A noble obstacle is when my friend's wife says, "Hey, we need to clean out the garage. It's crazy. It's out of control."



My friend, because he doesn't want to do it, says, "Why don't I do a garage sale?" What's funny about a noble obstacle is that it looks like it's helpful but it's not. He's now thrown up 30 barriers between them and getting a clean garage.

Cleaning the garage could mean throwing away a lot of stuff, and that's fine. Then you do it. But he has now thrown up all of these things and he gets the benefit of looking like, "I'm trying to make money for the family." He's really just hiding.

Here's another example for anyone who wants to build a business. You and I both know would-be entrepreneurs would go, "I'd grow a business but I don't want to ignore my family and end up getting a divorce."

Whoa! It's not like there are two options; not follow your dream or get a coke addiction and get a divorce. Those aren't the only two options. There is a lot of room between those things.

They get to blame their kids for not chasing their passion and feel like they are such a good dad by not doing it. That's what's called a noble obstacle.

A hiding place is a place you go to instead of doing the work you know you're supposed to do. That can take a million different forms. A hiding place could be Netflix. It cracks me up. Netflix doesn't even make you press another button to play the next episode.

They do a seven-second countdown to sadness and then they go. It goes, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 and then it starts the other episode. That's an obvious one. A less obvious one would be email.

There are a lot of executives I work with who over manicure inboxes because it feels like work but they're really just hiding from the tough meeting they have to do.

**AMY:** 100%! Mine is kind of similar to the inbox. I'm really organized. If you came into my office you would be very impressed with my labels, my bins, and everything that keeps everything in order.

But I'll spend a lot of time organizing that office and putting off what I should be working on.



**JON:** 100%. For me a big part of finishing and building a business you care about is self awareness and doing the work of that. I'm not saying you have to figure that out overnight. I think one of the greatest hacks to self awareness is relationship.

I think if you ask a friend who loves you enough to tell you the truth, "I keep leaving jobs the same way every time. What do you think is going on?"

I think they will say, "Here's this thing I see." If you tell them, "I have ten ideas I want to do," they might go, "Actually, the one you talk about 90% of the time is 'this'."

I think that's part of getting rid of your hiding places and noble obstacles is an exercise in self awareness.

**AMY:** That's a little challenge. If you guys can think of someone who you can ask honestly what they think of "this" or whatever the question might be where you're ready for some brutal feedback I think that could completely clear out those hiding places right away.

It's always scary to ask someone. I ask some girlfriends things like that and I almost want to have earmuffs.

**JON:** I asked somebody, it was me and my assistant on the phone with her, and I asked for business feedback. This was like two years ago. We had a meeting a week later and she was like, "Jon, you are what I call accidentally successfully."

That didn't sound like a compliment. She is right. She said I don't like structure. She was right. It was funny. I started laughing and my assistant started cackling because she thought, "Finally, someone said that to him."

You have to respect their opinion. You can't ask a friend you don't care about for their opinion. You will say they are dumb anyway. It has to be somebody...People aren't that mean if you frame the question right.

I'm not saying it's easy. I just think it's really valuable.

**AMY:** I do too. I actually really love the idea to go ask somebody you care about for their opinion.



Moving on to Secret #5, I really like this one, Get Rid of Your Secret Rules. I know you said in your book that not working on this one will trip you five feet from the finish line every single time so it's important that we tackle it now.

**JON:** This one is tough. Again, I like that in my job I get to go talk to companies and talk to them on a human level because this is a human issue, probably one that your listeners struggle with.

A secret rule is essentially something you believed a long time ago that isn't true and you still believe it. It's shaping a lot of your life without you even knowing it.

Maybe it was in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade a teacher told you you're not a good public speaker. Even now as your company gives you chances to lead meetings and get visibility you tell them you aren't good at it and you don't do it. It's because in 8<sup>th</sup> grade you accepted that as a tattoo.

If somebody said, "You're not creative," and you believed that you aren't creative. A big one that people struggle with is that success is bad, that success is negative, or success is harmful or wrong.

I had a buddy say, "I can't believe that CEO makes \$10 million. How do you think he sleeps at night?"

I wanted to say, "Probably on Hungarian down sheets. Probably pretty well." But in his mind, if you ask what it meant he would have to say it means that \$1 million is okay but \$2 million is sinful or too much. Again, who says? According to what?

Or, a lot of leaders will have a secret rule that once they are in leadership they can't ask for help or say they are wrong or that they don't know. They lost access to those phrases. At the time they need people more than ever (as they lead) they get isolated.

I think I said this in [Do Over](#), this other book I wrote, "Leaders who can't be questioned end up doing questionable things." Show me a church that fell, show me a business that fell and I'll show you a leader who could only be told the things he or she wanted to hear.

It's really self sabotage. The phrase we kind of say because self sabotage seems too emotional is to say, "It's like she can't get out of her own way."



Right as they bring the boat right back to harbor they drill holes in it and sink it to the bottom of the ocean. You wonder why they did it because it was such a good opportunity. Why couldn't you accept that? What was wrong about that?

I think it's really important that you deal with some of those things. There is a woman who spent six years on her degree and then failed the last final on purpose because she was afraid to finish. She didn't go back to school for 23 years.

I asked her why she went back and she said she had a heart attack and realized life was short. There was another woman in there that would shred every piece of artwork at the very end because her rule was that it had to be perfect.

She told a friend that one day. She had shredded hundreds. The friend said, "No more shredding." A friend's intervention doesn't have to be where you have coffee and cry for nine hours. Just the friend saying, "No more shredding," she now sells them for hundreds of dollars.

I think we did the math and she shredded \$30,000 of work.

**AMY:** Come on!

**JON:** I swear to you there are some listeners right now where the hair on the back of their neck is standing up. They are wanting me to stop saying these words, "Let me live with these secret rules." I think it's really important for you to kind of dig them up and deal with them.

**AMY:** We all have secret rules. I'll share mine. Mine is really ingrained in my childhood and I've talked about this on the show before. It's that in order to make good money you've got to work yourself to the bone with long hours, major hustle, work, work, work, and then you can make a lot of money.

I know that's not true but in the back of my mind that secret rule likes to rear its ugly head.

**JON:** I think that one's a common one. I think mine would be that if you promote it all you're too promotional. It's funny. I can talk to other people about that. That's what's interesting about a secret rule. You can give other people advice. A good hack is to ask what you would tell someone else if they had the same question.



I would say, “You wrote a book and don’t want to promote it? The next time, write a diary. Keep that on your night shelf. But if you actually wrote a book and need to sell it here’s what you do.”

I will even tell people if they are asking the question of not wanting to be too self promotional they are already in a good place. You know who never asks that? People who are too promotional.

**AMY:** Yes!

**JON:** I think that’s one that I, from time to time, I would say I am hopefully addressing some of this with my platform. If you scroll through my Instagram ([JonAcuff](#)) good luck finding a picture of a book in the last 100 posts.

If an alien came to earth and asked what I do it would be very difficult. I will say, “Funny joke...Here’s a butterfly.” I think that’s valuable to my brand. Don’t get me wrong. There is a point. But I think there is also a point to saying, “Hey, I wrote this book that I really believe in. I think it will really help you.”

I have a shelf that I am looking at right now in my office. There are probably 60 books that people have written because they read Finish. I call it the Finish Hall of Fame. They tell me they were dealing with it forever and the book pushed them over the edge, “Thank you.”

They will send me weight loss stuff or they built a business. People will send me their invitations to their graduation ceremonies for Master’s programs and they will say, “Hey, I was able to finish. I know you can’t go but I just wanted you to know.”

**AMY:** How cool is that!

**JON:** For shame for me not shouting. I should be all over that. I think we all have them. I never want people to be like, “Man, he’s dealt with this stuff.” Every time you do that you deal with different stuff.

I think Hemmingway said, “You’re never not afraid because every time you conquer something you try something bigger and there’s new fear there.”

You’re always kind of leveling up. Speak to ten people, I was nervous about that but now speaking to 1,000 people or 10,000 people or it’s a \$100 billion company. There are different challenges at each level so you’re always kind of dealing with it.



**AMY:** Always. My little hack for every time I have a secret rule that comes up, I'm looking for evidence that it's not true. When you said earlier (I might get my numbers wrong) you've traveled 24 days for business but you've had 26 days of vacation since the beginning of the year. It's like ding-ding-ding! There is another proof, Amy, that you don't have to work your life away to make good money.

**JON:** 100%, and I've had fun doing it. I look at it and see there is joy. My wife would say there will never be an enough, that I get to decide the enough and go do it and then relax in that.

I'm not naturally bent that way because I always tell people you will become a workaholic at something you love, not something you hate. When you hate it you want to do less of it. When you love it you can't believe...

When my kids graduate from high school Jenny and I are going to hit the road like crazy because I can do a +1 and I can say "yes" more and it's fun. But with the kids in the stage of life I am, I am going to say a bunch of "no's" because I don't want to miss it.

**AMY:** I'm always looking for that evidence so I'm so glad you shared that. We have reached the final secret to finishing what you start and Secret #6 is Data to Track Your Progress. Data is not so sexy so talk to me about what kind of data we're talking about and if it's labor intensive.

**JON:** It's the least sexy word. I promise you, if I could have found a better word I would have embraced that word in a second. The way I like to think about it, data kills denial, which prevents disaster.

A lot of times we live in denial of what's really working, what's not really working, what we should be focusing on, what we're not focusing on, and then we end up in disaster.

I remember the first time we went to a restaurant in New York that had the calories on it. Everybody's order changed because they recognized, wait a second, the burger that has the word "loaded" in it is not healthy.

The calories were there regardless of whether we knew them. When we knew them we got to make a different decision and say, "You know what, I'm going to have something crazy because I worked out three times this week," or, "I get to make a good decision."



There is a book called **Black Box Thinking** and he says a lot of us play golf at night. I love that idea. What he is saying is if you practiced only at night you'd never improve at golf even if you played for 100 years because the second the ball left you wouldn't know if it worked, if it was helpful, was it beneficial?

In business you should be addicted to data. Data tells the truth. Emotions lie. There will be times where you feel like giving up or expanding in an area because it feels right.

One of my favorite stories...This guy that manages brilliant neurosurgeons had a neurosurgeon come and say, "We've got to open up another clinic in this other part of the state. I'm getting people from there all the time. If we put a dedicated clinic there we will crush it."

He said he would check the numbers, the data. He found in the last year only eight people had come from that area. The problem was that three came in one week so he thought they were blowing up and killing that area.

If he had made that decision based on the emotion of seeing three people from that area it wouldn't tell the truth.

We've all launched courses. The first day of launch is never as big as you think it's going to be. The last day is crazy. All of these last-second orders come in. If you don't have the data that says it's okay, last time you did a 2% conversion, this time you did a 3% conversion, that's improvement.

You desire 80%? Guess what? That's not what's going to happen. Remember, the last day is the big day. If you don't know that information you can't say what's true or not. It just makes you really, really smart.

We talked about 26 versus 24. I mentioned I'll make more this September than I did in all of 2014. I looked at the numbers on that because I was curious. I'll do six gigs this September and make more than I made in 2014 doing 18 gigs.

It's not half the travel, it's 66% less travel. Me and the team get to celebrate that. We get to say it is trending in the right place. That is awesome. Let me reward. That's a great thing. I love to say, "Hey, this year I'm doing a bonus for my agents."

Anyone who doubled what we did last year gets "this" much of a bonus. That's awesome. But I don't get to reward people unless I know the data. It would be crazy.





I'm doing a half marathon in two months. It would be insane if I didn't know how far I'd run during the race. People would ask me how much more I had to go and I would say, "I don't know. I'm not a data person. I'm just creative. I don't like numbers."

They would ask me if I had a watch on. Didn't I look at the signs? I could be running the wrong direction if I didn't want to be boxed in with maps. I think your ability to track stuff just makes you smarter.

**AMY:** It does.

**JON:** You get better and better and better and you figure it out and you find holes in your funnel and you fix them and change them. People all the time are asking what I would tell myself ten years ago about marketing.

I always say, "I would over focus on email and focus less on social media." They say, "What??"

I always tell people that email matters more in part because you get a lot less every day. People don't change their email accounts. People change Twitter and social media all the time. Changing email sucks.

I still have people on my list that are rocking Hotmail. Why? Because then you have to say, "Hey everybody, I have a new email address. Please put it in."

Nobody does that. Everybody is like, "Good for you. You're now dead to me. I'll never speak to you again."

People take breaks from social media. People will tell me all the time they just had to take a couple of months off of Facebook because it was too gross. I've never met someone who said they took six months off of email. No you didn't! Your life is over.

I would say a mistake of mine is to get over focused on the sexiness of social media and ignoring the long-term, very boring, admittedly boring power of email.

**AMY:** You're speaking my language brother. You're speaking my language. I totally agree with that. On my team we recently put something in place where I've got a team of six and everybody has key performance indicators.



Back in my corporate days I hated hearing about KPIs. I wanted to vomit. However, they are incredibly useful and now at any given time if I asked Angie on my team, “Are you doing a good job in your position,” she would look at those key indicators and she knows if she’s doing a good job because she knows what’s expected of her.

We’re not guessing. She’s a community manager so there could be some guessing in there. Oh no. We took it down into numbers. I love that. It just makes everything a whole lot more clear.

**JON:** It’s a common language and it unites the team. I’m not naturally this way.

**AMY:** Me neither.

**JON:** This is not where I lean it’s just after years and years and years of going it’s like if you traveled for ten years and never did a loyalty program and somebody was like, “Oh my gosh, you must be crazy on Delta. You must be triple diamond.”

You are like, “No, I don’t do data. I want none of this to count.” That’s good. Good luck with that. Let me know how it goes.

**AMY:** Your loss. I love that you bring up the data. It’s not so sexy but it’s incredibly important. My listeners know. We talk about data and the numbers a lot. You don’t have to get crazy with them but you do need to know your numbers so I’m really glad you brought that one up.

Before we wrap up I want to recap these six secrets:

- 1) Cut your goal in half.
- 2) Choose what to bomb.
- 3) Make it fun.
- 4) Leave your hiding places and ignore noble obstacles.
- 5) Get rid of your secret rules, those limiting beliefs.
- 6) Use data to celebrate your imperfect progress. Keep it simple here. You do not need to get elaborate.

Jon, this has been so fantastic. This is what I love most about you, your stories, your examples, you make everything more real and you bring it to light in that way. It has been a delight to have you here and first of all, thank you. Second of all, where can people learn more about you?



**JON:** I have a URL at <https://acuff.me/amy> and I'll put a bunch of stuff on there. I'm going to put some speaking videos and the first chapter of the book. A lot of times you want to say something was interesting but it was just a podcast. You wonder if you should buy the book.

I'd love for you to read the first chapter. It's funny. Whenever somebody comes up to me and says, "Convince me I should buy your book," I always say, "Maybe you shouldn't."

They always say, "Wait, what?"

I don't know their situation so I give them the first chapter. They always end up buying the book. I love for people to kick the tires so I'll do the first chapter, some fun videos of how to speak and what it looks like. My big argument is that everyone's a public speaker.

If you've ever had to negotiate a raise with a boss you've given one of the most difficult speeches in the world. So I love helping people get over that fear and have fun with it. So just go to <https://acuff.me/amy>. On Twitter I'm [JonAcuff](#), the same on Instagram at [JonAcuff](#).

I'd love to connect with your listeners. It's just been a blast. We've kind of missed each other narrowly with some of the relationships. I'm good friends with Michael Hyatt and a bunch of folks that I know you know and love.

Come to Nashville. Where are you guys located?

**AMY:** We are in Carlsbad, California, but I'm coming to Nashville (I forget when this is going to air and this might totally date me and that's okay) in September to speak at Michael's event, Achieve, so I'm really excited about that.

**JON:** That will be fun. You know Michael, he doesn't do things that aren't awesome.

**AMY:** No, it's going to be a great time.

**JON:** If you move from California to Tennessee you will be a billionaire.

**AMY:** Right?



**JON:** You should just buy every house. I guarantee that's the right direction to move. You never want to move from Tennessee to California because then it's like, "Back to my closet." But if you move from Carlsbad to here, oh my gosh you guys will kill.

**AMY:** That's what my husband, Hobie, says. He says, "Get ready babe, you're going to love this."

**JON:** Yeah, it will be great.

**AMY:** I can't wait to see you soon, neighbor. I'm coming your way.

**JON:** Awesome. Have a great time at the conference.

**AMY:** Thank you so much, Jon. I really appreciate your time. I can't wait to have you back. Have a wonderful day.

**JON:** You too.

**AMY:** There you have it. I hope you loved this conversation with Jon. I know I definitely have some things I want to work on and really focus on to make sure I get to the finish line in all that I do.

That's a very big, important aspect of who I am. It's part of my identity. I tell myself, "I finish things." I think that helps me get to the finish line each time I start something but I definitely have my struggles along the way.

I'm going to apply these strategies. In fact, I already have. Remember, I listened to the audio book. I think it's hilarious. I was laughing throughout this whole episode with Jon. He's a funny guy. We all know that.

You are going to get a lot of that in the audio book so I highly encourage you to get that on Audible. I am a huge fan of Audible so if you go to <http://www.amyporterfield.com/Audible> you can actually get a free book when you sign up. If you want to take advantage of that this would be a great book to check out.

One more thing before we wrap up. Have you subscribed to this podcast yet? When you subscribe you get notified when I have a new episode going live. I have been



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Some of you are like, Amy, you're pushing it a little bit. But I really believe it.

Alright guys, thanks so much for being here. I cannot wait to see you here same time, same place next week.

Next week I'm talking about the P.S. Strategy. You know, the P.S. you put in your emails to your community? There is a very specific strategy to follow with the P.S. and I want to talk to you about that and give you some tips and tricks to make them even more powerful.

It's a fun episode. I'll give you lots of examples from my own business. I'll see you here next week so we can dive into it. Have a wonderful week. Talk to you soon. Bye for now.