

On Life and Meaning

MARK PERES

Episode 36 – Jack Ossa – The Power of Design

Overcoming Resistance

And now a personal word,

I listened to Jack amazed: at his story, his ambition, his gratitude and his grit. I came away asking myself: am I all that I can be? What is a larger vision I can have for myself? Am I taking enough risk and seizing opportunities?

I've always thought of success as the realization of one's dreams. The person who is able to imagine something and make it come true is successful, whatever that dream might be. Why is it that some people are more successful than others? How is it that some people can overcome remarkable odds and make their dreams come true?

There are many elements to Jack's story: the love he knows he has from his family, the encouragement he receives to achieve more, his belief in a higher power that is directing him, his talent and work-ethic, his introspection, optimism and resilience.

But there is more to it. Jack is a designer. He talked about how he begins the design process with a brief, a written document that outlines the project. The brief expresses an idea refined by a set of values. The expression shapes all that will follow until the project is realized.

Jack thinks of his life as a project. It comes as no surprise that Jack produced a written document that expresses his intention for his life. His manifesto declares his vision and purpose, the story of his personal journey that informs him, and his approach to generating the energy that sustains him.

Jack's manifesto begins with a single page called 'The Idea.' At the center of the page is a diagram of concentric circles and arrows that radiate out. Words and phrases, such as 'body, mind and spirit,' 'growth and learning,' 'energy source and maintenance,' are written into the diagram. Underneath the diagram is a single sentence, an idea that informs the whole of the manifesto that follows: 'Experience full potential through the power of design.'

The first narrative section of his manifesto addresses the resistance he must overcome. He quotes Steven Pressfield, author of *The War of Art*. Pressfield says "The resistance is

the space in between the life we live and the un-lived life within us, the space in between who we are and who we potentially can be.'

Architects by definition work through spaces of resistance to create something that didn't exist previously. Architects use tactics to transform a space into something beautiful and functional. They create a rendering of something not yet real and use light, materials, colors and objects for a new space to present and reveal itself.

Jack notes that is also true of our lives: that a rendering of something not yet real, and tactics to realize the rendering, help us reduce the resistance between who we are and who we want to be so that the fullest potential of our life can present itself.

In his manifesto Jack identifies his six 'life tactics':

1 – *Have a Vision*: dream BIG, cast the most daring vision of yourself and write it down. Break down your vision into small steps and act on them. Use your vision to make decisions and evaluate potential commitments.

2 – *Manage Your Time*: great work requires us to be vulnerable, committed and courageous. We must schedule our time to focus our hearts and minds.

3 – *Combat Fear Daily*: our biggest failures are not what we tried that ended poorly, but what we dreamed of doing and didn't try. Practice being bold in the presence of fear.

4 – *Trust Yourself*: act on your instincts. Stop waiting for permission. Explain your ideas with energy and enthusiasm. The world needs more of you.

5 – *Focus on Habits*: develop a simple and consistent daily routine aligned with your goals. The power of the compound effect of action accelerates the change you want to see.

6 – *Challenge Your Body*: exercise creates a positive effect on our perception of life and gives us the strength to produce and perform.

Jack is living his life through the power of design. It is an inspiring thing to behold.

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