Joe: Hey everyone. It's that time of year when we do the in-depth online course Art of Accomplishment. It's a course where you can experience a lot of what we just talk about on the podcast. The course is filled with real-life experiments, practices and tools that you learn with a partner and in small groups, so you will create meaningful friendships and you will get Q&A time with me. In the Q&As, we go deep. We break through belief systems that have been holding you back for years. If you are interested, check it out at artofaccomplishment.com. Last year we sold out, so I encourage you to apply early. Applications can be submitted through June 8th and June 20th. Again, it's artofaccomplishment.com. I look forward to meeting you there.

Episode intro:

To me, self-awareness is life. There is no difference. People think about business as something that's separate from life. I do that in business, or it's just business. To me, business is far more of an art form, and how you use it is far more important.

Welcome to the Art of Accomplishment, where we explore how deepening connection with ourselves and others leads to creating the life we want with enjoyment and ease.

My name is Brett Kistler. I am an adventurer, entrepreneur and a self exploration enthusiast. I am here with my co-host**,** Joe Hudson. Joe is a business coach who has spent decades working with some of the world´s top executives and teams developing a unique model of human patterns that underpin how we operate with ourselves, each other and the world. A good entry point into this model is a mindset called VIEW, vulnerability, impartiality, empathy and wonder.

Through understanding and cultivation we learn to easefully drop into the VIEW state of mind, deepening self awareness and increasing our connection with the world around us. To learn more about this podcast or courses, visit artofaccomplishment.com

If you've been listening for a while, you have heard Joe and I refer to the workshops and online courses that this podcast comes from. What's the deal with all of this? Why do we want you to join our mailing list? What's our intention? Are we trying to suck you into something? What's this going to cost you?

Today I would like to bring some transparency into what exactly is going on with all this VIEW business. Joe, how did you get into the coaching business in the first place?

Joe: By accident. When Tara and I decided to have a kid and a kid was on the way, I realized that I had to stop sitting in a room, meditating all the time and make a little money. I went into venture capital. One of the realizations I had early on was that if I

didn't bring my self-awareness practice, if business wasn't a way for me to continue to develop and understand myself, that I would never succeed at business. Then as I started to invest, I realized the mentality of the people that I invested in was the biggest leverage for successful investments.

I started sharing some of the knowledge that I had with them. That was successful in many cases. Then they started telling me that other people needed me, and I didn't have the time. I did a course, and then it just kind of happened. People, the line got long, and at some point I decided that this was far more my calling than investing and I was better at it, frankly.

Brett: With a lot of self-development programs, there is this way that self-development turns out to be a tool for somebody to make a bunch of money and inflate their ego. What makes what you are doing different from that?

Joe: Wow, I would love to say that I am different from that, but I am sure that is at play at the same time, meaning there is no way you can completely annihilate an ego. I think if you think you have completely annihilated it, that is ego in itself. I am sure my ego is at play, and making money, I enjoy making money. I definitely like it, but neither of them are the priority in my world.

Creating the business is far more about an enjoyment process for me. Maybe two or three years ago, I would have said I really want to bring this out to people, because it creates happiness and I want to change the world. That's really not alive in me anymore. It's far alive in me that this is something I really enjoy. I get off on. I like watching people have life changing experiences. I like being a part of that. I like building something beyond me. I like seeing the value through the success of a business. It's really a matter of enjoyment for me.

Brett: You described your journey as you started out being interested in self-awareness and meditation, and you had a baby and realized you needed some money. You started to get into business and VC, and you wanted of course to bring your self-awareness practice with you and make that part of what you were doing in business. Then it became the business itself. How did you transition from being a venture capitalist and focusing on the quality of awareness of the people that you invested in into making VIEW a business on its own?

Joe: I was really just following the demand. I was just following people's requests, for the most part. I have a vision for sure, but it is incredibly informed by what people have asked for and what they want. I feel like it's the same. When you are coaching

somebody, you start with where they are. You don't tell them what you think their agenda should be. You follow their agenda. I think business is the same way. You don't ask people to be different. You don't give them an agenda. You find out what their agenda is, and if you can serve that, if you can be of service to that, and it is aligned internally, then by all means, go ahead. That's what happened here. It was just the best way I could be of service that was inspiring and enjoyable for me.

Brett: Can you tell me more about what you are working on now inside and outside of the VIEW courses? What does that look like for you?

Joe: Yeah, too much. I think I am working on too much. We have the podcast going. We have the VIEW course going. We have the AoA course going. I have a group of 12 executives I work with every year as a coach, and then we have an occasional in-person workshop, particularly for those executives but sometimes for others. Then, there's the creation of content, which is what we are doing now, just generally spreading the word so that people, if it's right for people, they can find it. That's the work.

Brett: When we first met, VIEW was only available through these small in-person workshops you just mentioned. What's so important to you about in-person work? What made you start exploring the online format?

Joe: I was ignorant, I think. The in-person work, I had a limited thought that it could only be done in person, and then Coronavirus hit and people came to me and said hey, we need this, this and this. We need it online. I thought no, no, no. Luckily, I didn't need the money. Eventually, I was sitting in my hot tub one day. I have this hot tub that goes way too hot, and I got some engineer to mess with it. I am boiling my brain.

I had this epiphany that the way I learned a lot of this stuff is very different from the way I teach it, and so I thought, “Wow, I could potentially teach it online the way I learned it.” That started the exploration, and only to find out there are ways that when it is done online, it is more powerful. It is stronger. There are some ways in which it is strong. It is stronger because it is more persistent. You have more time with it. You don't get the workshop high. It becomes an integrated part of life.

There are some experiences that can happen in person that are bigger than the experiences that happen online overall, on average. There are some exercises you can only do online, and some you can only do in person. That discovery and just try to make it better and iterate, iterate, iterate, iterate, which is how I do it. I never try for perfection. I just keep on improving. It just turned out that people really dug it. We got great MPS scores, and people really liked it.

Then I got really motivated, because I realized it made me less involved, which is really a critical component for me in doing any of the work. If someone is teaching you math, you don't want them to have to be there every time you are doing math. That would be a pretty shitty teacher. I saw that the online version needed less of me, and that became really exciting for me. Then I got more and more inspired by the online work.

Brett: What are you trying to accomplish by growing VIEW as a business?

Joe: It is really just a matter of following my enjoyment. I think there is some freedom I have in the fact that I am not really trying to accomplish anything. It sounds kind of counter intuitive. You have to have business goals, and I do. You have to have a vision, and I do. But at the end of the day, I am really good with things not working, because I am not attached to, tied to, my value isn't created from the business outcomes.

The vision is, wouldn't it be cool for a whole bunch of people to be able to communicate this way, to have breakthroughs, to have happier lives, and to enjoy themselves more, enjoy each other more, businesses to be more successful, particularly businesses where people are open to self-exploration. Wouldn't that be awesome? It would be. It is a super cool thing. That's more of a symptom. The core is my own enjoyment. The core is what turns me on.

It sounds like that's a little bit hedonistic almost, but it's not quite that way in the fact that what I have learned over time is that when I am following the deeper call, there is more enjoyment in my life. It's not almost. It is an act of surrender. I am surrendering to the call, just like a baby surrenders to a cry. There's a movement that's happening. My enjoyment is a way for me to directly get in touch with that call, that thing that's pulling me, the gravity of my internal exploration, the gravity of divinity or oneness, whatever you want to call that thing, God. My enjoyment is the way that I get to gauge how deeply I am surrendering.

Brett: I love the way you described the vision was a series of run-on questions.

Joe: Shit, I didn't even notice. That totally makes sense.

Brett: You mentioned that you are doing this for your enjoyment and you do have business goals and a vision. What are some of the business goals? What is the revenue model? How does this work?

Joe: The first question that helps me answer the second question is what I want the money for, what the money is about. For me, money is just another tool in self-exploration. That's its highest purpose, and money is also as a secondary purpose a means of supporting people's energy. There's a definite need for a flow of money. Money stagnant is a destructive force in my conception of the world. The goals around money in particular are all about making sure the people who I work with are well paid, that they have good opportunities, that we get to do the stuff that we enjoy, and then the money towards the customer, the main purpose is if it supports the spiritual journey or not.

One of the things I think is really important, is that you create a slate of products that are accessible for anybody's journey. There's free content for people who aren't able to afford and then other content for people who can afford. The reason that's important is because that exchange of energy is really important, meaning I was in Nicaragua. There was this group of people who were there to deliver food and clothing to these folks in Nicaragua. I was sitting and talking to them. I was like, “I feel like it is a bit destructive what you are doing.” They were, of course, taken aback. I said to me if you just give them stuff, it teaches them that they can't take care of themselves on some level. I far more believe in an exchange. They were like these guys have nothing to give. Sure, they do. For instance, there was a sea turtle shortage because they had been killed. The community could do a sea turtle rescue, or they could help with the restoration projects for the sea turtles in exchange for it. There are lots of ways.

I think it is really important. A quote in a book called *The Soul of Money*, it sticks with me. It said, if you are here to help me, no thank you. If you are here to work together for our mutual freedom, let's get to work. I think the monetary exchange toward the customer needs to be there, and it needs to be something that's felt. If you are dealing with somebody who is a billionaire, to say I will do all this for $200 isn't an exchange of energy in the same way it would be with someone who is working $10 an hour. It is really important that there is some way that that energy exchange can happen.

Brett: It has been a common challenge, I guess, that really good coaching has been disproportionately available to executives or high-paid tech workers, and meanwhile, a lot of people who are really struggling and could use a lot of this work the most simply can't afford to pay for workshops. But now that you are creating online self-paced courses that don't require your time to administer, what makes you run those as a business when you could give them out for free?

Joe: That's a question I have asked myself a lot when we were looking at the business model. Do we want to do this for free? The answer was that we didn't think that we

would get as much completion and buy-in if it was free. That said, I do give it away for free often if the circumstances are right, if the approach is right. But just generally, the thought process is what's the way that the work does the best work inside of you, and that's how I think about everything. I think about it when we market something, for instance. I think about not how we get someone to buy a course. I think about how the marketing becomes the beginning of the course, how it becomes the beginning of self-exploration.

Everything I am doing is serving the self-exploration, everything from the way I bill to how we build the courses to the teamwork that goes into building the courses to how we price it. It's our best guess, and I am sure we are wrong but it is our best guess at how we can best serve the people, how to get them through the course, how to make it meaningful enough for them to value it so they give it the right love and attention.

Brett: That seems like a really difficult problem because you have some people for whom $300 is a throwaway and other people for whom $300 is the majority of a rent payment or their entire rent payment, and it could be argued that both need it equally or could use this work equally but just have completely different context for money.

Joe: It is. It is a really difficult thing. Hopefully, we'll provide stuff. The other part of the model is the higher end stuff pays for the lower end stuff, so the work I do in companies where there is a higher dollar per hour can pay for lower priced courses. Our own sustainability is definitely a part of us, and like I said, it is to make sure everybody in the organization or anybody I contract with has the ability to thrive in their own life. Because if we are creating something from a poverty mentality, then we are going to be projecting that poverty mentality into our teachings.

I think that's not going to work, but the idea for sure and a lot of the goals I have, are about making it more and more available at different price points and different levels of commitment. I don't have a perfect solution by any stretch, and if anybody has one, please let us know. My experience of doing stuff completely for free has not been as successful as far as serving the population that I want to serve, the people who are interested. It just doesn't seem to work as well, and yet we still pull that level sometimes. I recently gave away the course to an organization that doesn't have the money but is doing great work in the world, and I assume will continue to do that.

Brett: You were talking about sustainability. There are a lot of examples of organizations, like business built around some kind of work like this, that turn self-inquiry into a business at scale only to have things go south, or blow up for a number of reasons related to their requirements for sustainability, like training facilitators

and then gatekeeping those facilitators and trying to keep a cut and then creating paths that become somewhat manipulative and create dependence. People end up becoming financially dependent on a community or a particular organization and feeling trapped. How can you maximize the positive impact of this work and scale it without it becoming corrupted by the needs of a scaling business?

Joe: I did an experiment on this before. I failed miserably on it. This one seems to be far more successful. I think to some degree I was making that mistake. I think it is the gift of the online component that's really showed me to some degree the mentality mess up. My perspective, I thought I was far more necessary than I was. The less necessary that I view myself to be in the work or that I view the organization to be or that our existence alone isn't necessary for the development of humanity, that we are just here to serve it, this kind of development of humanity, the less we have a risk of becoming one of those organizations.

So I think the need to be special or the need to be needed or the need to save, any of those needs are what create those organizations. The inner work is really the most important thing, and that clarifies the way the art of this business is expressed. Everything that I do is all about pointing people back to themselves. The less involved I can be, the less involved the organization can be, the better so that we don't create an organization where people need us.

Brett: What's your approach to intellectual property? You could say the way of being that VIEW points to is not new, and you didn't invent it. People have been discovering it through many different traditions. How do you consider VIEW to be in some sense your baby and something that you are stewarding and responsible for, and to what sense is it just out there for people to discover?

Joe: This is one of the hardest questions I wrestle with. I am glad you brought it up, because it is a place where I could still use some clarity. On one level, there is a part of me that wants everything I do to be completely open source and anybody could use it for anything. On another level, I have seen that it can be really dangerous and destructive. These tools modified slightly can be used for nefarious purposes or at least unconscious purposes. There is a fear that that will happen, and I've seen it happen not even through people having bad intentions. It is oftentimes someone is like, I can use this tool to help a whole bunch of people. They haven't looked at their own shadow, and so their shadow completely takes over the work. I've seen that happen quite a few times.

The iteration I am on now is that you ask permission to use any of the tools that are specific to us if you are going to go use them. We make sure that it feels right to us and that you have the right support to use those tools. I don't know if that's going to be scalable but that's what we do in our contracts with people who are taking the courses is basically you can't go and use this.

I remember one of the talks I gave and I was giving people all these tools I had developed and that were a synergy of other tools. About 80% of what we do, I don't know anybody else who does them, and 20% of what we do are taken from traditions or neuroscience or something that's like 2,000 or 3,000 years old from esoteric texts that I have read, everything in between. But the stuff that's novel, it came from my consciousness and so to some degree I feel safe in using those tools. What I have noticed is when people use those tools but their consciousness didn't create it, it can become more dangerous, because they don't fully have an understanding of the tool.

More importantly, I created these tools from my consciousness and I want other people to create tools from theirs. Again, I want to be less involved and so as people create their own stuff from their consciousness, those are right tools for where they are and where the people near them are. It's just incredibly useful to have more of those tools out there rather than making them dependent on my tools. That's another reason that we basically have come up with a conclusion that you ask for permission to use the tools.

Brett: One thing I have heard some people have objections when they first encounter this work, usually through somebody else, is that it seems selfish. There are some shades of that in this conversation where you are talking about doing this for your enjoyment, and it needs to be an energetic exchange. You hear a lot of people talk about energetic exchange and using that word to disown they are actually charging for something, and they want money.

Joe: Yeah, I want your money. No doubt about it. I like making money. There's no doubt about that. But then again, that's selfish too. What's the answer I could give that isn't selfish? I have done a tremendous amount of non-profit work, and I can find the selfishness in that, too. There's incredible personal reward in being of service. I don't even know if the word selfish– I don't know if I even believe in it particularly. I feel like that's a word that some adult created to control their children.

The levels of selfishness seem a good way to gauge where you are in your own personal development. Selfishness of like, “I want this now, and I don't want you to have it.”, that level of selfishness just means you are in a tremendous amount of misery

compared to somebody whose level of selfishness is to be of service to people. I am sure the mentality of being of service to people is a form of misery compared to another level of selfishness.

I don't buy into selfishness, but I think what you are pointing to outside of that, which is kind of a justification of narcissism through spirituality, is what I would call that. This idea that I am going to make myself special or big or I am going to get all of my ID needs met through the activities I am doing in the world, whether it be business or art or whatever. I am going to justify it with a whole bunch of spiritual talk, and things like I am going to listen to my truth, etc. I think it's a real risk.

It's not to pretend it's not there. It's not even like the risk is that I need to see if it is there. The risk is that I need to find the more and more subtle versions of that in play in myself. The lucky part is that is misery. I can find those parts pretty easily, if I am just paying attention to where I am not aligned, where I am in friction with myself. That's the work. That's the work.

But from the outside point of view, there's really nothing I can say that somebody who is not being assertive with their own needs is going to hear that's going to make me sound anything but selfish.

Brett: How much concern do you have about these tools getting out there in mass, tens, hundreds of thousands of people taking these courses in a decentralized way and bringing this into their lives with all of their shadows? What concern do you have that this could become weaponized in ways you don't expect and unintended ways?

Joe: I hate this feeling. Now I am going to love this feeling. It is inevitable. I am going to say something that's a little risky here. There's an atrocity that occurs and it is through that atrocity that ten other atrocities are prevented. It's through the prevention of those atrocities that the next atrocity occurs. I don't see a way around good being corrupted into bad and bad creating the next good. It seems to be just the way of things.

It breaks my heart that I know to some degree that this stuff has already been weaponized. I know on a small scale someone is going to bring the VIEW and they are going to say something like, you are not asking how/what questions to their wife. Their wife is going to be like fuck the VIEW.

Brett: You are not in wonder enough.

Joe: Right, you are not in wonder enough. Exactly! Then it is just going to become a new morality and somebody is going to feel oppressed by the morality. Then they are going to be like screw VIEW. That thing is just blah, blah, blah. I don't know anyway for that to be prevented. It breaks my heart, and it has been happening. Look at what people have done with the words of Christ or the words of Buddha. They oppress themselves and others with them all the time. It is going to happen here. It happens with the internet. Anything, anything of significance gets used to oppress people eventually. Even love gets used to oppress people.

Brett: Or the idea of love.

Joe: Yeah, exactly.

Brett: Wrapping this episode up, what is your vision of a future five years from now where VIEW conversations are a thing that people just have all the time and it has become successful and just part of the social lexicon? What does that world look like to you?

Joe: It's all happening, and I am somewhat blissfully unaware I think is my version of the best case scenario. The best scenario is one in which and in a weird way this is already happening, where the repercussions of the work are far beyond my capacity to see them. They have extended into other people's work, and now there are new and better tools out there that have built on these tools. On a personal note, it would be nice to be continuing to be excited about the business and continuing to be trying new projects and funneling whatever resources we create into bigger explorations of self-discovery and the world. I have done it all inside a balance where my children still feel loved and cared for, and they know deeply that they are the priority over the work. That would be my vision.

Brett: Thank you very much, Joe.

Joe: A pleasure. You got me crying, man. Thanks.

Brett: Mission accomplished.

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