

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'll 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're interested, check it out at artofaccomplishment.com. Last year, we sold out so I encourage you to apply early. Applications can be submitted between June 8th and June 20th. Again, it's artofaccomplishment.com. I look forward to meeting you there.

Woman: Joe, I either want to fight myself or I just want to roll over and stay safe. I either want to fight against myself or I don't want to listen.

Episode intro:

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

Today we are going to share a coaching session between Joe and a woman in our community who is experiencing tension around authority figures. The conversation starts off with workplace challenges and very quickly ties in to her relationship with her father, ultimately touching on how she can give and receive love. We've removed her name and other identifying information for the sake of confidentiality.

While listening to this conversation, pay some attention to Joe's state of mind and how he holds the VIEW principles. These are the kinds of conversations that Joe has with participants, and that participants learn to have with each other in the Art of Accomplishment course. Let's get started.

Joe: What do you want to talk about today?

Woman: I notice I freeze around people who remind me of my father, especially in work situations. This is what's happening repeatedly.

Joe: How do you see them as your father?

Woman: They don't see me.

Joe: Aha, how do you know they don't see you?

Woman: Because it's very clear they don't know how I tick.

Joe: What's the evidence?

Woman: I'm doing something. I'm motivated. Then they start to speak to what they think I am motivated by. They will be like, "Good job." This is exactly what we need out of a team member who wants to step into leadership, whatever bullshit they are going to tell me. I'm like, "This isn't why I am doing this. I am doing it because I love it. I am doing it because I love it, not doing it for money."

Joe: What if they did see you and you can't recognize it? I am not saying that that's true by any stretch, but if it were true, what would it mean?

Woman: It would mean I am judging the shit out of them. [laughs] I think that's true. I think it would mean— I do think that's true. It would mean—

Joe: What makes you judge your father? What made you judge your father?

Woman: I thought he was wrapped up in himself so much that he couldn't see anyone else.

Joe: How is that not true about you? It's a scary question for me to ask, but how is that not true about you, that you are wrapped up?

Woman: So much that I can't see others.

Joe: Or so much that you care whether people see you.

Woman: Interesting. I want to be seen, it seems like again by certain people. It's because I am still wanting that one kind of attention I've decided I didn't get.

Joe: How is that not being wrapped up in yourself?

Woman: I think it is. It's wrapped up in my wanting.

Joe: What makes you judge people for what you are doing?

Woman: When they do it, [laughs] obviously, Joe, it is way worse than when I do it. I'm a better person than that.

Joe: Okay, so you are sitting in the meeting, and the person is like, "Oh, this is exactly what I want from a leader." What are you not seeing about them in that moment?

Woman: I feel like they are affirming what they want.

Joe: Right, so that's the judgment, similar to you being focused on what you want, to be seen in this particular way, but what are you not seeing about them? How are you not allowing them in? How are you not seeing them as a full person?

Woman: If they are telling me that that's what they want, I notice there's a part of me that closes to them first. I am like, "Oh, you are not coming to meet me, so I am tired of bringing myself to try to meet you."

Joe: One thing I just noticed, and I want to come back to it, which is you didn't answer the question, what is it that you are not seeing about them. You are telling me what it is that's hard to see about them, but I am going to detour for just a second, because my curiosity, my wonder just went in this other direction. How is your relationship with your wants affecting your judgment about what they want?

Woman: I believe that asking for exactly what I want isn't very effective, which I think is part of what's getting in the way. I'm not just explicitly asking for what I want.

Joe: Right. It sounds like they are not doing that either in that moment.

Woman: That's right. That's true.

Joe: If them not asking directly for what they want makes you feel unseen, what does it say about you not asking directly for what you want, if anything?

Woman: The logic is they are seen. I don't feel it. I don't want to feel it. I don't want to feel that.

Joe: How does it feel to just say it? I am not seeing anybody clearly. Right now, look at me. Do you think you are seeing me clearly? How clearly do you think you are seeing me? 100%?

Woman: Ah, definitely not 100%. Nothing is 100%. Okay, so, but high. I don't know.

Joe: At what point do I get to feel upset at you for not feeling seen? What's the percentage?

Woman: If I see you anywhere in the 50% or below, or in that range, that's not good enough.

Joe: That's when I get to be upset at you.

Woman: Yes, definitely.

Joe: Whose criteria do we get to use? How do we get the data to know what percentage it is at? So as an example, how true is it that you don't want to be in a leadership position, generally?

Woman: How true is it that I don't want to be in a leadership position, generally? Historically, I have balked.

Joe: Now.

Woman: Right now? No, I definitely want to be in charge. [both laugh]

Joe: So they are seeing you.

Woman: I really do want to be in charge. No, that's true. They are seeing me, but if they are telling me, then it feels like they are putting power back over, of like, pat on the head, good job little leader. I am like fuck you.

Joe: So what they are not seeing is, you already are a leader.

Woman: What they are not seeing is, I don't need you to affirm me.

Joe: I just want it.

Woman: I just want it. Don't believe that your little encouragements– That's like the opposite. It's creating a power dynamic that I reject.

Joe: How much of this is about not being seen and how much of this is about your own empowerment?

Woman: Yes.

Joe: How empowering is it to care about being seen or about how they treat you?

Woman: It's not very empowering, but I really want it.

Joe: What I am noticing is, there is a want component that's not fully lived. There's the being seen component that's not really lived, and there's the empowerment component that's not being really fully lived.

Woman: Yeah, want, seen, empowerment. Yeah.

Joe: How do you undermine the people who fall into that category, fall into the dad category? If in any way, how do you undermine them?

Woman: Definitely there is a way– [both laugh] Well, let's see. I could think of a few things. One is I just immediately project that to try to control me or manage me, even if they are really doing something that's really normal.

Joe: Just that thing, one of the ways you undermine them is project they are trying to control you, and what's your action?

Woman: I have trouble being productive. The more space they give me, the more I can be productive.

Joe: I got it. What you do is, you stop performing for them. That's the way you undermine, got it. When that dynamic happens, how are you undermining your own empowerment? I am going to ask you three questions about each of these things, empowerment, being seen and whatever the third one was that I forgot.

Woman: Want is the other one. I am undermining my empowerment. Just the fact that I am responding to that, it feels like I am still surrendering my power on some level. I am still surrendering my power on some level.

Joe: To rebel against somebody or to do what they tell you, both of them put them in the control seat. One of the things is that by undermining them you have empowered them.

Woman: Right, and I have decided I am helpless to do other. Like it is hard to figure out how to get out of that. Like, "Eh, I am not productive. I want to be productive. It's your fault." Whatever.

Joe: Then, the second one was want. How is that you are abandoning your wants in that scenario where you are undermining them by rebelling them against them by not being productive because they have patted you on the head?

Woman: I feel like I am getting out of touch with the part of me that just simply wants to work on this project, wants to build this vision, wants to contribute to this company. Like the independent of the authority figure.

Joe: Okay, and then the third one was, empowerment, want and not being seen, so how is that you are preventing yourself from being seen in this scenario?

Woman: In this scenario, I am reinforcing a story. I don't know if that's right.

Joe: Let me ask a question. You have somebody working for you, and they've stopped being productive. What are your choices in interacting with them to get them to be productive or to accept that they won't be productive? What are your choices?

Woman: Sit down and talk with them and ask what's happening for them.

Joe: Right, so that puts you in the control position. What's the next one?

Woman: I can give them space, just say hey, everyone goes through ebbs and flows. Let's just see what happens over time. I could ask somebody else to check in with them, go around the side door. I could take the project away from them. I could adjust the project. Okay, now I need this scope and this time. I could micromanage.

Joe: How about give them lots of compliments in the hopes that they will respond to positive reinforcement?

Woman: Oh, right, I guess that's a thing. It's not a thing I do. It's not even a thing I think about. I am like, "That doesn't work."

Joe: Out of all of these options, how many of them would make you feel seen?

Woman: I do think sitting down and asking me what's up really vulnerably without there being any punishment energy at all. That would feel great.

Joe: How many people do you know who respond that way? If you were to guess, there's 100 managers. How many would respond in that way?

Woman: None of them, not many of them, maybe one of them.

Joe: We'll call it one percent of them will. In that case, you have proven that 99% of them can't see you, or what am I missing by saying that?

Woman: I don't feel like I need that all the time. What it really is, I am specifically triggered if it is like, again, a man who reminds me of my dad, because if it is a woman, no issues. I am like you can do any of those things, and I don't care.

Joe: There are these three things that all happen, wanting, disempowerment, and not being seen, and overall how do you see if you are creating this in your world, if any way? You might not see that at all. You might actually see it is all their fault. If there is any way you see your creation of it, how?

Woman: One thing I have definitely hit on is, I am not letting myself be seen.

Joe: How would it be to stop right now and let yourself be seen?

Woman: Really scary.

Joe: How deep are you going right now in letting yourself be seen?

Woman: 20%, there's like a submission quality that's not the thing.

Joe: Beautiful. How is it to be seen without submitting, without surrendering in your complete empowerment?

Woman: It's so hard, because then I just want to fight. It's the two, either I am like one of those.

Joe: How would it be for you to say to me, this is a scary one for me to ask— How would it be to say to me, “Joe, I want to surrender to you or I want to fight you! I don't want to be with you. I just want to surrender you or fight you.”

Woman: Yeah, I want to fight you or I want to roll over. I want to roll over and not get hurt.

Joe: How much distance did that just create between us?

Woman: How much distance? Something about sharing it felt kind of good, instead of like having an invisible fight happening. [exhales] It felt like more clarity, like honesty, transparency.

Joe: How does it feel to say the opposite of it?

Woman: The opposite, I want to fight with myself? No.

Joe: Let's try that. That made me very curious.

Woman: Joe, I either want to fight myself or I just want to roll over and stay safe. I either want to fight against myself or I don't want to listen.

Joe: What's the opposite of fighting? It feels like you are still fighting a little bit.

Woman: I am. I am totally still fighting. It's just, like, softer. Maybe if I fight a little quieter, maybe if I do it like this, because then I will also collapse the other side. I am like, “Wait, stand back up, what is this?”

Joe: How would it be to try it again and feel the feeling of fight or rolling over and then letting your body feel the exact opposite of those emotions?

Woman: I am bringing myself back in. There's some like mild dissociation.

Joe: I notice you stop looking at me when you are trying to feel like.

Woman: Yeap. I feel like I lose connection with myself when I look at you. I don't lose connection with myself. It's like a thinner path or something. It feels more difficult.

Joe: What would this feeling be if you weren't resisting it, if you weren't disassociating, if you weren't scared?

Woman: It feels really alive. It also feels like almost so alive that it also feels scary.

[bell]

Brett: Listening to this interaction, we can see how she feels, like there's a dichotomy between rolling over and fighting. This is a false dichotomy that a lot of people hold. It's an indicator that you are in a power over state of mind, seeing the dynamic as a win or lose, zero sum game that someone is going to win and someone else is not. So many of our conversations are structured in this way, and it can be really hard to move from power over into empowerment. Let's listen further to see what happens.

[bell]

Joe: So what I've heard you describe so far is something that feels alive and full of energy and undefended.

Woman: I repeatedly have things like maybe it's not safe, the things out here.

Joe: How am I feeling about you right now in your estimation?

Woman: You feel very calm and grounded. I don't know. You feel about me though.

Joe: About you.

Woman: You feel a kind of awe. It's really nice. It feels good.

Joe: How much of me is fighting you and how much of me is rolling over for you?

Woman: You are not rolling over.

Joe: If you had to guess, how much am I fighting you?

Woman: Very low, probably a tiny bit is like— Very, very low.

Joe: What's the fight, that little itty bit? What am I fighting you to do? What's the purpose?

Woman: It's a very light feeling of bringing my attention. There's just a very light touch to it.

Joe: There's some part of me trying to control you a little bit.

Woman: A little bit, it's like this guiding tension. Just a light.

Joe: There's a little bit. Impartiality is, I think, hard to get rid of, but there is a little bit that's like, I want to know what the feeling is when it is unresisted.

Woman: Yeap, sure.

Joe: If that's true, how would it be possible for someone to not some way want to control you? Even that is a subtle way in which I want to control you.

Woman: I don't think there's a way to not do that. I don't think I take strong issue with everyone trying to control me.

Joe: When needed, it sounds like it is a good reason to feel like you are not being seen.

Woman: It's certainly surefire excuse of me, not being seen. You are trying to control me. Yes, of course.

Joe: I can't deny I am still really curious. What is this experience of non fight, of non rolling over? What's your body's answer to that question?

Woman: Balance came up. I don't like the word equality. I think there's some bullshit in that.

Joe: We are definitely not fucking equal. How could we be? Our hand size isn't the same.

Woman: But like balance, there's still a meeting that feels balanced where it is not you or me or you or me.

Joe: How can we be balanced with each other without love?

Woman: How can we be balanced with each other without love? In my head, I wasn't tracking love so far.

Joe: Increase or decrease the amount of love you feel towards me and see how it affects balance, if at all.

Woman: That was fun. It's so automatic. I feel like just patterns in my face being like distance.

Joe: Distance, what's that distance? How does the distance relate to fight or rolling over?

Woman: It feels a little bit like, it is still fight, in essence. It's like I am going to keep you at a distance. I will be over here, and you are going to be over there. I'm just going to manage this, because if you get too close, it's fight. That's what I have decided.

Joe: And how does that relate to balance?

Woman: I feel off balance back. Physically, somatically, my body is defending back inside. I am off balance back. Ooh, I still feel a falling forward. That's the motion I am kind of holding. Love feels a lot like falling forward.

Joe: What would happen if you took that experience to this authority figure, boss, whoever it is that pats you on the head and says, I see you want to be a good leader, that empowered, upright, non falling forward love? Non submissive love.

Woman: What would it be like?

Joe: I'll be the authority figure. You see what happens. Speak from that place and see what happens.

Woman: I have been treating you like a person in my head instead of the person who is here. Wow. I haven't given you a chance to get to know me.

Joe: Thank you for that. That really lets me know you are ready for leadership soon.

Woman: [laughs hysterically] Ouch.

Joe: How much of a relief, how much joy is there in that pain?

Woman: I go to be like, but you are going to misinterpret that. You are going to make it uh—

Joe: How am I going to misinterpret it?

Woman: You are going to think, “[says name] didn't hear me.” Let me try to repeat myself. Or you are going to think she's not taking me seriously right now.

Joe: Oh, if I am the position of the authority figure, if you go ouch, then I am going to attack in some way. I didn't mean that as an attack. I didn't mean to hurt you. Stay in that place, upright and defended love. What happens from that place?

Woman: And it did hurt. And it is absolutely fine that you don't see the way it hurt. It's okay. Oh yeah. It's okay.

Brett: It was beautiful to see her come out of the session in her stance of empowerment. The stance of empowerment is one where you are open hearted but you are boundaried. It is one where you state your truth with courage and you are not worried about the consequences or another person's reaction. You are vulnerable, because that's what's rewarding to you and not because of what someone else is going to do. To be empowered is to be in your truth while being open and loving.

Let's send some gratitude to our guest for her vulnerability in sharing this session publicly. It landed very deeply in me, and I learned a lot about myself and how I relate to power dynamics.

I am going to close with a few integration questions. Sit in wonder with these questions for a moment and just see what comes up.

How is your relationship with authority influenced by your relationship with your parents?

What stands in the way of you loving somebody that you judge?

What are things that you judge about others that you also judge about yourself?

Thanks for listening.