

Transcript for Noah Kagan | Limitations and Innovations (Episode 658)

Full show notes found here: <https://theartofcharm.com/658/>

NOAH: I was for a long time always saying, "I'm the founder. I started it," and it was a certain process like -- most of that is just egotistical. Do you really care about the title?

JORDAN: Welcome to The Art of Charm. I'm Jordan Harbinger, I'm here with producer Jason DeFillippo, as always. On this episode we're talking with my friend Noah Kagan. Man, this guy is sharp. He's weird but he's sharp. He's the founder of AppSumo and [Sumo.com](https://sumo.com). This guy, he's crazy in a good way, what can I say? It's Noah Kagan, you all know who he is.

Today we're going to discuss why limitations often spurt innovation, why side hustles aren't for everyone, and the FOMO is real on this, man. Everybody's asking about this. We'll also ask ourselves how does what you're doing now compare to what you want to be doing in the future? Something that we refer to here at at AoC as building your wall one brick at a time. And we'll explore the concept that there is no hack for wisdom. It's important to learn from bad decisions but man, do they always have to be my bad decisions? This and lots more on this episode of AoC with Noah Kagan.

There's so many things that I could talk to you about because we've been friends for a while. And you've been running Internet companies for what, like 17 years?

NOAH: Yeah, I'm a dinosaur.

JORDAN: How old are you right now?

NOAH: Thirty-five.

JORDAN: Thirty-five, so you've been running Internet companies since you were 18.

NOAH: Since right before college.

JORDAN: You were super young but the Internet was also still young, right? What year was this?

NOAH: That was 2000 and I remember it because it was really expensive. Domain names were I think 35 bucks a year and now they're \$8.

JORDAN: Oh, I remember domains were \$100 standard.

NOAH: And to get it was a pain in the butt.

JORDAN: Right, a huge pain.

NOAH: My first site actually I created was a site for import cars.

JORDAN: Really?

NOAH: Yeah, called Everspeed.com. I still own it. It was really hard. Because now we take for granted how we have Stripe right away and we have Wordpress which is super developed. There was nothing back then. There was a crap FTP server and you have to code everything in HTML.

JORDAN: I coded my first site in HTML and it was like, "This part should totally blink. Oh, that part should totally blink too," and then you're like, "Oh, this is unreadable and terrible. I'm going to make it on a black background with yellow text. Oh, awesome. Oh, you can put pictures in here? Oh, it's loading really slowly." Yeah, that was basically how it started. But you were so young, the Internet was young, I remember running little side hustles online but how did you think, "I'm going to put a business on here?" What we people take for granted now is, "Of course businesses are online. Of course we do our online shopping." Back then, if you're like, "Look, I'm going to put your brochure for your restaurant on the Internet!" people were like, "No that's stupid. I don't need that. I have the Yellow Pages."

NOAH: Yeah.

JORDAN: Why did you think it was a good idea and what got you to take action on this instead of just talking about it?

NOAH: It's so amazing. When you said that, I was thinking my friend's dad said, "Oh, I'll never bank online. I wouldn't trust it."

JORDAN: Of course, yeah.

NOAH: Now like going to an ATM people are like, "What's an ATM?"

JORDAN: Yeah, why bother?

NOAH: Why did I believe in it? I mean part one I grew up literally two miles from Cupertino so I was surrounded by it. That was my ecosystem and my environment and I loved it and it was just what I was always exposed to. I think the other thing for me was really AOL chatrooms. Do you remember back in --

JORDAN: Of course, I was on there all the time.

NOAH: And it was great and when you could start transacting, you could start downloading MP3s. You got an AOL chat message.

JORDAN: Yeah that was my AOL Instant Messenger.

NOAH: I remember that time. It was in 2000 and the .com was just starting to pick up some steam in the first one. I was like, "Man if I can buy domains, I'm going to get rich. If I can put together a business plan around this, I'm going to get rich." I've never talked about this, but my first business plan was there was all these high school friends of mine that had cars and they had a bunch of free time so I was like, "What if they could drive deliveries around or drive things around?"

JORDAN: Yeah, wow.

NOAH: I still have the business plan in my room.

JORDAN: You gave it to your friend Travis Kalanick to hang on to?

NOAH: Yeah, TK. And so I think the thing that I did then was just kind of exploring things I was curious about. I really wanted to make websites so I went to the community colleges to learn how to make websites better. I really loved this whole computer building thing. Back in the day remember you used to like build your own computers?

JORDAN: Oh, yeah, I wanted to do that at Best Buy and they're like, "No, you've got to sell CDs first," and I was like, "I can build computers," and they're like, "Yeah, music department for the first two years." I didn't take the job. I was like, "Tell all your friends I can build computers," and I started building computers for people. I started building computers for like my girlfriend's parents and then they would go to their church or whatever and tell everyone. Pretty soon I was installing home stereos, X-Box, charging 100-150 an hour to put everything together.

NOAH: But with that you were interested in it.

JORDAN: Super interested in it but I didn't think, "I'm going to build an online business," and even then, that was like 2005. You're talking half a decade earlier at age 18. I was already like 25.

NOAH: Yeah I think when I was around 16 I started messing with the Internet stuff, especially with like -- Honestly, like naked pictures. My step dad was an engineer. They were never really businesses. I never actually had the first online money making business until college and that was when I was 18.

JORDAN: Okay.

NOAH: Those ones I was just solving my own needs. So the first one I did was a book exchange and a lot of the ones -- They're just stupid. But most things like Facebook started out as a peer to peer file sharing site, which was Wirehog.

JORDAN: Napster.

NOAH: Yeah so they started Wirehog which no one even remembers. Then they're like, "Oh, we have this Facebook thing too. We'll do both of them." And so for me I just kind of was exploring mostly things I just wanted. So it was called comegetused.com. You could buy and sell books.

JORDAN: Yeah.

NOAH: My senior year, another one I did in college was called collegeup.org. So I thought Craigslist was really cool but I thought -- This is when Craigslist was just peaking. They're like, "I can't believe this guy who had a newsletter put it on a website and now it's making money and it's growing like crazy. I thought, "Why not make that for college student?" So I called it collegeup.org, so kind of like Facebook plus Craigslist.

It totally flopped. The only thing that was popular was Hot or Not on it. You'd be like chicks are hot or guys are hot or not. The one that finally worked was called HFG Consulting. That one actually was the first one that started working which was basically a student discount card. It was one of the cheesy traditional businesses. I went around to local companies and I said, "Hey, give me a discount," I put it on a card and I sold it for 10 bucks.

JORDAN: It's a great idea.

NOAH: Yeah it worked out well. I ended up doing it at five campuses, hired a bunch of college kids as unpaid interns because they got experience and then taught them everything I knew. I think that overall just the Internet was so amazed -- And I still think about it in two ways, one, the Internet never sleeps. Think about employees or people you work with, they're ***** lazy. You know why? Because they sleep.

JORDAN: Compared to robots they're lazy.

NOAH: No the Internet is always awake. I was like, "This is so ***** crazy. It's always on." I think the ability of the scale -- the

capacity of the reach was just unreal to me. Meaning, even now with AppSumo.com, my mom always comments every single time. She's so funny as a Jewish mother. She's like, "Noah, there's someone from Europe from Italy commented. How do they know about you in Italy? How do they know?"

JORDAN: They have that over there. Yeah.

NOAH: Exactly. Plus in general, back then it was a little bit more different but in general it wasn't that expensive.

JORDAN: The Internet. Running things online.

NOAH: Yeah, it was really ***** cheap. Think about a restaurant. Employees, and then you have to get this overhead plus you get the food plus you have to wait time to get a permit to get it all ready. You can get in to sign up -- Especially today it's insanely fast but back then it wasn't like -- The domain and all that stuff it wasn't super, super long.

JORDAN: You started to dabble really and create business, some failed, some did okay, and then what? You lost interest?

NOAH: One thing I would 100 percent do differently, I would have just started even more businesses in college. And I think what happened for me in college, in retrospect, is I was scared and I thought I was supposed to run my own company but it doesn't just magically appear.

JORDAN: I never thought, "I'm going to start my own business." That never occurred to me, even in law school.

NOAH: I guess I was similar to that where I didn't know what I was really supposed to do. I thought, "Oh, I'll probably one day have my own company," but I was always kind of jealous when everyone else seemed to know. And I don't know if it's like Tony Robbins where everyone seems like they love him but when you ask them afterwards, they're like, "Eh, you know. He was okay." They want you to believe that they know but maybe they're insecure as well. And all these people around me were

like, "I'm going to go be a consultant. I'm going to be an accountant." I was like, "I want to play on the computers more but I don't know what to do and I'm a little scared of it." So I just applied for pretty standard jobs.

JORDAN: Yeah, that sounds like me. I thought I would do something with diplomacy. I thought I would work in an embassy, I thought I would join up with an intelligence agency or something like that but then I realized -- I knew a bunch of people in the CIA and FBI and they were like, "Don't do it. You're going to be so frustrated." And these are guys that spend time undercover in Egypt and they're like, "It sucks compared to what you think." So I went and got my law degree and I was like, "All right, I'll do this for a few years and then I'll figure it out." And then what happened was the economy figured it out for me because the economy tanked and I ended up doing this show that I had started as a hobby in law school.

NOAH: I like how it's like, "Yeah, things were so bad I had to start this show."

JORDAN: Things were so down and out I became a lawyer and then it got even worse and now here we are.

NOAH: I think so much of innovation or a lot of growth comes when you're just limited. You're just like, "Well ****, the economy is sucking, I'm not really having a chance getting a lawyer job, I've got to make something happen. I've already been liking doing this."

JORDAN: Right. You know what it does? It lowers the bar. The risk is alleviated because it's gone. Because the quote unquote worse case has already happened. "You know I can't focus on this, I've got to focus on my legal career," and then it's like that evaporates and you go, "Well, guess I do have time to focus on this thing that I enjoy." And sometimes you're also going, "Wow, I have to work as a barista or something and I'm not liking that. My only saving grace is I have this little side hustle that I really like," so you can focus on that. But if you have an all

encompassing career like law, it's very hard to then go, "I'm going to risk not getting promoted by going home earlier and working on this side hustle that makes one tenth of what I'm making now."

NOAH: I think that's really hard, yeah.

JORDAN: I don't recommend people quit their job or something to create false urgency. I think that's bad for you. But I think if you find yourself in that situation then you can utilize it and you should.

NOAH: It is interesting. One of my best friends recently just got a severance and let go after 12 years --

JORDAN: Wow, 12 years.

NOAH: -- of working a corporate job. So we graduated at the same time and it's pretty amazing to me because I went to a corporate job, Intel, and he went to a corporate company. I thought everyone who worked at Intel was just completely idiotic. I said, "If you're so smart, why wouldn't you want to go create something brand new and change the world? Here you're changing one decimal. They remove you tomorrow, no one even notices." I thought that was just such a waste of life. And then so I went to go do all this startup stuff and he just recently separated from the company and what blew my mind though was that having a corporate job and not running a company is actually pretty great.

JORDAN: Yeah, awesome.

NOAH: People are like, "I need a side hustle." I was like, "Side hustle is not that great." I mean I think there's a lot of benefit of it, don't get me wrong. He worked 9-5 if that, probably only like half the time realistically, got paid a fat six figures --

JORDAN: Yeah.

NOAH: And your point was really funny because to him to do a side hustle which he started, he's doing videos. He makes a few

hundred bucks here and there and he's like, "This is going to take me 18 years to catch up to where I am."

JORDAN: Right.

NOAH: So the thing for me more though is that if you have a corporate job, is there a way to make it great and get the most out of it so the rest of your life is great?

JORDAN: There were many days -- fewer now -- that I call my post office days where I really just wish I worked at a freaking post office because something at AoC is just so stressful that I'm like, "Ugh, I should just go out and get a job and quit." There's stress in corporate stuff. It's a grass is always greener situation but I know a lot of people that work for the government for example -- I've got a buddy who works for the government. He gets so much time off because we works overtime and he kills it at work that he gets paid not in overtime cash but in time off because that's how the government can afford to pay you. So this guy is always like, "Hey man, I've got to kill five weeks of vacation before the year's over, do you want to go on a trip or something?" and I'm like, "Wow, it's September."

NOAH: Yeah, I think that's exactly right where --moving a little bit side tracked but the important thing is just alignment. And it's like, "What do you want to get out of life? Does this align with your job?" And I think the thing that just frustrates me and what I encourage people to do is -- You spend a third of your life in this office. Go find some office or create your own office, be in someone else's office that at least you're enjoying the majority of it.

JORDAN: And you can do that to a certain extent at corporations, right?

NOAH: Big time.

JORDAN: You can make it your own. And I think a lot of people they look at this in some sort of binary way. They're like, "Hey Jordan," I'm sure you get these, "How do I start a business? I'm in this corporate hell. Nobody understands me." There's a lot of people

in the same office as you who one, think the same way, two, they're not checking out and trying to do their own thing. They might be like, "Oh, I'm going to form a committee that's going to this thing for this product," and they pitch it to upper level management. And I see a lot of success stories coming in my inbox, people that try -- Where they're like, "Hey, I found this software that's going to make our job easier in tech support and I'm going to just make it," and they pitch their boss and their boss is like, "No, get to work," and then they pitch somebody in another department and they're like, "This is really good. Let's make this. You help lead it. Here's the budget," and then they basically make their own job.

So there was this yacht company and I wish I knew who told me this. It was in my inbox too. There was this yacht company, they had a ton of problems where they think their engines or their -- rich people problems or something. He was their all-star and what he was doing was he was helping all these people with their engine problems and then what happened was he kept helping people and giving them direct contact info for him and he was like, "Look," -- He created a message board so that people could leave their problems instead of being on hold for four hours during their vacation. They could leave their problems there and they could see the solution because some of the solutions were very common.

So he created essentially a support FAQ in the form of a form where you could post and his employer hated that because he was like, "You're making us look bad. Look at all these problems. Everybody else can see other people's problems. It makes our product look bad." And he's like, "But the customers are getting better support." So then what happened was he got fired from that company and then he said, "Screw it," and he started a for-pay support forum with immediate or near immediate response time for these yacht owners who are wealthy and totally willing to pay for better support.

He made tens of thousands of dollars per month because basically he was like, "Look, if you want me to be available, it's

going to be like," -- I don't know, for a yacht owner, \$250 plus a month probably for like, "Within 24 hour response time," and he had hundreds and hundreds of people paying for this level of support and he was making way more than he made as a support guy. And I believe that company then hired his company to consult for them and he ended up 10x -ing his income by doing this intrapreneur thing because of course the yacht company made a mistake. You might just get rich by accident.

NOAH: The thing that Anton said -- one of the guy's who has been like a OG (ph) with Sumo, he runs all of our sales. I was like, "Why did you work so hard with our company? Everyone nowadays is working for two years," and he said, "The more valuable I made the company, the more money that I was going to make." I really thought about it. I was like, "You thought that?" and that's how it became. He went from the junior guy making not that much to one of the senior people making a lot right now and that's because he just kept making the company more valuable and we were -- not forced but we wanted to compensate him for that.

JORDAN: Yeah, good companies will do that. So if you find that you're being punished or you're not being rewarded for that at all, what would you advise somebody who works for a company and they're like, "I try to do things like that and management doesn't care."

NOAH: I use a very simple phrase for myself and I encourage others to use it in that instance. It's generally like, "What is the metric of success?" If I'm selling a customer and I say, "Well, if you use our product, what would be an amazing level of expectation for you? What would be your metric of success that you love me?" and then they'd tell you and then you'd deliver that or deliver that plus a little bit more. So I think it's the same thing on an individual role where -- Go to your manager and be like, "Hey, what would make me be a top performer?" and they'll just tell you and then you just give them that.

JORDAN: Really? Okay.

NOAH: That's what I've found to be the case, at least for the people I work with.

JORDAN: We talk at AoC, one of the concepts we have is, "You're building a brick wall and everything you're doing is building a brick." A lot of people look at their career as building the wall but really you should be looking at each stage of your career as building a brick that goes into the wall.

So a lot of people, they go, "Ah I'm working for Nike and this isn't what I want to be. I want to be a shoe designer and right now I just work in retail," and it's like, "Okay, you need to know what styles people are buying. So now you're getting business experience in sales, you're getting business experience in seeing the final designs that have made it all the way through the vetting process, you should be taking mental notes or actual notes on all of these types of iterations and what's trending and you'll be able to spot trends in the future which is a key skill for a designer to have."

And when you explain it like that, people are like, "Oh, wow!" We have a tendency I think, just as humans probably, to look at what we're doing right now and be like, "Am I happy 100 percent with where I'm at? No. Oh, okay well, I need to change my situation." And it's like, "Well, no. There's probably something that you can get out of where you are right now that is going to give you an advantage or a skill or both in the next level." And a lot of people are just like, "I'm just wasting time here."

I got an email a while ago from a guy who was like, "I work at a gym and it sucks. I really want to open my own gym and train clients," and I was like, "You're exactly where you need to be right now to learn how a gym works. You work at a gym. Try to become the manager of that gym before you open your own gym. I would be in no rush if I were you," and he was like, "Oh, okay. I hadn't thought about that." And I thought, "This is super dangerous."

NOAH: Because like, how are you using this to help leverage for the future or build for the future?

JORDAN: Right.

NOAH: A lot of times at large companies -- At a corporate company you learn how to work at a corporate company. You don't actually learn, "Oh, I'm going to work at this company to learn how to run my own." It's like, you won't. So I think the thing that I really did well and I was happy with is that I was very proactive in setting up lunch meetings. At Intel I would try to find anyone that's doing something I thought was interesting. I was in operation supply chain. Literally I did Excel management all day, Microsoft Excel. And I was really excited with marketing so I reached out to the VP of marketing and I would reach out to Paul Otellini, who was the CEO.

JORDAN: How did you reach out to them?

NOAH: You can look up their information in the corporate company and all of them have to eat lunch.

JORDAN: What did your emails say?

NOAH: Most of them were just like, "Hey I'm really fascinated with your job. Do you have like 15 minutes for me to come by? I'm here for whenever is convenient for you." And so I set up meetings like at Microsoft, I met my boss. I spent a lot of time with him. And ultimately what I was looking for -- One, just learn about the rules but also kind of build a network. So at Microsoft because of that, there was a certain people I applied to for future jobs because I had met them when I was an intern.

JORDAN: Okay, so you basically just sent simple emails.

NOAH: If you're in the company you don't need to try to convince them.

JORDAN: You don't need to build credibility.

NOAH: No you already got the same domain. And so it's like, "Hey, when do you have time?" and it's something that I've noticed with Sumo. There's a few people who are proactive in taking out different people to lunch. I encourage it. I think it's great for the company, I think it's great for themselves to say, "Hey Chris, you're running content marketing. Can I just learn more exactly how you're doing this?" and then going into it with salespeople. Like our sales team with Anton, like, "How do you guys think about this?" It's really up to the person's own initiative. From a company standpoint, I want people to do it but the people who do it individually, I'm always impressed with.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

JORDAN: You have had business partners come in to Sumo after you started the company, right?

NOAH: Yes.

JORDAN: How does somebody bring enough value while you've already got your business running and is like, "Give me equity at a later stage?"

NOAH: Dude, I had a big realization. I think with AppSumo.com and Sumo, our business, I was for a long time always saying, "I'm the founder. I started it," and it was a certain process. Most of that is just egotistical. Do you really care about the title? Sometimes it does. "Well I'm the founder and this,"-- In my last business, I tried to give up some of the title and the ego and it was a huge blow up.

JORDAN: You tried to get rid of it and it was a blow up?

NOAH: If I'm honest with myself, yeah. And then I resented it. So my last company -- I started a games company and I founded it, brought on partners, they ended up becoming equal partners over time and we were all equal and it created a three headed dog. I went to them and I knew they would never vote for me to

just be the full partner again -- the full leader -- so I was like, "Hey, we just need someone making final decisions. It's going to be you." And they were like, "Okay," and then I became the CMO. I was really resentful and I ended up -- I left the company. I was just like -- My ego got in the way. I was just like, "Well I started this. This is me and this is mine," and in retrospect now, I failed that company. Because I think if you leave a company and it doesn't get more successful after you've left, you haven't actually set it up correctly.

JORDAN: Oh, wow, yeah. I suppose that is true.

NOAH: I used to brag. "I left them."

JORDAN: And they're suffering now.

NOAH: "And they sucked and they died." They didn't die. But, "Their company died and all this stuff. I need more equity." It's all worth zero now.

JORDAN: Mm-hmm.

NOAH: That equity that everyone always wants. And it was an interesting thing because I think for a long time I was always happy how much they failed. And only in the past few months -- having done a reflection -- I was like, "Oh, that was actually not a good thing." And so with Sumo and as we started this company, I don't care about titles. We didn't have titles until we had to really start other companies we email. Like, "Oh, you're that title. I need to know who you are."

JORDAN: Right, none of us have titles. I don't want to talk to you then because I don't know who you are.

NOAH: I know what it was actually. In Israel, this company called Iron Source, they do \$500 million in revenue. You've never heard of them. They make in profit -- He said it's public -- \$100 million a year in profit.

JORDAN: \$100 million in profit?

NOAH: Yeah, this is an Israeli company Iron Source. They make all this money. It's like toolbar stuff. It's like Chrome extension toolbar widget stuff. And it also leads me to always say that there's so much money out there. If you really want it, you just grab it. There's so much money in all these different things. But what he did was that he acquired a lot of companies. That's how they had a lot of their growth.

And he says every person that we acquire, almost eight of the nine people have stayed and everyone is a cofounder of this whole business. I'm like, "What do you mean? You're the founder. You started all this. Take the credit." He's like, "No, it's everyone." It really stuck with me where if you need to be the founder and you have to have that title and you need that significance, not you want everything to be inclusive like, "Oh, everyone, we love flowers." Why do I need all that title?

And it was a good message to -- Chad is my cofounder. Even though he came on the company almost a year later, he's an amazing cofounder and frankly everyone at this business, they're the ones who helped make it what it is today, not me. I've done my part of it, but I think that's the problem sometimes with companies where like, "Look at what they've done." It's like, no, it's actually the great people that were behind them. I want more people to get more recognition in these businesses.

JORDAN: Yeah, I think that's an important note because I always lament -- When I started there wasn't AppSumo, there wasn't Sumo.com, you couldn't install plugins and squeeze people (ph), you didn't have Infusionsoft, you didn't have FreshBooks, you didn't have all these great companies that made things easier, and you didn't have anybody like Gary V. or whoever, Noah Kagan, telling you how things should be done. You just had to guess and you were wrong most of the time. And then you had also shysters. Now you have all these resources and you also have all these people lying to you. Now you have a different problem, you don't know who to trust.

NOAH: The simple thing that you can do and this is a very easy test is that if anyone's telling you, "I'm going to teach you how to start a business," or, "I'm going to teach you real estate," just be like, "Show me your business right now, show me the real estate you own," and none of them do. Because if you say, "Hey what's your business?" "Oh, I don't really talk about." But if you have a business, like, I'm like, "I work at AppSumo.com and Sumo. Hey here's the podcast show I do." But a lot of these guys don't.

And if you're in a company, the other thing that was the book I had today, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*. It's super amazing. It's one of the best books I've read this year. Because what happens -- The main part of the book that I really enjoyed was it talks about how like if one person in the team is like, "Oh, I'm the greatest and we're doing great," but the company is doing poorly then that person is not doing great. And I thought that was just a kind of interesting concept and it talks how to build up better teams and working together and trust and just how to actually have an effective leadership team not just effective subteams.

JORDAN: You're making your company read this book?

NOAH: Everyone in the leadership and I'll probably pass it down to everyone else.

JORDAN: We'll link that in the show notes as well. I have not read that. I should read that. I like the idea of having difficult conversations inside a business. It's so hard to do.

NOAH: So hard.

JORDAN: So easy to say and it's so hard to do. Because you have ego wound up in things, you have titles, you have baggage from past interactions, then you've got to tell someone, "Hey, you know, when you do things like this, this, and this, it lowers morale in certain teams." It's not human nature to go, "Oh, that's interesting. I should work on that." It's human nature to go,

"Yeah, well you know what you do wrong? Here's a bunch of stuff that I've been sitting on for a while," and it ends up looking a lot more like a dysfunctional family than a corporation that's healthy. And that can cause problems over years.

We had that even inside Art of Charm where it's our job to be self aware, have difficult conversations -- There's several times over the 10 year history of the company where we're like, "Wow, we have to fire this guy and yet no one has the balls, no one wants to sack up and do it, nobody wants to tell him why we're doing it and we would end up just dragging something out for years or months and costing us tons of money and then that person of course hates us after that.

And I'm like, "Okay, never again," and then you find yourself slowly wandering down maybe that same path a few years later and you're like, "Oh, crap, we've done this before. Got to nip this in the bud," and it's like, "Go ahead, AJ," and it's like, "All right, we have to do this," and it's like next week we'll do it. It's tough. It's like putting down a pet.

NOAH: Yeah, people make all the difference in businesses. What I've come to believe, I think the two things it's like -- One, it's the only difference. It's the only difference in companies. And the second thing is just wisdom. I was thinking about wisdom. You really just can't cheat it. I think so many things today we want to cheat, we want to hack. That's why Lifehack is so popular, because we don't want to do the work. But wisdom, unfortunately, and I'm just noticing, it just comes with age. Like that wisdom that you have now and you share it on your show. Those are the two things I'm kind of like, it's cool.

JORDAN: Yeah it really comes from bad decisions.

NOAH: Are you encouraging people to do bad decisions?

JORDAN: I think you're just going to make bad decisions anyways and that's essentially what experience is, right? And then wisdom comes from learning, hopefully, from those bad decisions.

NOAH: Hopefully.

JORDAN: And maybe those good decisions. But generally, let's be honest, mostly from bad decisions.

NOAH: It's not that I don't mind making bad decisions, it's like, "Am I learning from that? And how can I pay someone?" Just straight up honestly pay someone who's already made those bad decisions first. So it's like my YouTube channel. This guy Tim Schmoyer, you know, you guys hired your coach Steve for your show. It's like, why don't you just pay someone who's already done this stuff a bunch of times and they can help you alleviate a lot of that distraction, alleviate a lot of the bad choices you're going to inevitably make?

JORDAN: Yeah, it can cut a lot off the learning curve. And he's talking about Steve Couch, Canadian broadcaster for a long time. He came on and listened to the show and he made a couple of really simple tweeks based on some radio stuff, we threw out some of his feedback because we thought it was too radio and we took on a lot more. Steve was like, "This is a really, really good show. I'm very impressed, most podcasts I've listened to I don't like," and Steve later on mentioned, "Look both of you guys, you don't have to worry about the ego thing because the guys with ego are the guys that hire me for one session and then they get mad at me during the call." Because he's giving them things to change and they resist it and they get pissed.

NOAH: I have Andrew Chan who does it for our businesses, also I've worked with a little bit of an NPR guy. A lot of the changes aren't going to be things you're already doing. So you have to at least know that you're going to be against it.

JORDAN: Yeah.

NOAH: And I like your thing, you're like, "Hey some I may accept, some I'm not," but I think the point is just to be aware if someone gives you feedback. My friend said this and I love this. He said,

"Say thank you, be okay that it's going to be, and then make the decision afterwards," but I think people just say, "Oh, no, I don't do that." But the change is not going to be just doing the same thing.

JORDAN:

Right, yeah. It sounds obvious, however when you're looking at your relationships, your business, your work, it's really easy in the moment to feel that resistance come up because you feel like, "I should be defending myself or I should resist this because, if I accept it means something about me," and that I think was a huge realization for me, both in business and in my personal life. You have to be able to accept feedback without thinking, "This says something that reflects on me as a person." For example, if Jennie is like, "Hey you need to work more on being on time because of these reasons," and my first gut reaction was like, "They're always late and they're going to waste our time," and she's like, "It doesn't matter."

But I thought at first, "Why am I resisting this?" and it's because every single time you get feedback about anything, your first gut instinct just as a human is generally going to be like, "Let me find reasons why this isn't true, why it doesn't apply to me, why this other person does something that discredits them -- discredit the source."

But if you just go, "It doesn't matter whether the source is credible, let's assume it always is, let's pretend she's giving that feedback to someone else -- Would I think that's a good idea for people in general?" and then usually the answer is yes and then I'm like, "So I should apply this even if it has nothing to do with me," and the answer is yes. Then you should just do it, right? You can almost short circuit the ego thing by pretending that it's about someone else at first and then adopting it anyway and then being like, "Oh, yeah. This is a good idea."

NOAH:

I like that.

JORDAN: You have to direct the canon at the guy next to you and then you're like, "Oh, I'm going to learn from that guy's mistake." Really you're sort of misfiring.

NOAH: I like the resistance thing. I think that's just a good thing anytime someone gives you feedback or suggestions. Say, "I'm going to resist this. Oh, this is resistance?" but like do a 180 on your mindset. Just try -- Accept all of it. Then you decide which ones you actually want to do or not. I like that.

JORDAN: You have to do it later when the emotions are not there.

NOAH: Yeah.

JORDAN: The emotions are always going to cloud the mix, right? It's like you're trying to strain something and it's like there's all this emotion in there and it's plugging up the filter. You've got to get rid of that, otherwise you can't strain out the good stuff.

NOAH: I think what people don't realize about business partners or what I've experienced with it is that people -- It's just like dating. People go out to the bar and be like, "Hey let's have sex, get married." It's like, "Dude, I just met you." It's like, hey, if I need a business partner or if I need to hire anyone, you need to start that process six months ahead of time. One of the things that had happened with that is actually I worked with -- He was my customer and then we worked as a trial. So he came on as a consultant -- as a contractor and helped me out with AppSumo in the beginning. We already had a relationship. It takes time so you can't really expect it right away. And not everyone's going to be a great partner. One of the fascinating things was that one day Chad quit.

JORDAN: He just quit randomly?

NOAH: He just was annoyed of me.

JORDAN: He just had enough of you?

NOAH: Yeah, I can be a lot. My style has changed. I was much more of a dictator and I still can be. You saw me in the escape room.

JORDAN: I did. No, we were like, "This is great. Somebody's got to do this."

NOAH: So I'm bugging Chad all the time and then he's like, "Dude, I don't need this." I wasn't even paying him.

JORDAN: Oh, man.

NOAH: And he was just like, "I quit." I was like, "Well, F you man, you get out of here," and I called Andrew, one of my best friends and advisors and he said something to me. He's like, "Noah, first number one, you call him right back and you apologize and you do whatever it takes to get him back. Number two, for you to find a replacement, not only would it take you three months to find someone else, but it would take you three months or six months to get to the level you guys are even at now. So now are you willing to wait a year? Are you willing to waste a year?" and I was like, "God, this guy's good."

JORDAN: Yeah.

NOAH: And the biggest point, I think, that I took away and still to this day seven years later -- We talked about it and I said, "Dude, we like each other as people. But why are some of us working together not working out? What's going on?" We identified three things. This was years ago. Number one, I would give him to-dos on a Monday and then I would give him to-dos on a Wednesday and I'd give him to-dos on a Friday. You would do it casually, like you were just on Skype or this was AIM probably, who knows, GTalk. I was like, "Hey can you just do this? Can you just do this?" and then come next Monday, none of it was done. And I'm just mad. This guy can't follow through with what he promises.

JORDAN: Right.

NOAH: Number two was we didn't really communicate a lot. It was just like, I'd talk Monday, keep messaging him stuff to do and then

I'd talk with him the following Monday and be like, "Oh, you didn't do any of these things we talked about." And the third thing was that I thought it was very one sided in our relationship where a lot of times it's like, "Here's everything I need you to do," but not tell you what I'm doing. If you're in a partnership with anybody you work with, I think make it mutual respect which is like, "I'm doing this, you're doing that, and this is why it's important."

JORDAN: Mm-hmm.

NOAH: Now we don't do it three times a week, we do it two. But Monday, Wednesday, Friday at 11 am, we've done this for seven years, we talk. We got real time chat. So we didn't have real time chat before. Like he wouldn't be online and I'd be like, "What the hell is doing all day?"

JORDAN: Yeah, must be farting around. There's no way he's working and being productive. He must be at McDonald's.

NOAH: People like McDonald's.

JORDAN: They do.

NOAH: No, he's very productive but he's like, "I don't want to be online because I'm trying to work."

JORDAN: Right.

NOAH: But it did help having real time chat to talk sooner. I always share what I'm doing now. It's not just him telling me he was like, "Okay, cool. Yes sir, I'll just do these tasks." And those are the things we've changed and it's been great for seven years.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

JORDAN: One thing that I've done that's helped me in my relationship with Jennie and inside the business is I make my calendar public. Inside the company everyone can see it. I have a

personal calendar that's a different color that other people can't see and it marks times as busy. So they don't need to know that I'm getting a haircut.

NOAH: Oh, interesting.

JORDAN: If Jen is like, "We're going to watch Game of Thrones on Sunday night," that might be blocked off on there so I don't do something like, "Hey Noah, let's go out to dinner." The rest of it is in there and what that accomplishes is everyone can see when I'm available but what they can also see is, "Oh, man, Jordan is doing a ton of work."

It's not only just, "Okay Jordan's busy or Jordan is doing this and that," it's, "Hey, Jordan, I notice you have a lot of phone calls and they're all throughout the week. Have you ever thought about just making them all on Monday afternoon?" I'm like, "No, that never occurred to me," and they're like, "Yeah, I find this, this, this, and this," and I'm like like, "Oh, hey Jen, let's try that for a week." She's like, "Great. I can't believe I didn't do that earlier."

Or they're like, "Hey I noticed that you have lunch meetings. I found that I just got rid of them and I make people meet me for breakfast or dinner," and it's like, "Oh, yeah, because those one hour things turn into like three hour time waste and I've got to shuffle everything. I never thought about just saying no to those lunch meetings." So me and AJ just don't do those anymore and we've both been like, "This is massively productive."

And then also, it eliminates the problem that a lot of times AJ would be like, "Look, I didn't know when you were available. I scheduled a 4 pm with our banker, can you make it?" and I'm like, "Oh, crap, no," or, "Yeah, but now I've got to move a bunch of stuff." He's like, "Made it for 3 pm, that was blank on your calendar. Cool?" I'm like, "Yep, totally cool."

NOAH: That is interesting.

JORDAN: It's such a dumb simple hack but I don't know anyone else that does it. These are people who have run companies like years that have 50 people working there and they're all trying to get your attention, so they're emailing you, you're going back and forth -- I'm like, "Tell people when you're available and you can make it public," and families need to do this too! "When's mom going to be home? When's dad going to be home? When does the kid have practice?" so you're not texting your son, "Where are you? Oh, soccer? Oh, yeah, that's right, it's Thursday." Jennie and I work together and we are married and we live together, of course, as a result of that.

NOAH: She's always there.

JORDAN: Always there. So I share my location because if she doesn't know where I'm at it's probably because I've been kidnapped for a third time, damn it. I mean, that's part of the beauty of working together is she handles all the logistics.

NOAH: What is one of the things that's not so great working together?

JORDAN: It's when I'm dissatisfied with a piece of work, which is rare. She'll be like, "I'm gardening. I'm going to do this. I'm going to the farmer's market. I'm going to do that other thing. I'm going to yoga," and I'm like, "Cool. I just assume your inbox is empty, right?" And she's like, "No," and I'm like, "Okay, fine." And then I'm like, "Hey, did you book this thing?" and usually it's done, 99 times out of a 100, but sometimes it's like, "Hey are you sure you should be going to the farmer's market when you have 25 unread emails or something?" and it's not that she's doing her job wrong, it's that I'm turning into a manager when I should be being a husband.

So it's my own fault for not knowing when I should do a certain role. That's been a learning curve but that learning curve wouldn't be there if she didn't work for Art of Charm. But that's the only disadvantage I can think of so far in two and a half years of working with her and I think that the advantages far outweigh that.

NOAH: Now that you've worked with your significant other, is that something you would always recommend?

JORDAN: No, I think most people can't do it. When we first started doing it, everyone's like, "It's going to be a disaster. Do not hire your girlfriend. Do not hire your wife. Don't do it. I tried it, this relationship fell apart. This guy did it, his relationship fall apart." We do it and it works awesome. It's been two and a half years, no problems at all so far. I don't know what these other people were doing that caused it to destroy their relationship or have major, major problems. I don't know what they were doing. Maybe Jennie is just a really good worker and I'm just such a lazy laissez-faire manager that those mix together really well. I don't manage her that hard but I also don't need to. I can see if she was not that productive and I was a stronger armed manager that that would be a problem or some combination of that. But I don't want to think about her role and she doesn't want me in it, so that works really well. A lot of people might be like, "Call him and tell him da da da da," and it's like, "Would you do that for a regular employee?" If the answer is no then don't do it for your wife or girlfriend. But of course if she's sitting there with you telling you to do it, now you're between a rock and a hard place. So if you think that's a danger at all, do not work with your significant other. There's also no real advantage to it unless you're business owners. Because if you work with your significant other but we both work for you Noah, so what? What's the advantage there? There's no advantage there.

NOAH: Commute is easier.

JORDAN: Commute is easier, right. There's probably a few other advantages. But if I own the company, I can bring her with me. Well great, my assistant travels with me. That's really awesome.

NOAH: There's not like a power dynamic that doesn't work? Like, "Hey he's always in charge and I'm always like having to do his **** work," kind of thing?

JORDAN: I think it's because I give her a lot of autonomy in the working role. Normally that's not the case. But you would have to give that autonomy in a relationship unless you've got some sort of weird submissive dominance relationship thing which would not work for us. So I give, obviously, the same amount of autonomy that she would have in the relationship, which is you can do whatever you want as long as it doesn't cause huge problems in the relationship. The obvious stuff. I also give her that freedom in the role at work. But again, I'm able to do that because she's not going, "Cool, I can do whatever I want and get away with it." There's results that need to happen and when they don't come, they're really obvious. "Did you not schedule my week in advance? Did you not return these phone calls? Did you not run these payments?" The results are really tangible and since she likes the work, it's not a problem. But if you were running a company and the person you're working with did not like their job and they were pulling stuff to get away with it and they were a significant other, you would have huge problems on your hands.

NOAH: I've worked with my exes in the past and I loved it. I absolutely loved it. It was nice that we had similar interests. It was nice that I respected their work ethic. If they were probably a crappy worker, one, I hopefully wouldn't be with them. But I was like, "Man you really helped make my life better," and it was a shared experience. Some people probably would say it's too much time together but I enjoyed all of it.

JORDAN: I mean look, it's possible that Jennie and I are just in the honeymoon phase, even though we've been together for four years. We did just get married three months ago so maybe we are in the honeymoon phase and like in five years it'll just be, "Oh, God, I just need a break," but I don't feel like that at all right now.

NOAH: It could be definitely a timing thing and also you have separate roles. You're not doing the same thing.

JORDAN: We work on separate floors. I don't see her all day.

NOAH: Do you think that probably is a big difference?

JORDAN: I think that might help. I broadcast all day. She's not in the studio. She's downstairs in her office. She's often during the day and she'll do her work at night when I'm relaxing. It gives me time alone to hang out.

NOAH: Totally.

JORDAN: And do stuff. Play some stupid zombie games on my iPad or whatever.

NOAH: You know how to play the iPad games.

JORDAN: But you have rules for your own relationship because you have a relationship agreement.

NOAH: So the relationship agreement -- I noticed in all relationships that I've been in, there's always some issues, no matter what. No matter how great the girl or guy is, there's always some issues. So, as we're getting more serious in our relationship -- I read a New York Times article called Sign on the Dotted Line.

JORDAN: Okay.

NOAH: And it was just a story about how a couple did a relationship agreement and it was about things that they expected of each other in the relationship and answers to common things like, "Are we okay with cheating?" And so with some relationships, yeah. It's like, "Hey, here's the clear thing about cheating that you can do." Just other things like what about how often should we be hanging out and what about personal development? What about trips? What about family? And I brought it up to her and I said, "Hey, why don't we do this relationship agreement?" and there was no template so we just created one from scratch. And I think ultimately what's been interesting is it just sets really clear expectations.

JORDAN: Yeah which I think is a great idea and I've had a lot of conversations with Jen about a lot of these expectations early in the game but I never thought to write down the actual answers. I just thought to spot check, "Are we on the same page?" But it occurred to me that someone could change their mind or just be in an agreeable moment at that time, myself included. They could just be saying what's convenient or, "Oh, I'm really not cool with this but we're at Cheesecake Factory so I'm not going to make a big deal out of it now."

NOAH: But you can actually do it. The way it started is that we had talked about it. I started putting something in my notes just in my phone -- so you could do it on your phone -- and then we moved it to a google doc that we could both edit. And I'll talk about more of the specifics but we said, "Hey, this is the date and we're going to revisit it on this date," because things change like maybe you move in together so you don't need that in your agreement anymore or maybe some things you want to add, some things you want to subtract. So, in terms of the relationship agreement, the first section: Reasons for being with Noah, she added why she's with me. It's funny, I still think about it.

JORDAN: Does it say Sumo with a dollar sign instead of an 'S'?

NOAH: She's like, "Pension," no, "Nest egg." No, it's more of like, hardworking, ambitious, I'm very thoughtful of her feelings. The next section was that we'd always be great friends. But what does it mean to be great friends? Do monthly experiences together. We have certain activities that we like to share and do that we'll do for ourselves. So it's like, "Let's try to do those because it really helps us explore and get closer."

JORDAN: Like escape games and dance lessons, that kind of thing?

NOAH: Yeah, exactly, but find communal things. Next section is visitation rights.

JORDAN: Mm, okay. You don't have pets. Go on.

NOAH: No not that kind of visitation but we don't live together so how many times a week should you see someone?

JORDAN: Interesting, okay.

NOAH: It sounds small but at the same time, one of the things she put that I didn't even think about, she's like, "You never come to my place." Her place is actually pretty nice.

JORDAN: It's probably cleaner.

NOAH: No, mine's pretty clean.

JORDAN: It probably smells better.

NOAH: But no it's also like a 20 minute drive and in Austin it's like, "Oh, I'll just take the airplane." But it's more just clarity around these things and I think that's the thing that's really helped. So, how many nights do we have dinner a week? Try to do like we did Shabbat last night. Try to do a Shabbat thing.

JORDAN: Vietnamese Shabbat because she's Vietnamese.

NOAH: A Vibbat.

JORDAN: Vibbat.

NOAH: And then yeah, just other sections. Personal development, trips, sex, monogamy, future, and marriage notes.

JORDAN: Okay, so wait. Monogamy, like, "Yes, we're both going to be monogamous. Non-negotiable."

NOAH: Is getting someone else's Snapchat name cheating? How would you feel about that?

JORDAN: Right, I would think that's weird.

NOAH: It is but I think that's one of these things that if it's not clear in a relationship, you do it, and then they're pissed off and you're like, "I had no idea." I can't tell you how many times in relationships I'm like, "I didn't no." It actually is helpful. Now I know what she's okay with. So, I don't want to share all the things that are super private but that's something that we're not okay with. If you're giving out your Snapchat names, okay now these guys or girls are talking to each other -- to us -- I don't think that's good.

JORDAN: It's in a way that she can't be like, "It's harmless."

NOAH: Exactly.

JORDAN: Right, and the thing is, even if you trust your partner and these kinds of things are important because you can't necessarily trust the person who's on the outside of the relationship. I remember early on in our relationship there was a guy who --

Me and Jen were meeting in Vegas and there was a guy who she met and she's like, "Oh, yeah, this guy I met. He's really cool. He's a young entrepreneur, da, da, da," I was like, "Cool, whatever," and then she was like, "Yeah, he invited us to go abalone hunting or whatever," and I was like, "Eh, I don't really want to do that." She was like, "Oh, okay, well we just won't go." Then the guy texted her and was like, "Hey, do you want to go do the abalone thing?" and she's like, "No, I think we're going to hang back." And he's like, "Cool, you want to meet for a beer?" and she's like, "I don't know. We're in Vegas at this hotel," and he's like, "Cool, when can you get away?" and she's like, "Get away? What are you talking about?" and he's like, "For a beer."

And she's like, "Well, I don't know. My boyfriend and I want to go see Cascade and all this stuff," and he's like, "When can you get away from him for a minute, is he going to go," -- And she's like, "Oh, I don't think that's appropriate," and then he's like, "Yeah, well I'm not asking you to marry me, I'm just asking you for a beer."

NOAH: Whoa.

JORDAN: And I was like, "I told you that he doesn't want to hang out with both of us. I told you that." And she didn't get that. She felt kind of bad but it caused a little bit of a riff because I was like, "This is really annoying that that happened. You should just not give your phone number to random dudes," and she's like, "I thought he was just a friendly guy." And I was like, "Oh, God this is weird." We'd probably been dating for like a month at this point, no big deal. But she had innocent ideas about this and that sort of thing bugged me. And the other thing is, if you put something in here, if you're doing this with a significant other, this agreement and the other person has really strict guidelines, you might be like, "Oh, they're a little controlling."

NOAH: More than you want.

JORDAN: I don't really want to deal with that.

NOAH: And you're going to have disagreements. So there's some stuff about if you're drinking -- if I'm allowed to drink around people of the other sex.

JORDAN: Oh, really?

NOAH: If I'm about to drink or if I'm about to hang out with someone of the opposite sex. Originally it was, "You are not allowed to," or, "You need to get approval to do that."

JORDAN: Damn.

NOAH: Yeah, I was like --

JORDAN: That's strict.

NOAH: "You can't control me, girl."

JORDAN: Hella strict.

NOAH: And I said, "Look, that's not the kind of relationship I want to be in. I want to be in a relationship with trust at least for this period -- this three months of our agreement, I will do my best to tell you. I can't promise that I will always do it but if I'm about to, I will let you know. And then in three months we can revisit if that's something you want to change."

JORDAN: Once she gets to trust you more she probably won't even care. After you get married, for me, it was kind of like, "That's fine. I don't care."

NOAH: Yeah.

JORDAN: But she's still like, "Wait, no you don't -- I don't want you to go on any trips without me." We talked about that after you mentioned that at dinner. She's like, "Do you really want to go on a trip without me?" I was like, "No, did I say I did?" She's like, "Well in that relationship agreement Noah said," -- And I was like, "Oh, no, I just don't know the answer to that." Now I do. Apparently that's not cool.

NOAH: Not cool.

JORDAN: But that's why it's in there. I get why. But I'm guessing that when we're married for 20 years she's going to be like, "Yeah, please do go on a trip without me and make it as long as you can. Get out of here." My mom's like, "Oh, yeah? You want to go on a trip? Make it three months. The house will be clean for three months. I'll pack extra food for you."

NOAH: That is true though is that I've asked her to convert to Judaism -- I think I mentioned that to you -- and she's like, "One hundred percent, I'll do it. No problem. Once I have a ring." And I'm like, "What kind of ring are we talking about?" I think all of this stuff, even trips -- This is what you were mentioning is that, I like travelling, it gives me stimulation, I like seeing people and all this stuff. But in here it's like, try to make trips less than two weeks if I'm going to be travelling solo. So just stuff like that, just a lot of clarity around this monogamy stuff as I talked

about. And the future one is even interesting too. It's like, when are we thinking actually of living together?

JORDAN: Oh, yeah.

NOAH: So what day is that? Dogs. The religion thing I talked about. Talking about where would we want to live, things like that. When would marriage probably happen?

JORDAN: This is all great. I think the only problem that people might run into is they're going to feel like, "I don't know the answers," and that's okay too because not only can these change, they probably should change. They just should be discussed as they change.

NOAH: That's what you say. You say, "I don't know the answer."

JORDAN: It's not a contract.

NOAH: Yeah.

JORDAN: Right.

NOAH: That's why I have my lawyer here, obviously. Thank you, Jordan.

JORDAN: Better renew my Bar membership.

NOAH: Harbinger Esquire. The point here though is that if you don't know, you just say, "Hey, we don't know." That's what I would do. The other part though is that this gives you a chance to freaking figure out the answer. I think for the most part you'll be like, "Hey we'll think about it." I'm like, "You're not going to think about it."

JORDAN: You're not thinking, you're putting zero brain power into thinking about it. The other thing is, you might know, "Yeah, I'd be totally cool with a dog," and the other person might be like, "I'm never going to get a dog," and you're like, "Okay, is that

important to me? Yes it kind of is," or -- There are couples that I know and I go, "So, are you guys going to have kids?" and the girl's like, "I think so," and the guy is like, "Not any time soon," and I'm like, "Ya'll might want to talk about that more than while I'm here with you at Chipotle because I feel like there's a slight difference in expectations here." And that stuff is -- Maybe the stuff you were talking about on the agreement is not as important as kids but it is important. Some guys might want to live in another country for a year or two and she's thinking, "No way, I'm not moving away from my family. Are you insane?"

NOAH: But like here, one thing, maybe we'll do it the next time. We don't talk about kids at all. It's not that we don't want to have kids, it's just not part of the section in where we're at with our relationship.

JORDAN: Right. I would put that in there for Q4.

NOAH: Yeah, I'm going to put that as a future note to talk about.

JORDAN: Yeah, I'm shocked that that's not in there.

NOAH: I'm actually a little surprised that we didn't have it too.

JORDAN: What an oversight. This is why I'm here.

NOAH: Nice. As my lawyer.

JORDAN: What about things like career? Looking at Jen and I's relationship, Jen quit her job and now works for AoC. Would Ly maybe be a stay at home mom?

NOAH: That's a great question to get clear on.

JORDAN: She may not know.

NOAH: I have asked her about it and she would stay at home, but for how long?

JORDAN: Yeah, she might be like, "No, I really like working." A lot of people do.

NOAH: She loves her job. That was actually one of the most appealing things about her. I really wanted to be with someone who loved their career, not just their job, their career. And she found one in medical that she just really likes.

JORDAN: My inbox is full of people that did not make the effort or have the foresight to discuss any of this stuff that are paying the consequences or have paid the consequences or are really wishing that they did.

NOAH: Yeah, a lot of this stuff, I think if I got on the same page with my previous girlfriend, it would have ended sooner.

JORDAN: Yeah, you would have ended it sooner.

NOAH: Yeah well because there was more in the religion thing. For her, religion was very big in Christianity which is fine, it was just not where I wanted to go. And I don't think we ever actually answered it. We never actually had to say, "Okay, let's decide. And if we can't decide, maybe this is not the relationship."

JORDAN: I broke up with a girl a long time ago because I couldn't take the religion thing. She was super, super religious. "If you believe in evolution you're stupid and you're going to hell and you're toxic to be around." It was just all kinds of ridiculous and then after law school I was like, "Okay, I need to grow up. I'm not going to tell my kids that this is magical and this is not real and don't believe in science. I'm not doing that."

And I was also meeting a bunch of other cool friends of mine, male and female, and they were like, "Wait, let me get this straight. Your girlfriend doesn't believe in this thing that all normal people believe in, she's hardcore about it, doesn't respect other people's beliefs, thinks gay people are evil," and all this crazy stuff that I just hated. I'd be like, "Oh, this guy I'm hanging out with, he's so funny. He's a gay dude at Howard

University and he's white. It's so funny. He's got the funniest stories," and she's like, "Ew, that's disgusting," and I'm like, "Okay, that's a creepy response."

And I was just like, "I'm not going to be around this. As an adult I can't do it," and so I had to pull the trigger on that. I'm like, man if I had had this agreement back then, I wouldn't have gone out with her for nearly as long as I did. It was a four or five year relationship.

NOAH: Wow.

JORDAN: That should have been a three month fling, if that.

NOAH: One thing I wonder and my brother said this to me, I've never forgotten it. I was seeing one girl and he said, "If she stopped having sex with you for one year, would you stay with her right now?" and I said, "No way." And he was like, "Okay, it's kind of pretty obvious what it is to you." I ended up breaking up pretty quickly after that because it was only about the physical that mattered, not actually that emotional connection.

JORDAN: I will tell you I've thought about this and I was like, "If Jen stops sleeping with me for one year, what would I do?" and I'm like, "Well, I'd be counting the days down but I could do it because she's really awesome."

NOAH: I should bet her, like, "Hey Jen, I'll pay you 100k just to not have sex."

JORDAN: 100K?

NOAH: For a year of no sex.

JORDAN: Hmm, I might take that deal. It depends on the parameters of the deal. But that is an important question to think about because as guys our minds our polluted with -- They're cloudy. Clouded with physical desires that need not be explained.

NOAH: No and I think it's interesting that -- I don't know if we should feel so guilty that that's a part of a relationship.

JORDAN: I don't feel guilty, I think it makes the making of other decisions -- it can be bad. You can make terrible decisions thinking, "Yeah, but that booty though." You hear that. That's a meme.

NOAH: They talk about it all the time. Every time when it's over -- in the past when it was with someone else that it didn't matter -- I was like, "God that was a quick four minutes and now I'm like, -- I just need to go."

JORDAN: Yeah.

NOAH: I was like, "What a waste of how much built up excitement it is versus the actual reality."

JORDAN: Yeah, and you're thinking about, "Man I went out, I spent all the night working on this. Now I'm going to have a hangover tomorrow. This was not worth it."

NOAH: There's an Aziz skit about that where he's like, "Man, I go out 100 nights a year. One night maybe I sleep with someone else but every other night I'm drunk, I've got a hangover, I've got bills -- What do I get out of this?"

JORDAN: Yeah. It's true for a lot of guys in their 20s and even 30s. And it was certainly true for me for a while. I love the idea of the relationship agreement, we're going to link to that in the show notes -- A blank sort of template-ish PDF that you can look at. I encourage you to add your own stuff on there and think about what's important to you. Remember, the answers can and should change. They should be revisited maybe every three to six months and you don't have to do it right when you start dating, I would say wait. It's when things are beyond, "Yeah, I'm having fun sleeping with you."

NOAH: You're committed. If I would have done this after three months it would have been weird. Because I wasn't ready to have a relationship.

JORDAN: I think so too. And these kinds of things we talked about really early because it was going to be like, "Look this isn't worth it if you're going to go and like bang a bunch of other chicks." That was something that she had made very clear and I was like, "Okay, I'm fine with that," because I had gotten that all out of my system at that point.

NOAH: Because I think with a lot of relationships we'll drag it. Like, "Eh, what's the loss? I have to make a decision, she's going to go or not go."

JORDAN: Yeah.

NOAH: There's something there to use in other ways.

JORDAN: Because what we said earlier in the show, lowering the risk by taking things off the table. Maybe this was raising risk by taking things off the table but either way, options were removed from the equation and I had to either be okay with that for real or not. And that was an important ultimatum. I was more than happy to make it. I was like, "I'm done with that. I'm good with that." That moved everything real fast. You can either ask that question a year in, you can ask it two months in -- If it's too early, you should voice that. The other person who's being asked should voice that. So if someone's asking you to commit too early, you can just say that. I think a lot of guys are just like, "Okay," and then they're like, "Ugh, resentment," and then it builds up and you end up with a relationship agreement that each person has in their head and they both look totally different.

NOAH: That's true.

JORDAN: Noah Kagan, thank you so much for your wisdom. Is there anything I haven't asked you that you're like, "Oh, my gosh, how did you forget that?"

NOAH: No, thank you for having me.

JORDAN: Great big thank you to Noah Kagan. He's got his own podcast called Noah Kagan Presents, got a lot of interesting guests on there and you can get more from Noah naturally, and friends over there. And if you enjoyed this, don't forget to thank Noah on Twitter. We'll have that linked in the show notes as well. Tweet at me your number one takeaway from Noah Kagan. I'm @theartofcharm on Twitter. As usual, we'll be replying to your questions and feedback for Noah on Fan Mail Friday and you can find the show notes for this episode at theartofcharm.com/podcast.

I also want to encourage you to join our AoC challenge. Man, this is a fun group. It's theartofcharm.com/challenge or you can text 'AoC' to the number 38470. That's A-O-C to the number 38470. We're redoing this whole thing. It was good before, it's going to be fantastic now. It's about improving your networking and connection skills, improving the social skills that you use every day, persuasion and influence skills, inspiring those around you to develop a personal and professional relationship with you. It's still free. It's still unisex. It's about forward momentum. Get that ball rolling. Come on and join us at theartofcharm.com/challenge or text 'AoC' to the number 38470.

And also, we'll end up sending you our fundamentals Toolbox that I mentioned earlier on the show, which includes great practical stuff, ready to apply the second you hear it, on reading body language, nonverbal communication, the science of attraction, negotiation techniques, networking and influence strategies, persuasion tactics, and everything else that we teach here at The Art of Charm. This will make you a better networker, a better connector, but damn, it'll make you a better thinker. That's the idea anyway. That's at

theartofcharm.com/challenge or like I said before text 'AoC' to 38470.

This episode of AoC was produced by Jason DeFillippo, Jason Sanderson is our audio engineer and editor, show notes on the website are by Jason Fogarty -- Just kidding, his name is Robert but I'm thinking about changing it. Theme music by Little People, transcriptions by TranscriptionOutsourcing.net, I'm your host Jordan Harbinger -- If you can think of anyone who might benefit from the episode you just heard, please pay AoC and myself for that matter, the highest compliment and pay it forward by sharing this episode with that person.

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