

Transcript for Toolbox | Single Dads (Episode 345)

Full show notes found here:

<https://theartofcharm.com/podcast-episodes/aoc-toolbox-single-dads-episode-345/>

JORDAN: Welcome to The Art of Charm; I'm Jordan Harbinger. The Art of Charm brings together the best minds in the industry to teach you guys how to crush it in life, love, and at work. This show is about you, and we're here to help you become the best man you can be in every area of your life. If you're new to the show but you want to know more about what we teach here at The Art of Charm, listen to the Toolbox at theartofcharmpodcast.com/toolbox. That's where we've got a lot of fundamentals of dating and attraction. body language, eye contact, vocal tonality, and even the single dad show that you're going to hear right now. We've got live boot camps running every single week here in Hollywood, California. Details at [theartofcharm](https://theartofcharm.com) or give us a call here in the office, 888-413-7177 or email me, jordan@theartofcharm.com. Looking forward to meeting all of you guys here in L.A.

Now today we're talking with Tom and Dave, alumni of The Art of Charm, both single dads, they talk about how The Art of Charm program helped them in their single dad lifestyle, if you will. Talking about detailing with their ex, how to gain control of their emotions, and how they passed that skillset along to their kids, including even social skills like making new friends and creating relationships as well.

And of course, also positive thinking and how that was passed along, positive habits from The Art of Charm being passed along by single dads to their kids, and being a better father, being a better entrepreneur, and dating as a single dad, of course, being the big one. And managing relationships and relationship concerns as a single dad. So, I hope you guys enjoy this one with Tom and Dave, Art of Charm single dad alumni.

I've got Dave and Tom here, AoC alumni. What I want to focus on during this episode, guys, is I know it's not just like, "Hey,

these are two alumni. Everybody take Aoc." It's kind of like, all right, you two are very unique in that you are single fathers. And it's not that you're the only two single dads that ever graduated from an AoC program. I mean, when I put the call out in the alumni network for this, I think we had a double digit reply from several guys, and you guys just happened to be available at this time. So, congratulations on making the cut. No, no.

TOM: It was such a long process.

JORDAN: It was, it was a very long application process that consisted of, well you replied first and you had a computer with Internet.

TOM: I'm going to step out and get a lottery ticket since I won this now.

JORDAN: Yeah, you should. But, one step at a time. And so, what I want to talk about essentially is how things changed with you, being a single dad after The Art of Charm program. Because I know that before the program, you were kind of -- as with anybody who takes the program -- you're one person beforehand and you're that same person afterwards, with a little bit of tweaks and whole lot more confidence. And that manifests itself in different ways, in a way that actually helps you with a lot of different things that I think a lot of people don't expect. So, I kind of want to start -- and feel free to chime in on each other's answer. But I definitely -- the first thing I noticed is that when you guys were sort of doing the prep that I'd sent you -- and thanks for that, by the way -- is that you're dealing with your ex. And that's sort of a reality.

Whenever you have a kid with somebody, you're dealing with them, whether you like it or not, in a business relationship, pretty much forever. And it's a complicated and complex business relationship, because if you just break up with a girlfriend, where you don't have a kid, it's like, "Oh, yeah, I hope I never see her again," or, "Oh, it's going to be awkward if I see her again," or, "I need to avoid this person." You don't have that

luxury when you have a child with somebody, unless you're in one of those situations where the mother just doesn't want to see the kid, which is pretty kid, you've got to deal with that.

So Dave, I know that you had some serious issues dealing with your ex, before and after AoC and things changed. The way that you handled those scenarios changed dramatically. Do you want to go into that a little bit?

DAVE: Yeah, I'd love to. Before AoC, I was -- number one, I was super negative and just always pissed off, always angry, so that didn't really help the situation at all.

JORDAN: Because she was coming into every interaction with you being like, "I've got to talk to my ex and he's such a negative dick. I'm just waiting for him to whine and *****. I just want to grab the kid and get out of there," right?

DAVE: Every interaction was a yelling match and I just couldn't wait to bug out and leave. I was like, "Just give me my kid and shut up and we'll leave," and it wasn't healthy at all, man. And it wasn't good for my daughter.

JORDAN: Yeah. Yeah, that's a good point. I didn't even think about that because I don't have kids, so I'm a selfish prick. Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. I mean, it seems like a lot of that stemmed from you being -- and correct me if I'm wrong -- you're essentially afraid. You were kind of a push over and you let her walk all over you, and that actually just made you angry, even though at the end of the day, that's kind of your own fault because that's who you were being around her.

DAVE: Yeah. Yeah, I was not the same person. It definitely manifested itself into just bad, needy, attention-seeking behavior.

JORDAN: So, go into that a little bit, because I don't know if everybody is familiar with what attention-seeking behavior might be. So, you were afraid and you were a pushover. Explain some examples

of what that means. So, explain that in the context of your ex and your child.

DAVE: Yeah, so we would always have issues around the holidays. I would never know the schedule and I would always ask her, "Hey, Christmas is around the corner. What are we doing? How are we sharing time," because we actually don't have a formal agreement through the court system. We work everything around the courts.

JORDAN: Because that's a huge pain in the but, otherwise. You're glued to it, right?

DAVE: Oh, man, you're glued to it and it's lawyer fees and -- I know you used to be a lawyer and you guys aren't cheap, so --

JORDAN: Yeah, that's true. Yeah, that's true. I'm cheap now. But my personal problems aside -- so, she would walk all over the boundaries because you didn't really set any.

DAVE: I didn't have any boundaries at all and I would always be afraid to bring up those topics because I was always scared to bring them up or I didn't feel confident in myself. I basically wasn't in control of my own life. I was just kind of riding the waves as they hit.

JORDAN: Okay, and so, you gave one example in the prep that you were so kind to prepare, which is sometimes you'd be waiting until midnight, 1 am to drop off your daughter, on a Sunday night, when you had to work the next day and be up at 6 am, because your wife just wasn't around.

DAVE: Right, yeah. She would be out with her friends, because she would work Saturday and Sunday. So, I get my daughter every Saturday and Sunday unless I make other arrangements and when it came Sunday night, I'd be sitting there, nine, ten rolls around, she's still not there. I'm like, "Where are you? You're not answering," and I'm sitting there and I'm like, "What am I going to do with my kid? It's cold, I'm leaving my truck running, this

isn't a good situation. What are we going to do? All right, well Walmart is open. Let's run around Walmart until mommy comes home.

JORDAN: That sounds terrible.

DAVE: It was miserable.

JORDAN: It sounds like when you're in an airport lounge and your layover -- you miss your flight so you have to stay overnight and nothing is open and you're just walking around with your thumb in your ass but now you've got a baby and she's like, "I'm bored. I'm hungry," and you're like, "Gotta put on a game face for the kid, but I want to strangle somebody," right?

DAVE: Well yeah. Well, not to mention that it's freaking midnight. She should be in bed.

JORDAN: Yeah, the child's health. Again, did not consider that because I'm not a dad. But yeah, you're absolutely right. And so what happened after the program? It sounds like you started to make changes that weren't just like, "I'm going to tell her how it's going to be." What really happened? How did you really solve this problem and what gave you the confidence? What gave you the ability to solve this problem?

DAVE: Well, what gave me the ability was the small victories. Doing little things every day to encourage positive strong behavior and it gave me the confidence I needed to approach her in a cool, calm, collected manner and say, "Hey listen, can we set aside a time and just talk about this?" I was actually vulnerable. I said, "You know, this really hurts me, I can't get to work on time, if you want to keep getting a paycheck, we're going to have to figure this out because this isn't sustainable. I'm getting into work late, my productivity is disappearing to nothing. This isn't cool."

JORDAN: "I'm going to get fired and then I won't be able to pay child support, let alone be willing to, right?"

DAVE: Yeah, yeah.

JORDAN: Okay, and you set that boundary because you started to gain confidence, essentially from the small victories like you'd said, where you'd been making progress in areas and being able to set boundaries in other areas, like personal life and at work, right?

DAVE: Oh, absolutely. What really gave me encouragement, too, is I changed a lot after the program, personally. I dropped a ton of weight, I moved to a better location of town, I was meeting new people, I created a new social circle. So, all these things led up to the situation where I felt confident and comfortable dealing with it. So, this is obviously -- it's very nebulous, right? Because a lot of guys are listening and they're like, "Yeah, great. You set boundaries."

What advice would you give to single dads listening right now who are like, "Yeah cool, all right, Dave gave his ex wife boundaries, well, I'm not just going to walk up to my ex wife and be all like, 'Here's what's going to happen.'" What advice do you give them? Because you obviously had to make some sort of transformation. If I were your friend, a single dad, and I come to you and I'm going, "I'm getting walked all over. She doesn't respect boundaries slash I'm chicken to set them," what do you tell me besides, "Suck it up and do it?" How do you get me there?

DAVE: This is going to sound counterintuitive, but my first recommendation was do a self-assessment about yourself.

JORDAN: That is counterintuitive, because everybody is expecting you to be like, "Lay it down. Don't back down," right?

DAVE: Yeah. You've got to get yourself in a position where you're confident and comfortable and you're not going to come at her wanting to fight, because if you come at her wanting to fight, she's going to fight back. So, you kind of have to be calm and

comfortable and cool and get in a proper mindset. Once you do that, then you can approach her and you can actually be a bit vulnerable while being confident, which again doesn't sound like it's possible, but that's exactly what I did. I said, "Hey listen, you're not going to get paid if I lose my job. This really hurts me. We've got to figure a better way to do this."

JORDAN: So you came at it, literally, with an air of vulnerability?

DAVE: Yeah, yeah.

JORDAN: Not, "This is what's wrong with you and this is what needs to happen or blah, blah, blah consequence." You're like, "Hey, I'm really worried that I'm going to suffer at work and this is putting all three of us at risk because you're staying out late," and she --

At that point, you being vulnerable must have led her somewhere in the neighborhood of, "Oh, yeah, I'm staying out late because I know I can get away with it, but I never really thought about the consequences of my daughter and then that also blowing back onto both of us as well as you and you're trying and I'm trying to be fair. And this isn't a team effort where I'm showing up late because I'm like, 'Eh, Dave won't do anything,'" So, it led her to do the same thing and reflect on that, and now you have a better relationship with your ex.

DAVE: Yeah. I don't know what was going on with her head, I just knew that it was something I had to do. I had to try something because, like I said, it wasn't sustainable.

JORDAN: Excellent. And so, it sounds like also the program though, helped you gain control of your emotions. You were blowing up, you were super angry all of the time. How did that affect you? And by the way, you did lose a lot of weights, props. The last time I saw you, I didn't recognize -- remember, I reintroduced myself to you?

DAVE: Yeah, yeah, yeah, that was funny.

JORDAN: That was a compliment, if nothing else. Because I was like, "This guy looks familiar but I don't know where, so I'm just going to reintroduce myself and you said, "I'm Dave," and I was like, "Holy ****, man."

DAVE: Yeah, well it wasn't only the weight thing. I also grew my hair out a bit because I figured I'd do that before it falls out.

JORDAN: Yeah. But also, the first time I met you, you were like, "I'm Dave." And then the second time I met you, you were like, "Hey, man," and I was like, "Hey guy I've never met before. What's going on, thin, long haired, beautiful version of a guy that looks like a guy I used to know?" Yeah.

DAVE: Dude, I'll tell you this. I was kind of a man-child myself before the first program. And then after the first program, it kind of -- I think there might be a misconception that the program is going to fix you, or whatever.

JORDAN: Right, yeah. I'm trying so hard not to be like, "The program did this and the program did that, and the program, --" because it sounds like one, this is not a sales --

DAVE: It has to come from within and immediately, when I exited, was I 100 percent different? No, it took me about a year. That's why I didn't go back for a year, because it took me about a year -- because I was so screwed up -- it took me about a year to figure it all out.

JORDAN: Excellent, thank you so much. And what about you, Tom? In the similar area, have you dealt with your ex in different ways based on what you've come through the program? Or was it more -- did you really focus on other areas?

TOM: You know, it was really other areas. My relationship with my ex has been -- the divorce itself came out of nowhere. It was frightening, it was very scary, I didn't know what was going on. But shortly after I got through that, the relationship with her

just improved and didn't have to go through the same things that Dave did, thankfully.

My big thing was just -- other than dating and personal relationships and stuff -- it was really about my son. I felt -- after my divorce, I was living on the east coast, I felt if I stuck around here, in the same environment, same friends and everything, that I wouldn't grow, I would be stagnant, just be even more complacent than what I was before. And I felt like I just needed to get out of dodge. So, that said, I moved to San Diego, moved 3,000 miles away.

JORDAN: Yeah.

TOM: The hardest decision about that was -- it's funny I just posed this in the forum or family page earlier this week. My father was not around me growing up so I really felt this attachment to my son and I felt if I stayed here, local to him, I would just be just as bad as my father was to me. So, I felt the best thing was really to move away. And that being said, my relationship with my son, just improved.

And then, obviously after the program, it just became way better. I could discuss things with him better, I was more vulnerable, I just felt like I was a lot more present with him. I wasn't constantly in my head thinking what I should say, what I shouldn't say, things like that. And then, just being out in public. After going through the program, I was a lot more confident in myself and the way that I carried myself. He actually started recognizing it and he even made comments about it.

JORDAN: How old is your son?

TOM: So, he's 14 now.

JORDAN: He's socially developing a lot.

TOM: Yeah.

JORDAN: Yeah, okay. That's great.

TOM: So, this was five years ago. So this was over the course of him being from 9 to 14. So yeah, definitely. And now he's in high school and stuff like that. So, it's a lot better than what I was five years ago, and even before that. Even during my marriage, I had life on cruise control and let everyone else make decisions for me and I wasn't really living my life. I was letting other people live it for me.

JORDAN: Right, life was happening to you, right?

TOM: Definitely.

JORDAN: Between 9 and 14 is a pretty critical age for any boy. Do you think that the things that you've done -- the changes that you made, made you able to a better role model to your kid?

TOM: I do, yeah. Not just role model, but we're able to talk about everything now. There's no [00:15:47], there's no hesitation, there's no fear. Fear probably was a big thing in the past. I don't really have any concerns talking to him about anything. We go out and do all kinds of adventures together. It's so much more meaningful, whereas when he was younger, I didn't know to be a father. I didn't know how to be that type of father figure or anything, so it was more like, "All right, today we're going to watch the movies," and that would be way we would spend our day together.

JORDAN: Right.

TOM: Anything not to interact.

JORDAN: Oh, really? So you were actively avoiding, like, "Hey, let's not have a totally real relationship about real stuff, because I'm kind of afraid where that might lead and I don't know how to do it."

TOM: Totally, yeah.

JORDAN: Yeah, and you hear about that a lot. My friends' dads growing up who were divorced, it was always like, "All right, Saturday we're going to the movies and then we're going out to eat," and it was this weird fake relationship where you only had this manufactured good stuff happening with the kid.

TOM: Right.

JORDAN: And it's weird because I remember being like, "Oh, you're so lucky. Your dad always takes you out to eat and takes you to the movies and buys you ****," and then he was like, "Yeah, it's awesome." And then it was like, wait a minute. When we were older, I was like, "Wait, that sucks, because your dad is like a fake guy that just kind of hangs out with you sometimes and when it's convenient," right?

TOM: Right, yeah. Really, the quality time versus quantity of time. I look back and it's sad looking back because that time is something you can't get back and it wasn't a lot of quality in it. But that's definitely changed over the last several years.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

JORDAN: Helping you get present, helping you get sort of vulnerable and real, mirrors a little bit of what Dave and I were talking about in the prep as well. And Dave, feel free to chime in here. You'd mentioned you were an emotional guy where you were in a major wreck. You were negative, you thought everything -- you were a man-child, right? And the program let you be more fun, energetic, and consistent. And now, you can actually communicate to your daughter when you get off, if you do sort of get off track, you can explain to her in a rational way, instead of doing what everybody else's dad, including mine, did, which was be like, "Ugh, whatever," and then just get embarrassed and quiet about it.

TOM: So I follow up on that. It's definitely true, Jordan, just being able to -- if I do act out of character or whatever, I can admit it and I'm not afraid to admit it and just follow that up. But, I'm pretty good about checking myself these days.

JORDAN: Yeah.

TOM: Honestly, it's not really an issue because, what I discovered within myself was when I was getting angry in the past, it was because I wasn't being honest with my intentions or with what I wanted, my desired, or whatever. Now that I am honest, if the other person doesn't want it, I'm cool with that. At least I got my point across from what I wanted and we can agree to disagree and we can move on. There's no - I'm not withholding anything and that withholding what I wanted or my honesty, that's what created the anger.

JORDAN: Interesting. That's really interesting. Right, it was the nice guy syndrome. Lack of boundaries -- your covert contracts not being fulfilled, that make you then angry and you have that. And for guys that don't know what we're talking about, listen to the No More Mr. Nice Guy podcast that we did. And then you get angry because this thing that secretly was never expressed, was not getting fulfilled, and then you decided to throw a tantrum about it.

TOM: Right.

JORDAN: And a lot of guys out there know exactly what that means.

TOM: Passive aggressive behavior.

JORDAN: Yeah. Yeah, perfect.

TOM: Yep.

JORDAN: And Dave, you sort of mentioned that this led to a parenting benefit in that Riley, your daughter, now understands, "Oh,

when I have emotional issues, I can just talk about these things.”

DAVE: Yeah, and it’s really great for her because she’s only six. And kids at that age typically do feel like the world was revolving around them.

JORDAN: Right, and that’s totally normal. Yeah.

DAVE: But it’s not normal for an adult. And I want to jump in with something Tom was saying. It’s hard to be present when you’re focused on yourself and whenever I’m super emotional or negative or whatever, I’m just thinking about me. So I’m sitting there, “Oh, my life sucks. Me, me, me. Wah, wah, wah.” And when you’re doing that, you can’t really focus on your kid.

JORDAN: Right, which the point of your entire existence at this point, right?

DAVE: Yeah.

JORDAN: Yeah, exactly.

DAVE: But now that you get that clarity and you’re not focused on yourself so much, it’s like, “Oh, my God, I can actually be present and be with her and I can notice these things.” And it’s not like I lecture her or I make her read course material or anything like that, it’s just everyday life. She’ll say something and I’ll be like, “Well, you know, you could think about it this way,” and she’s like, “Oh, okay.” And then, you keep doing that and I keep reinforcing that whenever I see her. It’s providing amazing benefits.

TOM: Yeah, so I want to echo one thing off of David, just to give an example of the whole looking at things positive. I lived out in San Diego, driving in L.A. traffic, or even out here in the Boston area. When someone cuts me off, I used to get very frustrated and angry and I’ve reframed that now and I look at it as for all I know, there’s a guy that’s trying to get his daughter or his wife

that's in labor to the hospital. But I don't know what's happening, so I just reframed it and it's more positive, and that frustration just evaporates. It doesn't even get started.

JORDAN: Interesting. So, you learned how to deal with tough situations around your kid as well. And so, of course you know, we all know that children pick up our habits, and that's what we would want them to have.

TOM: Right.

JORDAN: And Dave, you kind of mentioned that you give your daughter the framework that she needs. It's funny because you learned it at 26 and she's 6 years old. But, you can reinforce the positive and give her tools that you learned at The Art of Charm to basically help them deal better with life. And, you gave an example about making new friends. You want to talk about that a little bit? I thought that was pretty interesting.

DAVE: Yeah, so I have no idea if it's genetic or if it's just her being shy or whatever, or because she's an only child. But, we would go to the park and stuff and she'd always say, "I want to play with them. I want to play with them," and I told her, "Well, go over there and tell them you want to play," and she'd, "No, I'm scared. I'm scared." I'm like, "What are you scared of?" and I used, "What's the worst that could happen? You're going to have all your fingers and toes. You're going to be alive," and she still wouldn't do it. So, I'd grab her hand and I'd go over to the kids and I'm like, "Hey, this is Riley. She wants to play with you," and the first couple times I did this, it didn't work. But, I didn't push it, I just did it once or twice a day and then the week after, did it again, and this time a little girl ran up to her and grabbed her hand. And then Riley was hooked.

She went with the kids and she was running around with them and then that triggered something in her head and then, from that point on, she was able to make friends at the park. Now she's able to make friends anywhere. We were just on vacation this summer and we were in a pool and she just chats this little

girl up, and I'm like, "Thank God, now I don't have to be playmate," so I could sit in a lounge chair and just read for a little bit.

And I'm reading on my iPad, and the next thing I know, I see two smiling faces looking at me. It's my daughter and this girl she just met, and I'm like, "What's going on? What do you two have plotted?" and Riley says, "Can we go mini-golfing?" and I'm like, "Well yeah, but you have to ask her dad." So the next thing you know, they run up to her dad and he walks over and he's like, "I guess we're going golfing?" and I'm like, "Yeah, 4 o'clock." And it was like, my kid made these plans that I didn't even know you could do until --

JORDAN: So now Riley is making friends for you instead of you making friends for Riley.

DAVE: Yeah, it's crazy.

JORDAN: That's funny.

TOM: That's awesome.

JORDAN: That is awesome and it's very cute and now the police don't have to show up to the playground anymore to talk to the guy who's trying to make friends with all the little kids.

DAVE: Yeah. Yeah, it sounds crazy but it worked.

JORDAN: It's funny. Oh, my gosh. So, now is she doing a lot of this stuff on her own? Is she starting to chat up kids anywhere? You said she's making friends everywhere she goes. Is this a habit? Is this something she does even when you're not around? Do you know?

DAVE: You know what? That's a great question. I don't know. She's in school now and she talks about her friends so I'd imagine that yeah, she does.

JORDAN: I hope so, yeah. I'm trying to hope that some AoC and principles and principles of general kindness and humanity are not only being passed to you, but also to the kids as well. And Tom, you kind of had an interesting -- you're an entrepreneur, right? And you never really kicked that off until after your program. And so, I think not only is that good for you just being a healthy dad --

TOM: Right.

JORDAN: -- but it could rub off a little bit on the kiddies, as well.

TOM: Yeah, definitely. A lot of it was -- I've been starting my own businesses since I was 16 and a lot of it was either handed to me or I was just in the right place at the right time, or at least that's what the story I told myself was. But after I went through the program, I just felt I could take a lot more charge.

Again, it goes back to not listening to those voices in the back of your head. "This is how I feel and this is what I want," and putting it out there on the table. And having a discussion about it with your partners or your colleagues or whoever it is. Having a discussion rather than just letting it keep you up at night and next thing you know, you're frustrated with the business that you want to start and you lose that passion. Really for me, it was getting rid of that voice that was inside my head. I don't know when it got started but man that thing was so loud for so many years. It's nonexistent now, for the most part.

JORDAN: What about dating, guys? Now, the common thing that I hear from single dads that listen to the podcast is, "Dating is different. I've got kids now. You don't know what it's like," and I thought, "Hmm." That was one of the things that sparked this show was it's like, "Hey, I actually don't know but I know that a lot of AoC alumni are doing a ton of dating, even though they're single dads."

TOM: Yeah, so this was an area that totally tripped me out. I essentially never lived on my own until after my divorce. So, I

was 33 the first time I ever lived on my own. I've got a nine year old son and I hadn't dated since high school. So, you're talking '90s.

JORDAN: Nice, wow. Like, MC Hammer pants first date attire.

TOM: Yeah, totally. Yeah, so I graduated in '94. So, here it is 2009 and you have this thing called Facebook and these things people carry in their pockets that I thought were phones but you can do text messaging to people.

JORDAN: Right, exactly. And you're like, "What planet am I on? There's dating on your phone now?"

TOM: Yeah, you have Match, you have OKCupid, you had -- it was a completely different world. I grew up in a small town. So the first time I ever went to a club I was 33 years old.

JORDAN: That's awkward.

TOM: Yeah, tell me about it. I didn't know what I was doing. I had no self-esteem, to be honest with you, at the end of the divorce. Having a child obviously did put even additional pressure on me. So, it took me a long time to get through that and get over it. I did a lot of stuff on my own, I tried to find some guys that were cool, and then obviously I came across you guys and that's really what changed my life. And it wasn't just the program, it was the program, obviously the alumni network that we have afterwards --

JORDAN: Yeah, right.

TOM: It was really -- there was one exercise that we did during our program that I couldn't believe how difficult it was for me. It was, I think, on the third or fourth day. And it just about killed me. And I remember talking to Johnny about an hour and a half into it, and I'm like, "Dude, I just can't do this," and I couldn't figure out why. He told me, "Well go try this," and it didn't work.

And then I'm sitting there on Hollywood Boulevard and there's a guy sitting there on the street with one of these checks that's the size of your car. He's out there, I think, by a bank or something like that. And he sees me struggling and he gives me five seconds of advice and all it was, was, "Why cares?" And it's basically what Dave just told his daughter. You're going to live at the end of the day. In the 30 minutes of the exercise, I finished getting everything what you're supposed to do. It was getting the signatures piece. I don't want to say too much but --

JORDAN: It's okay.

TOM: -- I got everything I needed in that last 30 minutes and it was based off of five second advice from some stranger. It's so amazing how these little things can hold you back and all you have to do is just push it out of your head and go for it.

JORDAN: What about you, Dave? You definitely have done a ton of dating, post program.

DAVE: I didn't do too much dating before the program, and after the program, to be honest with you, the biggest challenge was I felt kind of embarrassed and ashamed I had a kid. And I was like, "How do I bring this up? What do I do? Are they going to accept her?" and it was kind of like -- I didn't know how to handle that.

JORDAN: Yeah, that's a good question.

DAVE: It took me a long time to figure that piece out. And basically what I do now is I utilize Tinder and online dating -- plenty of Fish or OKCupid, etcetera, etcetera. Those are my main sources and what I do now is I just -- the first meeting in person, after pleasantries or whatever, I just get it out there. Like, "Listen, I have a daughter, she's awesome." And I was actually surprised about the reaction. A lot of women love kids, apparently.

JORDAN: Shocking. Who knew?

DAVE: Yeah. We say that now in joking, but for me it was really mindblowing. I was like, "Oh, my God. Women love children. This is awesome." So, that was again, one of those small victories that gave me the confidence that, "You know what? My situation rocks. I have this adorable, smart little girl. Who wouldn't want to be around us?"

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

JORDAN: Yeah, excellent. And you know, for me, it seems like a lot of guys write in and say, "I don't know what to say about my kids. I don't want to admit it right away but I don't want to hide it because she's a big part of my life, and da, da, da, da." It does take a certain level of confidence in yourself to say, "Listen, we're a package deal," this is good but if you're not at that level, you need to get there, because otherwise, you're going to have trouble dating with kids, no matter what.

DAVE: Yeah, absolutely.

TOM: Yeah. And that's just going to come out in the dates. If you're not honest or you hide it, then where do you think that relationship is going to go, especially once she finds out? It's just a downwards spiral.

JORDAN: Yeah, because you could have dated that girl for five weeks and then been like, "By the way, I have kids," and instead of going, "Oh, well I like you so much I'm willing to deal with it," they're going to go, "You're such an *****. Why would you not have told me that? Go **** yourself." That's what's going to happen, right?

DAVE: Yeah and then in five weeks you might get attached to her or then you might get emotional about it. I just met you and you're not into it, that's really cool, thanks for being honest.

JORDAN: Yeah, that's completely fair.

DAVE: Yep.

TOM: And it is funny, Jordan, looking back at who I was back then versus who I am now. I don't even recognize who I was back then. Instead of the guy always chasing who they want, it's flipped. Are they good enough for me and even if I want to introduce them to my son, are they good enough to be introduced to him? That's a totally different perspective versus, "Oh, my God, is she okay with me having kids?"

But I was the same way as Dave. I didn't know how well that would go over and I was really nervous and a wreck about it and I hid it for the first several dates. But eventually I just got it out there in the open and the ones that weren't interested, I made really good female friends and they introduced me to friends that were interested in dating someone with kids. So, it was a win-win, once I overcame that.

JORDAN: Excellent. Thank you very much for that. I think that's one of the main questions that guys come in with or email or send in. It's, "I've got kids. How do I handle this? How do I handle the dating with kids?" and it can be a deal breaker because what it does is, it stops a lot of guys from dating. You had mentioned, Dave, like Tom was talking about, reframing things more positively. Is that --

DAVE: Yeah, yeah.

JORDAN: -- pass that on to your kid. DO you want to talk about that? Because that's a pretty good one, and we can end with that, actually.

DAVE: Yeah so, exactly what Tom was saying. Sitting in traffic and some dude cuts you off and gives you the finger. You can rewrite that and say, "Well, he was actually giving the finger to the car behind me and his wife is dying and she has to go to the hospital." And then you have sympathy for him. And then it just goes away. You're not angry anymore.

JORDAN: Sure.

DAVE: And it was remarkable because -- it's not only that. Anything positive that I can transfer to her, I do. And she's a really smart kid. We were sitting in the elevator and I don't know how this conversation came up but I used that same example, a car cutting you off. It was funny because I used someone taking somebody else to the hospital, blah, blah, blah, and she goes, "Or it could be somebody late to their best friend's birthday party," because apparently birthday parties are a huge deal when you're six.

JORDAN: Yeah, I would imagine so.

TOM: Really?

DAVE: Yeah. So number one, she gets points for being cute. But then number two, what really really shocked me, was I continued and said, "Yeah, exactly. Because you don't want to be angry or mad at them because then if somebody else meets you and you're angry or mad," and she goes, "Yeah, they're going to think that you're mad at them," and my jaw freaking hit the elevator floor. I was like, "Oh, my God, she gets it."

JORDAN: Nice. Kids get this. That's the thing about a lot of the AoC stuff. Kids get it by nature, adults are the ones where we have to beat it into you. And we have to waterboard you in order for you to get it through your skull. Because we've been programed with all of the crap that says, "No, the world is out to get you and people will pull one over on you," and it's not just that, yeah people are going, "Oh, childhood innocence, it's got its ups and down."

Kids are great at generally getting along with each other, because even when they don't get along with each other, it's because they're trying to be dicks and test their boundaries and throw their weight around and establish a social hierarchy. With adults, we just can't do it because we're clueless. We've screwed ourselves so much with programming that we've gotten and that media has given us and that other people have

given us and stories we tell ourselves. Kids don't have a roster of stories of emotional baggage and crap that they've collected to save for extreme circumstances. They don't get it.

So yeah, a smart kid will go, "Yeah, you're going to think that they're mad at them and that's bad," whereas an adult goes, "No, it's not that simple. It's complicated." It really isn't, it just required -- the program we've gotten is layered upon layer. So yeah, it seems complicated, just like a computer does, but if you've never seen a computer before, you just look at the screen and go, "This is what is inside the computer." Whereas, if you know how it works, you think, "Damn, there's a lot of stuff going on right now." It just mirrors humans. If you're just looking at the monitor, you think, "Oh, that's what's inside the computer."

DAVE: And not only is there a lot of information out there, there's a lot of bad information out there.

JORDAN: Well, yeah. That's my point. If the programming were good, we would all be highly functional human beings for having lived, simply gotten a lot of life experience. And unfortunately, usually it's the other way around. Usually there's a nice point at which you've been raised right, you've got a lot of good programming, and not as much bad, you can function socially a lot better.

That's why kids who have a lot of social experience in college, they can deal with these situations usually a lot more constructively than adults who pull this passive aggressive crap and do all these undercutting things, because that's what they've learned in 20 years at the office on Wall Street, or whatever.

Getting kids to think positively is actually pretty easy. Well, let me put it this way, it's a lot easier to teach a kid positive thinking than it is to teach an adult. I can teach kids positive thinking by gamifying it and making it easy. And adults go, "Yeah, but I've got a lot of stress and other things weighing on

me," and it's true to a certain extent, but it just makes it that much more difficult.

TOM: So Jordan, I just want to -- if I didn't say this, I would be mad at myself at the end of this podcast. A lot of the stuff that we're touching on -- the passive aggressive behavior that we overcome, the reframing things, making them more positive, like someone cuts you off and we look at it as they're just trying to get to the hospital or whatever -- there's a couple things that all this stuff brings to you, which is very important. It brings you higher quality relationships.

JORDAN: Yes.

TOM: It's amazing. The friends that I have in my life now, the relationships I have, they're just so much more meaningful. They're deeper. If I were to get a flat tire, I could call 50 people and they would come in a heartbeat to help me out, and that's a flat tire. Talk to me 10 years ago, 5 years ago, I might have had 1 or 2 people.

JORDAN: Yeah. Now you can have a 60 person barbeque while you change your tire.

TOM: Yeah, exactly. What do you think they're doing this weekend when they come over, man?

JORDAN: Yeah, for those of you that missed it, because we were talking about this during the break -- so everyone listening missed it except for Jason, our producer -- you're having a barbeque and 50 to 60 people are going to show up. I guarantee you that people listening to this right now -- especially a lot of single dads who quote unquote don't have time to socialize -- are thinking, "I don't even know if I could have five or six people show up to a barbeque on a weekend."

TOM: Yeah, and I have to be honest with you, it's at least 50-60 people. I know Dave, he's bringing his daughter, my son is going to be there -- going back to this whole question about, "What do you

do with your kids?" well freak, man, we're bringing our kids do the thing. So it's going to be one big social party.

JORDAN: Yeah, we don't teach parenting skills at The Art of Charm.

DAVE: Well, and I'm kind of repaying a favor because earlier in the summer, Tom brought his son down here to Pittsburgh and we went to this JeepFest, and it was just such a good time. That was the first time I'd been off-roading. It was funny, the one obstacle -- it's pouring down rain and everyone else is leaving. We are literally the only Jeep in this playground. My daughter goes, "Let's do it again," and it's raining and these guys just want to get the hell out of there and Tom goes, "Okay." He's listening to a six year old.

JORDAN: Right, yeah. Well somebody's got to wear the pants, right?

TOM: That's right.

JORDAN: It's really funny to see this stuff rub off on kids and it really does. It makes me feel really good about it because honestly, this is the legacy that we're hoping to leave here is making good men that can help raise great kids. And it's tough because I know a lot of times, there are a lot of issues that go along with this. And we're probably oversimplifying a few things here and there, which is why I wanted you guys to be on it because me talking about, "What single dads can do to improve their dating life," is such a circle jerk because I have no clue and I don't like to speak from anything but first hand experience.

So, I thank you guys very much for your time and your candor on this episode. And I know a lot of people listening who aren't single dads might have wished they'd skipped this one, but I think a lot of guys who are, are really thankful that they can relate to you guys. Last but not least, what has the alumni network done for you slash how have you been able to leverage what you've learned at AoC and the relationships that you've built here to help get through the tough times as a single dad?

TOM: Wow, okay. I could talk about this all night. I travel two to three weeks a month, all over the place.

JORDAN: You're always somewhere, I know that much.

TOM: Yeah.

JORDAN: You're never in once place. I never know where you are. We need an App to track you.

TOM: Well, everyone thinks I'm James Bond or 007. Well, I guess they're one and the same.

JORDAN: That's because you have lots of guns, yeah.

TOM: That's right. It must be. That and the Jeep.

JORDAN: James Bond doesn't drive a Jeep, dude. Nice try. Have you seen the movies? It's not a Jeep, but go on.

TOM: The alumni network has given me a lot. One, there's other single fathers, obviously. You mentioned that earlier in the show. Just being able to talk with them about some of the challenges that you're having or discussions that you're about to have with your teenage son or whatever. How have they handled that or was their feedback? What are their suggestions? Because you already have this common ground and you've gone through so much of this work together.

One of the biggest things for me, outside of that, is when I travel, I instantly have friends at these cities I go to. Even if I've never met them before, if they're part of the alumni network, I'm like, "Hey I'm going to be in Denver this weekend." I was out in Denver back in May and I think I went out with six or seven alumni that weekend. I was in Ireland recently. Boom, alumni. It's so fantastic. No matter where I go, I've got friendships and relationships there. Some of us meet offline, we do masterminding together on other topics. So, it's never ending, I think. It's been all positive. It's all up.

JORDAN: That's great and I know a lot of times it can be tough. A lot of single dads complain, "I don't know any other single dads in my area. I don't know who to talk to about this stuff." I know there's groups out there of single dads but not everybody's interested in moving forward. A lot of them are just interested in *****. The AoC family is definitely not like that.

TOM: Not at all.

DAVE: One benefit for me was I, in my life -- you are a product of your five closest friends.

JORDAN: Right.

DAVE: My five closest friends -- tada, they were negative.

JORDAN: Yeah. Surprise, surprise.

DAVE: So, I got the heck out of there, I did the fade away and got them out of my life. I never really travelled and it's like, "Oh, I don't have friends anymore. Oh, what's this network thing? Oh, there's guys in D.C. Oh, D.C. is four hours away," and they're like my best friends now. From the moment I showed up, we have this common bond and this common thread. "Oh, yeah man, it's cool. Crash on the couch," or, "Here's a beer," or, "What else do you need?" I'm just like, "Oh, my God, this is fantastic."

JORDAN: Yeah, some kindred spirits who are interested in helping other people move up and move forward. And that's what AoC is all about. I'm glad that we have these sort of sub-niches of not only guys in different geography, but guys in different life and social situations, like you guys. And so again, thanks so much for your time, guys. I know your candor is really welcome. A lot of guys are listening to this and feeling like, "All right, there is something that I can do about the rut that I find myself in." I know, for some of you guys, getting out to AoC or maybe for both of you guys, was kind of a struggle. It wasn't cheap, you

had to make a lot of sacrifices to do it. Would you say it's worth it in the end?

TOM: Absolutely. I think you actually met me two or three times before I actually signed up.

JORDAN: I did. I did meet you two or three times before that. And finally I was like, "Hey, you come to some of our meet ups and you just leave. Are you ever going to sign up for a program?" and you were like, "Yeah, eventually. I guess I should probably do that." And I remember being like, "Yeah, dude."

TOM: And I did. I did.

JORDAN: Yeah, finally. Dave?

DAVE: I don't want to get your head any bigger than it may be already but --

JORDAN: It's hard to fit through doorways, but go ahead.

DAVE: I'm being dead serious about this, AoC saved my life.

JORDAN: Really?

DAVE: Yeah. It changed who I was, it changed my behaviors. Before, like I said, I would go out to bars and clubs and I couldn't even talk to girls. I couldn't even hold a conversation. Getting a number was like -- I got two numbers in maybe four years. I could walk down the street right now and get two numbers instantly. It's crazy.

JORDAN: And it's not just the dating stuff. We talked about a lot of these things before with the parenting and the things spilling over to your kids. So you feel like this has made it possible for you to open up your social network, regardless of maybe the amount of time you have, or the amount of opportunity that falls into your plate.

DAVE: It gave me the confidence to take control of my own life.

JORDAN: Excellent. Thanks so much, guys. I appreciate you guys very much and I know everybody else listening does as well. Thank you very, very much.

TOM: Yeah, have a good one, Jordan.

DAVE: This was fun, man. Thanks.

JORDAN: All right guys, I hope you enjoyed that one. A lot of Candor. Props to Tom and Dave for being super open about being single dads and dealing with that reality, and of course, for how their AoC skill set has rubbed off on them being a better dad, dealing with entrepreneurial ventures as a single dad, confidence, dating, relationships as a single dads, and of course, passing those AoC skills down to their kiddies. Much appreciated, guys.

Now show feedback and guest suggestions -- now we rely on you to help keep our finger on the pulse. So, if you know who's a good fit for the show, let us know jordan@theartofcharm.com. Now boot camp details, of course, for our live programs at theartofcharm.com and if you're listening to this but you're not subscribed on iTunes or Stitcher that needs to change. Go ahead and subscribe on iTunes, Stitcher, or wherever you listen to podcasts. Getting our shows delivered while you sleep is a great way not to miss anything. And of course we have our iPhone and Android apps at theartofcharm.com/iphone and theartofcharm.com/android.

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