

Transcript for Adam Braun | MissionU (Episode 626)
Full show notes found here: <https://theartofcharm.com/626/>

ADAM: The people that are deeply entrenched in this space don't see, you know, that outsider with the innovative idea --

JORDAN: Yeah.

ADAM: -- that's going to grow in scale. So, my job is to come up with the ideas, build the, kind of, vehicle, and then get the right people on that bus that can actually execute on the educational side.

JORDAN: Welcome to The Art of Charm, I'm Jordan Harbinger. On this episode we're talking with my friend Adam Braun. He's the founder of Pencils of Promise and a new organization called MissionU which promises to reform education, essentially rebooting the whole thing, why the educational system in the US is failing students, one of our topics today -- we'll also discuss why students are even less prepared for careers now than ever before, and we'll discover new methods and tracks of studies that are a lot more future proof-- of course I put that in air quotes -- and last but not least, how to think like an executive even and especially if it's your first year on the job. All the supplies really really well no matter where you are in your career, frankly. Now, let's hear from Adam Braun.

By the way, I've heard your name mispronounced a lot, it's Braun, right?

ADAM: Yeah, Braun.

JORDAN: Yeah, okay.

ADAM: The one that people mispronounce a lot is when they say Pencils for Promise, it just like, comes out of their mouth rather than Pencils of Promise.

JORDAN: Oh, that's just lazy. When I went to law school, I went to University of Michigan Law School. Decent law school, a lot of

people got really good jobs out of there including me. Not necessarily because we deserved them but because --

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- people were recruiting from those schools. And I remember going through mock interviews where one of them was, "Okay sign up and wait in line outside the career counselor's office and we'll do a mock interview," and I showed up and there were three people ahead of me. And they went in, did their mock interview, and I went and got a snack. And when I came back I thought, "Oh, that was so fast. They must have multiple people in there doing these mock interviews. I wonder how they do that in this small room." And then, one came out and goes, "Are you Jordan? You're next? Okay," and then in the hallway, standing up near the door -- you know, the career counselor --

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- door is here and this woman's standing there and she asks me three or four really easy softball questions like, "Why do you want to work here? What's interesting about our company?" and then goes, "You're fine. This is going to be easy for you," because I wasn't nervous --

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- or freaking out. And I thought, "I think we should probably spend a little more time on this --

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- because you know, we're competing against Harvard Columbia and all these other big law schools, not to mention everybody else from the University of Michigan.

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: Are they really going to let off this easy during --

ADAM: Right, right, right.

JORDAN: -- the interviews? And the answer was absolutely not. And I thought, "Have you ever hired anyone for real because if so, I'll go work for you --

ADAM: Right.

JORDAN: -- when I blow my other interviews."

ADAM: Yeah. Yeah.

JORDAN: Have you noticed in your studies of education, in Pencils of Promise, in MissionU, that you're running now -- have you noticed that people are woefully unprepared for real life, even coming out of school?

ADAM: Yes, absolutely. I mean, being in that position of building Pencils of Promise and, you know hiring hundreds of people across that organization, and then having a lot friends who have built incredible organizations and companies that have hired tens of thousands of people, one thing that is consistently recurring -- I think all of us that are in positions where we're looking for qualified young people -- is that, whether they get a degree or not, they're coming out of undergraduate education, not prepared with either the soft skills or the hard skills that top notch companies are looking for.

JORDAN: And why do you think that is? Because it's not like university and college is something that's just getting started. I mean, these are institutions that people have been hiring from for literally hundreds of years.

ADAM: Yeah, you know, I think it's a couple things. One is that the demands of 21st century companies are changing so rapidly today that they look very different from what we needed before. So, you know, we had this series of revolutions -- one of them was the industrial revolution -- then we had the knowledge and,

you know, the kind of workforce revolution that happened, and now we're in the midst of an innovation revolution in which, you have computers and robots and AI and all these other things that are merging really quickly -- the demands of what's necessary has become one, hyper specialized and so you need somebody who has the latest skillset that might not have even existed a year or two ago.

JORDAN: Sure.

ADAM: And then the second thing is, you know, liberal arts as call it, you know, an ideology and experience. It made a lot of sense when the kind of gating factor to get a job was having that degree. And now that so many people are getting the degree, the form of education that they're receiving isn't actually connected to employment.

JORDAN: Yeah.

ADAM: Before if you just have the degree, you got the job. Now, we're kind of shifting to this new world in which credential isn't nearly as important as competency and college isn't necessarily preparing people with the specific competencies that companies are seeking.

JORDAN: I don't say victim of that but I've experienced that first hand.

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: I remember going through it and thinking, "This isn't what I'm going to actually do at work, right? Because I'm not just going to sit there and listen to somebody tell me about something at work. That's unlikely anyway.

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: It's a little baffling to sort of reconcile the idea that University of Michigan, for example, great research institution, all these

cool robotics things are coming out of there. Solar racing cars and all this stuff, engineering campus was amazing --

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: And so I thought, this is really practical stuff. There's all kinds of cutting edge stuff coming out of this university --

ADAM: Mm-hmm.

JORDAN: -- and yet, the soft skills that people were learning at the university were pretty much nonexistent. So, you end up with people who've worked on stuff that doesn't exist anywhere except for the university and then maybe one or two companies in Silicon Valley or elsewhere that are working on these particular types of tech --

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- and then nothing else is modern, whatsoever. Everything else is a 150 years old or from 1948 other than -- it's just such a weird paradox that the university can innovate on some level --

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- so greatly and then completely blow it elsewhere.

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: And the students either don't know about it or feel like we can't do anything about it.

ADAM: Yeah I mean, you know, one of the kind of big challenges of the future of the universities is that they provide so many great things to society, right? They're kind of these hubs of research and you know, like most of the medical innovation that's happened has oftentimes been incubated inside of, you know, the laboratories of great universities. But, at some point in the last call it decade or so, we stopped from the state, often times

federal level -- but especially the state -- we stopped funding education and the cost of education started to go up at such a ridiculous rate that the only way that that could be kind of born by an individual institution was by putting it on the student. And so, I think back to when my parents were in college, they could pay their way through school, right?

JORDAN: Sure.

ADAM: You could work a side job.

JORDAN: At a restaurant or something, right?

ADAM: Right, right. Like you could, you know, come out with minimal debt and you know, make a small contribution every month for, you know, a handful of years. Maybe it might be a while if you went through higher education and multiple degrees, but in general you could work and pay your way through education. And that's just not the reality anymore. And so, you know, we have this construct, this system, that we're selling so many young people on this kind of false dream now, that getting a bachelor's degree is a guaranteed pathway to success and it's hurting a lot more people, in my opinion, than it's helping and that's why we ultimately decide to build MissionU.

JORDAN: When you told me about it I thought, "Wow this is such a really good idea and it almost seems like it should exist already."

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: I was looking for other projects that were doing something similar and I came up pretty dry.

ADAM: Right, yeah. There's not a lot that I would say is, you know, similar to MissionU yet. Oftentimes I think within, kind of the space of innovation, it takes a leap of faith that others think is crazy at first and then, pretty clearly, you know, a couple years later, you say, "Oh, my God, that seems so logical."

JORDAN: Yeah.

ADAM: My expectation is that, you know, in the -- call it the next three, five, ten, fifteen, twenty years -- there will be many, many other institutions that look like MissionU, we're just leading the way in what we're building. So, you know, to put it simply, MissionU is a one year college alternative built for the 21st century. You know, our goal is to prepare students for the jobs of today and tomorrow, debt free. The way it works is within that year, you know, we don't think that students should leave institutions of higher education crushed with insurmountable crippling debt, and so we actually charge no tuition, at all, up front.

When you get into MissionU, we commit to investing in you for a full year and then at the end of that year, if and when you receive a well-paying job -- in our case, right now deem that as \$50,000 or above -- you contribute 15 percent of your income back to MissionU for three years and then you're done. So, you know, the average college student in the United States right now takes about 21 years to pay back their student loans --

JORDAN: Oh, yeah.

ADAM: -- they're on very high interest rates. There's no interest rates on an income share agreement, a very simple contract, there's no balance here. It's just, you know, once you start earning, we receive a percentage of that back to us so that we can extend that experience on to the next student. And ultimately, it's really just about aligning our success with student success and guaranteeing that if you don't have a great outcome then we don't either. And so all of us our moving forward to ensure that you're going to have the best life and career possible.

JORDAN: So should someone remain unemployed after that for whatever reason, that is just deferred until that changes.

ADAM: Or ultimately, you know, they might end up not having to pay us anything at all. So, you know --

JORDAN: Unfortunately.

ADAM: Right.

JORDAN: That's a bad outcome for everybody though, right?

ADAM: Right, yeah. I mean, the way that it works is that you have up to 48 months of deferment. And so those would be any months in which you're not making an annualized \$50,000 or more. So, let's say that you get a great job for six months, you're contributing back to the program, and then you lose your job because your company goes under and it takes you four months to find a new job. We wouldn't collect in that four month period. We don't think it's good for you, we don't think it's good for us --

JORDAN: Yeah it's tough.

ADAM: -- and it's up to 48 months and so, you know, if you go those full 48 months, you know, you're still not making, you know \$50,000 then there's obviously 36 months of potential collection. But if you go through that full period -- it's in total seven years -- and you are not earning, you know, \$50,000 or more, then you never pay us a dime. When I met my wife, she had over \$100,000 of student debt --

JORDAN: Oh, yeah.

ADAM: -- without getting a bachelor's degree. She spent three years in, you know, two different schools -- private and public, in state and out of state -- and she was essentially screwed over, for life --

JORDAN: Sure.

ADAM: -- because of that decision. And you have, now I think it's 34 million Americans with some college credit and not a degree --

JORDAN: Yeah.

ADAM: -- and, you know, we just wanted to set up a system that said that unless you're successful we shouldn't be either.

JORDAN: So, you obviously have to screen people who come in pretty hard because --

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- you don't want somebody who's just dabbling --

ADAM: Right.

JORDAN: -- and dilly dallying around and then never finishes, because then you just paid for that.

ADAM: Right. Yeah, I mean, our admissions looks wildly different from any --

JORDAN: Yeah.

ADAM: -- traditional college.

JORDAN: What does that look like? I vaguely remember the application process was, write an essay about ice cream or something --

ADAM: Yeah, yeah.

JORDAN: -- and then put everything in a form and then --

ADAM: Right.

JORDAN: -- oh, also how much money do your parents make?

ADAM: Exactly, right.

JORDAN: And that was pretty much it.

ADAM: And submit your scores on a series of standardized tests that --

JORDAN: Right, ACT, SAT.

ADAM: -- that are really just -- in a lot of ways, kind of capable of being gamified, if your family has money because you can get tutors in preparation --

JORDAN: Yeah.

ADAM: And they're tests that are very easy to prepare for and if you know how to take the tests you're inherently going to do much better.

JORDAN: Yeah.

ADAM: Yeah, we decided to remove a lot of those things from our application process. So, first and foremost, we don't look at SAT, we don't look at GPA, we don't look at even high school completion at all.

JORDAN: So how do you know if someone's going to be a hard worker?

ADAM: Right, so what we screen for are soft skills and a series of character traits, that's --

JORDAN: Soft skills?

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: What? You're blowing my mind here.

ADAM: Yeah. There's four steps to the admissions process. The first tell us who you are, where you're from, a little bit of your background -- we ask for some information, actually that the admissions team will never even get to see in making a decision --

JORDAN: Oh, just --

ADAM: -- but we want to use the data in retrospect, 10 years from now
--

JORDAN: Sure.

ADAM: -- so we can look at what makes a successful student. The second part is an admissions challenge. This is taken online. It's a series of questions that are actually pretty tough but, you know, we try and replicate the real world and so, it's untimed, it's open book, you can use Google or any other resource except for another human and we really want to see how do you solve problems, right? Like, what's the process for you and do you work through significant challenges and push through and get to the correct answers?

JORDAN: Are these case studies or something like that or can you give a rough example of what that might look like?

ADAM: So, a lot of them are math and quantitatively oriented because our first major at MissionU is data analytics. So, we want to see that you have at least some strength in kind of math. It's not like super high level. I mean, some of the questions are but, you don't have to necessarily get those right to pass off to the next stage, right.

JORDAN: You don't need a TI-83 to do it? Yeah.

ADAM: Yeah, exactly. Then there's ones where you look at graphs and and, you know, we'll say, "What is this graph telling you?" and then there's five different options and you need to actually be able to deduce information. So, that's kind of the second part. The third part, to me is the most interesting, which is the group challenge. So, you know, if you think about how real world work actually operates, it's a team sport, right? But the entire process of a college application is individualized, right? It's all these individual accomplishments, individual interviews -- so what we do in the third step is you essentially book a time online, you enter a live virtual classroom -- it's you and three other applicants -- and you're not competing each other, in fact, it's

about how well you collaborate with others. You have 45 minutes together and you're given a prompt.

And an example of a prompt that we've used is that self driving vehicles are coming to the American roads, will they have a net positive, net negative, or net neutral impact on our society and why? And you have 35 minutes to research this with a group and come up with a presentation together, all live, virtual, online --

JORDAN: Oh, wow.

ADAM: And then the last 10 minutes, one of our admissions staff members comes on, and you as a group, decide how to present to that person. And it's completely unstructured. We just give you the prompt and a couple, call it, core assets --

JORDAN: Sure.

ADAM: -- and we let you figure it out. And at the end of that, this whole thing is recorded, so we go back and we watch. And you self assess, you assess, you know, peers -- the applicants in your group, and we come up with a series of scores around how well do you collaboratively work with others, how critical of a thinker are you -- all the soft skills I was describing -- and then those that do well there, advance into a final round. Individual interview, and you also write a short essay about, you know why MissionU?

JORDAN: Ice cream.

ADAM: So, I mean the amazing thing is, you know, it surfaces an entirely different set of characteristics from a traditional application process and so, you know, we've had students apply from, you know, top notch elite schools that don't get in, and a kid who went to community college for half a semester and then decided to leave because he felt like he was learning faster than they were teaching.

JORDAN: Oh, wow.

ADAM: He's actually a great fit for us. We've also had students who are transferring from really, really top notch colleges. So, it's been amazing to watch the applicant pool build and, you know, for anyone that might be listening or watching, you know, we're running open applications right now.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

JORDAN: So you run open applications pretty much all the time or is it seasonal?

ADAM: So, the first cohort will start in September of 2017. So we have open applications basically until about mid-June. But given the demand that we're seeing, how many people want to attend MissionU -

JORDAN: Yeah.

ADAM: -- the next cohort for us is going to open up -- one's going to start in January, then we're going to launch, most likely, multiple simultaneously in the spring and then we'll continue to grow really quickly from there.

JORDAN: I would imagine, yeah. When people are applying, are you videotaping them working with other people?

ADAM: Yes.

JORDAN: And they're not in the same room, these are people in their own --

ADAM: Right, these are live, virtual classrooms. So, we use Zoom as a platform but it's like a tricked out version of a Google hangout --

JORDAN: Sure.

ADAM: -- or Skype. So, you almost have those kind of Brady Bunch style little boxes, right?

JORDAN: The tiled windows with the videotape.

ADAM: Yeah. And I'll tell you something else that's been so fascinating for us -- because, again, all this is recorded.-- but we encourage people to show up 10 to 15 minutes before the actual time starts so that they can get to know those that they're going to be working with. And then afterwards we say stay on for as long as you want if you want to just hang out. The bonds that people build so quickly, even though they're not side by side in the same room, but -- you know, there's a company called 2U and they have this great tagline which is, "No Back Row." And when they think about live, virtual, synchronous education, not pre-recorded lecture that you have to watch on your own time because very few people actually complete that type of process. It's very hard if you're not in a cohort model. Our approach is, this yearlong cohort and all of you are living within 50 miles of the same city.

JORDAN: That's good.

ADAM: You come together frequently. So, three day orientation is in person together, every month you're meeting up in a different company campus or a college or a collaborative working space. And, you know we're just tremendously excited about what's going on.

JORDAN: Well we'll see how long colleges let you guys meet on their campus, right?

ADAM: That one's been interesting. I mean, you know, we launched publicly -- we've been building this for a couple years, but launched publicly March of 2017 and right away we had a bunch of colleges reach out saying, "We want to partner and explore what this could look like together." Because, I think anyone that works in higher education knows that, at its core, it's fundamentally broken. You know, there's some schools that

certainly work for certain students but the masses are not succeeding through this process. I mean, one thing that isn't shared very often is the national percentage of students that enter a four year bachelor's degree program and graduate in four years is 18 percent.

JORDAN: That is one fifth of what I thought you were going to say.

ADAM: Right. I do a lot of public speaking, right? So I've asked a lot of [00:19:21] "What do you think the national percentage is that will graduate in four years from a four program?"

JORDAN: I would say 86 to 95 percent.

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: That would have been my guess.

ADAM: I would say most people give between 60 and 90 percent.

JORDAN: Yeah.

ADAM: Eighteen percent.

JORDAN: That's unbelievable.

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: That's really bad news because not only have you wasted all that time but the money that we just mentioned before --

ADAM: Mm-hmm.

JORDAN: -- and then you're basically right back to where you started only you have a ton of debt and you're behind everybody that's your age.

ADAM: Right. And so there's a lot of stats about, you know, completing college leads to higher income over the course of somebody's

life. One thing is, that's historic data and we're entering an entirely different economy that as, you know, I mentioned before, is competency based not necessarily credential. And then second of all, if you enter college and you don't get to that end point of the bachelor's degree, which a lot of people are not -- millions --

JORDAN: Yeah.

ADAM: -- around the country are not getting to, then you're actually -- by all historic data, not even the future looking data, but historic data -- you're barely better off than just having a high school degree.

JORDAN: Oh, man.

ADAM: Plus you have debt. It's something that, I think anyone who, you know, has either had a -- call it, friend, sibling, cousin, etcetera, that's recently gone through college in the last five years where the costs have really spun out of control, or anyone that's a parent and is feeling the pressure of thinking about, "Holy crap, how the hell am I ever going to afford this?"

JORDAN: Yeah.

ADAM: You know, I'd encourage them to check out MissionU and one other thing that we're doing right now for this first cohort is, you know, we wanted to create a distributed admissions process -- you know, much like Pencils of Promise -- you know, we're building a grassroots movement and so we wanted to empower every single individual to be a part of that story. One thing for anyone, again that might be watching or listening, is that, if you actually applied to MissionU, then if you reference that you've heard about the program through Art of Charm and Jordan, then we're going to give you a \$500 credit towards your actual experience --

JORDAN: Oh, wow.

ADAM: -- but not only that, my guess is there's a lot of people who say, "Geez I wish this was right for me. I've already gone through the process but I know somebody else who it could be a good fit for, so if they just went to MissionU.com they would see at the top it says, "Refer a Friend," if you refer somebody else, not only will we enable that student to get \$500 towards their credit, but we'll actually give that individual that referred the person \$500 as well once they complete the program and are successful.

JORDAN: Obviously if you come through Art of Charm, that's all going back into your program, right? Because I don't need that.

ADAM: We'll give the student the \$500, yeah.

JORDAN: Yeah, make sure they get it.

ADAM: No, no, no, no, no no.

JORDAN: Although I'd love to put that toward my student debt that I didn't -- that I still do pay.

ADAM: Yeah. On their income share agreement, at the back end, we would essentially reduce that by 500 bucks.

JORDAN: Oh, great. That's great.

ADAM: So it would be a credit.

JORDAN: Less debt than the debt you don't already have.

ADAM: Right, exactly. You frame it better than I do.

JORDAN: Perfect. I'm going to address some scepticism that people might have. Yeah that all sounds great but you don't have a PhD in education. I mean you started a charity, what the hell qualifies you to teach other people about education? Like, what do you really know about this? You worked at Bain Capital, that's not exactly some sort of educational charity or trust.

ADAM: Right.

JORDAN: And I'm sure you learned a lot about business there but what could you possibly know about reforming an education system?

ADAM: Yeah. You know, my first three years of my career were primarily spent at Bain and Company, I was on the consulting side but 80 percent of Bain Capital folks come from the consulting side. And then I've spent, you know, more or less call it almost a decade focused on international education, primarily education in rural parts of the developing world, which you know, was through Pencils of Promise and now, you know 400 plus schools have been built, 70,000 students a day in our programs. Then in 2015, I worked with the UN Special Envoy and I was the director of the global education platform, which is the UN Special Envoy's largest ed tac initiative to address global issues around education.

JORDAN: So you've got everybody fooled, really as the moral of the story.

ADAM: I mean, you know, what I've always said, and I've always been upfront about this is that, I don't consider myself an educator, I consider myself an entrepreneur who believes in the transformative power of education. And once you acknowledge both your strengths and your weaknesses, as an entrepreneur, one of the most critical things to do is to identify where you have weaknesses and then surround yourself with absolutely world class experts. And so for example, at MissionU, you know, the chair of our advisory board is a guy named Doctor Tony Wagner, he's probably one of the two or three most famous professors at Harvard, through their graduate school of Education, now he's an innovator in residence and the Harvard Innovation Lab. He's been incredibly instrumental for myself. And my cofounder, also is -- like the guy who runs our education -- he is, you know, a world class educator --

JORDAN: Okay.

ADAM: -- previously co-founded a company called Degreed, ran outcomes for three years at Hack Reactor, which is basically the Harvard of the boot camp space -- and then our team is, you know, a handful of folks who also come from really, really deeply entrenched education backgrounds, to women currently out of Stanford, one with a Masters, one with a PhD in this work specifically. So, anyone who kind of looks at me and says, "That guy isn't an educator at his core," I wouldn't disagree, and in fact, frankly I think it's what enables me to have the ideas --

JORDAN: Sure.

ADAM: -- to pursue it in a nontraditional way. Because often -- I mean, I remember, you know, a couple years ago when I started to explain to people this idea of MissionU, and they would say, "Why do you want to go after it?" and I would say, "You know, truthfully, it's because I'm a little bit of an outsider and because of that it makes me dangerous."

JORDAN: Yeah, sure.

ADAM: It allows me to think about this in a way that somebody who's been working in this space for 30 years won't. You know, over time, with Pencils of Promise, initially I started out that way and then, you know, call it seven, eight years in, I was so deeply entrenched in how you could do international education work that if somebody came up with a new innovative idea, I'd almost think, "Oh, that's not possible because I know the whole road map."

JORDAN: Right, I got the way.

ADAM: And, you know, it's this concept that is referenced in Clayton Christensen's book, The Innovator's Dilemma, is that the people that are deeply entrenched in the space don't see, you know, that outsider with the innovative idea that's --

JORDAN: Yeah.

ADAM: -- going to grow in scale. So, my job is to come up with the ideas, build the, kind of vehicle, and then get the right people on that bus that can actually execute on the educational side.

JORDAN: It's interesting. You almost have to use the meathead analogy, that muscle confusion. Like, you get good at something and you go, "Yeah I got great at this because I'm an outsider," and then someone goes, "What about this?" and you're like, "Pshh. No, you don't know anything, stop."

ADAM: Right, right, right, right.

JORDAN: And they're like, "Well wait a minute."

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: So you constantly have to hit refresh on that.

ADAM: Yep.

JORDAN: So who is teaching the classes then? You mentioned you've got educators on your side. Am I looking at a lecture or a webinar when I'm in MissionU? How does it work? Is it mostly collaborative assignments?

ADAM: So the actual instructors are industry practitioners. So these are people that have actually worked in the space. These are not called a dean, that's been --

JORDAN: Oh, good.

ADAM: -- you know, sitting on a campus --

JORDAN: Right.

ADAM: -- for 30 years telling you about accounting when they haven't actually been practicing accounting. This would be, if you're learning about accounting, that would be an actual CPS who's practicing and then takes time to teach some of our students in

a specific discipline. So, you know, the way that the year is broken up, the front third is what we consider foundation. And so, that's a broad set of skills. Things like, public speaking, Excel modeling, project management, requirements gathering, business writing, giving and receiving critical feedback in a business context, and all of these ideas are taught through the lens of an actual business case. Like a real problem that a company is actually facing. So, one of the things that we did before we ever started recruiting students was we were recruiting employer partners and we went to leading companies and said, "You clearly have awareness around the challenges of what's going on in higher education and the pathway to employment. How can we design a program that would most fit a lot of your needs?"

And so there are kind of three prongs to this employer partnership. The first is, you know, they meaningfully advise us on curriculum. We're calibrating around what we're hearing from leaders of industry. The second part is we're building things like case studies, we organize lunch and learns where leadership from these companies will interface with our students. And, you know, I went to four years of college at Brown and I loved my time at Brown University, but I had no exposure to anybody that worked inside of a real company.

JORDAN: No, no.

ADAM: Right? I mean --

JORDAN: Not at all.

ADAM: -- very few of us ever got that and that's a big part of the MissionU experience. And then the third part is these companies get early preferred access to hire our top graduates. So, you know, right now our employer partners are companies like Spotify, Lyft, Uber, Warby Parker, Harry's, Casper, you know.

JORDAN: I've heard of some of those companies.

ADAM: Right, right.

JORDAN: Yeah.Sure.

ADAM: A lot of big companies. You know when I spoke to 19 to, you know, 29 year olds and I said, "What's your dream company to work at?" those are the companies that --

JORDAN: One of these 10 companies.

ADAM: Yeah, and then we went out and pursued them as our employer partners.

JORDAN: No surprise though that some of the most innovative companies are the ones that went, "This is probably a really good idea, maybe we should be a part of this." Did you go after those specifically innovative companies or were they just innovative enough to see what you guys were doing and realize this is a good idea?

ADAM: I would it was me targeting them. I mean, you know, over the years I built a lot of great relationships with --

JORDAN: Sure.

ADAM: -- whether it was co-founders and CEOs, senior leadership at a lot of these companies, because, you know in building Pencils of Promise we all kind of came up together ---

JORDAN: Right.

ADAM: -- around the same time 08, you know 2010, 2012. You know, I talked to a lot of them for years about this idea and so many of them are like, "Yes, if you get this off the ground then, you know, I'd love to be able to support or participate or, you know, however we can be helpful." But you know, what's also been interesting was, you know, now over time we're starting to speak with more traditional companies and they're seeing the need for it as well.

JORDAN: Hmm.

ADAM: I would say at launch, what you logically will see is the more innovative companies are going to be willing to take the leap and say, "Yes, absolutely. This makes sense for us," but I think, over time, in the next call it two, three years even -- not that much time -- you'll see very large, traditional companies partnering with MissionU and they also have huge hiring needs and they have the same challenges of recruitment that so many others are facing. And so, that first third of the year, again, is that foundation. The second third of the year is a deep dive on your technical expertise, which is your major so --

JORDAN: That you choose, right. Your varied consultation.

ADAM: So, yeah. Over time we'll add many more majors but right now we launch with just one, I believe in the value of focus, so right now it's data analytics and business intelligence. And then the third trimester is essentially an internship but one that's scaled so we consider it real work experience. We break you up into small teams and you work for actual companies and clients on real projects.

JORDAN: Remotely or at the company?

ADAM: Remotely. Remotely.

JORDAN: Really?

ADAM: Yeah. You know this was heavily inspired by an experience I had in the early days of Pencils of Promise where I didn't have the resources -- the money basically -- to go out and hire a top notch graphic designer.

JORDAN: Sure.

ADAM: But Pratt School of Design, the top design school in New York, had a course called Design Core where the top 25 seniors were

broken up into teams of five and they acted as pro bono agencies to real nonprofits in New York City. So fortunately we became part of this program, I had like these great teams of young talent working on graphic design assets for us and they actually created the original logo, colormark, everything that to this day, you'll see as the Pencils of Promise brand that [00:29:19] was created in that class.

JORDAN: Wow.

ADAM: So it was great for me as a client, these students get to build this robust and real world portfolio, and they have, you know, someone that's going to give them a reference, once they complete the process. So that was a big inspiration for the back third and then we have our graduation but our graduation is not at the very end of the year. We don't think it makes sense to graduate and then kick somebody out and say, "Okay, good luck getting a job," --

JORDAN: Yeah.

ADAM: -- when 91 percent of freshmen say they're going to college to get a better job.

JORDAN: Right.

ADAM: And so the last six weeks of the year, which is actually part of the program, we call career launch. And that's where we support students from -- everything, that includes interview preparation all the way through to salary negotiation, which very few people learn.

JORDAN: What do they think of you teaching the students salary negotiation right when they're trying to get a good deal on some new talent.

ADAM: I think every person that I've talked to inside of a company, when I explain that we do that, their eyes open up and they go, "Geez I wish someone explained that to me --

JORDAN: I need to take that class, yeah.

ADAM: -- when I was 22 or 23 or 24."

JORDAN: Sure.

ADAM: At the end of the day, I mean -- you know, our target for our students is about a \$70,000 job. You know, there's probably not a lot of variability. They're not going to negotiate from 70 to 120 --

JORDAN: Right.

ADAM: -- so I think they're going to be really appreciative to get that job. But there's also just certain things that you can do in the process of securing your role that I think can help you hit that company with the -- call it more momentous on ramp than not.

JORDAN: What are some of those things? Like, what kind of things do you think someone could bring to a company straight out of school, that would result in them being more valuable than the guy sitting next to them?

ADAM: Sure. Yeah, I mean I've written a blog post on my website -- just on Adambraun.com -- a couple years ago because I hired somebody and I've wanted to give them this direct feedback but I didn't want to be offensive to them --

JORDAN: Right, okay.

ADAM: -- and so instead I wrote a blog post and I was like you should read this.

JORDAN: And instead you told the entire planet about --

ADAM: But it was also something that I wanted to reuse in the future and anyone --

JORDAN: Sure.

ADAM: -- that came to work with me or for me, I could just say, "Look this is the roadmap." You might have kind of heard this reference before but, you know, I believe there's three types of people in a company.

An intern comes in and -- or junior person, coordinator, whatever you want to call them. An entry level employee comes and day one says, "Tell me what to do. Give me ten tasks and I'll go do them." You know, a quality employee, a mid-level management will come into a company and they'll say, you know, "I've done some research and I think I have an understanding of what we do here. Give me three or four things to do and I can help manage a few other people that can go out and execute that." And an executive comes into a company and says, "I've taken a look at all of the variables at play and here's the four different suggestions of what I think we need to go do. Here's the three things that I've already done and here's the one or two that I want explore collaboratively with a team."

And every single person can take that mentality that from day one I'm going to operate like an executive, even if I don't have the title. But, you know, the people that exceed expectations consistently in companies, I find are those who come in and don't need to be told what to do. Asking for permission is asking for denial. They just go out and they start executing above and beyond what others expect of them and they make their bosses lives easier. So that as a core mentality can lead into a lot of different activities. But that mindset, I think, is the first thing that every person should start with, to immediately add value to a company, even at a junior level.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

JORDAN: Do you have an example of how that might look? Because I think a lot of people will --

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- think, "I don't want to execute on anything because if I do it wrong, then I've already taken steps in a direction that's incorrect. I'm going get in trouble for that."

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: Or, "They might not like that," or, "They're going to be thinking, 'Who is this cocky guy who thinks he knows how to actually do the work before he's even set foot in the office?'" I would have been afraid of that.

ADAM: So -- so, I'll give you a great example that happened literally yesterday. There's a -- employee at MissionU that's an absolute rockstar and I had a meeting with a very, very high level CEO of a very large company at our office yesterday and -- you know we have open calendars and people can see. And I had actually emailed our team and said this person is going to be in the office so, just as a heads up, make sure the office is tidy and that, you know, there's not sensitive information out and, you know, don't have food all over the place and clean up.

JORDAN: Sure.

ADAM: The night before my meeting with this other CEO, I got an email from this guy, didn't request it, didn't ask for it, nothing. But I got an email that said, "I saw that you're going to be meeting with such and such, here are a series of questions that I think would be really helpful if you wanted to surface to him for not just you, but for all of us across the organization." And right there, I had a roadmap for what I needed to make sure I asked in that meeting and it wasn't just things that I was thinking about but it was elements that were going to help all the other employees across the --

JORDAN: Oh, wow.

ADAM: -- company. And, again, I'm not going to look at that and say, "He's trying to take my job."

JORDAN: Right, yeah. Of course not.

ADAM: Right? Instead I'm going to say, "Oh, my God, how thoughtful. You know, he took 20 minutes of his time and mapped out how I can be most effective in a meeting, without me asking him to do so. I want this guy to be leading others." Right? It's not just, "I think he's great at his job," but that type of cultural commitment is something that you want to see sewn throughout every element of your company and those are the type of people that you want to elevate. And again, it was a mindset but then it takes form in an activity.

JORDAN: It's great that he did that and it only took a few minutes. Because all he really had to do is go, "Hey look if you had to ask the mid-level manager at, I don't know, Spotify or something like that, one question about XYZ, what would it be?" And some people will have nothing.

ADAM: Right.

JORDAN: Like I'm drawing a blank right now, maybe. But, I'm also doing this at the same time.

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: That's my excuse.

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: But somebody else might say, "Oh, yeah, what about this? And what does he think about the direction of that? Oh, and this other thing," --

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- and then you end up with this set of questions and it's like, "Look, you've got your own agenda for this meeting but, --

ADAM: Mm-hmm.

JORDAN: -- if you want to maybe throw some of these in there, or if you have extra time --

ADAM: Right.

JORDAN: -- or if you're just making casual conversation, these are things that we've been thinking about as a group."

ADAM: Right, and, and, and --

JORDAN: Super easy.

ADAM: -- and this guy actually has been consistently doing this for a lot of my meetings. And again, I never asked him to do it.

JORDAN: Right.

ADAM: And he has a ton of responsibility on his plate that is completely separate from what I'm working on but he'll just take the initiative to see, "Okay I can continue to add value and make Adam's life easier and therefore he becomes a more valuable employee." Even though, you know, he's not a C level, you know, executive right now, I can suddenly immediately see, "Oh, here's the upward trajectory for him within a company."

JORDAN: Yeah I used to keep my own interviews -- future interviews -- a secret from people because I didn't want people to go and book the same guest.

ADAM: Okay.

JORDAN: And I took that even to not even talking about it because I would do my own prep and do everything.

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: Now I've got a circle of people around me that aren't going to post about it online --

ADAM: Right.

JORDAN: -- and I ask them questions. And it came about because I would say things like, "Oh, I just talked to my buddy Adam Braun. He's got this awesome charity -- at the time Pencils of Promise --

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- and he's doing this and this and this," and they go, "Oh, well what about this," like really obvious question that I didn't think --

ADAM: Right, yeah.

JORDAN: And I'd go, "Oh, I didn't -- I didn't --

ADAM: "Great one, I should now incorporate that."

JORDAN: And then, yeah. And then it would be like, "Well, how old is he?" "Oh, I actually -- I'm not sure." "Does he go and look at the school? Who handles the construction?" And I'm like --

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: "Damn it, I didn't ask any of these questions." So I started sharing widely, at least within this circle --

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- what I'm doing, and it's shocking how much value can be added. And I've got friends who just -- they'll take 15 minutes and they'll go through their own questions for Neil deGrasse Tyson, for example --

ADAM: Right.

JORDAN: -- and I'll go, "Wow, this is so much better than what I was going to ask."

ADAM: Yep. Yeah.

JORDAN: It's not even close. So it's really easy to add value to somebody inside an organization. This guy is probably not spending three hours making these lists of questions.

ADAM: Right.

JORDAN: I mean, this is like you said 20 minutes.

ADAM: He does other stuff that he probably taking three hours --

JORDAN: Sure.

ADAM: -- but again, it's this notion of taking initiative and this idea that asking for permission is asking for denial. I mean, you know, I have interns in the company. I was invited to a dinner recently. It was a very high level dinner. You know, I got a guest list beforehand, forty names. And I knew that it was going to be legit people so I sent it to an intern and I said, can you pull together a powerpoint presentation? I just want a photo of, you know, their name and then their title and the company they work for so that when I get in the room I know, "Okay this person could be really instrumental to our next step," and that's like who I should make sure I chat with at some point.

JORDAN: Sure.

ADAM: You know, they did a great job but that's an intern responsibility. To take direction and then do a perfect job of the task that they're asked. You don't have to operate like that just because you're a junior person in a company. You can take that executive mentality and say, "How can I continue to add more value?" But the truth is, every time you ask that question, "How can I add more value?" if you're verbalizing it to the other person, you're creating more work for them. If you just go out and execute on it and show them the output, then you're creating value.

JORDAN: And it seems like my concern of being afraid of taking a step in an incorrect direction wouldn't actually be a big deal because worst case scenario, he sends you this list of 20 questions and you go, "I'm not using this," and it's over.

ADAM: And at the very least, what I see is that this person is over delivering.

JORDAN: Right.

ADAM: And they're constantly outworking what my expectation is. I mean, you know, I have a very good friend of mine who first year out of college, he was working for a large real estate company and he was just cold calling like, the most senior people possible and he wasn't getting any calls back.

JORDAN: Sure.

ADAM: And finally at one point, he literally yelled at like a secretary and was like, "I need to talk to such and such, I blah, blah, blah, blah," the lady was like, "Hold on." She came back and she was like, "He won't be taking your call," hangs up -- three minutes later, the head of his entire division calls him into his office and he's like, "Why are you cold calling this guy," and you know, it was 9 a.m. on a Monday, who's a very, very senior guy. The guy kind of temporarily scolded him and was like, "Look, you can't be doing that. It's [00:41:24] but at the same time, I love that you're making cold calls --

JORDAN: Appreciate the hustle, right.

ADAM: -- 9 am on a Monday morning," and this friend of mine is now like -- I mean it's a multi thousand person company and he's in the top -- probably 40 or 50 employees.

JORDAN: Yeah, he had to aim the cannon slightly to the right.

ADAM: Right, right. But it was the notion from that, you know, boss' mentality that, "Okay, he hasn't calibrated perfectly right but

he's willing to go and hustle that hard and over deliver without having to every time ask for permission or direction." That made him a really valuable asset.

JORDAN: Yeah, it's funny to see that because I can imagine myself doing that. When I was younger I called a stereo company -- ABC Warehouse or something that used to sell like, home electronics --

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- and I go, "How much are those dual cassette deck --

ADAM: Right, right.

JORDAN: -- tape players that have --

ADAM: Boombox

JORDAN: -- detachable speakers or something?" and they go --

ADAM: Yeah, with the anti skip on the CD.

JORDAN: Exactly, yeah. Probably before even the CD players were built in. And they said, "Well we can't quote prices over the phone," and I said, "Why not?" and they said, "It's illegal." And I don't know, I was like eight years old --

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- maybe 10. So I called the police and they said, "Well we don't know about different laws."

ADAM: Right.

JORDAN: And I said, "Well who would?" and they said, "I don't know, lawyers," or something like that. So, I remember thinking, "Hmm, the only lawyer I know works for the FBI. I should just call the FBI because there's a bunch of lawyers there."

ADAM: Wow.

JORDAN: So I called the FBI and I asked them and I left a message with somebody because they were like, "What?" They called back and my mom answered and my mom was like, "Okay, you don't need to call the FBI to find out about laws,"

ADAM: Right, right.

JORDAN: And they weren't mad and neither was the FBI agent --

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- who called back.

ADAM: Right, right.

JORDAN: They were just kind of like, "We just wanted to make sure you know your son's using the phone and he called the FBI," --

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- and they were like, "What?"

ADAM: Right.

JORDAN: "About stereo prices."

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: "Why they can't be quoted over the phone." So my mom and dad kind of knew like, "All right, he's going to do something with this--

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- rambunctiousness and this sort of --

ADAM: Yeah, yeah.

JORDAN: -- energy but, hopefully it won't get in him trouble."

ADAM: Totally, totally.

JORDAN: And -- and I can see that happening early in a stage of a company and it's very unlikely that you would get canned for doing something like --

ADAM: Right.

JORDAN: Even an extreme scenario like that.

ADAM: These are very teachable things. You know, some people naturally have that, call it like -- go after --

JORDAN: Get up and go or whatever.

ADAM: Yeah. That proactivity. But these are also, you know, mindsets that can be taught, and you know, back to your kind of question before, about -- okay, why are you qualified to build, you know, and lead this institution? While I don't self identify as an educator, as an entrepreneur, I understand what it takes to get a job. And the people that are leading a lot of academic institutions, they don't see that as their responsibility. And for some institutions that's okay. But when you have a consumer base, meaning students, and then their parents that are paying insane amounts of money with the expectation that the outcome is not only a transformative experience and, you know, something that enriches your life and well being, but a job that can help you pay back that amount or, you know, ideally advance your financial income in the future. I think it's essential that the person who is leading that institution has an understanding of that outcome and that's something that I really am heavily focused on for young people.

JORDAN: How do you decide who to hire for MissionU? Because it seems like you're drawing from a tremendous talent pool.

ADAM: Yeah. Yeah, I mean I can tell you a lot of our team is former Bain, because again, that's where I started my career. Not the Bain Capital site, former Bain consultants because it's just an incredible training ground of how to solve really tough business problems and do so in a way that can grow in scale and, you know, ultimately affect a lot of people in a positive way. And then, it's kind of this interesting combination on my side, which is more -- call it, you know, marketing, branding partnerships -- kind of, cultural vision setting, you know, more CEO duties -- operations. And then my cofounder, who's our chief product officer, oversees kind of two branches, which is technology and then curriculum. And so, we have a lot of -- call it curriculum experts, whether it's learning design and curriculum individual or, you know, someone who's kind of guiding the student experience. And then on the technology side, call it director of engineering and people that are way more technologically savvy than I am.

JORDAN: Sure.

ADAM: Because we're building incredible systems that can essentially make the process as seamless as possible for the student.

JORDAN: If I'm in high school right now or just graduated and I think --

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- "Okay, this sounds really interesting but what is data analytics and business?"

ADAM: Mmm.

JORDAN: How do I know I'm going to be good at that? How do I know if I'm even qualified to join something like MissionU because when I was that age, even after college, I wouldn't have known, "Oh, I should totally get into data analytics and business intelligence."

ADAM: Right.

JORDAN: It's like Greek.

ADAM: Right. One thing that's really interesting is the most popular major in the United States for undergrad is business.

JORDAN: Well generally because it sounds like "This -- for sure I'm going to make money with this,"

ADAM: Right, right, right. "Because I'm going to go into business so I should study business." Most business majors don't actually teach you anything practical that you're going to actually use in the real world.

JORDAN: Right.

ADAM: Right?

JORDAN: Yeah.

ADAM: It's theory it's not practical, it's not specific around an actual discipline that you're going to use. So there's a recent article that came out and I think the headline was something to the effect of, "This was stated as the number one most important skill in the 21st century by Eric Schmidt," who's Google's long time CEO and now chairman. And the entire article was on data analytics. And so, you know, for those that don't know what data analytics is, it's essentially, in its simplest form, distilling data, taking information, and using it to tell stories and make informed business decisions. That's really what it is at its core. So, now -- today, every business, not just like an Accenture or an IBM, but you know, a media company, a social app that's a start up -- you have all of this information that you didn't have before, the loads of information that you're going to have in data is only going to increase exponentially in the next 10 or 15, 20 years and beyond. And what a lot of businesses need and want are individuals who are able to distill that data, pull it apart, cut it up in a way that says, "Okay, there's clear information that is

usable to help us make better business decisions and then drive those decisions and help influence the business." So, in some companies there's like a data science team, but what we're seeing as we speak to all of our employer partners, is that the analytics skillset is applicable across almost every single call it function of a business. So you could end up in marketing as an analyst, where you're looking at, you know, the data that's coming through Facebook traction and saying, "Hey, this is actually where we should be putting ads." You can work in strategy, you can work in operations, you can work in, you know, sales, you can work in the engineering side. So, in our opinion it's kind of the foundational skillset that will be applicable across literally millions of jobs going forward.

JORDAN: I can see that. I mean, we're really good at collecting data now on everything from wearable devices to --

ADAM: Yep.

JORDAN: -- Amazon AWS --

ADAM: Right, right.

JORDAN: -- whatever those dashboards even are.

ADAM: Yeah.

JORDAN: I've got very little data -- running this podcast -- that I can't decipher, that are meaningful metrics. There's a whole bunch of data that I look at and I go, "Someday I'm totally going to use that for something."

ADAM: Right, and that will be a MissionU grad --

JORDAN: Right.

ADAM: -- with a data analytics major.

JORDAN: Yeah.

ADAM: It's the person that you'll say, "Tell me how I more effectively achieve this business outcome," --

JORDAN: Yeah.

ADAM: -- and they will say, "Okay, great. Just give me all the data and then I will inform you as to how that make that business decision most effectively."

JORDAN: Yeah. Somewhere in my data is, "Shows that are too long, don't get played until the end --

ADAM: Exactly.

JORDAN: -- except in big cities --

ADAM: Right.

JORDAN: -- where people have bigger, longer commutes," or something like that.

ADAM: Yeah, I mean --

JORDAN: I don't know, I can't see it.

ADAM:: -- you should know every single moment at which, you know, there's an opportunity -- if you want to play an ad or something -- like, where it's most effective. Again, where are people dropping off, based on the length? What geography is most listened -- the -- your biggest listeners.

JORDAN: Right.

ADAM: There's all this information and if you had one killer person to come in and help you understand that more effectively, that would be hugely valuable to you --

JORDAN: It would, yeah.

ADAM: -- and those are the types of people that we're training.

JORDAN: Yeah.

ADAM: And, again, you don't need necessarily a traditional bachelor's degree in order to add value to a business like yours or any others and, you know, we foresee MissionU as something that's a great choice for a lot of people.

JORDAN: Yeah, I think somebody who graduated from your program could probably spend five hours looking at this stuff and completely change something fundamentally inside AoC --

ADAM: That's the expectation.

JORDAN: -- and yet, I just can't see the patterns because I don't have that beautiful mind with all the pegboards that you're training over there.

ADAM: The other thing is -- I mean, it's a new skillset, right?

JORDAN: Yeah.

ADAM: We didn't have all this data beforehand. You know, this is one of the things that's a reality of the economy that we're now in is that there's -- you know, the 10 most in demand jobs in 10 years don't exist today, at all. And the 10 most in demand jobs today, for the most part, didn't exist 10 years ago. And so, you have to prepare people for what we consider a T shape learner -- like, really broad skillset and foundation and then deep technical expertise in a significant area so that they can be a contributor immediately and then also have this upward trajectory throughout their career.

JORDAN: So you find people who have a broad foundation where they're -- the jack of all trades layer --

ADAM: Yep, exactly.

JORDAN: -- but also a deep dive into, "But I'm also --

ADAM: One specialty.

JORDAN: -- really, really good at --

ADAM: Yep.

JORDAN: -- this particular -- "

ADAM: Exactly.

JORDAN: So call to action wise -- I mean, do you encourage people to apply even if they're maybe not sure? How does the decision --

ADAM: I mean, if someone just goes to MissionU -- and it's M-I-S-S-I-O-N-U, so not Y-O-U, just a U at the end -- so if they go to MissionU.com, you know, one you could learn a lot more about the program there, there's a couple of really amazing videos with founders of -- basically, you know, the kind of who's who of companies. It's really interesting. There's two videos there that are super compelling. But if you just go to MissionU.com/apply there's a very simple form that anybody can fill out there and start the process. And, you know, at the very least, I'd encourage anyone that this has peaked your interest to explore what that might be like. And, you know, hopefully, we can partner together to help that person achieve, you know, the life and career of their dreams.

JORDAN: Great. Yeah, we'll link to all this in the show notes for this episode as well. So thank you very much, man.

ADAM: Yeah, my pleasure. And one other thing. I mean, if anyone ever wants to reach out to me, I'm always accessible. They can just reach me adam@ipromise.org and I'm happy to answer any questions they might have.

JORDAN:

Great, thank you. Great stuff from Adam. It is kind of scary to see how traditional education is less and less useful. But it's great to see that there are organizations like MissionU that are really rocking and rolling and making sure that people are prepared and equipped for the future. Really interesting educational model that I think we're going to see a lot more of in the next decades to come here, especially from mainstream universities.

Great big thank you to Adam Braun. More info, of course, on MissionU at MissionU.com, we'll have that linked up in the show notes. And if you enjoyed this, don't forget to thank Adam on Twitter. We'll have that linked in the show notes as well. And I'd love to hear your number one takeaway from Adam here. I'm @theartofcharm on Twitter. And remember, you can tap our album art in most mobile podcast players. To see the show notes for this episode, we'll link to those right on your phone. Our boot camps, our live program details -- speaking of going and learning, at theartofcharm.com/bootcamp.

The program, the live program, is by far and away my favorite part of running AoC. Come to our campus, learn these AoC skills with us as your coaches. Seeing people become part of the AoC family, the growth they experience over the next months and years is just incredible. And remember, we're sold out a few months in advance so if you're thinking about it a little bit, get in touch with us ASAP, get some info from us, so you can plan ahead. That's at theartofcharm.com/bootcamp.

And if you're military or intelligence agency affiliated, check out elitehumandynamics.com for more information on programs that we have that are designated especially for you. That's elitehumandynamics.com.

We've also got our AoC challenge at theartofcharm.com/challenge. You can also text in to join us. If you text the word 'charmed,' to 33444, that's C-H-A-R-M-E-D to 33444. The challenge is about improving your networking skills

and your connection skills and inspiring those around you to develop a personal and professional relationship with you. It's free, a lot of people seem to not know that, but it's free, that's the whole idea. It's a fun way to start the ball rolling and get some forward momentum. And we'll email you our fundamentals Toolbox that I mentioned earlier on the show, which includes some great practical stuff, ready to apply, right out of the box, on reading body language, having charismatic nonverbal communication, the science of attraction, negotiation techniques, networking, and influence strategies, persuasion tactics, and everything else we teach here at The Art of Charm. It'll make you a better networker, a better connector, and of course, a better thinker. That's theartofcharm.com/challenge or text 'charmed,' in the U.S. to 33444.

For full show notes for this and all previous episodes, head on over to theartofcharm.com/podcast. This episode of AoC was produced by Jason DeFillippo, Jason Sanderson is our audio engineer and editor, and the show notes on the website are by Robert Fogarty. Theme music, of course, by Little people, and transcriptions by TranscriptionOutsourcing.net. I'm your host Jordan Harbinger. Go ahead, tell your friends because the greatest compliment you can give us is a referral to someone else, either in person or shared on the Web. Word of mouth really is everything. So, share the show with your friends and enemies. Stay charming and leave everything and everyone better than you found them.

