

EPISODE 117

[0:00:02.3] JC: Because ideas always seem genius at first but I've learned that if you give it time, you'll be able to see it differently and you'll either see that it sucks or that it's brilliant.

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:21.6] AT: Welcome to The Portfolio Life Podcast with Jeff Goins. I'm your host Andy Traub. Jeff believes that every creative should live a portfolio life. A life full of pursuing work that matters. Making a difference with your art and discovering your true voice. Jeff is committed to helping you find, develop, and live out your unique world view so that you too can live a portfolio life.

For much of his life, today's guest didn't feel like he fit anywhere. He didn't do well in school, he got fired from jobs and he wasn't following the path to success that most people would hope for, for themselves. Today, he's one of the most popular photographers in the world. So how did Jeremy Cowart end up a world changer? An artist living a portfolio life? Well, let's find out.

Here is Jeff Goins and Jeremy Cowart.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:01:15.5] JG: Well Jeremy, here we are, welcome to the show.

[0:01:17.3] JC: Thank you Jeff, really appreciate it. It's good to be here.

[0:01:20.4] JG: Fun to have you, I've never had you on the show before and I'm embarrassed to admit that because you, more than just about anybody I know, embody this idea of what it means to live a portfolio life.

[0:01:33.9] JC: Well gosh, it means a lot coming from you. I just thought it was career ADD this whole time.

[0:01:41.6] JG: So let's talk about that. I'd love to talk about all the different things that you have done that you do and are doing but let's start with that thing that you said right there, "career ADD". Correct me if I'm wrong but you have real ADD.

[0:01:55.6] JC: I think so, I've never been officially diagnosed but both of my brothers were and they were officially diagnosed and so I just have always assumed that I am because I definitely struggle in every day normal conversations to stay focused and pay attention. So, I guess so.

[0:02:13.5] JG: I think you do. As your friend, I think you do. I want to come back to that but you've been really generous with sharing your story, there's a wonderful video telling your life story online that went viral and I have seen it a bunch of times at events that we've both spoken at, you shared that at our tribe conference. Pretty much every time I cry.

[0:02:36.2] JC: As do I.

[0:02:37.1] JG: As do you. One of the things in that video that you shared that I thought was interesting is your struggle with just traditional education, with school. Can you talk a little bit about just what it was like for you growing up as a creative person and the struggles you faced?

[0:02:53.9] JC: Yeah, just remember, always wondering why I have such clear memories of being in classrooms and looking around and seeing all the other kids listening and taking notes, writing in their notebooks, following along, being able to focus and I just remember thinking like, "Why am I not able to do what they're doing? Why can't I take notes? I just ignore my teacher and just watch in curiosity. I have no idea what my teacher is saying, why can't I do this? Why is everybody capable but me?"

It's funny because to this day, I'm the same way in church. When pastor's speaking, everyone around me is like taking notes and listening what the pastor's saying and I'm often in Jeremy land with unicorns and teddy bears, just dancing along. As an adult, I know exactly what was going on but I just remember as a kid, it was so confusing.

[0:03:50.2] JG: Yeah, I think I knew yesterday when I texted you in the middle of church, that was going to catch your attention and you'd text me back. I could relate to the struggles too.

Okay, so these kids are taking notes, you're looking around going how can they do this when it seems so hard for me to do. So school wasn't easy, were there things that were easy for you? Were there things that came naturally to you?

[0:04:14.3] JC: Yeah, I remember seventh grade was when I took the first art class and I pretty much, the assignment was to draw a New York City street corner and they taught us how using two point perspective and I just zoned in and basically demolished the rest of the classroom and drew this really amazing New York City skyline and it was that moment when not only the teacher freaked out but my parents freaked out and everybody was like, "Whoa, where did this come from?"

I focused and focused and focused on it and it was kind of that moment was when I knew that, "Oh I'm good at art and I need to be doing this." I was also legitimately highly trained at studio singer, even as a kid I was in this kid's singing group and we would have to go to studios downtown Nashville and record backup vocals for Amy Grant and Michael W. Smith and all these. So I was good at music, I mean I could walk in to a studio, read sheet music and nail it first take. I was just excelling in all things creativity and music related but just sucked at all the academics. Math and science and all that stuff.

[0:05:28.9] JG: Yeah. I didn't know that about you being a singer.

[0:05:32.6] JC: Yeah, for probably 10 years, I did a studio work and then I hit puberty and my career tanked.

[0:05:40.6] JG: Yeah. So when you and I first had lunch years ago, you said something that was surprising to me and I think it might be surprising to other people who are familiar with your work as a photographer, you've shot Sting, Taylor Swift and all kinds of celebrities and musicians and everybody under the sun. You said something to me that surprised me, you said, you know, photography is great but what I really am is an artist. I remember you telling me this crazy idea that is actually becoming a reality, which we'll talk about in a minute, the fact that you're building a hotel. Do you predominantly think of yourself as an artist?

[0:06:25.8] JC: At the end of the day, I would say so. It's my favorite word, it's my favorite way to think about what I do, everybody has a different definition of what an artist is and my definition has always been, you know, if you were a Will Smith in that movie where he's the only man on earth, everybody else is gone and you're by yourself and you're still creating because you have to.

You have to get it out of your system like that to me is an artist, they just have to create no matter what and I have been that way as long as I can remember. It just manifest itself in different ways, it's painting, it's drawing, it's photography, it's marketing, it's social media, it's the way I dress, it's a hotel chain, it's so many different things and it's always evolving.

[0:07:15.0] JG: Do you think not being able to concentrate in school as a kid which I'm sure at times felt embarrassing or felt frustrating, did that give you any advantages that made you better at art?

[0:07:27.3] JC: Maybe so, I'm not really sure, I just know that when it came time for art, I was ahead of my classmates, I was hyper focused and I remember everybody else complaining and whining, "Oh I don't want to do this," and I was over in the corner just going to town. Yeah, I guess so, you often hear that ADD people are laser focused when they do want to achieve something and that's definitely been the way I've worked my whole life.

[0:07:55.8] JG: Was there a moment? Because you mentioned this briefly that you realized, art came easier to you than it did to other kids where you realize that you needed to be spending more time doing that, was there like an epiphany where you realized this is something that is in you that has to get out?

[0:08:12.5] JC: Yeah, I think it was through — I don't know if there was one moment but it was just an evolving moment through high school because I was also the lead in all of our school plays. I was the guy on stage singing and I was Tony in West Side Story and I was the lead and from art and music and drama. So I just knew that was always going to be and I actually thought I would be a musician, I never dreamed that I would actually be doing art of any kind of photography, wasn't certainly never on my radar in high school. Not at all.

[0:08:48.1] JG: Yeah, from that, you went in to graphic design, was that sort of the next vocational step?

[0:08:54.6] JC: Yeah, I think my parents were honestly scared of me making a living as a painter because that's really what I wanted to be. I'll never forget them bringing home the first mac that they had bought and my mom telling me about this really cool thing called Photoshop and it just scared crap out of me, I was terrified of computers and then I decided to go to college based on their advice and actually study graphic design and day on of my first Photoshop class and it was game over, I was just in love and obsessed and it's crazy to think that that was 20 years ago this year. I've been using Photoshop for 20 years.

[0:09:36.1] JG: So from there, we've got music, we've got art, we've got acting, we've got all of these things that are already starting to become a part of your portfolio which I think is fun and interesting. How does that transition into becoming honestly a world famous photographer.

[0:09:51.8] JC: I would say it was very accidental and organic. I followed the path that you're supposed to follow when you study graphic design, I graduated and got a job for an ad agency here in town and once again I was really ADD there because they were having me work on projects that sucked, that were really boring and my passion wasn't there.

So I wasn't working hard and then they tried moving me into the web development area which that was when the internet was still really brand new and I was doing some coding and I was trying to learn Macromedia, Dream Weaver, all that stuff and wasn't doing good. They ended up firing me and they didn't only fire me, they're like, "Hey, you should maybe go be a youth pastor or something."

[0:10:40.3] JG: That's amazing.

[0:10:42.0] JC: In all their goodwill in their firing me, basically they were saying, "You should probably stop creating all together." I went on to work for a couple more ad agencies and then just finally realize like, truly, that world was — it sounds so sexy to the rest of the world if you worked for an advertising agency but then you get in it and you realize it's still corporate, it's still politics, it's still pretty boring.

So by the time I had a lot of musician friends like Dave Barns and Matt Worth who were slowly building their music tribes and so they were my friends, I would just start designing for them and people started taking notice and my little design studio took off and before I knew it, I had major record labels as clients and then it wasn't again until a few years later that really digital cameras came about and I was the big texture guy, so I needed something to scan textures and so I bought my first camera really just to walk around and shoot concrete and shoot walls and just basically to scan textures is an easy way to get it into my design work.

[0:11:56.6] JG: So just to be clear, you're talking about in town, this is in Nashville, right?

[0:12:02.2] JC: Yeah.

[0:12:03.1] JG: So you met a lot of this guys who were either from here or came to town to get into music just because you lived here? I mean how did that work?

[0:12:10.9] JC: Actually in college, I went to MTHU, Middle Tennessee State and Dave Barns who is now a pretty well-known musician and I knew you went to their show and I saw. Really, really wish I had gone, I have a major show regret.

[0:12:25.7] JG: It was a good show.

[0:12:26.5] JC: So yeah dave was — basically there's a small group of three or four of us and he was in our little room and we were best friends in college. Hung out every single day on campus, you should have seen. If you think Dave's funny now, you should have seen him when he was single and needed girlfriend. It was Dave Barn's turned up to 11, it was hilarious. So I got to witness four years of that but yeah, actually Dave, small fun fact, Dave played drums for my band in college.

[0:12:58.0] JG: Really?

[0:12:58.6] JC: We go way back and then I remember the day that Dave came into my apartment and had an album by this guy named Matt Work and we just all, Brandon Heath was

also in our little friend group, Brandon's now got a massive following in the Christian music industry and we were all just buddies, it was all just college buddies and became friends and through working with those guys, early on in their careers, it just kind of branched out to other musicians and then labels and it all just very accidental and organically happened.

[0:13:33.4] JG: So how did you start shooting? How did you become this sought after photographer where some of the biggest celebrities and musicians in the world are seeking you out?

[0:13:47.8] JC: Yeah, just following that organic process, shooting friends, shooting people in town, the word getting out, label starting to hire me for both design and photography and then one day a lady in Hollywood called me. She said, "Hey, I was up against you, I had some orders that I placed up against you to get this job and you beat me, you go the job," and she said, "I checked out your website and I really love your work." She said, "I'm looking for more photographers and I'd love to represent you."

I didn't know that photography agents existed, I had no idea. I went and looked at her website, all her photographers were shooting this massive celebrities, George Clooney and Brad Pitt and Gwyneth Paltrow, all this crazy stuff. So I called her back, I was like, "I don't know if I can do this, I'll pencil you in, we'll figure out," — no, I'm just kidding. Of course I was super excited and we signed a deal shortly thereafter, it was basically like getting a record label.

She would send me out to Hollywood and I would sit down with the biggest TV and film studios and would get hired right on the spot, which was so rare. I remember her breaking out just saying this never ever happens, I literally went from zero to 60 within a couple of months of deciding to do photography. So yeah, just started shooting for the bigger TV networks like ABC and FOX and just things took off. The next thing I know she had sent me out to LA for another gig and Sting was there so I got to hang out and photograph Sting. After that it was just a blur, the first two or three years I was just shooting everyone everywhere.

[0:15:30.8] JG: I've heard you tell this story many times and you've heard you tell this story even more times. The question I've always had that never talked at length about is it sounds like it was a lucky break but the thing that stands out to more than anything is this agent was looking

at your work going, “Wow, this is really, really good.” Anybody who has seen your work was struck with awe, this is really sharp and interesting and creative and I know you are constantly striving to do something different, something new, something fresh.

So in those early days, because you considered yourself an artist and didn’t, as far as I can tell, hadn’t gone fully in on the photographer thing, how did you get so good? What were you doing to practice, what were you doing to hone your craft at that time that caught this agent’s attention?

[0:16:24.9] JC: I think I brought my designers eye into photography, I was composing things in a really odd way, I was shooting through things to bring different vibes and textures to my photography. I just remember being in meetings where the art directors would say just from looking at my work and said, “You’re a graphic designer aren’t you?” I’m like, “Well yes.” And they said, “We can tell by looking at your work.”

[0:16:51.6] JG: Interesting.

[0:16:52.7] JC: So lots of negative space, lots of odd compositions and it’s interesting to look back because I don’t do those things anymore. I think over time, you slowly learn what they’re going to choose anyway. You sadly kind of conform to what you know people want and then you look back on, “Wow, I was so much more creative in the beginning I was taking bigger risks,” and now I just know, my marketing mind just knows, “Okay, the label’s never going to use that tricky thing, the weird thing that it did.”

But it’s those weird things that bring you to the labels. So it’s a fine balance, it’s a fine line to walk where photographers have to be creative but they also have to know, and this goes for any medium, but you ought to also show people that you can deliver what they need.

[0:17:46.0] JG: Is that a struggle for you? Have you gotten disillusioned with being a big name photographer who is also an artist and wants to kind of push the boundaries but at the same time you know what’s going to sell?

[0:17:59.9] JC: Oh my gosh, yeah it's a huge struggle because I feel like I'm more creative than ever. I've grown so much more creative even in my photography and the way I light and the things I know. Yeah, I mean, I approach each shoot more this days towards who is the target audience. If I'm shooting Kelly Clarkson, I'm going to shoot light at one way, entirely different than I would if it's some indie band with has much darker music, that's both a good thing and a bad thing but at the end of the day, I do find my work probably more safe. Like the creative stuff, I don't push it as hard as I should.

Because I've done way too many shoots where we do all of the super weird creative stuff and they go — it's like they go to the shoot and they ask themselves, "Where is the most boring predictable shot that we could possibly use for the album cover?" And I kid you not, every single time, they use the safe stuff. So once that happens to you so many times, you're finally like, "All right, screw it. I'm going to give them the safe crap that they want."

[0:19:06.6] JG: Yeah. Why waste the time?

[0:19:10.2] JC: Don't get me wrong, I'm super thankful, I'm always, always grateful and thankful that people choose me for jobs. I mean there's hundreds of photographers to choose from but there is a level of frustration still that exist.

[0:19:22.6] JG: Well, one of the things that I admire about you is you're always starting something. You're always starting a new project from when the earthquakes hit Haiti and you went to document the aftermath of that. I know philanthropy and compassion are a huge part of your life.

Whether it's a nonprofit thing or a business venture of putting everything that you've learned about photography online through your online community, C University, or starting a hotel. I'm curious, is this one of the reasons why you're constantly starting new things is because the thing that you're doing becomes a prison? It becomes something that traps you?

[0:20:07.4] JC: Maybe, yeah, I think to a certain degree. I also think that it just doesn't challenge me anymore. Photography is still fun, I did a big shoot for an A list artist last week and I had a blast. I love the challenges that shoots bring but the challenge is no longer there. It's

like, I compare it to like being in the NBA and people from the outside think I'm Michael Jordan or LeBron James. I know I'm not LeBron James because I'm in the NBA and I know the real LeBron James is out there shooting every day, they don't have time to be on social media and so they're not as well known to the public. But I think of myself as like a sixth man on the bench somewhere that's coming in, I'm not even making the all-star team.

At the same time, I know what it takes to become LeBron James, to become Andy Libowitz and it just doesn't interest me anymore. I know how she's lighting, I know what she's doing in her posts, I know who she's hiring to do her post. So it's like yeah, I could work hard and I could party and I could socialize and I could move to New York and I could hire the right agent and I could do all the right marketing, I literally know what it takes to go there but I just lost interest in it years ago.

So I am so drawn to things that challenge me and push me and photography doesn't in that way. I'm not saying I'll never shoot again because I'll actually shoot a lot but it will just be personal projects, it will be on things that are dear to my heart and so I feel like I keep pursuing new things really just to challenge and push myself. I love being challenged.

[0:21:48.4] JG: So I remember a few years ago, you just kind of up and moved to LA and can you tell me what was going on in your life, in your career and your personal aspirations at that point, were you going for it? Were you trying to become like the best photographer in the world at that point?

[0:22:05.0] JC: Yeah, I've lived in Nashville my whole life and I was literally born down to Nashville at Baptist, which is now Saint Thomas. Yeah, it was one of those things like for an ADD guy like why live in the same city your entire life? Your Agents in Los Angeles, your clients are in Los Angeles, so many of your friends are in Los Angeles, why not go out there and give it a good year's push and just see what happens? I needed to get that out of my system.

So we did, we moved out there and actually loved it, we really did love it, big things were happening. They say you need to give LA two years to really get the right momentum and that momentum was definitely building after a year. Through, it's kind of a long story. Essentially, we

had somebody renting out our house in Nashville that not only didn't pay rent but nearly destroyed our house.

It was like worst case scenario, somebody renting out your house and then I was building an iPhone app at the time called Okay, Do This and all my developers were in Nashville, my help portrait team was in Nashville, there was still so many things tugging here back in Nashville. When you have a tenant not paying rent and you're paying for a house in LA and Nashville, we had no choice but to come back home.

[0:23:26.6] JG: Yeah, it's terrible. You came back to settle that and just decided this is home?

[0:23:31.7] JC: Yeah, it's like we came back and we were like, "Okay cool, we got LA out of our system." But yeah, the end of the day when you have two kids and you're trying to adopt two more and all three sets of our parents are in this part of the country, it just kind of.... My wife's experienced our divorce so she has two sets of parents and then I have mine and they're all here. It's a lot better with family to be here. It just kind of made sense to stay.

[0:24:00.6] JG: I forgot about the app, Okay Do This. So many projects, it reminds me of Seth Godin's book, Big Mantra's book where he shares all this projects, the things that worked, the things that failed, you're just building an incredible portfolio. The most recent addition to that is this thing called the Purpose Hotel.

I'm pretty sure, three years ago, I think it was three years ago when we had lunch at 55 South and you recommended the fried pickles which was a solid recommendation. You said, "I want to do this, I'm doing all these things, I think of myself as an artist," that surprising conversation we had, and you said, "I really want to build a hotel."

I remember you mentioning this that far back and we've gotten together since then and I think every time, you bring it up and then earlier this year, I think like almost like January, you said, "This is the year where we're going all in on the hotel." Part of me was like, "Okay." I grew up in Communities where people had all this dreams that never really came true. So I'm always really skeptical of big ideas and yet here we are, you've launched this Kickstarter and it's going great, tell me a little bit about the Purpose Hotel and where this idea came from?

[0:25:22.9] JC: Yeah, super random. I've never in a day of my life cared about hotels or the hospitality industry and so I had a meeting, your timing is right because my meeting was four years ago in LA at a meeting for a photoshoot in a hotel room. I remember walking down the hallway, it was a really cool hotel called The Standard, I'm sure many of your listeners have been there. But the hotel rooms were designed like a name tag and the name tag when I walked in the room said, "Hello, my name is room 121." For whatever super random reason, that room number caught my eye and I remember walking in the room, just thinking about how clever it was for them to rethink the room number.

But then I was like, what if instead of making it a name tag, they got a story attached to each room and that story was a child's face with their name on it, and you realize that your room was sponsoring a child whether it's a dollar or two a night and every room had a story. If there are 500 rooms in the building, there's 500 children being sponsored and stories being told and I got real excited about that idea and then instantly it was like — and every TV shows pornography. What if instead of pornography, every TV had this listing of social good documentaries through films?

And then look to sitting on a bed and, "Oh my gosh, nonprofits that are doing pillows and linens." And I know Thistle Farms who is doing soaps and shampoos and what if when you paid to access the internet that was going to aid an International Justice mission to fight human trafficking. It was just kind of one of those overwhelming divine moments where everything hits you at once and I know Caitlyn Crosby at the given keys, the room keys could be connected to giving keys. I remember sharing the company I was meeting with, they're called VISCO and they're now worth bazillion dollars.

[0:27:20.6] JG: Technical term.

[0:27:22.3] JC: Yeah, but it was in their beginning days too and I was in a meeting with them and I remember telling the guys about the idea and they were all blown away like that's big. Then I came home and I remember sharing it for a few months, really passionately and couldn't get it out of my head but then slowly I just kind of degraded back in to fear. Like, "Whoah, you're 35 years old, who the crap are you to build a freaking hotel chain from scratch? I just kind of

was daunted by all the voices telling me like, “No, this is not for you, this is too big, there’s no way this is going to happen.” So for three years, I’ll let those voices win. It wasn’t until this past fall of 2015 that I finally kind of overcame those voices.

[0:28:11.5] JG: Two things, the first, I want to talk about how this all came together, but before that, how do you know that an idea is worth pursuing. I think you get a lot of ideas more than the average person, more than me. How do you know that it’s worth doing or not because you’re talking about stuff that it kind of surprises me, you’re afraid, you’re like, “Oh I can’t do this, this isn’t going to work.” To me you seemed like a guy, you get an idea, you go do it and it takes off. So how do you make that decision, “I’m going to go in on this.” Whether it’s an iPhone app or an online course, a career as a photographer or a hotel?

[0:28:48.2] JC: Yeah, I first tell a small group of people that I trust and the first person is my wife and I love my wife because she usually just laughs and it’s in one ear and out the other. Come home, I’ll be excited, I’ll tell her an idea, “Oh, that’s awesome. Could you take out the trash? I’m going to run the Target, I’ll be out a while,” and literally doesn’t even hit her. When I told her about two things, first Help Portrait many years ago and then the hotel a few years ago, both of those times, she cried on the spot where she just wept.

The other hundred ideas, she just laughed and ignored it. So when my wife responds to an idea, I know that I’ve got something. Then after my wife, I will usually run it by my business partner, business manager next, his name is Michael, we’ve worked together for 10 years and Michael is the ultimate skeptic and he’ll shoot real straight with me.

So if both of them approve it then I’ll run it by close friends and community like yourself, you and Kyle Chaoming and John Acuff and get kind of get that third level of opinions and if it passes all of those, then I usually wait a couple of months because ideas always seem genius at first but I’ve learned that if you give it time, you would be able to see it differently and you’ll either see that it sucks or that’s brilliant. So if it passes all those tests, then I know that it’s probably something I should pursue.

[00:30:20.4] JG: So the Purpose Hotel apparently passed all those test last year and you just launched this Kickstarter, how did all of these come together? You’ve never done this before so I

imagine you've had to find people who know how to build buildings and can procure all these different moving parts and bring them all together in a place. How is that coming together? I'm really curious.

[00:30:45.5] JC: Man, it's — well, I wasn't planning on working with my business manager on this last fall because he does really good when he manages my other relationships. He oversaw the iPhone app process, he's overseen Help Portrait and he usually oversees the other things I'm doing. He doesn't get involved with them directly but I found the courage last fall to really just start putting one foot in front of you and then other and then start figuring this out.

I think when he saw that I was serious, he also started putting one foot in front of the other with me and I've very quickly realized that he was very capable of being my partner in this and so he was thinking through all of the things that I wasn't from a business model. Like how does this hotel actually money? What is it going to cost? How much is each room going to cost, how much money are we going to give back to non-profits?

Thinking through all the things that are infinitely more complicated than anything I've ever done and then I started while he was doing that, I started really dreaming in detail about what that's going to look like, who we're going to partner with, who we're going to help, why it needs to be in multiple cities around the world. So we started both working together on it and I don't know how to describe it but it's like there's been a boat sitting there the whole time in the water.

This is what it felt like for us, it's like we climbed in the boat and the wind just blew the sails and the boat took off without us even steering the ship and it's just been a crazy pace like green lights everywhere we look, sorry for mixing analogy. But everywhere we look it's just a yes, it's just go. Everybody we talked to, everybody wants to be involved, everybody wants to help, everybody wants to invest. It is just mind blowing how much is coming together ever since that step when we decided to say, "Let's do this".

[00:32:45.9] JG: Let's just go back to the boat analogy, let's pick one. Where is the boat right now? Is it just leaving the harbor? Is it in the middle of the choppy water, where are you right now with this project?

[00:32:58.3] JC: I would say it's still barely 10 feet away from the harbor. Even though I said it took off, I'm so bad at mixing all these analogies. Yeah I mean we're taking off and there's years and years and years of the journey ahead and so that's why I say we're just taking off. We're in the beginning and I know it's going to be hard. I know it's going to take forever and we might be three years away from the hotel actually being built.

We might be four years away, I have no idea? But to see the world rallying around it is insane. We don't even have land yet. We're certainly looking at land and we have options and we even have another major city that has the land, they're ready today to build the hotel so we're figuring all those things out.

[00:33:44.8] JG: Your goal at least last I heard was to do the first one in Nashville.

[00:33:49.1] JC: Yeah, of course. I love this town. I was born here and from here and I love the idea of this hotel. Eventually being around the world but starting in my home city. I've always loved that Starbucks started in Seattle. It's just a more lovely story for things like this start at a small scale and Nashville's such an exciting city right now and so many friends that there's no better reason, no better place than to start than in Nashville.

[00:34:15.1] JG: But your vision is that there will be Purpose Hotels all over the world right?

[00:34:19.5] JC: Yeah, for sure.

[00:34:21.6] JG: Can you, as we wrap up here and it's an incredibly inspiring message and lots of people are getting behind it and around it and it's just a great idea because when you travel, you're going to stay somewhere and as you mentioned, a lot of those little things that you experience throughout the hotel like the door, the soap, they're not interesting and they're not inspiring and in some cases, they're just totally lame or conflicting with a person's values period and why not make that something that is really refreshing both to the person's body but to their soul, I love it.

[00:35:02.5] JC: Absolutely.

[00:35:04.4] JG: So one of the things that it seems to me you started thinking about, I don't know, a couple of years ago and I don't know if this is true or I'm imposing this on you but it seems like you started thinking a lot more about legacy.

[00:35:15.7] JC: Yes.

[00:35:16.3] JG: And did something cause that? What was the influence for that?

[00:35:20.8] JC: Yes, it's weird man, I think I've almost got a slight obsession with it not in an unhealthy way but a meaningful way. Like two years ago in 2014, I suddenly lost my brother due to a heart attack and we had been texting all morning. We were both flying out. I was flying to Vegas, he was flying to Hawaii and I'm on stage in Vegas speaking when my dad calls me and told me that we lost Mike due to a heart attack and it just changes so much about so much.

And then just this year, I nearly lost my mom to a heart attack as well. Very, very close, she ended up having a quadruple bypass and so it just makes life seem and feel so, so short and when there are daily tragedies these days and just mass chaos around the world, more than ever I just feel like, "My goodness, I could go at any moment." My time could be up at any point.

And so I just am really obsessed with this idea of what can I do for the longevity of my family? How can I provide for them, how can I leave a legacy for them, how can my life advise them not just my words like I want to do something for my kids and their kids that will help them for many, many years to come along after when I'm gone and so the hotel idea helps in endless ways on that front. So yeah, I think it's super fulfilling.

[00:36:59.4] JG: Yeah and I love that and I think I was watching the video and you said something like, "Let's be a part of something meaningful that endures that is around long after we're not," and I was like, "Wow." You're not just building a building, it's a movement and one of the things I love about what you're doing here is hopefully, you are setting an example, a president for the rest of the hospitality industry to get on board with, which is really exciting for me to see that potentially happen.

[00:37:34.6] JC: Yeah, I hope so. I mean there are a lot of hotels that have like, you know you walk in and they'll say, "Don't turn in your towels or do this to save water." Or I think Holiday Inn has like breakfast with a cause things, so they're certainly starting to think that way. I just spoke at the United Nations in New York City at the Global Travel Summit and it was interesting because they're all thinking this way but they're all thinking about the environment.

It was literally 100% about saving the planet, which is amazing. I mean I'm all for that too, I want the Purpose Hotel to be extremely environmental friendly but I am more concerned about the environment but I am even more so concerned about the people living on it and so I think this hotel stands to literally provide jobs in our country and around the world as well and help the environment. So I couldn't be more excited about it for those reasons.

[00:38:30.6] JG: I love how you just casually dropped, "So I was hanging out the UN the other day," as one does.

[00:38:36.8] JC: Yeah, it's a bit ridiculous.

[00:38:38.7] JG: Yeah, as you do and it's amazing and inspiring to see the influence that you have had and continue to have in the world for good, an honor to call you friend, thanks for sharing your story today Jeremy and real excited about the Purpose Hotel.

[00:38:53.5] JC: Oh man, thank you so much and dude, thanks for the literally years of inspiration, the years of help. You have been such a huge part of my story and to see the university and I'm just so thankful that you've been a part and your listeners are in good hands with you.

[00:39:09.0] JG: Oh thanks man.

[00:39:10.3] JC: Yep.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[00:39:17.4] AT: So have you talked to yourself into limiting your potential? Have you let your dreams simply fade away? Are you living your authentic life using your God given gifts? We'd love for you to share your thoughts on today's episode where you can also share it easily with a friend by going to Goinswriter.com/116. We appreciate the time you've taken to listen to today's show. I'm Andy Traub and on behalf of Jeff Goins, thanks for spending some time with us.

Now, go build your portfolio.

"JC: I'm really obsessed with this idea of what can I do for the longevity of my family? How can I provide for them? How can I leave a legacy for them? How can my life advise them not just my word? I want to do something for my kids and their kids that will help them for many, many years to come long after I'm gone."

[END]