



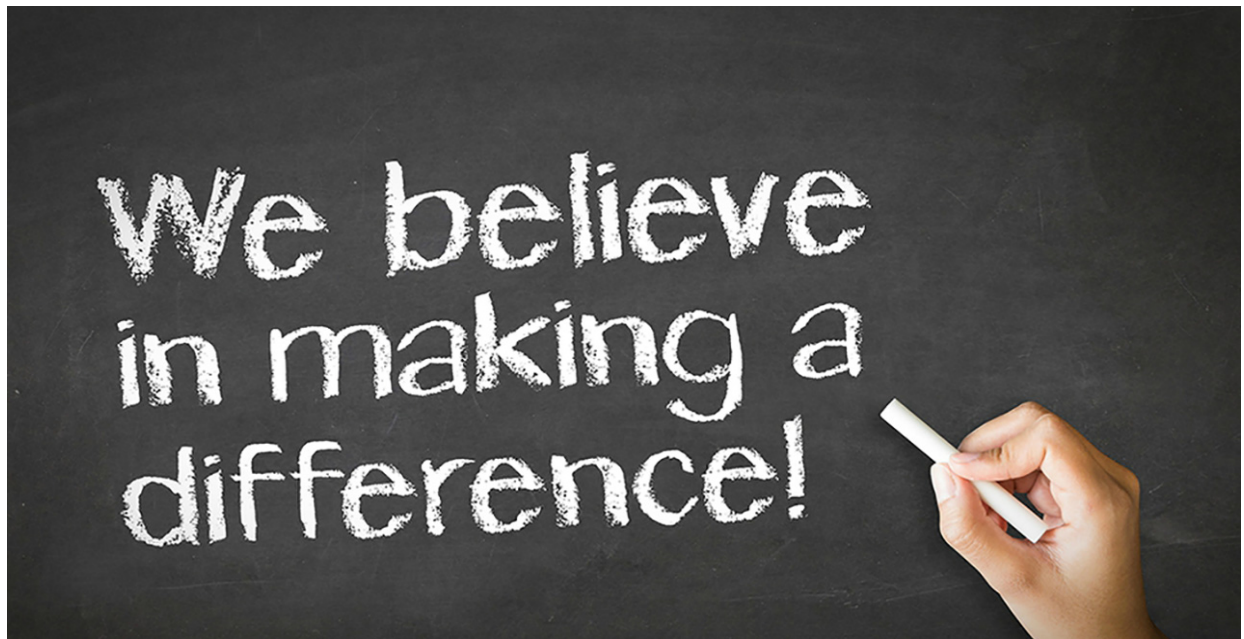
AESNATION.COM

ACCELERATING ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS PODCAST

EPIISODE
30

Chris Attwood

Show Notes at: <http://www.aesnation.com/30>



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Best of success,



John Bowen
Co-founder, AES Nation

John Bowen: As entrepreneurs, we struggle on a lot of things. And one of the biggest things we struggle with is driving our business. We're working so hard in our business. We want to be more successful. We want to serve more people. We want to make a dent in the universe. And sometimes we forget that success is different than just building a great business. We want to live a life on purpose, that we're really making a big difference. We're going to bring together those best practices of the most successful entrepreneurs. And that's what we're doing here at AESNation.com. But in addition to that, we want to make sure we design it so that we live a great life for all stakeholders, not only for ourselves and our lying self-interest, because that's what makes us more successful, but it's also everyone else we have the privilege of working with, our clients, our customers, our teammates, our partners.

And I tell you, I'm really excited today. I have an unbelievable, talented entrepreneur who brings together both parts. So often, we get the soft, fuzzy stuff over here and then we get the hard business side over here, and they don't get together. Well, I had the opportunity to meet Chris a couple years ago. And I was just blown away. So we have Chris Attwood and he's going to show to you how you can bring this together so you can have a hugely successful business and a great life. Stay tuned.

John: Chris, I am so excited to have you here. I know you're traveling. I don't even know where you are now. But I know you're on the road. So thank you for joining us.

Chris: I'm in Germany.

John: Oh Germany. Chris, I really appreciate you taking the time to share some of your insights because you have made such a huge difference in so many people's lives. And what I want to do is just take a step back though. I'm thinking as a young man, you didn't wake up and say, "Okay, I am going to solve one of the most pressing problems in the world. I'm going to go ahead and help everyone live a life on purpose, to have a great life and make a big impact." How did you get to where you are?

Chris: Yeah, thank you John. Thank you so much for having me. As you said, when we met I felt an immediate connection. I'm so glad to have a chance to reconnect with you in this context. And so for me, I was fortunate I would say in that for the first half of my life, I made choices based upon the things I love. I did the stuff that I wanted to do. I pursued all sorts of crazy things and ideas. I had a lot of fun. I traveled all around the world in the process.

And then there came a time when I got married. And maybe some of your listeners can relate to this. And I didn't realize it at that time but when I got married, I have this concept that now I'm the breadwinner. I'm the one who has to bring in the money. I have to see that we can pay the bills. I have to make sure that we live a comfortable life. And that was my downfall to tell you. That was like, Oh my God! Over the next five years, I went through four different positions, all executive positions. I was Chief Operating Officer, General Manager, CEO...

John: Your resume reads like unbelievable what most people would dream of and not just quite earning a paycheck.

Chris: Well, I had good jobs. The problem was none of those jobs were things that I was passionate about. I hadn't figured out that this was really important. I was all about the money. How much money are they going to pay me? Am I going to get equity in the company? What sort of partnership opportunities are there? Those are the stuff that I was looking at. And I've come to realize that while all those things are important, those have to be your number two when it comes to making decisions. Though number one has to be, am I passionate about this? Is this going to light me up? Is this going to turn me on? But I have learned that at that point.

And so I go through a position and I get a year and a half into it and I was tearing my hair out. You can see the result you know. It was an awful time and I was miserable and I remember, I got into this one position. It was an international recruiting company and we were recruiting health practitioners from overseas, primarily physical and occupational therapist. And I was a partner in the business at this point but I've been brought in by the founder to help pull the business together and it took me a while to figure out that we were charging less than it was costing us to bring the therapist in the country. Now you can guess that that's not a good prescription for a successful business right, John?

John: There's been many of us as entrepreneurs who have really tried to scale up before we figure it out. And the revenue numbers are phenomenal. I've been there. Unfortunately, many of us are still there. We're in something we're not happy but we're doing it kind of for the money, the drive, the ego. And we're looking at the top line and these... they're all our friends think we're hugely successful and...

Chris: Traveling. I mean I went to the Philippines, recruited a hundred therapists. We had a lot of business going on but the problem was, we got to a point... as you can imagine, if your cost is higher than your revenue, and you don't have an outside source of revenue to make it up, we got to the point I went four months without getting paid. I had at that point, hadn't figured out how incredibly it is to pay your payroll taxes. And so fortunately, today I wiped my brow that we figured it out before the IRS came in and took my house. But we were going through all of this stuff and I remember waking up in the middle of the night one day, and I was shaking. I was just... my whole body was shaking and it took me about an hour and a half to get through that but I realized something had to change. This just was not working.

And so it was at that time that my business partner today Janet Bray Attwood who was my wife at that time. But we realized that being husband and wife wasn't the best relationship for us as much as we love each other. And so we got a divorce after five years and then three years later became business partners. And today, we have a very successful business together. But at that time, Janet said, "You know, you need to do something different." And she introduced me to this little thing that she called the Passion Test.

She hadn't really shared it with more than ten or twelve people at this point. But she said, you got to go through and figure out what are the things that are really important to you? And so, I did that for the first time. That was probably close to 20 years ago now. And it really shifted everything for me John. If I look at one moment that was kind of a defining moment, that was one of those for me. Because now, I started doing what in my early life I had done just accidentally. But now I did it consciously. I started making choices based on things that really mattered most to me. And it wasn't long after that, that I got a new position. I started making more money than I ever had before. I was selling consulting and training to Fortune 500 companies and doing incredibly well at it.

And then not long after that, Janet called me up and said, "I have this opportunity to work with Mark Victor Hansen and Robert Allen. Mark Victor Hansen, co-creator of *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series and Bobby Allen, number one New York Times bestselling author of *Creating Wealth* and *Nothing Down* and we ended up partnering with Mark and Bob, we created something called the Enlightened Millionaire program. We enrolled about almost a thousand people, brought in about a million dollars in our first year.

And really, that's how I learned. This whole world that you are now so expert in John of how do you reach people online? How do you create an information marketing business? And

Janet had this passion for the Passion Test. And so that became an eBook. We did teleseminars, not unlike this. But it was teleseminars in those days, self-published the book. Penguin bought the rights in 2007. It became a New York Times bestseller. We now have 1,400 facilitators in 50 countries around the world. And we can say that the Passion Test has become the number one tool used worldwide to discover passion and connect with purpose.

John: What was the big breakthrough in not only your own life but helping others to do this?

Chris: The breakthrough in my life was really recognizing that I had to begin choosing in favor of my passions and you know I'm just going to comment on this and then I'll get to the answer to your question John. But as we have gone more deeply into this whole arena and we have a program called the Passion Test for business which is really designed both for small entrepreneurial businesses and large enterprise types of businesses.

And what you see in the literature today is that great companies are companies where their employees are fully engaged and the only way that you get engagement among employees is that the employees are passionate about the work that they're doing, that they love what they're doing. And when that's true, then they're motivated. You don't have to drag them into work because they want to come on their own. And we've seen that there's been studies done that shows there's a direct correlation between the level of engagement in a company and the bottom line, the profitability of that company.

So passion is not something that's nice to have. It's actually an essential piece particularly for an entrepreneur because it's what keeps you going. The thing I think you know as well as I do John is that if you're an entrepreneur, your life and your revenue stream is probably going to go like this for a while. That there's...

John: It's easy to become a manic depressive as an entrepreneur.

Chris: We all experience these ups and downs until we get to a point that we can even it out you know and so the passion is what keeps you going when everything seems to be collapsing around you. It's what inspires you and allows you to keep moving forward and I think for us it was that same thing that Janet and I... our company is called Enlightened Alliances because we recognized early on that both of us seem to have some skill and talent. And this is a key piece.

A successful entrepreneur takes their passions and combines them with their natural talents to serve a need that others have that can generate value and income. And so what we did is we used that. We started connecting with all sorts of people in our industry and in other industries and bringing them together, providing things that they needed, being able to find out what was their critical need and then finding ways that we could help them fulfill that, so that over a period of several years, we developed some really strong, loyal relationships among people who are incredibly successful for seven years.

We did interviews with some of the most successful people in the world about how they discovered their passions, how they overcame them, and along the way, we created relationships that then created business opportunities for us and for them as well. We interviewed people like Paula Abdul and on the other end of the spectrum Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, Tony Robbins, and all sorts of people from many genres and backgrounds.

The breakthrough for me I would say was from a business standpoint, the breakthrough was when we started engaging a team to enroll people into our primary revenue generator, which for us is a certification program. We certified past just facilitators. Up until that time, we were doing all the enrollments ourselves. We'd go out, we'd give talks, we'd speak to a hundred, three hundred, five hundred people, a thousand people. And then we'd invite those people to enroll in our certification program. That's how we generated revenue for the business. But if we weren't speaking, there was no revenue. That wasn't much fun.

And so the transition for our business was when we brought together a team and created a system, an online system, so that they were generating revenue even when we weren't speaking. And that's what created that stabilized our business really, is that we went from having these ups and downs.

What had happened with us John is we'd have an up and then we'd have a down. And when we were in the down, we'd say "Oh my God, we have to come up with a new program. We have to create some new products." So we'd go rush around and create a new product. And it's not a bad thing to do. As you know John, necessity is the mother of invention. We created...

John: That creative tension can really work well but it gets old after a time.

Chris: Oh boy, does it get old. But I just have to tell you this quick story. We created... in one of those down periods, we said okay people have been telling us we're so good at creating alliances, let's create a product called Alliance Secrets. And so we did. And we enrolled a bunch of people in it. It provided the income we needed at that moment.

But one of our students was well known by the name Rhonda Byrne and she contacted me when Janet was in India. And she said, "I'm creating this movie. It's going to change the world. I love to have you involved and let me send you the trailer." So she sent us the trailer and it was off the charts. It was so amazing, so powerful, so well done. She had a television company in Australia so it wasn't like she hasn't done this sort of thing before and so we ended up spending several months, three or four months just setting up interviews for her. We arranged for her to come to Aspen, Colorado and interview many of the Transformational Leadership Council members that was founded by Jack Canfield and that movie came out in 2005 or 2006. It was called *The Secret*.

And today it's been viewed by some 400 million people, as number one New York Times bestselling book that I think is still on the New York Times list some seven or eight years later.

John: A lot of people shared with me the big role that you played there. I mean you've really been powerful on alliances and I want to come back to that. But I want to just touch on a couple things that you mentioned that are just so important for all entrepreneurs. This idea of building it first... I don't care whether you're in professional services like Chris providing information or whether you're selling widgets. It's that concept of going ahead and nailing the process so it's a great client experience in what you're doing, and then scaling. And that for many of us is the big breakthrough.

And then the other thing Chris, you mentioned productivity. And a lot of guys like me that are... a number of people, they look and they say, "Geez, just the happiness stuff, that's good." Chris talked about it. And really where it hit me as a guy, a professor at Harvard Shawn Achor who wrote a book called the *Happiness Advantage*. I had Shawn out in front of the hard-nosed group of financial people who are some of the most successful wealth managers in the world. And Shawn, when he started sharing some of the numbers, what I remember was about a 30% increase in productivity by having your team really embrace happiness and go on this journey with you. For all of us who are hard-nosed, this stuff, bringing it together...even if you don't want to be happy, you want your team to be happy.

Chris: Forget about happiness for yourself. Just make sure your team is happy. That's great. And I'll give you a number John. It's kind of interesting to look at. Gallop has done a lot of this research. There's a number of companies that have... companies in the same industry, when you compare companies that have a high level of engagement. And I've forgotten what high level means but we can look that up. High level of engagement and these are companies which are in the top 5 in their industry and you compare them to the companies that are the bottom of their industry or just average companies, not the bottom but average... it's an 8 to 1 difference. And level of engagement is 8 actively engaged to 1 in the top five companies and then in the average companies it's 1 1/2 to 1 engagement. The difference on the profitability standpoint is EPS, earnings per share was 51% higher in those companies with those high levels of engagement compared to the average companies.

John: That's just huge. And this is one of the reasons why I wanted to have you on Chris is because I don't think as entrepreneurs, we kind of think of this that much. A lot of people starting out, they actually do. "I've got a blank slate. I'm going to design it." But when we get caught up and we're having success and we have a lot more flexibility to do this, we don't do it.

Chris: That's when we really need to do it, I have to say. I don't know if you know Craig Handley and Tony Ricciardi, they own a company called Listen Up Español. They have about a thousand employees. It's a call center in Mexico that they take calls for products that are run on infomercials in the US appealing to the Hispanic market. And they brought us in to their company when they were... They had grown from 20 to a thousand in a couple of years. And they said, "This company is getting out of hand. We can no longer communicate our values to all of our employees. And how do we do that?"

And so we came in and we instituted the Passion Test for Business. We took the management team through identifying what was most important for the company. And what were the top... they had top 8 passions for the company. And what is the unique contribution of that company? Got that out to the employees, trained about 95% of the employees, and then did a retrospective study looking at those who have gone through the Passion Test process and who were engaged with their passions with the company compared to what had previously been their top performers because their top performers interestingly enough, were the ones who didn't go through the training because they didn't want to take them off the floor. They didn't want to come off the floor.

What we found that in five campaigns, because this is a sales organization. You can measure sales... five different campaigns. Those who have gone through the Passion Test training outperformed what had previously been their top performers in all five campaigns. And we also created a process for their new hires to get them aligned right away. And they did now perform the old guard except on one campaign. At one campaign, even the new hires outperformed what have previously been their best performers.

The passion stuff makes the difference. When people are excited and passionate about their work, they're more motivated. People who are passionate are magnetic. You want to be around someone who's excited, someone who's happy, someone who's engaged, someone who is turned on about what they're doing. It's attractive. And so, naturally you're going to do more business.

John: What are you most passionate about now that you're working on Chris? You got a lot of things going on that I know but what are you most passionate about now?

Chris: Well, it's something dear to my heart. At first glance, would be so far removed from what you do John and probably what many of listeners are thinking about, but we have a new book coming out October 21st, it's called *Your Hidden Riches*. It's coming out October 21st and here's the thing about this book... especially entrepreneurs or business people would say, "Rituals, what do I need with rituals?"

But the truth is that rituals are the unspoken secret of all successful people. And the reason they're unspoken is because those rituals are yet generally very personal. They are things you don't talk about. You don't share them that much in a public setting because they are something very personal to you. But what you'll see is that the most successful people in the world all incorporate rituals in one way or another into their lives. And they do that to be able to perform at their best when they need to, to stay calm when they're under intense pressure, and to be able to create balance in their life.

I'll give you a couple of fun ones and then when it's more serious. Simon Cowell, he's probably worth \$300-400 million, you know what his daily ritual is?

John: I do not know.

Chris: Climbing a tree. Every day, he climbs a tree. And I want to say, I'm not suggesting that everybody should go out and climb a tree. But just think about it for a minute. Why would a grown man who's incredibly successful climb a tree everyday? And what I would suggest is that most of Simon's life, like most of our lives, are very focused, really busy. He's got a lot to deal with, a lot to stay on top of. And my guess is, he could exercise a lot of different ways besides climbing a tree. He could get in the gym and workout. But why climb a tree? Probably I would guess is it makes him feel like a kid. It's a way to have fun, a way to laugh, a way to feel silly because I'm willing to bet, that there aren't a lot of places in his life where he gets to feel silly outside of when he's climbing that tree. So that's one fun one.

There's another one. You know the actor Colin Farrell?

John: I do.

Chris: The Irish actor. So every time that he starts a new movie, he wears a particular set of boxer trunks, covered with shamrocks that say the luck of the Irish. And you might laugh at this and say oh its superstition. But I have to tell you John. When we're talking about rituals, we're not talking about religious practices. We're not talking about superstition. We're not even talking about habits. We all have good and bad habits, things that develop unconsciously. But when Colin is wearing those boxer shorts, I'm pretty sure the reason he does it is because it reminds him that he's lucky. He's Irish. He's lucky. He's going to do a great job in this film because it puts him into a mental-emotional state where he's ready to perform at his best and to accept the luck that he's entitled to because he's Irish.

I would like to give you one more if I can and this isn't a business example. I will give you a business example before we get done with this...

John: No, these are great Chris.

Chris: But there's a World Cup soccer player by the name of Leighton Baines, he plays for the British soccer team. And he's very successful and if you ever watch him play, you'll see that when he goes out on the playing field, he kneels down, unties his shoes and then ties them again. And you'd say, "Why would you do something like that as crazy?" Why would you do something like that? And that's clearly... the reason I love this example is it's clearly not a habit. This is not a good habit. It's not a bad habit. It's a ritual. And so why does he do that ritual? The reason that he does that is because it sets his ordinary everyday life apart

from when he has to be at his best, where he has to be out on the playing field and he has to be performing the best that he's able to and he has to do it with a million people or more watching him on television, thousands of fans screaming in the stand. So it's a way that he gets into a mental-emotional state where he can stay focused.

And if you ever talk to speakers John, I know you have a lot of friends who are speakers. You do speaking yourself. A lot of speakers have rituals that they do before they go on stage to put them in that state. You've mentioned Brendon Burchard. If you ever see Brendon Burchard backstage before he's about to go on, you'll see him bouncing around like this and doing this deep breathing and getting his energy up.

Warren Buffett, you'd have to say he's pretty successful. I don't know what all of his rituals are but one that's become public is that he spends 12 hours a week playing bridge. And you say, is that really a ritual? And I would make the case that anything that you do that is a conscious, intentional practice that you make habitual because you know it improves your life, that's how we define ritual. And Warren Buffett plays bridge because it gives him balance in his life. It gives him a way to relax and to enjoy. And 12 hours a week is a lot of time to play bridge for someone who's at the top of the financial market.

These kinds of rituals... the most important thing, the bottom line I would say for your listeners John is that a ritual is valuable to the extent that it has meaning and purposefulness for you. It doesn't matter if it seems stupid or crazy or silly to someone else. I doubt that many of us are going to go out and start climbing a tree everyday. And it doesn't matter. Thank God Simon Cowell is successful enough that he doesn't care what anybody thinks you know. He can climb all the trees that he wants. But the thing that's important is that the rituals that you put into your life are things that have meaning to you. And when they do, then they can serve this purpose of helping you manage your time, your energy, manage your thinking. Especially as a business person, if you're not putting your attention on the things that are going well, well there's a lot to put your attention on isn't almost all the time, isn't there John?

John: That positive focus and really having something that [distorted] I like. In the last three years I have taken up golf and I use that as a habit. Also Dan Sullivan at Strategic Coach got me doing the three gratitudes in the morning.

Chris: There you go. That's a ritual.

John: And his rituals. It just puts framing... I have a whole process as I'm doing major projects and so on and it really sets the stage.

This is the Application of the Day. What are you using that you really like on your smart phone that you want to share with fellow entrepreneurs Chris?

Chris: Sure. There are a lot of great applications. There are a couple that I use, I'll just throw them out and then I want to focus on one. There's a program called Wunderlist, w-u-n-d-e-r-list. I use that as a simple to do list program. It's well laid out. It's easy to use. It works for me.

And then another one is Evernote. Evernote is a great program to, when you just need to jot something down, and it syncs between all of your devices and it has a lot of ability you can do outlines. You can write letters. You can write emails in it and send them if you need to. Or you can just take notes. I use it a lot to take notes of presentations and then I want to share some information with a colleague or members of our team and I can send it directly out of Evernote. So those are a couple of quick programs.

But there's one that I think for entrepreneurs, business owners, is incredibly valuable, it's called Business Model Generation. It's an app that's available I now for the iPad. It's based on a book by the same name *Business Model Generation*. It's by a couple of very bright business guys in Europe, Alex Osterwalder and Paris, I forgot his last name. But the thing I like is they've taken 9 essential elements of thinking about a project and breaking it out. They call it the Business Model Canvas so just getting a glance over here. They help you think through what are your customer segments? What's the customer relationship that you're looking to create? What's the value proposition you're going to offer? What are the revenue streams that this product is going to generate? What are the channels you're going to deliver it through? What are the key activities, key resources you need to be able to pull it together? What are the key partnerships that you need to have? It's all laid out on one page, on one screen. And then they have post-it notes so you can brainstorm about all these different areas which I'm sure you'd agree John. These are things that you need to think about if you're going to start a new project, a new business.

John: I know they have a book. I bought their book because a lot of us are visual. And they have all these examples laid out. So I didn't know about the app but I will definitely download that. And it's a great book as well as Chris is saying a great app.

So you have some amazing resources that are available on your website. So I've got a couple of websites. I have the Passion Test and the 30-Day Ritual Challenge.

Chris: For business people, we have a site called ASAP Engagement. You might think as soon as possible engagement, ASAP Engagement. It actually stands for Advanced Solutions for Activating Passionate Engagement. But asapengagement.com, that's our business site. It's specifically designed for, how do you generate passion and engagement within a business environment.

And I'd like to invite your listeners John if they... are they going to be able to see this interview before October 10th? I should ask that.

John: Yeah, we'll definitely post this early because I want to give everybody notice about the book. The work Chris is doing, this is an area that you need to really take the time for these huge jumps in productivity plus your own personal happiness and those around you.

Chris: It's about both. So if any of you who are listening, if you go to thehiddenriches.com/book, up until October 10th, we'll send you a complimentary copy of the book when it comes out if you just paid the shipping and handling, so \$6.95 for shipping and handling in North America. Go to thehiddenriches.com/book and then we're happy to send a copy to you, a complimentary copy, just for the shipping and handling.

John: Chris these are super. Let me take what I'm taking away for our fellow entrepreneurs out of this.

The Key Takeaways. I'm looking at my notes. I got a ton of notes here but what I love about every time I have the chance to talk with you Chris, reading, watching the content that you guys create is just amazing. It just reminds me about how important passion is in business. We've got to have a good solid business. We can't just chase our passions and do things we're passionate about. We've got to create a business structure around it. But boy when we do that, we can enjoy unbelievable success by doing well because we're helping other people do well.

The ritual part, I have not really as consciously looked at that. I want to go ahead and read your book as soon as we get it. And you said as the unspoken secret of success and so much of life is setting the stage and not getting caught up in the absolute moment of crises in

business but being able to be there and comfortable and ready to perform. You got a million people. I can just see the purpose of that. A lot of people think that's crazy and then what I really very much enjoy is this unique life concept that each of us are put on this earth to really make a difference. And one of our biggest goals in life is finding that. But when we do that, then we owe it to the rest of the world to make that difference and do it in a way that as Steve Jobs says that little dent in the universe. We can make a pretty big dent.

So Chris, thank you again for joining me. Form Germany, I know you're out there doing a whole bunch of events and so on. And making a difference in a lot of people's lives and all our viewers here at AESNation.com really appreciate it, all the show notes and all the links will be there. I'll make sure to post this early so you can get access to Chris' book as soon as possible. And Chris, thank you again.

Chris: Thank you so much John, really a pleasure to be with you.

John: For all of us out there, the key thing is let's take these lessons and execute. Your clients, your, future clients, your teammates, your partners, your family, your communities, they're all counting on you. Don't let them down. We wish you the best of success!

A Second Opinion on Your Finances

A Complimentary Service from Financial Advisor Select for the Members of AES Nation

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Best of success,



John Bowen
Founder and CEO
Financial Advisor Select