From The Streets To Success: How To Beat Addictions And Remain Positive Transcript

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Introduction to John Joseph

All right, everybody. As amazing summit we're having reversing heart disease. I'm bringing a friend and inspiration. An author, a musician or a punk rocker or a food expert, but mainly a person who's lived 50 lives in his, I think about 63 years.

He's had 60. Two and a 14 time Ironman. Don't forget 14 timer and I did. I love it out. And some of you know the very famous John Joseph, but some of you don't.

And truly, everything I said from an incredible and still ongoing music career to an athletic career to various things. But John was given nothing but disadvantages with a broken home and drugs and alcohol and addictions in jail and prison and police.

I just got through. I have many of, John's books at home. Joseph, I just got through this one. Destroying monsters. His newest one. If you're dealing with any stuff in life.

This book is so powerful, I really, really, I struggle. That could be food addictions, too. You know, I was going to say for sure. For sure. They're good.

This was probably the first book of yours I read, the positive mental attitude of fact. Such a wonderful book also goes, you know, a little dark into why overcoming.

And then for those of you that have children around, cover their eyes. Because John wrote a book about health, you can read the title there. I had the pleasure somewhere down there of writing the s, the foreword.

There you go. Wow. But, I actually rereleasing that in 2025 with a whole bunch of new information, and I'm actually combining it with my cookbook, so it'll be good.

The information. And then, Hardcore Kitchen will be in the back of it. So Hardcore kitchen, because you can see there this is why this man is here. Prevent and reverse the 21st century health apocalypse.

This was written a few years ago, and now a lot of people, even people in Washington DC, are talking about preventing and reversing chronic conditions.

But John, with no M. D. and no page after his name, has a lot to say. Thank you for taking time out of your busy day. Thank you. I always make time for you.

You're my friend. But also, you're a workers, you know, so important. So we have to, you know, it's good to have, a variety of voices, you know, that came to the same conclusions, but all from different paths, you know.

I, I couldn't agree more.

Sobriety, Addiction, and Recovery

And we were just chatting for a minute before we went, on recording here about, you know, literally, you deserve a TV show. There would be six, seven, eight years of, shows because there's so much you could filler a movie every six hours.

We'll chat for 30 minutes. But maybe you, unfortunately, are quite an expert on addiction. And I think you, hit the bull's eye. A lot of people listening.

They got overweight, they got diabetic, they got heart disease, they got high blood pressure. They got erectile dysfunction because of food addiction.

And I mean, you've overcome and you've been, sober and clean now for, what, about 23 years? I got 23 years. And that was, you know, from 1990. It was like relapses in between. Yeah.

You know, 1990, I was, you know, crack addict pills, everything from 88 to 90. And then I got off that and then, you know, just being in New York, the club scenes and started doing the ecstasy, the my shrooms, they started drinking, you know, and it was getting close to being like, those temptations are there again, you know, it's who knows what's going to happen when somebody breaks out some, you know, some cocaine.

So then I just was like, you know, I really have to get it together. And I did it right before 911. And then the day before 911, My I had to do an intervention on my younger brother who passed away, two years ago. And, you know, I went to get him in Staten Island.

He was living in somebody's attic, like, close to death. And then I was going to get him into rehab. And then 911 happened, and I couldn't get him out of the country.

And he, you know, he's going to go to Saint Thomas, to my friend's rehab, and he detoxed on my couch for a whole entire month. And if I had been using, I would have.

That was a real test for me to not use at that point. And that's when I was like, all right, I think I got this thing figured out. You know, every day is a struggle.

Just like if we're overweight and eating, making bad food choices, it's what we do. It's one day at a time and that's that. That applies to anything. That may be harming us is, you know, just take it one day at a time.

Like, you know, I would always think, like, well, what am I going to do? You know, when the summer comes around and everybody's partying and or for some people it's like, well, what am I going to do when I go to the holidays, which are coming up and everybody's eating this garbage and, you know, I'm going to have to be strong with my stuff.

You know, this is what I'm and, you know, I made my mother has been plant based for four years now, thanks to your, you know, you helped out and gave some advice to for her because, you know, she had quadruple bypass and, slowly, she got off all the man.

She's been plant based, for years now. She's off all the medication. Organic plant based. Not like junk food, whole food, plant based, everything organic.

And, you know, at first it was tough for her to to go with her sisters in their early and crap and pasta with cheese and meat. But now she's like, no, they know I go there.

They better have some food for me that I can eat. Otherwise I'm not coming, you know? So amazing. Yeah. Well, that's the work that you're doing. You you helped, you know, between you and Forks over Knives, that helped my brother, who, my older brother had a lot of heart issues as well.

And then he almost. He had a heart attack at my mom's house, and the ambulance had to come, and she freaked out, and he's like, that's it, man, I need to know everything.

And I told him, watch Forks Over Knives. And, you know, I got a lot of your information out and showed him your videos, and that was the change that was needed. So.

I'm glad. So you talk a lot in all your books about a daily practice. I know you use the Sanskrit word sadhana. Not everybody. Can. Sadhana. Okay, I don't know. Yes.

I know, but that was, you know, again, people with food addictions are struggling to, you know, conquer their weight, their demons, their cookies, their Tim Morton donuts.

What's the role of a sadhana? And, you know, from your vast experience, right. Well, you know what? To me, like when I was, I was also a monk for two years, I was a Harry Krishna monk.

Shaved head the whole nine yards. And it was what sadhana means. Your daily practice, like what you do. And, you know, spiritually, for me, I was getting up at.

I was up at 2:00 every morning and bed by eight and started my meditation practice, going to classes, taking martial arts like I did all this. It's just everything that we do to improve.

And that comes from austerity. And it is an austerity to do this. In the beginning. Then it becomes second nature. But, you know, I talked a lot in my writing class and I talked tonight about value, right.

What we value and the risk that we're willing to take to, to, to achieve something. The greater the value, the greater the risk. There's no greater value then our health.

And what that looks like to me on a daily basis is I'm training for Ironman number 15. So I'm up. I eat a whole food plant based diet. I have done that for since 1981.

And it's like, so I, I make sure, you know, every day I got my meditation going as soon as I wake up, you know, like James Brown said, free your mind.

Yes. Or follow. Right.

Daily Practice and Sadhana

So I think it's like that too, with what we're eating and how we're living our life, and we should wake up every day with intention. And when our feet hit the floor, get after it.

For me, that looks like meditation, reading some philosophy, movement, you know, and the dietary stuff is, is super important as well because that's fuel I don't eat, I don't I don't live to eat, I eat to live.

You know, I, you know, it's like my what I take in on a daily basis is fueling me to do my training sessions, whether it's like I rode 30 miles the other day, like, just all out, like.

And then ran five miles in zone three. So it's like, if I'm putting garbage fuel in my system, it's not going to be I'm not going to have that pure glycogen and all the rest of the stuff that we, you know, utilize from greens to chlorophyl and all this great stuff that is available in the plant kingdom.

You know, you have to every day the body's the temple, right? We learn that, right? Whatever philosophy you follow, you know the soul, the body's the housing for the soul.

But this is the body we have in this lifetime. So to me, I'm like, I don't I'm not going to get overly materialistic and doing whatever, but it's like I'm going to take care of the vehicle that I have to get me through this life.

That's why, you know, I 62, I don't take a single medication. I can do whatever I want if I want to. If I wanted to walk out that door right now, I run 20 miles.

I could. If I want to swim five miles, I could. Although I wouldn't do it in here because there's a lot of gators here. But the point is, is if we invest in something, then we'll we see the results right to the degree we invest.

That's the degree that we see the result. Right. So I always say that in my books too. Like, you know, you got to have that daily practice, that sadhana, austerity, you undergo a hardship to achieve a higher result.

That's what austerity means. But it said that to pass here, austerity is the wealth of the the Brahmins or the enlightened people. That's that's the real wealth in life is to practice these or, you know, everybody.

All right. Guys say everybody. It's a microwave society. Everybody wants their stuff instantly. And like all the, you know, overnight fame over this, over that, like, you know, the quick minute auction, whatever.

It's the good stuff doesn't come like that. The good stuff requires a prolonged investment of time. If I'm getting ready for an Ironman, it's not. You know, I wouldn't walk out the door at the beginning of my, you know, kind of my build for an Ironman like I'm doing now and go.

I mean, I could run 20 miles, but I'm going to pay for it, you know, because it's that slow build every day, and you get you get mentally strong, physically strong, spiritually strong.

And you could do the same thing, you know, with food. And and that's why I really feel that the that's why I wrote the PMA effect positive mental attitude.

Because the mind is what's driving the senses, right? The it's, it's, Saturday night vigil. Jojo Genia tiger, great believer. Siya sa great tournament JD right.

So I'm Bengali. It means of all the senses, the tongue is the most difficult and voracious to control. But by meditation and all this spiritual practice, the tongue is easily control.

So the mind has to drive the senses. But what drives the mind is the intelligence. The intelligence is saying, don't eat this. You know how you're going to feel.

Remember last time you ate this, how you felt for the whole day. So that's the intelligence driving the mind and the mind controlling the senses. But that's what it's that's that's where the spiritual practice, you know, comes in.

And, you know, if I know if I eat some potato chips or something with a lot of processed flour and this, that and the other thing in it, even though it's vegan, I that's the whole thing is vegans.

They're eating this all the flank steak. It's 3D genetically modified soy and all this crap. And I'm like, dude, you know, look at that. Like it looks like something out of the movie aliens, man.

Like, why would you eat that? Like, so there's this whole thing in the vegan community, and you always used to see those arguments. All vegans, they all look unhealthy.

And like, I was doing it for eight years and. But they're not doing it the right way. They're not doing it the way, like you at your institute and your restaurant or the way Forks Over Knives says to do it.

I personally use a little bit of olive oil or coconut oil or whatever. You know, it's just my thing. But for the most part, I'm doing everything that that says.

And, you know, my weight is maintained. My vitality is maintained, my mindset is maintained. You know, like, I think that being unhealthy could lead to a lot of depression, too, you know?

And that's why that goes hand in hand. A lot of the people that are overweight and taking all these drugs, they're also, prescription meds for depression.

Right? Like, I know, and I hurt my back and I ballooned. I'm five nine. I'm, live right now. I got my six packs coming in on my 10% body fat. But when I heard I'm 170, 71 pounds, my race weight is 167.

So I'm I'm getting there. But when I hurt my back, I ballooned up to 210 pounds. I can imagine an excuse. My French apologize. Imagine carrying around that carry around a 45 pound plate at the gym.

Right. Carry that around for an hour. That's what I was doing to myself. And then I was having joint problems and back problems. And it initially started out as a back problem, but then, you know, it goes through the psoas and iliac.

It's everything's pulled out of alignment. And I really and I was eating a bunch of vegan junk food. There was a restaurant in New York, joint deep fried tofu, battered chicken cutlet, sweet mashed potatoes and vegan butter.

And like I kept that, you know, I was eating, out of depression. You know, I didn't have nothing. I, I'm, I'm a very physical person. When that was taken away from me, I just ate because I was depressed.

And that led to more depression. I never took any medication because I knew what the answer was. I just said, and the answer came because one night I was I was DJ and I had this blue sweater on, and I had jowls, like, if you like, you wouldn't even believe.

So my friend Brian Calley, he's like, he's this pretty well known actor. He does the part, the pilot, he's, you know, he's the one that got me on Rogan.

And he, you know, he does The Fighter in the Kid podcast and I was DJ ING at this restaurant. It was packed. And somebody comes up behind me and whispers in my ears and they're like, yo, I'm looking for my friend John Joseph.

You look like the Smurf version of him. But. And I turn around and Brian, he's like, what the f happened to you, man? Like, I had a being a friend. And that's when the light came on and he's like, bro, I can't even believe how much weight you put on.

Like literally like 40 pounds.

Mindset, Food Addiction, and Discipline

And I was like, that's it, dude. You just. And I and I tell him that story. Two I was like, yo, you wouldn't want to do that. You ain't. You didn't see me in a year.

And you're like, you put 40 pounds on in a year, dude. And I'm like, yeah, because it's calories in versus calories burned. So I was still eating all that food because it's the only enjoyment I could get.

But I wasn't working out. And now that's when I just cleaned up my whole diet. After that. So a lot of people, you know, have so much negative self-talk, I don't want to lose weight, but I'm not going to be able to.

I want to eat all that bass, but I'm going to mess up. I messed up before. I mean, what what would you say to the audience that are beating themselves up every day because they're not doing it?

I'm going to tell you something, man. I wrote about it in the PMA. Affect the enemy mind. That's what that is, that it says in the Bhagavad Gita, the for the for the condition living entity.

The mind is, is is his worst enemy. But for one who was liberated himself from the dictations of the mind, the mind is is their best friend, right? So we can't let the mind control us.

And that's why I call it the enemy mind. Because that's what it is. Is your enemy going to tell you to do anything that's beneficial for yourself? Now, your worst enemy is going to try to harm you.

And in the conditioned state that we're in, we have to understand that and at least first recognize that. That's why my teacher Prabhupada said, you got to beat the mind with a stick every morning because it's a wild beast.

But that's what the mind, the mind is going to. And the nature of the mind is thinking, feeling, willing. Right. Think about that. So first you're thinking about all this.

All, man, I could go get this salami sandwich and all the rest of this stuff, and then you feel like you want to do it, and then you will to do it. So you got to stop that thought process.

When that seed is first takes root in the mind and say, let the intelligence kick in and say, wait a minute, think, how are you going to feel you want to get rid of this way, you'd want to get off these meds.

The intelligence has to control the mind, right? And the mind is a tool. I can use a knife to cook a beautiful organic, plant based meal for ten people.

Or I can use it to kill somebody. It's not, you know, to me, it's like it's how we utilize something, right? So I tried to understand those, and I went through a little mental thing the other day, and I was like, I had to come out the other side of it.

It's not that, you know, we're in the material world, man. Like like, you know, like like, you know, sting said, we are spirits in the material world.

There's always going to be, you know, miseries of the, the, the threefold miseries audible, audible take out of your body. David and I will both take his miseries out of the body and mind, and the mind is going to constantly cause us problems.

Everybody that's overeating and overweight and sickly, all of that started on the mental platform. And then, you know, the tongue wants to taste and talk all this nonsense and taste all this crap food.

And then the mind is like, makes you think that this is going to be enjoyable. But, you know, it's it's. You know, in Sanskrit, douche. Polina, Helena chai and it's it's the lust burns like fire.

It's never satisfied. And that could be the lust for food. It's not. This has to do with the lust for materialistic things. It's never satisfied. The only way that's that we become satisfied in life is through the self.

And it took me years of being on the streets, incarceration, all of this stuff. My journey has not come like, you know, easily. And the first time I ever really thought about what was being done to the animals was in 1980, I saw Frederick Wiseman's movie meet.

He did. Did he cut Follies? And it's no voiceover narration. He just takes you through the slaughterhouse process and lets the camera roll. I never had any.

And for me, the thing that really kept me through every even when I was an addict, I would say after four days of being up street smoking, freebasing crack and pills, I would wake up and be like, yo, let's go get some wheatgrass juice.

And the dudes would be looking at me like, bro, like, you need to be in a straitjacket, bro. Like I just seen you do. I mean, I was strong arm robbing drug dealers that had guns.

I mean, I was a complete maniac because I always been this real physical. Like, I was doing 500 pushups a day, you know, when I was a crackhead and I was still training martial arts, doing whatever because I wanted to be able to, like, you know, I'm not going to get caught out there.

And then, you know, my wake up moment was in a crack house, and these dudes hit me with a friggin two by four. And robbed me and left me for dead. And I had lost everything after this, like two years spin out.

And I was like, that's it. I want to change. And I see the same thing with like when I was unhealthy, when, you know, what's that catalyst, what I call the inciting incident, right.

Like what makes us want to change and, and stick with the progressive complications that are going to come after that? It was a struggle for me when I have 40 pounds to take that off, little by little by little with, you know,

movement and exercise and diet and meditation and chanting and everything that I was doing, it healed up on, on all three levels the physical, the mental and the spiritual.

So, you know, watch out for those thoughts when they take always stop and reflect and say, what is this choice going to get me before you take that action?

And I called it the the stop and think mechanism. I wrote that in the BMA effect. That's what it takes. The stop and think mechanism. If I eat this, what is it going to do to me?

Just pull back for a second. Don't let the senses, the urges of the senses drag you to hell because they will. And I don't mean the hell the place, but I mean, hellish mindset.

Everybody that I talk to that's overweight and wants to get fit because I'm also a coach. Right. Sports and mindset and everything. They tell me straight up how depressed they are and everything else, and then they start coming out of the fog and to see the fog lift and then do the work.

It's discipline. And that's why I coach and discipline. And what is it? Discipline creates the habits. The habits create the routines, and the routines become who we are.

But that could be positive or negative because there's a negative connotation. Like when when I was on the streets, they'd be like, yo, I got a bundle a day.

Habit means this guy shooting ten bags of heroin every single day. So a habit could be a negative connotation attached to that too, right? So we want the good habits, we want the good routines.

And I always tell my clients, listen, write down everything. Make a meal plan like Erica's like a advanced National Academy sports medicine trainer. She did the plant based certification, to the Campbell Institute.

All of that. Right. And she has two black belts, and she knows what she's doing. She meal plans when she's getting ready for competition or whatever. So if we if we fail to prepare, we are preparing to fail.

So have the good food in your house. Make the meal plan because if you're sitting around and then you're all hungry and there's no food in the house, what are you going to do?

Dial up Domino's? They'll be there in 30 minutes or less, or it's free. You know, or eating some other crap. A lot of wisdom there. And of course your Instagram handle is John Joseph discipline.

So it's consistent with what you just said. One last little topic to cover. You know, we stress a lot in a lot of things community and, you know, surround yourself with like minded people.

And, do you think the hardest work, though, can be done in a group or the hardest work is all inside work for people that are struggling and want to make progress.

Community, Purpose, and Closing Remarks

I think, like you find your tribe eventually, and I talk about this like I went through so many things. I thought this was my tribe, that I thought when I was running the streets at 14, that these guys had my back for, for life.

And like, everything was like what they were. They ended up murdering people that I happened to get away from them. But they ended up they ended up murdering people that were with them the same way that I was.

And I'm like, that could have been me. So I think there needs to be a lot of time. We have to spend time alone for self reflection and all this inner talk and prayer and meditation, whatever.

I know you practice Judaism. Right. Whatever it is, it doesn't matter. God is God. So have those conversations with

yourself. With God. I firmly believe in, you know, higher power.

Otherwise I wouldn't be here. People like Joe Rogan read my book, addiction. And he's like, how the hell are you still alive? And I'm like, I give it up to God, man, because God was always there.

That inner voice was always telling me like, yo, don't do this. This is where you stop. And I think the community's important because there's strength in numbers, but there's also could be not so good people around in those areas as well.

So you, you know, it's like weeding out the bugs. Like they said when I was in the military, like, you know, if you're not supposed to because I was trying to go through like Special Forces and all this crap, you know that.

I mean, it was a challenge, but I was only 17 years old and then didn't know about it. Now, like, if you ain't supposed to be here, we're going to we're going to find you out, seek you out, and you'll be gone.

So I got injured and I was gone. But the point I'm trying to make is that there is that community need is finding that tribe of good people that has your back.

And I think a lot of the circumstances over the last couple of years and whatever those last four years and what my stance for myself, you know, I may have lost some people, but I gained a lot more.

I, you know, and in the health thing, I think there's there's a lot of narcissism that could be involved in this thing. And don't pay attention to those, man.

Look for the good in people. Look for that center of good. There's a there's a ton of people coming from a really good place. And that's where we we want to surround ourselves, you know, with those people, because I've seen the complete opposite ends of the spectrum.

I've been with people that would have murdered me, that I had to watch my back continuously. I could not. Like, I could not sleep for a second. I could because, like, that's what they say.

You're going to get caught out there. I couldn't relax if you relax, you get the ax. That's what we used to say on the street. But. And then I've seen the most beautiful, amazing people in the spiritual community and the plant based community who were doing it all for the right reasons.

And you find that a lot of the people that give up plant based eating and all this, they were doing it for the wrong reasons. For me, it's always about the animals.

I look at that first, and that's why I can never go back to eating a piece of animal flesh of fish or eggs or and meat, dairy, any of that stuff. Because I'm like, I think about that first.

I don't let the tongue dictate, yeah, go eat this like salami pizza or whatever. It doesn't even it becomes second nature eventually. I don't even think about all that.

Just like with the training and the writing, it's part of my sadhana. It's what I do every day, and the individuals that I communicate with and share and have community with are amazing people, and you'll find those.

It just might take some time. But yes. And if you're having those any conversations, I said this in my book, I've been on stage in front of 40,000 people at festivals and felt lonely as hell.

I've been in the middle of the jungle on the Big Island in Hawaii as a monk, and I was so in touch with God and the universe and my inner spirit, I felt I even though I was alone, I didn't feel lonely.

So. So that's my, you know, $0.02 for what it's worth. A lot of wisdom from John Joseph. What's the best place where people go learn more about. Because they're probably just fascinated.

Yeah, well, you can go. John Joseph, disciplined.com is my website. And then I have the Instagram JJ CRO mag or John Joseph Discipline on Instagram. And John Joseph on, on Facebook.

So yeah, you know, I mean, you know, so I'm going to stop as a little, you know, I post funny shit, I post thoughtful, provocative stuff that, you know, whatever.

It's I just try to be myself, man. I'm not trying to write for, You're you're pretty good self. I, enjoy so much learning from you and do follow your writings and your postings.

I think everybody who's listening today will say, here's a man I want to go learn from. And I'm telling you again, health book, great, great, great read.

Couldn't endorse it more. You know, staying positive in a negative world. Great book. Rich wrote the forward guys saw that. Really tough book. I'm going to tell you, this is just a tough, dark book for a guy that grew up like me and a pretty lily white, you know?

Yeah. Well, you know, I was me exercising a lot of my demons. And like I said, my brother died in the middle of me writing that book. That ended up being the second chapter.

I stopped the narrative flow, and I had to just be like, I have to address this now. And like, I, I was crying all night while I was writing that chapter on his life. It's unfortunate, you know, he was a disabled veteran, but they they had him on all the meds and all the crap, but he was eating like all of the fast food trucks and everything else.

And that's the life we get to make those choices every day, how we want to live. Yeah, right. And we have to say, what's the outcome of what I'm doing?

Right? And that's why my brother, my older brother and my mother went plant based and they're thriving. My mother's 82. She people think she's 65. My great Greg John Joseph I.

Thank you, Joe. And we are all right. Healthy doctor are going to share bread and broccoli very soon. I'm like. Yes, sir. All right. Let's see you down here, okay.

Yeah, I'm going down to get rid of the and Gator Country. Yeah, man. We'll go swim with some gators. Be well.