

-- Speaker 0 00:04 Make it right. The manufacturing podcast,

Speaker 1 00:10 the entrepreneur or the leader is somebody who stands apart from the crowd. They're just a little bit alone, a little bit outside the fray. They're expected to have answers, to know where they're going and to bring everyone along in a wave of enthusiasm and focus. But leadership and entrepreneurship isn't for the faint of heart. My guest this week knows it. Welcome to the mega bride podcast. I'm Janet Eastman and today I'm pleased to have John Jans on the show. He's an entrepreneur and a business owner for more than three decades and he has also a bestselling author whose latest offering is a collection of 366 readings and quotes from great classic authors such as the RO, Emerson and Whitman. These daily meditations are designed to inspire and challenge the reader, the leader and the entrepreneur. The book is called the self-reliant entrepreneur and I'm pleased to have John Jans is my guest. Welcome to the show, John.

Speaker 0 01:03 Well thanks for having me. And I, you know, as I listened to you describe the, the entrepreneur, the business leader, you know, I think there's a lot of myths and misperceptions about the fact that we're all just really a hot <inaudible>

Speaker 1 01:14 most days. Well, sometimes we are and sometimes we are. Right. So I'm curious, John, you've written a number of books. All of the previous ones have been directed at marketing. What prompted you to write the self-reliant entrepreneur?

Speaker 0 01:32 No, you're right. I, this is actually my sixth book in my first five books were squarely about some how to, uh, of marketing. You know, I just, as I've stated in this longer and longer and, and as you know, more and more information gets out,

Speaker 1 01:45 I just think, I think we have all the how to information that we need. I mean, you could

Speaker 0 01:50 Google a YouTube video, you know, to pretty much learn

Speaker 1 01:53 how to do anything. But where I think we still lack it sometimes is the why too. Or the mindset about, you know, running a business. Because I think people underestimate how important that aspect of it is. So I wanted to write a book that is really, in fact, I sometimes refer to it as a practice. You know, it's kind of a daily look on yourself, you know, before you go out there and kind of face the world approach. Yeah. So you have an interesting format to this book. So first of all, before we talk about the actual format, tell me why you decided to write it this way. It's a daily thing. It's, I'm assuming that you want the listener or the reader rather to pick it up first thing in the morning, read that and kick their day off that way. But explain why you chose this format.

Speaker 0 02:42 No, honestly I think a lot of books, a lot of authors would say this. I hope anyways, I would kind of, the book I wanted to have, this is a morning routine of, of kind of getting myself centered and ready for the day as something I've done for,

Speaker 1 02:58 you're probably 20,

Speaker 0 02:59 um, Julia Cameron's a book called the artist's way, which look it up if you're not familiar with it kind of got me journaling 20, 25 years ago. In that book came out and, and I've always had my own practice of doing some sort of reading that I felt kinda got me inspired for the day. And so I kind of wrote the book that I wanted to fit into my morning routine.

Speaker 1 03:20 Okay. So I think you're going to describe or actually read a page for us. So read a page for us and then let's break it down.

Speaker 0 03:30 Sure. So every day starts with a title of the page, um, or the, the offering that day. And then, um, I also kind of built the foundation around, as you mentioned, uh, some mid 19th century literature, which I, because still today the greatest entrepreneur literature ever written. Then those some cases, a hundred to 200 words by me, I think today is actually a shorter one. And then I ended up with a challenge question, something to take out there. Maybe we don't have the answer right then, but something to kind of take with you for the day. So this is January 21st one. We are recording this. So I'll read January 21st

Speaker 0 04:09 the wonder of things and I will show you that there is no imperfection in the present and can be none in the future. And I will show you that whatever happens to anybody --

-- , it may be turned to beautiful results and I will show you that nothing can happen more beautiful than death. And I will thread a thread through my poems that time and events are compact and that all things of the universe are perfect miracles each as profound as any. That's a from Walt Whitman's leaves of grass that originally was written in 1855 I guess he continued to add to it until he died, but I then go on to say in his popular book, stumbling to happiness, author Daniel Gilbert States, wonderful things are especially wonderful the first time they happen, but their wonderfulness wanes with repetition. When we begin or plan our entrepreneurial journey, we're full of wonder. So how are you feeling about it today? Miracles, wonderful things, beautiful results happen around us every day. If we let them. Your challenge. Question for today, what miracle will you witness today?

Speaker 1 05:23 So that is a page for today. And if I'm the reader and I've read that, do you want me to answer that challenge instantly at the end of that? Like after I've read that? Or is it something that you go through your day and then you fill in that challenge with that thought in your head? Like, I've got to figure out what is the most important challenge to take on today.

Speaker 0 05:46 Yeah, I guess I just hope that this book inspires you to go to work on yourself. I don't care how you do it. I've had people tell me, I read one day and then I read ahead a few days. Uh, have people tell me, I just pick the book up and flip up and do a day. Um, and just read that. So there's so many ways to consume this. And then I think the other thing that you'll find is if you stick with it and you read day after day, there will be certain days that you go, wow, John was talking about me. How did he know? You know, it's just going to hit you. Um, and, and it's going to be the thing that you've been struggling with or you didn't know you were struggling with until, you know, maybe you ran across that question that you couldn't answer. So that's kind of an ironic thing about writing a book, about telling how it's telling people to be self-reliant. The South part's kind of on you. Um, but I do know, because I've gotten a lot of feedback from people that sometimes people will journal about the question and they'll really work on it for 20, 30 minutes and then other people will say, Hmm, that's interesting. And then they'll, something will happen during the day that kind of goes, Oh, that's what we were talking about. Or, you know, that's how I respond in a way that maybe is not as healthy, you know, as a, as it should be. So, you know, there is no prescription here. It's really just meant to be a practice and a journey and you know, we'll see where it takes you.

Speaker 1 07:10 I guess I was going to ask you, you know, how do you want people to use this book? But I guess ultimately what you're doing every day is kind of planting a seed and it's all up to the reader to figure out if that seed germinates for that day or it doesn't. Right?

Speaker 0 07:24 Yeah. Yeah. Cause I just know, I mean you don't take this book on vacation and come back and go, I got it now. Yeah, it is. It's moving a process or a practice and you know, I think the first step, if you come across something where you think, you know, I need to change that or I need to do that differently or I need to trust myself more, you know, to make decisions that are right for me or you know, kind of whatever spark gets, uh, gets lit. I think you have to start witnessing how it's showing up. You know, day to day before you can make any kind of change or what it's costing you to not make that change. I think that's always the first step. And so <inaudible> that's why call this or talk about this as a practice because I think it's something that you come back month after month of just, you know, two minutes a day. Um, and I think that you're just going to find it. It's like a lot of healthy practices. You're just going to find that it's having positive impact.

Speaker 1 08:20 I think it's really interesting too that you've pulled from authors going, you know, as far back as the 150 years, possibly even more. There was a lot of wisdom back there that it's kind of surprising when you look at our lives now and everything that we have and the technology and whatnot. They were talking about some of them anyway, going and finding a place of solitude must've been pr --

-- etty easy to find solid dude back then because it certainly isn't easy now. So you can go somewhere and actually think,

Speaker 0 08:50 yeah, in some ways. I mean we can, we can debate whether or it was easier then or not because in some ways, you know, you, they were killing food and making their clothes and making their houses. We don't have to deal with any of that stuff anymore, you know? So I think that, you know, we can debate what was wa was harder, easy, but I just think, I think the technology is just a distraction. I think the human condition is when it's always been the, the reason I think so much great writing came out of that period though, is if you think about what was going on in 1850 or so, we were on the cusp of the civil war. Women were marching in the streets to get a right to vote. We were trying to abolish the horrendous practice of human slavery. It was kind of the first counter-culture period in America where all of a sudden you had writers, preachers, you know, like Emerson saying, you know what?

Speaker 0 09:45 Maybe we shouldn't listen to our parents or the preachers or the <inaudible> teachers are, you know, our elders. Maybe we need to actually think and for ourselves and maybe even if it costs us, we need to pursue, you know, what is our unique path? And so you had people like Emerson and Thoreau and Margaret follow, you know, overtly writing, you know, those types of things, but also cite a lot of the fiction from that era because books like a Scarlet letter and Moby Dick and you know, even Tom Sawyer had protagonists that were, were very much self-reliant. Uh, they, you know, they again made the decision to follow their heart even if it sort of costs them, you know, publicly or you know, in their, their status. And I think that, um, it's, again, it's a great message for entrepreneurs and I think it just came from a time period where there was a lot of upheaval. You've actually been in business for 30 years. You've been an entrepreneur for a really long time. When you look back over those 30 years, has the challenge of being an entrepreneur changed that much?

Speaker 0 10:51 No, I mean, in a lot of ways it's gotten easier. I mean, if you, you, um, I think a couple of things sort of converge. Um, you know, you experience a level of success, you get happy with where you are with what you have today. And I think those things kind of merge into, you know, a much more peaceful journey. Sometimes when you are starting up, you're still struggling with, is this the right thing? Have I found my purpose? You know, web is this failure to teach me. I mean, all those kinds of seasons of the entrepreneur that I, that I kind of structure the book around. Um, and I think, you know, I, if, if I'm going to kind of point to myself, I think I'm like a lot of entrepreneurs or people that stick with it for a long time. I'm in that season where I'm thinking about what difference have I made, what impact did I had? Um, and, and I think that, you know, again, I, you know, I've been doing it for a long time. I get up every single day, as cliché as it sounds, and I'm excited about what I'd get to do. Um, and I think that that will carry you a heck.

Speaker 1 11:56 Yeah. What are the key challenges that you see entrepreneurs struggling with now? Because I'm sure you're meeting a lot of them and talking to them. What are the key challenges that are out there right now in the 21st century?

Speaker 0 12:07 Okay. I think one of the biggest challenges for entrepreneurs, I don't know that this is, yeah. <inaudible> you know, the times that we live in the biggest challenge, but for a lot of entrepreneurs, the distraction of comparison. So you see, you know, other people doing something, you see all the stuff on social media that makes you feel like, well, I'm not, you know, I'm not as successful as all of those people are, you know, why did they get the big interview or the, you know, the big, uh, um, you know, successful launch or whatever it is they're comparing themselves to. And I think that that's, you know, that worrying about kind of the future and the past as opposed to living in the moment is really robbing a lot of us of the joy and happiness that being an entrepreneur can break.

Speaker 1 12:55 Okay. There's a lot of talk right now in leadership and entrepreneurship. Um, guys like Gary V are talking about it. Your talking about it, it's about the entrepreneur nee --

-- ds to look inside. And then from there bring out that passion. You've done that. So, so tell me what it feels like to actually get there.

Speaker 0 13:18 Well, Janet, you're never there, but no, I, I think that, um, I at least have come to the conclusion that that, you know, entrepreneurship is really one of the greatest self development programs ever created. And I think if you look at it that way, that your life is a work in progress and that your only real job is to continue to experience things and continue to bring value and continue mainly to do what you believe is what you were meant to do. Every single one of us is unique. I mean, science, you know, down to the DNA proves that we are all unique, just like every tree and plant is unique. And given that, well I think that our only job is to figure out what our unique purposes.

Speaker 1 14:12 So how did you find yours? Because you, I mean you've written books on marketing, you've done a lot in marketing and suddenly you, you've made this turn towards the self-reliant entrepreneur book. Um, has your purpose changed?

Speaker 0 14:28 No, not at all. And I would, I would suggest that even though on the surface, this book seemed very different, I have worked with, you know, true small business owners for 30 years and you know, let me tell you, we can call it marketing, but when you're working with the smallest of businesses, you know who the owner is being, um, you know, what they believe in, you know, how their values come across. That's all marketing. Um, and I, so I feel like I've, I've kinda been waiting in this, in this particular area, you know, even though we didn't call it marketing really for my entire career. So I wouldn't say my purpose has changed at all. Um, you know, and you, you kind of started out by saying, well, how did you find yours? I think what happens is you go out and you experience a lot of things.

Speaker 0 15:14 You stick with things you are reliable and consistent and you know, in, in bringing, you know, value or whatever it is that you're bringing to the world. And I think purpose finds you then. So I want to, I want to take a step back and talk a little bit more about these authors that are in the self-reliant entrepreneur because I'm thinking, you know, you had to find 366 passages from different books that we're going to fit into this book. It must've been a great time seeking them out. Was it difficult? It was extremely difficult. I, I feel like, uh, I'm sure some professors would beg to differ, but I feel like I got sort of a masters in transcendentalist literature. Um, you know, because I studied it for six months probably before I wrote anything. And the, the big breakthrough, if you will, you know, I started just reading and writing and taking notes and then I realized sort of the size of the project I'd taken on.

Speaker 0 16:12 And so kind of a big breakthrough was I had written an article about, I don't know, probably four years ago, and I called the seasons of the entrepreneur and I talk about kind of the, the, you know, it doesn't happen necessarily in a year, but just the various seasons that I've passed through numerous times. And, you know, being in business forever. And I think that what that did was that that kind of gave me, you know, obviously with the annual, you know, format, calendar, format of the book, you know, the season metaphor was kind of there for the taking. So allowed me to say, okay, you know, I'm here, here are the seasons. Um, and here are themes that I think fit into each month of that season. And so with, with kind of 12 monthly themes and they're just one word themes, uh, you know, failure and, um, congruence and love.

Speaker 0 17:02 And, and so I kinda came up with 12, those 12 words. And what that actually gave me was not only a narrative arc for the whole, but it actually gave me an organizational structure for finding this content. So I knew, um, the time period and many of the authors I wanted to site. And now with that framework, I was able to say, okay, when did Emerson have to say about congruence? Um, and so it made it much easier for me to find passages and works and even to get into their journals and letters. And really deep, uh, into their writings to, to kind of mold the, uh, the themes and the, uh, and the readings together. I'm curious to know what impact the whole project had on your life. Um, yeah, I mean, I think a lot of authors w --

-- ill, will say that that, you know, a book changes you in many ways.

Speaker 0 17:52 This book, certainly I have been on this path for a long time. I mean, uh, you know, a lot of people look at this and say, wow, why did you write this different book? But I mean, your meditation and journaling and, you know, reading inspirational works is something that's been a part of my morning routine and ritual, uh, for many, many years. And so, um, what this really did was it took a lot of the work, the self development work that I've done and really crystallized it. And, and, you know, got me because it was such an intense amount of time and focus, both researching and then writing, uh, each of these entries. It really brought greater focus to a lot of the things that I believe in. A lot of the things that I, I have worked on for many, many years. Um, so in a lot of ways it was a real gift to be able to write this book, but it was also probably the hardest thing I've ever done. It turns out Jane, and it's harder to write short entries just to write for 10 pages.

Speaker 1 18:53 I'm kind of curious to, to know if an English teacher anywhere has said to her, you know, I want to use this book with my high school students or my university students and have them carry this book with them through the year to see what it does for them. Has anybody approached you in that way?

Speaker 0 19:14 You know, that's a fabulous idea. Um, nobody has yet, but, uh, I, I, you know, I have, I have heard from people that in small groups are, you know, discussing it. Um, I, I've heard from a couple, um, husband and wife teams who work in a business together who have said that, you know, all we ever talk about is, you know, the book's probably going to hire and this kind of gave him something deeper and more meaningful to talk about in terms of their, you know, entrepreneurial journey. So I think that, I think there's a lot of opportunity there. I'm just not known in some of those circles. So it's going to be, it may take time to get out into some of those circles. I have actually sent the book to some, some transcendentalist scholars and things and you know, I haven't really gotten anybody, you know, this is this, this is far too commercial. I think maybe for them personally, I'm not sure. But, uh, um, you know, I, I would love to explore that idea. I think that think that would be, uh, you know, some, some professor that has a class around that marrying it kind of with, you know, here's modern, practical thinking around that stuff as opposed to just, you should study this because it's good literature.

Speaker 1 20:24 Well, and I think some of this is some of the passages and some of the questions that you ask in it, they don't necessarily have to deal just with being an entrepreneur and being in business, like they can be used in any way you want during your day. So I just wondered, I thought it was a kind of an interesting thing that maybe somebody would like to do sometimes. So. Well, good luck.

Speaker 0 20:45 Well, I was going to say tell the world cause

Speaker 1 20:48 I think it's a great idea. Yeah. So John, tell me, you know, it's the 21st century. What do you believe is the ultimate role of a leader? Um, I probably think

Speaker 0 21:01 small picture more than big picture. I think, I think the ultimate role of a leader, at least in my view, because I don't lead armies of people necessarily, but it's the lift other people up is to help other people realize their potential, whatever that word means for them. Um, and you know that it's probably the hardest work you'll ever do. It's a whole lot easier to stand around and, and tell people what to do. But, uh, as a leader realizing that your job is to raise everybody else up, um, takes a tremendous amount of intention.

Speaker 1 21:39 John, I really liked the book. I think it's, it sort of plants a little seed like I mentioned in your head every day makes you really think about certain things and uh, I wish you good success with it. Congratulations. Thanks Janet. It's been fun having a lot of these conversations about stuff other than SEO and websites, which, you know, of course I love to, but this has been a lot of fun. Yeah, I bet it has. Thanks so much for sharing your thoughts. Uh, on the makeup ride podcast. I hope you had a chance to speak with you again.

Speaker 2 22:09 That is John Jans. He's a business owner and a bes --

-- tselling author. His latest book is the self-reliant entrepreneur. It's in stores now, but if you're also interested in marketing, he has a website called duct tape marketing.com too. That is our show for this week. I'm Janet Cheeseman. Thanks very much for listening. Check out our Twitter and LinkedIn feeds that are on our podcast page at <inaudible> dot com and subscribe and share this podcast with your friends and colleagues through iTunes, Google play, Stitcher, Spotify, and YouTube. And the mega bride podcast is brought to you by Kevin Smith, leadership advisor and author of the bestselling book, make it right, five steps to align your manufacturing business from the front line to the bottom line. I'm Janet Eastman. Thanks for listening to the mega ride podcast.

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