



JIM HARSHAW JR

Revealing Failure as the Path to Success

Success Through Failure Podcast

Action Plan Episode #109

Justin Wren

Today I bring you, Justin Wren. Justin has spent much of his life fighting – from a stellar early wrestling career as prep national champion and Junior National Champion to becoming a star UFC fighter.

Early in Justin's fighting career, he appeared on the Spike reality show, "The Ultimate Fighter," cementing his reputation as a dominating force in the heavyweight division and his current record is 16-2.

But many are surprised to find this 6-foot-3-inch, 265-pound fighter has an even bigger heart. After discovering his faith following a six-year struggle with addiction and depression, Justin stepped away from MMA to find God's purpose for his life.

He soon felt called to serve the Mbuti Pygmy people deep in the jungles of the Congo. While he knew they were an incredibly impoverished people group, he did not know the depths of their pain until he spent time living among them and shared in their suffering. They are enslaved by rivaling people groups, are even cannibalized, and refer to themselves as The Forgotten People. A turning point in Justin's life was holding a young boy, named Andibo, as he died of a water-related parasite after being refused care by local doctors.

Justin's story is too big to summarize in a short bio so let's get to our the interview details...

Quotes

"In that year off from the sport, I didn't get a paycheck but I helped at a lot of different places."

"If I had to explain the Pygmies in a way that a kid would understand, it would be they're the most bullied people on Earth, the most overlooked."

"Swahili proverb: if you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

About Having People Who Hold You Higher Than You Believe

"I just had some coaches and teammates that would come over and encourage me and say, 'Hey, just keep at it. Just keep trying. Write down your goals.' So I wrote them down. I had an Olympic gold medalist tell me to write down 'State Champion' and he would make me a state champion by my senior year. And that made me believe in myself. Maybe I didn't see it in myself but he saw it in me. Even my dad didn't see it in me but this coach did. By the time I was a senior, I was a national champion."

About Life's Purpose

"Life was all about me before, but then I discovered that life's not all about me. Life's about so much more. For me personally, it's loving God, loving people and pushing back darkness. It's fighting the good fight. It's fighting for people."

About Living to Love and Loving to Live

I sign my email and book with 'Live to love. Love to live.' And I know that can sound cheesy or look cute. But live to love, I think all of us get it mixed up. We get it backwards. We want to love to live. We want to love our life and we're always struggling and fighting and grit it out to figure out why do we not love this life we live? 'Why am I depressed? Why am I sad? Why am I not fulfilled?' And I think that if we just look to love people, to fight for people, if we live to love, we will love to live. But you have to have it in the right order."

Action Item

"I think there's an Aristotle quote that says 'No act of kindness ever goes wasted.' So I would say just start there. I think there's so many times that we could reach out and do something kind for someone else and we miss those opportunities every single day. If we have our eyes open, head on a swivel looking for those opportunities, looking to reach out just to lend a hand, to give a word of encouragement, to help somebody out. That for me, is what led me to do this now."

Website and Social

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