

Episode 10 - Sean Douglas, Certified Master Resilience Trainer

Sean: Basically I am a master resilience trainer. So what happened was they sent a bunch of military people to University of Pennsylvania to check out this program.

And then after that they loved it so much that each of the military branches adopted this program. I became the program lead for the resilience program for the entire base of four thousand people.

Jason: I am excited to bring you episode ten today where we are talking with Sean Douglas who is a certified master resilience trainer with the United States Air Force. He does a phenomenal job.

In this interview he has a coaching practice, a consulting practice that he does and also he has a book that we're going to talk about.

And what I loved most about this interview is some of the nuggets, some of the wisdom that he shares about how he is building his public speaking practice where he gets public speaking gigs.

And he also shares with us about how he went about doing the research behind starting the consulting practice that he's running. So it's going to be a great episode. Let's get ready.

All right everyone welcome to episode ten of the Jason Owens podcast. I am happy to have you with me.

We all go through setbacks in our lives and our business lives especially and I tell you what this episode packs in a phenomenally great framework for helping you overcome those setbacks with excellence.

We're going to hear from Sean Douglas; certified master resilience trainer. He's going to breakdown an eleven point paradigm, eleven point program that he uses as he's training people in the United States Air Force -- helping them build their resilience.

Not only are we going to hear that eleven point framework he is also going to share with us the business that he has built around that framework.

And to get the show notes with all of the links that Sean is going to share here in this episode you're going to want to go over to JasonROwens.com/10 that's for Episode ten. Again JasonROwens.com/10. Let's jump into the interview right now.

Here's Sean Douglas. Thank you so much for being on the show Sean.

Sean: Oh, man. Thanks for having me. I'm super pumped to be a part of what you're doing.

Jason: Thank you so much. So why don't you go ahead and just kind of walk us through a bit whenever someone says resilience, what really did they mean by that?

And I guess from there go ahead and tell us a little bit about how you are taking that into the work that you do.

Sean: Yes so by definition people think that resilience is how you bounce back from something which is completely true.

But the definition of resilience is your ability to withstand, recover and grow through the face of adversity, stress and life changing demands. That's the definition of resilience.

Now how I do that is like if there's an incident somewhere or if there's somebody dealing with issues I figure out what their ability is to withstand that adversity, to recover from let's say there's a death in the family or sudden you know death unexpectedly or what have you how can they recover from that.

Like with their ability to recover and then how to grow because you can't just go through an adversity we have to grow through it. And that's where the heart is. That's where the meat of resilience is your ability to grow from the event because sometimes those events are self-created.

Jason: Very, very good. Now you are you have a couple different ways that you are kind of living this out in the world right?

Sean: sure

Jason: So can you tell us about... understand that you do motivational speaking and you do some consulting work with kind of get into that in a bit. Tell us about what you do? You're in the military, correct?

Sean: Yes I am active duty Air Force.

Jason: Okay, okay. Excellent, excellent and where you based out of.

Sean: I am based in Goldsboro North Carolina at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base.

Jason: All right good stuff good stuff so tell us ... and this is one thing that really fascinated me when I was looking at your title. Tell us about your title.

And what that means to me is this is an institutionalized thing. This is an institution that has recognized this is being a need and obviously this is part of the organizational culture.

So tell us a little bit about the title and then tell us how that; what your day looks like.

Sean; Sure so basically I am a master resilience trainer. They're not quite like that so. So here's the story behind it.

So University of Pennsylvania had a program that they were standing up. And they said hey, we want some people are contracted out you know. Well the military said that maybe there something to this.

Like maybe this is what we need because in 2012 and 2013 and literally 2011 and 12 and 2013 it was like a rash of suicides in the Air Force. I mean it spiked and nobody knew why.

So basically the DOD – Department of Defense said we need to do something about this. This cannot continue. So what happened was they sent a bunch of military people to University of Pennsylvania to check out this program.

And then after that they loved it so much that each of the military branches adopted this program. So each one like ... so base of the program became the you know,

Air Force resilience program, the army was resilient program but then they toned it down.

So okay we're going to have comprehensive airman fitness and then comprehensive soldier fitness and then comprehensive marine fitness.

So every single branch took University of Pennsylvania's program that they were developing and then had all the think tank people because you know the military loves think tank people.

And they had the think tank people say okay, what do we like, what do we don't like, how can we translate what they're saying into military terms? And then that's where it came from.

And then I was a drill instructor for Air Force basic training for four years prior to this. So I have a lot of knowledge, a lot of expertise in building lesson plans and building speeches and crafting that sort of thing.

So when I got into the program in 2013 it was just being stood up and I was like man I could so totally take this. You know and mold it into you know, something else.

So in 2014 I immersed myself into it certified as a master resilience trainer which means I mastered the material, I mastered the objectives of what they wanted.

And last year I became the program lead for the entire base of four thousand people. I became the program lead for the resilience program on the base.

Jason: Wow! So that's a burst of amazing accomplishment. And amazing dedication about really seeing this as being kind of the new thing really. And finding a really good opportunity just going for.

So kudos to you for seeing that. How in the world do you teach somebody to be resilient?

Sean: So there's different skill set. So I teach eleven different skill sets. So what I do real quick; I teach... here's the skills that I teach: accounting blessings which basically you count three blessings a day.

And you develop an attitude of gratitude. And then we talk about values based goals. We don't talk about accomplishing goals.

See I get really, really fired up and really mad. Like I tell you I get pissed off when people talk about goals. They get to have smart goals and you have to have smarter goals and I'm like shut like you are ruining people, here's why.

So what we tell people is you have to have smart goals, you have to have you know, specific and measurable and well how do you measure success? I measure success differently than everybody else. I measure success in a way that is measurable for me.

I can't measure someone else success because I don't know what I'm measuring it against. I just know what I measure it against. So you're not really; it's measurable.

What does that mean? If you have somebody like what do you mean measurable? Like what are we measuring like what's my standard unit of measure?

Now like uh, every time you fail. You know what I mean? So what we talk about are values basically. We don't talk about having realistic goals because as a limiting belief part of having resilience is your ability to grow.

But if you have a belief where well I'm only realistically. If you have somebody who's going through let's say a divorce, nothing is realistic at that point. My life sucks and I see no way out.

See what I'm saying? So if I have a guy who has a really, really bad mindset right now and I tell him you have to have realistic goals that really I want to get through the next day you know, that's a goal of his.

Maybe that's all that's realistic for him at that point. So telling somebody they have realistic goals is literally limiting their beliefs and what they think they can overcome.

Jason; Right

Sean: So I tell them like no you have to have unrealistic goals. You have to have a goal. If your goal does not make other people laugh, it's not high enough.

If you have a goal that throw punches at somebody else then it's a good goal. But if your goal doesn't make other people laugh and make people want to do it with you, it's not high enough.

At some point you have to have goals way beyond everybody else's measure of you and then that way if you do fail, you've already exceeded their standards. Not that you should live by anybody else's standards but I'm just saying.

Jason: Right

Sean: That's if you had super, super high goals. So we talked about values based goals where you know, if I value healthy life then I set goals to live that life. If I value relationships, family, hard work, dedication whatever.

Whatever you value that's the goal that you attach. That is goals of where you want to be in life or goals are accomplished along the way and values are where you want to be in life.

So goals are just dreams with a deadline and I love teaching that part. Then the next one is A.B.C. It's like what's in our brain.

So we talk about activating event. I got pissed off because or I didn't handle this right because or whatever activates you in an uncharacteristic way and then your brain's interpretations and then see the consequences.

So I teach that. It's a great skill to kind of do a self-assessment. Man I really ruined that relationship.

I wonder what I was thinking at the time. And it's kind of a self-assessment tool and then we tell you to balance your thinking, right. Like have all the evidence to support like do I really believe what I believe?

And then we go into mindfulness. So I teach mindfulness and this is part of my favorite ones especially when my 11:34 [inaudible] hit Time magazine last year. I was like yes, finally!

Everybody knows I'm not crazy. Like I'm doing mindfulness technique if you like why you breathing all weird and wired like what are you doing? You know, I'm doing my mindfulness technique like ...you're crazy.

And then they see it on Time magazine and then people ask me do you do remember this. Like it was all that about ... oh now who wants to know.

Jason: Yeah

Sean: Like now see. So yeah man definitely mindfulness is huge, huge part of resilience. And then we talk about check your playbook.

Like check yourself before you wreck yourself. Like this work out in your favor. No, okay let's reassess and realign and pick another play that works.

It's basically just checking yourself like; did I act uncharacteristically? How do I fix that? And then we talk about capitalizing on strengths.

Everybody has a set of strengths and then using those strengths to be productive and accomplish your goals and all that. And then we talk about physical resilience, nutrition, sleep, endurance, strength.

We talk about spiritual resilience which has nothing to do with religion, has everything to do with the fact that you strengthening a set of beliefs, principles and values. That's what spiritual resilience is.

And then we talk about interpersonal problem solving and then good listening and active constructive responding so that's all that I do.

Jason: So those are the eleven... you call them pieces? Do you call them pieces of your skills? Eleven skills set.

Sean: Skill sets of resilience and then each one of those skill sets plays into the four domains of resilience which is mental, physical, social and spiritual. I would even enter a fifth one or maybe make it social/emotional.

Because a lot of times were fueled by our emotions, our thoughts, feelings and beliefs fuel our decisions and they fuel our reactions. So I would even venture to say that social and emotional would be kind of the same thing. And then emotional and mental too but really socially; it's got to be social and emotional. So yeah those are the four domains and then each one of those skill sets plays in one of those realms.

Jason: Got it. That is brilliant. I love hearing the framework that is the first time that I've heard it spelled out quite that well, so thank you for doing that.

Sean: You're welcome.

Jason: Want to shift gears now into; tell us a bit about the products and services that you have. I know that you have consulting work that you do. Tell us about what that array of products looks like.

Sean: Sure so the biggest one is team dynamics and team building. Everybody says that I'm a team building you know, I can make your organization run smoother, I can ... right but they'll never tell you how.

You know they'll never go into; well I can see that this guy is lacking in this area you know we're going to fix that ... It's not that simple you know. So basically, all I do is I go and assess because each team or group has a set of dynamics.

You know you have introverts, extroverts you know, if you've heard of the disk profiles or if you've ever heard of like Myers Briggs; tools and like for lenses. I mean there's a ton out there.

But basically to get an organization operating at prime a productivity you have to know the stages of team development first. Which is you form the team and then you come together and you're trying to gel together and there's conflict right.

So it's the storming phase and they once you've ironed out all of your issues or what have you then you're into the norming phase. Which okay I'm kind of used to this guy now. It's been you know couple weeks or a month or whatever like I'm kind of getting used to it.

And then you go to your performing stage where everybody has been assessed their team roles, everyone has been assessed who the team leaders, managers the you know and this is helpful in startup companies to know exactly what role is?

What responsibility do I have and what my contribution is and then you can measure that against the whole company's success. So if you have an area that's lacking you can figure that out quite quickly.

So that's kind of what I do. I go into an organization and assess their team dynamics and especially the capitalizing on strengths. I use a tool to assess where. I had a guy so like in basic training.

Let's just take me for example, in basic training. So in basic training you have guys that come in and they're going to be like in charge like element leaders or let's say they're going to...

Say you're in charge of dusting this area or you're in charge of the bathroom. We call a latrine. You're in charge of the latrine.

We're here to clean this and then you're going to line all of the shoes, you're going to find all the bunk beds you know make sure all these beds are aligned right.

Well if I have some five foot two kid who's eighteen freshly coming into basic training and he's trying to align these beds and they're bunk beds then we're going have an issue.

But let's say I have an older guy who is like six two, who is that exact height and doesn't have glasses because why would I have anybody that has glasses align something right. So you have to figure out like where each person skill is.

I had a guy who's a... I was a janitor. I still run a janitor company. I could definitely be your latrine person or just be your dorm janitor, monitor you know whatever, your building manager like that would be awesome because I'm playing on his strengths.

Jason: Right

Sean: So sometimes you'll have somebody who is who is failing because you're not playing on their strengths. Like they have no idea what they're supposed to be doing and you're not harnessing their gifts or their talents that you know.

One of the gifts that tools of success or one of the rules would be to exploit someone's gifts and talents. Everybody has a gift and talent. If you exploit those then you'll have a better organization.

So that's kind of what I do I go in and assess how the organization is operating and functioning and I just try to make it better.

Jason: Fantastic, fantastic

Sean: 17:44 [inaudible] long answer there.

Jason: No that's perfect, that's perfect. So I understand you also do public speaking on top of the consulting. Tell us a little bit about that.

Sean: Yes so I consider myself an inspirational speaker not a motivational speaker. Everybody's a motivational speaker I mean. I don't even think even Tony Roberts considers himself sort of a motivational speaker but just a speaker or maybe an inspirational speaker.

But see, inspirational speakers are kind of few and far between. But if you really look at what's motivation and what's inspiration. Motivation is getting energy to do something.

Inspiration is like I'm stuck and I have no fricking idea what to do. What in the hell am I going to do? And that's where I come in.

They hear me and I'm like man I'm inspired like let's do this. And then they'll get the motivation could be because they're already inspired to do it.

Because the motivation comes from like a physical thing like I'm motivated let's do this. Like I got to get moving but inspiration is kind of an emotional mindset. So it makes sense?

Jason: Yeah absolutely

Sean: So inspirational speaker, I think in my opinion when I looked up the definition when I was starting my business is just that you know, inspiration comes from an emotional standpoint. Not so much like a like motivation.

Like why are you motivated? Like because I'm a happy guy. I mean you know I mean so a lot of people that I talk to what I speak to and they're just they're stuck.

They just don't want to do. A lot of them know that they want change but they just don't know how.

And then when I come in and I give them the ... like recharge their thoughts, feelings, beliefs because thoughts feelings and beliefs. That's what you know makes us decide what we're going to do.

That's what I do. So I give them a tool or a way can do it what I want to call it to have the inspiration to inspire their thoughts, feelings and beliefs.

And I inspire the uninspired and then I motivate them at the same time to live their brand whatever their brand is; honesty, loyalty, love, business whatever I want them to live their brand.

And just living your brand is finding opportunities to live out your values every day. That's what living your brand is.

Jason: Got it, now when you were first starting the consulting side of your business, how did you go about finding clients? And let me tell you why I ask.

When I think about people who are listening to the show it's people who are either at your level or people who are just really getting started. So it's those really kind of those questions of where's the money.

Quite frankly I mean that's really what these questions boil down to is how in the world can I become like you right. I mean it's kind of one of those aspirational interviews here. So when you were trying to start consulting, how in the world did you go about finding clients?

Sean: So I looked up; and this is going to sound really ... like ethically but I think people want to perform ethically but at the same time like I'm not going to reinvent the wheel. I always I have a saying like I work smarter not harder.

You know, so I basically I looked at the top consulting agencies and I said what are they doing and how do they find their clients? And you know what have you.

So I did research on the top five consulting agencies. Whether it be business performance and their personal life you know whatever. I looked up the top five consultant agencies and I looked at their marketing.

I looked at what they are doing differently than everybody else. And basically I was looking up how I can set myself apart from everybody else.

That was a huge thing for me. Like I don't want to be like everybody else. I want to design my own way of doing things using a model that has already been done many times. Does that make sense?

Jason: Right

Sean: Okay so I basically looked up what everybody was doing and I found out that there are people mostly that will reach out. Like oh my gosh! We are not doing well and we need to figure out why. So let's call a consultant.

Jason: Right

Sean: Now you know what I mean and so I talked to a couple of them and said hey, you know I'm thinking about getting into the consulting game.

You know what do you recommend like where I mean how do I start? You know and I just; I literally just asked people. A lot of times we're just afraid to ask somebody.

How did you start? Like what did you do? You know and the guys who are not about elevating you; you'll find out real quick I'm like that's not how I want to be. Like I love the fact that you asked me that question because I love to go back and help people, right.

So basically what I did was I after I researched the top five companies I then looked at who's their top sales guy? Like who's the guy?

You know who's the guy and I said a couple messages that he was a hey, I'm thinking about and I did a couple of different companies. I want to get into the consulting you know would be my next step is?

You know what do you... what sets you apart from everybody else? Why would I go to your company? You know I mean I just sent emails you know to people some answered and some didn't that's fine.

But the ones that did answer they were like you need to and this is probably the best advice I could ever give. That you need to fixate and what it is or why it is that you're going to do what you do.

But you have to solve a problem. Like you definitely have to have the solution for a problem and when you market, you have to market the problem not the solution.

Everybody has a problem for their solution everybody knows I can tell you right now how to lose weight but I'll get a hundred different answers.

Like will feel good or it's too tough or I mean everybody has an excuse which I call excuses I just call everybody has a problem for their solution because everybody does. Everybody knows what they're supposed to do they just wouldn't do it.

So basically the answer to the question would be if you want to do something, anything; if you want to do something go ask people who are already doing it. How do I get started? What am I going to do?

What was your first step? Listen to pod casts. To find the clients you just look at different companies.

Like I wrote a list of companies that I wanted to work with. Not like you know Apple and Google it you know like that but just you know different companies like a restaurant company or enterprise rental car or I mean just list places that you want to work for as clients.

A great client would be just like tech companies you know I mean they're always looking for a consult somewhere you know.

But look at the different companies that are doing what you're ... that you want to do and figure out who their clients are and then go after the same type of, not the clientele.

That's really bad but go after the same type of client that they're already servicing. It's the best way I can explain it.

Jason: Nice very good sounds like you did a lot of research there and getting started. Kudos to you, that's great that is great.

So in addition to the consulting work and the public speaking you also have a book. I want you to tell us about that.

Sean: Yeah my book is called 'Decisions The Power to Overcome Self-Defeating Behaviors'. Everybody exhibit self-defeating behaviors whether it be an addiction

or a self-limiting belief or some way that people are sabotaging themselves just by their attitude, just by their mindset.

And it's an autobiographical approach to my attempted suicide and addiction and everything that I went through. And highlights my transformation and how I did it and what you need to do to live an epic life.

Jason: Okay so let me rewind here. You have a book that leads us through how you went from being suicidal to leading a transformed life?

Sean: Yes

Jason: That sounds like it needs to be on the New York Times best seller list and honestly that is brilliant, honest to goodness that is a million dollar idea just in the book right there.

Sean: I wish the Amazon numbers would show but I don't know I haven't really worked on the publisher. I self-published it on create space and then put it on amazon. Although I did debut at number eight and that's about as high as I got.

Jason: Nice

Sean: I debut that number. The book wasn't even out yet and I had so many preorders for it. I preordered it about one hundred and half I preordered.

So I mean I was really cool that one hundred fifty people.. it's a hundred fifty six or so. But that many people thought my book was worthy and I've gotten like six or eight reviews I think.

And two of them I know who they are. They were like good. I liked this book is amazing, the author's amazing everybody needs this book but I've gotten e-mails.

You know and Facebook messages about like your book was so awesome I love your book but I don't know. I'm not really how I'd be awesome to be a bestseller absolutely but just the fact that I wrote a book that have impacted people like that.

That is so awesome. It's my goal. I want to be a bestseller definitely be highlighted in that fact. But we'll see.

Jason: Okay you know you just touched on something great and that is yeah, it would be awesome to go out there and influence thousands upon thousands of people. But you know what?

That one 150, that 125, that 10 people, the 12 people even if it's 5 people that has still influenced them.

Most of us in our lives never really get a chance to have but no matter how big or how small those numbers are you're still realizing that there is a call and purpose you're following through on that.

You're doing something with it packaging that knowledge and getting it into the hands of other people. And that is what we're all about here. I understand you are starting a radio show.

Why don't you tell us a little bit about that.

Sean Yeah my radio show has been going on for about three weeks or two; three weeks now.

Jason: All right.

Sean: Yes so I launched it February tenth. Yeah that's sounds about right. February tenth and it's called 'Life Transformation Radio' and it is amazing.

So Life Transformation radio is all about our transformations and how we got from point A to point B with the roller coasters, the hick ups, the ups and downs of our world and how we got through it.

You know overcoming adversity, the whole thing. So I launched it because I felt like people needed to get in touch more with their own transformation. I mean really; I mean if you think about it people have gone through an amazing transformation.

Like I was suicidal at one point and a functioning alcoholic. And I mean it's just ... my life sucked you know. I was going through a divorce.

Nobody really liked me. It was so bad. So I wanted to highlight those transformations and put a why in front of everything.

Because everybody has a what they do and everybody has a how they do it. But nobody has a why for what they do. Oh because I want to get money so I'm going to do this.

Oh because I want to help people I'm going to do this, right. But what is the why and sometimes or most of the time to find out that they went through a similar experience and they want to use their experience for good.

Because everything that we're going through right now is preparing us for where we're going to go.

Jason: Brilliant and right there was another fantastic quote that I want to pull out and move up to the beginning excellent. Let's move on to public speaking again.

Kind of the same question. What is it that's working for you right now in regards to finding public speaking gigs?

Sean: So how I find them is I use a couple different websites like Speaker match, speaker hub, 30:01 [inaudible] tack is really great.

Some people are like well you know... they always talk about well my fee is five thousand dollars a... Good for you get that's awesome. Like I'm so happy for you that you're getting five thousand dollars a speech.

That's really great. But everybody needs a speaker and so if I'm going; like I want to a to a sales event and what happened was I got booked for a thousand dollars for a speech.

Jason: Nice

Sean: It's not my fees. My fees are around two thousand and twenty five hundred, right. That's my normal speaking fee is about two thousand and twenty five hundred.

After the conference in Kansas let's say or in Indiana or somewhere else and I need a hotel and I need airfare and I need to eat and I need to see those deductions.

Okay and so my speaking fee went from two thousand five hundred dollars plane ticket to fifteen hundred and then I need a hotel for two days which is about two hundred to fifty. So now I'm like thirteen hundred dollars and then I got to eat.

So there's like twelve hundred dollars and then you keep deducting everything that you're spending money on you may end up with a thousand dollars speaking fee.

Jason: Yeah

Sean: Although some people say and that's on a two thousand dollars fee. Now some people say oh well you know, my speaking fee is five thousand and I'm like that's great that's really cool.

And I mean that's what you want to do that's fine. But I looked at it as hey, it's local, it costs me twenty dollars of gas and I got a thousand dollars, I'm real good. So I like them tag or gig sales another one gig 31:33 [inaudible] another one that you would use.

But you know Speaker match, because but Google has been amazing. Google has been like just like I'm a resilient trainer so I Google resilient, conferences.

And then you look up all kinds of resilient conferences or Google call for speakers plus; the plus sign and then resilience you know and those and it will have all the resilient conferences or mindfulness or wellbeing or whatever your topic is.

Just do that and that's what got me booked a lot. And then you build relationships like anything else you get to build a relationship.

I don't just speak it somewhere and say okay thanks for the money and then I never hear from them again. I stay in contact with them every once in a while but what I always do is send a thank you card.

Jason: Right

Sean: I always send a thank you card after the event. Like I get back home and I absolutely send a thank you card because you're building a relationship. I would much rather have four quarters in my life than one hundred pennies.

Jason: Yeah awesome I'll tell you what Sean this has been great. I really, really appreciate your being on the show today.

This has been fantastic and I have already heard about four really good sound bytes and I have about three good quotes that I'm going to put out there on the podcast notes. So this great. I really appreciate you being here.

Sean: Thank you so much I really appreciate your kind words.

Jason: And once again for all the show notes that have to do with this episode and all of the links that Shawn told us here earlier on the episode, go over to JasonROwens.com/10, that's episode ten.

JasonROwens.com/10. And, hey, thank you so much for staying with us this far in the podcast.

I look forward to seeing you on the very next episode stay tuned everyone!

Great stuff is happening.