

MASTERS by Winn Claybaugh, June 2023

Brock Johnson

Instagram Growth Coach: Growth Tips for Creators & Entrepreneurs



Brock Johnson has over 600,000 Instagram followers, consults with Meta and Instagram staff, and coaches thousands of entrepreneurs and creators on how to grow on Instagram. In 2021, his personal following blew up, thanks to his reels strategies, and it has grown approximately 1,000 followers per day since then. Interviewed by **Winn Claybaugh**, Brock shares the ins and outs of Instagram, the importance of getting clear on your “niche,” and the end goal of using social media to build followers and build a business. You will love Brock’s fun energy!

WC: Hi everybody, Winn Claybaugh here, and welcome to this wonderful issue of MASTERS, which I'm excited about because I'm in person.

BJ: Yeah.

WC: In fact, the guy that I'm interviewing right now, Brock Johnson, he and I were discussing, before we started recording, just the value of being in person. As much as we have made it work virtually and there's some huge, huge benefits to that, but there's just nothing, nothing that replaces this. You agree?

BJ: Yeah, nothing like being face to face in a room. Like, that's—we're human beings, at the end of the day. I love technology: social media is my jam, I love Instagram, but at the end of the day, connecting with another human being face to face, like, that's part of the biggest reasons why we are here on this earth, I think.

WC: Yeah, and I just finished a tour and I've done Zoom events and classes for a thousand people, but I would rather be in person with a hundred people having that connection. Even though it just took me 24 hours to jump on a plane, to get there, to scramble at a horrible hotel and through security, I'd rather do that for a hundred people than to wake up and walk to my home office in my pajamas and do it for a thousand. So.

BJ: Yeah. I'm not smart enough to know why but it's different.

WC: It's different and I love it. So, thank you for doing this. And I was telling Brock that I have been doing interviews, podcast interviews, since the '90s, before there was even the term podcast and they were going out on cassette tapes. So, Brock wasn't even born yet when I was doing that. So, I'm always on the hunt for incredible speakers and authors and leaders and mentors that I can interview because I got to put out an issue every single month. And so, I'm always on the hunt. I didn't find you because I was on the hunt. I found you because you're like screaming at me.

BJ: [Laughs]

WC: Like Brock, just what you have turned into in the last a couple of years is just—I couldn't ignore it. And even though it's a topic that I know nothing about, and while we're going through this interview people are gonna think, *Wow! Winn has no idea what he's talking about right now.*

BJ: [Laughs]

WC: Or, *Winn is reading a script. Somebody else told him what to say.* And so, I'm just admitting up front, that's exactly what's going to happen.

BJ: I love that.

WC: Yeah, well, you know what? I pride myself on not being the smartest person on any topic. That makes my company successful.

BJ: Don't they say like if you're the smartest person in the room, you need to find a new room?

WC: Oh my gosh, I'm gonna steal that from you!

BJ: If you're the smartest person in the room, you're in the wrong room.

WC: You'll never be able to say that again because people will say, “Oh, you stole that from Winn.” [Laughs]

BJ: I definitely didn't come up with that myself [laughs].

WC: No, but it's true. But I think we were taught to believe that we have to be the smartest and if you're not the smartest, you're screwed. That was exhausting for me, because I thought that that's what I had to do and so I always felt intimidated. I always felt less than, and that's not a good feeling to try to lead a company.

BJ: Totally.

WC: I'm less than but here, everybody, let me try to take you to the next level. So, wait, I haven't even said who you are and what you do.

BJ: [Laughs]

WC: So, we're already into this. Okay, you guys. So, I'm with Brock Johnson. He has been a coach for thousands of entrepreneurs and creators on how to grow on Instagram. He has grown at a rate of approximately—get this—a thousand followers per day and is now over 600,000 followers. He personally consults with Meta and Instagram staff and is an international keynote speaker. Now, that was probably like the shortest bio. Either you're super humble, you're super young, or something but there's a lot more there and which we're going to jump into. But I like it that you have credibility. Like sometimes I've sat in the audience with somebody who was on stage and they're talking about leadership. I'm like, “Wow, so how many people do you have on your team?” “Oh, nobody. It's just me.”

BJ: [Laughs]

WC: So, you're teaching me about how to lead a bunch of people and you have no people.

BJ: Yeah.

WC: Right? You're teaching me—I used to go to these classes on how to make the classroom environment fun and it was the most boring seminar I've ever been to.

BJ: *[Laughs]* That's the worst.

WC: Exactly.

BJ: That's the worst.

WC: Yeah.

BJ: Yeah, well, I appreciate that. I got started with this whole business thing and entrepreneurship when I was 19, and I've been doing trainings and virtual coaching and things like that since I was 20 or 21. And so I've always felt this need to establish my credibility, because why else would a business owner who's in their 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s trust some kid who's, at that time, still in college? So, I felt like I needed to prove my credibility in order to be taken seriously at such a young age.

WC: Well, I think I saw videos that you did much younger than that.

BJ: Yeah.

WC: Like so, you were posting—

BJ: Oh, yeah, I got started—

WC: —at what age?

BJ: I got started posting, I made my first blog—and I put that very loosely in air quotes because it was created, really, by my mom. And the only people who saw the blog were my sister, my mom, my aunt, and then our dog. My mom had made a fake account for our dog and so that was like our fourth viewer.

WC: Are you serious?

BJ: Yeah. So, that was the blog and it's so funny because I think it's still up, like online. You can find it on the archives. And the comments on every post on the blog are my sister, my mom, my aunt, and then our dog.

WC: And then the dog.

BJ: Yeah, so, that started when I was, like, less than 10 years old. That started in—

WC: And what was the topic?

BJ: Anything and everything. I think it was football, snowboarding, and dogs. Like that was the three kind of focuses of my blog. I posted like four blog posts. It was never consistent. It was just a little—my introduction to content and posting on social media, you might say. But not long after that is where I started posting on YouTube. I've always loved video. I've always had a video camera in my hand. And so, I started making little educational YouTube videos when I was 11 or 12

years old, I would say. Learning a lot. And a lot of them are still online, so you can go search them up and find them. But pretty much since then, I've been posting consistently in some form. The niche and the topic has changed, but for the last 15 to 18 years I've been posting pretty consistently online.

WC: And I know that you'll get into this—

BJ: Mm hm.

WC: —because I know that one of your big messages is just put something out there. Just be organic.

BJ: Yes.

WC: Quit trying to make it so perfect.

BJ: Yes!

WC: I remember we went to Tulum, Mexico for New Years—

BJ Beautiful.

WC: 2020, right? And me and my husband and my daughter, we're on the beach just laughing at this girl. I bet she took a whole hour to set up the perfect—

BJ: *[Laughs]*

WC: So, she had to be some type of an influencer and she was in her bikini and she had to arrange this and then it was the sand and the beach and then this angle and then the sun change. And, you know, before she ever shot anything, like it had to be absolutely perfect.

BJ: And, Winn, I guarantee you she got home to her Airbnb or her hotel that night and spent another three hours editing it and photoshopping it and adding the filters. Yeah.

WC: I think I saw something—you were filming in front of a dumpster.

BJ: Yeah!

WC: What was that *[laughs]*?

BJ: I used that as a hook in a few of my recent videos because I started—

WC: So, it was on purpose?

BJ: Yeah, on purpose because we have this like narrative that social media has to be perfect, has to be pretty and beautiful and curated and photoshopped. And I post videos in front of a dumpster. I'll post videos intentionally in front of a messy background or a crooked mirror so that people, (a) they pay attention to that and, also, that's real, right? Like, I'm not going to curate my life and pretend like I'm something I'm not. There are people who live a really beautiful, aesthetically pleasing lifestyle but that's not me and that's not something I relate to. So, I just post who I am in the moment and allow my audience to relate to that.

WC: Over the weekend, I was in Utah visiting my 96-year-old mother and so we were going to go to Sundance, the resort, to have brunch and everything and so I'm

like—there's no hairdressers around. I'm not a hairdresser; I'm the furthest thing. You're gonna look like me—

BJ: Hey, yeah.

WC: —which you almost do, Brock—

BJ: Yeah.

WC: —when you shave your head—

BJ: Yeah.

WC: —if I'm going to do your hair. But so, I got to do Mom's hair to take her outside and everything. And my sister-in-law was taking pictures of me doing my mom's hair because she thought it was funny. I wasn't planning on posting that, but I did post it and it got like a ton of comments. But what's so funny are how many people like, you know, “Mm is that a picture of like,” meaning they had to blow it up to see what was in the background—

BJ: Yep.

WC: —and the background behind that.

BJ: Totally.

WC: I'm like, what are you looking at? Like, why are you trying to find stuff like that? It wasn't a perfect backdrop.

BJ: No, it's just the curious nature. People, they want to see real, too, plus that's authentic, right? That's real. You're not in this glamorous studio.

WC: Oh, so they were excited to see that?

BJ: They're excited to see that!

WC: Okay.

BJ: They connect with that.

WC: Got it.

BJ: You know, we talked a little bit about how much that there's been challenges and changes over the last few years. And I think one of the big ones is, we all have a really finely tuned like BS radar. Like when someone's selling us a bunch of baloney we're like, “Okay, that's not real; that's fake, that's phony.” And maybe 10 years ago on social media, that would have been attractive because it was like, “Wow, how did they make their life look so perfect?” But now, it's a couple quick filters, a couple quick edits and you can look perfect online. So, we all are craving what's real. We're like, “What's real?”

WC: Ah!

BJ: “What can I connect with? What's authentic?” And so, to hear, or in your post's case, see you being real, being authentic, you're doing your mom's hair, like, people connect with that. You're not in some beautiful studio with thousands of

dollars' worth of equipment. You're just being real and that's what people connect with.

WC: I just thought it was a silly, casual thing I was gonna post. I got more responses to that than if I posted a picture of me with Oprah. You know what I mean?

BJ: Yeah.

WC: Not that I have pictures of me with Oprah but I just feel like, wow, that's what people connected to.

BJ: I love that. That's cool. That's awesome.

WC: So, the thing that I love about you, as I say, it's not like I was hunting to find you. You were just in my face so much.

BJ: Yeah.

WC: First of all, I love your mother.

BJ: Yes.

WC: I follow your mother, Chalene Johnson. Love your dad, Brett.

BJ: I love them, too *[laughs]*.

WC: Yeah, okay, well, tell them they got good points with us today.

BJ: Yeah.

WC: And I've interviewed your mother a couple of times and brought her in to speak to my organization. So, I guess that's kind of how all of a sudden you started popping up, like, "Oh, how cute, it's Chalene's son."

BJ: Yeah.

WC: "Wait a minute, this is Chalene's son?" And that's how I took notice of you and you have the credibility. I think that you just kind of tell it like it is. Your posts are not overproduced, as you said, and you post a lot.

BJ: A lot!

WC: You post a lot. You're constantly posting and creating content. Is that exhausting, too? Because I have been to lunch or dinner with people who are on that level and it's like, you can't get through a dinner with like, okay, call the waiter over here. The waiter is now taking the camera and you know, "Hey, I'm up here with Winn Claybaugh, right now and hey, Winn, we were just talking about this." Is that exhausting for you to have to produce that much content? Or do you see it that way?

BJ: If I lived my life that way, that would be exhausting. But that's not how I live my life. I am very hyperaware of overworking and overstressing myself in my life. My family comes first and I say this a lot and people always get a kick out of this: I don't have children right now so, like—

WC: Really?

BJ: —that's a big part of how I'm able to create so much content. But I don't have children now. It's just my wife and our two dogs. But they are my priority and my screentime on my phone is very low. I spend a couple hours max per day on my phone.

WC: Are you serious?

BJ: Yeah.

WC: See, that surprises me.

BJ: Mm hm.

WC: Which I think is really good news.

BJ: Yeah. It's great news because, again, it's this like narrative that you have to be on your phone all day, you have to be creating content all day. I spend about an hour and 12 minutes per day on Instagram, max. And that's—

WC: Really?

BJ: And that's not being strict with it. That's an hour and 12 minutes, still watching my friends posts and twiddling my thumbs and scrolling through random content. If I was being strict with it, it would be—I think I did a test one time, it was about 43 minutes per day.

WC: Wow!

BJ: Yeah and so, it doesn't have to be all day long. And I'm very intentional about having time away from Instagram, away from my phone, and not spending all day creating content. And so, for me, it's not overwhelming. And I think I've been able to build systems and teams—that's a huge part of my success is, very early on, I learned like I need to hire help, I need to outsource. And so, I started doing that. I started building systems. I started building large kind of stockpiles of content. So, now I really don't work that much. I'm definitely not on my phone all day. It bugs the crap out of me when I'm at dinner with someone and they're making content or they're on their phone the whole time. That drives me nuts. So, my wife and I have a rule: when we're having dinner, when we're eating together, the phones go down and we are present in each other's company. So, no it doesn't overwhelm me to create this much content but there's a huge asterisk, that I have a team. Took me years to get to this point and I have systems on top of systems in place—

WC: Okay.

BJ: —to be able to produce this much.

WC: Okay, hopefully, even with what you've already shared, I know that people are like, “Okay,” because this can be overwhelming. And there's so much fear surrounding this whole, “What's the formula? What do I have to compromise? What do I have to sacrifice? What do I have to learn? What do I have to do to be a success in this?” And again, the thing that I really like about what I've seen so far is that you make it fun and you kind of remove that stigma that this has to be overwhelming—

BJ: Totally.

WC: —and you're going to screw up. That post is going to get you in trouble and you kind of take that out. You do it in a very fun and quirky way. I know that that's your family. I think your mom got blasted on social media for dancing and twerking at your wedding or something like that.

BJ: Yeah, yeah.

WC: So, you are a family that likes to finally cut loose and—

BJ: Absolutely.

WC: —and you've got balance with sports and family and dogs and all kinds of things. So, I think all of that is really, really good news and a sigh of relief for our listeners right now—

BJ: I hope so.

WC: —so, thanks for that.

BJ: Mm hm.

WC: Okay, so, just share with us the story behind your rapid growth on Instagram and the strategies, tactics that has contributed to this incredible substantial increase in followers.

BJ: Yeah. So, let's rewind back to 2020, 2021. My mom and I decided to launch our Instagram membership together. And that's where we started teaching people on a more reoccurring basis about Instagram, what's going on, what's trending. But I felt like I needed to, again, establish my own credibility and I felt kind of like a phony if I was teaching Instagram but didn't have a massive following or massive growth or success myself.

WC: Right.

BJ: I had taught a lot of people over the three or four years leading up to that but I hadn't built a massive following. I was still largely known as Chalene Johnson's son. So, around this time, I had 50,000 followers and reels were really popular. They had just released a few months earlier and April 1, 2021, I challenged myself to post one reel per day for 30 days. I was like this is just gonna be a test for this month.

WC: Okay.

BJ: One reel per day. At the end of that month, I had over 100,000 followers, I was growing at a rate of like 2,000 followers a day, multiple reels that had reached a million people, and I was like, "This is working, this is a success." And also, I already had some systems in place to make it easy. So, I wasn't working, you know, hours and hours every single day to make this happen. So, like I'm just gonna keep it going. I'm just gonna keep posting one reel a day. And now here we are, two and a half years later, and I'm still sticking with that schedule of at least one reel a day and the growth has still been pretty consistent at around 1,000 new followers a day since then. And so, what started at around 50,000 or

60,000 followers, is now over 650,000 and still growing. So, yeah, it's been rapid but it also took years to get there.

WC: I mean, you guys can't see this but Brock is seeing seven pages of notes—

BJ: *[Laughs]*

WC: —that I prepared *[laughs]*. Because, again, I'll admit this, and I'm fine, I feel fabulous admitting this, that I turn everything over to a couple of people, so I have my team too.

BJ: Mm hm.

WC: Not that I don't know what the content is, not that I'm not involved in helping to create the content, not that I'm not included. So, it's not like they're just posting things—

BJ: Yep.

WC: —without my knowledge and awareness. But there's no way I could do this on my own. I need that team of people behind me—

BJ: Yes.

WC: —and so, I do want to get into—well, maybe we should talk about it now. At one point, then, you said that you outsource. What does outsourcing mean? What does that look like? What tasks?

BJ: Yeah. So, for me, it started way before the Instagram growth, way before I was even an Instagram coach. As soon as I launched my first business, which 19 years old, I call my first, like, real business, I had a million little entrepreneurship endeavors growing up that lasted a month and then I was on to the next thing. When I was 19, I launched an online course that was teaching moms how to keep their kids safe on Snapchat. Snapchat was like big in the news. Everyone was scared of it. So, I was teaching moms: here's how you use it, here's what your kids are doing on it, here's how to keep them safe. That's what I was teaching.

WC: Well, how did you have the knowledge and awareness to be able to provide a course for moms on how to keep their kids safe on Snapchat?

BJ: Yeah, well—

WC: What did you learn then?

BJ: I knew nothing about parenting and I was very upfront and honest with that in my marketing and in my videos. But I was basically saying I had just taught my parents how to use Snapchat, because I had just gone off to college. I was like, “Hey, I know I can teach someone of that age group how to use Snapchat. I am 19 years old so I know what is going on with my generation and how we're using the app.” So, I felt that, essentially, if I could teach the parents how to use the app and teach them what's going on on the app, they could make their own parenting decisions from there as to keeping their kids safe and how they wanted to monitor, restrict, parent, whatever you may have. But I think the first step was

just knowing and understanding how to use it and what's going on. So that's kind of where that started.

WC: Little sidebar: is that kind of how you operate? Like, if somebody gives you a gadget, you want to dissect it, take it apart, put it back together, ask a million questions? I'm the type, just give me the stupid gadget and if it doesn't work, I'm going to hand it back to you.

BJ: I want to know how it works if I'm interested in it. If it's something that excites me, I want to know everything about it. If it's something that I'm like—I don't really care, I'm the same. Like, let me use it and if it doesn't work, I'm going to get rid of it. Give me a different one.

WC: Okay, then something like Snapchat, you weren't just a user, you wanted to dissect it and what's this function about? Why does this work? Why —

BJ: Yeah, and I felt like I also had to dissect it because I had decided that that was my business. But I think a distinction that I want to make sure is clear with the Snapchat business is that this was in no way something I was passionate about. This was in no way something that really, you know, excited me or that was my life's calling. This was something that I thought was my quickest path to making money. And at that time, I felt like I needed to provide for myself because I wanted to financially cut myself off from my parents.

WC: Right.

BJ: I wanted to, you know, detach. I'm away at college. I'm an adult now. I'm going to provide for myself. No more mommy and daddy. So, that business was built out of a need, really, to create that financial independence. And so, it wasn't a question of what am I most passionate about? Where am I? You know, where's my heart drawn? It was where can I make money fast, what do I know, and what is there a market for? And then once that's running and successful, then I can pivot.

WC: Right.

BJ: Then I can chase a passion project or go after something that is more purpose driven. But early on, it was truly just, like, where is there a market need and what problems can I solve?

WC: Okay, so we were talking about outsourcing.

BJ: Yes.

WC: So, you start this company—

BJ: Yes.

WC: —to consult with parents on how to keep their kids safe with Snapchat.

BJ: Yeah.

WC: Okay.

BJ: So, that was kind of the background of that first business and then very quickly, within a few months of starting that, I hired an assistant. And at that time, she—

it's funny to look back at, like, people asked, what was she doing for me? Really, nothing. She was doing, like, quote unquote, market research, which really just meant telling me on a weekly basis what the latest trends and changes were on Snapchat, which, there weren't very many. But just the fact that I had someone who I was now responsible for and someone who I felt like I couldn't let them down—it wasn't just me, I was letting someone else down—my productivity shot through the roof and our revenue, I think—I don't know the exact number but it two or three X'd in that first month compared to what it had been in the six months prior to hiring that assistant.

WC: But it was based on—

BJ: Yes.

WC: —your efforts—

BJ: Yes.

WC: —and your hustling, not because she did it.

BJ: Yes.

WC: Oh.

BJ: It was just the fact that she was on the team.

WC: So, you thought—

BJ: Yes.

WC: I better be a responsible—

BJ: Yes.

WC: —boss here.

BJ: Exactly, exactly. And now, since then, I can definitely attribute so much of my success and growth and consistency to my team. Now my team is actually doing things for me.

WC: Right.

BJ: I have a full-time assistant who is helping me with actual assistant roles. I have a community manager on Instagram, who, she handles all of my engaging, comments, direct messages. I respond to some but I just don't have time to respond to every single one.

WC: What did you call her?

BJ: A community manager. And my mom's asked me, she says, "Why do you have this person?" Because she, like so many other people with large followings, you get hundreds of messages every day. But I really value that community and being able to respond to all those messages.

WC: And I see that you do.

BJ: I do.

WC: And then in the back of my head, I'm like, he's on his phone 10 hours a day. So, you have somebody else, this community manager, for the most part is responding to that.

BJ: To the comments and the direct messages so that no one is talking into the void. So that if they reach out to me, they're getting a response 99 percent of the time. I also tell my team, "Hey, you might not always get a response from me but you're getting an authorized response from one of my team members."

WC: So, your followers know that.

BJ: They know that.

WC: This probably didn't come directly from—

BJ: Yes.

WC: —from Brock—

BJ: Yes.

WC: But his hands are in this.

BJ: But it came from someone who has been trained and vetted. Exactly.

WC: Okay. Do you feel like your followers are okay with that?

BJ: They are. Oh, they are. Yeah, and I'm actually—it's funny that we're talking about this—in the process right now of revisiting this topic with them and seeing if there's a better way of going about it. Because it's been successful for the last year or so that I've been doing it, but maybe they would like a message sign-off with her name, letting them know it's from her versus from me, or a message saying—

WC: Oh, that would be part of the response?

BJ: Yes, it would be. Maybe at—

WC: Oh, that's interesting.

BJ: —the bottom saying "Team Brock," so they know it's not Brock but it's a member of his team. So, those are things I'm kicking around.

WC: As long as we are talking about that, do you have advice on that? Because, I mean, I don't think I respond to 99 percent of the responses that I get. So, give some advice to an individual who's out there, or a company. Like, do you feel like, how urgent is it that every or the majority of responses get a response back?

BJ: It—probably 50 percent of the time when I respond to a direct message or my team responds to a direct message, the next response from that customer or follower is, "Wow, I had no idea you were going to reply. I'm shocked!" Instant win. Instant positive association. Because we live in a world where everyone who has a large following, they suddenly become untouchable. They don't answer their messages. They don't respond. They don't help people. Yet, all these entrepreneurs are preaching, "I want to help, I want to serve, I want to connect."

Well then, make your social media an extension of that. That's my argument to the big businesses and big brands.

WC: Wow.

BJ: Smaller people who might have smaller size following, couple 100 followers, you're probably not getting that many messages. So, you don't need to outsource and hire someone to do it.

WC: Right.

BJ: But once you get to the point that your business is large enough that you're getting that many messages, you can probably also afford to hire someone to make that their job.

WC: See, this is a good conversation, because I know that a big—and we're going to talk about this—is that you ask for engagement. So, you're not just, "Hi, I did my mom's hair for Sundance."

BJ: Asking.

WC: You asked for a response.

BJ: Every single—

WC: You asked for a connection.

BJ: —post. Yes.

WC: Right. Okay, so, which we're gonna get into that. But what you were saying before is that the entrepreneurs and true leaders and mentors, they are approachable. They are engaged. And I'm that way in every other way, except for in social media. Like, nobody reads my emails, except for me. Like I'll stand and—last week, "How many of you have emailed me?" and 10 hands went up. "How many times did I respond?" They're like, "Oh, you responded," and the rest of students are like, "What?"

BJ: It's powerful.

WC: "He has 12,000 students, and he's responding to his own email?" Because I know, I see the value in that. I want to be approachable and I'm engaged but on social media, I'm like, I just throw my hands up.

BJ: Yeah, yeah. And that's kind of how I felt. And I felt overwhelmed having that inbox pile up. So, I said, "What if I just hire someone and make that their job to be an extension of me?"

WC: Okay.

BJ: And she's awesome. She's wonderful. It's more than just customer service. She's answering questions and able to, you know, solve problems for people. So, it's powerful.

WC: And what's her time commitment to be able to do that?

BJ: She spends roughly 20 to 30 hours a week.

WC: Just responding to your responses.

BJ: Yes, responding to—

WC: Got it. Okay.

BJ: —comments and direct messages. Yes.

WC: So, even though you are able to only spend an hour or so on Instagram, she's there with the whole follow up.

BJ: Mm hm. Exactly.

WC: Okay, what else about outsourcing and a team to be able to pull this off?

BJ: Yeah, so, I have now—and I've consistently over the last year been giving up more and more and more things, taking them off my plate—recently hired an editor. I said earlier that like, I love videography, love video, I've always had a camera in my hands. So, for the longest time, I was like, *I'll edit my own videos. I enjoy that. It's something that's fun for me.* And those things are true but I also know it takes me a long time. And I also know that an hour that I spend editing a video could instead be spent creating, filming, four or five more videos.

WC: Right.

BJ: Recording a podcast. Or hanging out with my wife and taking my dogs on a walk, right, doing things that aren't related to business. So, I've hired a full-time editor now who edits my content for me, my social media content, and I have an editor for my YouTube. We have an editor for the podcast that my mom and I cohost together. And then I'm trying to think of any other. Oh, and then I have a graphic designer as well, because that's something I suck at. I'm terrible at graphic design. So, very early on, I think within the first month of that initial reels challenge, I hired an editor to design my non-video posts for social media.

WC: So, that's a team of how many?

BJ: Five or six that are dedicated to my social media.

WC: Okay. And most of them full time?

BJ: Most of them full time or close to.

WC: Okay. That's a good, clear picture of what this thing needs to look like.

BJ: Yeah.

WC: So, I'm sure that part of the consulting and training that you and your mom do, are helping a company gauge, “Okay, you're this big, you want to grow to this big. The only way you're going to be able to do it is you need to bring on one full-time person and this is what they'll do.” You'll help them gauge that or?

BJ: More or less, yeah. Guide them in the hiring process. Of course, there's no like one size: Well, if you want to get to 100,000, then you need to hire a video editor,” or something like that. It's not that black and white. But there's absolutely, yeah, we have courses on hiring and we help teach people about outsourcing. It's just so essential and I think that's one of the best business lessons I learned

from my mom and dad is just the need to outsource and ask for help and hire. Because, like I said, that first person I hired when I was 19, she's actually still with our business today and she's actually doing things for our business now. But like I said, even though she wasn't doing anything for me, just the fact that I took that first step to hire, I wasn't so scared anymore, because I had done it. It wasn't this foreign territory that I'd never ventured into. So, then when I'm ready to hire an actual staff or team member, I can do so without that fear, because I've done it before.

WC: Got it. Wait, she's not going to hear this is she, and say, "Well, he said I did nothing"?

BJ: [Laughs] She won't listen to this.

WC: [Laughs]

BJ: Joyce, I hope you're not listening.

WC: That's funny. Okay, so but obviously you had a means to an end because it wasn't you just wanted a whole bunch of people to like your new shoes. It was like this was to monetize. This is, "I need to make money at this." So, what opportunities did this open up to you, to be able to capitalize on the fact that you're getting a thousand new followers a day, two thousand a day, up to 600? What opportunities did that open up for you?

BJ: Absolutely. Well, there's—a thousand new followers can also be said as a thousand new leads, a thousand new potential customers, a thousand people who are learning about our business every single day. And so, of course that leads directly into email lists, growing our subscribers, growing the number of people in our membership who now are students of ours. But then, more broadly, it just kind of creates this name recognition. It creates this credibility so that when other people are then asking their friends, "Hey, how did you grow on Instagram? Where are you learning about Instagram? Who do you turn to for your social media tips," they know who to recommend. They know who to point people to.

WC: Right.

BJ: And I think I've done a good job of establishing myself as one of those people.

WC: Well, then go ahead and do a little commercial right now because people are, "Okay, cool. I hear what he's saying. I like Brock and I like his mom." So, what does that direct them to do? Because I have team members who subscribe and I pay it, by the way. I want you to know I cover the expense of that so they're subscribers, they're members or whatever you guys call that, so do the commercial now. What does that lead them to do?

BJ: Yeah, into the InstaClubHub is what we call it; my mom named it.

WC: InstaClub—

BJ: InstaClubHub.

WC: Hub. Okay.

BJ: Yeah, some people call it the Insta Hub Club. It's the InstaClubHub. My mom named it. She names everything, that's her thing. But the InstaClubHub is an Instagram membership, because we were sitting there in 2020—I was actually living at home because I had to leave college—and we were like, “Everyone's always coming out with Instagram courses. But Instagram changes every frickin' week.” Instagram is always adapting and changing and releasing new things. And so, as soon as you put out a course, it's outdated. Also, as soon as you put out a course, it's oftentimes only one person teaching; one or two mentors. So, with the InstaClubHub we've instead taken a different approach. It's a monthly model. People can join for an annual price if they want to save some money, but it's a monthly price and you get pretty much every single Instagram question you could ever want answered. You start with an assessment to learn where you're at on Instagram. You, Winn, are going to start at a very different place than the 20-year-old marketing and technology major who just graduated, right? You have different knowledges and backgrounds of Instagram, different technological backgrounds. And so, we set you on a different course. You can go through at your own pace and learn and then we also have tons of other features, like monthly live trainings on advanced topics, on whatever's changed on Instagram. We have weekly updates on the latest news on Instagram and we've helped now tens of thousands of people grow. We have numerous members with over 100,000 followers. The most-viewed reel on the history of Instagram was created by one of our members.

WC: Well, now I need to ask, who is it? What was the reel?

BJ: I don't even have his username off the top of my head, but he is a photographer and created a reel with his dog. It was crazy. It was funny, it was cute. It checked off every box of virality.

WC: And how many views?

BJ: It was, at the time, over 350 million and I think it's probably over half a billion now, over 500 million.

WC: Geez!

BJ: Yeah, no, it's wild. Yeah.

WC: That's cool.

BJ: Yeah, and so that's what my mom and I do together. And I think we also bring a unique perspective because we have myself, who I just turned 26, I've been in entrepreneurship for less than a decade. She's been in entrepreneurship for over 30 years and she's—I don't even know how old my mom is. She likes to say she's 28 still or maybe she says she's 32 now. I think now that I'm in my upper twenties she says she's like 32 now. But yeah, so she brings a much more veteraned-experience entrepreneurship approach. And then we have numerous other teachers and instructors in the club as well. So, it's not just the Johnson perspective on Instagram. You're getting a perspective from a lot of different experts.

WC: Okay, can we tell our listeners now how much that club costs from the onset?

BJ: Sure, yeah. So, we have a trial. So, for anyone who's like, not sure, you can check it out for \$7 for two weeks, going to instaclubhub.com/trial.

WC: And then they love it and then what do they pay?

BJ: The monthly is \$47 a month and the annual is \$299 for the year. And—

WC: So, all super, super doable!

BJ: Super doable. And we are going to raise those prices soon because every time we have a team meeting, our marketing and advertising staff are like, “You guys need to up your prices, because you're offering double what other people are offering and you're charging half of what they're charging.” So, we're gonna raise our prices soon; I want to be transparent about that. But by the time this episode comes out, they might not have increased yet. But yeah.

WC: So, you, as this speaker and a trainer, you're standing on stages, you're delivering these virtual trainings along with your mom. Some of them are live. Are some of them recorded?

BJ: We do offer recordings of all of our trainings. Yeah, but we do a live training probably at least once a week.

WC: Okay, so, all this stuff is going out.

BJ: Yeah.

WC: So primarily, who is in your audience? Like, who are the people that—because I'm sure that there's the outliers, it's just somebody who has a bunch of cats and they want everybody to like their cats.

BJ: Yeah, there are those people.

WC: Right. But I would think that the majority of them are people who are trying to monetize their followship.

BJ: Exactly, exactly. People who are entrepreneurs or creators who, they want to make money from social media, whether that's brand deals and partnerships, or that's having their own product, or they're in network marketing, or whatever it may be. It's usually someone who's trying to make money. If you just want to grow your following to grow your following, we can help you do that. But we would also argue that there's not really much of a point in that besides virality and fame. That's not really the business we're in. I mean, we can help you do that but that's not our end goal. Our end goal is helping people grow their following, dot-dot-dot, so they can make money.

WC: Make money.

BJ: Yep.

WC: Okay, cool. So, when I asked you in advance, you were kind enough to slip in something about my industry. So, I'm in the beauty industry. Not that I am not in other businesses, too. But you slipped it into some of the information that you provided back from me about the intersection of social media and beauty evolving in the future, like what trends or changes. So, that's stuff that you and

your mom would look at as well. So, you take specific—as I think you said, you did an assessment.

BJ: Yeah.

WC: So, that would mean you would go on to my company's main Instagram account and you would say, “Oh, well, missed opportunity. Well, that sucked. Oh, there's a win—”

BJ: Yeah.

WC: “—they're on the right track, missed the mark again.” So, that's the assessment.

BJ: We do offer full-on reviews and critiques like that in our club. We can't quite do that for every single member, but it's available for every single member. But when you do join, you take a self-assessment to assess where you are at yourself. But, yeah, one of the new things that we just recently redesigned our club is to make it more specifically applicable to each industry. Because the beauty industry is a little bit different than the fitness industry, is a little bit different than the healthcare industry, and so each of these different industries is going to have slightly different best practices. And so, we help you not only figure out what those best practices are, but also connect with other people in your industry, because that's so huge, is being able to connect with, you know, if you're a real estate agent, other real estate agents who have grown on Instagram and who are successful and who are also in the club. So, you can connect with them, network, and kind of pick their brain or learn from what they've done.

WC: So, it's not like the people who are following you and learning from you have an opportunity to have their followers, “Here, click here and give us a credit card.” Some of it is—like my business, you can't click here and buy a bottle of shampoo. You can't do that in the Paul Mitchell world. You can't click here and sign up for my school. Again, those are my revenue sources for how I make money in my company.

BJ: Yeah, so, you're building the social media following. It doesn't always have to necessarily be a direct translation from followers into dollars, from followers into “click here to purchase.” It can also be establishing that trust, which is just so—

WC: That's what I was looking for.

BJ: —huge. Yeah, in this 2023 world that we live in, everyone's asking the question, “Who can I trust?” And it's interesting to read about consumer psychology and how it's changed over the last five, ten years. Trust is something that's shot up the charts in terms of what matters to consumers.

WC: Aah.

BJ: Who can I trust? What can I trust? Where can I get my news? Where can I get my media and information? And more and more, people are turning to. quote unquote, influencers, creators, or just people on social media for that because they trust them more. They feel like I can relate. I know this person, I've been following them for years, I felt like I had this parasocial relationship where I trust this person. I don't really trust this news station. I don't really trust this magazine

or this podcast, whatever. But they're trusting the people they're following on social media. And so, you know, building that social media following—and of course, this takes time—can be another great way to build that trust. And then you can leverage that trust into things that are more than just “click here to purchase.”

WC: Got it. Got it. Let's jump into the ins and outs of Instagram.

BJ: Yep.

WC: First of all, why have you chosen that Instagram is your area of expertise and not Facebook and not TikTok and not—does that matter?

BJ: It does, more or less, I think you can have success on any platform. I do think each platform has like slightly different demographics and expectations. I also think it's easier in some ways to create content for Instagram or TikTok than it is for YouTube or for a podcast. So that's part of the reason is it's easier to create content on Instagram.

WC: Okay.

BJ: I also had success on Instagram. When I started blowing up on social media and really taking it seriously as a business, Instagram was the focus. TikTok was around but people weren't really using it for business. YouTube was around but, again, higher cost of entry because greater production value. So, I had success on Instagram and I was drawn to stick with that success.

WC: So, 600,000 followers and growing on Instagram. How many followers do you have on Facebook?

BJ: I have no idea. I've barely used Facebook in the last five years. I just added it back—

WC: So, when you post something on Instagram, you're not saying automatically post this same content on Facebook?

BJ: I am now and that just started a few months ago. I didn't take Facebook seriously.

WC: And you don't know how many followers you have?

BJ: Nope, no idea.

WC: Do you have three.

BJ: I probably have three. I think I might have around—

WC: Is your dog—

BJ: —a thousand, two thousand

WC: —still on there? Your dog?

BJ: She's on Instagram. Yeah. She's not on Facebook. She's got—

WC: Does she follow you? Does she comment?

BJ: She does follow me. My dog actually—she's blown up. She has over a quarter of a million followers on Instagram.

WC: Don't tell me that because now I feel bad about myself. I have 30,000.

BJ: Mila's got 250K on Instagram.

WC: Oh, whatever!

BJ: Mila's crushing it.

WC: That's awesome.

BJ: Yeah, so that's Instagram. TikTok, I have about 300,000 on TikTok.

WC: Well, that's nothing to sneeze about.

BJ: I shot myself in the foot there.

WC: Why?

BJ: Because step one for growing on any social media is identifying your niche. Like, what's that topic you're going to be posting about and who are you going to be posting about it for? We talked about that a little bit already. My niche is probably clear to anyone listening. It's organic Instagram growth for people who want to make money on Instagram. But on TikTok, I got on there right when it launched. And I was one of the OG first people to like, blow up. I had 300,000 followers on TikTok in 2019. Most people didn't even have TikTok downloaded in 2019. But I blew up for the wrong reasons and you mentioned them: dancing. I blew up because I posted some funny dancing videos. And this was at the time that I was a college football player. And, Winn, people thought it was funny to see a college football player in his shoulder pads in the locker room dancing. And then I would get my teammates in and this was before there was like the stigma and this like, "Ooh, TikTok is just for dancing." So, I was just like, "Guys, come film this TikTok with me."

WC: Wow, oh my gosh that was hilarious.

BJ: And they didn't know what TikTok was. They were like, "Okay, whatever." Like, "Brock is just being weird again." And so, I make them all film these TikToks with me and I had like video after video; a million, 3 million, 7 million, 12 million. I have this one video from 2019 that's still getting views, like hundreds of views every single day on TikTok.

WC: That's hilarious.

BJ: But case in point, it's the double-edged sword because I went viral. I blew up: 300,000 followers four years ago on TikTok. But even though I enjoy dancing, I can't monetize that. Or at least I didn't want to monetize that. It was a bunch of people who followed me.

WC: I know of a club down the street that's hiring.

BJ: [Laughs] Yeah, I've had a few reach outs—

WC: Some offers?

BJ: From clubs. Yeah.

WC: Okay.

BJ: But so, now I have a bunch of people following me for dancing. They don't care about growing on Instagram. They're not entrepreneurs. Most of them don't care about making money online. They just want me to do more silly dancing videos in my shoulder pads. I still get comments that are like, "What happened to the football team?"

WC: You should do that in front of the dumpster. You're gonna blow up.

BJ: I should. But, so, anyway, so I have 300,000 on TikTok. But it's kind of like a black eye because they're there but they're there for nothing. And they're not engaged and they don't really care.

WC: Got it. So, and then what about YouTube?

BJ: I've just started, over the last six months or so, taking YouTube really seriously. And I've seen decent success, decent growth on YouTube. Nothing crazy.

WC: Well, your video content is great. So, would it be the same content—

BJ: It's, YouTube shorts.

WC: —that you would then put onto—

BJ: So, YouTube shorts is YouTube's version of TikTok and reels. So, my YouTube shorts are the same, generally, as my TikToks and my reels, but my long-form YouTube videos—

WC: Exactly the same or they're—

BJ: Similar.

WC: —specific to YouTube?

BJ: They're not specific to YouTube. They're more specific to Instagram or entrepreneurship.

WC: But they just are playing on YouTube.

BJ: They're just playing on YouTube. Yeah. And then I do have your traditional horizontal YouTube video that you think of when you think of YouTube video.

WC: Got it.

BJ: And then the biggest reason that I've recently been confirmed about why I think I'm right, or why I think I was wise to really focus in on Instagram, was this study was done by Karat Financial, where they broke down how much you can expect to earn per follower on each social media.

WC: That's interesting.

BJ: And they did this study, it was really interesting, by looking at the real numbers of how much money does each company make and what is their primary social media that drives that. And so, they looked at Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok. And a few other smaller ones, but those are kind of the big four that people ask about. And Instagram was far superior in terms of the value.

WC: Interesting.

BJ: It was four times higher than YouTube and 11 times higher than TikTok.

WC: Wow.

BJ: And I think that, not to get too lost in the weeds, I think that goes back to what we were talking about trust and building those relationships. Because Instagram's direct messages are far superior. They're way better than YouTube; I don't even think YouTube has direct messages. They're way better than TikTok. It's very challenging to send a direct message on TikTok. But to kind of bring this full circle, you know, earlier we were talking about responding to messages and having conversations with people. You can do that better on Instagram than anywhere else. And so, I believe that lends itself to much more trust, much better relationships, and then much more sales and much higher conversion rates on Instagram than on TikTok or YouTube or any of these other platforms. And so, that's why, as a business owner, I love Instagram.

WC: That's great. I mean, that is in the weeds but that's valuable information.

BJ: Yeah, it's important to know.

WC: Okay, so let's go—we'll just kind of go down a checklist. So, people are gonna like this. Different features that you could focus on, one more than the other. So, the about me highlight.

BJ: An about me highlight is useful. Highlights in general, not very useful. An about me highlight is good because it's kind of an introduction to who are you. If someone just lands on your profile and they see an about me highlight, it'll break down who you are and what they should know about you in a quicker way.

WC: And what are the mistakes that people are making with their about me highlight?

BJ: I think just making them too long, in general, or adding too much without giving enough information.

WC: Well, they don't give you much space.

BJ: You do have 60 seconds for a story, but highlights, you can kind of add them all together making them into kind of a longer video. So, you can make them longer, but I think people, again, go too far into the weeds and talk about all these different things on their about me when, really, people want to know, "Why should I follow you?"

WC: And how long should it be?

BJ: Two minutes, three minutes max.

WC: Oh, that's longer than I thought.

BJ: Yeah, yeah, yeah. But if it's 45 seconds, 30 seconds, that's fine.

WC: So, I need to make myself a note. I don't really think I have that. Okay.

BJ: You might not. It's not it's not the most crucial thing.

WC: All right.

BJ: That's in the middle of the pecking order, in terms of importance.

WC: Okay. Profile bio. Profile.

BJ: That's your billboard.

WC: Right.

BJ: That's everything and, like I said earlier, we spend 30 minutes on Instagram, we follow 250 people, and we're real stringent and picky with who we're following. So, why should I follow you? And that's what your billboard, your bio, needs to clearly articulate. You know, if we're driving on the 5 freeway and I see a billboard that's got three paragraphs on it and it's talking about how I love cats and I'm a wine drinker and I'm a skier and I'm an Aries and I'm a mom of two fur babies. And I'm like, I don't need any of that. I don't need to know that—

WC: Plus, you missed it because it was so fast.

BJ: Plus, I missed it because it's so much information and I'm driving by at 70 miles an hour.

WC: Right.

BJ: So, I need to know, clearly, what's the phone number to call, to put it in billboard terms. Put it in bio terms, why should I follow you? Clear and simple, as concise as possible, using terms that I—and me, I'm pretending to be the like the ideal follower—what would your ideal follower already understand? What would they already know? Because if you can't answer that question clearly and immediately, if they land on your profile and there's any sort of ambiguity, if there's any sort of information that's not clear, they're not going to follow you. They don't have time. They don't have time to research your Instagram and figure out if you're the right answer to their problems.

WC: Okay, so mine says—

BJ: I already see a mistake before you even get to the—

WC: Oh, and you're reading it upside down!

BJ: I'm reading it upside down. Yeah.

WC: Why did I show you the screen? Okay. It says motivational speaker, dad, speaker, author, philanthropist, Dean, co-founder of Paul Mitchell, and it has the link to the website, author.

BJ: Yeah.

WC: Okay so—

BJ: Those are great fun facts.

WC: What?

BJ: Those are great fun facts.

WC: Okay.

BJ: Hi, Winn, welcome to your first day of school. Please stand up and say a fun fact about you. Those are great fun facts.

WC: *[Laughs]*

BJ: But—

WC: Okay.

BJ: —if I'm landing on your profile—

WC: Okay.

BJ: —what problem can you solve for me—

WC: Okay.

BJ: —or what can you provide for me? It needs to be about me as the potential follower. And so, if I read you're a keynote speaker and you're an author and you're a this and that, I'm like, "That's great for you. But what can you do for me?"

WC: I'm not a wine drinker. I'm sober. That's in there.

BJ: Yeah. So, it's just got to be clearly articulated of, "What's in it for me as the new follower?"

WC: Okay, so I'm getting this for free. What would you change?

BJ: Let me take a look at this. So, we'd have to answer that question. And you would have to answer that for me is, when someone, your ideal follower—can you think of who your ideal follower of this account is?

WC: Yeah.

BJ: Okay. When that person lands on your profile, what can they get from you, from this profile? Why should they follow you?

WC: Because they're gonna get culture, positivity, how to overcome self-doubt. That's kind of stuff that—

BJ: Is that what they're struggling with? And again, this is for someone who's trying to grow, so—

WC: Yeah.

BJ: —we should even backtrack. You're trying to grow this profile?

WC: Yeah.

BJ: Okay. Is all of your content about those topics you just mentioned?

WC: No.

BJ: Okay. Well, then it should be.

WC: Okay. Yeah, cuz see, I thought, *Oh they're gonna want to follow me because I'm a dad.*

BJ: Once they follow you, they will appreciate that you're a dad.

WC: Got it.

BJ: People don't want to follow you just because you're a dad.

WC: Okay.

BJ: There's about a billion dads on the planet.

WC: *[Laughs]* Okay.

BJ: You know? And that's the honest truth.

WC: But I'm the best one out there.

BJ: Yeah. And that's the honest truth. Like everyone wants—"They'll follow me because I'm a this. They'll follow me because I'm—." They'll follow you because what of you can do for them.

WC: Okay.

BJ: That's why they'll follow you. And so, that's what needs to be clearly articulated. Not who you are, not what you can do, but what you can help them with.

WC: Okay. So, if you and I would have a back and forth and you would ask me questions, because like you just said, I'm the one who needs to write this and come up with and answer the questions. What's your intent here? What's the end result here? And then I would give you an answer, and you would, "Mmm, maybe not, Winn. There's a billion dads on the planet." Okay, so that's the exchange that we would have to get that down.

BJ: Yeah.

WC: So, how important on the pecking order is this profile bio? Pretty important, then.

BJ: It's step two. So, earlier I said step one is niche. The second most important thing is this bio, this profile.

WC: Oh, wow.

BJ: Because without this, there's no way to communicate what you do or why someone should follow you.

WC: Wow, great advice. Okay, call to action.

BJ: Mm hm. Every post should have one.

WC: Okay.

BJ: Pretty much every post should have one because why do we expect people who are mindlessly scrolling on their phone for hours, why do we expect them to engage and interact? Why do we expect them to just know what we want them to do? Instead, we ask.

WC: Okay.

BJ: Right? When you ask, you will receive. If you're not asking for engagement, which is another way of saying a call to action, if you don't have that call to action, people aren't going to act, they're not going to engage. And so, every one of my posts includes some kind of explicit call to action. "Like this post if you found it funny. Save this post if you learned something new."

WC: So, that's the call to action?

BJ: At the end of every post. And then also I add one at the end of my bio as well, to direct next steps. Because again, imagine that billboard, we're driving on the freeway. It says, "Call 777-Lawyer now."

WC: Right.

BJ: Right? There needs to be a next step. I don't just need to know that you're the best lawyer in LA. I also need to know, what can I do if I've been in an accident? So, I usually recommend having the last line of your bio directing that action.

WC: So, what does the last line in your bio say?

BJ: Mine says, "Want Instagram coaching?" and an arrow pointing to my link. Or sometimes it says—

WC: Got it.

BJ: —"Click here for Instagram coaching."

WC: Got it.

BJ: Because that's what people who land on my profile and they're looking for next steps want. They're like, "Okay, I just need someone to coach me on Instagram." If you want it, click here.

WC: Okay so, I'm not trying to sell anything, but I am trying to build a following. Like, because what you had said earlier about building trust.

BJ: Yep.

WC: Like, I know I'm a good guy. I'm honest, I'm integral. I feel like people should trust me because I have a really good heart. I'm approachable. So, I feel like that's why I want to grow.

BJ: Yeah.

WC: Okay. But so, for example, here's the posting I'm showing. So, there's me doing my mom's hair for Mother's Day. What would the call to action be on something like that?

BJ: Well, because this is more of a sentimental post and because this is more of a behind-the-scenes post and because it's just photos of you doing your mom's hair, you wouldn't be able to necessarily put a call to action on these photos. Like, that would feel weird if you were doing your mom's hair and there was a text banner above your head that said, you know, "Share this with a friend." That wouldn't make much sense. But in your caption, what if you asked everyone, "What's something you've done to express love to your mom today?" Right? Because everyone, that's what Mother's Day is. You look at Mother's Day on

social media, everyone is just talking about how they love their mom and they're doing this for their mom, they're doing that. Everyone's just using it as an opportunity to brag about their mom or brag about what they've done for their mom. So, what if you turned your comment section into a free opportunity for people to "Tell me what you've done to show your mom you love her today?"

WC: Ahh.

BJ: Now you're getting people, they're bragging about themselves. They're leaving engaged comments, they're not just saying, "Beautiful, love this."

WC: Oh, I got a lot of those.

BJ: I'm sure you did and I'm sure you still will, but you're also still getting people—or I should say you're now getting people who would be leaving paragraph-long responses about how they bought their mom flowers and they got her her favorite donut and whatever.

WC: Dang, I love this.

BJ: *[Laughs]*

WC: Okay.

BJ: This is what I geek out on.

WC: Can we rewind back to Mother's Day, because I can see how that conversation, where people reading about what other people did. Because that was a lot of the comment. "Good for you, Winn. You're not a hairdresser but you had that experience. I mean, what mom wouldn't want her son to do her hair? Whether or not you're good at it or not." I mean, those were some of the comments, but to be able to see what other people did, to learn what other people, would have built my trust and built my tribe.

BJ: Yeah, absolutely.

WC: Okay, so, closed captions?

BJ: Essential because roughly 80 percent of Instagram users watch on mute. They're consuming Instagram while they're rocking their baby to sleep, while they're at work, while they're at the red light and they're not supposed to be on their phone. They're watching with their sound turned off.

WC: So, 80 percent?

BJ: So, if you don't have closed captions, they can't consume the content. Instagram is working on adding an automatic closed captions. So, just like when you watch TV, like there's automatic closed captions added. Instagram's working on that, but it's very early stages. Not everyone has it yet. So, it's not something I would rely on.

WC: So, how do you add it then?

BJ: An outside editing app. So, either I'll add it with the editing app myself, if it's simple. I'll have my editor add them for me and make them engaging and pop up on the screen. Or Instagram does have their own built-in sticker that you can put

on the on the video that is not just crossing your fingers and hoping that it's going to automatically be added, but you're actually adding the closed captions yourself within Instagram. Again, not everyone has that sticker but it is a sticker that can be added.

WC: Maybe this question isn't important, and you can tell me that it's not. How vital is it that the closed caption is accurate? Because I've watched it where it spells—the name of the person who's doing it spells their own name wrong. Does that matter?

BJ: That happens every single day with my mom because it's Chalene and it always comes up—

WC: Chalene, not Charlene. I know. Every time I talk in my, it always comes out “Char.” I have to go back in—

BJ: Yeah, it always adds R. Or closed captions will make it like S-H-A instead of C-H-A. But it's important. I wouldn't say it's not important, but I also don't think it's like the biggest make or break for your content, is having perfect closed captions. But, you know, they should be accurate.

WC: All right, hooks?

BJ: Also essential. I try to have a hook in every piece of content if I can.

WC: Give us an example.

BJ: It would really depend on the exact video, but as I scroll through my own content, it's basically asking a question or telling people what is going to be delivered in this content that they're about to watch. We're so used to hooks in TV and in every article we read and in every movie we watch. And newspapers have been around for hundreds of years and every single news article starts with a hook. So, of course, it would make sense that in social media it's the same thing. And so, it's basically just a phrase or an expression at the beginning of your content that draws people in.

WC: Cool. Give us an example straight from your social.

BJ: Sure. Yeah, I'll scroll through my most recent posts. The first one says, “Six things stopping you from reaching 100,000 followers.”

WC: That's the hook.

BJ: That's the hook.

WC: So, it's like you're telling them, then you tell them—

BJ: Tell them what you're going to tell them.

WC: And then you told them what you told them.

BJ: Yep, exactly.

WC: Okay.

BJ: And this hook specifically uses—kind of an advanced tip, which is using a negative hook. I don't recommend using these every time, but if—

WC: Your mom uses those, by the way.

BJ: I know she does because she—

WC: Well, something along the lines of, “Don't follow me if you are—”

BJ: Yeah.

WC: What does she say? Because I want to get it right.

BJ: She says something like, “Don't follow me if you,” and then inserts things that are truly about her.

WC: Right.

BJ: Yeah.

WC: Your mother used guilt. That's what she uses: guilt on me.

BJ: She does.

WC: [Laughs]

BJ: But so, this negative hook is something that I would not recommend doing in every post. But it's planning on the fact that, as humans, we're drawn to negativity. There's a reason why we're going to—our caveman brain is going to notice the tiger but ignore the 300 butterflies, right? That's the thing that's threatening, that's the negative thing, that's what I'm gonna pay attention to. So, if I'm scrolling through my feed and I'm seeing positive, positive, positive—

WC: You're a really good speaker. You know that, right?

BJ: Thank you.

WC: You're very good.

BJ: I appreciate that. But so, like this one says, “Six things *stopping* you from reaching 100,000 followers.” I could say, “Six things to reach 100,000 followers,” and it means the exact same thing, right? But if I tell you that it's something stopping you, you're like, “Oh, what is it? I need to know. I need to be aware.”

WC: Interesting.

BJ: Yeah. So, again, not every post because too much of that, then you're the Negative Nelly, then you're turning people away. But you know, something like that. Some other calls to actions from some of my recent content, is, “If you want to build a stronger community on Instagram, you need to” and then I shared what you need to do. So, “If you want blank,” you know, “keep watching this video to get the rest.” “How to make money on Instagram.” I'm just scrolling through my calls to action. “Stop saying these six phrases on Instagram.”

WC: So, those are all your hooks.

BJ: These are all my hooks, yeah.

WC: And do you use a hook every time?

BJ: I try to. It's not always possible because sometimes you're doing those, like trending lip syncs. So, it's not—like, in those, you have to lip sync what the audio is. You have to create the content that's already been made by someone else.

WC: I would suck at that.

BJ: There's not always a hook.

WC: Some people are so good at that.

BJ: I struggle with it. I'm on the struggle bus with that. So, with those, you can't always add a hook. But if it's content that I'm creating on my own, I always try to add one.

WC: Okay, so why did the video switch from horizontal to vertical on Instagram?

BJ: Because for 50 years, we watched TVs and movies, which are horizontal. And then we all got phones. And it's really weird to turn your phone sideways. And no one does that. Hardly anyone does that, turns their phone sideways and watches like this. You hold your phone vertical and upright. And so that's what Instagram wanted to capitalize on by showing us that kind of content.

WC: When did they, like, officially make that announcement or that—

BJ: Well, they actually began—because Instagram, some people are going to be like, “Oh, I remember,” when I say this. Instagram used to be only square. It could only be square pictures. Everything had to fit in a square and that maybe changed almost 10 years ago now; eight to 10 years ago, where they said you can post of any aspect ratio. But as they started to add more video, as they came out with reels, they basically realized we're watching content on our phone. And so, we need to be able to watch content meant for the phone, not meant for TV or a movie screen.

WC: Okay, so given your expertise with Instagram reels, what advice would you give to businesses or creators who want to leverage that feature?

BJ: Yeah, first and foremost, I would say if you're brand-new to Instagram reels, a great way to dip your toe in the water is with those audios that we talked about a second ago: the lip syncs, the trending audios. And the reason for that is oftentimes it's like a six-second video. It's very low cost of entry. Hundreds of other people have already done it. So not only is it viral, but you also have hundreds of other examples to learn from to re-create that content. So, that's a great way to like dip your toe in the water. But what we're seeing is that that kind of content is falling more and more on unengaged ears. People are not as engaged with that kind of content as they once were. And that's because they've seen so much of it. They're seeing hundreds and hundreds of the same videos. They're like, “I'm over it. I'm bored. What's original and what's unique?” And so, that's where we're headed, with all vertical content. So, reels, TikToks, and YouTube shorts. With all those vertical video formats, we're trending away from these super short, dancing, lip syncing, just re-creating what everyone else has already done and instead we're moving towards longer content. So, long videos but in this vertical frame and videos that are educational, that are storytelling, that

are authentic, that show off your personality. And that's the other thing with these lip sync videos is there's no personality to 'em. It's—I have to use someone else's voice and the same voice that 300 other people have used today.

WC: Right.

BJ: So, being yourself, being authentic, talking about your niche, whatever that topic may be, and sharing this longer form content. That's where we're seeing this as that's where we're headed.

WC: Okay, so, by the way, seven pages of notes I could not have come up with by myself. So, you have a team, I have a team.

BJ: Yeah, yeah. Shout out to our teams!

WC: So, yeah, exactly. So, I put it out there to my team, “Hey, I'm going to be interviewing Brock. What would you want me to ask him?” And so—

BJ: I love it.

WC: Okay, so, this came from a business leader in this world. “Hey, Brock, one question I have for you is, if you were to have the complete attention of a non-technical—I think he's talking about me.

BJ: *[Laughs]*

WC: “—but very artistic and creative business owner and the nicest guy in the whole planet,” no he didn't put that in there, “What would you want them to know or gain knowledge in the world of social media and how it can impact their business both negatively and positively.” So, that was a mouthful.

BJ: Well, what I would tell them, and I think you brought this up at the very, very beginning, as one of the really key pillars that I try to preach on. I don't try to preach on very many things but this is one thing I try to preach on. And it's just getting started. And everyone has an excuse. A lot of the excuses I hear is, “I'm technically challenged. I'm not very technically advanced. I don't know social media. I wasn't brought up with social media. I'm new to—”

WC: Now you're just repeating what I said to you.

BJ: I know and it's because you are my ideal audience. Our customers or students, my followers, are predominantly over the age of 45. Like that is my demographic. I'm not teaching 20-year-olds how to grow on Instagram. I mean, there are some, but I'm teaching mainly people who are business owners and entrepreneurs. And so, what I want to say is, it's definitely possible. It's not too late. We are in a social media recession but there are plenty of examples and case studies and accounts that are growing, that are growing rapidly, that are having success. But what I need to say is just rip that band aid off and just get started. Because you need to start messy and start sloppy and we've never been in a better time to start sloppy because people don't expect you to be perfect anymore. If you were posting sloppy, crappy, bad posts five years ago, people wouldn't engage with it as much because they were still in this mindset of “it needs to be perfect.” But now people are like, “I want sloppy, I want real, I want authentic, I want

imperfect.” And so that's what they're drawn to. And it's ultimately just practice, right? Like that's all posting on social media is. I don't look at each one of my posts as this is the next marketing breakthrough, this is the next viral post, this is the next “Michael Jordan, it's gotta be the shoes” commercial, right? This is just another opportunity to practice. This is another opportunity to learn from my audience. This is another opportunity to throw some spaghetti at the wall and see what sticks. And my strategy is not that I'm some marketing genius or some creative mind. I've just thrown a lot of spaghetti at the wall. And so, people are like, “Look at all that sticking up there!” Well, yeah, I've just been making spaghetti and throwing it at the wall for the last four years.

WC: Wow, such great advice.

BJ: Thank you.

WC: That was perfect.

BJ: Thanks.

WC: I can't believe that we've already eaten up this amount of time. Because, to tell you the truth, I guess I need to have you come back because I wanted to ask you about being a young entrepreneur. I wanted to ask you about working with family and the do's and the don'ts. Why it works, why it doesn't work, why it's incredible. So, I had a whole bunch of other things I wanted to ask you, too, but we're gonna have to save that for another time.

BJ: We'll have to. I'll have to come back.

WC: This was great. This was just so great.

BJ: This has been awesome. This has been really fun.

WC: Do you have a final message for our listeners?

BJ: Yeah, I would say besides the idea of just getting started and ripping off that band aid, my most painful tattoo is also my most beautiful tattoo. And it's also my most meaningful tattoo. And it's on my ribs and it's this rainbow 3D holographic design and it says two words. It says, “Find Joy.” And that's what I use to lead my life. If it doesn't bring me joy, I will not do it. Now, there are things that I do that don't totally make me happy, that don't, while I'm doing them, they're just like, “Oh my gosh, this is so happy and passionate about it and I'm positive all the time.” That's not what joy is to me. Happiness is this like fleeting thing. It's how many likes did you get? Did it go viral? How many views did you get? How many followers do I have today? Right? Happiness is this fleeting thing. I remember when I was a sophomore in high school and I posted a celebration post on Instagram because I had reached 2,000 followers and I was celebrating, I was like, “Yes, 2000!” Now I'm growing at a rate—some days, I grow by 2,000 followers in one day and I don't have that same, “Yay, I'm making the celebration post.” My point is that like happiness is fleeting, it's the sand that's always slipping through your fingertips. So, instead, as you're growing this business, as you're posting on social media, find the aspects of it that can bring you joy. Because there are opportunities there. Maybe you don't like content. Maybe you

don't like videos. Maybe you don't like the way you look on camera, but you love the feeling of connecting with a community and engaging with other people. Just find those areas of joy and focus on those areas of joy and then the rest of this will take care of itself. You'll be able to sustain all these efforts much longer because your cup is being filled by some other area.

WC: Wow. That was perfect. I gotta call Chalene and Brett, mom and dad, your mom and dad, and just say they did good.

BJ: They did do, they did do good.

WC: Wow.

BJ: I appreciate that. No, I've had a lot of really great mentors in my life from a young age. They've been amazing mentors. The find joy, I basically just told you what my college offensive coordinator, my football coach, said to me every day. That was what he would preach to us. He said it enough times that it got ingrained in my brain and got tattooed on my ribs and now I'm just spreading that message. So, we're just vehicles to spread other people's messages.

WC: Perfect. Thanks, Brock.

BJ: Thank you.