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00:03

JIM: I've really been looking forward to today's guest for a long time, and that is Bo Eason, and many of you might recognize that name because he was a former NFL standout, has played many years very successfully and I think maybe I'd like to hear your story, Bo, and our listeners would like to hear your story because you were a pretty unlikely NFL player, and what really impressed me about it all is we hear the stories of a lot of professional athletes that once their time runs out, shortly afterwards they don't know what to do with themselves and they're broke, but you had a successful transition from retiring from football to your next phase in life, and I think this is going to be helpful for our listeners because with all of transition in the world today it's good to always come out on top when change happens, and I think you do a great job of coaching people on how to do that, so with that welcome, Bo.

00:58

BO EASON: Thank you, Jim, thanks for having me, and yeah you're right. I saw something on, I don't know if it was on the news or a study the other day that was saying that our parents' generation got a job when they were 18 and they retired when they were 65, one job, and if you think back of your parents that's how you remember them and then they say the generations now, even us, we're going to have, and the kids coming up are going to have five to eight jobs, different occupations in their lifetime rather than one.

01:26

JIM: It's just amazing, and it's such a fast paced world today it's easy to get left behind, but you teach people on how to stay on top. I think a lot of the myths that are out there are the NFL players or the NBA players or Major League players, they all were walking around with a silver spoon, they just had this natural ability and they just walked into it, but I think you came from a much different background. Can you share that story with our listeners?

01:52

BO EASON: Yes, I sure will. As ESPN would have you believe or the media in general will have you believe that elite athletes were always elite, and that is the biggest myth. If you can think of the best athlete that you've seen lately or in the past, whether it's Michael Jordan or Stef Curry or whatever it is, these guys have all had to struggle, and ESPN will not tell you that because they don't want to give any credit to hard work. They want to give credit to like hey they're gifted, I'm not; hey, they're gifted, you're not. That is a myth, that is a lie.

My story is really similar, Jim, to every other elite athlete that I've ever met, and it is, when I was 9 years old I drew up a 20-year plan. It was a dream that I had to be the best safety in the NFL, and I drew up the plan with school paper and cray, and I still have that plan. It's 45 years old, and I followed that plan for years.

Now look, the whole 20 years leading up to that day it never looked like it was going to happen because no college ever recruited me, I didn't get a scholarship to college, and by the way neither did my brother. We went to high school together and grammar school together. We didn't get scholarships. We both had these dreams of playing pro football. He went to a junior college. I went to a division two college called UC Davis in northern California that doesn't give any football scholarships, basically football is played there for fun, and cut to two four years later my brother is a first round pick to the New England Patriots and I'm a second around pick to the Houston Oilers.

There are bumps in the road the whole time. The whole time people are saying you're no good, you can't do it, you can't achieve it, but if you stay true to your dream and stay loyal to your plan instead of what other people are saying, then it works out. It works out every time. Jim, if we thought of like who's the greatest football players of all time, like Jerry Rice, Joe Montana, Earl Campbell, and those are just three that I mentioned, but those are three of the best to ever play the game, and by the way all three of those guys were teammates of mine. Those guys all have the same exact story as me and my brother have. The only reason you don't know about it is because ESPN and those sports media shows, they won't tell you that. They will not say it. If you talk to Joe Montana or Jerry Rice, they would tell you.

04:15

JIM: I just found it fascinating how you broke on to your division two team, because you were pretty much warming the bench. How did you break through that the coach noticed you?

04:25

BO EASON: I snuck on to the field. I talked the equipment managers into giving me a jersey so that I could at least run on the field and wave to my mom and dad who drove three ours to come see me play, and I wasn't, I practiced with the team, they let me practice kind of like as a joke because they thought I was funny and they thought I was a freshman that was little and kind of like a little mascot for them, and so I practiced and then it came game time and I talked the equipment managers into giving me a game uniform so that I could get out on that field. Well, as fate would have it they gave me the same jersey, the same jersey number as our best player, the captain of our team, so he wore number two and they gave me a duplicate of the best player on our team's number, number two, so they told me to sit on the bench and don't get in the way of the coaches and stay out of the way of the real players, and I did, the whole game, until about a minute 20 left in the game, and we're kicking this team's butt, we were just beating them like 34 to nothing, and I keep looking up at the clock as it's ticking down. I keep looking up at my parents in the grandstands who are sitting there wondering why they came all this way to watch their boy sit on the bench, and I said this is my chance right now, and Darrell Goss who was the best player on our team, the captain, number two was on the field and I talked him in to letting me step on the field for him and he stepped off, so he stepped off, I stepped on, and I ran down on a kick-off team and I made the tackle on a kick-off team and the crowd went crazy, right, when I made this big tackle on the kick-off team.

Well, right as I tackled him I put my arms up in the air and I'm cheering with the crowd. I hear over the loud speaker this, tackle made by number two, Darrell Goss, and so I dropped my hands Jim and I ran off the field as fast as I could trying to be investible because the part that I haven't told you yet is Darrell Goss is a 250-pound black dude on our team, the best player on our team. I at this time weigh 145 pounds and I'm a white guy, so that's how I broke through. I thought I was going to get kicked off the team after I did that, and lo and behold that wasn't the case. They kept me on the team. They kept me forever and I ended up being probably the first or second best player to ever come out of that college.

06:42

JIM: You know, even before that point you were kind of kicked off the team because you certainly didn't make the team, but your perseverance, you just kept showing up and they let you stay and practice.

06:54

BO EASON: That's the thing I found out, Jim, the one ability that I have that takes no talent at all, by the way. I just have one ability, and I always teach my kids this. I go, look, I'm not going away, that's my only, that's the only talent I have. I am not leaving. If you cut me from Little League which happened when I was in Little League, I just came back to practice the next day, and they cut me again. I said, no, no, I'm just going to practice, and then eventually I just keep showing up to Little League or showing up to college, to UC Davis, eventually they go, hey you know what, I guess this guy is not going to go away, let's just give him a uniform, let him just be out there, and eventually they let me be out there and eventually I got into the games, and just imagine every listener on this podcast right now. If you had one ability and that ability was you weren't going away, just think how successful you'd be.

07:44

JIM: It's unbelievable. I think Winston Churchill said it best when he said, never, never, never, never, never give up, right.

07:53

BO EASON: Boy, it is so true, and you know what's attractive about it, Jim, is that people respond to that kind of person. That kind of person who just is like no, I want to play, and they're going no, you're actually not on the team, and you go no, no, I just think I'll stick around and just practice, and they're like you want to practice? Yes, I want to practice. They never even heard of anybody wanting to practice.

08:17

JIM: Well, that's fantastic. Hey, we've got to take a short break. When we come back, let's transition that now to how you've transitioned from football. We'll spend a couple minutes talking about your NFL career, but how you transitioned from that NFL career being very successful and had something to retire to. Please stay tuned.

[BREAK]

09:34

JIM: Welcome back as we continue to visit with Bo Eason. Many of you will know him as an NFL player but I know him as a very motivational coach and speaker and presenter and author. I was just enamored by your presentation several months ago that I just had to get you here to share. It was such an inspiring story to me because there are so many people out there that they just give up, you know, I'm not good enough for this, I'm not good enough for that, and you are a walking living example of how staying the course can produce big results.

Before the break you talked about how you just stayed there and you made the college team, so how did you go from somebody who was invited not to participate on the team to someone who was a second around draft pick?

10:20

BO EASON: Yes, well, once they allowed me to play I started to excel. I had been training myself for many, many years before that and my body just want mature, you know, it never, like I didn't have to shave in college. I don't even think I had hair under my arms when I went to college, and so I grew kind of late, so I developed in college and got bigger and stronger and faster, and so all that work ethic of being a mutt so to speak, all of that work ethic that I put in because I got cut and stayed home finally caught up to my body by the time I was a senior in college, you know, I was best safety in the country and those dreams that I had way back when I was a kid and that plan that I followed came true.

What I've learned, Jim, is I've just done that same thing, talk about transition, I've done that same thing over and over and over again, so whatever occupation I'm any want to be the best in the world at that occupation, that's my, that's how I operate, and then I switch occupations and take the same principles that made me the best safety and channel it right over into being the best playwright or stage performer. It's the same exact principles. It doesn't matter.

The problem is most elite athletes don't do that. Most elite athletes, they end their career in pro sports at the very top and then they don't want to start over at the bottom again. They don't want to apply those same principles that made them the best at their sport, so it never works out for them. You have to be willing to start at the bottom of the next mountain and work your way up, but if you apply the same principles that got you to the top in the first place, your journey is much shorter.

12:01

JIM: So let's fast forward, you're an NFL player. You know your days are numbered as you get older and the injuries crop up, what was your plan as you were winding down your NFL career? What steps did you take to have a successful transition that you've had?

12:16

BO EASON: Yes, I did exactly what I did when I was 9, so now I was 29, right, so at first I drew up the plan when I was 9 and then 20 years later I'm 29 and I created a new 20-year plan when I was 29. The only thing I had in my head when I was a little kid was I want to be the best safety in the world, so I just took that same wording and I changed the word safety and I exchanged it for this. I want to be the best stage performer in the world, and that was it, Jim. I mean, that's how simple it is.

I drew up that plan, I moved to New York City and I started getting my feet and my butt on a stage and taking every class that I possibly could and learn how to be the best in the world at being on stage, so this is what I did. I went to every kid that was? My classes, and I was 29, already had a career. These kids were like 18 years old. I went to all those classmates of mine in all the theater classes and acting classes and improv classes and writing classes, I went to those kids and I say, hey, who's the best stage performer of our time, who is that, and at that time this was about 1990, they all said oh, that's Al Pacino, and I said cool, where he is? Where is this Al Pacino guy, and they all said well, he's a movie star, he's probably on a movie set or he's in his mansion offer whatever. I said, okay, I got to talk to him because if he's the best then he's the only one who can tell me how to take that mantle because what I've learned is that people who are mediocre and people who are second best, for one they don't have the information to help you, and two, they won't share the information to help you. You've got to go to the top dog.

I had my agent from football, Jim, I called him up, I said man, can you get me a meeting with this guy Al Pacino, he's in the Godfather, he's in Goodfellas, you know, Serpico. After about three or four days, Jim, my agent got me a meeting at Al Pacino's house, and I went to Al Pacino's house and there was snow all over the ground, because it was Thanksgiving and it was in New York, and he knew why I was there and he said Bo come on back, I have a room back here where I play pool, and he had a room back there with his cool pool table, and I'm back there with Al Pacino, and he goes I understand why you're here, and I said yeah, man, I'd really like to be the best and everyone tells me you're the best, and he's a very humble guy. He said, well if you want me to break that down for you I can do that. You can tell you exactly how to do that, but it will probably take you 12, 15 years to get there, and I said that's great because I work well in those kind of time lines.

Basically, Jim, for three hours he answered every question. He told me who to work with, how to work with them, basically if you took what Al Pacino said and you narrow it down to a sentence, he basically told me that if I wanted to be the best stage performer of my time then I was going to have to have my feet on a stage more than anyone else has their foot on a stage for the next 12, 15 years, and if I do that then no one will be able to keep up with me, and he said your ability to put your feet and your butt on a stage, that's up to you, that's in your control. You can't control your height or how you look or your talent level, but you can control how much effort you're going to put by being on a stage more than anyone else and I said, I got it, I know what to do.

I followed that plan for about 15 years, and I did everything he told me to do. I worked with the teachers he told me to work with. I put my butt on a stage more than any other human being on the planet, and because that was up to my control, and I did it. Listen, during those 15 years Jim I never saw Al Pacino again except on movies and stuff. I never like visited with him. I spent three hours with the guy, he told me exactly what to do and I did it, 15 years later, Jim, I'm back stage on Broadway, New York City, opening night of a play that I wrote that I'm the only guy in, and I'm back stage about to die because I'm so nervous to face the New York critics and the New York audience, and I run out there and I begin the play, and I begin to do it and I am nervous. I mean, you know, I'm having like an out of body experience, but about five minutes, 10 minutes into the play I make eye contact with a guy sitting in about row 5 right on the aisle and it's Al Pacino, sitting in the audience. We make eye contact, and he nods his head at me, and that was it.

17:07

JIM: Wow.

17:08

BO EASON: Now, I never saw Al Pacino again after that. All I know is I did what he said and he gave me the head nod, and so I did that performance, Jim, 1300 times, one performance 1300 times, and when you do something that many times you get to be pretty good at handling audiences and dealing with mal functions and, imagine that play, I had done that play for 17 years, imagine what has happened in those audiences while 17 years goes by. People having heart attacks in the audience, people leaving, people throwing stuff, people loving it, people hating it, you know what I mean.

Once you go through that kind of gauntlet, people started to come to me, owners of businesses started to come to me. They came to the play to see a play. They would come to me back stage and they would say hey, Bo, can you bring this to my company, can you come talk to my company, and I go, I don't know what you're talking about. This is a play, I don't go to companies. I didn't even know there was a speaking world out there at this time, and they kept asking and they kept asking, and finally one guy says to me, Bo, can you bring what you do to my company, and I said no, and then, Jim, he told me oh, that's too bad that you don't do that because we'd love to bring your whole family to Hawaii and you do this, and I go, well maybe I do do this, so that's how the whole speaking world then began, how I started to speak to companies and to audiences.

We didn't know why people were attracted to this play and to my speaking. We started asking them, and what we found is people want to be able to learn to do what I do, and that is be able to speak their dreams in front of other people and tell their story in front of would-be business associates or customers or audience members. If they have the ability to share themselves in front of an audience, in front of people whether it's one on one or one to a thousand, then you have the ability to build something, to share something, and to break down this barrier of trust that has been demolished as you can see in our country and in our world. There's such an erosion of trust. Just turn on the news, turn on politics, turn on Hollywood. There is no trust anymore. The people who have the ability to share themselves in front of other people, tell their story, they break down those trust barriers so fast because story connects you to other human beings. This is what we found out what other people wanted to do to learn from me to build their business and that's why we started speaking in front of them, and then training them to do exactly what I do.

20:06

JIM: Let's just expand on that just a little bit, because I think this is the best part of everything that you talk about. So many people are so full of here's all my credentials, I spoke here, I wrote these books, I'm wonderful, I'm wonderful, I'm wonderful, I'm wonderful, and they're really missing the connection. You do a coaching program where you're teaching people how to make these connections. In today's world whether you're transitioning to a new job, you're applying to get into a college, you're looking to start a business, you're looking to gain a customer, it's all about being connected in today's world. Your connections got you to Al Pacino to get to this point, but it's all about being connected and the quicker you can make those connections the better you're going to be. Talk about that personal story and where you put it.

20:50

BO EASON: Yes, we have some people in the finance world on this podcast and then a lot of people that own their own businesses or entrepreneurs or solopreneurs. It doesn't matter your occupation. What matters is your personal story. Your personal story is the key to the kingdom for you because people cannot follow a vision that talks about a resume, so if I got on this podcast this morning, Jim, and I say hey everybody, I went to Harvard which I didn't but say somebody says that, I want to Harvard University, I got straight A's and blah blah blah and I start listing all my accomplishments, people don't care. There's nothing to connect to. All that is is information.

If I tell them that when I was 9 years old I had a dream and as soon as I made that dream I got cut from the Little League team, that is a personal story that people connect to immediately, so now every listener, every audience member, every person you ever run into, if they hear your personal story, something simple like I just said, the couple of sentences like that, they now are connected to you as a human being and they will help you build whatever vision you have for your company, but they can't help you build if you tell them a resume. They don't know how to help you. They do know how to help you if you have human connection, which is a lost art in our world as you can see. This restoration of trust is huge right now.

Gallop started doing a study, a survey in 19 I think 72 was the first year they did it, and they asked people, do you trust your neighbor, and one-third of the people surveyed, one-third said no, one-third, so now that's 1972, so now today Gallop still does the same survey. Now it's two-thirds of the people do not trust their own neighbor. The trust has never fallen since they've been doing the survey. They've never fallen this low. You can see if, if you turn on the news tonight you see it, you go oh, they're lying. You see a politician you go, oh, I don't trust them. You see, you know, somebody on TV trying to be an advertiser or a speaker speaking on stage you're going like this, wow, you're really not trusting them unless they authentically tell you their story, and I'm not talking about the story of the greatest moment of their life, I'm talking about the story of the darkest moment of their life. That's what we're interested in as human beings. That's what we connect to.

I'll give you another example just to people can get their heads around this. Let's say all of us on this podcast today are going to make a movie about climbing Mt. Everest, conquering Mt. Everest, just think right now if we're going to start that movie, what is the first frame of film we are going to show that audience? What is the first thing we're going to show the audience to get this movie started? How are we get to get our audience to connect with the characters in the movie? Do we start them on the top of Mt. Everest, putting the flag in the mountain and waving and being happy? No, that does not connect you to your audience.

I'll tell you what connects you to your audience. You start your characters at the bottom of the mountain looking up two miles into the ski going, how in the heck, how are we ever going to conquer that? There's no way, it's impossible. That is what the audience connects to. They connect to the climb, to the against all odds. They do not connect to success. They connect to what it takes to be successful, the climb, always, so all start your story, always start your meetings or your date or your presentations with a personal story, one that shows you starting at the bottom and busting your butt to get to the top. That's what people connect to.

Now, once you do that, Jim, now you're in a whole different place than every other competitor out there, because what's every other competitor going to do? They're going to talk about oh, I'm so smart, I'm so great, I'm going to make you 20% on your money. People don't even understand what that even means, only thing they can understand is this, I got dumped at the senior prom, I got cut from Little League. I entered a dance contest and I was the first one to be kicked off. That's what people connect to, that's what people love. If you're not doing that, I want all, everybody to start doing that and then you watch your business grow. You watch people start to build your business for you because they're involved with you and they help you. That's what I want everybody to do.

25:35

JIM: You need a big room to bring Bo in because he's going to be bouncing off the walls with excitement, and he's passionate and it's fantastic. I just have to test, because after hearing your speech I went back and changed some things. I do professional speaking. I was told awhile ago I'm kind of modest, I don't like bragging about myself or any of that stuff, and you're told you've got to put your credentials up there and all that, and I started incorporating the stories and I get a lot more people coming up to me afterwards and they're not asking about the tax section that you talked about. They're saying, hey, you know, I did the same thing when I was younger and I had the same issues, and those connections are unbelievable, how much easier they are when you're willing to be a little bit vulnerable. You open yourself up and you let people know, hey, I'm real.

26:22

BO EASON: Yes, story begets story, so once I tell my story everything else is thinking about their upbringing and their life, and then they start to share. That is the human connection that is missing in business, and it's so simple that it's almost silly to even talk about, but if you think about the people like the generation before us that were so successful, I guarantee you think about your grandpa right now or your grandma who was really successful, the reason they were is they knew how to tell stories. These generations coming up, they don't know how to tell stories because they're stuck on electronics all the time, so they don't have that human element, that human connection, but it's what we all crave the most. It's what we are missing the most in this world.

If you can be the solution to that problem, then you are going to build your business and people are going to follow you and they're going to help you.

27:16

JIM: If people want to get more information, Bo, I know you've got a web site, you do training programs. How do people connect with you to go through this process?

27:25

BO EASON: Yes, the best way to do that everyone is go to BoEason.com and my first name is Bo, B-o, and my last name is Eason, E-a-s-o-n, dot com. If you go there there's a lot of training that we offer. The three-day event that we do, we do it twice a year in La Jolla, California, which is done in San Diego in a beautiful state of the art theater and we teach entrepreneurs, we teach business owners, we teach financial advisors, elite athletes. You know what else, who we teach a lot, it's funny, elite military, like Green Berets, Navy SEALs, a lot of them because they're coming out of the military and they want to be able to speak and share their story so they can be a civilian and work on the outside of the military. It's a really great three days. What I do is I bring in the people who trained me for 15 years.

The number one thing that people get from this, Jim, is they physically embody, because that's how I was trained to physically embody your story so that your story is walking around with you all day every day, and it makes you so that people cannot dismiss you. They have to deal with you.

28:36

JIM: Again that web site is?

28:39

BO EASON: The web site is BoEason.com.

28:43

JIM: All right. I really appreciate this, and I trust that we have inspired some people there to make some changes and take advantage of being the best they can be. Hopefully a few of them will go through your training program. I know I picked up a lot from the session that I was at and it was fantastic. It's such an inspirational story, Bo, I appreciate you sharing.

29:01

BO EASON: Yes, thank you, Jim. It was great you having me, and it was great to catch up again.

29:05

JIM: Thanks for joining us this week, and tune in again next week as we explore another phase of the Real Wealth process, and remember if anything you heard in today's show you'd like to get more information about, contact your Real Wealth advisor. Also if you feel that any of this information would be helpful to a friend or family member, just click the Forward To A Friend button.