

# THE JORDAN HARBINGER SHOW

## Worksheet for Charles Ryu | Confessions of a North Korean Escape Artist (Episodes 84 & 88)

As hard as we may try, our efforts to live with an attitude of gratitude sometimes get derailed when life throws unforeseen obstacles in our path. But as unfair as we may deem our current situation, a fresh perspective serves to remind us that no matter how bad we think we have it today, somebody, somewhere has it way worse. We believe [episode 84](#) and [episode 88](#) may be just the fresh perspective the doctor ordered.

Charles Ryu of [Liberty in North Korea](#) escaped from North Korea, was deported back and sentenced to a forced labor camp, worked in a coal mine, and then escaped North Korea again by the time he was 17. He now lives in the US fighting for the rights of those he left behind. This is part one of a two-part episode, which will conclude next week. [Gabriel Mizrahi](#), no stranger to North Korea himself, joins us.

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## Freedom

A theme emerged pretty quickly in our chat: freedom. Charles eventually achieved freedom from the most oppressive regime in the world (spoiler alert!) but *what* a road to get there. His mixture of bravery, vision, and luck were just a few of the qualities that got him out. However, there was one that kicked it all off: discovery.

He had to discover what freedom meant for him. Against all odds (including the brainwashing efforts of the the North Korean regime), Charles discovered what freedom meant for him. The concept also evolved for him as well. At one point freedom meant living in China, but he went on to learn that he would never be free there because he could still be deported back to North Korea -- and deportation to the DPRK would mean certain death. Charles eventually was able start life over in America -- free as a bird.

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If you're reading this, there's no doubt in my mind you are literally free. Perhaps you aren't free from student loans, or from your sister paying your cell phone bill (hey, it was *her* idea to put you on the family plan), but I assume you aren't a resident of North Korea.

What does freedom mean to you? Do you desire more of it? What would that look like in your life?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their response to the question above.

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## Turning The Tables

At only 10 years old, Charles had dropped out of school to take care of his extremely sick mother. He was just a boy and yet he rose to the occasion and became her around-the-clock nurse. Essentially, the child became the parent -- and that left the child without a parent.

**Even in the short term, have you ever experienced a role reversal with one of the primary relationships in your life?**

**Looking back, how did you grow from this experience? Are you now able to find gratitude for that situation?**

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## Instinct To Survive

Charles had grown up faster than most kids on the planet. From taking care of his mother to being homeless and hustling for food to his experience in labor camps, he survived on a mixture of a resolve and smarts.

Charles, however, doesn't give himself too much credit for these traits. He believes that when survival is on the line, the instinct takes over. In fact, he says it's in our DNA. I think there's certainly truth to that. I *also* think it's true that Charles is a very special person who possesses a mountain of humility. He barely seems to have an ego.

**Take some quiet time and think about your own life. Have you ever had friends give you credit for something and you're quick to pass it off as no big deal? What is it that you're naturally the most humble about? Should you give yourself credit where you currently do not? For you, where do you draw the line between humility and ego?**

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## Resentment

My interview with Charles was a powerful experience that I'll never forget. I felt like we could have talked for days (a lot of which I credit to him because he's so open and honest). After the interview I couldn't get my mind off of his story. His words kept bouncing around in my head. I then realized there was something that *wasn't* part of his story: resentment.

Despite all of the loss, all of the hardship, and all of the day-to-day struggle, Charles never once pointed a finger at anyone else for his lot in life (and if ever anyone could have rightfully done so it was him). He never once felt the fire of resentment and blamed his abusers, captors, or government (and that's just one of his many inspirational qualities).

**Do you think resentment would have served him along his journey? Where does resentment pop up in your life? Does it serve you or hold you back? If you think it is of some utility, why do you think we like resentment?**

*Full show notes and resources for this episode [can be found here](#).*

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## About



Join Jordan Harbinger (critically acclaimed host, formerly of The Art of Charm) as we get deep into the untapped wisdom of the world's top performers -- from legendary musicians to intelligence operatives, iconoclastic writers to visionary change-makers.

We deconstruct the playbooks of the most successful people on earth -- and learn new strategies, perspectives, and insights you can't find anywhere else. Then, take these insights into your own life and live what you listen.

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