

THE JORDAN HARBINGER SHOW

Worksheet for Todd Herman | The Life-Transforming Power of Performing (Episode 163)

To us mere mortals, world-class athletes and other high performers sometimes seem like superheroes. They exhibit skills, focus, and drive beyond what most of us can even fathom, yet surprisingly come across as everyday people when encountered in "real" life. The most aggressive NFL player is a nurturing dad and friendly neighbor. The ear-biting, skull-cracking cage-fighter is a goofy video game nut. How -- and why -- do they transform from one identity to another, and is there a lesson to be learned here that we can harness for ourselves?

[In this episode](#) we talk to Todd Herman, coach to many of these high-performing athletes and author of [*The Alter Ego Effect: The Power of Secret Identities to Transform Your Life*](#). He'll explain the power of these secret identities, what we can do to break type and -- like working out muscles we hardly ever use -- channel out-of-character facets of ourselves we may never have realized existed. Listen, learn, and enjoy!

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Wrestling with the Superpower

"Our greatest superpower -- the thing that totally makes us unique on the planet -- is our creative imagination," says Todd. "That's it. That's what separates us from everything else that's here: our ability to create worlds in our heads to tell ourselves stories to narrate. An alter ego is simply leveraging the superpower that you already have to help you go and do the difficult things."

Think of an unflattering story you're always telling yourself about yourself and jot it down. Maybe you blew a line in the third grade school play and it still makes you cringe. Now pretend that narrative isn't about the "real" you, but your alter ego. Use your imagination and list potentially positive aspects of the story that build up rather than tear down this "other" you -- things you perhaps didn't notice because you were too close to the story. How might this new perspective allow you to be more forgiving toward yourself when your own story goes off script?

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Does Your Alter Ego Wear Glasses or a Hockey Mask?

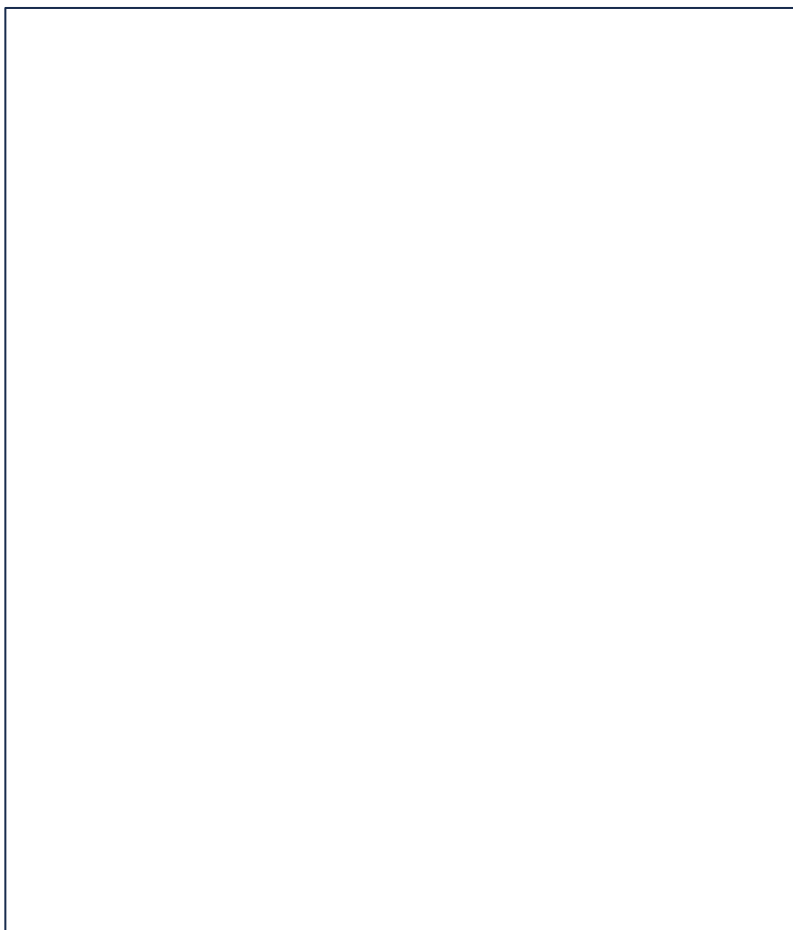
Todd always had a complex about looking younger than his years, and worried others wouldn't take him seriously when he took his first steps in the business world. Even though he has perfect vision, he bought a pair of non-prescription glasses to look older, smarter, and more professional to potential clients. When he put these glasses on, he was able to channel his businessman alter ego and move past the insecurities that otherwise distracted him from doing his best. If it sounds crazy, consider this: Martin Luther King, Jr. had perfect vision as well, but wore glasses in public to be his "distinguished self."

"Those glasses were almost a shield against any of those arrows thrown his way," says Todd.

And Bo Jackson, star of baseball and football in the '80s and '90s, was an angry kid who found focus by assigning the cold and calculating demeanor of Jason -- the slasher from *Friday the 13th* -- to his alter ego.

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Think of something you want to accomplish and list the reasons you tell yourself you can't be the one to do it. How might adopting the traits or wearing the personal effects of someone who can do it motivate your alter ego to try?

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Alter Ego vs. Motivation

"In the world of performance, the number one thing I'm doing...is subtraction," says Todd. "I'm deleting and removing most of the time. People who get [to the top of a mountain] the slowest are the ones who want to take everything with them: all of their trauma, all of their past hurts, all of their judgments."

On the other hand, the highest performers know how to streamline and discard what doesn't work for them. Sheer willpower to persevere up the mountain with a full backpack might work for some, but understanding how to lighten the load and decrease resistance gets better results for most. And one of the most effective ways to lighten that load is to adopt an alter ego appropriate for hurdling whatever obstacles you face.

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Use the superpower of your imagination to suspend disbelief and step into an alter ego better suited to tackle a problem at hand. For fun (and to stretch that beautiful superpower), also consider alter egos who would be a terrible fit for solving that problem. Batman might be great to channel when you're chastising city council for turning a blind eye to local injustice, but you might want to leave him in the cave when it's time to address the company luncheon.

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The Enemy

Todd defines The Enemy as a force that stops you from showing up as your best self. Like the yin to your yang, it's the dark but necessary part of you that acts in balance to the light, and often makes itself known by way of protecting you in some misguided or overreactionary way. Todd once worked with a tennis player who refrained from beating opponents she outmatched too badly because her Enemy was the value of fairness -- appropriate in most scenarios, but not during a match. So Todd helped her tennis-playing alter ego shed this.

Think of ways The Enemy intrudes on your plans or gives you pause before pursuing something you really want to do. Make a list of them, what their good intentions are probably trying to protect you from, the trouble they're actually causing you, and how different alter egos would best deal with them.




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The Single Self vs. Several

"What makes [examining the power of alter egos] so healthy is that we start to see ourselves as the many selves that we actually are," says Todd. "In fact, one of the core theories of psychology that's been torn down in the last few years is that the human being who identifies himself as a single self is the most mentally healthy. It's fundamentally proven to be untrue now. People who understand that they have multiple selves -- there are multiple contexts of how you experience life -- are extremely healthy mentally."

Do you think of yourself as a single self or several? How many selves of your own can you identify and list? Do these operate as effective alter egos for the places where they most often appear, or do they act counter to efficiency?



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How to Create an Alter Ego

After all this, you might be wondering why we haven't come out and told you exactly how to create an alter ego, but the fact of the matter is: you've known how since you were a kid playing cops versus robbers or princesses versus witches or Imperial stormtroopers versus Rebel scum. If you really need extra help, Todd outlines a process in his book, but he says there are many ways to get there -- and you probably already know how.

Todd names his alter egos, gives them origin stories, reads books and watches movies that would interest his alter egos, uses totems (like his glasses or a Darth Vader helmet) to trigger their activation, and interacts with people at the coffee shop in character.

In the podcast (and video), Todd helps me work on my own alter ego in real time that's specific for interviewing, but it should give you context for how you can tailor your own approach to suit your needs. You're ultimately working to trust yourself better in these various roles, but be curious. Be playful. Have fun with this! And if you find that your alter ego isn't working as intended, Todd reminds us that it's an evolving process. It takes time to get emotionally connected with these new sides of ourselves, so don't expect everything to run smoothly out of the gate. Like anything else worthwhile, practice makes better.

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

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About



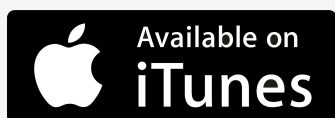
Join us as we get deep into the untapped wisdom of the world's top performers -- from legendary creators to intelligence operatives, iconoclastic writers to visionary change-makers.

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 valuable insights into your own life and live what you listen.

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