

THE JORDAN HARBINGER SHOW

Worksheet for Reid Hoffman | Mastering Your Scale for the Unexpected Part Two (Episode 208)

This isn't your typical episode of The Jordan Harbinger Show, but then again, Reid Hoffman isn't our typical guest. He's a cofounder of [LinkedIn](#), investor at [Greylock Partners](#), and coauthor of [*Blitzscaling: The Lightning-Fast Path to Building Massively Valuable Companies*](#). He's also the host of the [Masters of Scale](#) podcast, which explores how the world's most successful entrepreneurs take their companies from startup level to becoming household names.

[On this episode](#) we'll examine how TaskRabbit's Stacy Brown-Philpot grew grit selling newspapers as a kid on the mean streets of Detroit, what Eventbrite's Julia Hartz learned during her time as a barista about unpacking the subtext of indirect feedback, why we should never waste a good crisis, what Reid picked up about complex human motivations and heroic teamwork from playing Dungeons & Dragons, insight about the millennial work ethic from Brit + Co's Brit Morin, and Reid's notion of aligning goals between employers and employees of any generation with rotational, transformational, and foundational tours of duty.

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Nature + Nurture = Grit

"Grit...some of us have a more natural predisposition for it; some of us don't. But it's always nature plus nurture. I think grit can be learned. The principal way is any time you run into a difficult circumstance, realize it's a learning opportunity. Realize it's 'This is where I can learn grit. This is where I can...pick myself up, I dust myself off, and I do it again.'"

"Simply putting your finger continually in a light socket is not particularly a good learning experience. What you want to be doing is saying, 'How am I measuring what I'm learning?' One of the ways I do it is I come up with principles. So it isn't just, 'I'll take more pain,' I'll go, 'Here's a place where I took the pain; how do I play again where at least if I'm failing again, I'm learning new lessons? Now I'm going to play differently.'"

Reid suggests switching things up by inviting a few friends to take on the challenge with you next time or building momentum with smaller challenges before trying again. What opportunities for growing grit present themselves in your own life, and how might you adapt your approach if at first you don't succeed?

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It's Not About the Latte

Direct feedback isn't always direct feedback, as Eventbrite's Julia Hartz learned when she was a barista dealing with a customer who would complain about the coffee every morning. She eventually figured out the woman just needed someone to talk to. So how do we know the difference between direct and indirect feedback? Reid says we should integrate data from multiple points, and here are two ways we can gather this data:

1. Observe. You've got one grumpy customer complaining about the coffee versus a greater number of regulars raving about it daily. Which data is anomalous?

2. Ask your network. A connection who will give you an honest assessment of the coffee and why they think the grumpy customer is being so disagreeable will give you insights beyond what your own senses are telling you.

Think of a time when you've misunderstood someone's seemingly direct feedback and later discovered you weren't *really* tuned in to the whole story. How might you have integrated data from multiple points and deciphered the intended context, and what might you do to better collect this information when confronted with future feedback?

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Don't Waste Good Crises

When you're looking to integrate data from multiple points, what if one of those points is the boss you don't get along with?

"If you don't have a good relationship with your boss, you should be thinking about your next job!" says Reid. "Pivot early. It's the kind of thing you shouldn't let rest. It's not the kind of thing that improves accidentally over time. The second thing is, say you're having a problem with your boss and you're trying to figure out: 'Is it the boss, or is it me? Or what combination?' Again, that's why network is useful."

What if your marriage is going through a rough patch and your spouse is a data point who might be having thoughts of smothering you with a pillow while you sleep? Same advice: pivot early.

"Address problems early. Think about getting marriage counseling, for example. Say, 'Hey, we have this difference of opinion X. Let's go find some third party we both trust and have a conversation — sit down and work through that.' And if you can do that, it makes your marriage much stronger. Don't waste good crises! If it turns out that it doesn't become stronger, then maybe it's not the right thing for either of you."

What aspects of your life — personally or professionally — could benefit from the shakeup of a good crisis? Do you have the nerve to pivot early, or do you tend to waste good crises?

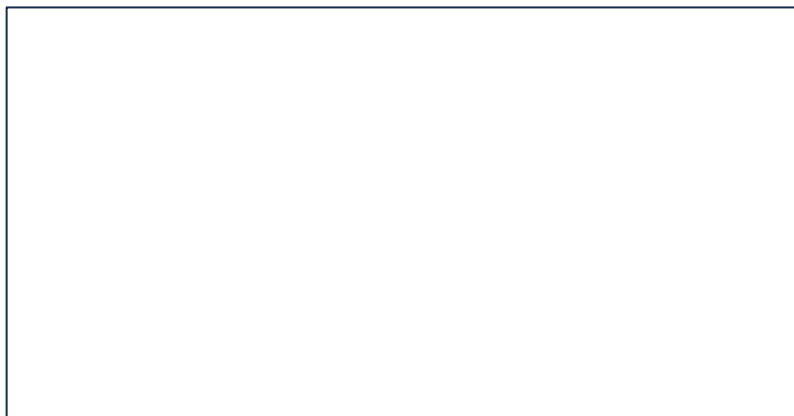
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Make Everyone a Hero

Rather than playing zero sum games in which some players win and some lose, Reid likes to cultivate life circumstances where everyone works together toward a common reward. While running Dungeons & Dragons and RuneQuest campaigns, he learned that people initially want to be heroes of their own story, but the greatest fulfillment comes when you can get a group of heroes to collaborate and contribute their own strengths to a shared outcome.

“Life is a team sport, not an individual sport,” says Reid. “And once you start thinking that way, everything goes a lot better.”

Reinforce the magnified rewards of heroic teamwork over individual glory and think of ways you can cultivate collaboration among the people with whom you regularly find yourself teaming up.



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Tours of Duty

It's uncommon for someone to spend decades working for one company anymore. As millennial CEO Brit Morin explained, people from her generation are a lot more transient, spending two or three years in one role before hopping to the next job.

"Millennials have evolved in a world where the only constant is change and where individuals have an enormous amount of choice," says Reid. "And as I've poked and pulled at the cliché, I've come to believe the stereotypical millennial has a viewpoint not far from my own. I don't believe in taking one job for your whole life. As a manager and an investor, I believe in tours of duty, not lifetime appointments. I seek out employees who want to constantly evolve, and opportunities that allow me to do the same."

Inspired by Star Wars, Reid envisions these three tours of duty for aligning goals between employers and employees of any generation.

Rotational: "You're a hired gun, you're doing the work, you're not really tied to the mission. That was Han Solo."

Transformational: "How both you as an individual, as an employee, are transformed, and how you also transform the organization. Of course, that's Luke Skywalker, just beginning his Jedi journey."

Foundational: "Where your mission is so closely aligned with the organization, that the organization is part of your own mission as an individual. And that's the foundational tour of duty, where your life's mission is part of growing and the impact of the organization. That's Princess Leia's tour of duty."

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From the standpoint of an employee, what tour of duty suits you? From the standpoint of an employer, what tour of duty would you try to negotiate with a new employee? What are the pros and cons you see with each tour?

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

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About



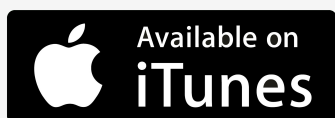
Join us as we get deep into the untapped wisdom of the world's top performers — from legendary creators to intelligence operatives, iconoclastic writers to visionary change-makers.

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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