

THE JORDAN HARBINGER SHOW

Worksheet for Adam Savage | Every Tool's a Hammer (Episode 219)

Like a lot of kids in the Midwest, I had three hobbies growing up: building stuff, breaking stuff, and blowing stuff up. In a stroke of genius, Adam Savage — former cohost of the celebrated Discovery Channel's *MythBusters* series and author of [*Every Tool's a Hammer: Life Is What You Make It*](#) — managed to turn these three things into a wildly successful career.

[In this episode](#), Adam and I discuss why you'll be happier and probably wind up in a career you actually like if you pay heed to your obsessions rather than being bullied out of them, the value of deadlines for everything from assembling costumes to building props to interviewing people for podcasts, why regular and honest introspection is one of the most important duties a human being can take on, the power of an expanded vocabulary, the universality of imposter syndrome, and much more.

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Heed Your Secret Thrills

“Our obsessions and the things we can’t stop paying attention to, whether it’s aliens or fan fiction about Twilight or Dungeons & Dragons, or whatever it is, those obsessions make us vulnerable because they reveal us,” says Adam. “They’re showing people our bellies. So a lot of people don’t pay heed to those things, and this book is my permission slip. When you do pay heed to those things that tickle at your head that you can’t stop paying attention to — that I call secret thrills — in my experience, I found myself in those things, it was like a secret formula for self-actualization, self-realization.”

What secret thrills of your own have you stifled because some external force — like a bully in high school or a concerned but misguided parent — has reduced their value in your eyes? What long-buried hobbies might you resurrect with the confidence of clarity that there’s no shame in paying heed to your obsessions? Is there a way to leverage these secret thrills into your own career?

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Your Deadline's a Lifeline

“I use deadlines all the time to get stuff to a place where it’s wearable or usable or demonstratable and that’s vital — because if I’m left to my own devices, I’ll just peter away at the tiniest details forever,” says Adam. “Finishing everything perfectly is not the goal for me of a deadline. One of those reasons I love deadlines is because it hacks things off your decision tree and it takes things out of your build. In order to get X done by Friday, as you get closer and closer to Friday, you start having to leave behind things you thought you were going to get done...it makes me look at each thing I am looking to complete and ask myself, ‘Is this of the essence of the completion, or is it ancillary to the essence?’”

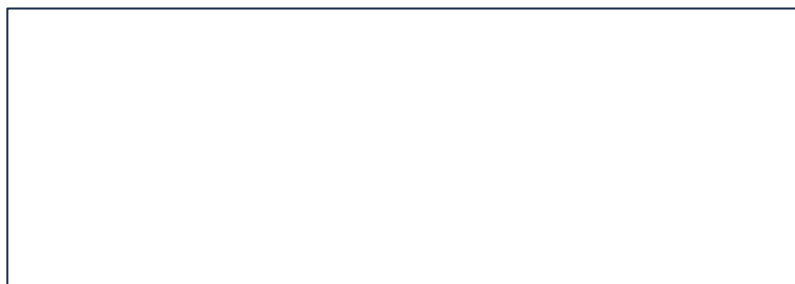
Think of one of your own projects that’s gone on well past a reasonable completion date. It could be anything from organizing the garage to writing your novel to building the stunning costume that’s going to win you \$100 at this year’s company Halloween party. How might imposing a deadline on this project help you trim the fat and boil it down to the essentials? What should stay and what should go?

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Imposter Syndrome? What's That?

Adam says: "I was having lunch a few years ago with someone my age and I mentioned imposter syndrome, and they said, 'Wait a minute. What is that thing you just said?' And I said, 'The feeling you don't belong where you are, even if you're successful, and someone's about to come out and tap you on the shoulder and tell you that it's time to go home?' And he just turned sheet white and said, 'I thought it was only me!' It made me so sad that he had spent 45 years of his life thinking that he was the only one that suffered this and somehow everyone else was escaping it! No one else escapes it. It's just so universal and so important that we talk about it because I've met people that don't think they're an imposter, and they're interminable to be with!"

We've discussed imposter syndrome at great length on this show, but if you're just hearing about it and it's a familiar feeling, understand this: you're not alone. Jot down ways you've experienced imposter syndrome and [be sure to check out our deep dive on how to overcome imposter syndrome here!](#)



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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support@jordanharbinger.com

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