

The Jason Cavness Experience

**Growth & Resilience:
Real Stories and Lessons
from Entrepreneurs,
Leaders, and Creators**

The
Jason Cavness
EXPERIENCE
Podcast



About Jason Cavness



Jason is an INJF tattooed Retired U.S. Army Officer and CEO/Founder of CavnessHR. Which provides provides HR to companies with 49 or fewer people

He hosts The Jason Cavness Experience, a top 2.5% and top 81 tech global podcast with 300+ conversations.

His motto: “Be Great Every Day.”

Introduction

Why Growth and Resilience Matter

Through The Jason Cavness Experience, I've interviewed hundreds of founders, veterans, technologists and creative leaders from diverse backgrounds.

Different backgrounds. Same theme: real growth demands resilience.

This eBook shares their unfiltered stories, about starting from nothing, rebuilding after failure and staying mentally strong through the chaos.

Each chapter includes direct guest quotes, actionable advice and a question to help you apply the insight to your own path.

Be Great Every Day,

Jason Cavness

The Entrepreneurial Journey: Realities, Risks, and Rewards

Entrepreneurship looks exciting from the outside. But behind the scenes, it demands more than most expect.

Founders often give up stable incomes, social lives and even sleep to bring their ideas to life. It's not just about building a product. It's about becoming the kind of person who can lead through uncertainty, setbacks and sacrifice.

This chapter features insights from guests who've navigated the toughest parts of building something from nothing.

Especially during volatile times. They talk openly about the emotional toll, the chaos of wearing multiple hats, the importance of empowering others and how to lead a team when you're still figuring things out yourself.

Guest Insights

“You have to be the janitor, the CEO, the recruiter and the marketer, sometimes all in one day.”

“The hardest part wasn’t the tech. It was staying focused when I had no money, no roadmap and no one to call.”

“If you’re not willing to sacrifice comfort today for growth tomorrow, this path will eat you alive.”

“Hiring is a bet. You hope you're right, but it’s still a bet. The key is how fast you learn from a wrong one.”

Actionable Advice

- Be ready to do everything at the start. Delegation comes later.
- Set expectations early, with yourself and your team.
- Don't assume people know the vision.
- Lead through uncertainty. Even when you don't have all the answers, communicate clearly and show up.
- Understand the emotional cost. This path will test your relationships, identity, and self-belief.
- Build around people, not just product. Team dynamics will make or break your ability to scale.

Reflection Question

What's one messy, unexpected part of your entrepreneurial journey that forced you to grow?

Building Resilience: Pushing Through Obstacles

Resilience isn't just about bouncing back. It's about moving forward when everything feels like it's working against you.

Entrepreneurs, creators and leaders face rejection, slow progress, financial strain and moments of deep self-doubt.

The ability to keep showing up, adjust course and learn through the hard parts is what separates those who build from those who burn out.

This chapter highlights how real resilience looks and sounds. Strategies, stories and decisions are made in tough moments. It's about finding your footing when the ground shifts and continuing anyway.

Guest Insights

“I’ve had to rebuild myself multiple times. Each version was a little stronger, a little wiser.”

“Some days, resilience looks like sending one email. Just one. That’s all I had in me, but I did it.”

“People think resilience is loud. But it’s usually quiet. It’s private. It’s showing up when no one sees you.”

“You’re not failing. You’re just not done yet.”

“Resilience isn’t a mood. It’s a decision you keep making.”

Actionable Advice

- Start small. On your hardest days, focus on one next step.
- Reflect, don't retreat. Learn from the setbacks instead of avoiding them.
- Find your support system. You don't have to power through alone.
- **Redefine success. Progress isn't always visible, but it still counts.**
- Don't wait to feel ready. Take action even when it's uncomfortable.

Reflection Question

What's one moment where you had to keep going, even when everything in you wanted to stop?

Prioritizing Your Well-being: Mental Health & Self-Care

Ambition and burnout often ride side by side. Many high performers push themselves to the edge, sacrificing rest, relationships and mental clarity in the name of success.

But true growth isn't sustainable without mental well-being.

Founders and leaders must learn to manage anxiety, self-doubt and pressure. While creating space for recovery and reflection.

This chapter gathers honest insights from guests who've wrestled with imposter syndrome, self-criticism, overwork and trauma.

Their stories reveal that strength isn't just found in pushing through. It's also in slowing down, asking for help and caring for yourself before the work.

Guest Insights

“I used to think rest was weakness. Now I see it as strategy.”

“You can’t lead others if you’re constantly at war with yourself.”

“I had to start treating my mental health with the same urgency I gave my business.”

“Self-doubt never disappears, but you can learn not to give it the mic.”

“Sometimes the bravest thing you can do is say, ‘I need a break.’”

Actionable Advice

- Make space for stillness. Even 5 minutes of quiet can reset your mindset.
- Talk about it. Normalize conversations about stress, anxiety and burnout.
- Set non-negotiables. Protect sleep, exercise and relationships like key business assets.
- Notice your patterns. Track what drains and what recharges you.
- Lead by example. Your team watches how you treat yourself.

Reflection Question

What's one change you could make this week to better protect your mental well-being?

From Idea to Action: Taking the First Step

Many great ideas die in the gap between thinking and doing. Fear, overplanning, perfectionism and self-doubt often delay action indefinitely.

But progress only begins when you move, even if you're unsure, unprepared, or imperfect.

The guests featured in this chapter emphasize the power of simply starting, no matter how small the first step may seem.

This chapter is about breaking inertia. Whether you're launching a company, starting a creative project, or making a career move.

The hardest part is often just beginning. These stories prove that clarity comes through movement, not before it.

Guest Insights

“Execution beats intention every time. Start now. Adjust later.”

“I didn’t know everything. But I knew enough to begin.”

“You can’t discover your voice if you never speak.”

“Taking action shrinks fear. Every step forward makes the next one easier.”

“If you want to build confidence, stop planning and start doing.”

Actionable Advice

- Break it down. Start with the smallest, simplest next step.
- Detach from outcomes. Focus on effort, not perfection.
- Set a 24-hour rule. When you get a new idea, take some action within a day.
- Use momentum. Action creates clarity and confidence.
- Celebrate starting. Reward yourself for movement, not just results.

Reflection Question

What's one idea you've been sitting on and what's the very first step you could take today?

Authenticity and Finding Your Passion

In a world full of noise and comparison, staying true to yourself is one of the hardest and most important things you can do.

Authenticity builds trust, creates alignment and fuels the kind of passion that sustains you when things get tough.

Many guests on The Jason Cavness Experience emphasized the value of doing work that reflects who you are, not who others expect you to be.

This chapter explores how founders, creators and leaders discovered their unique voice. Connected with deeper purpose and ignored the pressure to follow someone else's path.

Passion isn't about hype. It's about doing work that aligns with your values and energizes you, even when it's hard.

Guest Insights

“I didn’t need to be louder. I needed to be more me.”

“Once I stopped chasing trends and started following my gut, things started clicking.”

“Passion doesn’t come from hype. It comes from meaning.”

“Being authentic isn’t a tactic, it’s the foundation of everything that lasts.”

“You’ll burn out fast if you’re building something you don’t believe in.”

Actionable Advice

- Define success for yourself. Don't let others write your goals.
- Start with your 'why.' Let purpose guide your work, not pressure.
- Audit your time. Are you spending energy on what matters or what impresses others?
- Be honest in your messaging. Authenticity attracts the right people.
- Give yourself permission. You don't need approval to be yourself.

Reflection Question

Where in your work or life are you holding back from being fully authentic and what would change if you stopped?

Continuous Growth: Investing in Yourself & Learning

The most successful people aren't the ones who know everything. They're the ones who never stop learning.

Growth-minded leaders treat every challenge as a classroom and every experience as an opportunity to improve. They read, ask questions, seek mentors and aren't afraid to start from zero.

This chapter highlights how founders and professionals stay sharp by investing in themselves. Whether it's learning by doing, picking up new skills, or unlearning bad habits.

The message is clear: consistent personal development is the foundation of long-term success.

Guest Insights

“Your startup can only grow as fast as you do.”

“I don’t care about being the smartest person in the room, I just want to be the most curious.”

“Every job I’ve ever had taught me something, even the ones I hated.”

“If you’re not learning, you’re losing.”

“Education isn’t a phase. It’s a strategy.”

Actionable Advice

- Schedule learning time. Block weekly time for reading, training, or reflection.
- Stay curious. Ask questions even when you think you already know.
- Invest in coaches, courses, or communities. Growth compounds when it's supported.
- Reflect often. Learning isn't just input, it's processing and applying.
- Document what you learn. Create your own "growth archive" to revisit.

Reflection Question

What's one new skill or topic you've been putting off and what would it unlock for you if you committed to learning it?

The Power of Connection: Mentorship and Community

No one builds alone. Behind every successful founder or leader is a network of mentors, peers and supporters. Who helped them learn, stay grounded and keep going.

Community offers more than encouragement. It provides accountability, shared wisdom and a reminder that you're not the only one facing hard days.

In this chapter, guests talk about the people who shaped their journey: mentors who challenged them, friends who listened without judgment and communities that helped them feel seen and supported.

The takeaway is simple but powerful, growth multiplies when shared.

Guest Insights

“I wouldn’t be here without my mentors. They saw potential in me before I saw it myself.”

“Success didn’t happen when I figured it out alone. It happened when I started asking for help.”

“The people around you either push you forward or pull you off course. Choose wisely.”

“Community is a safety net and sometimes a launchpad.”

“Mentorship isn’t about answers. It’s about perspective.”

Actionable Advice

- Find your people. Seek out founders, peers, or groups that align with your values.
- Ask for guidance. Don't wait until you're struggling to reach out.
- Give back. Be the mentor you wish you had.
- Be vulnerable. Real connection comes from honesty, not performance.
- Build your circle intentionally. The right people will challenge and champion you.

Reflection Question

Who has supported your journey so far and how are you investing in those relationships?

Navigating Uncertainty and Cultivating Patience

Building something meaningful often means walking into the unknown. There's rarely a clear map and progress can feel slow, uneven, or invisible.

That's why patience isn't just a virtue for founders and creators. It's a survival skill.

The ability to stay focused, flexible and grounded in the face of uncertainty is what keeps long-term builders in the game.

In this chapter, guests reflect on how they managed doubt, moved forward without guarantees and learned to trust the process.

Uncertainty is part of every journey, but how you respond to it can shape everything that follows.

Guest Insights

“You won’t always know the next step. That doesn’t mean you’re lost.”

“I used to panic when I couldn’t see progress. Now I look for patterns, not quick wins.”

“Patience doesn’t mean waiting. It means staying committed while things unfold.”

“The destination might change, but that doesn’t mean the journey is wasted.”

“Being kind to yourself in the unknown is part of leadership.”

Actionable Advice

- Focus on consistency, not control. You won't always control outcomes. But you can control effort.
- Track small wins. Even the tiniest progress counts.
- Accept the unknown. Let go of the need to have it all figured out.
- Practice self-compassion. Progress takes time. Be your own ally, not your biggest critic.
- Revisit your vision. Let your long-term “why” anchor you in the short-term chaos.

Reflection Question

How do you usually respond to uncertainty and what would it look like to approach it with more patience and trust?

Embracing the “I Don’t Know If I Can”: Taking on Challenges

Growth rarely happens when you’re doing what you already know. It comes when you step into something that stretches you.

Sometimes you’re not sure if you can pull it off. The most meaningful breakthroughs often begin with discomfort, doubt and risk. What matters is choosing to try anyway.

This chapter highlights stories from guests who leaned into challenges that scared them. Whether it was launching a startup, switching industries, or tackling complex problems.

They said yes before they felt fully ready. The lesson? Confidence follows courage not the other way around.

Guest Insights

“I never felt fully ready, but I started anyway. That decision changed everything.”

“If something feels impossible, that’s often a sign it’s worth doing.”

“The best opportunities came from saying yes to things I didn’t think I could do.”

“Comfort zones are useful, but they don’t lead to growth.”

“Courage isn’t the absence of fear. It’s doing it scared.”

Actionable Advice

- Say yes before you feel ready. Growth starts on the edge of your ability.
- Take on projects that scare you. Fear is often a sign of potential.
- Don't wait for confidence. It's built through action, not preparation.
- Celebrate attempts, not just outcomes. Trying matters.
- Surround yourself with people who believe in your stretch goals.

Reflection Question

What's one challenge you've avoided because it felt too big and what might happen if you took the first step?

Beyond the Noise: Focus and Inner Peace

In a world full of distractions, staying focused is a superpower. It's easy to get pulled into comparison, negativity, or the pressure to constantly be visible and performing.

But true growth often happens in quiet moments. When you step back from the noise and reconnect with what really matters.

This chapter explores how guests tune out distractions and stay anchored. They share how they protect their energy, create boundaries and focus on work that aligns with their values.

Not just what gets the most attention. Focus isn't just about productivity, it's about peace, clarity and intentional living.

Guest Insights

“The most important work I’ve done was in silence. Away from the feed, the noise and the pressure.”

“You can’t build something meaningful if you’re always chasing likes.”

“I had to cut out distractions, even if it meant missing out. So I could hear myself again.”

“Peace of mind isn’t optional. It’s fuel.”

“Focus is freedom. The more noise I eliminated, the more progress I made.”

Actionable Advice

- Audit your inputs. Be intentional about what you consume and who you listen to.
- Schedule quiet time. Make space to reflect and reconnect with your vision.
- Set digital boundaries. Protect your time and attention.
- Simplify. More isn't always better, cut what doesn't serve your goals.
- Reclaim your attention.
- Focus isn't something you find, it's something you create.

Reflection Question

What's one source of distraction or noise you could reduce to gain more clarity and peace?

Closing Thoughts

The entrepreneurial journey isn't just about scale or speed. It's about endurance and growing through the hard days, not just the highlights.

The lessons in this eBook aren't theory. They're real-world insights shared by founders, creatives and leaders who've lived the highs and the lows.

The guests on The Jason Cavness Experience have shown that resilience isn't just a trait. It's a choice made over and over again. That growth often starts where comfort ends.

Whether you're launching something new or rebuilding after a setback.

I hope these stories offer clarity, encouragement and a reminder: you're not in this alone.

Be Great Every Day!

Jason Cavness

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