

1 INSIGHT

with RICH LITVIN



Episode 6: "It stopped me in my tracks"

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Rich: Welcome to 1 Insight. My name is Rich Litvin. I grew up in London and I now live in LA. And this is a podcast for extraordinary top performers. You see, I've coached some of the most successful and talented people on the planet. I see what most people cannot see and I dare to say what most people wouldn't dare to say. What I know about success is that on the other side of it, they can actually be lonely.

You can feel like more of an imposter the more successful you become. And when you're the most interesting person in the room, you're actually in the wrong room. I coach around insight. Life looks one way, something happens, the world looks different and your entire world changes. It can happen in an instant. This podcast is called 1 Insight because a single insight can change everything. You're about to hear me coach Jermaine. She's a fascinating woman, had a very traumatic childhood.

And sometimes our biggest gifts come from our most challenging experiences. She has an incredible gift, an ability to calm people in any sort of situation at any level, from the highest level leaders who she coaches now because she came from a very fearful childhood. It was not safe. And Jermaine's ability is a superpower right now. She helps people feel safe. She calms their nervous system. She says to me, "Rich, I want to build community." And I don't answer that question. She wants to jump into the how, the meetup group, the Facebook group. I don't care about that.

I need to find out a reason, a motivation inside of her that's so powerful that she'll do whatever it takes. And we get there. And it's a powerful journey. And what she's up to is really, really needed in the world right now. And if you're listening to this because you're a leader or a coach, I know that what you're up to is really needed in the world right now. So, listen in and listen in from the place of, I'm coaching, just as much as I'm coaching Jermaine in this short conversation. Hi Jermaine?

Jermaine: Hi Rich.

Rich: Hey. I think of you a lot. I actually tell your story a lot out in the world. Because when we first met, you shared with me that you'd invested a lot of money, a lot of time and energy in marketing, PR, all the kind of stuff that coaches, we fall into that trap of thinking we need this stuff to launch ourselves in the world. And you and I spoke and I found out what's going on for you and where you work.

And actually, it turned out it would be amazing if you became the go-to coach in your organization. And you could do that. I think the context was being like the James Bond, the secret agent of coaching, one connection, one relationship at a time, the prosperous coach approach but not trying to get paying clients serving in your company. And so, take me back through that. How much did you invest in and what did you spend the money on at the beginning?

Jermaine: Well, I did one of those 10K in 30 day things with a beach coach kind of thing, where you can work from anywhere. And then, it was various coaching programs as well. And yeah. Coaches that had programs to get a business up and running plus a website. So, did I say the total yet?

Rich: You said say. Yeah. I know.

Jermaine: I don't think I did. It was like 30, 35, if I added up over the years. It's been a lot.

Rich: Yeah. So-

Jermaine: I could chunk.

Rich: If you're listening, because it was hard to even say the number, almost \$35,000 Jermaine spent on this and trying to get clients. And when we met, you'd said, actually, you haven't got a single one, if I'm right.

Jermaine: Well, I had practice clients. I had a lot of those. But yeah. And I had one that invested to go through a program I had created. So, yeah. It was a lot of money out and not a lot in.

Rich: Yeah. It really illustrated for me what Steve and I wrote about in The Prosperous Coach a long time ago that we're people, people is why we become coaches and then we go into this world and we get seduced by all the noise online of, well, I should be marketing. I should have an email list, a CRM, SEO, all the acronyms. And the people

who speak loudest online are the marketers. And they promise stuff like... What did you say? It was 10 grand in 30 days. And-

Jermaine: Yeah.

Rich: And so, we... Okay. Well, let me... And we spend a bit here or a lot there and suddenly before we noticed, we've invested a huge amount and nothing's come back. Fast forward, we had our conversations, we met, we spent a few days together. What we call a deep dive. What happened in your coaching after that?

Jermaine: Well, yeah. So, you and I talked about... You just helped me see, why not start where I am with the relationships I had already established and people trust me, they know me? So, there was just something in me that just wanted to build something on the side. But I did start where I was. And so, now, especially with COVID but during this lockdown, I've launched-

Rich: Well, slow down. Slow down. I don't want to miss this.

Jermaine: Okay. Okay.

Rich: Because again, what struck me is you ended up coaching your boss and your boss's boss. You are really be of service to the people who knew you and trusted you.

Jermaine: Yes. Yes. Exactly. I started focusing on the people around me. And like I said, the people that knew me and trusted me. So, my boss, she and I would move into these coaching conversations all the time and I would help, especially in my particular way, which is calming, right? I hear that all the time that people are around me and they just calm down. And even her boss, our CEO, when I worked directly with him, he was just like, "Wow, Jermaine, I'm just calm around you. So, I feel like I'm at the spa kind of thing." So, yeah. I started to focus on that. And then-

Rich: That's really powerful. Even that phrase. Because coaches get a bit caught up in, "What do you do?" And what do you do... Well, we talk in your life changes. You can't really describe coaching very well. But what you do is that when people are around you Jermaine, they just get calm. And these are people who play at a very high level in leadership roles in an organization. They spend time with you and they literally say, "Being with you is like being in the spa. I just get calmer." It's very powerful.

Jermaine: Yeah. And I've heard that all my life. So, I've just really connected to that being my superpower.

Rich: Thanks for that context Jermaine. That story you share is actually very powerful for many coaches. Because we get caught in this trap of doing the marketing thing, following the courses that make all sorts of amazing promises and it's hard to get out of it. And we wrote the prosperous coach approach. It's not anti-marketing, it's an antidote to marketing as if that's the only approach to build a business. And what we said it,

"Look, if you're great at that kind of thing, if you love it, by all means, do it." But one conversation at a time, one relationship at time changes everything. So, in this... Oh, you were going to say something?

Jermaine: I was just going to say that for some reason, I'm drawn to those emails. But I also know that it's not the way I want to go. It's not the way I want to build this. I want to build it one conversation at a time.

Rich: I can tell you why you're drawn to those emails. Because great marketers use... There's about seven very powerful psychological tricks that draw you in that they use every time they write a long copy sales letter or an email. It's there. So, you can't help it. Your human nature is drawn to those psychological tricks. And they know them. They've been working for a hundred or so years. People have been doing marketing and then direct response marketing to work out those ways that we think and tap into that. So, that's why.

Jermaine: [crosstalk 00:09:15].

Rich: If you feel that draw, it's just same reason we feel drawn into checking email or going on Facebook, all those people behind those systems have used those same psychological techniques to draw you in. So, you're being very human. It's okay. Give yourself some compassion.

Jermaine: All right. Thank you.

Rich: And maybe unsubscribe from a few emails as well.

Jermaine: Exactly.

Rich: How can I support you best today?

Jermaine: I've been thinking about this a lot. And I saw a lot of myself in your recent email about all those fears. And a lot of those show up in my life. And so, I know that I'm fearful. But I'm still taking action and I'm still moving forward. So, and now little things are starting to happen where I see little seeds that were planted are starting to bloom. So, I feel like there's some energy around me. So, I think what I would like to talk about is building community, which you are so good at and it doesn't come naturally to me at all.

I've been a serious introvert for as long as I can remember, despite a chart a friend did for me this week and it said extrovert as my sun sign and my moon side. But I don't relate to that at all. But the idea of creating a group, holding space for a group, knowing how to facilitate a group but it's something that I want to be able to do. I started a meetup and they keep emailing me, "Finish your group." I don't really know what to do with the group. But I would like to.

Rich: All right. I'm going to ask about why in a moment but let me take you back. I felt lonely for a lot of my childhood. I felt different. I just didn't know it was okay to be different. And I'm an introvert, which if you're listening, the distinction I have around being an introvert is I'm comfortable on stage in the front of the room and I'm comfortable in the restroom hidden away. I just can't be in the middle of the room making small talk. One of my favorite jokes is, you know you're an introvert when plans for a night out get canceled and you're secretly relieved.

Jermaine: Yeah. I feel that.

Rich: How many introverts does it take to change a light bulb? None. Are you kidding me? If you turn the lights on, people might know you're home and want to come over. And so, you know you're introvert, you get those jokes. And it's a spectrum. It's not really a symbol. It's not black and white, that you're either one or the other, introvert, extrovert. My wife gets energized when we go out to parties and I get drained of energy. I go to one party and I can stay home for two weeks. She goes to a party, she wants to go to another party that same night.

But there comes a moment when she's done and wants to regather her energy. And it turns out 12 weeks of lockdown, even an introvert can discover he wants to be around people. So, it's not black and white. Creating community, it never came naturally to me, it wasn't something I thought to do. For me, leadership is something I ran away from for a while. I was a leader in the organizations. When I lost my job in 2005, I think I got afraid and intimidated about being a leader again. I was fired from a job. So, I made up this story what it meant.

My favorite definition of leadership is turn around and see if anyone's following you. Because there are people in every organization who have all the titles and no one's following. And they're not a leader no matter what it says on their business card. And there are people who have no title and all sorts of people are following. That's a leader. The only way to move people to follow you is to allow yourself to be moved and to allow yourself to be moved means to have a mission or a cause or a purpose that's so inspiring it moves you. So, let's not talk about how do you build a community, let's talk about what moves you.

Jermaine: Okay. So, what moves me is helping people. It's always been something that just connects to my soul. I remember even my mom used to tell me the story that in school, the teacher had to tell her to tell me to stop trying to make people feel better when they got in trouble in class. I would try to console them and say, "Oh, she doesn't mean it," and make them feel better. And the teacher is like, "I do mean it. Tell her to stop that." But yeah. Somehow it just makes me feel better. It helps me to know that I'm helping people.

Rich: Yeah. When was the first moment when you found yourself doing that and where did that come from?

Jermaine: My guess because I was very young but I think I started doing it for myself. I think I was calming myself down, making myself feel better when I was very young because of my difficult childhood.

Rich: And you decide how open you are to sharing as much as that, if you want to share, what was so difficult about your childhood?

Jermaine: So, my parents had an affair and my mom left Canada to move to be with my dad in Jamaica, ended up having me there.

Rich: Meaning, she left a previous relationship or he did [crosstalk 00:15:42] both?

Jermaine: Yes. Yes. She left a marriage with two kids, moved to Jamaica, had me, then left me with someone... I'm still not even sure but left me with someone that knew our family. My dad went back to his marriage. My mom came back to Canada. So, I was there for about a year and a half, which I'm not at this point, even I know she was a friend of the family. She was a nurse. She had other kids. And then my mom-

Rich: How old were you at that point?

Jermaine: That point I was a year and a half. So, my mom had left for the year and a half, came back to get me, brought me back to Canada and then put me up for adoption. So, she thought she was ready when she came back to get me but then realized she wasn't. And I lived with another family for a year. And then she changed her mind and had the adoption. It didn't go through. So, she told me the story of how she pleaded with the judge and it was supposed to be final and it didn't happen. And then even when I was back with her, there was alcoholism and suicide attempts. And there was a lot going on. It was chaotic. And-

Rich: By what age are you now where there is the alcohol and so on?

Jermaine: Well, when we came back and after she got me back after the adoption, she married my stepfather, who was an alcoholic. And so, things with him were tumultuous. And I ended up growing up with him and he was the dad I grew up with. And he was beautiful. But in those early years when they first met, yeah, it was difficult. And there was a lot of just instability, moving and leaving someone in the middle of the night and moving out. And he saved her from a relationship but then he was an alcoholic. So, there was just a lot happening.

Rich: Yeah. I mean, you say it in a way that makes it seem it was a lot. Well, sometimes I go to the store and I've forgotten what to get for Monique. And she's angry with me. And it feels like a lot. What I mean by that is it was so your world that it was just your world. You didn't know at that moment in time that every kid isn't raised in an environment like that. It was just your world. And little Jermaine... Were you called Jermaine back then when you were young?

Jermaine: I was called Jerry.

Rich: You know what little Jerry did? Is she kept you safe. And she did an amazing job. How do I know that? Because you're here right now. And she allowed you to grow up to be the woman that you are, making the difference that you make and she kept you safe. And she did it. She found this amazing way to soothe you, to calm you and to make you at ease, even in the midst of absolute chaos.

Jermaine: Right. Right. So, that's where I think it comes from.

Rich: Yeah. Absolutely. We don't ever wish challenging circumstances on people but often, they're the defining moments of our lives. And the one of most extraordinary coaches I've met had all sorts of really incredibly challenging childhoods. And how they survived was what became their gift as a coach [inaudible 00:19:12] years later. So, thanks for sharing your story. It's a powerful story.

Jermaine: You're welcome. Thank you.

Rich: I'm pausing to check in, to see where to go. I have a few thoughts in this moment. I want to see where you are in this moment.

Jermaine: I'm here with you. And it felt good to talk about that, actually. I don't often. And I think my big goal is to just to create something that helps people feel safe, more and more people. I just want to impact people. And I think that's why the group comes to mind. It's like, how do I do that? I mean, I'm doing it through work and I have people coming and following and I could create a community through the people that are coming to my sessions at work, three times a week. But I also want to grow that private side, the private business practice.

Rich: Yeah. Yeah.

Jermaine: So, I feel like a Facebook group or something is [crosstalk 00:20:48]-

Rich: Well, let me slow you down because you've moved straight into the strategy. And so, let's slow down for a second. When you could say to somebody as an answer to the question, "What do you do?" And your response is, "Well, what I do, I've been doing my entire life," and then you go quiet, they get really curious and lean in. And when they say, "What do you mean? What do you do?" You say, "Well, I survived a very traumatic childhood." Many kids don't survive. They literally don't the kind of childhood I had.

And I survived by not only learning how to calm and soothe myself, turned out I got really good at doing it for others. I was doing it as a little kid in school, got told off by the teachers from helping to soothe other kids. And it's what I do to this day. I do it with high-level leaders in organizations. And so, I'd pause there because I want to let that land first of all. What I do, I've been doing my entire life. Can you feel the power of that?

Jermaine: I can.

Rich: Coaching is a title, not... Sorry. Most coaches want to use coaching as a title. It's not a title, it's a tool. You don't have to answer that, what do you do? Don't ever answer it again by saying I'm a coach. Because everyone and their mother can become a coach these days. Coaching is one of the tools that you use. I know you use movement and yoga and the body. And I've got no doubt there are other tools that you use now and more that will come in the future. Coaching is just one of those tools. Don't call yourself a coach.

Jermaine: So true. Yeah.

Rich: What I do, I've been doing my entire life. It doesn't matter whether you're a young kid, struggling with a challenging environment you're growing up in or you're the leader of enormous organization, when you spend time with me, you will get calm. And when you are calmer, decision making is easier. Communication is better. You have more of an impact in the world. You have better relationships. And if you're running a business from a place of calm rather than stress, you'll not only have a company that makes more of an impact, you'll make more money too.

Jermaine: And personally, you'll make more of an impact. Yeah. Exactly.

Rich: So, it sounds to me like you want to have more of an impact with more people, with the handful of people you work within the organization. There's a limit to how many people you can literally see. And this idea of having a community is, "How do I have more of an impact? Let me bring some people together in small groups."

Jermaine: You're right. And I feel like I want to serve more. And so, to just have a place where I can be in there and... I mean, similar to what you're doing and just create conversations, thought provoking questions, resources, my meditations, I would do live meditations. Yeah.

Rich: Look, now you're talking about tools. You have lots of tools. If a group came to you, you'd be doing the one thing all that you're ever doing, is you'd be having to calm people. Well, what I'm ever doing is helping powerful people to remember how powerful they are. That's what we've been doing in this conversation. But how I do it, sometimes it looks like coaching, sometimes it's teachings, sometimes I'm on a stage, sometimes I'm writing a book. That's just the strategy.

Underneath it, my purpose. I'm helping powerful people to remember how powerful they are. Underneath it, whatever you're doing, whether you're sitting in a room with your boss, whether you're working with a handful of people in the organization or whether at some point you have small groups that you're working with, all you're ever doing is calming people's nervous system. Cool. So, now we're getting clearer on your why, why you love to do this. Because often, our biggest gifts come from our biggest

challenges. A long time ago, you never had this. And that you could now be this person for others.

Jermaine: Yeah. The person that helps give it to others. Exactly.

Rich: Yeah. So, you got to talk and share about this. You have to talk and share about this in a way that allows you to feel moved. Because when you do, if you allow yourself to be moved, you will move other people. And then some of them are going to say, "How do I spend more time with you?" Now, right back to that original distinction, I'm not anti-marketing but what I'm going to talk about now is an antidote to marketing.

It feels really easy, "Let me create a Facebook group." That's easy. With a few clicks of a button, you've got a Facebook group. And you might get a few people in it. Because these days it's so easy. Always a new group. I know Jermaine, let me click on the button. I'm in. And suddenly there's a group. And then may or may not be a place for that in your world. But let's pause on that for the moment. What does a group or a community look like for you?

Because I didn't start off with thinking of a community. I started off in 2007, I was working with a lot of really interesting women in particular at that moment. And Monique had an idea, my wife, of creating what we called The Creative Woman's Salon. It didn't really work that year. Nobody signed up for it. I reinvented it and looked at what I was doing differently. I created something called The Confident Woman's Salon. And I think we've got five people in the first group.

And it felt really good. And I loved it and so did they. So, I did another one. And then another and another. And then it shifted, I did all sorts of different salons. They were named for my groups of 10 people. And I ended up with having... Once my book was published, The Prosperous Coach Salons and I created this amazing community overtime without an intention to a create community. All I said is, "Let's put a few people in a room together."

Jermaine: So, maybe if I focus less on, I have to create a community and the technical side of that. And just how can I just simply bring a few people together?

Rich: Yeah. If you had said to me in 2007, "Do you want some help building a community?" I would have A, been confused and B said, "Hell no, I don't want a community." I'd never intended to build a community. Overtime, I've been out there serving. And so, the other day... Well, 12 weeks ago at the start of lockdown, I said, "What can I do to contribute to coaches?"

What if I create a popup Facebook group for 30 days to make a difference for coaches?" I created this group called Serve, Lead, Serve. It's a Facebook group. Within a couple of weeks, we had 1500 people. And someone posted on the group, "Wow, Rich, 1500 people in two weeks. That's amazing." And I said, "No. In 15 years of work as a coach,

I've made enough of a difference in the world that when I create a Facebook group, it gets 1500 people in two weeks,"

Jermaine: Right. Right.

Rich: So, I'd go back to, "Why do I do this?" And as I see it, you do it because it was what you needed as a youngster. And it's the gift that you've honed for years from bringing a little kid in school, to being a coach working with leaders at every level. Then, you can just say to people, right... People will say, "What are you up to?" "Well, you know what? I'm putting together a group of..." Pick a number. For me, it was 10 for my first group. I only got five people.

Steve Charla tells a story. He was a speaker in the old days before a coach. And his first ever speech, he put flyers out everywhere in his town. He rented a room with a hundred seats in it. His kids came along, four kids. Every one of them helped put the leaflets on the chairs, hundred seats in a room. Two people showed up. It was mortified.

His kids are there to watch their dad and only two people show up. But he says to himself, "I'm going to give the best speech these people have ever heard." And he does the best he can. And at the end he says, "Thank you so much for coming. And would you come back next week? And if you liked it, bring a friend." And overtime, one person at a time, that ripple effect went out into the world.

Jermaine: Okay. I'm thinking about it differently.

Rich: Yeah. There's a piece of artwork behind you on the wall. And when we got on the call, I said to you, "What is that? I don't recognize it." And you said, "Well, it's a piece of art that stopped me in my tracks." And when you share your story from the heart, that some of the most challenging moments you've lived through, as well as your desires, it will stop some people in their tracks. And they'll say, "I want that." It's not supposed to do that for everybody. Most people on the planet won't like that piece of art on the wall behind you.

That's not the artist business you did. The reason most people don't put their in the world is it's too scary because someone might not like it. And there are great artists right now all over the world who are hiding their art. You have amazing art within you Jermaine. It's time to bring it out in the world. Some people will love it whatever you say or do. And some people will hate it whatever you say or do.

You remind them of their aunt, their sister, a teacher who used to be mean to them or your way of working is not for them. That's okay. Most of the 7 billion people on the planet won't know either of us even exist. And we hold ourselves back. Since you were two or three years old, you've been calming people. And right now, more than ever, people need to be calmed. Their soul needs to be calm, their spirit needs to be calm, their emotions need to be calmed. This is your time.

Jermaine: Yeah. I need to think less about how to do it and just do it.

Rich: Yeah. One tiny step at a time.

Jermaine: Okay. Thank you.

Rich: I really admire Jermaine. From the moment we met, I appreciate your story. I appreciate your honesty. I appreciate your courage. I loved hearing where you've come from. And that really is a mission that is needed right now. If you let yourself be moved by this story, if you let yourself be moved by the reason you have for creating groups, other people will be moved and they'll come and spend time with you.

Jermaine: I am going to focus on that. Not creating a group. That's what I'm taking away. Thank you.

Rich: No. No. I ran those salons for 10 years until the moment I done with them. I don't do salons anymore. I was done. And now, I have a different kind of community. I run groups of 30 people. I have 20,000 people in my community now. I didn't start from that place. I started off, let me create a small group for 10 people. And only five showed up.

Jermaine: And you did it anyway and then it grew. Okay. I'm going to finish my meetup and just see what happens.

Rich: Yeah. Look, again, that strategy. It might be a meetup, it might be a Facebook group, it might be the people at work. Share what you're up to. And say, "Hey, I want to get together with 10 people and it will be on a Zoom call or be at a restaurant six feet apart," or whatever it is and put it out into the world. And then do it again and then do it again and do it again.

Jermaine: Okay. Okay. So, I'm going to start sharing it and see where it goes. Start talking about it. Okay. All right.

Rich: Thanks Jermaine.

Jermaine: Thank you. I appreciate it as always.

Rich: For most of human history, it wasn't called coaching, it was called a leadership. And it's what I love to do, to coach people, to lead people and to mess with people's thinking. If you'd like more of this or if you'd like to learn more about our community of extraordinary top performers, go to richlitvin.com/1insight.