

Hello, everyone. This is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute. Thanks for tuning in.

This week, I want to talk about *12 Rules for Life* by Jordan Peterson. It is a terrific book. The New York Times says that Jordan Peterson is the most influential public intellectual in the world right now. And this book has sold, oh, I don't know, what? 6 million copies. I mean, it really is a runaway bestseller. The sequel has just come out, I got it this week and started on it. So, what about this book is important to you? It's not a business book. Okay? So, why am I talking about it? Well, the book is kind of a conglomerate of psychology, history, family and children, self-help, religion, a happy part, happiness studies, purpose studies. And ultimately, I think it does come back to business, even though it's not intended as a business book. I think it does, it does get there.

Now, Jordan Peterson has a thesis that you'll see throughout this book and throughout his other work and his many, many, many videos. And he says that life is suffering. Life is suffering. And ultimately, we're slated for destruction. Well, not the life is suffering, but the slated for destruction, that's inarguable. We're not going to walk out of life, right? So, he's right about that. But life is suffering seems awfully harsh to me. M. Scott Peck wrote a book, Golly, 30 years ago called *The Road Less Traveled*. And the opening words of that book I subscribe to more fully, he said, "Life is hard." And it is some days. Boy, some days, you just cruise through life, and it's wonderful, and it's terrific, it couldn't be better. Some days, boy, it's like swimming against the current and you just swim as hard as you can. You're not getting anywhere, maybe even going backwards. Life is hard. I think we can all subscribe to that.

Now, Peterson says specifically, "Life is not about happiness." In today's society, it seems like everybody wants to be happy and maybe that's why people turn to alcohol or other things, because they want instant happiness, but life is not about happiness. Peterson says, "We experience much of our positive emotion in relation to goals. We're not happy, technically speaking, unless we see ourselves progressing and the very idea of progression implies value. We must have something to set against the suffering that is intrinsic to being. We must have the meaning inherent in a profound system of value or the horror of existence rapidly becomes paramount. Then, nihilism beckons, with its hopelessness and despair." So, no value, no meaning. You can see how this relates to business, and we'll obviously conclude there.

So, he talks about ... Well, I'm going to talk a little bit about rule two, the second chapter, rule two. Treat yourself like someone you're responsible for helping. And he gives this, and I'm assuming he researched this, he's a doctor and wrote a huge bestseller, and I'm assuming he did his homework. He said of a hundred people that go to the doctor and receive a prescription, one third won't even get the prescription filled. So, you go to the doctor with some ailment, and a third of the people don't even get the prescription filled. Another one-third won't take the prescription as prescribed. So, they either don't take it at all, they take it sporadically, they don't finish out the prescription, whatever it happens to be. And so, two thirds of people go to the doctor with some ailment, an ailment that causes them to make an appointment and go, for gosh sake, and then they don't take their medicine, ultimately.

And he says that people are much, much better at getting prescriptions filled and medicating their pets. I mean, that doesn't even make sense, does it? But he posits that the reason people don't take care of themselves with respect to their medications is they don't feel worthy of self-care. We know ourselves too well. We know that we want to take care of our members, right? But I know myself, and I know my flaws and my foibles, and maybe I'm not worth it. My members are worth it. Our members are worth it. We'll move heaven and earth for them. But for ourselves, maybe not so much. Maybe we judge ourselves a little bit too hard, and that's why it's so important to have vision and direction in your personal life. And obviously, we want to translate that to your business life as well.

"Don't underestimate the power of vision and direction. As Nietzsche so brilliantly noted, 'He whose life has a why can bear almost any how.'" Right? I think Simon Sinek also echoes that in his work. "It's super important to have vision and direction. The present is eternally flawed, but where you start might not be as important as the direction you're heading."

Perhaps happiness is always to be found in the journey and not in the fleeting sense of satisfaction awaiting at the next peak. Much of happiness is hope."

You've heard the saying, it's not the destination, it's the journey, and it really is. And then finally, if you fail to have that vision and direction, and you fail to have goals, "Because while you're failing to define success and thereby rendering it impossible, you are also refusing to define failure to yourself. So that if and when you fail, you won't notice, and it won't hurt. You will instead carry with you a continual sense of disappointment."

It makes sense. We don't set goals. I think my mom was that way. She worried when I set goals because she thought that if I didn't achieve the goal, that I would somehow be hurt or disappointed. Well, if the value of having goals is in the journey, if the value of having a vision and a direction is in the journey, it doesn't matter if you achieve the goal. And we do, we do manage to achieve most of our goals once we set them, if they're realistic. But people worry that the disappointment of not achieving goals should outweigh the value of the journey itself, and that's just not the case.

The subtitle is An Antidote to Chaos. And that's what it's all about. It's about living your life well. It's about doing the things that any individual needs to lead a good life, but it does translate to business. Okay? Because how you lead your business has a direct effect on your life, not to mention the lives of many, many other people. You, your employees, your customers, your vendors. How many people does the average business leader come in contact during a week? 25, 50, 100? You have a chance to impact every single one of those individuals every single week, and the place to start is with you. If you have your own house in order, then you're going to be able to make a more valuable impact on all those people.

So, to make impact, values, vision, mission, and goals. Those four things that we always talk about in our blogs, that we always talk about in our strategic planning. A happy life is the journey, not necessarily the destination. So, if you've read the book or others like it, I'd like to hear what you have to say. This is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute. Thank you.