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POWDERKEG PODCAST TRANSCRIPT: LUIS GARCIA

Intro: Achieving success depends on how much you want it. On how motivated you are. On whether it really is your burning ambition to succeed.

Millennial influencer Luis “Ambition” Garcia started building his business while on tour in the war zones of Afghanistan. Using precious breaks from 16-hour army days, he laid the groundwork for a social media empire that now engages millions of followers on Instagram, Periscope, YouTube and other channels. Luis -- who grew up in the ghettos of North Philly -- created his brand by prioritizing relationships over revenues, by first giving value before asking for anything in return.

In this podcast, you’ll discover the evolution of his entrepreneurial journey from selling crazy balls and pretzels in school to running [Ambition Media](#), a full-service media agency that helps brands extend their reach, accelerate growth and achieve targets.

But this podcast is not only about Luis. It’s more about you and your own ambitions. Your unique challenges. And the best paths to grow own brand and succeed.

How do you go beyond a constrictive environment, navigate roadblocks, and move towards bigger goals? Can you start anything worthwhile without a hoard of cash? Luis certainly did, and so can you.

How do you build a brand that people respect? How do you identify the specific pain points you need to solve in order to gain your audience’s trust? How do you plant seeds of opportunities?

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Matt: Luis, thanks so much for being here, man. I'm super excited to talk to you about what you've done with your business. Obviously, we want to get into how you got 6 million plus followers on your Instagram accounts and how you're getting the engagement that you're getting and getting 30 million impressions weekly but first I want to talk a little bit about where you're from, how you got to where you are. So, where did you grow up?

Luis: First, thanks for having me here, Matt.

Matt: Absolutely.

Luis: Yeah, I grew up in North Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, right in the center of the ghetto. It was definitely an experience growing up there. I mean, it's taught me a lot. One thing I'll never forget where I came from.

Matt: Yeah. So, talk to me. You said North Philadelphia ghetto. I've been to Philadelphia but I can't say that I've been to North Philadelphia ghetto. Were you living on the street or were you just kind of in a lower income section of the city? What did your parents do? How did you end up in North Philly.

Luis: So, yeah, my grandparents came from Puerto Rico and my mom was a medical assistant. She actually got pregnant with me at a very early age when she was around 15. So, that right there started us off kind of depending on my grandma. And she didn't speak too much English at all. So, coming from Puerto Rico, she only knew enough to get her by and she worked as a cafeteria lady at one of the elementary schools out there. My mom, she began getting into a school or whatever trying to finish out school and eventually became a medical assistant.

Matt: Wow!

Luis: Yeah. And my real father ended up getting time in prison when she was three months pregnant with me.

Matt: Oh my gosh!

Luis: So, I didn't really have a relationship with him growing up but my stepfather kind of played a part in there and picked up where he left off.

Matt: Yeah that makes a lot of sense. I imagine that not having that biological father figure could have been tough and may have been a little bit of a source of the drive behind your now success. When you look back at your childhood, are there things you can point to or maybe glimmers of the entrepreneurial



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spirit that now drives what you're doing with Ambition Media?

Luis: Oh yeah, absolutely. Actually, I have a crazy story.

Matt: Let's hear it.

Luis: So, back in elementary school, I used to go to John Welsh Elementary School in north Philadelphia and what we did was we would sell ... Have you ever seen crazy balls from the Corner Store?

Matt: Yeah.

Luis: Like you put in a quarter and you turn a little thing and a little bouncing ball comes out where you can just throw it and it goes crazy all over?

Matt: Sure.

Luis: So, what we did was we would go to the Corner Store after school every day and we would go buy out all of the balls that were there and we would in turn sell it for a dollar instead of a quarter to make a 75% profit.

Matt: No way.

Luis: Yeah, it was insane. So, we started that for a little while.

Matt: How old were you at that time?

Luis: I was probably 10 years old, like 10-11 eleven years old.

Matt: Do you remember what you wanted the money for?

Luis: I wanted gummy worms.

Matt: That's awesome, man.

Luis: That's [inaudible] what I wanted. I was like "You know what, I want gummy worms. I can't **afford** it. I don't have lunch money like the other kids. I only have a couple of quarters that maybe my grandma gave me or something." She would give me like a dollar every time I came and saw her. So, I would take day and I would go to the Corner Store, buy the last few balls that I could because everyone loved it, it



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was in demand. That's when I began learning about supply and demand, I guess. And I just started selling that for a dollar. And then I wanted pretzel and the school started distributing pretzel and [inaudible] was known for their pretzels as well. So, when they would sell pretzels, it would be for a quarter a pretzel. So, I would wait closer to like 2:30 at the end of the day when everyone was about to be on their way home and they was a limited to amount of pretzels like, I don't know, pretzels left. So, I'd just go downstairs after selling all my crazy balls, take out the profit and go buy pretzels and then resell the pretzels while everyone was leaving to go home after school and I sold that for a dollar a piece as well which is insane.

Matt: That's so great, man, with crazy markups too, I imagine.

Luis: Yeah it was amazing. My mom actually thought I was stealing her money and I was like "No, mom, this is what's going on. I'm actually selling things at school" and it was just an insane moment in my life. I guess that's really what began my entrepreneurial side.

Matt: That's so great, man. One of our previous guests in Episode 007 was Jordan Wirsz and he did the same sort of thing when he was a kid, buying model airplanes and trading them up for better model airplanes. Then eventually he was buying and selling real planes and helicopters and it's just a crazy story that when you look at some of the most entrepreneurial people out there hustling, building amazing companies, you can usually trace their entrepreneurial spirit back to when they were a kid. So, it's cool that that gene definitely showed up in your childhood.

Luis: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, it started off with wanting gummy worms and gummy worms and pretzels to me selling cars and sneakers to then me selling entrepreneurial products and real estate courses and then transitioning now when I'm selling social media ads and stuff. So, it's definitely been a crazy ride.

Matt: So, what drives you now? Is it still sort of getting that next thing? Are you trying to buy 10 million pretzels now? What's the thing that you're passionate about attaining with your business?

Luis: I mean, it might be a pretzel company. No, I'm just kidding.

Matt: Can't rule it out, man.

Luis: So, what drives me now is the fact I'm mature enough to understand the world and the way it works and growing up where I did, I kind of realized like "Okay, well, we didn't have the greatest things but we made the greatest times out of the least things." And now it's just I want to give so much more back to my family. I want to give so much more to my kids. I have two daughters now. So, I'm just



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trying to build the best life I can for them so that one, they never have to go back to kind of struggling, the way that we did growing up where they're worried about the electricity being cut off or getting evicted or something like that. Now, they can just focus on school and their part of using their passions because of what I've done and what I'm doing now.

Matt: Absolutely, man, I can really relate to that. I certainly didn't grow up in the ghetto in Philly but my family didn't have a lot growing up. So, understanding sort of that drive of never going back to that, feeling of lack again is definitely a driving force but it's really cool to hear that a lot of what's motivating you right now is giving to others and providing for others and doing that in a way that creates value for everyone. That's really cool, man.

Luis: Absolutely. I mean, I think the most successful people, I mean, you can go back to their core and figure out that they just want to provide a better life for either themselves or their family or someone else. You just want to provide better ways of life. I mean, the only way to do that is by working and creating results for others..

Matt: And I think that it's one thing to have drive but it's another thing to learn discipline and the fundamentals, not only learning the fundamentals of business but the fundamentals of motivating yourself and taking action and doing the work every single day. I know that there was a gap in your entrepreneurial journey where you were deployed to Afghanistan. Talk to me about joining the army.

Luis: Oh, man. So, yes, speaking of discipline and stuff, I was not the most disciplined child growing up. I would run around crazy and just do whatever I wanted, whenever I wanted kind of thing and I was kind of getting used to that. I started becoming lazy. During the end of my high school year I actually failed 12th grade twice which is insane.

Matt: Oh my gosh!

Luis: And it wasn't more of that I just didn't have the intelligence. It was more of me just not going to class because I wasn't learning the things I wanted to learn. I wasn't interested in the curriculum. So, I just went off and I learned so much more growing up on the street than I did inside school that contributed to my entrepreneurial success. So, emotional intelligence played a huge factor in learning people but fast forwarding a little bit, I was senior year, I finally graduated and I was "Alright, I tried to join the Marines the first time a Marine recruiter came to my high school when I was in 11th grade and I tried to join the Marines and because I failed that year, I couldn't join on time. So, then I backtracked, I tried again and at that point I had a tattoo on my chest and they weren't giving out waivers at that time. So, I kind of let that dream go a little bit and started looking for other avenues and I started flipping sneakers and stuff and then I finally graduate and I was like "Alright, I need to get out of North



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Philadelphia.” There was a lot of personal things going on at that time. I didn’t grow up in the best area. So, a lot of my family members were locked up, a lot of my friends were getting shot or being locked up. So, I needed to get out of that environment at that time.

Matt: Did you feel kind of a fight or flight sort of instinct to get out of there and find that next thing?

Luis: Absolutely. My only thought process for that entire year before I left to the army was “I need to get out of here because there's nothing left for me here and everything's going down the drain.”

Matt: So, at that point it wasn't even “I need to go find this thing that's going to inspire me and get me disciplined and get my mind right.” It was more “I’ve just got to get myself out of this environment. I’ve got to get to a place where I can get a clear head and get some focus.”

Luis: Yeah, absolutely. So, my train of thought was “There's nothing here. If I want to succeed, it’s not here. The thing that I need to catapult me to the next level is not here. I’m going to either end up dead or in jail or working 30 years at McDonald’s and I don’t want to do either of those. So, let me get out of here.”

Matt: You don't [inaudible] at McDonald’s, man?

Luis: God, no. I mean, no, not at all.

Matt: Nothing wrong with it but I would imagine your entrepreneurial spirit wouldn't really have a chance to fly there.

Luis: You know what, I tried working at Taco-Bell and KFC once and it did not work out well. I mean, I think I lasted like two months at best and I'm surprised I lasted that long.

Matt: That’s impressive.

Luis: Yeah, I don't like being restricted to the things I can do. I don't like having a cap on the amount of revenue I can bring in. I like to have more control of my life than giving someone else that control which is kind of ironic seeing that I went into the military but I did go into the military because I felt like it was my escape goat from where I was to push me to the next level. So, I joined the military and I started learning things like discipline, leadership, courage, all the Army Corps’ ... and then I get to **2014. So,** February 2014 we deployed to Afghanistan. I was in the 101st Airborne Division at Second Battalion 2502. So, we deployed to Afghanistan and I was there for about nine months and being there was definitely a life experience. It kind of changed and shifted my entire mindset to what really was



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important in life and what mattered and what didn't matter.

Matt: And what mattered?

Luis: So, at that point what mattered was surviving, surviving and getting back to my family and not having to put myself or my family through something like that again. So, it's really hard and difficult for not just me but my family to deal with me being away, me being overseas, me putting myself in those positions and putting them through that stuff, I don't want to do it again. So, I have this thing where I can endure as much pain as possible whether it's like struggling financially or struggling just with life in general but if I put my family member or a friend in that position for me, then it affects me a lot deeper and I don't want to do that again. I don't want to do that to my children. I don't want to do that to my fiancé or anyone else. So, now it's just like "Alright, I'm in Afghanistan. We're dealing with stuff on a day-to-day basis." Obviously you can tell we're still, you know, I guess semi at war, if you want to call it that.

Matt: Yeah.

Luis: So, I decided I needed to make a changing in decision in my life to take more control of my destiny because I was like "I'm not going to die out here on a mountainside" or whatever. It was like "I need to go back to the United States and take care of my life my family."

Matt: And before you came back to the United States, what was one of the best lessons you learned about leadership or discipline?

Luis: Oh man, leadership is a big thing in my life leadership. Leadership, I've learned what good leaders are like, I've learned what bad leaders are like and they both taught me how to be great leaders or be a great leader. And with leadership, I mean, that influence you have as a leader is so powerful and people don't realize these things, that influence can make or destroy a company, it can make or destroy a person. It is just so powerful and people, I think, overlook that when they get put in leadership positions and it's so easy. I mean, it's so easy to destroy anything with bad leadership. So, it becomes a cancer in a sense where you're just being negative and then everyone starts catching your negative vibes and it just starts spreading throughout your company.

Matt: So, you really learned through the military that role of leadership, just how impactful that role of leadership is that you can drive massive positive change but also you have the power to drive **negative** change and create negative downward spirals as well.

Luis: Exactly.



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Matt: Yeah, that's a great insight.

Luis: Yeah. The military has definitely done a lot for me when it comes to discipline. I mean, I've always been a confident person but having those life experiences and going through that definitely boosted my confidence. So, anything I go into, I'm 100% certain of where I'm going. If I'm not certain, I am doing it with 100% certainty anyway.

Matt: Was there one of leader in the military that you really looked up to learned from you?

Luis: Yeah. Actually Staff Sergeant Pearce, I think he's Sergeant First Class now. He was pretty young, extremely intelligent, extremely smart, extremely sharp and he was my squad leader at the time and just kind of speaking to him and learning from him and understanding that there's better leaders in the Army because the Army has a lot of different types of leaders, let's just say, and he was definitely one of the better ones. I didn't really have so much father figure growing up. So, I guess that was one of my first senses of a father figure in the military, kind of having that squad leader take care of you and watch over you guys and it's a brotherhood as well. You people in your squad, they become your brothers at that point, people in your platoon company and so on and so forth.

Matt: You could tell everyone had your back.

Luis: Yeah. And he was definitely one of those guys. As long as you were doing the right thing and you didn't do anything to jeopardize your integrity, the integrity of the company or the Army, he would go to bat for you no matter what he was. He was right there behind you every step of the way. So, that definitely taught me how powerful that support and influence was and then I took that into everything else I did moving forward.

Matt: Man, that word 'influence' I think says a lot about you and the narrative of your own life, especially with what you're doing now with Instagram and the influence you've created there. So, you learned that important lesson about influence in the military and you decided you had to get yourself home and get yourself to your family. How **did you do that? How did you make that happen and what were you moving towards at this point?**

Luis: Okay. So, at this point we were wrapping up Afghanistan on our way back home. So, I'm thinking "Alright. Well, this is pretty crappy." So, at that point I'm thinking "This is pretty crappy. I need to start reevaluating my life and what I really want and what's really important being there, having that time overseas away from family and not just away from family." And in a good way it would have cleared my mind of all the noise in our environment back home, kind of got me thinking to what I needed to do. So,



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the first thing I thought was I needed a mentor and that's where everything else began. "I need a mentor. I need someone who's been through the ropes, who's done what I want to do at a higher level, at a higher frequency and get around those type of people."

Matt: And where did you find that mentor for you, that first mentor?

Luis: Well, I was in Afghanistan. So, there wasn't really many CEOs around that I could just walk up and talk to at that time. So, what I did was I did have my phone at a point and we had Wi-Fi when we were transitioning back. So, I started looking around on Instagram because I didn't really jump on Facebook too much, I didn't really jump on any other social platform. So, I was just primarily on Instagram. It was easy to use. I would just scroll through pictures and find people or whatever.

Matt: What year was this?

Luis: This was 2014 and I've had Instagram prior to that but I really started jumping into it in 2014.

Matt: Okay. So, just two years ago.

Luis: Yeah just two years ago. My entire thing has been over the last year really. I've catapulted into different phases of my life throughout this last year but it began in 2014. So, there I'm looking on Instagram trying to find out who was successful and then I had to bring it back home and think "What am I even good at? What do I want to do?" So, everything led to networking and I guess just sales and marketing and meeting other people and I can build a relationship with anyone. You put me in a room and **we're having a conversation in less than two minutes about something relatable to both of us.**

Matt: How do you find that in a conversation? Can you break down a little bit what you do? Well, I'm guessing you do naturally after all the years of selling super balls and pretzels.

Luis: Yeah exactly. I mean, anything, it can be anything. So, this is where emotional intelligence really plays a huge factor in this. Growing up in North Philadelphia, you have to have that, you have to understand how people move, you're reading body languages, reading between the lines when people speak to you and kind of figuring out what their real message is. I mean, if me and guard were just sitting there, I would see "He has a ring on. He's married. Let me talk about relationships stuff. Maybe he's going through stuff. Every guy goes through stuff in relationships. It doesn't matter who **you're with. If you're with anyone for a long period of time, you're going to go through stuff.**" **So, that's easy** groundbreaker right there. And I would start it off with them. I'll bring up something and if they relate, then I'll run with that. If they don't relate, then I move on to something else but laughing, laughing always does it. It doesn't matter what situation you're in, if you can make someone smile and laugh,



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then you're in, in my opinion. I think no matter what background you come from, laughing is just one of those universal things.

Matt: Absolutely. You got any go-to jokes?

Luis: No, I actually don't tell jokes. I just laugh at like maybe a situation we are in. So, in the Army we go through a lot of what we call 'the suck', right? So, if we're sucking and we're going through like a rough march or for 13 miles on something, you are just going to start laughing about it. It's the strangest thing but it's a completely different culture. You can just start laughing about going through the pain or whatever because at that point you just embrace it. You're just like "Okay, this is going to suck or whatever. Let's just embrace it and make the best out of it." So, the Army kind of instilled a better sense of perseverance for me as well. So, when I go through anything now, I just laugh it off. That's it. And whenever I'm with someone else, we just laugh things off regardless of what it is and I just build a relationship from there. It's always been natural for me. I don't have any go-to punch lines, any go-to introductions. It's just naturally being able to understand how people think and how people feel. That gets me to where I need to be and gets me to that conversation.

Matt: And it sounds like your willingness to share first or laugh first really helps set the tone with a new relationship.

Luis: Absolutely. I think you going first brings in vulnerability and makes the other person feel a little bit higher in a sense or a little bit more comfortable where they're saying whatever they want to say that's on their mind or anything like that. So, getting yourself into a vulnerability first kind of allows for other doors to be open.

Matt: I love that. I love that. So, how did that translate to Instagram? As you're in Afghanistan using your phone to check out and see what Instagram is all about, how did you reach out to that first person, what made you reach out to that first person?

Luis: I reached out to millions of people. So, I realized early on that if I wanted to get anyone's attention, I would have to add value to them. I know you hear a lot of successful people say something similar along those lines where you have to add value and I believe in that 100%. Anyone that I've ever tried to reach out to, anyone I've ever worked with knows that in the beginning of our relationship there was a point where I added value before I asked for anything. You have to give before you ask. So, what I would do is search on Instagram for any and every one in real estate, in any sort of successful business and I say real estate because I started off with a real estate guy early on and I kind of reached out to everyone and he was one of the people that responded to me. So, what I did was I started figuring out problems these guys were having and solving them on my own time because they don't have the time to



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solve these problems. They're running, doing a million things every day.

Matt: You had the time, right?

Luis: Exactly. All I had was time. I would find the biggest pain points, the three biggest pain points every person had on my hit list, what I called, and I get that from a book called 'The Ultimate Sales Machine' by Chet Holmes.

Matt: That's a good one.

Luis: Yeah his daughter Manor Holmes is a good friend of mine. She's an amazing person as well and I actually met her after reading the book which is insane [inaudible] out there. Yeah. So, she became part of my like initial hit list and we built up a good relationship, she's an amazing person as well but I definitely started off reading that book which kind of helped me out. Obviously I read the normal books, 'Rich Dad Poor Dad' and stuff but I began finding the hit list and began finding pain points with every person on my hit list. And the first pain point I found was people needed marketing, people needed a platform to speak on because everyone has an idea, everyone has a great company but they just don't have the marketing there to excel that company or maybe they do have the marketing there but they don't have the social platform or the social presence and influence there and that's kind of where I started beginning my Instagram journey. And it was just funny, even more funnier than that. When Periscope came out as well, it is what really pushed me to the next level. So, Periscope comes out and all of these mentors and people on my hit list started jumping onto periscope and no one else was on it. So, it was the perfect opportunity for me to jump right in there and start creating a platform of my own to stand out on. So, whenever anyone was on a personal video – and I tell the story all the time and people are like "Jesus, that's genius" like "How did we didn't think of that" – so, what I did was I jumped on Periscope and any time any influencer was on Periscope, I would go in there thinking I wouldn't speak to them directly. I didn't care about them at that time. I cared about everyone in that room with them. So, what I did was instead of focusing on the speaker I focused on the audience and what I did was build a relationship because the speaker can't get to every single question, can't comment back to every single person and now I have like the fastest thumbs in the world thanks to Periscope and Instagram. What I did was I started messaging people who were messaging the speaker and kind of answering questions for them and introducing myself saying hi to them, especially if we started seeing each other a lot in different rooms and pretty often, we started building up relationships and then we would build up relationship outside of Periscope but when I started doing that, my goal and my plan was to get everyone in the room to say my name, right? Because if I had everyone in the room saying my name, one, that's instills credibility for me and two, the speaker sees my name a million times going across the chat room and is trying to figure out "Who in the world is this guy Ambition?" So, that was like my Periscope thing.



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Matt: That's great. That's great. So, do you still do that on periscope?

Luis: No. God, no. I'm like way down the road from that now. So, starting off on periscope, that was my whole plan and again my name on Periscope was Ambition and then I've started wanting to brand that name and brand that word 'Ambition' after like millions of random people started coming up to me and it was just like "Hey, Ambition" and I was like "Who are these guys talking to? I don't know who Ambition is." Then I kind of like started catching on – "Okay, they're referring to me" or whatever and it started becoming like a thing. So, I started branding the name 'Ambition' in different ways, started off with like 'Ambition Live' and then started translating it to 'Law of Ambition' which it is what it is now and 'Ambition Media' and so on and so forth but doing that, it kind of had the speaker, whoever the speaker was whether it was a multimillionaire or whether it was a lower level influencer, they all knew my name because I targeted their audience instead of targeting them. So, instead of having that just one shot at mentioning their name and hoping them to see my name, I would just have millions of chances for everyone to mention my name and then to see my name.

Matt: It's a really creative example of how can I add value to this influencer in a world where everyone's trying to get access to this influencer and you saw this emerging platform and you saw the need or the pain point which shows a lot of empathy on your part.

Luis: Yeah, definitely, for sure. And doing that opened up so many opportunities for me. I mean, I've had countless offers to move to different parts of the state and work for different people, amazing people and fast forwarding a little bit more, I started gaining influence on periscope and I only did like two or three Periscopes in my life and they weren't even long at all but I had like 2500 followers which was like amazing for the first beginning stages of Periscope and whenever I shouted any room out, it stood out with almost 75% of those followers. So, it wasn't just me putting it out there to 2500 people, one person showing up. This with a solid loyal fan base.

Matt: That's great.

Luis: So, anywhere I went, it transitioned and people saw that and people appreciated that value that I added to their Periscopes when they only had 25 follower in a room and we got in a couple hundred.

Matt: We jumped ahead a little bit and I would love to take maybe a step or two back when you were just kind of discovering Instagram because I think that those early moments are some of the most pivotal moments and a lot of entrepreneurs, even if they have huge influence on email or huge influence just with their brand in general, they can't always get over that first hump of Instagram and making it work for them and for their business in a way that creates value. So, can you maybe baby-step me



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through that story of being on Instagram, reaching out, trying to add value because we didn't get to that pivotal moment where things kind of clicked and the scale started to tip for you?

Luis: Well, it was actually a balance between Periscope and Instagram at that point. So, I was reaching out to everyone and Instagram was like my go-to platform to find these people and then Periscope kind of like catapulted me into the next phase where it was like “Okay. Well, I'm building relationships with these people” and I brought that back to Instagram. So, I didn't stay on Periscope and just run with Periscope. I brought that back to Instagram or even before that. So, here's the biggest point or pivotal point. While I was on Instagram and then us transitioning into Periscope, everyone on Periscope was just randomly there. You couldn't really interact with them like you could on Instagram, right? So, I couldn't just jump into a chat room with someone on Periscope. I'd have to do that on Instagram. So, the influencers that I was working with at the time wanted to bring everyone into one platform. So, I found a chat group on the apps store or whatever and we created a community of 3000, it started off with 3000 initially and it went up to like 6000 loyal people who were there 24/7.

Matt: Wow!

Luis: I didn't understand how powerful was that at the time and now it's mind blowing to me that I was able to do that. We're not just talking a regular Facebook group. We're not just talking and email list or something. We're talking 3000 to 6000 dedicated people working on the same platform at the same time, conversing with each other, building up genuine relationships and networking anywhere from beginning entrepreneurs to multimillionaire CEOs.

Matt: Wow!

Luis: And they were all on one platform and I didn't understand how powerful that was but I was just going with the motions and just trying to build up as many relationships as I could and networking with everyone that I could and introducing people who I thought needed to meet each other and adding value there and just continue going forward but then I started realizing “Well, maybe I need to translate this into Instagram.” So, I started pushing them back on Instagram and having everyone follow me. I would have everyone exchange their social platforms and other information but doing all these things, I started creating a brand name for myself and I didn't realize it. Remember, I had no idea what entrepreneurship was at the time. I wasn't even thinking about all of the possibilities at that point. I was just thinking “I need to find a mentor, I need to add value to these people and I need to create my own platform to push on and I need to build those relationships.” That's all I was thinking. I wasn't thinking “You know, I'm going to sell all these guys a 300-dollar product and make a million dollars at the end of this year.”



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Matt: Yeah I think that's the right way to think about it though. Clearly it worked out for you.

Luis: Absolutely but most people would have thought “You know what, let me sell them something. Let me sell them something” and I get that all the time – “Why don't you have a product? Why don't you have this? Why don't you have that?” Well, it wasn't about a product. You don't have to sell everyone all the time. What you need to do is build relationships all the time because people push people forward. Products don't push people forward. People push people forward. So, you need to build up those relationships because maybe later on down the line I will have a product. Maybe I will have a company and I can use this solid support. Maybe they'll become a part of my company at that time and then I have a great company full of great employees and amazing employees from every side of the world doing amazing things. So, what I had in mind was just adding value, right? So, let's go back to the Instagram part. I started working with a mentor who I reached out to and he reached back out to me and I started getting more involved with him on Periscope which translated into me running his Instagram account and this was like that pivotal moment that I think you're looking for. So, me starting to manage his Instagram account opened up my mind to the amount of influencer are out there and how Instagram worked with ads and sharing and how Instagram engagement worked and I started looking at Instagram as a business versus just a social platform to network on and that was that pivotal moment.

Matt: Wow! That's incredible. And that was Steve Mehr, right?

Luis: No, actually that first guy was Cody Sperber, @cleverinvestor.

Matt: Okay.

Luis: He is a great guy, allowed me to help him out with social media. He allowed me to help him out with sales and I just started pushing as much as I could. I took full advantage of the opportunity and I just went on a rampage with networking and contacting people and trying to do the best that I could for him at that time. You know what I mean?

Matt: Yeah.

Luis: So, having that though, it opened up so many other doors. It got me involved with other influencers like Andy Frisella who's the CEO of 1st Phorm. It got me involved with 'Agent Steven' Steve Marais got me involved with Ben Newman and millions and millions of other influencers who are now like pretty good friends of mine, Jason Stone, Millionaire Mentor, all of these guys and building that community and building that network gave me all the tools that I needed and all the resources I needed to catapult into my next phase but that was definitely a pivotal moment and what transitioned that from



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me just running Instagram accounts and social media accounts was Cody giving me the opportunity to sell his real estate course. Yeah. So, I started doing sales and then that's when things got a little tricky because now it's like "Alright, this is not just Instagram, bro. This is you. This is actual company, actual revenue being generated and profit." And I was still transitioning out of the Army at that time. Actually I was in the phase where I was like "Alright, if I'm going to do this, I need to get out of the Army or if this doesn't work out, I need to reinvest because I can't have my family going to nothing." You know what I mean?

Matt: That can be pretty motivating.

Luis: Yeah it was definitely motivating. I mean, we would work 16-hour days in the Army every day from Monday through Friday, 16-hour days. If we were in the field program, then I was working a month at a time three weeks or whatever, a week in the field and around that time I had to find time for social media and everything else. So, while I'm working 16-hour days, I find time to still – and this is a piece where everyone who says that they don't have enough time, you don't prioritize your time correctly. That's what it is. So, it's all about your priorities. While I was working in the Army, I was in the Infantry, I'm working in the field all the time, down in the range I'm training my guys, my guys are training me, there's so much going on in the military to then when I leave work at 7 o'clock at night, going to straight Instagram influencer mode and just start doing sales, start building relationships, networking until 4 in the morning and then having to go to PT the next day and work out in the morning for a few hours and then go on my 16-hour military day.

Matt: What time was PT in the morning?

Luis: PT had to be at my place at 5:45. So, we started PT like 6 o'clock, 6:30.

Matt: So, you'd be basically sleeping 4 a.m. to 5:30 a.m.

Luis: Oh my god! We had power naps, power naps got me through everything. So, what I would do is I would take a power nap right before work and then I would take a power nap at breakfast time. So, I would eat something really quick and try to take like a 30-minute nap and then go back to the rest of my work and then noon came when it was lunch time and I would eat really quick and then try to take another hour nap if I had the time for it and then just pushing through my day like that. So, power naps really got me through the last stretch of my Army career.

Matt: I've been there, man. So, while you're doing, this you are building mastery on how to use Instagram for business. Give me give me a crash course, power course on Instagram. Can you talk to me a little bit about what you learned as you were growing these accounts? What brands or leaders did you



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work with to learn from their best practices?

Luis: Man, there's so many great things I can tell you right now. The no. 1 person who taught me almost everything I know about Instagram was 'Agent Steven' Steve Marais and he ran the account 'Agent Steven' and he also runs like 'Motivation Mafia', [inaudible], whatever with a few other great guys. Ruben – 'Think, Grow, Prosper'. Farokh, he's another great guy. He runs 'Good Life' and he has his own personal brand MrGoodLife.co which is an amazing brand as well. And all of these guys taught me the core values and the rules of Instagram and the one thing I can tell you is you have to respect your followers. If you don't respect your followers, then you're not going to grow, you're not going to learning anything.

Matt: Tell me how you respect them. How do you respect your followers?

Luis: Well, one, you have engage with them and give them what they're asking for. If I have a page and people follow me for quotes, I'm not just going to change it to a cupcake page. You know what I mean? So, that's one thing. I'm also not going to spam my page with ads. People hate that. You don't watch a TV channel to see commercials all day. No one does that at all. I hate when I'm getting interrupted on a hour-long movie and I've got ten 3-minute commercials in between. That's why everyone live streams, right? That's why everyone uses Netflix and stuff like that because people hate being interrupted by ads. Even though I understand that's the way to generate revenue and everything else but people hate that. So, you've to respect your followers to not give them ads, to not give them low-quality ads as well where it's like "Get Rich Quick Overnight." You know what I mean?

Matt: Sure.

Luis: So, everyone hates "Pay a dollar today and I'm going to get rich overnight" or "Hey, take these pills and your brain power is going to increase" or just crazy pseudo science stuff or anything like that at all. So, you can't bombard your followers with these things.

Matt: How do you get the followers in the first place? So, you've got to respect your fans and you've got to engage them. How do you get them to engage with you in the first place?

Luis: So, you have to post things that are relevant to people's lives. So, for example, you're not going to post Valentine's Day on 4th of July. You know what I mean? So, you have to post things that are relevant to people's lives and that's where you start off. So, a big thing that we do is we have a lot of core accounts, motivational, core entrepreneur account and the reason why we do this because obviously Steve Marais is a huge serial entrepreneur and he has all the experience. What I don't like is people who come on and tell you about things they've never experienced. I want to hear your



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experiences. I want to hear from you personally. Tell me what you've gone through in life that's made you create that decision that you made today. I don't want to hear about other people's experiences. So, what I do and what we do with we talk about our experiences. So, if there's something going on at Steve's company or at my company or someone else's company, we bring those things to life on our pages or we just talk about things in a moment because it doesn't always have to be business, right? It can be things that you resonate with because not everyone is a CEO, not everyone is in start-up mode. Everyone is like "Well, what is my passion? What am I good at? What do I do now?" So, we relate to those things like "Hey, I've been there too, I've been lost before too and this is what I did. Maybe this can help you." So, that's how you add value. So, that's a big thing. You add value to your followers and they'll follow you and once they follow you, their followers will see that and if it adds value to them, if they resonate with it, then they're going to follow you to and just being consistent, creating unique posts, creating authentic posts, all of these things play a part. I mean, there are so many variables that play a part but adding value is the biggest thing and respecting your followers.

Matt: Occasionally, you see these newer Instagram accounts or brands that are just trying to get on Instagram and they're just following massive amounts of people. Is that an effective strategy?

Luis: No, I don't like that strategy. Here's why. When you see someone following a thousand, two thousand people and they follow you, you don't feel as special, you don't feel as important. You know what I mean? So, it's like "If everyone can have it, I don't want it" but if I'm only following 50 people and the next person I follow is you out of the millions of followers that follow me, you're going to feel a lot more special about that. You know what I'm saying?

Matt: That makes a lot of sense. It goes right back to respect your followers.

Luis: Exactly. So, if I'm going to follow someone, I want my audience to understand that they're going to add value, whoever I'm following is going to add value to you because they add value to me. I don't want to just follow everyone for no reason. I want you to understand that you can come on my page for everything. You can come on my page for motivation, entrepreneurship, lifestyle. You can come to my page to find other entrepreneurs who are killing the game and other millennials and, I mean, generation Y, Z, X, all of these things. You'll find all these guys on my page who are crushing the game, not just the regular. I mean you might find ones and twos of these but it's mostly just other people you can follow to get more value.

Matt: I also see a lot of people that are using hashtags to gain likes and maybe inevitably some follows. Talk to me about that strategy. Why are people using that and what's the right way to do it and what's the wrong way to do it?



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Luis: Okay. So, there's multiple things you can do on Instagram. Instagram has like multiple different tips and tricks. I know you see some people using hashtags. Some people are using certain locations. Some people are engaging with their audience in a certain way at certain times. The reason why is you have to think how people think, right? So, if you're using a hashtag, you want use the hashtag that people are searching for. You don't want to use like [WhiteWall.com](https://www.white-wall.com/)/[NikonCamera](https://www.nikon.com/). No one's going to follow that. No one looks for that. That's ridiculous. You want to use simple effective hashtags that have to do with your brand and your goals. So, for me as an entrepreneur, one of the main hashtags that I use is #entrepreneur, right? And then I want to brand 'Ambition'. So, I throw 'Ambition' on there and that's another thing that gets involved with entrepreneurs. So, you have to find relatable words for your brand and your goals. So, if I am an entrepreneur, I want to bring in anyone looking for motivation, anyone looking for inspiration, anyone looking for entrepreneurship, anyone looking for ambition, anyone looking for success because that's what all these people look for and these are relatable words to my brand and my goal. So, that's how you do it. And then you find the words that are most effective and are looked for the most for your brand and your goal and then that's how you target them. Unless you're just trying to build up a following and you really don't care, then obviously you want to just find the most engaged hashtags in the world.

Matt: That makes a lot of sense. As you're going and finding new people to connect with and to get them to be a relationship and forge a relationship, how are you identifying those people and then how are you engaging with them on Instagram?

Luis: So, these people that I identify, I mean, it started off with the first person that I got involved with and then it was like "Alright, well, who is his social influence or who is his circle of influence? So, who does this guy follow?" Okay, he follow these three people. So, let me follow these people. Okay, who do they follow?" because the ultimate goal is to create a success circle, people who are all successful in their own way because you can learn something from everyone, right? Again, I'm sure you hear this all the time, people use this all the time, if for of your friends are millionaires or successful, you're going to be successful. You're going to be the fifth. So, I use that as well. I find everyone that they're in relation to and I am like "Alright. Well, is this in line with any of my goals? Okay, well, let me add this guy to my circle of influence. Alright, is he aligned with any of my goals? Okay, let me add him. And what can I do to provide value to both of these guys? Alright, well, this guy doesn't have that many followers on Instagram. Alright, well, let me give him a shout-out two." Cool. Now, it's going to get his attention, he's going to get followers, he's probably going to hit me up and say thanks. Alright, cool. And it's a good relationship.

Matt: It goes back to the give value first and then build a relationship later.

Luis: Exactly. Now, in order for that to be effective, you can't just have 200 followers and him have



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500,000 and you expect him to see that because it doesn't add that much value. So, you need to leverage something else and you have to figure out what that is, what resources do you have in your control that you can leverage to get his attention or get her attention or whoever it is. And a lot of people think "Well, I don't have any resources." You have the ultimate resource in the world if you feel like you don't have any resource the next time. You have time and time can be your biggest resource. It's your biggest asset. So, use that time to figure things out. Use that time to solve some of his problems and then use that to add value to them in order to gain a relationship or put your foot in the door with someone. Even if it's not him, I'll start at the CEO and work my way down all the time. So, if it's not him, move down to the next person in charge and then move down to the next person in charge. Eventually someone's going to catch on and then you work your way back up the ladder.

Matt: I love the methodical approach to it and maybe not even reaching out first to the influencer but finding those people that are in that person's circle of influence and working your way in that way. It's a really good strategy and I've heard other entrepreneurs deploy this strategy in other areas outside of Instagram which is a good segue to talk to me about how Instagram ties to the outside world. What good is a 'like' to me in my business? What good is a follow to me in my business? When all you've got is the exit link in the profile on Instagram, you can't even put links in the comments, why would you want to engage with this platform?

Luis: Okay. So, right now our entire generation is transitioning to social media, right? So, the amount of people who view even desktop are dropping significantly in comparison to mobile views. The amount of people who are watching TV is dropping significantly to live streaming and to YouTube and everything else, right? So, everyone's on mobile, everyone's on their phone and I guess my little saying for this is "You're not going to go fishing where there's no fish." So, if you're going to go fishing, I want to find the most populated lake, the most populated part of the ocean or whatever to go fishing at so that when I do, it's effective. Now, in order to create an effective platform, if you're on Instagram, everyone's already watching you anyway. So, all you have to do is add value there and then bring them in. People respect authenticity. People respect people who take time to respect them. So, if I'm on Instagram, I'm adding value and I'm expecting my audience, my audience respects me now, I can build up those relationships. It's so much more easier to sell if that's your goal. It's so much more easier to sell as a company. And then if I have, let's say, a million followers as Nike, Nike has like 63 million or something like that but let's just say I have a million followers as whatever brand – and these are organic followings. So, there's a big thing that we will touch on a little bit later where people are buying fake followers and engaging themselves which is counterproductive, you're shooting yourself in the foot. So, if you're buying fake engagement, it's horrible. Don't do it. I highly recommend you stay away **from that** and just take the time, be patient and grow organically but let's just say we have a million organic followers. If I put out a product, my reach is probably going to be around 10%. So, I'm probably going to hit like 100,000 to 200,000 views. If it's a good engaged post, I'm going to get 100,000 to 200,000



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views. That's going to add up with all my posts to about like 10 to 20 million impressions a week if I'm doing about four posts a day for a week. So, how much money do you pay for impressions on television? Thousands and thousands of dollars for a small amount of impressions and people aren't even watching the commercials, people aren't watching television. People are watching social media. So, why fish where there is no fish. You know what I am saying?

Matt: Absolutely.

Luis: And when you have a million followers and you have them engaging like organic followers actually engaging and liking and following your stuff, it adds credibility to your brand and what that does is the no. 1 thing that every salesperson knows or every successful salesperson knows – People who buy from other people. So, if I say “Hey, Matt, where did you get that watch?”, I'm probably interested in that watch. You're probably going to tell me “It's a great watch. I got it from Rolex” or “on Market Gear” or wherever. And I'm going to say “You know what, that must be a good brand because I like Matt and Matt knows what he's talking about. So, let me go check out Rolex and AP.” You see what I'm saying?

Matt: Absolutely.

Luis: If I am on Instagram and I've got a hundred comments on my Photo of people saying “This is amazing,” “This is amazing,” “I love this,” those are like little testimonials that add up. So, if another new person comes onto my page and they see a million people commenting and liking and engaging with me, they're going to want to like, comment and engage too. Therefore, they'll be more inclined versus me having a hundred followers, me following 5000 people and only having one comment on my page. You see what I am saying?

Matt: Absolutely.

Luis: So, that's how that affects your business. Don't fish where there's no fish.

Matt: Well with the Instagram Stories that were released here in the last couple months, it seems like Instagram is not only here to stay but is here to compete with some of the other platforms like Snapchat. How has it changed the game for your business?

Luis: It hasn't changed the game at all. It's actually made it a little bit more interesting. Instagram is not even at its peak, in my opinion. So, if I'm going to back any platform, I'm going to back Instagram because Instagram is also being backed by Facebook, right? And Mark Zuckerberg is a genius and he has more than enough revenue or capital to create whatever platform he wants on Instagram to compete with anyone else or not even compete but dominate any other platform. So, the only other platform –



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and it's kind of out of this league kind of thing – is YouTube because it's all video based and video's the way to go and YouTube is a giant. YouTube is not going anywhere ever. So, Instagram with Instagram Stories in relation to Snapchat Stories. So, Snapchat is just stories, right? Although people get crazy amounts of views on there, it's definitely a great platform, I'm not discrediting Snapchat. It's just not my thing. I like having that diversity where I can post to Instagram Story and I can post a photo and then I can message people and I can comment and going back and forth and I can comment to people publicly so that everyone can see it and everyone can engage, not just my comment to them privately in a message. So, it does so much more for me on one platform than Snapchat does and I like kind of being niche. So, Instagram would be my niche. If you're doing great on Snapchat, keep going, keep doing your thing or whatever. Instagram is just my world.

Matt: And it's a great world to be in considering that it just continues to grow and add new features like the Stories. You did touch on video briefly. I have seen some of the larger Instagram pages leveraging video in their feed. Why do you choose to use that or not use that in terms of posts and updates on Instagram?

Luis: Videos actually, going back, started my entire transition to meeting my mentor Steve and getting into more of the business part of the Instagram world and getting me where I'm at today and I'll give you a brief story on that. When I was starting in the military and I was looking for that mentor and I began running Cody's Instagram account, I started figuring out that all of these guys need video. They're all going to another guy for video. There was just one guy who was charging crazy amounts of money for this video. So, what I did was “Okay. Well, I'm already running this guy's Instagram. I'm already selling stuff. Why don't I learn how to generate another source of revenue, create videos and sell all these guys' video packages ever. I have all the contacts. I have all the connections. I know everyone who needs it and I can just add that in to part of the value that I bring for half the price.” So, I sat down for an entire weekend and YouTube “How to use Final Cut Pro”, started creating 15-second Instagram videos, got decent edit. I wasn't like a professional or the greatest. I got a decent enough edit to just start selling them. I started selling them and that's how I met Steve. So, I sold Steve '10 for 600' video. So, I sold ten videos for 600 bucks, 15-second videos and when I began that relationship, I said “Hey, Steve, if you don't like these videos, send them back. I'll refund your money and I'll send you back fresh new ten that you like and we will keep working at it until you're satisfied with the result.” So, that immediately I think hit home for him and he loved how I ran my business and we started building up a relationship from there.

Matt: So, obviously you believe in the power of using video on Instagram. What makes an effective video as opposed to just single snapshot?

Luis: I 100% believe in video and the difference with video is, I mean, you get more views and you get



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likes and comments. So, think about this. If I'm on Instagram and I'm like strolling through or whatever and I see a photo I like, I might like it, I might take the time to like it, I might take the time to comment if it's really good and resonates with me or if I have the time to. A lot of people don't have the time to. A lot of people I start doing that and they're like "That's pretty cool" and scroll and they're like "That's pretty cool" and just keep scrolling or get distracted with a million and one other things. Those videos take into account just people looking at it even if they don't have time to engage with it at that time, that they looked at it because you get distracted with a million things, you could be looking at a photo, your phone rings and you're off to the next thing but you really wanted to comment and engage on that photo but you got distracted with a million and one other things, right? So, having that view count kind of lets me know what my reach truly is, how many people actually have put eyes on it which kind of gives you a better gauge to price things kind of like YouTube. So, when YouTube people look at it, they look at impressions and reach and everything else. Now, it's the same for Instagram and I think the most effective way to do it, people are using a 60-second long videos because Instagram has released that. I think 15-second long videos can work better because I'm spoiled now, I've been having 15-second videos which gives me back 45 seconds of my time. You know what I am saying? So, this is another thing where you have to respect your audience. Don't make your audience sit there for a 60-second video and it might not seem like a long time to you but it's definitely a long time to your audience. I don't want to sit there and watch a 60-second video and waste 60 seconds of my life just like you don't want to sit there and pump gas for 5 cents more down a block, you'd rather drive two blocks away and get it for 5 cents cheaper.

Matt: That makes so much sense. That makes all the sense in the world.

Luis: So, if I'm on Instagram and I'm getting a 60-second video, it's probably not going to convert me. I'm probably going to be over the curiosity of "I need to go engage with this guy." 15 seconds is like a flash. You know what I mean. You're just getting me like "Oh, what was that? I probably need to go check this guy out. That's pretty cool. Let me see what else he has." And it's because we're spoiled on Instagram just like we're, in a sense, spoiled with gas where it's like "I don't want to pay 10 more cents," "I don't want to pay 20 more cents" and it's only 10-20 more cents which results in maybe 4 or 5 more bucks but we don't want to pay that 4-5 more bucks at all and you don't want to spend 45 more seconds on Instagram at all. I mean, some people are doing it and it still works for some people but I recommend shorter clips, at most 20 seconds. Don't waste your viewer's time. Even if you think your adding tons of value, don't waste of your viewer's time. If they want to engage, they're going to engage.

Matt: What are the big brands that are doing this well and these can be clients of yours or they can just be big brands that you respect on Instagram?

Luis: Nike is dominating. Nike dominates like in the entire athletic world, in my opinion. So, they



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they've got video. They've got a relationship with Kevin Hart now where Kevin Hart has his own line of sneakers now with Nike and they've just been doing a great job overall on Instagram. When I work with other brands – and I'm actually like trying to work something out with Nike but we'll touch on that a little bit further down the road.

Matt: We'll do a follow-up once you pass the 10-million-follower mark.

Luis: Yeah, that's funny. So, another thing is – now that you mentioned that, I'll touch on this really briefly so we can get back – you don't have to have 10 million followers. You just have to control 10 million followers. You don't have to take 5 to 10 million a year to build up that following because these followings take time. You're going to spend two things – time or money. You decide. So, if you don't have the money to spend on it, put in the time to admin these accounts, to run these accounts, whatever. I do page management as well as one of my services. So, do these things and you don't even have to be paid for it. If you're a starting entrepreneur, you don't have a lot of money, use your time, you have a ton of time. Use that, pay forward and then later on down the line opportunities are going to open up for you that you'd never dreamed of. So, just take the time and do that. Let's get back to the real question. So, a lot of my influencers that I work with, I mean Gary-B's one of them, I actually have a packaging going on with Gary-B right now where we're promoting him and he's a huge influencer as well on social media. He prides himself on being one of the top social gurus or the social guru and, yeah, he definitely does a phenomenal job and we're working with him and his team which are great as well but he's definitely one of them and there's tons of like bracelet companies and watch companies that we work with as well but what these guys are doing, especially Gary-B, is utilizing video, utilizing every aspect of this social media platform to leverage and expand and scale his businesses. So, right now Gary has like a 60-second thing coming out, a 60-second video giveaway coming out in 2017 seventeen where he's giving away one brand of thing to whoever comments within like 60 seconds of his post. I think he's mentioned a car, he mentioned a house, he mentioned a pair of Yeezys, just random great prizes that he's going to be giving away in 2017 every day – I believe it's every day, don't quote me on that but I believe it's every day – to just random people and I think that's going to be phenomenal. I think that's a great way to boost engagements, a great way to get your community involved, can help building a solid community and fan base and if they follow you everywhere, if you have a solid fan base, you can use that influence to do almost anything on Instagram and you have to make sure you do that in a positive way that adds value to people's lives because just as easy as you can sell someone, you can destroy someone. You know what I mean? So, you want to be careful how you use that influence but he's doing it in such a phenomenal way and I highly respect his way in using that platform to grow his businesses.

Matt: So, you mentioned a lot of the brands that you're working with. Obviously, there are a lot of people listening to this who would love to learn more about how they could benefit from your services.



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If people want to learn about your agency and what you do, where do they need to go?

Luis: They're just going to go to AmbitionMedia.co. I am working on getting the .com right now. So, bear with me but for now you can go to AmbitionMedia.co. If you have any questions, you can always contact me via Instagram @LawOfAmbition. If I change my Instagram handle, I'll let you guys know. I'll make it public somehow. And if I do, it's probably going to be @Ambition. That's probably the only name I would change into ever. So, for now it's @LawOfAmbition and you can find me on Instagram there. Again, I don't go on Facebook much. I don't do on Snapchat or Twitter or anything like that. So, if you want to contact me, the best way to contact me is via Instagram @LawOfAmbition. I do read my message. I do read my comments. I do engage with my audience because I respect you guys' time and coming out just to engage with me. So, I would definitely engage back.

Matt: Well, I can corroborate that too because that's how you and I connected.

Luis: Yeah, exactly.

Matt: Well, Luis, thank you so much for sharing your story, your passion, your ambition, your influence on Instagram as well as your expertise and influence on Instagram. I look forward to seeing what 2017 holds for you and your business and we've got a loyal audience here, they'll be eager watch your rise as you continue to climb the ranks.

Luis: Thank you. I appreciate that, Matt, and I appreciate you having me on the show. I mean you're doing a phenomenal job with these podcasts and all your businesses. So, I look forward to seeing what you guys do in 2017 as well.

Matt: Thanks so much. Dude, that was great, man.

Luis: Well, it was my first time. So, I hope I did well.

Matt: Dude, you nailed it.