

Jason: [00:00:00] And I know what that's like. I know what it's like to be a kid. You know you're just trying to figure out how to deal with it - how do you get through the next day because you're having such a hard day and you're having these twitches and it's uncontrollable and it literally feels like hell. And so I wanted to speak to those folks.

[music]

Peter: [00:00:27] Welcome to Improv is no Joke podcast, where it's all about becoming a more effective communicator by embracing the principles of improvisation. I'm your host Peter Margaritis, the self-proclaimed chief edutainment officer of my business, the Accidental Accountant. My goal is to provide you with thought provoking interviews with business leaders so you can become an effective improviser, which will lead to building stronger relationships with clients, customers, colleagues, and even your family. So let's start to show

[music]

Peter: [00:00:59] Welcome to episode number 59 and today my guest is Jason Michaels, who is a professional entertainer, speaker, and author with astounding experience in the arts of deception. A storyteller by heart, Jason loves to blend impossible mysteries with unforgettable tales. As an entertainer, Jason's show, The Card Shark: a true story of scams, cons, and hustles, is a one man, autobiographical, sleight of hand show that dives deep into the world of confidence men, fortune tellers, and charismatic magicians. As a speaker diagnosed with Tourette's syndrome at the age of six, Jason has overcome the impossible and become an internationally award winning sleight of hand artist and professional speaker. He motivates audiences to see beyond their challenges and self-imposed limitations and inspires them to take action by living bigger bolder lives with his keynote program, You Can Do The Impossible, Too! As an author, Jason has authored the book, You Can Do The Impossible, Too! His book details his journey of overcoming the debilitating neurological disorder Tourette's syndrome to become a success in business and in life.

[music]

Peter: [00:02:20] Hey Jason, welcome and thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to be a guest on my podcast today.

Jason: [00:02:28] I'm excited we get to chat. This is going to be a good time.

Peter: [00:02:31] This is actually - this is the first time that we've we've ever met. A mutual friend of ours, David Crone, who was on episode 35 of my podcast, actually connected us and said "Pete, you need to interview this guy. He's got a wonderful message and you're going to enjoy it." So he set the bar really high.

Jason: [00:02:51] [laughs] Well I'm not sure what to say about that.

Peter: [00:02:56] You'll deliver, you'll deliver. Give the audience a little background - a little taste of who Jason is.

Jason: [00:03:03] OK. I am a professional magician. I got interested in magic when I was 16-years-old. That is approximately the exact same time I got fascinated with theater and I studied theater through high school and college - that was my major. I ended up becoming a magician. And over the years I've worked in a lot of different types of settings. I worked as a college entertainer and a corporate entertainer and a cruise ship entertainer and theaters and performing arts centers. Kind of all over the place because I'm constantly challenging myself I'm constantly trying to put my my entertainment out there. But then I also started speaking on kind of overcoming adversity. It's sort of an interesting story. To go back even further than my beginning in magic and my beginning and acting and theater and all that... You know I have a genetic disorder called Tourette's syndrome, which is just a neurological brain chemical disorder that manifests itself by what doctors refer to as tics, which is just basically uncontrollable movements or vocalizations. I dealt with this throughout my entire childhood through, through teenage years, into my early 20s. And so when I started speaking I was just kind of talking - some of my first speaking engagements were to school groups and youth groups, and I was talking about overcoming adversity. I was talking about some bullying. But I wasn't really talking about the Tourette syndrome a lot because I didn't want to be... I didn't want Tourette syndrome to be the thing that you know defined me. I didn't want people to go "oh this guy's a pretty good entertainer, especially because he's got this disability." I just wanted to be good at what I was doing. I didn't want to have that sort of label, but I have a really good friend, who is also a speaker, and he said man you have to talk about this. And after telling him for years that I was not going to talk about this.

Peter: [00:05:06] [laughs]

Jason: [00:05:06] He continued to invite me to see him speak and at some point it just kind of... I guess it got through my thick skull because I saw him. I saw the way that he was able to affect people with his own story, and he dealt with a difficult childhood. And I was able to see how this could connect with people; how people needed to hear this message that he was sharing and it made sense to me, finally, why he was telling me that I needed to share my stories. So in addition to being an entertainer and a magician, I'm also a speaker and I speak on what I like to refer to as being able to do the impossible. Because sort of one of the interesting things about my story and my past is that a kid with Tourette's syndrome... you know when you have an uncontrollable like movement disorder - you twitch a lot or you know the people who have the vocalizations they'll make clicking noises with their tongue or their throat... And it's just kind of an odd thing. Because it's unexpected, people will get freaked out a little bit by it. The idea that I would somehow become an entertainer or become a performer in live theater... that you know you're standing on a stage in front of a big group of people... that that kind of doesn't make sense. And there have been people that have said you know that's kind of impossible - that makes no sense that you would be able to do that. When I developed my talk, which ultimately developed into a book, I started talking about being able to do the impossible because I think we all have things - and I mean everybody. I think everybody has things in their lives that feel impossible to overcome. And I like to talk about that. I think it's important that we hear a message and we see examples of people who have overcome quote unquote "the impossible in their lives."

Peter: [00:06:54] Exactly. And as you talk about the Tourette's syndrome, and in our conversation prior to this, there's some misconceptions about that. Would you like to address some of those misconceptions?

Jason: [00:07:07] You mean just like out in the public as far as what Tourette's is?

Peter: [00:07:10] Yeah. When people think a Tourette's.. how it's been posed is uncontrollable cussing.

Jason: [00:07:21] [laughs] Yeah, which which definitely makes things interesting.

Peter: [00:07:26] [laughs]

Jason: [00:07:26] Yeah absolutely. That is sort of I guess... I remember years ago when Tourette's kind of made it into the scene, the national consciousness, what you had was you would have these television shows that might have an episode about somebody with Tourette's, and it would be this guy who just had these uncontrollable outbursts of inappropriate language and makes everybody very uncomfortable and freaks people out. News programs were done about this and that's actually - while it is very real for some people, that's actually a pretty rare type of Tourette syndrome tic. The most common tics are movement ticks. And a lot of people would just look at him and say he's just twitching, although sometimes it's a lot bigger than a twitch. Sometimes it's an actual larger movement with a body part, like an arm flailing around or something like that. And the thing that is hard for people to understand is it's movement as well as vocalization. So it doesn't have to be words. It can be just clicking noise or things that you do with your mouth and your throat. I think the hardest thing for people to understand about Tourette's is that when I tell you it's uncontrollable movements or vocalizations... if I didn't have Tourette's I would just say "well no... just try hard or harder. Just control it." But it's not like that. It's not like all the sudden you think to yourself "oh I'm about to have a a tic or a twitch or a movement or vocalization." That's not how it comes about. It's not like you can try harder - the tics are usually described by medical professionals as uncontrollable, rapid, repetitive. So the rapid is what's key there because it pretty much just happens. It's just boom and there it is. And sometimes it happens over and over and over and over again until, for some strange reason, it stops happening. So it can be very difficult for... it can be a real sticking point for people with Tourette's because they're uncontrollable and they just seemingly come out of nowhere. It is embarrassing. I mean you know because you're doing this thing that nobody else is doing. And even when people aren't looking at you or laughing or making fun of or saying something along the lines of... well, whatever it is that they say that makes you feel alienated... you still know that you're doing this thing and that, if you're in the grocery store, that nobody else around you is doing this. And so you know and you can tell and you can feel this is an odd thing to do. So it's just it's something that for a very very very long time, as far as you know me personally, it was just something that was difficult for me to... it was extraordinarily difficult for me to talk about. I just couldn't talk about it. I mean I'm talking about into my 30s. I just couldn't talk about it.

Peter: [00:10:35] The thing that's amazing about your story is that they're uncontrollable movements.

Jason: [00:10:41] Right.

Peter: [00:10:42] But at an early age you want to be an entertainer.

Jason: [00:10:46] Yeah.

Peter: [00:10:48] You said it was hard for you to talk about, but you had no problem being up on stage in front of people knowing that this is going on but still getting past that point. And maybe I'm naive but I think that's probably a bigger barrier.

Jason: [00:11:07] [laughs] it doesn't make sense, does it?

Peter: [00:11:10] And jumping over that because yeah I mean it's truly amazing that, at 16 years old, you want to become an entertainer and do illusions and sleight of hand, and in front of an audience that is sitting and looking at you.

Jason: [00:11:24] I'm still learning interesting things about myself and I was talking to somebody about the book that I just released recently and he said it seems to me that the theme of your book is that you're constantly challenging yourself to do new things. I never really thought about that, but I've thought about it a lot since that person said that to me. And I realized that he's right. I don't like the status quo. It's very rare for me to do something and get good at it and just keep doing it. Now I do that you. Like with some shows, I work very hard on the show. I have a show called The Card Shark, which is like the one of the main the main things that I do right now. And it's the best work I've ever done. I put the most time into it. It took me years to be able to develop it. And so I do that over and over and over again for groups and for theaters and people that hire me to come in and do it. But at the same time, I don't like just sticking with one thing. I like to feel constantly challenged. I actually think I like the feeling of being uncomfortable, and I know that probably a strange thing but I just like the idea that somehow I can just learn a new skill or try something new. So I think that with the performing... you know I love movies, as we all do when we're kids, and I just think I saw these people in the movies and I thought I want to do that - I can do that! So you know when the opportunity to take a speech and drama class or to go out for a play was there for me, I was like I want to at least try it. Just to see. You know I just didn't think about the tics. I just said I want to be that guy up on the movie screen.

Peter: [00:13:16] For most people, that fear is debilitating to get to that point. And you've jumped over that tenfold, and I'm somewhat the same way. I always like to try new things. I like to make myself uncomfortable - get outside my comfort zone, because that's where the magic happens.

Jason: [00:13:36] Mhm.

Peter: [00:13:37] But still there's that fear and being able to manage that fear and still be able to do it, all the while knowing that failure is an option.

Jason: [00:13:45] Oh yeah. No failure is absolutely absolutely an option. And it's sometimes a very painful option. Yeah. I mean you know what's interesting is that I've recently - my most recent thing that I've been working on is... in my shows, I'm not inherently funny. That doesn't mean I don't have humor and laughs in my shows, or even in my speaking, because I do - I do have humor - but I'm not the type of performer that people look at and say "oh he's just funny." That's not me. I'm not naturally funny. So I just basically said you know what? I'm going to start going to some open mic nights to see if I can be funny. And you know it's terrifying because the idea that you're going to tell somebody "hey I'm going to come up here and try to make you laugh and that's the one and only goal," and then you step up there and people are like alright,

make me laugh. It's like oh my gosh. And so you know I think the thing about failure - and I'm learning this through this experience with just attempting some some standup comedy - but I've also learned it in other places. I think the thing about failure is that ultimately failure is not nearly as painful, and it's not nearly as bad, as your imagination makes it out to be. Yes sometimes it is difficult. And yes sometimes it hurts. But what is in my head, what is in our head about how bad it's going to be if I fail, is never that bad... except in rare rare rare cases.

Peter: [00:15:24] Right. So you're in Nashville, correct?

Jason: [00:15:27] I am in Nashville.

Peter: [00:15:28] So you have to look up a friend of mine who I've interviewed on my podcast that I've been on his. His name is Rik Roberts. He actually does workshops and stuff down in Zanies in Nashville. He's also a member the National Speakers Association. He's got a podcast called School of laughs. Great resource for writing comedy. And another guest of mine he's got a book out there who's been read by, I want to say, millions. Her name is Judy Carter. And the book is.

Jason: [00:15:57] Oh, I have one of her books. I have one of her books!

Peter: [00:15:59] Do you have The Comedy Bible?

Jason: [00:16:01] I'm actually looking at it right now!

Peter: [00:16:03] Bingo.

Jason: [00:16:03] I do. I do.

Peter: [00:16:04] I've had that book forever. That's one of my go-to books when I want to refresh my mind on the actual art of writing stand up, versus the art of standing up in front of people trying to make them laugh. But those are two great resources. You need look up Rik. He is a great guy. Got a great school. Does workshops and stuff. And he's a clean comedian and he's a good guy.

Jason: [00:16:32] That's great yeah. You know what it's funny. His name keeps popping up. Different people have told me "you should talk to Rik Roberts," and I'm going to have to reach out to him because, when I hear the same thing from multiple people, I know that somebody is trying to tell me something.

Peter: [00:16:48] And I applaud you for doing something that is like, to me, jumping out of an airplane without a parachute - doing standup comedy and going to these open mics and and trying to make people laugh. And, in a lot of cases, trying to make drunks laugh, and they can be not nice at times.

Jason: [00:17:07] Oh yeah.

Peter: [00:17:07] It can be brutal, but it does... I don't get to do it as much as I would like to, but I still try to go out there every now and then and find an open mic and work on a set I've been

working on for 15 years. And it does feel good it does feel awkward, but there's a lot to learn from doing stand up.

Jason: [00:17:30] Oh gosh. I tell you... I'm used to, because I've been doing magic for so long, I'm used to succeeding at it because I know that I can get up on stage and do well with magic because I've just done it a lot. I've got that skill set underneath my belt. But with stand up, it is just so unique and different and it's just... and I tell you I'm not a nervous type of performer. I don't get nervous. But when I do stand up I literally I'll be sitting there right before I walk up going why are you doing this to yourself? Why do this? You don't need to do this. This is not necessary. You got a good job as a magician. [laughs]

Peter: [00:18:09] [laughs] Oh my god you're in my head too. Because I do the same thing. Why am I doing this? I'm 56 years old. Why do I think I'm doing this!

Jason: [00:18:16] Yeah. Yeah. What's fun is that I'm always nervous before I walk up on stage trying to do comedy, but after I walk off, even if I didn't do great, I always feel better. I mean I've had some times where I was like I didn't get any laughs at the stuff that I thought should have gotten laughs, and it's frustrating, but at the end of the day you're not standing in front of a firing squad. So you may feel like it, but it's not going to kill you. So you know go a little bit of failure is frustrating, but it's not death.

Peter: [00:18:53] That's true... You've got a lot of things going on. We've talked about that. We talked about the speaker. But I'm really curious about this book because you just had it published in the middle of last month. It's out there live. Tell me about the book.

Jason: [00:19:11] So here's how this happened. My buddy convinced me to start talking about Tourette's syndrome and I said OK I'll start talking about it. And one of the next things I did was I connected with one of the TEDx conferences and said basically I sent them a proposal of what I wanted to talk about. And it was me talking about dealing with Tourette Syndrome, and after going back and forth a little bit they said we'd love to have you come speak. So my first actual real speaking gig about Tourette's Syndrome was that a TEDx conference.

Peter: [00:19:48] Wow.

Jason: [00:19:48] Which is just stupid. Why would you do that to yourself?

Peter: [00:19:52] [laughs].

Jason: [00:19:52] You know like really. You know it's like oh this is going to be broadcast on the Internet. This is going to live forever. You are an idiot.

Peter: [00:20:02] Couldn't you start with the Rotary Club or something? Come on.

Jason: [00:20:05] I'm not that guy. I like to literally climb up to - what is it? - the 10 meter platform or whatever. As high as you can go and dive straight into the deep end. That's the law that's the person that I am. I mean that's kind of like when I decided to do Harry Houdini's under water torture cell. So you know I just said OK I'm just going to do it... and So I did it. But we can talk about that in a second if that interests you. But to answer your question: So I decided to do

this TED talk and I prepared just... I used all my skills that I've been honing for two decades. And the TED talk went fantastic. It went really really well. I was very very pleased with it. And then what ended up happening is I started to speak a little bit more after that opportunity. I was talking to a friend, who's one of my trusted advisers. We talk business and creativity all the time. And he said you know in order to really talk about what you talk about, he said why don't you write like a really in-depth bio and try to remember as much about being a kid with Tourette syndrome as possible. And that idea really stuck with me. And little by little I started just kind of writing down instances and stories, and then at some point I looked down and I was like wait a minute... I may have the outline of a book here. And so this idea of just trying to make sure that I was doing the best presentations that I could germinated into kind of the outline and the beginnings of a book, and then once I saw what it looked like and I went OK now I just have to tell these stories. Now I have to explain what it's like. Now I can talk about this stuff. That's kind of how the book came about, because I just wanted to make sure that, when I was talking to people, that I was giving them the best information, the most powerful stories, the techniques that I've learned over the years on how to deal with stuff and how to overcome the impossible things that I've overcome. And so that's how the book came about - it came about because I really wanted to you know expand my talk. You know it's an opportunity for people learn about Tourette's and part of me wanting to release it... there were three audiences that I really think this book speaks to. There's the folks who like magic and like entertainment and just want to hear about some incredible stories that I've had, adventures that I've had, traveling around the world and crazy stunts that I've done and stuff like that. And so it speaks to those folks and it's a fun read. It really is. But then there's the folks - the family members and the people around the world that have Tourette syndrome - and I know what that's like. I know what it's like to be a kid. You know you're just trying to figure out how to deal with it - how and how do you get through the next day because you're having such a hard day and you're having these twitches and it's uncontrollable and it literally feels like hell. And so I wanted to speak to those folks. I want to speak to the parents and the siblings who have somebody that they're not really sure how to support the best way that they can. And so I said OK if I share my story maybe they will learn, from my point of view, some new ways to help their loved one, their child, their sibling, whatever. So there's the magic audience, there's the Tourette syndrome audience, and then there's the audience of folks who want to push themselves. Folks who want to get outside of their comfort zone. Folks who need some inspiration - need a message of inspiration to let them know that they're not alone; let them know that the difficulties that they deal with in their life - that everybody deals with certain difficulties and need a push, or maybe a little bit of motivation, to get outside of their comfort zone and make some incredible things happen. So that's really - those are the folks that I hope this book gets in their hands.

Peter: [00:24:14] So as I'm hearing this I have to ask a couple of questions. One, you mentioned that in this book you talk about your magic.

Jason: [00:24:23] Oh yeah. A lot.

Peter: [00:24:24] And you said you said these two words, crazy stunts, which caught my attention. So I want to hear a story about some of these crazy stunts.

Jason: [00:24:32] So I write on several chapters on my experience attempting to escape from Harry Houdini's under water torture cell. The underwater torture cell is the most famous thing that Houdini created and escaped from in his shows, and basically it is kind of like a phone

booth except the door is on the very top of the phone booth. And you you have to be lowered into the cell from above it. And you're lowered in upside down because your ankles are locked into the top stocks. So you're head down being lowered into this basically a telephone booth filled with water. And then the stocks are locked onto the top and you have to escape before you run out of oxygen. So I attempted that and what ended up happening... I mean I talk a lot about it. I talk about how I trained for it. I talk about some of the the unexpected things that happen as I was figuring out how to how to do it. I basically... I sold this idea to a local mall, which was brand new at the time, and it was the biggest nicest mall in Nashville. And I sold them this idea as a Halloween stunt because they had just opened and I said this would be a great way to get people out. And they said We love this. I'd never done a Harry Houdini's underwater torture cell.

Peter: [00:26:06] [laughs]

Jason: [00:26:06] But I was like Let's do it because I'm a magician and I like to push my boundaries and so we did it on Halloween. And what's crazy is that I had been doing a lot of press, as far as trying to get the word out - sending out press releases and getting the word out and all that stuff - and then one of the local news stations shows up to shoot the thing. And I was able to coordinate with them so that I got dunked literally - They cut to a live feed of me hanging above the water torture cell and then maybe two seconds later I get dunked into the water torture cell. So now the live 6 o'clock news here in Nashville... you know the audience has just seen me get dunked into a water torture cell. So now they can't cut away. They're stuck with this shot for like two and a half minutes trying to figure out if I'm going to drown or if I'm going to escape from this water torture cell. It was epic. It was fantastic.

Peter: [00:27:07] Wow. And clearly, since we're talking, you did not drown.

Jason: [00:27:12] Well I guess you guess you got it all figured out. I did drown.

Peter: [00:27:17] You did escape?

Jason: [00:27:19] I did escape. Yeah. It was pretty awesome. I did escape. Yeah.

Peter: [00:27:23] Because I guess my one question in this is, if at some time during this process, if you see that it's not going to work and you're running out of oxygen, is that like a safe word or is there some way...

Jason: [00:27:37] I had signals with my team. I had an entire team of people on the outside. I had signals with my team - they could've got me out. Like it would have been a little bit humiliating, but yeah.

Peter: [00:27:47] But you escaped.

Jason: [00:27:49] You have to read the book to find out. [laughs]

Peter: [00:27:52] [laughs] Well I do know that you didn't drown. I do know that.

Jason: [00:27:55] That's right. Exactly.

Peter: [00:27:57] Wow. So yeah I could see that's kind of crazy, since you've never done it before, even though you trained for it.

Jason: [00:28:03] Oh you just reminded me: I write in the book about the entire experience. But at the end of that specific story there is a link to my website where you can watch the video clip. So if you're on - I don't know if you're currently online - but if you're in front of your computer and you're looking at my web site, where there's a link that says the book, if you scroll down that page below the information about the book there there's a clip of me doing that. The actual video clip from the news is on that page.

Peter: [00:28:34] Water torture cell live. I see it. I'll have to watch this after we're done. Holy Toledo. Man that's that's... That's gutsy. I got nothing compared to that. So crazy stunts, and then the second thing I think that even bigger than the crazy stunts is being a kid with Tourette's and having to overcome so many obstacles. Are there some stories that you can - I know there are some stories that you can share on this one. What comes to mind first that you could share of my audience?

Jason: [00:29:14] You know I remember instances where it was painful to deal with the Tourette's because people would say things and you know really when you're a teenager, or a young kid, you're not really trying to stand out from the crowd. Now you know if you can become well-known because you're like a quarterback of the football team or something like that then that's one thing, but most of the time what you're trying to do is you're just trying to go about your life and trying to hang out with your buddies and you don't want people to point you out or alienate you or anything like that. And I remember instances when when people would say things... I mean you know it happens. It's two things. Number one my mom was amazing because she, when I was really little, when I was in grade school, she would go to my teacher before the school year started and and let them know what I was going to be dealing with, and she was willing to basically, if she had to, she would have gone to war for me you know because she wanted to make sure that I had everything as best in my favor. But you know I think one of the most interesting things was when I went out for the play. Because I went out for what was called the junior-senior play. It was the very first play... I was enrolled in speech and drama class as a Junior. First year I'd done that. The Junior-Senior year play was in the fall. So I had been maybe in class for six weeks or something like that. The teacher announces we're going to have auditions for this play. I think OK - that's why I'm in this class. I want to try to give this a try. Sounds fun. And I go out for this play and I'm up there and I've got a piece of paper with lines on it and I'm reading lines with other people and I'm having this audition, and you know the first day of the audition, after it's all over, the teacher says I'm going to post the callbacks on the bulletin board. Callbacks just basically means the people who she wants to come back the following day and audition again. It's kind of narrowing the field down so she can select who's going to get what role. And the next day I saw the bulletin board and my name was on the callback list. So I'd done well enough. And I was in the running for a potential part. So I go back that night. Audition some more, and what was interesting is just that when I was on this stage it just felt so natural. It felt like it was the place I was supposed to be. And you know at the end of the auditions she says I'll post the cast list tomorrow. I go to the bulletin board, go to the list, and my name is on the list. I had never auditioned for a play before. I'd never done anything like that and all of a sudden I have the lead role of the junior senior play.

Peter: [00:32:00] The lead role?!

Jason: [00:32:01] Yeah. The lead role.

Peter: [00:32:04] Gosh! Wow.

Jason: [00:32:06] And you know what's really interesting is that I didn't know what to expect. I remember standing back the opening night of the show and I'm like am I supposed to be nervous? What am I supposed to feel like? And I just walked out on stage and the twitches and all that stuff that you know may have driven me crazy when I was in another setting... that stuff literally was just gone. It is like a magic trick happened, It's like I was exactly where I was supposed to be and I was doing exactly what I was supposed to be doing, and I was perfect on stage and got that huge round of applause at the end of the show and I'm hooked at this point. And you know that's it. That's all she wrote.

Peter: [00:32:56] Wow. So when you were auditioning and rehearsing and practicing... as you said to do when you walked on the stage all the all the the neurological tics and stuff went away. Did it also go away during that point? Or was it the first time you were in front of that audience and getting ready to do a performance for the first time not as a rehearsal.

Jason: [00:33:20] You know what... what happens with the tics is that - and I've learned that it happens with other people that have Tourette syndrome as well - when you are extremely focused on something, when you're like really dialed in on something and you're 100 percent locked in hyper focus most of the text just kind of goes away. What ends up happening, though, is you're not going to maintain that level of focus. When you let down your focus, when you're tired physically or mentally, the tics really really kick back in like doubly as hard.

Peter: [00:33:59] Oh wow.

Jason: [00:33:59] Like you're going to pay for it later, but you have hyper focus at the time that you need it.

Peter: [00:34:06] Wow. Just based on this conversation I'm thinking your mind's gone I don't care for trying to be you know twice as bad. This is just... it felt so natural to be there. I don't care about the back side of it.

Jason: [00:34:21] Oh yeah yeah yeah. That's very true. I'm that type of a person where it's like oh I don't care what the repercussions are if I'm doing what I'm supposed to be doing, and this is, I'm going to just do it.

Peter: [00:34:32] So do you do you take the kind of message... So we we've got overcome adversity, and just these two examples alone, and you take that message out to the corporate audiences during your keynote presentations. And I can and I can only imagine the amount of people that come up to you afterwards and all but briefly share their story or how what you just shared with them made them see things in a different light.

Jason: [00:35:00] It's one of the great pleasures that I didn't know was going to happen - to get to talk to other people about the things that they're dealing with. And I tell you it is highly emotional for me to to have somebody come up and be willing to share with me this very

personal... sometimes very personal pain that they're dealing with. And I get really really emotional about it because I know how difficult it is to talk about this stuff, because I didn't want to for a very long time. And so to hear people who because I shared my message and because I shared with them, and when I share my message I share some of the principles and some of the techniques that I've learned over the years, and some of the things that I've just kind of naturally developed over the years, on how to do the impossible in your life. And so when they're telling me... you know I had a lady talk to me about how she was just dealing with unbelievable pain after the loss of a child and she is telling me about how my talk gave her new hope and helped her see a new direction for what she needed to be out there doing. I mean I'm sitting there and I'm I'm crying. I mean it's so emotional, but it's one of the great blessings of being able to to share my message with other people.

Peter: [00:36:23] And have that type of impact on other on other people.

Jason: [00:36:27] Right.

Peter: [00:36:28] I can't imagine... I've had people come up to me after a few of my presentations, when I talk about my son and not listening to him and finding out that he had ADHD and I was just being a really bad parent because I wasn't listening to the signs, and people have shared that with me and I got emotional... but I can't imagine somebody saying the death of a child and then how you're... I would be crying just as hard.

Jason: [00:36:54] Yeah yeah.

Peter: [00:36:56] But it's amazing that, for all the time you didn't want to talk about it, but the effect that you're having on people because you are talking about it. I mean that's... That's awesome.

Jason: [00:37:08] Well thank you.

Peter: [00:37:08] How many people you have helped and how many people you will be helping has got to be overwhelming at times when you think about it, especially after as long a time that you didn't want to talk about it, but that message is so powerful and so inspiring that I want to thank your friend who who pushed you to start talking about that because man you are making a big impact on people's lives.

Jason: [00:37:37] Well thank you. I really appreciate you saying that. It means a lot to me and it's good for me to hear that sometimes. And you know this: when you're out there and you're just trying to get your message in front of as many people as possible, sometimes you deal with frustrations and difficulties and certain opportunities open up and other opportunities that you wanted to happen don't happen. So I really appreciate you saying that because sometimes, when I'm dealing with frustration just trying to get the word out there, it's good to remember that that the message is important and it's getting in front of people that need to hear it. And I tell you it does drive me to put this message in front of as many people as I possibly can because I've... And it's not even what I think. It's what I know now based on my experience. There are a lot of people who need to hear this.

Peter: [00:38:31] Oh yeah and it's it's amazing. I mean if you just take this message of doing the impossible and overcoming adversity and you take that to a corporate market... I mean just think about all the adversity people go through in corporate America and just trying to survive a day. And you've got an overbearing boss and you've got these dreams and you've got all this stuff going on. And I believe people, at some point in time, they give up and they need a voice to inspire them again to not give up and to keep on trying, and to keep on trying to do the impossible. And you're that voice.

Jason: [00:39:11] Well I appreciate it. I really do. And you know in lieu of actually being at every event I hope that the folks that hear this podcast, I hope that they hear the folks that hear my story or see something on line, I hope that they do have the opportunity to check out the book because they can get that message of hope on their own time. By reading the book at their own pace they can laugh and maybe cry a little bit, but certainly be inspired. And you know what? I just realized we've just been talking about the book. The book is titled the same thing that my keynote is titled: You Can Do The Impossible, Too! So I want to make sure we knew that.

Peter: [00:39:54] And what I will do is we will put links in the show notes to your Web site, which is www.JasonMichaelsMagic.com, and I'm looking at the Web site right now. You can buy the book either ebook or paper form on Amazon.com.

Jason: [00:40:16] That's right. Absolutely.

Peter: [00:40:18] Obviously those of you who have been listening to this you should be so moved that, as soon as you finish listening, you go out and buy his book. Great message. And go to his Web site. I mean it's a well done Web site, and you know it's fascinating because it opens up about the card shark and it has a great picture of him in a gray suit and then some smoke comes out.

Jason: [00:40:47] [laughs]

Peter: [00:40:47] It's a really entertaining Web site that talks about you, and then there's a picture of you doing the TEDxChattanooga thing. I mean it's very well done. It's a great book. Wonderful message. And if you happen to be a meeting planner or a corporate executive listening to this podcast, get a hold of Jason. Book him for an event. If you need an inspiring message, he's the man. Look him up.

Jason: [00:41:18] You're the best. Thank you so much. I appreciate it.

Peter: [00:41:21] Jason, it has been a wonderful opportunity to meet you. I hope that our paths cross here in the near future. And if you ever get ready to do an open mic night let me know because, if I have some of some free time, it's a Southwest flight. I've got Miles on Southwest. I'll come down and perform with you.

Jason: [00:41:46] I love it. I love it. That's great. That's awesome! I fully expect to be running into you sometime soon. This type of stuff - the way people connect. This isn't random stuff. This is the way it's supposed to be I'm sure we'll meet up soon.

Peter: [00:42:01] I'm sure we will too, and I can't thank you enough for sharing your story with my audience. It's very powerful and I wish you all the best. And I can't wait to meet you face to face. But please don't put me in the Houdini get out of the water thing.

Jason: [00:42:19] [laughs] You're all good. You're safe.

Peter: [00:42:21] Alright. I appreciate it. Thank you so very much Jason. It's been a pleasure speaking with you.

Jason: [00:42:26] Yes Sir.

[music]

Peter: [00:42:29] I'd like to thank Jason again for sharing his powerful and inspiring story with us. As he discussed, his ability to overcome his fears and deal with the adversity because he could do the impossible is a parallel message to the power of improvisation and Yes, And. It boils down to having a strong positive mental attitude and taking on adversity and your fears head on. As I like to say, and as Yes And proves, moving forward in a positive direction. Listen, learn, and learn. I have partnered with the Maryland Association of CPAs and the Business Learning Institute to bring [an exciting new learning opportunity for accounting professionals to earn CPE credits](#). You can earn up to one CPE credit for each completed podcast episode purchased for only \$29 through the American Association of CPAs and the Business Learning Institute [self-study website](#). The podcast episodes are mobile friendly. Open your browser on your smartphone, tablet, or computer, Go to the MACPA and BLI self-study account, and listen to an episode. Take the review and final exam while you're working out or after listening to an episode on your commute to and from work - It's that easy! While all Improv is no Joke podcasts are available on my website, only those purchased through the MACPA and BLI self-study Web site are eligible for CPE credit. You can get detailed instructions by visiting my website at www.PeterMargaritis.com and clicking on the graphic "Improv is no Joke for CPE credit" on my home page. I hope you enjoy this exciting and flexible new way of earning CPE credit. Remember you can subscribe to my podcast on [iTunes](#), [Stitcher](#), and [Google Play](#). If you'd like to purchase an autographed copy of my book *Improv is no Joke: Using Improvisation to Create Positive Results in Leadership and Life*, for \$14.99 with free shipping, please go to my website, PeterMargaritis.com, and you'll see the graphic on the homepage to purchase my book. Please allow 14 days for shipping. You can also follow me on social media. You can find me on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) or [Instagram](#). In episode 58, I interviewed Patrick Donadio, who's taken his decades of experience and crafted a results-based process for his new book, *Communicating with Impact*. Focused on improving communications, increasing profits, and boosting performance in less time. Thank you again for listening and remember to use the principles of improvisation - and You Can Do The Impossible, Too! - So you can achieve your goals, all the while not letting adversity stand in your way.

--