

## JUSTIN

One of the biggest changes for me was really focusing in on what I wanted my life to look like. I didn't want to get caught in a cycle where I'm just going to work and live, live a mundane life. I really wanted to make sure that I was intentional with how I was spending my time. You know, I don't mind going to work a job or anything like that, but I want to make sure I believe in it. I don't mind going to spend time with this person, but I want to make sure that this conversation is fruitful. And so one of the biggest changes was making sure that I'm intentional about how I'm spending my time, and I'm spending the majority of it the way I want to. So, as opposed to the beginning where, you know, spoken word was, I mean always took it pretty serious, but now, it needs to be. I love doing it. I'm good at it. People recognize me for it. I think I add value to the world in that way. This is something I want to focus on. This is something that I want to spend more of my time. I want to take it more serious. So how can we take this thing and turn it into a business and really enterprise it and figure out how we can scale this.

And so that was the biggest change for me is molding my life and my wife's life into a life that we create and not just something that we just looked up and kind of fell into. And these aren't things we're necessarily taught. There's just stuff that, you know, you live and you learn. So here I am talking about, you know, creating the life I want to live at 34. You know, up until then, it was just like, this is what you're supposed to do. You're supposed to go to school, do this, do this. But the old model that I was given isn't necessarily the way, just because everyone's doing it. If I have a vision and a path for myself that I think can get me to where I want to be, then that's what we doing.

My wife got pregnant, or I found out she was pregnant, April 2021. So during that time, I just got more focused on the things that I wanted to do. I wanted to make sure I had something that I could build for myself. And so, I mean, I've been doing spoken word poetry since 2015, but I don't know if I've ever really taken it as serious as I have in the last couple of years. And so, that was one of the biggest changes, trying to hone in on really what I wanted to do, what I wanted my life to look like. Uh, doing stuff like creating a five-year plan, which a few years ago, I probably would have said that was corny, but now these things are real, and I have to do that to make sure my family and I are on the up and up and making sure we're achieving the goals that we want to, together, individually. And yeah, I feel like I just had to get more serious.

I wrote a poem. It's called "My Son's Eyes", and it's basically talking about just, just looking into his eyes and seeing the innocence, seeing him look back at me. It puts so much more inside of me. I want to do so much more, not only for him, but just for myself. I just look at him and see so much promise and so much, so many possibilities. I don't want to lose that for myself. And it sounds cliché, but he

literally makes me want to be the best version of myself. And everybody says the best version of themselves, but he makes me want to be the best in every facet of my life from being the best husband, being the best father, being the best poet, being the best writer, being the best everything. Uh, because you know, how can I tell him to aspire to the unimaginable if I don't prove it to him? I can't tell him to be the best if I'm not doing it because I'm pretty sure he's watching me a lot more than he's communicating to me right now. So I want to make sure my actions are communicating everything I want them to.

The biggest lesson that I learned that I would like to instill in my son is to live your life for you. Now that doesn't mean neglect your responsibilities and your loved ones, just because you want to get high and go to a party or something like that. What it means is the steps that people are going to give you, there might be some practicality in there. It might, they might be helpful. But at the end of the day, you're responsible for the life that you live and the decisions that you make. You have to live with those decisions, not anyone else. So live your life the best way that you know how. Be the best version of yourself that you know how to be. You're going to get a lot of noise. People are going to tell you to go this way, go that way. But at the end of the day, you're going to have to be able to sit with yourself and figure out what's that inner voice telling you. And you're going to have to follow that in the midst of all the noise.