

Ep. 101: A MILLION DOLLARS IN A DAY?!
With Corey Arvinger, CEO of Support Black Colleges



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Rachel Rodgers

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Ep. 101: A MILLION DOLLARS IN A DAY?! **With Corey Arvinger, CEO of Support Black Colleges**

Rachel: And I think making quick decisions is the mark of a powerful CEO, right? I think a lot of people think about it forever, hem and haw for months, and it's like the opportunities are passing you by while you're thinking about it. Or, you know, we're so worried about it's going to cost me X. Okay, but what is it costing you to not make that move?

Corey: Exactly.

Rachel: How much are you losing by playing it safe all the time?

You want to make more money? You are in the right place. Welcome to the *Hello Seven Podcast*, that's seven as in seven figures. I'm your host, Rachel Rodgers. On this show, it's all about you and your money. We talk about how to maximize your earning potential, how to make better financial decisions, and how to find your million-dollar idea, that genius business idea that's going to make you a whole lot more money. I'm here to show you how to expand your income and expand your confidence, power, and joy.

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Rachel: Hello, and welcome to the *Hello Seven Podcast*. I'm sitting here with my new best friend, Corey Arvinger, of Support Black Colleges. So we're going to hear how he built that brand. And y'all just going to listen in as we have, you know, friend talk, okay? Y'all get to hang out with us, all right?

Corey: that's it, we're just kicking it.

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Rachel: That's what this episode is going to be, all right?

Corey: We're just kicking it, hanging out, having a good old time.

Rachel: That's right. That's right. So tell me, what I'm interested to know is like how did you fall upon this business? Like what gave you this idea? Is this your first business?

Corey: So this is technically not my first business.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: I was an entrepreneur before I knew what that meant, and I'm sure most of us were.

Rachel: Yes. Like you was like hustling?

Corey: Yeah, I was like hustling. Two things, two businesses that really stood out to me that I used to do.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: When I was in middle school I used to sell these icees. So you get some Kool Aid. You make Kool Aid and you pour it into the Styrofoam cups.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And I used to sell those for 25 cents a cup.

Rachel: Listen, you could have sold them for 50 cents.

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Corey: I could have, but I was scared. I didn't know, I wanted to get by.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And so, you know, you lick it and then you just tear the Styrofoam off as you get to the bottom. I used to sell that.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And then at high school when I was at my old school, Michelle Obama was doing this healthy snack thing and I was upset, I ain't going to lie. I wanted to honey buns, the oatmeal cream pie.

Rachel: She was killing—

Corey: She was tearing me up. So I used to go to the dollar store and buy snacks and I used to sell them at school.

Rachel: Yes, you mean like, “You all ain't about these healthy snacks? I got something for y'all.”

Corey: I used to come home with empty duffle bags, like hundreds of dollars in my pocket. So that's technically my first businesses.

Rachel: This is in high school?

Corey: In high school.

Rachel: I'm obsessed.

Corey: In high school.

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Rachel: Listen, I love a high schooler with, you know, just mad money in their pocket.

Corey: Yeah, I was tired of asking my mom for stuff, and I also worked at Abercrombie.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So I got a little money there, I got a little money in school. So it all kind of came together.

Rachel: Yes. But one question for you though.

Corey: Yeah.

Rachel: You sound like you was focused on getting your ones, right?

Corey: For sure.

Rachel: Why? Because some people aren't, right? Like that's how I was too growing up. I was like, "Where them dollars at? What moves do I need to make? Who I need to work for? Yes, I'll take those extra hours. Yes, I'll do the double shift." Right? because I wanted as much money in my pocket as possible because I needed it.

My parents weren't giving me anything. They had nothing to give me. You know?

Corey: I tell you.

Rachel: Yes.

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Corey: And that's the thing, so I grew up in a single parent home.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So I saw my mom like be a teacher and then like she used to work at a hotel part time, she worked at Cracker Barrel part time.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So I'm like, "What do I look like taking that money from her after I see she trying to provide?"

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And so for me I'm like, "Well, let me just do me and don't worry about me." So I would like pay my own cell phone bill and do those things.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: Like I'd take the little easy things off the plate and, you know, basketball shoes for when I played and things of that nature.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And so it became fun for me. Like she'd be like, "Oh, you got how much money?"

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: I'm like, "Yeah, we're going to have to eat on me tonight."

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Rachel: Yeah, exactly.

Corey: It felt good, I liked that feeling, myself.

Rachel: Yeah, your mom's like, "Let me hold something."

Corey: Facts. Facts. And you know, I slid some to her. But you know, now I'm like, "Hey mom, remember when I was in high school and I lent you? I need that \$20 back."

Rachel: Exactly, with interest please.

Corey: So I think I've always had it in me, but I think from seeing my mom struggle, it was like, "Nah, it can't be like this." And so that's what drives me.

Rachel: Yes. You know what? You saying you are from single parent household, I just had it clicked in my mind that so am I. I mean, I grew up with two parents until I was 12, but my father passed away when I was 12 and then it was just my mom, right? And she was struggling. And she was struggling very much because my father passed away. That was all she knew, she'd been with him since she was 16.

Corey: Oh wow.

Rachel: She knew nothing else. So she was like, she didn't realize how much he was holding things down even when he was there, you know? So I think that made me be like, "I'm going to know all about money. I'm going to keep money in my pocket." So I was always hustling to like, you know, just same thing, buy my own clothes, buy my own food, just take care of myself.

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I was a bank teller. I feel like everybody worked at a bank.

Corey: Oh wow. I applied for the bank jobs, I didn't get them though.

Rachel: Listen, the best thing about the bank job for me was seeing people's accounts with \$90,000 in it, \$200,000 and being like, "How do you accumulate that sum of money?" Like that was mind blowing to me.

Corey: That's interesting.

Rachel: But it's like I needed that. Or you ever go to an ATM and you see somebody left their receipt.

Corey: Yeah, yeah.

Rachel: And you see their balance and you're like, "You got 36 grand in your bank account? How you got so much money sitting there?" So it's just like the idea that people do have money just sitting.

Corey: That's good. That's good.

Rachel: I needed that. I needed that, right? Like I needed somebody to show me that, I needed to know that that was real, that that was possible. So that got me focused on money like, okay, it's possible. So let me just make sure I educate myself and know everything that I can about it.

Corey: Yeah, definitely. I mean, and it's so funny because you can see the opposite side of that too.

Rachel: Yes.

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Corey: You could see somebody with the chains on and the Gucci and the Louis and then be like, “\$20 in your account? What you doing?”

Rachel: Exactly.

Corey: So you get to see both sides of it, I think that’s pretty interesting.

Rachel: Yeah. Yes, that's true too, right? Like the overdraft account, like that was my account. My account stayed overdraft. I mean, I didn't have Gucci and Louis because I couldn't afford it.

Corey: Right, I mean, you know.

Rachel: I wish I could. I used to have a fake Gucci purse, like when I was a kid. I don't know where I got it from.

Corey: All right, listen, the fakes are actually selling a lot better than the real one sometimes.

Rachel: I believe it.

Corey: They’re like popular now. So all the resellers and the fakes out there, you got a chance.

Rachel: Listen, as a former intellectual property lawyer I’m like, “This is all wrong. This is just wrong.”

Corey: We’ll skip that one. don’t listen to what I just said.

Rachel: Listen, we’re not supporting that, okay?

Corey: Right.

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Rachel: Because we don't want people doing the same thing to us, right?

Corey: Hello.

Rachel: We want our creative works protected as well.

Corey: That's true.

Y'all, Black Friday is coming and I know you want to make some extra money before the year ends. I'm going to tell you exactly how to do it inside The Club I am teaching my Black Friday course, a special training just for you including a group coaching call. So you need to get in The Club. Do it right now so that you are ready to get this money on Black Friday.

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Rachel: Speaking of creative work, so how did you land on this idea?

Corey: So one thing that you'll learn about me is I'm an impulse doer.

Rachel: Oh, no wonder we're same-same.

Corey: Impulse. Everything for me is impulse. I mean, like look how we got here today, it just happened, right?

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: I bought my house on impulse. I bought a dog on impulse. I moved to Atlanta on impulse. So this is the same thing.

Rachel: First of all, okay, I want to reframe that.

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Corey: Yeah.

Rachel: I don't think it's impulse. I think you're following your gut and you make quick decisions.

Corey: That is exactly it, I agree.

Rachel: And I think making quick decisions is the mark of a powerful CEO, right? I think a lot of people think about it forever, hem and haw for months. And it's like the opportunities are passing you by while you thinking about it. Or, you know, we're so worried about well, it's going to cost me X. Okay, but what is it costing you to not make that move?

Corey: Exactly.

Rachel: How much are you losing by playing it safe all the time?

Corey: Me and my mom have these conversations and I'm like, "You're trying to show up perfect instead of being present."

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: Like why are you trying to be so perfect? Just be present and then everything will work itself out in the present.

Rachel: Yes, exactly. And just trust that you can handle whatever gets thrown at you. Like you got this.

Corey: Look, we have 100% success rate in life so far.

Rachel: Right.

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Corey: Everyday we've made it. Even the days we thought we weren't, we made it.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So I just feel like everything's going to work out the way it's supposed to work out.

Rachel: Yep, and you know what? There are studies, scientific studies that show when you think like that, you actually make it so, right?

Corey: Cool.

Rachel: Right? So if you are constantly thinking it's not going to work out, it's going to be a failure. This is going to be a mess. It's going to be a hot mess. Oh, it's a disaster, right? When we use language like that all the time, we actually manifest that in our lives.

Corey: We do.

Rachel: So it's like if your thoughts are that powerful, change the thoughts.

Corey: Exactly.

Rachel: Start with that, right?

Corey: Easy.

Rachel: Start thinking positively.

Corey: Easy steps.

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Rachel: Yes, and just tell yourself, you know what? Even if you're like, "I have no clue how I'm going to make this work, but I got this." Just keep lying to yourself.

Corey: That's true. I've been there many times.

Rachel: Listen, that's my whole strategy, is lying to myself until I figure it out.

Corey: There it is. I'm so over it, like that's all you need to know.

Rachel: Exactly, that's all the gems you need.

Corey: Definitely, I agree 100%. And even with this, like when I was starting and I just wanted something different from everybody else.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: It was homecoming time, I was trying to be fresh and I'm like, "Yo, everybody got the same things."

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And so it started with a simple logo, just like Support Black Colleges. My cousin helped me make it because he was like the more graphic design specialist. And so came up with the logo, just screen printed it on one t-shirt. And the response I got from it was like, "Oh, where did you get that from? That's dope, that's dope." In my mind I'm like, "People want it, start making some money."

Rachel: You're like people start turning like cha-ching, cha-ching.

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Corey: Oh, it was instantly. Instantly, that's all I saw is like in the cartoons, like money walking around. That's all I saw. And it was like, I don't sell snacks anymore, you know what I'm saying?

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: I'm in college, my new hustle. And it began there, I went to a local print shop, got some shirts made. And that's kind of how it started, just very simply. I wasn't in school to have a clothing line.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: I actually wanted to work in the NBA doing like broadcasting.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So this is not my life plan.

Rachel: Right.

Corey: But it was God's plan.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So that's why I'm here doing what I'm doing. But yeah, it just started so simple. I think so many people were like, "Corey, how'd you start, man? How many years did you prepare?"

Rachel: None.

Corey: I just jumped in.

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Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And I'm learning as I go along.

Rachel: Hello, can we talk about this? Like please stop going to the University of research forever.

Corey: Oh my gosh.

Rachel: You know what I mean?

Corey: Yeah.

Rachel: Like, please stop. Like stay out of that institution because while research is valuable and it's good to do some homework, the homework is really done when you are doing it.

Corey: It's the best.

Rachel: You could read all day long, you could read every book there is about business, but you are not going to learn these lessons until you are out there doing it, risking your ego, having people say, "No, I don't want to buy your thing," and rejecting you to your face.

Corey: Been there, been there.

Rachel: Having your website fail, like having team members not do their work and take your money, right? You need to have all of these experiences so that you can become the leader that can have a successful business.

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Corey: And people don't understand that. I mean, any job you apply for, at first you go through like the written portion and do all that and even driving test.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: But then at some point you have to get on the road and try it.

Rachel: Correct.

Corey: At some point you have to be, you have to shadow somebody to get that experience.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And people in their own business they won't do it, but they'll do it for somebody else's business. You have to get out there for your own self.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And if you fail it's okay. Hey, this is a lesson, so let me just switch this, do this, and now we won't have the same result.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So I just think that a lot of people, they'll do it for somebody else. But when it comes to their selves they don't want to try or put themselves out there because of scared of failure, or what people may think, or getting told no. Which you're doing yourself a disservice, honestly.

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Rachel: Yes, I agree. To that end I have a question for you. What was the quality of those first T-shirts? Was it like high quality? Were you like super proud of it? Or were you like, did you have shame?

Corey: No, I wasn't super proud of them, but I wasn't mad at them either.

Rachel: You're like, "That'll do for now."

Corey: That'll work. As soon as the first person bought I said, "This will work." All I needed was one person.

Rachel: That's right.

Corey: Tyler Perry always talks about it, all I needed was one yes.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: All I needed was one yes, and after I had that one yes I was lit.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So now I know. So it was probably like, you know, a regular Hanes, the cheapest one they had.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And then he's like, "All right, how many colors?" And I'm like, well, can we decrease the colors so I can have less, whatever was the cheapest, that's what I wanted.

Rachel: Give me the cheap version.

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Corey: Exactly.

Rachel: Let me see if I can sell it and then we'll come back.

Corey: Because I wasn't, I ain't going to say I wasn't confident, but I wasn't sure. Let's just be honest.

Rachel: Yes. Yes, of course you weren't sure.

Corey: And I'm a college student.

Rachel: Right, but on the other side of this you're like, "Is anybody going to even buy this?"

Corey: Exactly. You know how people say, "Oh, I like this, is I'm going to get this when you drop it." And then you drop it and be like, crickets. That's what I was like, please.

Rachel: First of all, let me just say this to y'all. When somebody tells you, "I love your offer, I can't wait to buy it," they are lying. Until they give you money do not believe them.

Corey: That's right.

Rachel: Listen, doing the market research and saying like, "Oh, will you buy my thing?" And people say yes. Never, never, ever rely on that. You know what you can rely on? Put the website out there, put the buy link out there and say buy it. And do they buy or do they not? That's how you know.

Corey: That's a fact. And in my industry, especially because there's so many HBCUs they would be like, "Make some for my school, we'll buy it. We'll buy it." And I would make something for their first school and no one

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buys it. And I'm like, "Y'all, y'all are wondering why I don't put out specific stuff for your specific school, but I'm losing money because you're not buying."

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: I want to support you and the school, but you got to buy when I put it out there.

Rachel: Right.

Corey: I'm 100% on that wave.

Rachel: So what if you did like a pre-order?

Corey: I've done that many times. I mean I had a pre-order strategy for a long time. I love the strategy because obviously you see what sales, you get it made and you make the minimums or whatever you need, and you win, right?

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: On the opposite side of that, then your production and shipping times have to be tight on that second end.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: Because once you tell your customer a week, two weeks, whatever you tell them, then you have to meet that standard.

Rachel: Yes.

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Corey: So there's positives and negatives to it. Early on when I needed a lot of capital, all pre-order. Everything was a pre-order.

Rachel: Me too. Pre-order all day, every day. I'm like, "I'm going to be creating this thing. Do you want it? Buy it now at a discount."

Corey: That's it. Because once it comes out regular, that price is going to be full price and you got to pay for it, definitely.

Rachel: Exactly. And I'm like I ain't even create that thing unless you say you going to buy it right now.

Corey: if I get less than 10 sales on this I'm going to refund you all 10 and we going to move on.

Rachel: Hello, Because listen, here's the worst thing in the world, for somebody to buy one.

Corey: Oh my god.

Rachel: No, just nobody buy it.

Corey: Oh my god. We just had that like a few weeks ago. Somebody bought, it was like 10 different shirts and one of the shirts only sold like two of them. And I'm like, "I wish I just wouldn't have brought those out."

Rachel: Exactly, because then you just don't make them.

Corey: Because now I have to email and say, "Hey, would you rather take one of these other nine shirts?"

Rachel: Exactly.

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Corey: And you know, luckily, we worked it out. But just still, because I don't want to waste that screen on that one shirt.

Rachel: Exactly. Exactly. And that was for me, like if I'm doing a course and I got two people signed up, now I'm embarrassed because now I've only got two people in the course. And I still got to deliver it for two people. It ain't enough money, it's a disaster.

Corey: Now it got to be buy one get one so people can bring other people in. Trust me, I know.

Rachel: Yes, but you also, like there's another way to reframe that and say in the early days, two people? All right, I'm going to make these two people have the best experience of their lives so that they tell everybody they know. And then let's get it poppin, right? That's how it is in the beginning.

As you get further along, then you can be like, "Nah, I don't want to do that. I got options now."

Corey: Yeah, facts. We got email and text lists, okay? We ain't worried about none of that.

Rachel: Yeah, exactly.

Corey: But before, definitely.

Rachel: Exactly. Okay. So you did your first screen print, right, of the logo in college. Then what happens next? Like how do you grow it to where you're at now?

Corey: So it's a few things that happened.

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Rachel: Okay, so my cousin was working with me. He was in Jersey, he wasn't in school at the time, he was doing graphic design and just stuff like that.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And I was on campus. So I took a guerrilla grassroots marketing approach. I didn't know that's what it was called, but as I've learned now that's what it's called.

Rachel: Yes. First of all, Guerrilla marketing, I actually miss it. You know what I mean?

Corey: Me too. Me too.

Rachel: Now I'm running a, you know, eight figure company, we can't do it that way. I miss the just like let's just do just scrappy, fun.

Corey: Exactly.

Rachel: I still do it every now and then, I'll be like, listen, y'all need to follow me on Instagram, okay? Because every now and then I'll be like, "Yo, I'm doing this. DM me and let's get it poppin."

Corey: Yeah, let's do it. That's the way to do it. I mean, a lot of people are lazy these days too, like who haven't made it yet.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And so that's why I'm still working my tour stops. They're like, "Corey, you still go?" Yeah, I still go because that's how I connect to my person. Like that's how I can talk to you and see what you need and feel

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your energy so that the rest of these 9, 10, 11 months of the year, I still feed off of that.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So, you know, I was doing what we call dorm sweeps, where you get thousands of flyers printed and put them on everybody's door.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So I'd be like, "Tomorrow on the yard we have a pop up from one to four." And the night before I'm flyer everybody's door.

Rachel: How long does that take you to flyer everybody's door?

Corey: Well, initially or once I got good at it?

Rachel: Initially.

Corey: Initially, so at Howard you have a lot of dorms. There's like seven or eight dorms, which have like, you know, 20 rooms on every hall and like 20 floors.

Rachel: Right.

Corey: So initially it would take us like six or seven hours with a team of people.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And we got to the point where we used to race to see who could finish their dorm first.

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Rachel: I love it, gamify it.

Corey: So we'd all get our own dorms and we'd be like, "All right, ready? We're going to start at 11 o'clock, go." I'm talking about it was like some cartoon. You know like the mailman in the cartoon having all the things, it was like that.

Rachel: This actually reminds me of my DM strategy of like, because I like will write the response in Apple notes. And then I just alter the name and plug it in.

Corey: Easy, easy.

Rachel: So it's like copy, paste, copy, paste, copy, paste. Yes.

Corey: That's exactly what it is, just in real time. And so after I got good, it probably went from like six hours to like an hour and a half.

Rachel: Yes, that's amazing.

Corey: I'll pay everybody, you know, \$15 an hour whatever, something like that. They would get their money, but one hoodie is \$50 so I would make all of that back with two sales.

Rachel: We'll see. Here's the thing, right? Like you are doing the work that doesn't scale, right? It's not scalable.

Corey: It's not.

Rachel: And you can't do the scalable thing on day one, right? Like, yeah, yeah, you could, you know, because I think people do like, "I'm just going to post it on social media." No, you need to have individual conversations and

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get people on board. They have no reason to trust you. There's no social proof. There's nothing out there saying that you are somebody to pay attention to.

People have this thing where they think they have the right to somebody's attention.

Corey: Oh, that's good.

Rachel: You know what I mean?

Corey: That's true.

Rachel: You're not entitled to anybody's—

Corey: We're so entitled. We are so entitled.

Rachel: Exactly. Like, oh, no one paid attention to me after one day of posting my thing. I don't feel sorry for you, my friend.

Corey: Yeah, you didn't nurture anybody.

Rachel: Exactly. Put in some work, build a relationship, right? Like, are you going to find your life partner after one date? No. So then you're not going to find your customers after one post, right?

Corey: That's true.

Rachel: Put in some effort, have some real conversations.

Corey: Yeah.

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Rachel: And I think that is the most important work that a CEO needs to do from the beginning and to the end, right? You should always have an ear to your customers. So you going on tour, it makes perfect sense, right? You can talk to your people, you know what they need, and then you can drive the company the rest of the year and know exactly how to fulfill that, right?

And people, like you said, sometimes they can be lazy or they just don't know what they don't know. And they don't know that that needs to be the priority, not figuring out how do I write this funnel? Yes, funnels are important.

Corey: That's all we want to do now.

Rachel: Exactly, I want to funnel this, and I want to social media post that, and reel this. And I'm like, cool, but is that moving the needle and generating sales?

Corey: You're skipping a lot of steps, buddy.

Rachel: You're skipping a lot of steps. Go talk to somebody and find out what they need, and even if they want your product. If you're not here to serve a particular customer, close your business.

Corey: And that's the key word, serve.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: You can't serve somebody properly if you don't know what they need.

Rachel: Exactly.

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Corey: So if I'm vegan and you're serving me meat, it's not that you're doing something wrong, you just don't know what I need or what I want.

Rachel: Yes, because you didn't ask.

Corey: So you're serving me the wrong thing, so you're like, "Well, why aren't you taking it?" Well, you didn't know what I wanted.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So we have to have that conversation first. I'm going to nurture you and I'm going to be able to tell you soon enough what you want without you even saying that you want it because I know you that well.

Rachel: Exactly.

Corey: So that's what we're trying to do.

Rachel: That is the magic of a really strong business, is knowing your customer better than they know themselves.

Corey: Exactly.

Rachel: Where you can speak their language, and they're like, "How do you know what I'm thinking?"

Corey: I love it. I love it.

Rachel: Me too.

Corey: I love it.

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Rachel: I love it when they say that.

Corey: I love it, that's how certain things sell out. It's like I can put out something and I'm like, "This is going to be a hit, I know it."

Rachel: Yeah, it's like your Spidey senses, like this about to pop off.

Corey: Exactly. So we're on the same page on that, for sure.

Rachel: Yes, I love it. Okay, so you're running to the Dorms putting out flyers. Also, you're paying people.

Corey: Yes.

Rachel: So you brought in a team. You could have did all that by yourself and spent a week or whatever.

Corey: Sure.

Rachel: Or you probably wouldn't have been able to get it done in a day. Maybe you would have spent 16 hours trying to make it happen and exhausted yourself.

Corey: Definitely not myself. People are multifaceted, they can do multiple things.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So all I was doing, I was doing I was throwing parties in college too. So I was already well known for that, so I just took people who threw parties and did my flyers, I just said, hey, y'all do these flyers. Same actions, just different thing you were selling.

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Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So I'd be like, "Yo, if y'all do this, y'all can get into the party for free."

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So I made ways that people felt like they were, or I would swipe you in the caf and I would buy you lunch.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: Like in college it's easy, you ain't got to do too much. Lunch, lunch will get me a lot of places, I don't know why. And I had a car, so I would give you a ride somewhere.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: That kind of stuff works. You don't always have to do money, it could be something that's valuable to them that's not monetary.

Rachel: That's such a great lesson. And you were using the resources you had access to right? You got a lot of, you know, free labor or low cost labor around you.

Corey: Right.

Rachel: Because you got college students who are not professionals yet, they're not skilled workers yet, right?

Corey: Yeah, they don't know their value yet.

Rachel: They don't know their value yet, right?

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Corey: Let's be honest, let's be honest.

Rachel: Exactly. So you have all these peers, you have a car that you can use as a resource, you have somebody who you know knows how to make fliers, right? You're just using the resources in front of you and that's what we all have to do.

And that's the sad part, is that some people don't realize like I have resources in real life. I don't have to go find somebody who never heard of me on Instagram. Who can I look around in my life to right now who could help me get this thing off of the ground? And ask for the help, right? Use the resources that you have, like love the people that you currently have access to instead of wishing for somebody else?

Corey: Yeah, people aren't going across the world looking for people.

Rachel: Yeah.

Corey: And just like I'll get on Facebook and say, "I need to be able to work at A&T's homecoming." And I'll get 30 people to hit me back and say, "I can do it."

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: Why am I going to a temp agency to find staff?

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: There's people right in front of you. And so many times we feel too prideful, you know, there's so much pride that we don't want to just ask for help or put ourselves out there. But you putting yourself out there can be

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the difference between you having a stressful event or a very easy going event because it's right here.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: Like I know graphic designers, I know art, there's so many people that you meet and connect with.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: Even like when people are like, they need certain information. The information is all on YouTube, Google, TikTok, wherever you want to find it.

Rachel: Exactly.

Corey: But people in their mind it's just like, "I want you to tell me because you're the expert." Which is fine, but obviously that comes with a cost sometimes.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: Or you could do it for free yourself, learn a little bit, and then once you get to a point where you can do no more, then you can hire somebody that can take you to the next step with something specific.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And I think so many times people jump into that let me get help early versus like, hey, try on your own. Buy a book, read the book, see how it does for you, and then ask questions later.

Rachel: Yes.

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Corey: I think it's different ways, but it depends on the person and their journey. And a lot comes down to pride, Honestly.

Rachel: I agree. That stops you and holds you back where they're like, "Oh, I don't know why it's working." Ask me, I know why.

Corey: Yeah, exactly.

Rachel: Pick me, I'll tell you. I'll tell you exactly what the problem is.

Corey: Exactly, exactly.

Rachel: And it's true, here's the thing, right, before I hire a team member, I need to know what I need them to do.

Corey: That's a fact.

Rachel: Right? So if I haven't figured out a strategy yet, or I don't even know how this works, I could do it myself the first time and be like, "Oh, now I understand the process". Now I can write down that process and say, "Okay, here's how we're going to do it." Right? Teach the process to the person.

Corey: Putting them systems in place.

Rachel: Exactly.

Corey: And one thing I always, one of the biggest questions I get asked all the time is, when do I know when I need to hire staff? Or like, how did you hire staff? Well, I did everything at first, then I knew how long it should take, I knew what the processes were little like, I knew how easy or hard it was.

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Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So that when I brought in somebody I said, “Hey, this task will take about 16 minutes. All you're doing is this, this, and this. And then you're doing this and this and this and this. And after that, you can report back to me.”

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: If they didn't do that in that amount of time, or maybe a little over, I can be like, “Oh, well, you're faster than me. Okay, so you're good. You're much slower, okay.” So now I know, but I don't know without doing it. You can't just Google, “when should I hire an assistant?” No.

Okay, I need help with these five things. I used to realize in my business that I never respond to emails.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: I didn't know I had hundreds of emails being piled up from orders. One day I'm like, “Yo, there's so many emails.” So this is something that's out of my reach. Let me do these, let me see how long it takes, let me see what the responses look like.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: I took my top 10 responses and made a folder for them. These are the responses you're going to give most often. Copy, paste. Order number, name switch. Same thing, right?

Rachel: Exactly.

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Corey: But we don't know unless we do these things. And people prematurely try to hire people and they don't understand that you need to go through the process first so you can set up a system and pass it off properly and then understand what you should get from that person when they're doing it.

Rachel: Yes, exactly. And I think I actually have the opposite with my community. I think they don't hire. They don't hire at all, right?

Corey: Wow.

Rachel: So, you know, they'll have a \$500,000 business with like, you know, one or two super, super part-time contractors.

Corey: Oh wow.

Rachel: And then they're trying to get to a million. Then even if they do find a way to get to a million, it's not sustainable, right? You got to build a system, that's how you know you built a business that is an asset, right? Otherwise, you're a freelancer.

Corey: That's true.

Rachel: You know what I mean?

Corey: Very true.

Rachel: Otherwise your business is you and you got to show up to work every day. And if you get sick or if you get injured, you can't work, no money, right?

So I want us to build assets because that's how we build wealth.

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Corey: Love it.

Rachel: And that's how we, there's a massive racial wealth gap in this country, right? White people have 10 times, no, I think it's 110 times the wealth of Black people, right?

Corey: Wow.

Rachel: The net worth of Black people in this country. And so how do we address that, right? How do we fix it? I think it's through entrepreneurship, that's how I did it.

Corey: I agree.

Rachel: That's how I went from zero to a lot more than that. Actually it wasn't even zero because I had six figures in student loans, so I was negative.

Corey: Yeah, it was negative, honestly. If we really want to talk about it, negative.

Rachel: Yes, I was multiple six figures negative because college and law school, right? And if I would have gotten a law school job, that would have taken me years to dig myself out of that hole, right?

And I saw a stat the other day that I was like, "What?" 60% of Black wealth goes to student loans.

Corey: Wow.

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Rachel: So when we have capital, when we make money, we are using it to pay student loans because our parents didn't pay for college. They did not contribute because, for the most part because they didn't have it, right?

Corey: Yeah, definitely. Wow.

Rachel: So I was like, "Oh, hell no. We got to fix this."

Corey: Yeah, that's crazy. I don't like that at all.

Rachel: Exactly.

Corey: And that's why we encourage scholarship, obviously.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: We do scholarships and we try to push the needle, hey, do this common app, apply for these grants, apply for these loans. I posted something today about a scholarship, it was 2,500, but better than nothing.

Rachel: Listen, yes, it knocks it down. I love it. I love it. Okay, so you're handing out flyers, you're doing pop up shops. Tell us what happens next. Like when do you build the website? How do you scale? How long did it take? What was that looking like?

Corey: So I was doing that for about a year and a half, like I said, me and my cousin. And my first website was a Big Cartel site. So if anybody knows about ecommerce sites, it's not a great site. It's pretty bad.

Rachel: I remember those.

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Corey: It's like Target, Walmart, and then like, I don't know, Food Lion, I don't know what's next under that, but it's like that. It's like Dollar General.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And so I was using Big Cartel for a while. No, I wasn't collecting emails and no data, nothing.

Rachel: Yes. Oh my God, I had my business for like at least a year and a half before I figured out, Oh my God, I was supposed to be collecting emails. And I got so much press in that time too.

Corey: See.

Rachel: I was like, I played myself.

Corey: You don't know about it, you just don't know what you don't know.

Rachel: You just don't know. I remember I paid somebody \$350 to build the subscriber thing into my website because I didn't know how to actually—

Corey: Wow, that was probably two clicks.

Rachel: Exactly, but I just could not figure it out. So I was like, "How much is it? Okay, great." You know, best 350, right? Because then I started to build a customer list that I could market to.

Corey: Yeah, that's great and, you know, we were doing that for a while. Actually, something interesting happened. So my sophomore year I actually got kicked out of school.

Rachel: What?

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Corey: Yeah.

Rachel: Why? What did you do?

Corey: And I say kicked out because, you know, it was kind of out of my control but it was like my control. So essentially, I was supposed to get approved for this grant that I didn't get.

Rachel: Yes

Corey: Or it like never hit my account. And so we used to have something at Howard called The Purge, where after a certain date if you didn't have money, or financial aid, or whatever, you used to get kicked out.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: At the time I had just came back from a trip to China. I started an organization on campus, we went to China. I was the vice president of my class in School of Business. I was like doing a lot of stuff on campus.

Rachel: Yes, sounds like the model student.

Corey: I mean, I was the best student ever, honestly. I mean, my GPA was like a little iffy. But, you know, I brought it other ways, right?

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: But I ended up getting kicked out of school because I owed \$14,000.

Rachel: Wow.

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Corey: And I was able to stay a little longer, my teachers were cool. I was the president of the dorm so I had the room a lot longer than I probably should have.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: But I had to go home.

Rachel: Wow.

Corey: Came back here to North Carolina and I worked three jobs. I worked at High Point University doing yard work. I was just talking to Bethany about High Point University.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: I was actually like on the yard staff at High Point.

Rachel: Wow.

Corey: Could you imagine being the man on campus like throwing parties, having a clothing line to like cleaning up after people on campus? It was one of the most humbling experiences I've ever had.

Rachel: I bet. Even just like, even just driving back home and not being in the energy of a university.

Corey: It's different. It's different, especially DC to Greensboro. And my area is like I was the person that left and was doing it. I did that in the morning, then at nighttime I worked at Kay Jewelers selling jewelry. So I would go from lawn clothes to like suits.

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Rachel: Wow.

Corey: And I was selling jewelry to people. And I had no idea about what I was selling.

Rachel: You know, this reminds me of when I was interning for Senator Clinton in DC.

Corey: Okay.

Rachel: So I worked in the Russet Senate office building.

Corey: Wow.

Rachel: And I would be there during the day dressed, right, and doing like mail sorting and receptionist work, right? Not the most important work. And some sometimes they would give me a project that I really learned things on.

So I'm doing that during the day but it's an internship and it doesn't pay me, right? And other people, their parents are funding them and I'm like, "Yeah, not an option." So in order to say yes to this, I got to get a job. So I would leave there, put on my waitressing clothes, which is like white shirt, black pants, right? And then go waitress from five until like 10 o'clock at night. And then take the train home. It took me like an hour and 15 minutes to get home.

Corey: Oh man.

Rachel: And that was my hustle for like a year, year and a half I was doing that.

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Corey: They don't get it. And they wonder why you're doing so well now.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: I think people always see like overnight success or like this came out of nowhere. Like no.

Rachel: No, no, no.

Corey: I was like out of school and doing this, I remember what that felt like.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And I was taking certain lessons that I was learning from every job and opportunity I had and I'm applying that to my everyday life.

Rachel: Exactly.

Corey: So when you say, "Corey, how do you go so hard? How do you wake up at 5:30?" You don't remember when I was cleaning toilets and stuff at another university after being the man on a different campus.

Rachel: Yes. So it's like the benefit is being aware that it can happen.

Corey: Oh, it can happen.

Rachel: It can all go down.

Corey: At any time.

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Rachel: Listen, and was is that quote, like success is rented and the rent is due every day.

Corey: Every single day you got to put in that work. Listen, you got to pay that landlord every day.

Rachel: That's right.

Corey: And when you stop paying it's going to start creeping back on you for the eviction.

Rachel: Yes, exactly. I tell people that all the time, like you stop marketing and you think like, oh, people are still coming. Yeah, and it's a lagging indicator. So in two months you're going to be like, "Where the people at?" Oh, they're back where you stopped? That's where that at.

Corey: They're waiting for you, they're at the bus stop.

Rachel: Exactly, you better put in some work. And then they're mad because then they start putting in work and they're like, why is it taking so long? Because that's how it works, yo, it's going to be a couple of months before you start to see the traction from the efforts, right?

Corey: Keep the foot on the gas.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: If you never take it off you don't have to worry about those things.

Rachel: Listen, that is the benefit of failure, of not having money. I feel like growing up and not having access to capital is one of the best things that ever happened to me because it gave me a strong work ethic. And it forces

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me to not give into my fears, right? I'm afraid and I'm going to go do it anyway because I got kids to feed, I got rent to pay, I got people to take care of. Like there's no option.

Corey: Life don't' stop because you're broke.

Rachel: It sure don't.

Corey: Life does not stop and uncle Sam is going to come and get that, the little money you got, he's going to come knocking.

Rachel: He's going to take it.

Corey: So you better make a decision because like, I like the quote that's like you can cry in a Rolls Royce or you can cry like whatever. I'm like and I'm going to choose. if I'm going to do it come on now, I'm going to cry with some money.

Rachel: I'm going to cry in the Rolls Royce.

Corey: if I'm going to do it, come on now, I'm going to cry with some money in my pocket at least. We're going to go through this and make it happen though.

Rachel: Exactly.

Corey: So that's what I was doing, you know? The brand was still going but it was on the back burner because I had other opportunities and obligations that I had to do. I was living back at home with my mom.

So I actually started this campaign call 4 for 14,000. I was at home talking to one of my best friends. He's like, "Corey, how you going to get back to

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school?” And I'm like, “Bro, I have no idea.” And at the time I had like 4,000 Twitter followers.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So it was this simple, the idea was this simple. If I could ask all my followers for \$4, I could get back to school.

Rachel: Wow.

Corey: It was that simple, right.

Rachel: First of all, can we just talk about math for a minute? These are the benefits of math. Again, you're like what resources do I have available to me? I got 4,000 Twitter followers, will they give me \$4? if you would have said, I would have been like, “Listen, I got you, I'm in for 1,000.” You know what I mean? Like, I got it, let me help you.

Corey: It's crazy. And what's even funnier, this story is going to come like full circle crazy. But I'm like, all right, I owe 14,000. \$4, okay, that'll get me around there. So I'm doing that, I remember my first person, all I needed was one yes.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: Maxine, Maxine Chapman, she went to Howard.

Rachel: Shout out to Maxine. Thank you, Maxine.

Corey: She probably watches this, so that would be interesting. Once I saw her name come through I like broke down. It was one of my classmates, so

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somebody that's also a college student who like probably didn't have it, gave me money.

Rachel: Yes. She had 20, she gave you 4.

Corey: You know what I'm saying? So now on Friday she can't eat, right?

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So now I'm like if somebody believes in me that's on my level I know people above me will as well.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And so all I needed was that one sale to go through or that one donation in order for me to go hard, and I started going hard.

Rachel: That's the thing, right? Like you put yourself out there, you get one yes, it gives you momentum.

Corey: I was humble too, like I was asking for money, remember.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And this is not, GoFundMe wasn't a thing. This was like 2012, GoFundMe did not exist. I actually went on YouTube, figured out how to make a website and found out how to make a payment processor, and I did that myself.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: I mean I didn't have the money to pay anybody to do it.

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Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So I learned all that stuff by just I needed to do it. And once it started happening, I started turning up with it. Then I made it a campaign. So I'm like, "If you can pay \$4 for Starbucks, you can pay \$4 for education." And like little slogans like that, like skip McDonald's and pay me. And they started going crazy.

Rachel: I love it. And you used your story, right?

Corey: That's it.

Rachel: You just told your story.

Corey: I told them exactly who I was., what kind of student I was on campus, like what I brought to the university. What I was doing in the meantime.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: Like I was telling the whole, so when you saw it, when you came to my page you may not know me when you come, but you know me when you leave.

Rachel: Right. And if you have nothing else, you have your story, right?

Corey: That's it. That's it.

Rachel: Tell your story and use that.

Corey: That story goes a long way.

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Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And it's funny, one of my biggest donations came from our friends, the facility.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: Our Friends, they donated \$4,000 to me.

Rachel: Oh my gosh, I love it. So we're talking about the former owners of the Rogers Ranch.

Rachel: Yeah.

Rachel: We bought this property from an amazing couple and Corey arrives and realizes, "I've been here." He grew up with their son, which is wild. So he's been all through this property. He's like, "This is very familiar."

Corey: Yeah, my parking spot is still out there.

Rachel: Yes. Listen, when we bought this we used to have them on speed dial, we stayed calling them like, "Where's the well? What's the well pump? How does this work?" Like we broke everything in the first six months. We didn't know what the hell we were doing.

Corey: That's crazy. That's so funny.

Rachel: One day they came over to like pick up mail and we weren't here. We were like, just go ahead in. And they saw that we didn't have like the pump on the pool and they went and got the pump out the pool room. And they're like, "You about to ruin this \$100,000 pool cover."

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Corey: Can't give y'all nothing, man. Can't give y'all nothing.

Rachel: Yeah, y'all don't know what y'all doing. So listen, the first year that we were here, we stayed calling them.

Corey: Yeah, I believe it.

Rachel: And they were very gracious and very sweet.

Corey: So it's so crazy, they gave me \$4,000.

Rachel: Wow, such a small world.

Corey: That same couple.

Rachel: So bananas.

Corey: I cannot make this story up, I'm not that good of a storyteller. So that ended up happening. About almost over half a year went into it and I got a call from MTV.

Rachel: MTV.

Corey: Randomly. Or it was an email.

Rachel: Wait, wait, wait. So did you make your 14,000 and get back to school?

Corey: No, not yet. Well, I did eventually.

Rachel: Okay.

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Corey: That's a part of the story.

Rachel: Wait, wait, wait, this is months?

Corey: This is months. I'm out of school, I'm at home working still. I'm at Kays.

Rachel: No, but I mean like it's months since you start the 4 for 14?

Corey: Months. It wasn't like I got, like in the beginning I got a lot of money, obviously, people were like excited. Then it like dies down. And I'm still grinding, I'm still grinding.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So I'm still working my job and all that.

Rachel: In my mind I'm like, so this is a 72 hour campaign.

Corey: Oh no. I was at home.

Rachel: Like you knew how to do that.

Corey: I was at home like not about to go back to school.

Rachel: Wow. This wasn't like you ran this campaign and it was instant success. I love it.

Corey: Because GoFundMe didn't exist.

Rachel: Yes.

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Corey: So the mindset of like just donating and that was like, “Oh yeah, let me give to this cause.” It wasn't like Kickstarter or any of them things.

Rachel: Yes. So it was a slow, slow process.

Corey: Slow grind.

Rachel: Okay.

Corey: And I wanted to quit many times.

Rachel: Yes, oh I'm sure.

Corey: And it's so important to say that because so many entrepreneurs are in a place where they might want to quit, but don't understand that you quitting, but you came this far. If I'm going to quit I might as well just keep going, I already done did all this.

Rachel: Exactly.

Corey: I made the website already and I've already taken people's money. So at this point I cannot quit, I felt like I couldn't. And once I got that \$4,000 I definitely couldn't quit, right?

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So I still needed like, I think I was around \$8,000 or like \$7,000, around there.

Rachel: So you're halfway there.

Corey: I'm halfway there, I'm close.

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Rachel: Months later.

Corey: But it's like six months later.

Rachel: Yes, six months.

Corey: So I'm like I already missed another semester. I already missed a semester.

Rachel: Wow.

Corey: I was like, you know, I'm going to sit out a semester and I'll come back. I was missing the second semester too, right?

Rachel: Wow.

Corey: And I was getting discouraged, I was.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: because I'm like, dang, I'm out two semesters. And what ended up happening was this whole story kind of comes full circle too because I didn't know how MTV found me.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: I thought I was just that good at marketing. And I wasn't, which is humbling. But a guy that went to Howard that was in my class was doing an internship at MTV and they were doing these stories on people. He sent in my story. He never told me this. I found out like after the campaign was over when, I'll tell you the story.

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But anyway, I did a story but it was just online. So they called me, they interviewed me and it was like a web article. It's probably still active.

Rachel: First of all, this is one of my favorite things about entrepreneurship because there was days where I was like down in the dumps. I was home with my, you know, six month old daughter and I was like, "How am I going to make this business work? How am I going to get another client so I can pay these bills?" Right? Like every month it was just like a new 30 days of hustle to try to, you know, hit these bills and hopefully make a little something extra so I could put something in a savings account and feel less stressed.

Corey: That's right.

Rachel: And one day I like just wake up, like was up all night with my daughter, wake up, get a call. I'm like, "Hello?" And it's Forbes.

Corey: Wow.

Rachel: Somebody from Forbes wants to interview me. And I was like, "What?" And like try to wake up. And then I'm like, "Don't wake up that kid." But yes, so this was like randomly got interviewed, and then that created social proof and then got more and more press as a result.

And so it's just like you just got to be out there doing it. Do something newsworthy, right? Like be doing something that's worth talking about, right? And then people, like you'll have those opportunities. That's what I love about entrepreneurship, like one day you'd be down in the dumps, next day you're in Forbes magazine or on MTV.

Corey: I mean you never know who's watching.

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Rachel: You never know.

Corey: And because you're not putting yourself out there and not doing it, then you don't give them an opportunity to see you.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And even if it might be humbling, or you might not feel great about it, understand that there's somebody who's compassionate. There's somebody who is in a position to help you out for free.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: Like he didn't make any money or lose any money from doing that. He was just doing his job that he was an intern for.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And so they end up doing the online story. That got some traction, a few \$1,000. But it wasn't like, I thought I made it. I'm going back tomorrow.

Rachel: I'm famous.

Corey: But I got close, I probably made like 1,000 or something. I was famous, I'm like, "Where's my verification check?" All of that. None of that came, it was just, "Hey bro, here's \$1,000 and there you go." Right?

Rachel: Right.

Corey: And so I was in church and I was praying, and I remember this one Sunday my pastor was like, "Somebody needs something." You know, they're always talking to you.

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Rachel: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Corey: When you're struggling they're always talking to you.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: Somebody in the crowd needs something, like touch agree with the people beside you and it'll come. So my mom was here, my sister was here, touch and agree I need to get back to school, I need this money, I need the bread, whatever.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: I'm talking about literally 14 days later, MTV hits me again like, "The story did really well online, we want to do an in-person story on you."

Rachel: Wow.

Corey: So I'm like, "Bet, this will be another few thousand dollars." So they fly me to DC. I'm staying in the Omni Hotel in DC, I'm like living it up. I'm ordering room service.

Rachel: Let me get them French fries and some champagne.

Corey: I'm like little Bow Wow on Like Mike, when he found out about room service, he was running it up.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So they was like, "Everything's on us, whatever," I'm like, "All right, cool." So I go to the school, I actually interview with Sway Calloway.

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Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So Slay is interviewing me with MTV, we're walking to school, we're telling my story. We get to the library, right? And this is always the funniest part I tell people, we get to the library, the interview is over, he's like, "We're going to do this last little part to close out and you can leave."

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So when I walk into library everybody's like, "Surprise!" Mind you, I came up here by myself. So it's like my mom, my people, all my friends, they're in the library in DC. She was just in North Carolina yesterday morning.

Rachel: Wow.

Corey: And it's so funny, I tell people I thought I won a car. For some reason I thought I won a car. I didn't even need a car but for some reason I was like, "I won a car." I didn't win a car but they're like, "You're coming back to school, Corey, you're coming back to school." And I'm like, "What? what do you mean? I'm still like, trying to raise money. Like, are they filming this for when I do come back to school?" I thought they were like pre-filming it and they wanted to see my reaction. So I'm like, "Yeah, it's cool."

And then I see they bring out a big check for \$12,000. And I was like, "Oh, I'm going back to school now. Like right now." So they gave me a check for \$12,000. And then Howard was like that was from MTV and this company called Salt.

Rachel: Wow.

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Corey: And Howard was like, “And we're going to match that and give you 12,000 as well.”

Rachel: Wow.

Corey: So I got 24,000.

Rachel: So not only could you go back to school, but you got a head start for the next semester.

Corey: Exactly, and I had already raised eight myself.

Rachel: Wow.

Corey: So I raised \$32,000 in about eight months. I still had to stay out the rest of that semester because I was already too late.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: But I ended up raising the money. And then at the end of the filming they had one more surprise for me. And it was Usher and he surprised me with a message saying, you know, shout out to you, Corey, da, da, da. I lost it. I lost it.

Rachel: What?

Corey: I was crying, I was like, “Oh my God, I can't believe it.” It was a lot.

Rachel: That's amazing.

Corey: And so all that work I was doing, I just was like, man, it was all worth it.

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Rachel: Wow.

Corey: Every single cent, every single job I worked, every single time I clocked in, every single time I showed up when I didn't want to.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: It was worth it every single time. And that's why I try to encourage entrepreneurs. I'm like, there's going to be days where you don't want to get up, there's going to be days where you don't want to do this. But understand people are still watching, people are still looking out for you, people are praying over your business. You prayed over your business.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: There are so many opportunities and people there that want to see you win and you're giving up on yourself, then you're doing yourself a big disservice.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So when that happened I knew at that moment that anything was possible.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: I'm like, oh, this is crazy. I literally raised 32,000 in like eight months.

Rachel: Wow.

Corey: Like that's some people's salary.

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Rachel: Literally.

Corey: That's my mom's teaching salary.

Rachel: Exactly, that's bananas.

Corey: In eight months just by telling my story.

Rachel: Just telling your story and just being out there doing something.

Corey: From people who didn't know me.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And so after that happened I ended up going back to school next year. And things just, I was on a high. I was just glad to be there every day.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: Like I didn't care what was going on.

Rachel: Then you had a special appreciation, I'm sure.

Corey: Oh man, I appreciated it. You don't understand what it's like going from like man on campus to living at your mom's house still doing chores. My mom like, "It's Saturday, go do your chores." Oh, I hate this, I hate you.

Rachel: Yes. Okay, so you went from the 32,000 that you raised in eight months, then you had a million dollar day. Tell us about that.

Corey: Yeah, so we actually did a million dollars on Black Friday twice.

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Rachel: Wow. Okay, how did you do that?

Corey: Man, so what's crazy is we were at this warehouse. It was on this place called the goat farm, that's where our warehouse was in Atlanta, Georgia. And a few weeks before Black Friday I'm talking to my business partner and I'm like, "I want to make a million dollars this Black Friday."

Rachel: Yes, I love it.

Corey: He's like, why that number? I'm like, why not that number?

Rachel: Exactly. You know why? Because it's a BHAG, right? It's a big, hairy, audacious goal and it gets you hype and gets you out of bed in the morning. If you said, like I want to make 100,000 or something that feels very doable, you'd be bored. Snore. That's not exciting.

Corey: We're already making 10 to 20 to 30k every month.

Rachel: Right. 30k a month and you're like, "Nah, let's do a million in a day."

Corey: I was riding high. Like riding high.

Rachel: I love it. We are the same.

Corey: Come on now. It's like if somebody didn't be like, "You're crazy," that means it wasn't big enough.

Rachel: Exactly, that's how I roll.

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Corey: And everybody was like, “Bro, what?” And I’m like, “Yeah, I want to make a million dollars.” So that was the goal. I didn’t know what the math was like to get there.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: But that was the goal and it was so crazy.

Rachel: Like so now you know the math, how many like units do you have to sell? How many shirts do you have to sell to make a million dollars?

Corey: So we had 15,000 orders and 33,000 items.

Rachel: Wow. So you got everybody to order two things instead of one.

Corey: Yeah, and you know how?

Rachel: that up-sell.

Corey: We did buy one get one free hoodies.

Rachel: I love it.

Corey: And we did like the shirts in the package deal and we did the hats. Everything was packaged and we dropped new product at full price.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So it was a combination of different things. But a few weeks before Black Friday was crazy. We ordered these new jumpsuits, they were going to be one of our new products. Our warehouse got flooded. Flooded.

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Rachel: Wait a minute, I just love how you set a big goal and then there's a big thing, it's like disruption follows intention, right?

Corey: Oh yeah, it's a setup.

Rachel: Yes. And it's like, okay, you still going to hit that million or are you going to use this as an excuse? Let's see what happens.

Corey: And you know what's crazy? I said I wanted to make a million, our warehouse flooded. I was actually in North Carolina at A&T's homecoming vending and it rained really hard at the goat farm. It was an old building, it was a goat farm. It literally was an old goat farm.

Rachel: Your storage was an old goat farm, I'm obsessed.

Corey: Seriously, we were at an old goat farm. And the package from DHL had just came in because you know anything overseas comes from DHL.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So it was on the ground and it all got flooded, right? I got the video on my phone to this day. And as soon as I found out all that stuff, I came back the next day. I was like, I got go back and see what happened.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: I saw how much damage we had, we probably lost like 30, \$40,000 worth of inventory.

Rachel: Wow.

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Corey: As soon as I saw it I said, “We’re going to make a million dollars.” I knew it. I just knew it. I said, “We’re going to make a million dollars because this don’t happen. I need something to happen to get me, I’m awake now. Like I’m here because now I got to grind a little differently.” Right?

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And so the next week we actually found a new warehouse, brand new warehouse. It was like 8,000 square feet, it was a complete upgrade from what we’re doing.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And we got out of there, we moved into the spot.

Rachel: Because here's the thing that I'm taking from this, right? Like you're still at the goat farm but talking about you want to run a million dollar business, right? Make a million dollars in a day.

Corey: That’s true.

Rachel: If you want to make a million dollars in a day, you got to do the things that people who make a million dollars in a day do.

Corey: That’s true.

Rachel: Which is they don't have their product at a goat farm, right?

Corey: On the floor.

Rachel: Exactly. Exactly, you know, you got to upgrade, right? You have to put your money where your mouth is, you have to make those investments

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and you have to start to see yourself as that million dollar business owner before it actually happens.

And when you do that, that's how you make it happen.

Corey: Exactly.

Rachel: If you keep making broke ass decisions every day, you ain't going to, you know, a million dollars don't come from that. It comes from million dollar decisions. And so that was for you so that you could make that million dollar decision.

Corey: I was mad at the time, don't get me wrong.

Rachel: I bet you were.

Corey: But once I was able to calm down and just like talk to God, I was like, "I'm going to make that million dollars."

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And sure enough, we set up, I was like, "All right, so now we have to do our email marketing a certain way. Now we have to do our text marketing a certain way. We have to give these deals." At first we weren't going to do buy one get one free, at first we were going to do this. Now let's start it on Wednesday instead of Friday. And then let's extend it to Cyber Monday instead of ending it here.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And we did all those things and we amassed a million dollars.

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Rachel: That's amazing.

Corey: It was great and amazing. And when we hit it, I'm like, "We're going live on Instagram. Look at my Shopify, we ain't lying to y'all, we can do this." And then comes the realization that you have to fulfill all these orders.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And just like that things got bad again.

Rachel: Well, because, again, some more million dollar, because it's showing you like, listen, if you want this level of operation, you got to upgrade your systems, right? You need to operate on a new level now if you want to have this kind of business.

Corey: Yeah, and we learned that.

Rachel: So that makes sense.

Corey: In entrepreneurship you don't know what you don't know, and if you've never been there you don't know how to handle those things. And so what ended up happening was, we switched to a new warehouse, but we also got a new fulfillment center.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: We were like, "Well, if we're trying to do a million dollars, we need a fulfillment center.

Rachel: Yep.

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Corey: And the fulfillment center, it wasn't that they couldn't do it. I think that on both sides we didn't set realistic expectations.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So I told her I want to make a million dollars, but I don't know if she like actually believed me, let's just be honest.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: It's like have you made a million? No, I never had, but I'm just telling you this.

Rachel: Yeah, of course she didn't believe you, there was no reason for her to believe you. You were seeing it.

Corey: There was no proof.

Rachel: Right, you're about to create it. You're about to create the evidence.

Corey: Yeah, so I'm trying to tell you.

Rachel: And I'm like, "Yes, yes, tell me I can't do it, okay? This is fuel."

Corey: Yeah, She didn't say no but she was like, "Okay, we can handle it."

Rachel: Yeah.

Corey: It's like, we can handle it.

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Rachel: Yeah, doubt me, that gives me hype.

Corey: And I'm like, "You don't believe me. But it's cool though, you don't believe me but it's cool because you don't know me that well."

Rachel: Yeah, because it's about to go down. Exactly, you don't know who you're dealing with here. I love it.

Corey: You don't know 4 for 14,000 Corey, you know Support Black Colleges Corey, so that's cool. We ended up doing it and we ended up doing a million dollars and fulfillment was just a nightmare.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: It was a nightmare because she had started making the stuff ahead of time but it was just, I mean, you can't prepare for 33,000 items like in two weeks.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: Remember, we just changed warehouses and everything was so new.

Rachel: We got to deliver it in 14 days.

Corey: So what ended up happening was we ended up getting, I would say about 8,000 out of the 15,000 orders out before Christmas.

Rachel: Wow.

Corey: Which left like, you know, 8,000 not done?

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Rachel: Yes. So 8,000 potentially unhappy customers emailing you. God's like, "This is what it costs to have a million dollar business."

Corey: It was bad. It was bad.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And people are like, "Y'all are not responding to emails." And I'm like, you got to understand that some of y'all are emailing seven, eight times. So you're actually taking away from us helping other people.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: Email one time, once somebody gets to you, like it was such a process. I was doing emails at that point.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: Everybody was doing them.

Rachel: Yes, like all hands on deck.

Corey: No one was shipping, we were like let's just do this. We were sending out mass emails, we were doing social posts. And it got to a point where like it was a group of small, a small group of customers, probably like 100 of them, like banded together and was like really coming after our company.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: Like hard. Sending like BBB, I mean it was bad.

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Rachel: Oh, I've experienced that.

Corey: Yes.

Rachel: Listen, one angry customer, what they love to do is recruit. They're like, "Nah, I'm not powerful alone, I need a squad."

Corey: They were putting together, and it was on a private Facebook group that we didn't know about.

Rachel: Yeah. Oh, I've had that too.

Corey: So once they had it to a certain point, it was too late. Like we found out about it but it was like it's too late. So once I got a representative in there undercover, they were playing as a person who could get access to us and they were helping, but it was really my staff.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: Because we didn't want to say it was us, so we were figuring out what they were doing and all of that. And so we ended up kind of dismantling that group, but not before they put us on the Shade Room.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And so they put us on the Shade Room, "Company can't do this and this." I'm explaining the same story, But of course it's not received. They're saying, of course Black owned businesses do this and I'm just like y'all have no idea how hard I've been working to make this happen.

Rachel: Yes.

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Corey: So we ended up refunding about \$400,000 worth of orders.

Rachel: Wow.

Corey: After we had already paid for it to get made. So we really lost a lot of money and lost a lot of customers, let's be honest.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So obviously now, you know, eight months later, things are like getting back to normal and stuff but Black Friday is coming up.

Rachel: Yeah. You about to do it again?

Corey: No, we're not making a million dollars.

Rachel: But listen, all that tells me is like you should do it again.

Corey: Yeah.

Rachel: But you just got to have the systems in place.

Corey: Yeah, we've been working on systems for a long time.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: What I'm doing is I'm taking all the inventory I have, because I definitely have enough inventory to make a million dollars. And so we're going to package what we already have plus launch new new products that will already been pre-made, and once it sells out, it sells out.

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Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So if you get it, you get it. And if you don't, you don't.

Rachel: That's it. Like Maya Angelou says, when you know better you do better.

Corey: Oh my gosh, I know better.

Rachel: Yes. And the thing is, is like you can't get those lessons otherwise, right?

Corey: You can't.

Rachel: So people think, well, I shouldn't have went for a million. No, you absolutely should have because it's showing you where you need to work in your business and what needs to be improved so you can turn it into a more scalable company that can do things like that on a regular.

Corey: And the best lessons too, like you can learn from other people.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: So you don't have to have this problem, I had it already. So listen to my story and utilize my story for yourself so that you don't have to same issues.

Rachel: Yes. And you know what it is? It's believing, right? It's trusting that this is going to happen, I'm going to have this million dollar day. And so therefore, I'm going to prepare as if it is definitely going to, as if it's guaranteed. Instead of saying let me see, right? Because playing small is what gets you into troubles.

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Corey: That's right. And I mean, even if you play big, you shoot for a million and you do 500,000, it's like man, you never did 500,000 before.

Rachel: Exactly.

Corey: So why not go for it?

Rachel: Yes, you did 600,000 if my math is correct, right?

Corey: Yeah, exactly.

Rachel: That's a win.

Corey: Exactly, so we still won at the end of the day, after all the mess. But it's one of those things where I was extremely proud of myself for doing it. And I was low on the disappointment. I wasn't disappointed, I know I could have done better but I'm glad I was able to show myself that anything is possible once again like I showed myself before.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: And now it's just lesson after lesson after lesson that I'm now learning to do things the right way and prepare, pre-prepare. See, I want to be proactive, not reactive.

Rachel: Exactly.

Corey: When you're reactive you're fixing a problem that already happened. When you're proactive is like, all right, cool, I'm prepared for whatever may come.

Rachel: Yes,, and also I'm prepared to win.

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Corey: Exactly.

Rachel: Prepare to win. I think a lot of times we prepare to lose.

Corey: Yes, which is so negative.

Rachel: And that's what we're accustomed to. But it's like, no, no, you know, you got to build Noah's Ark. Like, Noah's building the ark, everybody's like, "You out your damn mind. This don't make no sense." Right? But he knew it was coming, right? And he did it anyway. And so I think we have to build the ark for the business that we're trying to really create and the success that we want to have.

Corey: Exactly.

Rachel: So I love it. Like the theme of this episode clearly is, right, like you can turn any failure into a million dollar day, right?

Corey: Anything. I got a bunch of failures, I could talk about that all day. Really, I could give a whole list of things.

Rachel: Yes, and listen, failures is what you collect on the way to winning, right? As you're winning, you're also going to have some fails and it's for you so that you can win some more, right? So you can learn the lessons you need to learn, turn into the leader that you need to become so that you can win some more.

Corey: That's what we always say, it's not a loss it's a lesson.

Rachel: That's right.

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Corey: People will see a loss, oh, a loss, a loss, a loss. Yeah, but now I learned, so I'm going to be stronger and better because of that.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: You have to change the way you think about how things happen to you.

Rachel: I agree.

Corey: you can't play the victim, but you have to play somebody that actually is about to get victory.

Rachel: Yes.

Corey: Like I'm about to win because I lost. I know now so this just didn't work for me, let me try this system. Oh, that didn't work. Let me tweak it a little bit and now when you're winning, now you have a system for success.

Rachel: Exactly, you just got to keep going. Well thank you, Corey, for coming and sharing so many gems. Tell people where they can find you.

Corey: Yeah, they find me in my social, Corey Arvinger, it's just my name. Or at support black college to support the HBCU merch.

Rachel: Awesome, awesome, and we will link all of that up in the show notes. Thank you so much for coming. This was awesome.

Corey: Of course, it was a good time. Good time.

Rachel: Yes.